

Hard Science TALES

Eighth Issue

It's painful how people become so confounded over questions of the Hereafter, and develop such unique attitudes toward Heaven and Hell. It's clear that bringing a little True Science to the examination of death and destiny could unzip many mysteries, so I've decided to Enlighten You All today. (Pause now for applause. Or applesauce.)

Being impressed at an early age both by religious philosophy and Alfred Hitchcock, I quickly realized that the mind has great powers and will fill the White Light Tunnel with the images it wants to see there. In the tentmaker's words, we all create our own Heaven and Hell, not too unlike the way the Voodoo victim creates his own torments.

Obviously, it's constructed according to what we each believe, and bestows on us what we each think we deserve. And, scratch us, or throw us in the foxhole, and we all revert to our earliest lessons about destiny, so create our visions according to our most basic beliefs.

Then, as explained in many stories, during our final moments before the light goes out, our time stretches into eternity, and we live forever with the rewards we've selected for ourselves.

Pure science. I'm sure it's clear to you all now.

Couple this with the belief that I cannot be happy if there's someone else suffering in Hell, and it means you can all count on eternal life in my



Heaven, along with all the animals I want there, too. And, to insure that great reward, you can send me \$1 to make certain I'll keep you in my mind, to enjoy those eternal pleasures.

JoHn Hardin has contributed his dollar, and is the first guaranteed recipient of my promise of Eternal Salvation. Who'll be next?

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How I Found Fandom, part 6

We were talking about my long slow trip into Fandom, from that dusty attic in Poplar Bluff, MO, to the used books store in Hollywood, to the science fiction shelf in a St. Louis hole where I met Jim Hall.

The truth is that Ray Fisher wasn't anxious to reenter the microcosm. He'd learned his first sad lessons about life in fandom, when G.M. Carr and Russell K. Watkins, and their Crusade to Clean Up Fandom got his zine **Odd** banned from the mail. Ray had published a Ray Nelson cartoon showing the nebbish looking into a funhouse mirror, and seeing a magnified vision of himself. The cartoon was captioned "Man and His God." That was his offense. Max Keasler published an item that said "heroin inside," or "lick this spot" or something in that line. Both were forbidden to mail future copies of their zines from the Poplar Bluff post office.

Ray's Dad helped him get the last issue into the mail, by carrying it to a neighboring town, but felt it was time for him to quit. Keasler's folks were more supportive, and Keasler continued for a while after changing **Opus** to **Fanvariety**. But both young men had seen the clay feet of fandom.

(Years later, when his dad died, Ray found a newspaper clipping in his father's wallet, about the boy's publishing accomplishments. It was a revelation to learn his dad was proud of him.)

Ray had also been disappointed in his own reception in fandom. Though only a teenager, he was used to being called a Whiz Kid, or Orson Welles, and in general lauded for great accomplishment. And he really worked at **Odd**. Being so young, he had little patience for waiting to acquire accolades.. Then Keasler got active, took a different tact, easy-going and laid-back, and was enormously popular. Ray dreaded a repeat of the same disappointments (even though at his older age, it was unlikely because of his adult skills.)

So, when I'd now and then push him to try to find fandom, he'd write to some old friend. And he was never too disappointed when the letters came back marked "moved away."

I already said how Jim introduced me to his son David, and how David called the meeting of the group that became the Ozark Science Fiction Association (OSFA). And like any eager youth, the next words out of his mouth were "Let's have a

convention!"

With little humility and no understanding at all of our small import to the larger fan world, David suggested we invite a Really Big Name Fan to be our guest of honor — Ted White. In a true sense, it was Ted who ushered the group through the door into real fandom.

It's time for a small digression, to discuss that mysterious and long-absent fellow who had such impact on my life, David Hall.

If memory serves, Dave was 17 or 18 when we met, a senior in high school Tall, but puffy like risen dough, long ragged fingernails, black uncombed longish hair and blazing eyes that seemed unable to focus on anything for more than a moment, his appearance was that of thousands of mid-1960s teens. He wasn't yet a rebel, but not of his own world, either. Mercurial and high-strung, he had moments of brilliance, and sometimes, hours of frustrating childishness.

He immediately became a good friend. He'd come up to St. Louis from Crystal City, his home town about 30 miles south, after school and on weekends — a nearly constant guest in the Fisher apartment. He'd usually rage through the door waving a fist full of some just-received zine, then often would sit down at the typer to vent an intemperate burst of scorn on the unfortunate editor.

Most of the zines were from Apa-45, and often filled with the same kind of juvenile rants — I recall that he and Richie Benyo were oil-and-water to each other and fought through the pages of many impassioned, long-forgotten, crudzines.

Or, he'd sit for long hours over cups of hot tea, discussing the possibility of other worlds, other lives. Or stomp up and down through the tiny rooms, shouting his anger about the steadily increasing horrors of war in Vietnam.

Sometimes he'd produce incredibly long epic poems about the Fimbulwinter, and dragons and knights-in-armor, fair maidens to save, and injustices to halt. They waved their banners between the borders of awful and intolerable, with occasional turns of phrase that impressed me with potential.

He had a gift for topics. He named a Lord of the Ring zine **Mathom**, then bored of it and gave it to someone else. He published **Sirruish**, the club's official genzine, but tired swiftly and turned it over to someone else. With Dave, it was always

something new, and never time to acquire any polish before he'd shift his attention again.

Gradually we became aware that he was even more of a troubled youth than we'd first imagined. After Jim Hall made such a fool of himself at the first Ozarkon, he didn't come around so much, but there was steadily increasing friction between the two. It seemed a relief when David went away to Missouri University, where he planned to room with Hank Luttrell. But he apparently suffered a mental breakdown from being away from home, and took to his bed, refusing to leave. Eventually the Halls drove to Columbia and took him home, fairly well reduced to a basket case.

As the months passed, Jim Hall grew more and more irrational. One weekend Dave astounded us all with the announcement that Jim had committed his wife to the State Insane Asylum in Farmington, MO. Missouri allowed a family member to commit another with no collaboration, so Jim had done it in a fit of pique. Dave went to a counselor who'd been kind to him in high school, and after two or three weeks of red tape, was able to get his mom released.

A couple weeks later, word reached us that Jim had done it again, this time committing David to the institution. His mom was too terrified to do anything. Ray and I and the rest of the local fans worked together to get him out, convincing a judge of the father's wrong headedness.

Time runs together after over 40 years, so I can't pin down the exact sequence of events. But after the break with his parents, David came to St. Louis. At first he stayed with friends, moving from one to another. But eventually he did what so many others were doing in the late 1960s — he turned on and dropped out.

In his particular case, this meant moving to Gaslight Square, a café-coffee house-bar-filled area down on Olive Street, the counter-cultural center of town. He hung out in the clubs, took whatever handouts he could get, slept in the doorways, and slipped deeper into a miserable existence of willful poverty and deliberate degradation.

It was Mickey Rhodes, the artist, who pulled him out of it. He picked Dave up off the Square, took him to his own apartment, cleaned him up, and held him there for several weeks without letting him return to the streets. I think he saved Dave's

life; I don't think Dave could have endured for much longer without this rescue.

Vindalf the Wine-Maker Consults the Oracle

(excerpt) by Dave Hall

*He locked the gates,
The gates of his castle,
And left them to squabble in the snow;
And he rode to the Oracle
Of the Seven Great Towers.
He rode to the East through the snow,
To ask whether the gods listened,
To ask whatever god might listen,
Which side should Vindalf take
In the battle that came....*

*And to him came this answer,
As he stood in prayer at the altar;
To him came this answer,
As he stood in the house of the Horned God:
Do not trouble thyself,
For you will not be at Ragnarok.*

(originally published in Odd #16)

We'd go weeks, even months, not seeing him — I think he traveled around a lot during this period. Then he'd pop in, filled with the same kind of hyper-enthusiasm he'd had before. We'd welcome him back, feed him as much as he'd accept, and try to keep him interested as long as possible. Then he'd wander off again.

As life treated him worse, his childish joy of life turned to anger and belligerence toward everything that reeked of authority. Sooner or later, he even turned against Ray. There was one dreadful afternoon he came roaring into the apartment, determined to punch out his former mentor and friend. I don't recall what sparked it, but I leaped between the two, and snatched the eyeglasses off Dave's face. (I figured he wouldn't be able to see to strike Ray, and I knew Ray wouldn't hurt the boy. Later Dave thanked me, because he thought I was trying to keep his glasses from breaking.)

I believe it was after Baycon in 1968 that he showed up with a woman, introduced her as his wife. I don't remember her name — but although they'd only been married a day or two earlier, she spent the afternoon trying to get another of our guests to take her off to New York. It was clear

that her affection for Dave was limited, at best.

The pair got involved with some Stranger in a Strange Land nests, and within a month or so, the girl had split for other sources. Dave next became involved with Tim Zell's cult, which eventually evolved into the Church of All Worlds. There wasn't much stability in his life.

Ray and I divorced, and I left St. Louis in 1970. When I returned for a visit in the winter of 1972-3, I arranged to see all the old gang. But there was a blizzard the night Arnie and I were there. Traffic stopped; the hoped for reunion didn't happen. But Dave drove over 30 miles through the storm, to the airport motel where we were, the only one of the group who did. I was overjoyed to see him.

He was unkempt, hair about to his waist, Zig-Zag Man beard about the same length. But his mind was clear, and it was a great visit.

I never saw him again. But we did stay in touch. He moved west, and I always sent him our zines. Once every year or so, I'd get a letter from him. But they seldom brought good news when they arrived. Once in a while there'd be a publication; usually some almost illegible political rant. As time passed, the legibility improved, but not his content. But that phase passed, and later he mostly did fanzines that reprinted little-known pieces of prose by nearly-forgotten writers.

time visiting with Avram Davidson during his final months in the hospital. That was good of him.

He also maintained contact with Ray Fisher and his wife Janie, whom Dave had introduced to Ray, and visited them in Galveston extensively. It was Dave who let me know when Ray's illnesses became severe, and encouraged us to talk to each other again. I've always been grateful for that.

But as the years passed, his letters to me grew more and more disapproving of my participation in fandom, and specifically in fannish fandom. His reproaches became accusations, and his disapproval graduated to anger.

The last letter I had from Dave told me he was disgusted with my fannishness, and if he ever saw another envelope with my return address, he'd have me arrested for harassment. He told me I'd wasted my life and my talents writing humor, and that I should be doing something worthwhile, like archiving forgotten masterpieces of fiction. He told me he hated me, and what I had become.

And we never communicated with each other again.

Last year I learned that Dave Hall is dead. Apparently he died not long after that last letter. I don't know what killed him, nor where he is buried, nor if he died in pain and sorrow. I hope not.

You may well ask why I'd bother to preserve

his history, to call his fan career to your attention. It's because I want him to be remembered. I'm glad there are people out there who cared for him, who admired his archival work, who befriended him.

Dave Hall got me into fandom. He was my first fan friend. And I'll always remember him for that burning energy, that burst of enthusiasm as he was when we first met, leaping onto a tabletop to say "We'll have a

I know a little about his final years. In addition to archiving antique writings, David spent a lot of

convention" and "Let's ask Ted White to come." (memoirs to be continued.)



Letters:

Hank Luttrell:

You mentioned that you wondered what happened to some of the other people in Columbia (Missouri) fandom. I'm a bit depressed to have to report that many have passed away...Doug Carroll, James Turner, Terry Hughes.

One that is still very much alive is Creath Thorne. Creath and I have been emailing each other for the last few months, trying to stay in touch a bit more often. In fact, I got a note from him this morning. The last time we touched base, he expressed curiosity about current fanzine publishing, and while I was of the opinion that much of this kind of creative juice goes into blogs and discussion boards, I pointed him toward some fanzine sites.

He was surprised to have found a fanzine article by Arnie about gafia, which said that Creath had completely gafiated after being snubbed by me at St.Louiscon. Creath said this wasn't true. Creath was an important part of the Columbia Golden Years, 1969-71, we all hung out together, publishing fanzines like nuts. Must have been somebody else I snubbed. ... St.Louiscon was sort of my honeymoon, you'll recall. I may have been preoccupied. Arnie even pointed out that I was one of the convention organizers. I'm sure my role was minor, but that doesn't mean I felt it was, and that may have also contributed to my distraction.

You know, I always thought I was a friendly guy, warm and fuzzy. But I've learned that many people don't see me that way. In the seventies a business associate of mine told a mutual friend that he found me "cold and aloof." I was shocked when that news got back to me. But with age comes insight, sometimes, and it has dawned on me that, in fact, I am often cold and aloof. I think this is probably a function of being shy.

That story keeps going 'round, about someone snubbing someone at St.Louiscon. The first time I heard it, it was Arnie who snubbed Terry Hughes. But Arnie didn't attend that con. I have no idea where it all began, or who did what to whom.

I think all of us who were shy as youths sometimes were misinterpreted. I think it's a common theme of most fans.

Eric Mayer:

That's a great story about jets breaking the sound barrier. When I was very young I had a vague mental image of some sort of real barrier the planes had to pass through, like a force field or something. I've know older folks who claimed the weather all changed when they started sending rockets into space and punched holes in the atmosphere. An elderly aunt had her own theories about electricity, which she greatly feared. The idea that the television was filled with the dangerous stuff alarmed her. She refused to touch any of the knobs. A relative had set the contrast and so forth and turned the dial to the channel the Billy Graham Crusade always appeared on and my aunt then, simply plugged and unplugged as necessary.

Funny Chris Garcia mentions my copious loccing. It is an illusion. You and Arnie, and Chris, and maybe Dave Burton, think I'm active, but, in fact, I hardly read any zines except the ones you four produce. I guess it is a matter of me choos-

ing a Fandom that is the right size for me! Over the years my interests have multiplied while my time has dwindled. The best solution is to make some money off one's interests as you and Arnie know. The books Mary and I write finance our writing them, but my other hobbies haven't been so lucky.

Unlike Hank Luttrell, I didn't have to fast during the Vietnam years to stay under the minimum weight. I was naturally (or unnaturally) far below the required weight. Intellectually, I knew there was no chance of my being pressed into the service of my politicians (my eyesight wouldn't have cut it either) but it was still plenty scary when I got my draft notice. Predictably, after I was weighed, I was tossed back as too small. However, I was summoned into a doctor's office where an army doctor solicitously lectured me on the dangers of fasting. It seemed kind of strange that someone who was measuring me up to send overseas to be shot, blown up or impaled on poisoned stakes would evince such concern over my health.

And I heard, from older relatives, that the shelling during WWII changed the weather. And only today, I was told that the earthquake that caused the disastrous tsunamis has moved the earth on its axis, and that's the reason it's raining in the Southwest. It's a Good Thing that Scientific Truths are thusly passed on from one person to a next, so we aren't left in ignorance about such matters.

Robert Lichtman:

"It is heartening to believe that men begin to have a parental feeling towards the unborn baby when it stirs in the womb. I had always assumed those feelings didn't awaken in most men until after the baby was born." Fandom isn't a very good place to poll on this subject -- so many fans don't have kids -- but count me along with Chris Haraway who had those feelings during all four pregnancies. It's hard for me to imagine there are men who *don't*, actually.

"I rarely go to the casinos, only if there are out-of-town guests who want to be there." I'm the same way about the wineries here in the Sonoma Valley. Since I'm not a regular wine drinker they hold no attraction to me. But when Christina and Lilian came around in 1988 and Pam Wells a few years later -- TAFF winners all -- I dutifully took them around. My favorite winery is the oldest and most scenic: the Buena Vista Winery out east of Sonoma. It's owned by



some big corporation these days, but it had its roots (so to speak) in the 1850s when a Hungarian count came to Sonoma Valley and started it up. Maybe my own Hungarian ancestry makes the connection even stronger, but the main thing about it is the beautiful grounds and old buildings.

"I've never been to the Grand Canyon." And living so close! I tell you what -- after you're done with your ankle surgery and fully back on your feet, you really ought to do so. I've never gone down *in* the Canyon, but there's plenty to see and do on the South Rim (have never been to the North Rim). Don't miss the Hopi House, home of many beautiful examples of Native American art.

Good to read that even before the ankle surgery you're able to proceed with the cataract surgery in your left eye. I forget -- is that the only one needed? Whatever the case, this connects up with what I wrote above about the Grand Canyon since, after all, why go there if you can't properly *see* it.

This will be my second cataract operation. Perhaps after all this is behind us, Arnie and I will be able to do some traveling. I'd also like to see Glacier Park again.

Hungarian ancestry? How exotic! Did you ever meet Margaret Dominick (DEA) who hailed from Transylvania?



Jason Burnett:

Your comment to Lori Forbes about how tourists take complete leave of their senses in Las Vegas also completely summed up the way people act when they come to New Orleans. That was part of the reason why I had to get out of that town - people would fly in and do things they'd never dream of doing in their hometown, staggering down the streets drunk, vomiting on the sidewalk, urinating on people's front steps, and the locals were left saying, "Mudhole? Slimy? My home this is!" And of course, the city wasn't having the cops crack down on these people, because they know that tourists in prison don't spend money and they don't come back.

Your encounter with Steve Brust's dog sounds horrifying. Big dogs are my biggest fear. I love the idea of dogs ("dog theory," Angel calls it) and can watch dog shows on TV all day long, but actually being in the presence of any dog over a certain size is a nerve-wracking experience for me. I've gotten somewhat better, though — when we went to the Celtic Nations festival in New Orleans a few years back, I gritted my teeth and forced myself to go



pet an Irish wolf-hound when its owner gave me the chance. But if I ever get a dog of my own, rest assured it will be a small dog. (Right now I'm rather taken with French bulldogs.)

The bite has taken a long time to heal; I still have a puncture wound where one tooth went in a bit deeper. But it hasn't affected my fondness for animals, including large dogs. I had a Great Pyrenees as a kid, "Princess Mona St. Marie", and love the big white wooly things. (But the incident might have slightly impacted my affection for science fiction writers who don't leash their animals.)

And, that completes the letter column for this issue. Thanks very much to those who wrote, and sure would like to hear from more of you next time. Don't hesitate — do it now, write without thinking!



Alien Voices (Mailing Comments)

Profane Revelations (Charles Fuller)

The definition of incest not only changes with the years, but also with geography. When I was six or seven, and had a crush on my ten year old second-cousin, my mother assured me that I could marry him if I still wanted to when I grew up, since this was legal in Missouri. Later, we visited family in Kentucky in time to catch the buzz about a wedding between a pair of first cousins, acceptable in that state. In fact, it was a pronounced instance which pushed the limits of wisdom, if not legality. Two sisters married their first cousins, two brothers, a number of years earlier. Their offspring, a girl and a boy, double cousins, then married each other the summer of our visit. To most of us, this seemed dangerous.

Because of course it's not morality that is the issue. It's the health questions. It gives the child a double-shot at any infirmities that exist in the family. In the case of my Kentucky kin, they all have weak lungs. Double this by intermarriage, and I imagine the child of that double-cousin marriage is right now coughing his/her lungs out with tuberculosis.

And, one must wonder about the children of Victoria and Albert, whose children inhabited the royal courts of so many European capitols. Does this explain the craziness that followed in the 20th Century? Does this explain Alexis Romanov's hemophilia, leading to the tsarina's obsession with the mad Rasputin? Was one marriage between cousins the reason for all the evils of World Wars I and II?



Amity (Marcy Waldie)

I also think of the Luxor's beam as an alien attractor. I just hope I'm here to see it when the ship finally lands.

I never went to Camp, so missed that shared experience with a group of girls. But my family did camp a lot, and I often got to take one of my friends with us. We watched the skies a lot, too, in hope and anticipation that Something, Anything would happen. I guess I'm still waiting.

And yet, at that age, I had no concept of Other Lives on Other Worlds. It had never even occurred to me; if it had, I might have had Religious Difficulties with the thought. (How do Fundamentalists answer this puzzle?) I didn't overcome that particular mind-barrier until I was out of high school and started reading science fiction.

Der Fliegender Hollander (James Taylor)

I was slightly jealous of those kids whose families moved around. It seemed to me like they acquired a polish from being exposed to different places and a steady stream of new people. My life was extremely stable; since I was the fourth and last child, my parents were older and more settled by the time I was born. Not only did they have deep roots in Poplar Bluff, but in fact once they built their house after World War II, they didn't move again until retirement, so almost my whole childhood was spent at the same address. And, al-

though I had a few years of beatnik-style travels, most of my adult life was spent at only a couple of different addresses. I lived at the same address in St. Louis for eight years. Arnie and I lived 19 years in the same apartment in Brooklyn Heights, then 14 years in the house on Bridge Glen here in Vegas, before we moved to the Launch Pad, where we are now.

The picture to the right of this paragraph is the one I mentioned in the last mailing. It is by Ross Chamberlain, and I always think of it as the Flying Dutchman (though I don't know if he meant it to illustrate that opera.) In view of your zine's name, I thought you'd appreciate seeing it here.

The incident in the Green Room at L.A. Con was a horror. This is a fine example of fandom-gone-wrong! You did exactly right to rip off your arm band and stop volunteering; you certainly weren't treated right.

When con committees forget what fandom is all about, and start seeing huge differences between pros and fans, they have surely lost track of the good side.

Bat Signals (Teresa Cochran)

The St. Louis Zoo had a dark house, housing exhibits of night creatures, including a cave-like room with a colony of bats. And, they had microphones of some sort so you could hear the bats' chitter-chatter keening. They're interesting creatures, though not exactly cuddly-pets. I've also seen a few mounted specimens. Their faces are a bit frightening, until you stop to think how tiny they are and how little threat they actually represent to we large creatures.

But the best way to see bats is in free flight. Poplar Bluff was just rural enough that you'd see colonies come out at twilight. Their flight patterns involved a lot of graceful swoops and turns, and were beautiful to watch.

Chris Haraway

I have always liked *The War of the Worlds*, in all its configurations. I used to have an LP of the Mercury Theatre broadcast. I've always felt those who were sucked into it were pretty stupid; it was clear that it was a performance and not a news broadcast. But the story is an excellent paranoid look at extraterrestrial invasion. I'm anxious to see this latest movie, and your report makes me all the more eager, but will have to wait until it comes to the small screen.

But what you say about watching movies alone, instead of with someone, is true — it is a different experience. I saw *Jurassic Park* alone, and I'm sure that increased my enjoyment.

Well, fanzine fandom was pretty intensely interested in the terrorist bombings in England. The fan list serves were full of chatter about it, and anxious people checking on the



safety of their friends. I think it's probably understandable that you didn't find much interest in the casino — vacationers are generally fairly oblivious to the real world, and so are gamblers.

But you don't actually have to fly to London to find someone who gives a damn.

By the way, I want to echo the feeling of whoever it was who said they really enjoyed your writing here in Snaps. I do too, and also look forward to your eventually being able to come to social events with us again.

Midlife Crisis (Linda Bushyager)

Another great issue from you, Linda! I really enjoyed your look back at your earliest days in fandom, and your discussion of the early days of filk-singing.

And your elevator song is right on — the incidents you mention at St. Louiscon were an education in poor hotel relationships. I recall that Boston had the suite at the top of the old tower. The traffic between the lower floors was intense, and the elevator operator just quit going up to the top floor. This was a major problem — Boston was throwing their bidding party, and the inability of fans to get up there, or get away from the top floor, was becoming a major problem to them. Finally, someone called the Fire Department and complained that they were trapped on the umpteenth floor in the tower. Can't say it was the smartest thing anyone ever did, but it sure did get results. And, after that, the elevators started going to the upper floor again.

We should sing your filk song at the next gathering! (And thanks for the kind words. Coming from you, they mean a lot to me!)

Jojatoq (Lori Forbes)

I used to enjoy ballroom dancing, too. When I was in high school, Billy Wayne Mayberry and I used to do a lot of fancy steps and turns. I particularly liked big sweeping dances with lots of flare, like the grand waltz, or the polka.

But my real appreciation for the art of ballroom dancing grew tremendously when I had an office coworker, back in New York, who did ballroom dancing as her hobby. Kay was with Arthur Murray Studios, and devoted all her free time to taking lessons, dancing, and preparing costumes for dance tournaments. She was a winner, too — the United States Champion Fox-trotter.

But Kay's story was strange, so I'll recount it here. When she was 20 or so, she got married. Her husband was a motor-cycle messenger in Manhattan. And, when they'd only been married about a year, he was permanently disabled in a bike accident.

Kay stayed with him forever, and went to secretarial school so as to become the breadwinner. But to fill her unhappy and unfulfilled life, she took up the hobby of ballroom dancing. When I knew her, she was at retirement age, so she'd been at it for a very long time.



I've always thought the dancing was a constant reproach to her paralyzed husband — an activity they couldn't possibly share, a reminder of his own infirmity. I've never known whether she was consciously or unconsciously punishing him.

Softcore Fantasy Adventure (Arnie Katz)

Deadlines actually seem to drive writers to Herculean efforts and, as you cited in your remarks, often to outstanding accomplishments. I know that a great deal of my professional work has been written *At The Wire*. And, like you in the last distribution, here I am today, skirting the deadline as close as is possible. This probably won't cause me to produce Laney/Burbee/Perdue— or even A.Katz-like brilliance, but the clock does make me produce copy. This was a handy talent for a magazine writer, but even better for a fannish apa-hack.

As I've explained at nearly intolerable length, in various fan articles, the thing that attracted me to fandom was the desire to be part of a circle of friends that was unbounded by locale. Yet it is a great wrench when friends move away from their accustomed proximity. Just like having a family member leave, a friend's departure is a lessening of one's self, leaving a hole in your life, a tear in your eye, a lump in your throat.

It is hard to accept the Wilsons' and the Formans' move to Arkansas, much harder than when they went to California. That was close — Arkansas is far away. There's a real empty spot in my heart.

And I was no where near recovery from that loss when Woody Bernardi moved back to Boston. Another friend gone!

But the fannish ties are strong. It's a great comfort to know they're just Over There, on the list-serv, in the apa, at the end of the telephone wire, in the fan lounge at the next convention, waiting for me. The wise words from Ted White, "I'll see you in the fanzines," are as you describe: both a promise, and a comfort.

Some Personal Notes

Heart procedures past and pronounced successful, I now am preparing for the ankle fusion surgery, hopefully before the next issue of this zine. I'll be in a cast for a month-to-six weeks, then another month of recuperation. But if all goes well, this nightmare will then be over. It started in April 2004 with a mild case of post-Corflu Flu. And you can be sure the next time I feel faint, I'll just sit down!

Art This Issue

The photographs (and prozine cover) are Internet booty. The cartoon on page 4 is by Alan White, and the ones on pages 6 and 7 are by Ross Chamberlain. That's All, Folks!

