

flicker

November, 2004

Fourth Issue





SONGS IN THE NIGHT...

Hope Springs Eternal

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Flicker*, the fanzine that sprung from the still-quivering corpse of the ill-starred *Splotch/Blotch/Grotch/Crotch*. Though it's quite common these days for the editor to begin a campaign for a Hugo in the fourth issue, assuming he hasn't started even earlier, I've done just about everything possible to maintain *Flicker's* "underneath the radar" status. So remain calm and keep voting for Dave Langford.

I start each issue with such verve and optimism that it's almost a shame to see things unravel by page four or five. I've begun each *Flicker* with a burst of writing creativity that carries me through the opening pages. Just when I start thinking about "the new, monthly *Flicker*," events derail the

whole thing and I end up taking three months or so to finish it properly.

Yet here I am, a sappy smile on my sensitive fannish face, kicking off the fourth issue of *Flicker*. And I believe, I really do, that it will come out in November. (If it doesn't, you aren't reading this paragraph.)

The Heartbreak of Psoriasis

How far has the graying of fanzine fandom taken us? I don't think Terry Carr or Ron Ellik wrote a single word in *Fanac* about psoriasis. Getting dates and acne were probably fandom's biggest problems back then, in *Fanac's* late 1950s heyday.

I remember seeing my father's elbows and now, by golly, I got 'em, too. Although it's only a minor annoyance and pretty much under control, my ears perked up when a TV

Flicker #4, November, 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

commercial for a prescription drug called Enbrel that promised to totally eradicate any traces of Psoriasis.

So I was listening very intently when that oddest segment of such commercials came around, the catalog of side effects.

We've all seen the allergy medicines that have the side effect of producing all the symptoms an allergy-fighting medication is supposed to eliminate. And there's nothing new in the "non-drowsy" medicine that has, as a side effect, drowsiness.

Enbrel is a whole new ballgame. Among the side effects the voice over cheerily enumerates are lymphatic cancer and death from sudden cardiac arrest. There were others, but those two blew the rest out of my memory.

A few sniffles or a watery eye seem like a small price to pay for being rid of Psoriasis. If that was the downside risk, I'd probably have looked into Enbrel more deeply and maybe even tried it.

Somehow, though, I don't think I'll be trying Enbrel at the risk of dropping dead as a doornail. Psoriasis doesn't seem quite so bad when lymphatic cancer is part of the alternative.

I can see the remnants of the John Q. Public Family as they gather around John's sumptuous open coffin (paid for by the lawsuit against the drug manufacturer)

"He looks good," says John's ne'er-do-well younger brother. "Why the short-sleeve shirt?"

"We wanted everyone to see how well Enbrel cleaned up his elbows," the widow explains.

The Heartbreak of Greg Pickersgill

Speaking of Sudden Death and agonizing heartbreak, Greg Pickersgill recently surprised most members of Wegenheim when he announced the dissolution of the listserv. I say "most," for reasons that will become clear.

Fans have probably noticed Greg's growing disillusionment and disappointment with fandom over the last couple of years.

He has never lavished much love on US fandom, but his gloomy outlook has extended to his native UK fandom as well.

I wouldn't presume to speak for Greg about his reasoning, but the condition is observable. It hurts to see a fan whom I admire so much appear to derive so little satisfaction from the hobby to which he has contributed so much. I keep worrying that he will finally throw up his hands in utter frustration and Go Stiles on us, not to return for years, if ever.

Frankly, I identify with Greg. Although we have never met, except in fanzine pages, I've gotten the impression from those who know both of us that we are somewhat alike. (I think of him as me, minus the comic streak and irresistible sex appeal.)

Until the Wegenheim closing, the most palpable evidence of his state of mind came a little over a year ago, when he withdrew his participation from the Memoryhole listserv he founded. He also took the name, claiming ownership. (It continues as the present-day Fmzfen.)

He had every right to do this, of course, even though it may've struck some as petty. I mean, Don Wolheim didn't ask for "FAPA" back when he left the apa. Still, Greg was so downcast at the failure of the Memoryhole listserv to fulfill his purposes that I couldn't begrudge him the title if it made him feel better. It's a good enough title, but let's face it, there are lots of possible titles and this one clearly meant something special to Greg.

Within the last month or so, Greg has pulled the plug on Wegenheim, the listserv he started after Memoryhole. Then fandom's latest Prying Eye Victor Gonzalez reported that Wegenheim did not fold, after all, and was continuing as a secret listserv.

Greg is pretty angry with Victor for pursuing and posting the story. If Victor did more than ask around and check Yahoo Groups, then maybe Greg has a case, but otherwise it looks a lot like professional-quality journalistic enterprise.

And there you have yet another aspect

of a problem that has perplexed me for a long time. It boils down to one central issue: Do people who are luminaries (Big Name Fans) forfeit their privacy in the same way as comparable figures in the larger society?

If Greg had folded a company and dismissed its personnel and then hired back some for a secret project, *Wall Street Journal* reporters would search for the story and report it once they obtained enough facts.

Yet essentially the same situation looks a lot less straightforward when transferred to fandom. Greg is simply engaging in a hobby, not bidding for worldwide acclaim. Does such a person have immunity from the journalist's investigations and the humorist's quips?

As a fan humorist and journalist, this is of more than passing interest. Even after ruminating for several years, the best I've come up with is to make the decision on a case-by-case basis. If a fan isn't a humorist and doesn't attack other fans on a personal level, I would tend to exempt that fan from my satire.

I haven't done a newszine for close to 30 years, since Joyce and I co-edited two short runs of *FIAWOL*, but I don't see easy answers there, either. I don't like to print personal stories about someone unless they send it to me or at least verify its authenticity and acceptability.

What about reporting stories that are not personal, but relate to fan activity? If an apa folds or a new one starts, it seems reasonable to expect a newszine to report it.

The more invasive professional journalism tactics feel out of place in our little tribe. In other words, hacking into someone's email queue or sifting through their

crud sheets isn't justified by the degree of importance of anything that happens in fandom. Fan doings aren't exactly matters of National Security.

How do you folks feel about these issues as they relate to Fanzine Fandom?

For whatever reason, Greg has since replenished *Wegenheim* with most of its original members. The listserv is prospering in the way of listservs, but I wouldn't bet against another flare-up of Pickersgillian frustration.

Greg can, indeed, be a bit moody, but he may also be responding to something real. Listservs are admirable communications channels that keep fans in touch even when they have little to say and very little art with which to say it.

Yet the listservs also soak up a lot of fannish energy. How many of those who have focused their fanac on listservs have favored us with anything more ambitious than off-the-cuff opinions about some transitory facet of current macro-society politics.

Speaking for myself, and not necessarily Greg Pickersgill, I appreciate the communications value of the listservs, but I lament that so much energy and time is going into utilitarian communication and so little is now channeled into artistry.

It's great to hear from so many of my fan friends so often, but I don't think anything would be hurt if they posted half as often and returned to producing writing, art and fanzines.

Dead Letter Dept.

Once families feared the telegram, thought to be a carrier of bad news. I believe this originated during the war years when a telegram most often meant that Johnny would *not* be marching home.

The modern equiva-



lent is the listserv letter that has a subject line that consists of a well-known fan's name. It isn't always a death notice, but it brings that sad news more often than not.

That's why I shivered when I saw an email with the name "Shelby Vick." I had already heard that my old friend had been in a cataclysmic auto accident, so the arrival of such an email seemed ominous.

It didn't improve when I read the first few sentences, which described some very alarming symptoms for our convalescing Trufan. And then, when the news just couldn't have gotten any worse, the writer, his daughter Cheryl Good, said something like, "I'll spare you the details."

My heart was in my throat and I braced for the worst as I hesitatingly read the next few lines. What a relief to learn that Shelby had then made a major improvement and appears to have turned the corner in his recovery. It looks like a long road, but Shelby is exactly the kind of resolute person who will get there.

Thinking of Shelby, perhaps the nicest human being I have ever met and a great credit to fanzine fandom, I found myself returning to a story a fan once told me about Shelby that illustrates his lovely personality.

A young woman went to Chicon II, the 1952 World SF Convention in Chicago. She walked around and, frankly, didn't much like what she saw. Discouraged, she headed to the front door of the hotel. She was ready to call it a failed experiment and step away from the whole thing.

And now, without one of Paul Harvey's True-Value Hardware commercials to postpone "the rest of the story"...

She got to the door, where as fate would have it, Shelby saw her dejected mien and intercepted her. Shelby buttonholed her for a conversation and she soon found she was enjoying it. Somehow, she never made it through the portal to the Mundane world.

Instead, she decided to hang out for the rest of Chicon II. After that, she sought out fans in her area, started drawing some cartoons (with a bit of captioning help from

Terry Carr) and eventually became one of the most celebrated fans in the star-studded history of Los Angeles Fandom.

That nearly stillborn neofan?
Bjo Wells Trimble.

And *that's* the rest of the story.

Rude Boys Forever

One recent thread on the Fmzfen listserv reminded me of a complaint Paul Kincaid once leveled at Las Vegas fandom. This was back in the mid-1990s, when the Vegrants, including today's Yucaipa (CA) Insurgents, weren't the household names they became over the ensuing decade.

Kincaid, in a somewhat misguided review, accused Vegas fans of being too nice, liking each other too much and being too friendly to the rest of fandom.

Spurred on by Paul Kincaid, whose picture now hangs in the Las Vegrants clubhouse, we have not stood idle in the years since Paul fastened on this flaw in Vegas Fandom. Ever eager to please, we have Taken Steps to cure our failings and take our place beside the famous rude and insensitive fandoms of the world.

To be truthful, Las Vegrants doesn't have

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



That's a
well-known
rule of tentacle!

a clubhouse, so we can't hang Kincaid there. If we ever get one, though, we'd be delighted to hang him. Or his effigy.

As those familiar with Las Vegas Fandom know, we seldom do anything by half-measures. When we tried to be friendly and hospitable, we strove to outdo everyone. We became the Fandom of Good Cheer, indefatigable hosts who would go any number of extra miles to make visitors happy in Glitter City.

Once we understand that a vocal segment of fandom would like us to be meaner, we pursued our new goal with the same zeal that had achieved our old one.

That was the genesis of the Las Veggrants School of Churlishness. We are a fully accredited school that grants a BS in Odious Fan Behavior. We hope to eventually award a PhD in Advanced Reprehensible Conduct. But that depends on how successful we are at hiring the proper instructors. We're hoping to have Paul Kincaid himself to guide and grade the doctoral theses.

Until that glorious day, we'll have to be content with a more modest curriculum. Even so, we cover all the key subjects, including Paranoid Hostility, Bad Manners and Sloppy Drinking. Jealousy & Envy for Reviewers and Alienating Fans.

How I wish Paul Kincaid could see our Dean's List students go through their paces. The feelings of revulsion and hostility they can inspire with just a few words and gestures are truly awe-inspiring.

We have several Las Vegas fans who can ruin any fan's day at 50 paces. And our best students are now able to establish a climate of mutual distrust, dislike and rudeness in moments. Within a year, we expect to graduate a class of insensitive louts who know how to be inappropriate and offense in virtually any situation.

Y'all come visit real soon now, y'hear?

The Outlaw Fandom

Despite the previous section, Las Veggrants (and the Yucaipa Insurgents) won't veer much from what Ted White identifies as

The 'Other' Vegas Fandom

Any discussion of Las Vegas Fandom, I must acknowledge that there is another, component of Las Vegas Fandom that is invariably left out of the picture. The visible part — Las Veggrants and fellow travelers — is not the whole story.

Modern Las Vegas Fandom began with a biweekly formal club called SNAFFU. Though the group was extremely active and vibrant under the stewardship of Ken and Aileen Forman, their departure sent SNAFFU into a downward spiral. They are nice, friendly, reasonably intelligent folks, but they barely qualify as fans..

This is no elitist fan rhetoric. I don't mean that they have forsaken fanzine fandom for some other variety of fanac that I judge to be inferior. Beyond book discussions, SNAFFU does very little than anyone would consider fan activity.

This includes, but is not limited to, a lack of desire to attend conventions, meet other fans, receive locally published fanzines or have club events. They cancelled the 2003 SNAFFU Halloween Party. One of the local fandom's longest-lived traditions, because the members preferred to attend one of those commercially-oriented Comicons.

Some SNAFFUties show promise as potential fans, but it would take a lot of effort for any of them to actually become active fans in a club now dominated by nay-saying, older semi-fans.

the group that tries hardest to live up to fan-nish ideals.

So why is Las Veggrants the way it is? And to raise the question I heard at Corflu Blackjack, could the magic be duplicated somewhere else?

Kicking the questions around with some of fanzine fandom's finer minds has led me to a theory. It's a corker, too. Even now, as I formulate the next few paragraphs in my mind, I'm a little stunned by my own hypothesis.

Las Vegas Fandom developed the way it

has, because the people who gravitated to its banner were Outlaws. In miniature, forces very similar to those that brought forth fandom in the late 1920s and 1930s fostered fandom in Vegas.

You're probably thinking of Joyce Katz as Ma Barker or Ken Forman as Cassidy and laughing uncontrollably. Or maybe you're thinking of Tom Spring and Ben Wilson as the motorcyclists from *Easy Rider* and laughing uncontrollably.

If you'll quit that cackling, which is very distracting, I will add that I am not talking about any of the conventional images of an Outlaw. After all, what is an Outlaw but someone who is outside the society and who charts his or her own course?

Let me ask you, especially those of you who have spent time in Glitter City, what would constitute an Outlaw in Las Vegas? That is, what would constitute alienation from the mainstream culture?

Although the Vegrants have had visitors from that culture, especially during the years of the monthly Socials, most of the prominent members lean more toward the bohemian than to the glitz and flash of Vegas Players.

For whatever reason, Las Vegrants members are largely out of the Vegas mainstream. We may seem like hedonistic party animals to those used to more sedate environments, but really, we're pretty tame compared to the folks who perpetually haunt the casinos and sit in the back of the cab on HBO's *Taxicab Confessions*. We're Outlaws in Vegas — but not quite tame enough to avoid being identified as Outlaws when we journey to more sedate cities.

Las Vegas fans developed along classic fannish lines in response to what was about as close to the classic proto-fan situation as is likely to occur in the US today.

Many fans expended a lot of energy to make Las Vegas Fandom what it became, but it still might well not have taken root in arid soil.

Las Vegrants, like fans of old, felt alienated from the surrounding culture and turned to fandom as a place where they could be more themselves.

It's a good story and I'm sticking to it. Well, at least until the next section. We Outlaws are some kind of elusive effer.

A Posse to the Rescue

Just about every fan has heard about the spectacular science fiction collection of Forrest J Ackerman. I was lucky enough to see a portion of it during a visit to the Ackermansion back in the 1960s. Part of the legend of 4e's is the fabulous Garage Mahal, the repository of all manner of sci-fi memorabilia.

Then there's the garage at 909 Eugene Cernan Street. I fear ours is Nature's Way of balancing out the Garage Mahal. No one would ever dream about being let loose in our garage, unless they are prone to nightmares.

When fans visit our home, they often remark on its orderliness. (It doesn't hurt that many of our visitors maintain vast piles of packrat kipple on every available surface in their homes. Even our desultory housekeeping looks good by comparison with true fan chaos.

Like the town that is all facades in *The Enchanted Duplicator*, 909's relative cleanliness is a false front that masks the heart of darkness that is our large, two-car garage.. Well, it would seem large if we hadn't filled it to the gunnels — and maybe a little more — when we went from 2,500-sq.-ft. Toner Hall to the 1,800-





sq.-ft. Cape Carnival produced an unwelcome material surplus. We needed somewhere to put about a zillion packed cartons and our copier. That “somewhere” turned out to be our garage.

Our new home is only a couple of miles from the old one, but the sheer volume of stuff to be transported made the relocation a logistical nightmare. There wasn’t any opportunity to do more than jam all the cartons into the garage in scarily tottering piles that stood mostly because there was no place for them to fall. We couldn’t even reach all the boxes, much less find anything in them.

A Friday afternoon phone call from Yucaipa heralded an impromptu visit from Ken Forman, Aileen Forman and Ben Wilson. (Cathi had to stay in California to take care of Megan and work.)

Less than four hours later, the Vegnants mini-reunion went into high gear. One tentacle of the virtual fan club sometimes known as the Group Mind (Ted White, Proprietor) sprang to life as years of close association easily bridged the miles of geographic separation.

I heard a little buzzing among our guests about the garage. I ignored it, as one would a conversation among one’s friends about one’s gross physical disfigurement.

Yet I was a little shocked when, after breakfast the next morning, Ken and Ben volunteered — *volunteered* — to dismantle and reassemble the stuff in the garage. It promised to be a Las Vegas August scorcher, which means about 110 degrees, so a better person than myself would’ve talked them out of it. I’ll admit it, I could not bring myself to refuse their offer.

Though I joined them after I completed my morning’s work on *Pro Wrestling Daily*, I felt my full age by the time I slumped onto the living room couch. “I’ve got the knees of a retired NFL running back,” I told Ken mournfully.

Ken and Ben did a prodigious amount of work on our behalf. With minor assistance from me and lots of authoritative orders from Joyce, they emptied the garage, helped us identify boxes to bring into the house, give away or trash — and then put things back into much better order and help situate the copier in its new position near the back of the garage.

During the day, we filled two large bins and several cartons with throw-away stuff, gathered 20 cartons of software to donate to charity (after letting Ken and Ben take whatever they wanted) and unpacked close to two-dozen boxes full of books, paintings, video tapes and Joyce’s tureen and glass collections.

The garage isn’t quite ready for the H&G Channel, but the improvement is startling. Thanks largely to Ben & Ken’s near-superhuman efforts, there are many fewer boxes, all remaining cartons are next to aisles and the copier is positioned much more advantageously. Having friends who’ll do something like this is pretty wonderful; I’m humbly grateful and hope they feel I’ve been as good a friend to them.

Alone... All, All Alone

Little did I imagine, when I wrote the preceding section, that I would soon have the

dubious opportunity to experience a peculiar form of 21st Century isolation.

In retrospect, the technical problems began on September 10. Service interruptions, at first brief and merely annoying, escalated to major outages.

I'd developed a severe cold, but I was recovering well when we suddenly got a respite from Internet and phone problems. I couldn't resist the opportunity to use phone and email while they were working. I plunged into a frenzy of work, had a relapse and was about twice as ill as I'd been in the first place.

We finally got a service call from Cox on Saturday, September 25 – and learned that the problem was due to a bad installation job Cox did for our next-door neighbors. In process of setting them up, Cox damaged the connection from the street to our home. Besides telling us this news, the service call also knocked out phone and Internet completely. Too sick to leave the house and too fogged out by medicine to write much, I became keenly aware of how isolated I was during the four-and-a-half days leading up to the Cox service call that re-established the telephone and Internet connections to the rest of the world.

Several science fiction writers have written about the catastrophic effect of the sudden removal of the layer of modern technology that separates us from

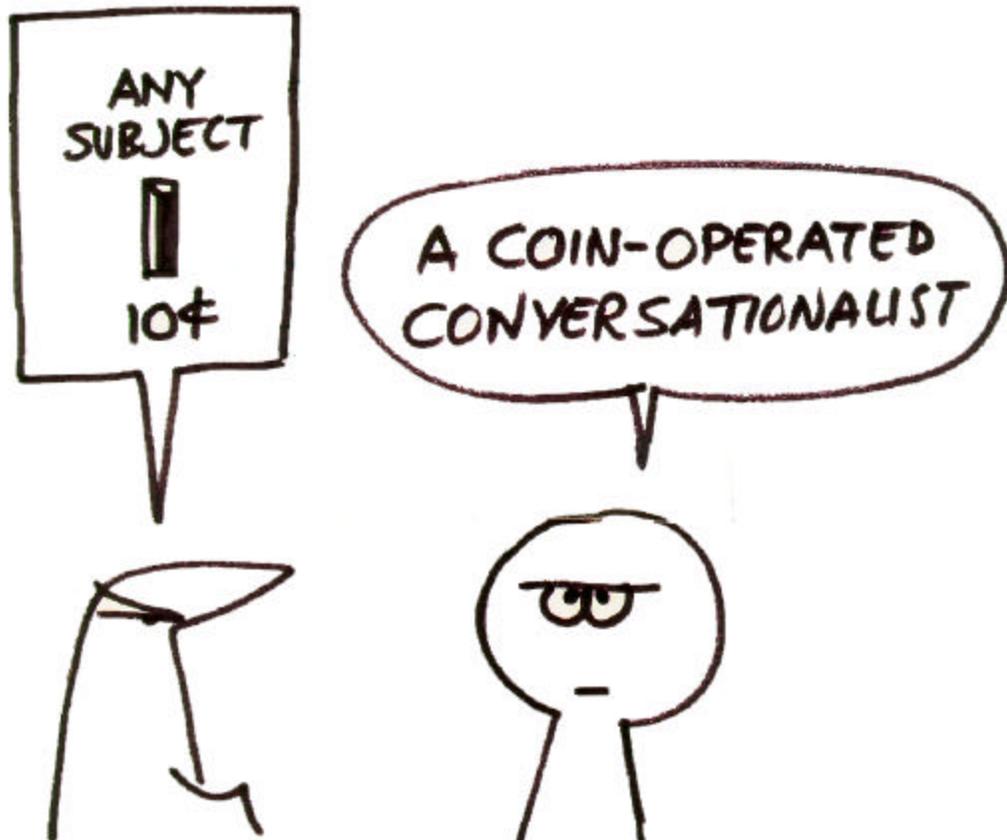
the beasts of the field (and some third world countries). I felt like I was living inside one of those novels, caught in an isolation zone while the rest of the world spun merrily.

Will they miss me? I wondered somewhat pathetically. With no calls or letters — we get almost no hard copy mail besides a few bills and ad circulars — life suddenly became a good deal grayer.

Fandom's Roguish Gallery

Writing about Ken and Ben's latest good deed reminds me of an extraordinarily nice thing rich brown did recently. He wrote an incredibly egoboosting letter about me to the Las Angeles fans who do the Fan Gallery site. (<http://scifiinc.net/scifiinc/gallery/list/>).

Rich pointed out the larger omissions in my fanography and said ridiculously nice things about *Quip*. I would repeat them here, except I'm not sure rich wasn't exaggerating for effect, trying to put me over with the gallery's selection committee. Besides, I want it to be fresh when you see it at the next Corflu, tattooed on my forehead/



I like the idea of an annotated Fan Gallery, a digital Walk of Fame. (We'd better do it quickly, too, before LASFS decides to sell spots on the sidewalk leading to the front door of their clubhouse.)

The actual implementation left me a bit puzzled. The entries seem to give as much, if not more, glory to low-level convention workers as to Fandom's most illustrious writers, artists and publishers.

I love to see fans justly rewarded with egoboo for their contributions. "Justly" is the operative word, because if Fandom is a meritocracy, then most of the accolades should go to those who are most deserving of it.

Remember the giantess in *The Enchanted Duplicator* who drowned fans with over=generous torrents of egg o' boo. Let us be lavish but not indiscriminate in the distribution of egoboo, but not

The desire to see egoboo go to merit leads to a series of questions as complex and they are controversial. The first, most basic, issue is: "What is fanac?"

The Very Same Rich Brown — note that the capitals on his name are entirely due to the Demmonesque use of Capital Letters — who sang my praises to the Fan Gallery folks, once told me, "Anything two fans do together is fanac."

That's a good premise for fandom's first amateur porn video, but rich's assertion is less a philosophical statement than something to tell stoned female fans on the way to a hotel room. Important as that is, I don't think "anything two fans do together is fanac" should be given the same credibility as "Fandom Is Just a Goddamn Hobby" or even "All Truth is Contained in Fanzines."

So what constitutes fan activity? Reading or watching science fiction doesn't make someone a fan. So those activities, however pleasurable, do not qualify as fanac. (Is watching a science fiction movie in the company of other fans fanac? Pick a side and argue away!) To turn that around, we could say that things that go beyond the primary source material — movie, book, magazine or

TV — are fanac.

That definition would probably see us through the vast majority of circumstances, but sticklers will want to add another element: connection in some form to some aspect of Fandom. If you and your next-door neighbor discuss *Battlefield Earth*, that is not fanac. It's just a conversation between two friends, though the same discussion at a local fan club or at a convention round table probably does qualify. Like the tree that falls in the forest, fanac that happens in total ignorance of and isolation from Fandom is not fanac.

To summarize, fanac is an activity that goes beyond mere perception of primary source material and is carried out in a fannish context. That's a pretty broad definition, to say the least. It means that making a bheer run for a fan party, stapling a convention progress report and playing in a baseball game at Corflu are all fanac. In truth, the definition comes perilously close to "Anything two fans do together is fanac."

That brings up a second, even more controversial question: Are there some forms of fanac that are more worthy of egoboo than others? In short, is there a hierarchy of fanac.

The temptation is to say that all forms of fanac are equal. That's a fine, egalitarian statement, but I am not sure it is entirely true.

I'm *not* talking about which type of fan activity is your favorite. People like what they like, usually for powerful psychological reasons, so every fan must be free to choose how to spend their fanning time. If working the registration desk at a convention is your favorite form of fanac, that's what you should be doing.

Nor is this about the *quality* of performance within any category of fanac. I'll leave it to better, or at least more judgmental, fans than me to say whether writing a bad fan article is better than giving a good speech at a local club.

If there is a hierarchy of fanac, it must be based on a set of standard. If one species of fanac is more worthy of egoboo than another, there has to be some basis for the judgment or it's just a way to prop up a favorite form of fanac.

There are many possible standards, but the one that makes the most sense (to me) is the standard of traditional science fiction fandom. The details of fandom and the participants change, but

the eternal fannish verities endure (more or less).

Each neofan makes a social contract with Fandom. Each of us has made a bargain with the sub-culture. The exact nature of the bargain varies, but each neo has implicitly agreed to do certain things to derive certain pleasures and satisfactions.

Fandom coalesced around an interest in the written word and, secondarily, discussion of the ideas contained in futuristic stories. That suggests that the purest fanac is related most closely to creativity and to discussion of intellectual content. (The Founding Fans didn't have the plethora of media we now enjoy, but I think they would be comfortable with widening fandom's focus beyond the written word.)

By that measure, the crowning fanac would be writing, drawing and publishing fanzines and websites, exhibiting in convention art shows, fan-oriented photography, filking, listservs, correspondence and con-related activities like putting together the program.

What's at the bottom of this hypothetical hierarchy? Well, some very important and necessary functions that facilitate actual creativity (in some cases): Collating, clerk and guide con-running jobs, party giving and serving as President of FAPA.

All are good and needful activities, but they are not the *raison d'être* for Fandom. They facilitate the "higher forms" of fanac, but it would not be Fandom if such activities were all we had.

Wouldn't it be nice if the Fan Gallery did things that way? .

The BBB Fund

The fund to bring Bruce Gillespie to the US for the 2005 Corflu and Potlatch conventions has largely moved from fundraising to firming up the elements of the actual trip. With \$4,200 in hand and more expected from sales of *The Incomplete Bruce Gillespie* and the auction, we've solved the money part of the equation.

The itinerary isn't set in stone yet, but it

looks like Bruce will visit both Los Angeles and Seattle as well as the Bay area for the two cons.

He won't be coming to Las Vegas, which we knew wasn't feasible going in, but I am hoping that a good number of current and recent Las Vegas fans will come to Corflu Titanium. Joyce and I are planning to be there.

Speaking of Corflu

My Corflu Blackjack report is available at efanazines.com, which is a good place to visit for free downloads of electronic fanzines (including this one). *Fanac Time in Glitter City* is somewhat more straightforward than some of my con report, though there are enough digressions to please fans of meandering prose.

Ken Forman and Ben Wilson, co-chairman of Corflu Blackjack, paid a surprise visit to Las Vegas for the October 4 Ve-grants meeting. I was getting ready to extol the virtues of *Fanac Time in Glitter City* to Ken, the Mainspring headed off my windy soliloquy with the revelation that he wants to put on another Corflu! And here I thought only Andy Hooper felt driven to do it all again.

Actually, both Andy and Ken will have my support if either decides to put in another Corflu bid. I enjoyed Corflu Blackjack and Corflatch tremendously and feel they've earned another shot if they want it. I've never objected to a good party and both sound like they would fill the bill.

I just think it's important to watch Ken (and Andy) for additional signs of craziness. This impetuous desire to run another Corflu is a Warning Sign we would be wise not to ignore.

Au Revoir

That's it for my part of this issue of *Flicker*, except for some responses in the letter column. See you all next issue, which might be sooner than you expect — or later than I plan.

— Arnie Katz

Hunting with April

SOUTH OF THE BORDER, IN OLE MEXICO

I've just come back from Mexico, where I faced Princess Sugey (Soo-hey) one of the top luchadoras, in a six-women tag for LLF and then 1-on-1 for AAA TV. Like in Puerto Rico, Mexican wrestling is real -- not sports entertainment -- so I spent much of my time off doing interviews and appearances for *ESPN Sports Zone* TV and radio.

And doing centerfold video shoots, but more on that later.

Day 1: Confirm with airline. Find out morning flight has been cancelled and move to later flight. Go to airport. Find out flight hasn't been paid for, go back home. Listen to promoter freak out about how flight *has* been paid for, damn the agency, and re-schedule for 4 am the next morning. Sleep for three hours, get up, do it again.



Day 2: On said flight. Unfortunately, I get one of three hells too often;



Stuck next to Incredibly Fat Person (so large they take up part of my seat too), Screaming Baby or chair in front of a Seat Kicker. This time it was

a Seat Kicker. I have a show in a few hours, with no sleep and not really knowing the language, I'll need to be on my toes.

Ain't gonna happen.

Every time I finally doze off, Brat pummels the seat. I ask him and his parents if they can please contain his enthusiasm. They oblige; the following flight I get Screaming Baby. Hope the rest of the tour goes better than this start...

Day 2 pt. 2: I go to baggage claim to see the belt finish rotating without my baggage on it. I'm panicking and ask the security what to do about a lost bag. They LAUGH at me and basically say (in Spanish) that I'm in Mexico now, so *speaks spanish*. Thanks, guys. Now I know what it's like to visit America.

I find someone who speaks English and he says that international baggage is in another area of the airport. There are zero signs explaining this. Luciano is there and takes me to get a steak. I like him already.

We head directly from there to the newspaper *El Sol* studio to do a photo shoot for Page 3. (The nudie page in most countries. In this one, it's just a sexy swimsuit page. I must say, we really miss out on this tradition here in the US of A.)

I have no makeup on and break my record for getting "photo shoot ready" in 35 minutes flat. Donning a teeny Colleen Kelly bikini made mostly of elastic and three quarter-sized patches of snakeskin print material, I'm in front of a camera with all my assets hanging out.

Pt 3: (This is a long day, huh?) It's hot. Really hot, like 100 degrees hot, but dry and breathable so no swamp-ass side effects. I'll



take this over 85 and humid in New England any day.

We head to the LLF venue, which is outside and not air conditioned. Nothing is. This is Mexico. I do a press conference for several magazines and TV, yet another thing I had no idea about. Still, it was cool and

the press spoke Ingles.

Later in the dressing room, I'm surrounded by a bunch of women who don't speak a word of English, all of them looking me up and down. Uncomfortable? Yes. In my opinion, you haven't truly experienced the wrestling business until you've experienced going to Japan, Mexico or any place where you are a total foreigner. You have to rely on yourself and adjust; this is why I have more respect for those who travel. It's a petrifying experience at times that tests what you're made of. I had a year of Spanish and my Gram speaks Italian, which is similar, but I don't know enough of the language to really converse.

In the "bathroom" (a sectioned off closet area with a toilet and a towel hung up for privacy), there was water -- at least I *think* it was water -- everywhere except for the sink. While I was squatting to pee, a large cockroach came out of nowhere, heading straight for my foot. F'k that! Clearly, I was trespassing. I cut it off and hightailed back to the dressing room.

I was in a six-way tag with Linda Starr (who I'd seen on plenty of Japanese tapes) and Miss Janeth, another vet. The women wrestle well into their 40's. Once they become older, they're turned "bad" and are used to bring younger talent up. Mexicans have a thing for tomato juice and beer mixed together. It was offered to me and I thought it rude to refuse, but





matches on TV and decided to try and change that.

He has combined forces with AAA, and his theme is to take the talented Mexican female luchadoras and pair them with the American and Canadian beauties for a product that is different. So far, the fans seem to be loving it.

Pt 4: I'm hot, tired and smell like a brewery. I've been up for 24 hours and only had three hours' sleep the previous day. I want air conditioning, a shower and bed.

Well, the promoter and his wife take me to an apartment they rented for the girls. It was a nice place, but... no toilet paper, soap, towels, phone or air conditioning. They had forgotten to stock it.

I think it's an acquired taste. We faced Princess Sugey, the Bride of Jason (hockey mask and all) and The Witch.

All the matches are two out of three falls. After I made Sugey submit for the first fall, I got my ass royally kicked. It turned into a street fight, where I was rammed repeatedly into a garage door outside, then tossed onto a table. Oh, and I got two beers dumped on my head. Yummy. 37 sweaty, gravel-stuck-to-cerveza minutes later, Sugey's team won. Despite half my ass being left on the street, the fans (who were pretty damn great) mobbed us afterwards.

Mexico is not really familiar with WWE at all, because they're not on TV there. Fans there do know the fallen WCW and their own federations well. Wrestling is the second-most-popular sport on TV, after soccer and baseball, which are tied.

LLF (Lucha Libre Femenil) started when Luciano noticed there were few women's

Is this too diva-ish? I did the best I could with what I had. Put my beer-soaked hair in a pony tail, took a cold shower with shampoo, used my pillow

case as a towel and opened all the windows (which had steel bars on them).

At 3:00 am, I was on the bottom floor and freaking out. I tried to sleep, but couldn't. With the windows and sliding door open and no phone... I keep jumping when I hear any little noise.

Now I'm totally paranoid I'd end up raped or something and no one would even know. I found the metal bar that goes into the sliding door track and slept with that in my hand. No sleep anyway, I had to be ready by 9 am for an appearance.

Day 3: 9 am radio show for sports radio. I don't understand a damn thing/ They speak so quickly. Everywhere I go, people are laughing at me for not being able to speak Spanish. While I'm



gone, Luciano had a guy fix the air conditioning and got me towels, soap and stuff. Yay! After a round of real Mexican tacos - really freaking good, I might add - I'm back home for the afternoon. Nap, washed the beer out of my hair, ah, feel better.

The apartment really is big and nice with an amazing private courtyard out back. White leather couch, big open shower, all the Mexican colors, a bar... It looks like something I'd use for a location photo shoot.

Hmmm... wait... I have clothes and a video camera

and I already have my makeup on... Let's shoot! (This turned out so well, I'm going offer a full centerfold video, *From Mexico with Love*, for sale very soon for "over 18"s.

The men, despite most are shorter than me, are absolutely *not* intimidated by me in the least. Unlike American men. (Maybe the balls grow bigger there?) The guys look at you like they want to eat you up and the women like they want to kill you.

The magazines told me they haven't seen the combination of strong *and* beautiful, that they love it and that's why I'm unique in wrestling. Aw... flattery will get ya everywhere. (Well, not really.)

Part 2: 11 pm Saturday night and I'm off to Club El Volcan to do a promotional appearance. Wow, cowboy hats are alive and kicking in this country. I think I was the only person not wearing one. I announced the AAA/LLF show at the Coliseo, but when I said (in Spanish) that I didn't speak much Spanish, I almost got booed off stage. Note to self: take language course A.S.A.P. I finished my promo (en crappy espanol), the DJ saved my ass and pride, and we brought some people up on stage to dance with. I'm done, wanna go home, hafta be up early for something else I just found out about...



Day 4: 9 am ESPN Sports Zone TV show. Did the interview and afterwards, the host told me that I "really should learn Spanish." Yeah, I know. I'm really tired. Nap for me. Ohmigawd, a huge cockroach near my suitcase! Stomp. F-ck he's still alive!!! Stomp, stomp... still moving... stomp... aaaaaargghhhh, Riverdance, mutherf*cker! Crunch. Flush. Ick.

5 p.m. Off to the Coliseo. I took a bottle of frozen water with

me in case it wasn't air conditioned. "Air conditioning?" Luciano laughs. "No."

Of course. It's only 102 today. Why would I think there would be air conditioning in a public building that hosts strenuous athletic events?

I wrestled Princess Sugey (w/ The Witch) and won via DQ when they ganged up on me. When the ref's back was turned, Witch (Bitch) threw a beer at me, totally blinding me. Lemme tell ya, that stuff stings when it gets in your eyes, so I'm glad they finally got caught. It was maybe a thousand degrees in there and the fans didn't care. They also mobbed the dressing room, impatiently waiting outside for the wrestlers.

More yummy Mexican food and I get to sleep a full night. Sort of.

Day 5: Up early for my flight, going home with lots of pictures and hot video, yay! Thanks to LLF for the opportunity, I loved it and they treated me very well.

--April Hunter

Find out more about April, and see even more eye-popping photos at her new refurbished site: <http://www.aprilhunter.com>

The Readers Speak

SIGNALS IN THE DISTANCE

Mark Plummer

I wouldn't dream of assuming that your call for 'a special effort by leading fans' (*Flicker #3*) was directed at somebody like me, but I wanted to drop you a line anyway because even though I'm still in several respects an off-line fan I can see much of merit in your comments in 'Here Comes the Iceberg'. I do however have slightly different conclusions.

I'd certainly agree with you that one or more 'backbone' fanzines of the kind you describe -- 20-30 pages, monthly or bimonthly, wide circulation within the community -- is a desirable state. For me, it's pretty much a *theoretical* ideal rather than being a Golden Age which I experienced and to which I'd like to see us revert, because I think I came in on a fanzine scene where it was already difficult from an economic standpoint to produce such publications. The only examples I personally experienced were the back-end of the run of *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk*, the first few issues of *Attitude*, and of course *Wild Heirs*. (I'm probably slighting somebody else horribly here.) But even without much first-hand experience I certainly agree that it would be a Good Thing to see again and while it's almost certainly not viable for anybody to do it in hard-copy form it should be perfectly possible in the efanzines medium.

This, though, is the point at which I

think -- if I'm reading you right -- that you've got the argument backwards. It seems to me that it's less that people don't produce frequent efanzines because readers don't respond to the medium, and more that readers don't respond because people don't produce frequent efanzines.

You suggest elsewhere that it may be the case that response rates are declining generally, while noting that for efanzines it's particularly poor. We, as a community, are getting out of the habit. Why is this? After all, email should make the mechanics of response easier. I'd suggest it because of the relative infrequency of publication.

Looking at the UK, because that's the scene I know best, there is *Emerald City* -- depending on whether you regard that as British -- which is an efanzine that appears monthly, but it's not relevant to the discussion here simply because it doesn't publish letters. There is *Ansible* which also appears monthly (and is also something of a special case), and *Erg* which was appearing quarterly although I suspect it's distribution wasn't all that extensive and it's now ceased anyway. Everybody else -- and I suppose I should say that I'm also discounting fanzines intended primarily for APA distribution -- publishes at a frequency below quarterly, with most people running at one or two issues a year.

This has got to be a disincentive to letter

writers. I would like to think that when I write a letter to a fanzine I am responding to the editor and, where applicable, the other contributors; if the editor wishes to share that response with the readership via a letter column, well, sure that's fine, but that's not the primary purpose. However a lot of people do want and expect to see their letters in print, which is fair enough if they've sunk a fair bit of effort and work into it, yet they know that a letter to a fanzine that appears at best biannually may well be pretty much nonsensical to the readers by the time it is printed -- seriously, I've seen a few of my letters published six to twelve month (or more) after writing them and I've got no idea what I was on about -- while also having to deal with the uncertainty over whether it will be published at all because at the typical modern publishing schedule it's kinda tricky to tell whether a given publication is still a going concern.

I wonder therefore if what we actually need is a frequent publication, one of these 'backbone' fanzines that you talk about, to get us back into the habit. I'm slightly worried here that what follows is a What-You-Should-Do-Is argument, the sort of thing fans do so well and so annoyingly, but what I think somebody should do is start a backbone on-line fanzine, something that's substantial and frequent and at least primarily distributed electronically. This does require commitment of editorial effort, if not commitment of editorial finances. The editor may need to be prepared to wait for response to build, maybe several months and several issues. He or she may have to seed a some printable letters, perhaps specifically asking a few prominent names -- ideally people who don't usually write letters to efanazines -- to write and to help to engender the sense that There's Something Going On Around Here. Essentially, I'm suggesting that we need an If You Build It They Will Come approach to fanzine production, rather than waiting until you've sold some tickets before you start building the thing in the first place.

Arnie: *I have to agree that your theory about*

response is as tenable as mine. Probably, it's a mixture of both. Fans have not yet become used to responding to digitally distributed fanzines and the lack of a group of electronic fanzines has retarded the development of that response habit.

Flicker does have a print edition as well as electronic distribution. I send every issue through FAPA and also give/send some copies, too. And in the long run, posting online may well give readers' letters a longer life-span than they are likely to have in hard copy form.

Robert Lichtman settles accounts

A little late for a complete letter of comment on *Flicker No.3*, but I can't leave some comment hooks unaddressed....

First, the figures you provided for the cost of paper fanzines. You give the example of a 30-page zine done in 200 copies costing \$600 at Kinko's then-current price and that "most fans would be hard pressed to get that 30-page fanzine copied for less than \$400."

Since your 30-page example is equivalent to the last two issues of *Trap Door* that were 60 half-sized pages, I guess we here in the greater Bay Area are just plain lucky. Those two issues were done at Krishna Copy in Berkeley much more reasonably than that. I was quoted 2.9 cents per side, plus a little extra for the colored paper used on the cover, plus sales tax, for a total bill -- I have it in front of me here -- of \$241.13. It cost more than that to mail them out, of course, thanks in large part to the postal service's usurious rates to deliver to non-U.S. addresses.

Your figure of \$1.20 apiece to mail that 30-page fanzine domestically is a little on the high side, by the way. TRAP DOOR costs 83 cents apiece to mail within the U.S., \$1.10 to Canada, and anywhere from \$2.30 to \$2.60 elsewhere depending on location. But your \$550 per issue total is pretty close to the mark for my fanzine.

I'll be doing somewhat better next issue -

- which will be out pretty soon -- because I've struck up a friendship with the copy shop in Santa Rosa that does all the work for my employer. They're going to give me a 2.5-cent rate *and* the sales tax is 1.25 percent lower in Sonoma County than in Alameda County. And thank ghod the postal rates haven't gone up again, yet!

Arnie: *I'll bet a lot of fans have gone green with envy over your print costs., The price you quoted is less than it would cost me to do it for you. Very possibly, there are other parts of the country in which similar bargains are available, but I'll bet most fans use Kinkos or equivalent.*

You said, correctly, that two issues of Trap Door equal one 30-page, standard-size fanzine such as I described. If it costs you 83 cents to mail one copy of Trap Door, then isn't my \$1.20 a copy for the 30-pager fairly close to the mark?

Specific numbers aside, doesn't empirical evidence suggest that the cost of doing a fanzine precludes a hard copy monthly or bi-monthly of 20-30 pages for most fans?

You mention me as a "happy exception, a classic fanzine fan who treats electronic fanzines with the same respect as the ink-and-paper variety." I like electronic fanzines because they're waste-free. That is, I get a number of paper fanzines in the mail that I don't keep but instead pass them on to Dave Rike, who does ghod-knows-what with them. With electronic fanzines, I only print the ones I want in permanent form. I also save them electronically on CDs for future possible reprinting and general archiving purposes. The ones in which I have no interest simply remain on Bill Burns' efanzines site.

I have to question your statement that "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." This simply isn't true, and one of the shortcomings of FAPA in recent years is that mailing

comments aren't universally offered up. In the current (August) mailing, for instance, only 18 of the 34 fanzines in the mailing offer any mailing comments, and not all of them are complete sets. This is actually better, I should add, than the situation some years ago when the mailing comment was close to being an endangered species in FAPA. And it's not to say that those other publications aren't, for the most part, worthy of one's attention. Considering the size of the mailings and the range of membership, FAPA is an interesting scene these days with less crud than in some years past.

April's column was enjoyable, both the text and the illustrations, but no comment hooks this time around. Well, one -- that link you provided didn't work.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful," you muse, "if someone emulated Bill Burns' efanzines.com, but with classic fanzines?" This is happening to some extent at...

http://fanac.org/fanzines/Classic_Fanzines.html

...where there's quite a list of them available.

Unfortunately for those of us who like the look and feel of the old zines, many of them are typed-up text (all egoboo to Judy Bemis for the work involved). But just this week Joe Siclari announced that Rotsler's MASQUE No. 7 (a huge issue with lots of terrific stuff) and half a dozen issues of Joel Nydahl's Vega are now lodged there. These are scans of individual pages. Today I copied the 24 pages of VEGA No. 5, put them in a WordPerfect file full-page size, and printed out a copy because I didn't already have that issue.

Another site that's worthwhile is...

<http://www.midamericon.org/tucker/currentlez.htm>

...where digital photos of numerous issues of Tucker's fanzine are available. These are of variable quality because they are shot from his own file copies, which were hardbound and cannot be unbound for scanning purposes. But most of them are of sufficient quality that they can be read, downloaded, and printed -- and Keith Stokes, whose project it is, says that his tech-

nique has improved and he will eventually go back and redo the more fuzzy/blurry issues. The first twenty issues are all there, plus eleven others between Nos. 21 and 38 - and also the four issues of *eZombie* Bob did in 2000 and 2001.

In my letter in *FLICKER* No. 3 I wrote that "I'm not an Associate Member of First Fandom, although sometimes I think about it. Nor am I a member of The Fossils, although I qualify under its rules as well." This past month I remedied the first listed by joining First Fandom, and now that Ken Faig has taken over the editorship of THE FOSSIL I'm thinking of joining that group as well.

Chris Garcia makes his *Flicker* debut

I must say a fantastic little piece of work you have managed to put out. I've been scratching around as a wrestling writer off and on for a few years now and can remember April Hunter back in the day, when she made a date for an interview, only to stand me up due to getting a better gig, which I can't blame her for. Her stories are always fantastic, a trait which we in the wrestling journalism biz love her for, and it's great to see her writing in your pages.

It's sad to see another of the Sacred Sites of Fandom go. I started a tour in the mid-1990s looking for the most important (and often former) sites of fandom. The places still surviving at the time, like The Ackermansion, Claremont Hotel, and the LASFS building were easy and fun trips, though too many of them were journeys to the parking lot that used to be The Booby Hatch, or the new sub-division that was once the LA Fan Hilton. It's always a sadness to me, a history nut, to see places which such significance to fandoms go into eternity.

Must say your views on the future of fanzine publishing are a little dire, but I can't argue with them. There was a statement at a conference in London by an early net library guy saying that someday there would be no books sold in print, merely available for

download. Most laughed at this but one of the guys in the audience, believed to have been either John Brunner or homebrewer and 1970s computational philosopher Mike Wishelton (they looked exactly alike and both hung around once in a while with various Xerox PARC people before they died within six months of each other) said "Nah, books will stay around. Newspapers will die completely, but magazines will fight for survival before being left to the last ten humans with working mimeograph machines." I've met several people who were there and half of them said it was Brunner, half Wishelton. Still, the sentiment always felt just about right once I realized exactly where the internet was heading. Having grown up with my Dad's copies of various late 60s and early 70s fanzines, I still prefer the small of the paper, but love the fact that they won't clutter my house like the old ones did for my dad.

I hope to get a chance to meet you at the up-coming Corflu in SF. If you've got a chance, come down and visit the Computer History Museum. I'd be happy to give ya a personal tour.

***Arnie:** I really, really love the idea of a tour of famous and notorious fanhistorical landmarks. Imagine a busload of visiting fans tooling around Los Angeles, San Francisco or Los Angeles as your trusty guide points out the slanshacks, meeting places and more. "On your left is where the topless club stood where Ardis Waters wrestled in the nude!"*

Alas, Las Vegas doesn't have nearly as much fanhistory as the more established fan centers. Maybe we could work up some kind of site attraction based on an authentic recreation of Dwain Kaiser's bedroom.

Lloyd Penney stares back

I downloaded *Flicker* 3 a little while ago, and of course, it got lost in the clutter of the desktop. At least it was still there, staring me in the face, and snarling, "Loc me already!"

I'm a basic chickenheart, so here's a loc to save my face.

Arnie: *It's funny that you would use the phrase "save my face." I've been thinking of starting a campaign to foster increased response to **Flicker** with the slogan: "Send a LoC and nobody gets hurt." Well, the wording may need a little tweak or two.*

*Meanwhile, thank you for rescuing **Flicker** from your pile of kipple.*

The average fan likes to keep busy, to keep his crifanac levels high. The BBBF does that. I wish I could contribute, but I am perpetually unemployed, and even a quarter is an extravagance.

I hope Joyce's recovery has been swift. I remember the car accident we were in coming home from the Friday night of the last Toronto Ditto...Yvonne still has the odd twinge from the wrist she broke.

I have noticed that this year, there aren't as many zines coming to me via the paper-mail than in previous years, and when it comes to ezines, there aren't as many of them, either. Clubzines are getting scarce, even those who are ezines or .pdfs.

I used to correspond with the club in Melbourne, Australia, and they'd send me copies of their clubzine *Ethel the Aardvark*. I've been getting it in the mails for more than 15 years, but no more. Clubs have to fight apathy more than ever now. I hope the Southern Fandom Confederation still produces their Bulletin... haven't seen it in a while. I like clubzines; it shows there are levels of fanac some of us don't suspect are there.

Arnie: *Your statement surprises me, because I've had the impression that there are more fanzines, total, now than in recent years. I suppose we'll have to wait for the Sage of Glen Ellen to do his annual count in **Trap Door**, but the total should be pretty high when ezines are added.*

I agree that the composition of the field has undergone a shift. The larger clubzines are, indeed, getting scarcer and there are

*also fewer genzines like **Chunga** and **Smokin' Rockets**. There are a lot of one-fan shows, especially coming from the UK. I've always enjoyed the "group effort" feel of a fanzine with a range of contributors. (I might not be doing **Flicker** if I wasn't already involved in such a fanzine, **Crazy from the Heat**.)*

Joyce told me in some emails a while ago that one of the problems many faneds see is lack of response to electronic zines. I make it a point to do so, but I can't fill the loc by myself. Others have to respond, too.

Some faneds want more than just a letter of comment, but it's about all I can do now. I am still jobhunting, and my time has to be spent slaving over a hot jobsite or two or nine, or two hundred. There are that many places for me to look.

I would like nothing better than to print out the ezines I get, but the paper and cartridges to do so cost more than I can afford. So, zines go in a folder on my desktop called Zines To Print, and I expect they will be burned onto a CD-R at some point, and probably printed at a future employer's expense.

Arnie: *The development of ever-cheaper printers will help, eventually, but the situation you describe seems fairly common at the present time. Fans have to allocate their personal resources carefully when acquiring ezines, so they have to be choosy about which fanzines they actually print.*

With so many electronic fanzines posted in one spot, efanazines.com, clutter could become a real danger as the number of titles multiplies. That, in turn, could make it harder for fans who don't already have a reputation to find an audience. It's a lot easier to get a fan to open an envelope containing a hard copy fanzine than to get a fan to search out and download an unfamiliar title.

Fanzine reviews may gain a new importance as guides to the numerous electronic fanzines pouring onto the Internet. I've started a review column for David Burton's

fanzone **Catchpenny Gazette**, which I hope will help a little.

The America George Dubya knows is one of paranoia and distrust, one of attacking before one is attacked, one of soldiers dying to bank accounts can be padded, one allies can't trust, one where due process and personal liberties are withheld in the name of national security, where prisoners are held incommunicado in prisons around the world, where the press abandons their objectivity for hyper-patriotism in the name of increased ratings.

I don't think this is the America anyone wants, American or non-American. I sincerely hope Americans will exercise their franchise, and replace the most powerful idiot on the face of the earth with anyone else who is running for the job.

As a Canadian, I think John Kerry may not turn out to be our friend, but he does seem to have his head on his shoulders, and he may return the world to a saner and more honest level. We'd all appreciate it, and we all need it. (Good thing No Award or No Preference aren't on the presidential ballot, hm?)

Arnie: *It mystifies me how there can be so many people who categorize themselves as "undecided" when it comes to this Presidential election. We've sometimes been asked to choose between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, but if there's one thing that Kerry and Bush offer America, it's a very well-defined choice.*

I have been asked by a few people if I might be interested in joining FAPA... I think there would be one or two people who would not like to see me there. However, there are many members who send me their FAPAzines as a perzine, and I respond to them with locs. Just got **Feline Mewsings 17** from R-Laurraine Tutihasi yesterday. That's probably my most affordable level of involvement. Besides, it has been some years since I put together an apazine.

Arnie: *As vice president of FAPA, I do not have the power to shanghai fans into the group, but I do urge you to re-consider the idea of becoming a member. While receiving, and repsonding to, individual FAPAzines is fun (and admirable), there are special pleasures associated with being part of the group and participating in its multi-pathed conversations (mailing comments, to be slightly more prosaic.)*

Hello, April...I haven't seen Fahrenheit 9/11, but I'd like to. Michael Moore put his own spin on things, but everyone does that, and his message was the same as many others... Dubya is the worst thing to happen to the USA since 9/11, and his lying and bullshit is pulling the whole world down, and hurting the USA in the eyes are all.

I don't watch the news services of ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and definitely not Fox, where I'm just a northern wetback from Canuckistan. However, the CBC has kept an admirable level of objectivity, and the BBC has done the same.

My loc...Yvonne and I made some hard decisions... No more Worldcons. No more distant SF conventions. No more working on convention committees, which means we resigned from the Toronto Bouchercon committee.

I went a little further...I unsubscribed to almost all Yahoo! Groups, and the SMOFS list. My fanac is now attending local cons, hitting the monthly pub nights, and loccing zines. Yvonne has gone in another direction...she has gotten much further into space advocacy, is the Canadian representative for the X Prize Foundation, attended the big NASA Centennial Challenges conference in Washington, and plans to go to Vancouver shortly for the annual International Astronautics Conference. (Plus a day at V-Con.)

Arnie: *Thanks for the great letter, Lloyd — and thank you all for reading Flicker. I should be back with another issue before year's end.*

