

Middle MINDS

First Annish

WHY
I AM A
FAN





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Idle Minds #4 is the combined effort of Las Vegrants, Las Vegas' informal, invitational Core Fandom Fanclub. This issue is dedicated to Earl Kemp.
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Arnie Katz

The members of the Vegrants who produce this fanzine wanted to do something special to celebrate the First Annish of *Idle Minds*. After all, this is the first Vegrants fanzine to attain that goal since *Wild Heirs*.

Looking at the completed issue, I think we can call that mission a success. We've got a lot of content and I think you'll find a lot of it quite compelling.

Idle Minds always has an overall theme. Since I greatly admire Earl Kemp's seminal *Why a Fan?*, I picked "Why I Am a Fan" as the theme. I didn't want to duplicate Earl's early 1960's wide-ranging study, but I decided to solicit contributions on the theme from a number of BNFs from around Fandom. Though a few ignored my entreaties and one or two refused outright, the response from most was as bountiful and interesting as I could have possibly wished.

Once you get past this page, the issue is organized into three sections: The Vegrants contributions, then the longer articles and finally the contributions from fans outside southern Nevada. The lone exception is Earl Kemp's contribution, which begins on the very next page. We all thought it ought to go first in recognition of Earl's original landmark fanzine.

On behalf of all the Vegrants, both the Actifan Element that produces this fanzine and the "Fellow Travelers" who help make meetings so much fun, we want to thank you for the way you've responded to *Idle Minds* and *Home Kookin'*. Egoboo is the fuel that powers fanzines, so we probably wouldn't be doing this now without your encouragement and support.

Missing this time is "Digiboo," the letter column. It will definitely return in the next issue, though. We hope you enjoy the annish and that you'll share your comments with us in a LoC.

And now... let's rock.

— Arnie



WHY
I AM A
FAN

An Introduction

Earl Kemp



Why Is a FAN Still a FAN?

Opening thoughts:

...most fans are neurotic messes, seeking in fandom the fulfillment their botched natures prevent their seizing out of life. (p. 12)

Fandom was All...the soporific of fandom was so strong that this disquiet very rarely reached the level of consciousness.

That is the insidious and rotten thing about fandom. Just the same as any other evasive compensation, it fetters its participants, and does them positive harm. A head-on and non-evasive adjustment is by no means as easy to make, but through his accomplishment lies a person's only hope of attaining genuine happiness and security....

...the chief reason I am writing...is to try to get you, and you, and you to face your own personal problems like men instead of like fans, get out of the drugging microcosm, and triumph over whatever is keeping you in fandom. (p. 22)

...he said bluntly, too bluntly perhaps, that fans were pretty much impossible, poorly adjusted, and that what most fans needed more than anything else was a normal sex life...I still feel the same way.... (p. 105)

...bums, loafers, deadbeats, moochers and parasites on society; pathologically neurotic incompetents imagining themselves as fine minds and cultured individuals; pretentiousness, hypocrisy, dishonesty with each other and with themselves running rampant.

Why don't *you* quit fandom? If you face the truth about fans and their microcosm, face it fairly and squarely as I have done or tried to do, it looks to me like the only alternative. (p. 127)

-- Francis Towner Laney'

Ah! Sweet Idiocy!

Laney/Burbee, FAPA, 1948

I was kicked back, relaxed, enjoying my magnificence when "You got mail." It was a message from Arnie Katz that flattered me considerably. I knew right away that Arnie had something in mind that involved me. After all that flattery...imagine him expecting me to believe that I was the cause of it all...that I was the Frankenstein who invented the Arnie monster and mega BNF.

All he wanted in exchange for sending that ego-

praise was a simple little article. And it had to fit within certain parameters and I had to do it more or less right away because...you know...there's all those deadlines and Vegrant meetings and birthday and house-warming parties.

Takes a date book just to keep track of all those wonderfully fannish things taking place in far off exotic Las Vegas.

Whatever it was that Arnie was after had to be tied into my 1961 publication of *Why is a Fan?*

It was a very busy year, 1961 was. The SF World-Con was held in Seattle that year. Yuri Gagarin was the first man into space. John Kennedy became President and we were well on our way to invading Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.

At the Seattle WorldCon, I not only won the best costume award, a Hugo Award for my previous year's *Who Killed Science Fiction?* but also left Seattle as Chair of the 1962 ChiCon III.

I was doing some frantic tailfeather shaking most of those days. I was writing zillions of letters to zillions of people I knew all over sfworld. That *Why is a Fan?* exists at all is because I knew those people or they knew me. Between us all, I was still allowed to work my weary—some insist wicked—way across the face of fandom...fanzine fandom anyway

So...where to begin my *Why is a Fan?* piece for Arnie.... The first thing I did was to grab my file copy of the zine and reread it.

My goodness! April 15, 1969...48 years unseen, filed away. Who was I? How did it all happen?

At the sight of the cover alone, memory flashes attacked without warning, bringing back to mind one sorry incident. I had prearranged with Richard Bergeron to do the front cover for *Why is a Fan?* He agreed and I sent him the text that was to go on the cover...very little text in fact, just the name of the issue and what it was. Two lines of type:

Why Is a Fan?
the second SaFari annual

Simple? Not to Richard.
He "corrected" my mistake for me and produced the cover for the issue of

What Is a Fan?
The second SaFari annual

"Oh, no, Richard," I screamed in antique snail mail.
"You have to change it back to Why."
"That doesn't make any sense," he said, "and I

won't make any changes on it."

But I did. I carefully cut the What out of the artwork and fashioned a Y from the A and T, then replaced the new word in the artwork. With a lot of help from the Multilith platemaker, you can hardly tell how much I screwed up Bergeron's precious original.

Why Is a Fan? was inspired by Jim O'Meara, springing from his theory that most sf fans are either first born or only children. Inside the issue, 73 friends wrote their thoughts on the topic. I never understood, until many years later, how much influence I had back in the '60s. Or nerve...I do remember that I never had much difficulty about just walking in onto editors, artists, writers, fans unannounced. Those wonderful 73 friends, fans, pros gladly contributed their thoughts on the topic. Just a list of their names alone reads something damned close to *Who's Who in Science Fiction*.

Reading through the issue brought back some wonderful memories of gathering the material, making the Multilith masters, getting them run off by Lynn Hickman, collating the pages, stapling the copies, and mailing out the second SaFari annual.

As I reread those great thoughts from some great friends, I couldn't resist occasionally marking a special quote now and then (actually there are five quotes) to share with fans figuratively half a century since the first go-round.

Quotes from *Why Is a Fan?* (April 15, 1961):

FRITZ LEIBER: You can find friendship, common interests, empathy, interesting new enthusiasms, etc., in fandom. But there's no happy way to achieve worldly success out of it directly. It's a fellowship. Down the ages there have again and again been these clubs of forward-looking men, generally young, interested in what's new and exciting and obscure. Fandom is such a club (or fellowship) given continuity by its devotion to published science fantasy.

ANDY MAIN: I stay in fandom because I enjoy it—I enjoy fanac more than anything else I do, with one exception, but she's gone for vacation. Perhaps it's the creative urge; there are few things quite so soul satisfying to me as putting the finishing touches on a 36-page issue of my fanzine. I know the escape is involved, but that can't be all; after all, reading a good book provides just as much escape and isn't so tiring or money-consuming. Perhaps it's the recognition of my True Worth; in truth, as a social misfit, fandom's one of the few places where I feel on an equal footing with everybody.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY: From fandom I get a place to express myself without undue criticism; an outlet for the attitudes and emotions which are not

permissible in my restricted social and family situation; an opportunity to work on my pet hobbies; a place where I can write what I please without having to tailor it to circumstantial requirements; a sort of open market place where I can be valued for what I am, rather than what I look like or how well I conform to current mores.

I suppose that also, in painful, deliberate self-honestly, I must admit; a place where I can “show off” without being thought an exhibitionist; I am not really “shy,” simply afraid of being thought forward or “pushy,” but in fandom I can be as extroverted and exhibitionistic as I please, since if people don’t like it they can simply tear up my letters, etc.; I don’t have the same fear of offending that I do in mundane life.

I also think of fandom as a sort of private world where I can live when my own world gets too small to hold me, and where I can control my environment (to some extent) instead of being controlled by it. It is also...the marketplace where I meet my chosen friends. A sort of backdrop for recreational time. The equivalent of, I suppose, the old coffeehouse, pub, or what have you.

HOWARD DeVORE: I suppose that a sense of “belonging” would be the chief benefit from fandom, whereas egoboo would rarely influence the younger fans I do not think it is the primary reason why fans continue on for 10, 20, 30 years as some of us have done. A man of 40 or 50 will go to extremes to prove a point but it is primarily for his own satisfaction, rather than to impress a group of youngsters. Certainly some of the people in fandom are well known in their chosen field and could attract more attention there than in issuing a fanzine seen by perhaps 100 people. It must be for their *own* enjoyment.

For myself I suspect (and sometimes fear), that I will spend most of my life involved with fans to some extent. I married during World War II and my wife has learned to get along with fandom.

She attends conventions, understands fans (as well as it is possible) and while she does not approve of everything concerned will probably never issue an ultimatum, “either those books go or I do.” (There is somewhere in the neighborhood of four tons of material in the attic and she weighs a mere portable 116 pounds.)

I am busily raising a family, my oldest will be in college soon and the younger ones even slip sheet, so the family concerns do not limit me greatly, except as it influences income and the amount of money I can spend on fandom.



Earl Kemp, a good friend to Vegas Fandom, pioneered the exploration of this issue’s topic.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL: The scientific method too often treats human beings as stereotyped and thus becomes overly dogmatic. Salk vaccine protects everyone against polio—even if it kills some by the way. You get what I mean? The fact is that people are different, widely and sometimes amazingly different. They differ as much in mentality as in color or culture. The individual is happiest in the company of his own. Like clings to like. Birds of a feather flock together. The Salvation Army mentality finds its natural home in the Salvation Army. The Jehovah’s Witness type of mind inevitably joins Jehovah’s Witnesses. There’s an imaginative, questioning, speculative kind of mind that finds sanctuary in fandom. The fan is a cultist for reasons both natural and proper. The world needs cultists if only to prevent the bottling of the mass-mind.

And how does *Why is a Fan Still a Fan?* apply to me personally? I am totally addicted. I am a hopeless captive.

There is no possible escape.

I was an sf fan before I ever met an sf fan. I know I am where I belong most of the time and that’s just where I want to be...

...home....

— Earl Kemp

Teresa Cochran

I think it was the spring of 2005 when everything changed.

I'd been reading SF since my golden age of fandom (twelve, of course) and I started attending my first SF club meetings in 2004, twenty-eight years later. The club was fun, and it was good to find others of like mind.

Someone in the club mentioned another group of local Vegas fans, the Vegrants. They held meetings in their living room, and were much less formal, he said. My ears perked up instantly.

You see, when I lived in Berkeley, I had hung out with all kinds of artists and poets, and they were part of a loose network of artists all over the country who exchanged art zines and chapbooks. I suddenly remembered hearing and reading about fanzines when I was younger, and wondered if maybe there was a sort of fannish subculture.

From what I was told, it sure sounded like it. Unfortunately, the Vegrants were an invitation-only group, so I wasn't sure how I was going to meet these cool folk.

I sailed through a few months of formal club meetings, until one day, Woody Bernardi asked me if I wanted to go to a Vegrants meeting. I was self-

Tee likes to fiddle around at Vegrants meetings.



WHY
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The Vegrants

conscious and shy, but my heart leapt. “Well, it’s invitation-only. We can’t just pop in there, can we?”

“Don’t worry; you’re expected,” Woody reassured me. “I am? Well, okay, then,” I said doubtfully, though I felt rising excitement.

When we got to Joyce and Arnie’s house, I was immediately at ease, because it seemed Woody and Kent knew these folks. Then when we began talking about everything from Cajun music to science fiction, I felt right at home.

“So is this it? Has the meeting started yet?” I asked, noting the eight or so folk sitting around conversing amiably. “This is it!” Arnie replied. “My kind of meeting!” I burst out, realizing simultaneously that it really was.

That was only the beginning of my fanac, of course, but from that moment on, I knew I had a fannish home.

Bryan Follins

I have always been a curious fellow. When I started watching and reading science fiction (sci-fi) as a kid, I never thought of it as fiction, but as speculation. Sci-fi was something that was not necessarily true, but something that could be possible. It aroused, and still arouses my curiosity.

Funny, but in the sixth grade, while our class was spending a period in the library, something happened. The librarian, Mrs. Geary, came up to me and told me that I was different (not in a bad way) from the rest of my classmates. She handed me a book she wanted me to read. It was *Fantastic Voyage* by Isaac Asimov. Why she handed me a science fiction book, I will never know. I had already been reading Marvel Comics for five years, but this was different. From that day forward, a thought occurred to me. Was someone or something always watching, observing? Possibly. It did not have to be from a library. What about watching from another dimension, another portal?

There is a timeless saying that “anything is possible.” I will always believe this.

At some point in my life (I cannot remember when), I looked around and tried to place everything I saw on a finite plain. I could not do so. I could not look into the night sky and say that life on earth was the only life in the galaxy or the universe. How could I? What did I know about life on other planets or galaxies? I slowly came to realize I was only a spec on the backside of a universe. I could not even make a coherent statement on the number of possible universes. Was it possible to have several universes on earth itself? Why not?

I really do not know much about life on earth.



Could I account for every life form on earth (including those which inhabit bodies of water?)

I do not even know what my body is capable of, not by a long shot.

A few days ago I was driving along on a scorching July afternoon in Vegas. There was no wind or breeze. All of a sudden, a gust of wind hit the car, nearly pushing it into another lane. I immediately looked around, seeing no trees moving in the wind, no flags fluttering at any establishments. Was it the wind?

When occurrences such as that happen, we give an excuse: the wind, a sudden atmospheric disturbance. I began to speculate and imagine. Was it really the wind? Or, was it a visitor from another planet going five times the speed of light? Maybe their vehicle threw a rod.

Was it me passing through a wrinkle in time? Maybe it was a war between three microscopic civilizations that was just kicking up a sudden breeze. An excuse is the easy way out. But, if we step through the door of speculation and imagination we may see something else.

A long time ago, I stepped through that door. That is when I became a fan, and I have not regretted it one bit.

Joyce Katz

That’s a question for which I’ve had several answers, depending on when I was asked. The first time I heard about fandom, back in the 1952-53 school year, Ray (Duggie) Fisher told me about his fanzine, and invited me to write something for it. It was significant enough to me that I wrote about it in my diary, excited at the notion of publishing my poems. And I planned to do it, too. But Duggie left Poplar Bluff shortly after, for college and photography school. Even if he hadn’t folded publication around that time, I probably wouldn’t have carried through on my plans, since I was only 13 and desperately in love for the first time.

Four years later, Duggie and I met up again after I

had graduated high school and he returned from Los Angeles. We had a whirlwind courtship and were married in July of 1956. Early in August, as I've written so many times in the past, he took me into the attic of the Fisher family home, and introduced me to science fiction. I started devouring large chunks of s.f. every day, so Duggie showed me a stack of crumby (and crumbling – that attic had no insulation and open windows) science fiction fanzines. I was excited at the notion of writing articles about this new (to me) literature. And I would have done it, too. Except that he then showed me a group of zines he especially prized, such as *Opus/Fanvariety*, *Slant*, and *Quandry*, and I fell desperately in love for the second time that summer.

In the next few years, I often brought up the subject of fanzines, and it was always in my mind that Duggie should revive *Odd*, so I'd get my chance to participate. But the time wasn't right, I guess, and it didn't actually happen until the mid-60s, when I made contact with Dave Hall, which ignited the Ozark Science Fiction Association (OSFA) in St. Louis. Even then, it took a couple of years before Duggie decided to publish again. By the time that happened, I was desperately in love with club fandom, with its fixation on the literature, and its opportunity for great conversations. Then, too, there was a war going on, and fandom was full of current events and utopian dreams.

Any one of these reasons could explain my continued participation in fandom. It offered good conversation and exchange of ideas with a group of like-minded people. There was science fiction – a body of interesting concepts and futuristic dreams. There was social interaction in the club, with its give-no-quarter conversations. And there were fanzines where I could rub metaphorical elbows with the intelligentsia in this world of letters and communication. *We Would Change the World*; and *Shake Society's Foundation*. And I was in love with the idea.

It was really love that kept me in fandom. At first it was love of idealism, love of mental stimulation. Like a crazed teenager, it was delightful to leap from extravagant notions to engaging revelations. Eventually, love of audience kicked in; it was very involving to know a group of people who'd read, and sometimes even comment on my writings.

But even love must rest, and none of these are the reason I'm still in fandom. As time passed, those self-serving interests receded, and became less important. Science Fiction was still good to read, but usually came second after other interests. Clubs and conversations lost a lot of appeal, as I grew less interested in argu-



Nix Farey helps Joyce Katz at a recent oneshot session.

ment for its own sake. Conventions, which I once loved, became less amusing, as they grew so large and top-heavy with people with whom I shared so few interests.

Fanzines, with their audience and intellectual exchanges, retained their interest. I still think it's a fine thing to write and publish for a circle of other writers and publishers. Yet, I guess I'd have to admit that my interest is not at the white-hot level of my younger days. But there was still one more card to play.

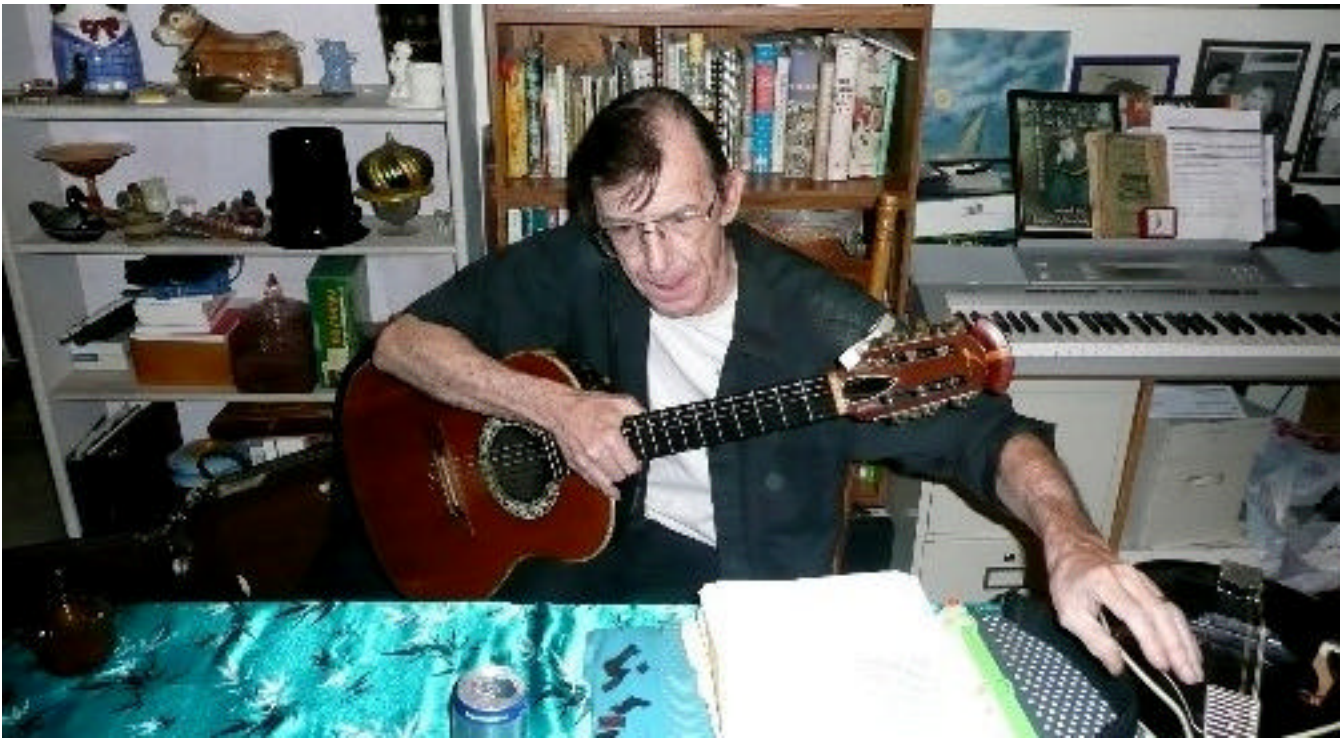
Now I stay in fandom for the people. They are more engaging than all the high-minded idealisms that first caught my interest. Also, friends made through fandom are often much more long-lasting than those outside of our microcosm. In fandom, relationships continue for decades and provide continuing touch-stones throughout life. It can be boiled down to one sentence, or even one word: Friendship.

I am a fan because of the friends who share fandom with me. There is nothing I enjoy more than to be in a room with the people I like best. Most room parties can't hold much more than a couple of dozen at a time, but they are worth more to me than all the rest put together.

Bill Mills

The question of why I am/why I became a fan spurred a lot of thought which took me through a maze of social and psychological complexities and personal introspection. From that point of view it became a very complicated puzzle of perceptions, motivations and gratifications.

Fortunately, for one and all, I realized that all of that was merely my tapestry's filigree and not the base cloth



Bill Mills, shown here leading the Vegrants Band, had a long history in Fandom before he encountered this sliver of it, Core Fandom.

on which it's stitched. The foundation on which it's built is actually pretty simple. Since childhood, I have considered intelligence and creativity to be among the most admirable traits a human being can have. Thus, I truly revere people who are intelligent or creative or, best of all, both! When I was introduced to 'fandom', back in 1969, it was through the auspices of David McDaniel, (aka Ted Johnstone) a terrific writer and long time fan and, in fact, a brilliant man. At the time, David was the Secretary of the LASFS, which I joined of course, and through my involvement with the club and Dave's friendship I leapt immediately from the kind of crowd with which the average neo might expect to interact to a fairly elite and (for me) very heady social group, of pros and fen, in which the common dominator was intelligence and creativity. And I... was undeniably and irreversibly hooked!

At the core of it all is actually selfishness I suppose, because it's the pleasure of regularly interacting with excitingly clever creative people that seduced me into the demon's lair in '69 and it's that same selfish desire, make that need, to revisit and/or prolong that pleasure as long as possible that continues to magnetically attract me and hold me still.

I am grateful that upon returning to 'fandom' in 2005, after nearly twenty years of Gafia, I found myself residing in the same city as Arnie and Joyce Katz and

was allowed to join their little band of Vegrants. They're a good group (mostly), consisting of people who are intelligent (mostly) and creative (mostly) and friendly (mostly) and fannish (mostly)... of which I am proud (completely!) to be a part.

Jacq Monahan

It's been nine months and I am still unclear on the concept of what it means to be a fan. In fact, I have a knee-jerk reaction to the word, with its connotation of implied worship. Enthusiast goes down much better. I will admit to being enthusiastic about something much more readily than declaring myself a fan. That, to me, means I am down here and the object of my admiration is up there.

I have made some dear friends in fandom without ever having shown proof of purchase. They accepted me into their core simply because I appreciated their intelligence, literary acumen, and wit. My own experience in the field is inconsistent and wildly disparate.

Ray Bradbury captured me. So did Rod Serling and Gene Roddenberry. And Arthur C. Clarke.

The Martian Chronicles made me want to be a writer. Childhood's End made me want to be an Overlord. Even as a child I searched for an alternate universe, and those inventive minds allowed me to enter some.

Attending LosCon with Alan White was an eye opener and I'm afraid the man was overrun with my peevish inquiries. "What do you mean by "fan?" "Why do you call yourselves that?" Alan explained the allure of conventions, which transported self-proclaimed ill-fitting remnants of society into a cohesive unit of shared interest – leaving the so-called mundanes (real world drones) behind with their pesky, inconvenient reality. I began to understand.

After experiencing the camaraderie of LosCon, not to mention the ConSuite overlooking LAX – where you could watch planes take off while you landed on your ass in front of several kinds of cake – I understood more.

It's still all very amorphous. What is a fan? What are they fans of? What does one write about in a fanzine? It seems no one will say the words. Fandom remains as elusive as Sasquatch, as puzzling as the following riddle:

What is it?
It's bigger than the universe
The dead eat it.
If you ate it, you would die.

The answer is astoundingly anticlimactic, but when you don't know it, the quest can consume you. The same way fandom's mysteries evade me.

My square peg introversion and eccentric manner may qualify me, I suppose, for some kind of fringe designation. I depart from the real world often enough, frequently telling those interested enough to care that I'd willingly jump onto any inviting spaceship – even if 'To Serve Man' DID turn out to be a cookbook.

So...she came for the food, but she stayed for the fans. They are, after all, some of the smartest, most literate think tanks around (no pun intended, but there are a lot of oversized bodies to go along with those oversized brains). They hear the proverbial different drum, and although the beat may not be easy to dance to, it sustains an amazing fellowship of creative and progressive individuals.

They call themselves fans, even though they are usually the ones who should have a following of their own.

I admire them. I am enthusiastic about them. I still don't know if I am one of them. Hey, I wanted an alternate universe. Now that I'm actually in one, it's probably time to purchase a house instead of simply inhabiting a timeshare.

I think I'm going to be staying awhile.

James Taylor

It's the money. Oh, they wouldn't want me to tell you, but it's the truth. Every month, there's an electronic deposit to my banking account from the Special Steering Committee Of the Society for the Preservation and Promotion of True Fandom, or as the bank records call it ssc/sptf. It's not a lot, but it helps and I do appreciate it.

So how did this come about? I've heard several stories or perhaps tales but it seems to date to an online conference on a private list serve about 1995. While noting the return of a number of BNFs after absences, it was also noted that new young fan candidates were still very rare or more realistically nonexistent. New fans simply were not sticking with fandom, their disjointed and unintelligible responses when asked were unhelpful, even less so when truth drugs were applied.

This group decided that this lack of information was not fatal to coming up with conclusions or better yet a Master Plan to Save Fandom. Basically it was decided True Fandom would at some future date regain popularity among young people when they tired of the soulless and solitary existence that is current popular culture. But what was needed was an interim measure to see True Fandom through this Dark Age.

Only a small amount of money (it was thought) would be enough to equalize the distractions of school, work and team sports on big screen t.v's. After all in a fair fight who would choose those over fandom? Local BNFs would put forward candidates who would then be approached discretely with the offer of assistance in pursuing their fanac. I myself was approached by Ken Forman while admiring the SNAFFU Library in his spare bedroom, while Aileen demonstrated the hanging chair in the living room, effectively distracting the rest of local Las Vegas fandom.

There was of course a promise not to discuss this....Why look! It's Frank Lunny, I didn't know he was in town, and why does he have a red silk corddddddd

ROSS Chamberlain

Jeez, I dunno. What *is* a fan?

Arnie's been attempting to provide an answer to that question for years, and I still am not certain. Many of the descriptions and definitions he's offered appear to be applicable to parts of my life, and since those parts are largely associated with what social life I have, I guess I can accept the idea that I'm one of... Them. A member of Fandom.

I remain uncertain about some of Arnie's subcategories to the fannish microcosm, which, while essentially clear enough as sort of like the houses of a horoscope, with preferences of media here and list-makers there and dress-up mavens on that side and conrunners (in the House of Smof) on the far end, nevertheless interact with each other with the equivalents of Signs and Aspects and Cusps and Nodes and Rulers in a variety of ways. I'm quite sure I intersect with some and overflow the strictures of some and am thoroughly unconnected with others. But who's to say which?

Protofandom, the primordial ooze from which Fandom gathered itself, was once upon a time thought of and even called Science Fiction Fandom. Some of us, still mired in the Old Ways, still think of it that way. Imagine that!

I've always read science fiction and fantasy more than general fiction, and fiction more than nonfiction, and these forms extend also to my preferences in other (largely visual, sometimes aural, often multi-) media as well. A large part of my emotional upbringing related to these, enhanced and invigorated by the necessary social inadequacies that swung my attention to their input as opposed to that of other, i.e. human, interaction, which was often uncomfortable.

Despite growing up in a loving family environment, I was the youngest child by over a decade. Parental support was distracted and largely deferred to my older brother and sister, who, as teenagers in most of my earlier formative years, had their own fish to fry and problems to deal with. Nevertheless, we often had sharing times where we would sit around a table and draw, and my sister Elinor helped me learn to read. These were as you might imagine hugely formative influences. And the books I learned from were fantasy oriented, like Johnny Gruelle's Raggedy Ann and Andy stories, and later the Oz books, etc.



Odyssey of a Proto-Fan

School, when it eventually came to that, was another situation. Because I could read, which in those days was rare before starting school, I skipped a grade. Not terrible initially, because that first year was in a one-room grade school covering grades one to six (or maybe eight) so aside from some activities and books I remained part of a single class environment. But when we moved to a new town, where grades were sufficiently populated that each had one or two home rooms, I suddenly became a year younger than most of my peers.

I could still read better than most, and draw, and other such stuff, but out in the schoolyard it was another story.

I was not a good student, forever avoiding tedious homework, depending on scraping through on tests to pass class requirements. Eventually I failed to pass from my sophomore to junior class in high school (my *bête noir*, geometry; I blame the teacher), though that was the year we moved from Texas to New England so at least I wasn't sharing the classes with kids that had been in the grade behind me, with the same old teachers. At school in Kents Hill, Maine, I had a good geometry teacher and almost found myself enjoying math; I also had a fine English teacher who encouraged my creative writing and almost made me interested in the Classics...

The following year (following my grandfather's difficult passing and as my father's health declined following a cerebral hemorrhage that had forced him to retire early) we settled at an intentional community near Great Barrington, Massachusetts. I went by school bus to a high school in Great Barrington; my first (and worst) experience with a large high school with rules and regulations that I'd never had to deal with before, and it didn't help that I'd fallen in love with a girl a couple of years older than I, a good Irish Catholic whose health problems (epilepsy among them) became such a focus for me that I had even more problems dealing with school life let alone trying to conform to the life of the community..

There were other contributing elements, but, already an introspective nerd or geek, I suppose, I pulled such a shell around me that therapy was called for, and the following year I was sent to a private school that emphasized creativity in many forms. It more or less worked.

I emerged from the shell at least for my few schoolmates, got involved in drama as well as doing more writing, and in a couple of years went from there to a radio and theater school in Boston.

And, having never developed any self disciplinary skills, dropped out.

I retain to this day a feeling of angst in regard to academia, avoiding school environments, encroaching upon them only when forced, as when elections are upon us and the polling places are set up at school gymnasiums and cafeterias.

I'm grateful for the move here in Nevada (and I gather now expanding) toward pre-voting in locations like my local supermarket....

Meanwhile, I'd heard of fandom, distantly, as I grew up, probably via the classic means of the letter columns in the pulp magazines my father brought home from many of his travels. Those were hardly the springboards that they were for many fans.

They belonged to folk "out there" in the Greater World of which I perceived only the shadows as on the movie theater screens, impersonal, unrelated to anything I could expect to get involved with.

This changed when, in Massachusetts, I met a lady named Alice Norton, whom we all know as Andre Norton.

I didn't really keep in touch with her in later years, but for a long time she and my father kept up a correspondence, and she would send him packets of paperback novels; her own and others. He passed these on to me, and they formed a seed for my own collection.

While in Massachusetts, she gave me a copy of Harlan Ellison's *Dimensions*. That, in effect, was the first real touch of the Spirit of Fandom's magic wand. Wish I still had that thick, beaten-up sheaf of mimeography with its peculiar approach to life and the world that I now know as the fannish paradigm. Don't know whatever happened to it.

After quitting school and a period of indolence when I was supposed to be working on my art (Famous Artists School correspondence lessons), I got my first "real" job in Boston for a while, then eventually (after taking a Speedwriting class in Pittsfield, Mass., and spending a summer with my brother in Brevard, NC) moved to New York.

I had a couple of jobs there before starting up with Bookazine Co., where I met Mike MacInerney, who introduced me to live fandom...

Normally when I reach this point, the next phrase is a closer: "...and the rest is history."

True, but we have a Topic, here, and I don't think we've really tapped it yet. Why a fan?

FISTFA (Fannish Insurgent Scietifictional Association), meeting biweekly (yeah, every two weeks; let's not get into *that* discussion) at Mike's place which he shared at that point with rich brown, was where I fist met what I think Arnie means by "Core Fandom," or "Insurgent Fandom," or some combination thereof. This was not a formal organization of science fiction

readers, with discussions and minutes, though there were earnest enough conversations on ramifications of this or that sfnal concept right along with similar exchanges on everything else of intellectual (and not-so) interest in the mid 1960s... politics, Viet Nam, TV, drugs, sex, and rock 'n roll.

Now legendary fannish figures and names were among the attendees, and a few of those, led by Ted White, had an invitational group that met alternate Fridays from FISTFA. Their group was called the Fano-clasts, a name to evoke exactly the insurgence against formality typified by previous fan organizations. The group had recently lost a number of members who had moved across the country to fabled California and other sites, and Ted with some of the others apparently saw some potential in me and invited me to come and help fill out a little of the void. (Faint wordplay there: up until around then Ted and a few other well-known fans had been doing a fanzine called *Void*. No, I never got to contribute to it.) Terry Carr, Lee Hoffman, Dave Van Arnam, Steve Stiles, Jack Gaughan and Dick Lupoff were among those I got to know, and there were occasional visits from such as Harlan Ellison, though I never became acquainted with him, nor discussed my brief encounter with *Dimensions*.

I learned much of Fandom from Ted, Mike, rich, Arnie and others in those two groups. I think it was rich who loaned me a copy of *Fancylopedia II*, Dick Eney's massive contribution to the history and microcosm of Fandom. I also got to read an original edition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*, and I contributed to Apa F, the original weekly APA, though it lasted only 69 issues. It's offshoot, APA L, is still going strong in LA. I'm now fairly versed in fanspeak, though still recognize it as a jargon, emphasizing it in my writing and verbally in much the same way as one may speak in Capitals on occasion.

All of this is how I became acquainted with Fandom, and, as such, I guess, became a Fan. The question remains, however—Why?

Because most of my best friends over the years have been Fans, I suppose.

Now, I say that with the reservation that none of my family ever turned that way. My brother Hale would have been great as a Fan, if he'd had any interest in it. He used to be a clever and amusing and thoughtful writer; he was a would-be Author, though never really got around to solidly working on anything (that I ever saw). He liked to draw. He saw many of the fanzines I wrote or illustrated, including the Brooklyn Insurgent's edition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*, and my own *Fangle*. He acknowledged some amusing material in them, but was never hooked by any of it. I sometimes

fear that he felt I'd surpassed him in some respects in both writing and drawing, and was discouraged by it. If so, at least in regard to the writing (I acknowledge I ended up drawing better than he did, though had he worked more at it that might not have necessarily been the case), then I did a disservice to the world. But we were too alike in never really pursuing our talents, so I can only assume a little guilt about that.

For what it's worth, he was never the fan of fantasy and science fiction that I was, though he loved the works of John Crowley (*Little, Big* in particular) and Jack Finney. It's possible that it was the association of F&SF with fandom that prevented him from perceiving the eclectic nature of the microcosm.

Joy-Lynd tried for a while to share in fandom, but has trouble with many of the counter-cultural aspects of the Fandom as practiced among my friends. She's verbally articulate and street smart, but comes from a worldview that departs considerably from most fans I know. She's religious, so has a problem with the occasional revelations of ingrained agnosticism (not to mention atheism) expressed on occasion at fan social gatherings; she deals with my own agnosticism with resignation, I think. But most of all, she has had times of antagonism with some of us... I'll say "us" because my perspective differs from hers...that derive from personality clashes in the past and unresolved resentments based on her own perceptions of my one-time working relationships with Arnie, Joyce and at one time Bill Kunkel. I won't get into that here; suffice it that I don't share that perception.

While she's been a reader (with difficulty, owing to the dyslexia), with several of Asimov's books to her credit, and she managed to struggle through *Atlas Shrugged* (yeah, well... I've never managed that), I'd have to say that her SF&F interest has primarily been media-oriented. She's a Star Trek fan, has seen with me most of the blockbuster SF (and fantasy) films of the last 20 or 30 years or so. And many of the animated ones, CGI or not. We share that interest in some depth.

Thus, I have a fan life and a mundane one, but subscribe neither to FIAWOL nor FIJAGH. Fandom is definitely a large part of my life, but other than the time frequently spent on it I generally keep it separate from my "mundane" life, though in general I'd have to say that side isn't really all that mundane. It's just different

Why am I a fan?

Because, well--- Just as some folk in their malleable youth fall in with with thieves, murderers, snake-oil salesmen, Republicans, some 45 years ago I fell among fen.

And never fell out.

— Ross Chamberlain

Brenda Dupont

In September of 1984, I went to WorldCon, LACon II. I spent Thursday night at the Ice Cream Antisocial filling up on Anthrax Ripple and other ice cream flavors with grisly names and saw a movie starring Sting. I was trying to hook up with Darleen, my fan friend and con cohort for the past four years - with no success. By Saturday afternoon, I'd been to the dealers and exhibit rooms many times, attended panels, movies and a few parties, and still hadn't seen Dar. I finally went to a 2-hour crash course on Dr. Who in hopes to find her. I'm not sure how I missed her. She's almost 6 feet tall and had her Dr. Who scarf wrapped around her neck, waist and arms to keep it from dragging the ground - a Tom Baker fan you know. We panel-hopped, read the party boards, checked out the exhibits again and nixed the movie. I was bored, and wasting time is a terrible thing to mind. What to do? What to Do?

The Dealers' Room is the place to go when you've nothing else to do and no hotel room to go to. The Con Suite is where you get your free snacks and drinks, and run into more friends only seen at cons. If you can get a seat, you might hang for a bit. If it weren't for the Con Suite, many fans might starve or die of dehydration. It closes when they need to replenish supplies. Anyone who isn't a con suite volunteer gets booted. So you go to the Dealers' Room.

Now, I was sure I'd memorized everything on every table on previous passes. We stopped again at the table of an importer of various children's toys. I sifted through ray guns and dolls from Japan, some cars from Germany and other toys from several European countries. As I started to walk away, **the Bear** caught my eye. It was a yellow plastic bottle shaped like a bear, wearing a red hat. "How cute!"

"Take off the hat and squeeze him," the purveyor encouraged me. I took off the hat and squeezed his tummy. A bubble wand popped up! I giggled. I put my lips together and blew...bubbles!! Then I saw a smaller one that had the wand anchored to the inside of his hat. I sampled it. Bubbles went everywhere. The price was outrageous - \$6 for the small bear and \$8 for large. But my mental age quickly dropped from almost 30 to about 10 years old. Dar and I both bought the small bear. Hey, \$2 was \$2.

Unable to contain our enthusiasm, we started blow-

I SHALL RULE THE
WORLD, BUT FIRST
I MUST CORRECT
ITS GRAMMAR



THE INSTIGATOR

ing bubbles in the Dealers' Room. Bubbles landed on tables of adjacent dealers selling zines, comics, photos and books. In fear of being ridden out on a rail, we took our leave. Standing outside blowing bubbles, we hoped to attract more bubble aficionados who would appreciate our great bubble-blowing talents. We did. Mostly women came forth asking who sold the bears. Wow! I was a promoter!

A small unit of storm troopers marched by in beautiful form. I got an idea.

Bubbles following bad guys. What could be funnier? We gave chase and caught up with them in an impromptu photo session on the lawn. While the paparazzi were popping, we provided nice bubbly Lawrence Welk ambience. The storm troopers were not appreciative and told us to stop blowing bubbles. After a bubble landed on a camera lens or filter, we hustled off. Continuing to roam, we blew bubbles at any bad guys that stumbled across our path: the Joker, Klingons, Romulans, Darth Vader, and NBC actors dressed as Visitors in red overalls.

The Visitors were handing out free copies of the newly published novelization of *V*, with which they also used to shoo us away. These wanderings eventually brought us to the main hotel, the Anaheim Hilton.

In the lobby area, at the end of the front desk and rows of elevators, sat a fountain with a small waterfall centerpiece. Water flowed down at an angle. The area was surrounded by comfy sofas and side chairs that offered a relaxing respite from the heat outside. The fountain opened up to the second and third floor mezzanine. I got an idea.

I just had to blow bubbles from the top of the mezzanine onto the waterfall. There were many unanswered questions. Would they flow to the bottom and then float across the water or break as the water fell and joined with the pool? My aim wasn't what I thought it might be, and my bubbles drifted lazily down to the pool and floated around or popped, but not a one landing on the waterfall first.

We were drawing an audience. A fan dressed in Renfair garb came up and asked if he could join in. I told him sure, and he said he'd be back. Had to get his bubble trumpet and solution. As I watched him run down the escalator, I wondered, what other convention in the world would attract someone who traveled with a bubble trumpet and bubble solution? A few moments later, I looked up to see fans lined up along the railing blowing bubbles, almost all had bears, one had a monster bubble wand – wait a minute, where did he get that? Trumpet man was the first to get a very large bubble to ride down the waterfall and land in the pool without breaking. But he cheated: he moved down to

the second floor. People below cheered us on, fan and mundane alike. Bubbles floated everywhere in and above the pool. Some wafted over to the front desk, and I spied renegades by the elevators.

Thirty minutes later, bubbled out and tired of getting jostled, I gave Dar a nod, put the lid on my bear and headed for the escalator. A man in an official looking suit came up as we rode down. Like most good instigators, I made my escape before management noticed what was going on or that I was part of it. Back on the ground floor, I heard him announce: "Please stop with the bubbles. Bubbles are bad for the fountain." Groans of dissent and disappointment echoed through the lobby.

The bubble dealer continued to sell bubbles throughout the weekend. He completely sold out of the bears and restocked with mundane bubbles from the local Toys R Us. I figure he still owes me a commission or at least a bear... the \$8 one.

That was only the beginning of my career as an instigator. I started the great paper airplane show at NASFIC/CactusCon in 1987. The hotel we stayed had had rooms off an atrium, and instead of a hallway, there was a wrap-around balcony. My room was on the 5th floor, and there were a few more floors of rooms above it. When I opened the door and walked three or four steps forward, I could lean over the balcony and look down on the atrium or I could look across and see the doors to the rooms across the way. Oh, no...I got an idea.

I grabbed a flyer and made an airplane. I only make one model – the basic. I tried to fly it all the way across, but it fell short and landed in the foliage below. A palm tree, I think. Dar was with me on this one too, and she started making and flying planes with me. Soon, fans on several floors were lined up around the balconies, flying airplanes across, up to other floors or down to lower floors. There were many colors and many different designs.

The planes didn't always make it and many got stranded in the foliage, on the lights, windowsills and the front desk. People below were getting the fallout of those that crashed and burned ..oh, diving straight down. No one was safe.

Eventually, we ran out of flyers or I lost interest or got hungry. Right as we walked off the elevator, an announcement was made on the intercom, "Stop flying the planes and do not congregate on the balconies." Once again, escaped just in time!

Instigator for hire: Gets Ideas ~ Will Travel

— Brenda Dupont

Nic Farey

Or, “Why I Am a Fan”

I needed Barty for this one.

He was in his usual spot, still sucking at his upper lip in the eternal search for teeth, still with an inch of beer remaining in his glass, as if he'd been waiting for me for I don't know how long to stroll through the old door and across to his familiar table.

“Ello Barty”, I said. “Pint?”

“About time an' all”, he grumped. “Where you been?”

“Moved to Vegas.”

This got me Barty's reaction when he's massively startled by something. That is, he actually looked up at me and furrowed his brow ever so slightly.

“Bit sudden.”

“Lemme get the beers Barty, I'll tell you a bit.”

“All right.” Barty tends to recover quickly from astonishment. His eyes went back to the dwindling contents of his glass, which he at that point actually put a hand on, though I knew he wouldn't actually finish it until he saw me coming back from the bar with fresh ones in hand. He's cautious like that.

I got back to the table with our beers and sat down while we had a moment of silence for the one Barty had just killed. He has to go at his own pace in a conversation. I realized early on that you have to let him take the lead, he doesn't have a lot of patience for people who don't appreciate the value of silence, he likes to mull it all over and let you know when he's ready.

“Vegas, then, is it?”

“Yeah Barty, Vegas. They still got some work there.”

He thought for a moment, looked for his teeth some more then looked up and said “Dogs”.

“Sore point there Barty”, I said, “But no, some of 'em are good-lookin'.”

“No, you berk. Dogs. The bloke and that...”

“You mean Katz, Barty?”

“Um. Yeah. Probably.” Barty doesn't really like being corrected like that, but he takes it better from me. I also always noticed how much faster he drank when I was there, his pint was about half done already, though I knew he'd show a bit of deference and slow down a bit towards the bottom.



BARTY'S HISTORY of the WORLD



Nic Farey (and his wife Bobbie) are the newest Vegrants, but already among the most popular club members.

“As it happens”, I said, “It was him I wanted to talk about, sort of.”

Barty doesn't really complain much, at least not out loud, he just looks. So now I got a look which after all these years I knew meant “I might have known you'd be wanting something, otherwise I'd never see you”, which I didn't take to heart since we both cottoned long ago to the fact that Barty likes me to need him for something since he gets more drink that way. The look also tells me that I can carry on and ask, and Barty will then have a think and start to talk more.

“Does a load of fanzines, Barty.”, I said. “And he wants me to write something.”

“Like Byers?”

“Well, not exactly, but kind of.”

Barty hates that. He needs information, especially the kind he can interpret in his own ways. I got another look, with a very fast glance at the glass which means “I need more beer to deal with this.”

“It's about ‘Why I am a Fan’”, I said, quickly pointing at his drink and adding “‘Nother?”, knowing this would give him the thinking time and fuel he likes.

“All right.”

Coming back from the bar with fresh glasses I wasn't detecting the glow of excitement that Barty emanates when he thinks he got something. Nothing we needed to be talking about now was telly, the primary source of his worldview, and not much of the subject had benefitted from his presence. All he knew was what I'd told him over the years. This was going to take a minute, and a good part of the fresh pint.

Now Barty can get on a roll and talk in paragraphs, but it takes a little time to get to that point. As usual he started out with bullet points.

“The footballer. Honey. Star Trek.”

Having known Barty for so long I've got pretty

good at figuring out what he means, and this one didn't faze me much.

“No Barty, he was a bookseller. Got me in with the Brum lot.”

“Oh, right, when you was with the Star Wars bird. Whatever happened to her?”

“Star Trek, Barty. Dunno, kind of lost track of that one. Still owe money, I expect...”

“An' you slept on the floor?”

Barty remembers a lot of the stuff I've told him, though it often gets filtered through some tortuous pathways when it comes back, though this time he'd got it right.

Through meeting Rog Peyton at Star Trek conventions, I'd been asked (along with fellow ST con committee person Dave Liddle) to run the teck stuff for the BSFG (“Brum Group”) annual Novacon. Dave was from the Midlands (Coventry, actually), so it all turned out quite handy.

We charged a bit of a price back then, and the wives came with us. They stayed in the room the whole convention (being Trek fans, they were obviously not interested in actual science fiction), lolling about, while me and Dave, having worked all day, ended up sleeping on the room floor.

“Yeah, that was a rough one Barty.” I glanced at his glass and bowed to the inevitable. “‘Nother?”

“All right.”

As I eased up out of the wooden chair, Barty glanced back up at me, then at the clock, then back, and kept eye contact for a few seconds. I knew what that meant, and it's as close as Barty ever gets to asking nicely.

“Ready for a little ‘un?”

“All right. And an ‘arf.”

It was pretty quiet in the old place, so this round didn't take long to find its way back to our table. I like that about it here, gets busy with some young ‘uns from time to time, but never too rowdy. The gov'nor keeps it old-fashioned. He'll never be a millionaire, but makes a steady go of it, enough to be comfy.

Barty had been whiling away the couple of minutes looking for his teeth again, I could tell by the whiteness of his lower lip where he'd been sucking on it, but he didn't waste any more time on that pursuit once I got back, and reached immediately for his little drink.

A larger sip than usual and a small grimace was followed by: “Mary Queen of Scots”, with a twinkle in his eye that showed me he knew exactly what he was saying and enjoying this chance to wind me up a bit, since we both had no idea when we'd get together again. I gave him a half-smile of my own, and allowed myself a sip of happy remembrance.



Bill Mills strums his electric guitar while Nic wets his whistle.

“Well close Barty y’daft bastard. Tudor, though. There was a Stewart too, mind you...” I knew I’d got one over by his mildly startled expression, quickly hidden as well as possible in the beer.

“Tudor”, I emphasized, thinking to myself “and Evans, and Berry, and Green, and Holmes, and a host of others who made me feel more than welcome, and who actually read books and could talk about sf while drinking two-fisted and taking the piss at the same time. All that reading I’d done since I was a kid could be talked about, made fun of, and new stuff recommended.

Barty must have noticed me getting a little misty. “Been a long time”, he opined, which could have referred to me and them or me and him at that moment. “How about another?”

This was a little startling. I can probably count on the sixth finger of either hand how many times Barty actually asked for a drink, however obliquely, because I knew that wasn’t going to be an offer.

“Sounds good, I reckon. Same?”, I asked, beginning to rise.

“Siddown”, Barty said, and noting my extreme puzzlement, added, “I’ll get ‘em.” I slumped back into the chair in shock, probably hurting something as I did.

Barty, of course, didn’t move at all. He stared at the bar for a few seconds, then nodded his head upward, then sideways in two quick motions. I didn’t need to look over my shoulder to know that the guv’nor was filling our drinks.

“You’re somethin’ else Barty”, I said. He looked at me very steadily for what seemed like a long time. “So are they, ain’t they?”, he said as the drinks arrived.

He gave a me a few moments silence to reflect on the many years of friendship represented not only by our presence here, but by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, who made a rank neo more than welcome, and now by the Vegrants who took me in with open arms with the promise of many years of friendship to come.

The beer tasted good, and the whiskey was starting to tickle the back of my neck.

“Like coming home, Barty. It’s always like coming home.”

“Good to see yer, mate”, he said.

I never did see him pay for the drinks.

— Nic Garey

Arnie Katz

Most fans have a different motive for becoming a fan than staying one. I am no exception. In addition, I gafiated for 14 years and then returned in late 1989, which gave me a very good opportunity to ponder my relationship with Fandom.

My views have certainly changed since I entered Fandom just short of my 17th birthday and I just celebrated my 63rd birthday on July 2, 2009. It would be a sad comment on my maturity and wisdom if I hadn't learned and evolved in all those years.

If you'd asked me as Lenny and I schemed to ferret out Fandom, I would've given a succinct answer: To meet and interact with other lovers of science fiction and fantasy literature.

The idea of going to a convention of science fiction fans, attending a club or exchanging views about SF via fanzine sounded like utopia to me. My high school friends were alienated pariahs, like me, but they didn't entirely share my priorities and concerns. Fans, I could tell, would share my interest. We would no doubt spend hours, possibly days, judging stories and authors.

My short statement is true, but not accurate. It summarizes a lot of motives, some of which were not clear to me at that time. I was bookish and lonely, eager for human companionship, especially the chance to spend time with people who would accept me more or less on my own terms.

As a 17-year-old male with the usual complement of hormones, I also hoped that Fandom would lead to finding a girlfriend. The first fanzine I ever saw had photos of fans that included female fans, which gave me some hope in that direction.

I also wanted to write and, mistakenly, believed that Fandom would be a route to fulfilling that ambition. Hell, having never seen a fanzine, I half-assumed that they would have many amateur science fiction stories (and wrote one for my first fanzine, as did co-editor Lenny Bailes).

Even then, my desire to write included fandom. I'd read about fanzines and their editors in backdate magazines and wanted to try my hand at writing and publishing for this group of Major Thinkers.

Meeting the men and women who created the stories, art and prozines was part of that for me. I didn't want their autographs; (wanted to talk about their sto-



HERE
AND
BACK AGAIN

ries and, perhaps, get some topics that would inch me closer to my goal of professional writing.

My ideas changed considerably by the time Joyce and I gafiated circa 1976. I'd become much less interested science fiction and much more interested in my own writing career. At the same time, an astonishing number of our fan friends moved, or in several cases returned, to other parts of the country.

New York Fandom was large, but the supply of the kind of fans who'd made the Fanoclasts and Brooklyn Insurgents so much fun and so stimulating wasn't infinite. There were still many nice people in the city, but very few of them seemed like good friend material.

My career took off and usurped most of my waking hours. For several years, I worked as an editor during the day, including overtime, and did first *Main Event* magazine and the associated weekly radio show and later *Electronic Games* magazine in the evening.

When *EG* took off, I didn't have to work two jobs any more, but the electronic game field monopolized my attention. With Bill Kunkel and Joyce, we scored some notable successes, branched out into game design and became very well know in the electronics industry and to fans of interactive digital entertainment.

And so we gafiated. I see it as one of the stupidest decisions Joyce and I ever made. Just because we were running short of local comrades shouldn't have led to us going silent right across the board.

Fandom retreated into a tiny corner of my mind. Within a few years, it was just a hazy cloud of memory. I recalled good times and good people, but the demands of my burgeoning career kept me from dwelling on what I had lost.

I can't say I never thought of Fandom. Once or twice I even considered the possibility of a return, but inertia did its work. There was always something to write or edit or design, so I never felt the fannish urge sufficiently to break me out of my routine.

The right thing to have done was retrench on the local level and continue to maintain contact on the national and international fronts. My only explanation that things grew so arid within New York Fandom that it colored our attitude and destroyed any remnants of enthusiasm.

I enjoyed my professional work immensely – and still do. Yet a realization grew that my life lacked something. We knew a lot of people, but we didn't have the kind of deep friendships I'd had in Fandom.

My role in the electronic games field made close friendships difficult. Candidly, I avoided such industry entanglements as much as possible. I sometimes had to write negatively and I hated the thought of hurting a friend's business with serious public criticism. I owed

the readers the truth, so I shunned relationships that might compromise my willingness to tell that truth.

I also learned about the downside of fame. As a writer and editor, I acquired the kind of fame that allowed me to walk unmolested down any street.. A lot of folks knew my writing; few had seen me.

Things were entirely different within the video and computing gaming industry. Everybody knew me. At events like the Consumer Electronics Show, that spelled near-constant attention. Having people follow you around to note down your every utterance is very heady stuff, but it also got tiresome fairly quickly. As someone who likes his alone time, I found it wearying to be "on" all the time.

That's why one of the most appealing things about returning to Fandom was the sure and certain knowledge that I could be "one of the fans." I expected to excel, but I knew that wouldn't cause me to receive any special treatment. I wanted fellowship, not an entourage.

I wrote a very extensive fannish memoir as part of the process of deciding whether or not to return to Fandom. The manuscript is out of reach, buried in some obsolescent Macintosh files, but it served its intended purpose of making me reflect on my experiences, motivations and relationships in Fandom.

I've maintained a high level of fan activity for nearly 20 years, so there's not much doubt about what decision I made.

I'm a fan, and expect to remain one for the rest of my life, for three main reasons.

The first is the outlet for creative and interaction with other creative people that Fandom offers. I continue to write and edit professionally, but Fandom is a unique community that I find especially congenial.

The second is friendships. I have very little family, so Fandom has given me some of the familial feeling that I might otherwise miss. I treasure my faanish friends and I am particularly pleased that Las Vegas Fandom has offered me such an abundance of comradeship. I enjoy sitting in my office, writing or editing fan stuff, but there's nothing as creatively stimulating as the company of others who are involved in the same sort of activity.

Third, and by no means, last is the appeal of the subculture of Fandom, It is a lovely and unique alternative to the mainstream culture. Like many fans, I function pretty well in the big world outside, but I chafe under its conformity, anti-intellectualism and pointless competitiveness. I've put a lot into Fandom, but I've also been richly rewarded by it. And so the love affair continues until I embark on the trip to the Enchanted Convention.

— Arnie Katz

Greg Benford

I wanted to be a writer, but who reads anything by a 13 year old?

Answer: fans.

I realized this when I came upon the fanzine reviews in Mari Wolf's column form Imagination. (I'm a highfalutin' hard sf writer now, but truth is, I thought Astounding was stiff and formulaic. Still do.) So my brother Jim and I sent off for some of these mysterious fmz and—lo!—I saw an audience for my scribblings. I wanted to write, had so much to say, and here were eager ears!

Well, not so eager—but that just meant you had to get better. Use the hints and dodges learned by watching so many other who were better—Terry Carr, Ted White, Dean Grennell, Tucker & Willis & Shaw and so many...

I'm 68 now and those days still ring clear and true. That is the life in fandom for me, a voyage up and out and all of a piece.

So it can be for you. Use fandom for what you want—and give back to it as you must. It is a community, a huge opening in the world, a way to think about yourself and make your way.

GO FORTH! he says, and it is true.



WHY

I AM A

FAN

Trufans Speak

Tracy Benton

I'd been reading fantasy and science fiction since middle school, when I was introduced to Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series by a librarian... a librarian, come to think of it, who might have been a fan herself. But I did not find any like-minded souls up through high school.

Even though I read a lot of different stuff, from fluffy magic animal fiction to the Riverworld to every Star Trek tie-in novel in existence back then, I never seemed to find anybody who enjoyed talking about the genre. (Nor did I actually know the word "genre" at the time.) My brother, whose "Lord of the Rings" collection I had absconded with, occasionally threw me a Stainless Steel Rat novel, but we didn't talk about books very much.

Just before I entered university, my sister and I began to watch the old Doctor Who episodes being re-broadcast on public television. We had both enjoyed Star Trek and the cheesiness that was the original Battlestar Galactica, but this oddball British show, full of humor, bad effects, and occasionally incomprehensible accents captured our hearts. We huddled down every Saturday afternoon with a bowl of popcorn, and when a day-long fundraising marathon ran, we cleared our cal-

endar for the day. We could sustain an argument over Sarah Jane vs. Leela for an entire pepperoni pizza. We were a fangroup of two... nobody else we knew had any idea what we were going on about. My mother referred to it as "that weird show."

Some months later I was hiking up Bascom Hill in the dead of winter. As I chugged along in the mass of students, a figure in front of me caught my attention. A very short person was wearing a backpack utterly covered in buttons. Rather than the typical "anarchy" or "si si Sandinista" emblems popular at the time, they were photos: Tom Baker. Elisabeth Sladen. A Sontaran. A Dalek. The TARDIS.

The logo. It was *somebody who watched our show!* I hurried up behind the figure and said loudly, "Where did you get those incredible buttons?" The person stopped and turned about. She smiled at me, and I instantly registered that in addition to her other accoutrements she had a extremely long, striped, knitted scarf draped around her shoulders. This was someone who seriously, seriously liked *Doctor Who!*

"Hello," she said, "are you a fan?" I didn't interpret that phrase then as I would now, but I replied that I never missed an episode. "I've got a class now, but let me do you a favor," she said, scribbling on a piece of paper, "call me at the dorm and we'll get together and chat. Bye now!" Off she went, leaving me holding a piece of paper, which just read *Shari S.* and a phone number in the Chadbourne dormitory.

I struck up a friendship with Shari, who became one my group of "weird friends," as my mother would describe them. She loaned me books. She hauled me off to the Dungeon Masters' Association, where I met people who played D&D for the first time. She chaperoned me to my first WisCon, #8, to which I wore my own 14-foot hand-knitted scarf. We hung out together for years. But Shari and I eventually grew apart. I met a guy at the DMA (whom I later married, and divorced). Shari met a guy at the DMA (who she later married, and divorced.) I found out that LeGuin wrote somewhat better books than Alan Dean Foster. I discovered that the name for some of the outrage I'd felt for years was in fact "feminism."

I started going to the local SF book discussion. I decided I did not enjoy being killed off in D&D and stopped hanging out with the gamers, whereas Shari would answer the question "how are you?" with a ten minute description of her half-elven thief. Now, almost 30 years later, I almost never see her, though our greetings are warm when our paths cross.

Though I no longer spend time with her, I've come to recognize her for what she was: *a fannish ambassador*. SF fandom is so full of poorly socialized introverts that

it's hard for many of us to reach out to new people and draw them into the fold. The fannish ambassador is that rare breed, the fan who can recognize a kindred spirit, even when it's someone they've just met, and reach out! I owe Shari's friendliness so much: most of my college friends; all the fun I had working on WisCon for so many years; the connections I made that led me to the Turbo APA and eventually fanzine fandom. So a toast! To fannish ambassadors everywhere! For without them, fandom would be a pitiful thing indeed.

Warren Buff

So why am I a fan? That's a tough nut to crack. Most of my cognizant life (which I generally think of as beginning when I was 14) I've been a fan. I started playing Dungeons & Dragons and Rifts and Magic: The Gathering in middle school (yeah, I just dated myself – I started playing Magic in its second year, 1994, when I was in 6th grade). I was enamored of the animated version of *The Hobbit* when I was a kid, and occasionally watched *Star Trek* when I was young. I collected comics pretty early on, too. I was into stefnal material as long as I can remember. Asimov's *Norby* books, Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, and the *White Mountains* trilogy were staples of my childhood reading.

But when did I become a fan? That probably happened when I joined my high school's science fiction and fantasy club, at 14. We gamed and watched movies, mostly, but there were some book discussions, and the Diplomacy players made frequent defenses of alternate history as a valid tradition of science fiction. So we were talking. Communicating. And it was science fiction we wanted to talk about. Some folks involved in the club did a zine called *Vanguard*, though they thought of it as an independent literary mag. Still, it looked a heckuva lot like a fanzine. And by the end of my time in the club (I served as its president my last two years there), we had a lending library. It was fandom, even if it was isolated. Many of the folks I knew there are now regulars at conventions around here, so I'll say it counts.

Okay, that takes care of the how, and maybe some of the causal reasons why I became a fan. But it doesn't address why I am a fan. Is it just something that you either are or aren't on a fundamental level, and in spite of having the build for it you just decide you don't want to try out for football? I find that a little hard to believe – we do, after all, lose folks to gafia. Surely they didn't discover that they never were fans, and surely some of them do stop being fans. So why do I remain a fan?

I'll take a wild guess here and say it's the community. I really like fans, and I like being around them and talking to them, whether that's in person or remotely. I like how they'll treat you like family, and introduce you to folks by first name (even when the person you're being introduced to is the Guest of Honor at a con). I like how folks are chill enough that we can actually have the sorts of hot tub get-togethers that Heinlein wrote about. I like seeing folks respond to something I've written, and how they're not afraid to disagree with it, and mature enough to do so intelligently. I like how I can always count on some folks to have something to say, and even our trivialities are interesting.

I like how I can have a conversation about how space travel means that we no longer have to look at Rapa Nui as a microcosm for the planet, and see that half a dozen folks are following the entire discussion and contributing. I like how I can infect my friends with phrases they don't know the origins of, and then teach them a bit of fanhistory to clear it up. Community – maybe that's it.

Randy Byers

In March 1979 I traveled to Seattle with two college friends to go to my first science fiction convention. I was eighteen years old. The night before the convention we joined a large group of fans for what I didn't know yet was a traditional fannish dinner at a Chinese restaurant. In my journal (I kept a private one at the time and keep a public one now), I observed, "I was amidst strangers who were basically already my friends.... I wasn't exactly uncomfortable, but it wasn't really a pleasant experience — somewhat unfulfilled. I felt that I should be chatting away with these people, but there was very little consistent conversation. I just sat there expectantly." It took a while for this initial expectation to be fulfilled, but I knew my people when I saw them. I made the acquaintance of people on that trip who are still my friends today, thirty years later.

One of my companions on that trip, Carl Juarez, was already a fan, and the other never became a fan. We all read science fiction, but not all readers become fans, although that was something it took me years to figure out. I thought I was hanging out with this community because we all liked science fiction, but in fact we were hanging out because we liked each other. Well, I'm slow that way. In my first few years in fandom, my main interaction with the community was at conventions, although I also visited fannish friends outside of conventions.

Once I moved to Seattle in 1984, I moved into a fan-

nish household and became deeply involved in the Vanguard group of fans. Before I knew it, fandom was almost my sole social circle. I had fully integrated with my people. I lived and breathed fandom.

My adolescent dream was to become a science fiction writer, and I clung to it for many years despite a lack of any actual accomplishment on that front. Gradually I discovered fanzines as a forum for my writing and editorial talents, such as they were, and it seemed like a natural fit. Best of all it gave me an opportunity to give back to the community, which had given so much to me. So that's another reason I'm a fan: it gives me something productive to do, and it does so in a form giving me a connection to generations of like-minded people going back to the '30s. That sense of historical continuity and rootedness has gotten more important as I've gotten older.

So I came for the party, stayed for the people, and gradually discovered my roots in the history. Although I still do quite enjoy the party aspect, as some of you may have noticed. No doubt things would have turned out very differently if it hadn't been for the beer.

Jack Calvert

Arnie Katz grabs me by the elbow, fixes me with a piercing gaze, and asks the above question. Arnie has a way of asking the hard ones. I pause and think a bit, staring off into space to find the middle road between flippancy and plonking earnestness.

Not that it's hard to think of many good reasons for being a fan. One meets interesting people with a quirky sense of humor. There is the small-town feeling of everyone knowing everyone, if not in everyday reality, then in print, or in legend, and of being connected to things that have gone before. There is the pleasure of sharing the common culture of science fiction. Fanzine publishing makes a damn fine hobby. The parties are good. The secret handshake is cool. (Well, maybe not the last.)

But I knew none of these things before I found fandom, and there are many mundane folk who give fine parties and have a quirky sense of humor. Some even do amateur publishing. (And some really do have a secret handshake.) So why fandom?

I'm led back to science fiction. More exactly, back to when I first started reading it, in the days before Star Trek and Star Wars, when things sfinal were weird and outside of the mainstream. I was a shy and quiet kid to start with, not much into what the other kids were doing, and interested in this weird stuff besides that. I went from anthologies in the library to magazines, with their letters to the editor and even columns about con-

ventions and fanactivity. These bits of fannishness in the prozines gave me a clue that there might be others like me out there.

Many fans began their story that way, but it took me an inordinately long time to get to the point of actually meeting other fans -- I started reading sf in the late forties and went to my first convention in 1968. After that, I drifted away for a time, but never lost the feeling that this fandom without any first name was where I felt most at home.

And that is why I'm a fan: fandom feels like home.

Marty Cantor

There is a question, "Why am I a fan?" which can best be answered by another question, "Why not?" At least, for me, it can. However, that is really too shallow an answer as it applies in my case.

See, for much of my first 39 years on this planet, I was what might be called a proto-fan. Nowadays, people call me all sorts of other things, but cantankerousness has its pleasures, too, so I mind not too much the slings and arrows and rotten tomatoes flung my way. Besides, why worry about people who throw slings instead of using them in their proper manner?

Anyway, here I was, having this fannish attitude about things and life in general, and there was no place to go. You see, until I was discovered to fandom just before my 40th birthday, I knew nothing of this hobby/way of life.



Naturally, finding fandom, especially fanzine fandom, set off a fire of catching up with things that still stir me at times. Indeed, since that day in 1975, I have turned out almost 1400 zines of assorted types, and it does not look like this torrent of zines will stop anytime soon.

My fannish beginnings are still the area of most of my fanac. You see, my first exposure to fandom was LASFS, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. At the time I attended my first meeting, the club was residing in the first clubhouse which it owned. It has since purchased larger quarters and has resided there for about 30 years.

One of the activities I observed at my first meeting was a collation of APA-L, the APA (Amateur Press Association) put out each week at LASFS since October of 1964. It did not take all that long before I found, more than LASFS or fandom itself, APAs were my natural home within fandom, and I eventually joined several of them. More than that, about a year after I started contributing to APA-L, I found myself running it, the first of three times I have been its Official Collator (as the Official Editor is called in that APA) and I am now six years into my third stint as OC of that APA, having just put out distribution number 2300. Well, that is not too many ...

In October of 1976, LASFAPA (a monthly APA) was started at LASFS. I took over this APA with distribution number 9 and became the Little Tin God of what eventually became the Stannous Church of LASFAPA. Well, I have never minded punishing people. I ran that APA for several years before I got tired of doing so but I took it over again in the Summer of 1999 and I continue to run it to this day.

In 1980 I put out my first genzine, HOLIER THAN THOU. A zine of large size, it made the HUGO shortlist in 1984, 1985, and 1986, but never won one of those statuettes. Still, it was fun to put out that zine. For awhile, my wife was co-editor, but it still eventually got to be too much work to pub and it just drifted off and went to sleep. I mean, 50 to 100 pages of stencils to be typed on a manual typewriter, 3 or 4 times a year, with 20 or 30 illos cut and pasted into those stencils ... YEEK! Now that I look back at what we now call primitive technology, I am amazed that I produced so much work with that equipment. Remember, I was also putting out zines for my APAs at the same time. Well, my zines for APA-L were the first to go.

Eventually I dropped LASFAPA, HOLIER THAN THOU, and all of my other zineac. Indeed, I went semi-gafia in the early 1990s, a condition I maintained until I got my first computer in 1997. You see, I was more than annoyed at the number of typos I created

with every zine and decided that I had had enough of typo creation and was not going to do any more zining until I could afford a computer, a way of more easily eliminating them from what which I wrote. Well, a computer *was* an easier way to eliminate typos ... but it seems it is *never* easy to make them *completely* go away. *sigh*

With the advent of my first computer I got into my next genzine, NO AWARD. I had put out the first issue in the early 1990s but it lay dormant until I got my computer. Then I got back into LASFAPA and APA-L; again, eventually running both of them. Modern technology makes running paper APAs very, very easy as most members and contributors send me their zines as e-mail attachments and I print them on my colour laser printer. All that I have to then do is to collate and staple the disties, handing them to the local people at LASFS and mailing copies to those who live a distance from LASFS.

Producing fanzines seems to be in my blood. So, when the LASFS' monthly newsletter, *De Profundis*, needed an editor, *DP #328* (in April of 2000) was the first of over 5½ years of me producing the zine each month. Eventually, even though I enjoyed creating the zine on the computer, the hours of printing, collating, folding, stapling, et bloody cetera, 240-320 copies each month just tired me out and I resigned as editor.

LASFS has recently gone on an austerity drive, reordering spending priorities at a time when many members have been hit with the same fiscal problems as others in the current recession. As such, even though *De Profundis* has a large pdf distribution and is uploaded to a web site accessed through the LASFS web site, resulting in not many paper copies being produced, the LASFS decided to cancel the zine as there was nobody who wanted to edit an on-line only zine. Enter, me.

There are some LASFS members who do not have on-line access, and there are members who do not show up at the club all that often. As such, both paper and on-line copies of *De Prof* are important links to these members, informing them of club happenings. As such, I was *very* upset at the decision to drop publication of the club's newsletter. So I made the club an offer.

I asked the LASFS' Board of Directors if they would give me *De Profundis*. I promised to run the zine as I previously had; except, this time, the zine would be the *unofficial* club zine. I would still put in all of the announcements of special events and other items of interest as if the zine were still the club's zine. I would still provide pdf copies both for the LASFS' web site and for the LASFS' mailing list. As I subsist mainly on Social Security, a small pension, and a rent reduction for

managing the building in which I live, I told the Board that I would have to sell any paper copies I produced. However, these would be sold at my cost of producing them, and I would add the cost of a stamp if they had to be mailed. There were a few more details, including me handing the zine back to the club if it ever wanted it, but the Board agreed to turn *De Prof* over to me. As of this writing I have produced 3 monthly distributions of the zine. And, as my printer can also collate what it prints, the scut-work of zine production has become minimal and I can continue producing my current APA-L zine whilst my printer is producing the latest issue of *De Prof*.

Fanning is fun ...

Jim Caughran

As a teenager, I was shown fanzines and letter columns by a friend in school (Tom Perry). It made perfect sense to me that people would write to each other, print their own magazines, and go see each other at "conventions". It was a group I felt I belonged to, and people of all ages simply accepted me as a fan.

In those days, there were 100 or so active fans. There was only one fandom, not specialist fans like trekkers or animé or SMOFs. Oh, we made a fuss about fanzine fans and club fans, but we knew the "us" and "them" were all the same, science fiction fans.

After all these years, I still find it worthwhile. I publish apazines to engage in conversations with 6-month intervals between my comments. I contribute to online groups, where there might be 2 minutes, 2 hours, or 2 days between comments. I go to Corflu conventions;



these are the fanzine fans that I identify with.

I avoid large conventions. There is a movie-tv emphasis that I'm not terribly interested in, and since I no longer keep up with science fiction, a lot of it is lost to me. And I have a fear of being lost in the crowd. At Torcon, I spent almost all my time in the fanzine lounge.

I regret that I'm not able to keep up with incoming fanzines and write locs. Still, I love the creations, printed or electronic fanzines.

The people make the difference. There are people I've never physically met, whom I "talk" with every few days online. There are people I knew half a century ago. We're all science fiction fans, and we hang out together.

John Coxon

Why am I a fan? It's something I get asked regularly by my friends, people at school or uni who have never really come across the concept of conventions, or fanzines, or any of those words which to me seem so normal and commonplace.

There are several ways to answer the question, because the question itself can be asking any one of a multitude of things, and I'll try to answer in three or four ways (concisely, since I'm already behind the deadline that was behind the first deadline, so I need to pull the finger out!). In chronological order then, I will answer "why do you like science fiction?", "how did you become a member of fandom?", and "why are you still a fan?".

The answer to the first one is perhaps a slightly odd one. Rather than being lured to science through the wonders of science fiction, I was lured to science fiction through the beauty of science (or, more accurately, the beauty of astronomy). Throughout my life, the stars and galaxies above our heads have fascinated and enthralled me, and from a very early age I desired to find out as much as I could about that strange world.

Through that desire, at the age of twelve I watched a BBC TV programme called 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' whilst at a friend's house one evening, expecting it to be a documentary. I was instantly hooked, and that Christmas I received the radio plays on cassette. Never had my Walkman known such extensive use! That was in 2001, and so sadly, I was not a fan of the Guide until after its creator's passing.

This discovery of science fiction beyond Star Trek and Star Wars was also my route into fandom, as I became more and more caught up with the Guide and joined ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the official Hitchhiker's Guide appreciation society (no article on my route into

fandom is complete without a plug for zz9.org). I went to my first ZZ9 event at the age of fourteen. Through ZZ9 I met fans: initially on LiveJournal, but, as I got older and more able to travel to the events, I met people in Real Life as well. Through those fans, I got into fanzine-editing, and convention-going (in that order).

The last question is the easiest to answer, since I'm preaching to the converted. Why am I still a fan? I get to go to weekend-long gatherings of people who are interested in the same things I want to talk about but still have disagreements of opinion that will let me think about things in a new and exciting way. I get to publish and read zines in which people write about things that I want to read about. I even get to commission articles from friends if I want to read about something that nobody's written about yet. I get to expect people I meet at cons to have...

Why am I a fan? I enjoy being part of such a vibrant and interesting community of people. Being a fan is a part of my life without which I would be half the man I am today, and I don't want to let that go.

Dian Crayne

"But Arnie," I said to myself, when I got his note, "I'm not a fan! I don't belong to SAPS or FAPA anymore, I don't go to conventions, and there isn't a local club within 150 miles!

Me? Write an article on why I'm a fan? Arnie, you have got rocks in your fannish head.

True, there was a time when I *was* a fan. I sort of wandered into it. I was a Theatre Arts major at Los Angeles City College, and another aspiring actor in the department knew about a local sf fan club. My boyfriend at the time was all hot to go to a meeting. He'd been reading *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, wanted to be a makeup man on science fiction films, and thought he might meet a *contact* at the club.

He nagged me into going because he didn't drive and I was the one with the car. I wasn't interested, but anything to keep the peace, right? Thus are femme fans finagled and that's why, one Thursday evening in June of 1961, I found myself at a LASFS meeting, held at the home of John and Bjo Trimble.

I loved it. These people were even stranger than theatre folk!

After a couple more meetings, I joined up. The boyfriend and I split, but the LASFS and I were soul mates.

What captured me was the sheer relief of being with people who understood and enjoyed science fiction and fantasy. My father was a big sf fan and we had a home library of books and prozines, but I had never before been with a *whole group* of people who had the same

love of it. Hey, fans spoke my language

From the LASFS it was a short step to conventions and then to apa fandom. I loved fanzines. My father wanted me to name one of mine *Arnel*. "So you can tell people to do right by it," he said, which tells you the sort of humor my dad had

That was 48 years ago.

Aside from a casual connection with the *Cult* (now defunct) I've been gafia for a long time now. True, I do contribute to SNAPS, and I am a member of the Trufen mailing list... and I enjoy being part of the Corflu virtual lounge every year... and the LASFS claims that "death will not release you"...

Y'know, Arnie, maybe you're right. Maybe I *am* still a fan.

Ken Forman

Stepping off the curb and into the amazing current that is Fandom can be a daunting event. I know it swept my feet out from under me. There is always the question or issue of what exactly is Fandom, or more precisely, what is a Fan? I certainly am not going to rehash all that has been previously written on the subject. Loads of folks far more erudite than I have expounded on the subject until the words have leaked out of the pages like runny ink out of a Rex Rotary. The biggest issue that confounds most newbies is the sheer plethora of possibilities. It used to be simpler. Fandom used to be all-encompassing and all-inclusive. Unfortunately, little-f fandom has been splintered into multifaceted shards and big-F Fandom is claimed by most all.

The confusion surrounding such obfuscation leads many into passionate arguments and sometimes causes bad feelings between dissenting groups. Most folk feel their version of fandom is The Fandom.

How sad that would make some of the fannish luminaries to know that the hobbies they enjoyed are now the subject of stress and strife amongst fans. Consider as examples Jack Speer or Poul Anderson. Jack participated in one of the earliest convention Masquerades wearing a (perhaps the first) propeller beanie. He was also one of the grand old fans who were part of Fandom pretty much from its inception – publishing fanzines, helping with conventions, writing and singing filk, as well as participating in masquerades. To suggest, even to hint that Jack's contribution was *only* masquerades or *only* fanzines or *only* conventions does a grave disservice to the man.

Poul Anderson (with his wife Karen and a few others) founded the Society of Creative Anachronism in the Anderson's back yard. I know modern-day fandom tends to eschew live action role playing groups like the

SCA. But when you consider that some of the big names in professional SF circles were the progenitors of such activities, it's easy to see the connection between All-Of-Fandom and its sub-genres. The important part of this, though, is to understand that fandom came about as a generalist hobby and not as a specifically guided practice.

This is why I am a fan. I enjoy so many of the pieces of fandom that I **must** consider myself a fan. That's the easy answer. The hard answer isn't really so hard to understand.

Fandom is a party. But just like many parties, there are pockets of party-goers who tend to be somewhat cliquish. Such cliques at a party can be off-putting, for sure. The same is true with fandom. Unfortunately when new folks come to a party and the first (or only) people they encounter are the cliquish groups, it's no fun at all. Again, the same is true with fandom. Far too many newbies first meet fans who are certain that *their* particular version of fandom is *the* fandom. If they happen to like that particular version, then the new initiate is happy they've found "fandom." Chances are that they won't be that interested, and will wander away (metaphorically) looking for other diversions.

But I'm not trying to write about what's wrong with fandom. I want to address what's right about it.

I've said many times before that the best analogy for fandom isn't "Fandom is a Party;" nor is it "Fandom is a Parade." Both have value when talking about fandom, but I think the better analogy is that Fandom is like a family. Families squabble amongst themselves. They may not like all portions of the family tree. Sure, Uncle Towner might have been an ass, but he was one hell of a writer. Of course Cousin Springer never seems to come to many events, but we can be sure that he thinks of us as fondly as we think of him. Brother Hooper might lose his temper from time to time, but most of the time, he's a brother I'm glad I have. Even Grandpa Earl gets persnickety now and then, but damn it, he's still a great guy and listening to his stories is always worth the time. Fandom is a family you get to choose. The reunions are grand fun, too.

Unfortunately much of this family is scattered across the globe. This is both good and bad. The good side is that you generally don't have them dropping in at all hours of the night asking to borrow stencils or stylists. The bad side is that these interesting, fun, and wonderful relatives tend to be very good at what was once called "bull sessions." Fans love to talk. They tell stories. They share anecdotes. And they effectively communicate. But the physical reunions tend to be few and far between so those bull sessions often go late into the night.

It is a fortunate thing that many fans also write (either as a job or a hobby). Their essays are likely to be interesting and well worth reading. When I sit down and read what other members of my fannish family have been doing or their thoughts on different topics, it's almost like sitting down next to them. Of course, the discourse tends to be a little one-sided, but that is easily mended. All I have to do is respond in kind.

I suppose to sum everything up; I fan because it's fun. I fan because my fannish family is filled with wonderful interesting people. I fan because it's fun.

Chris Garcia

I haven't thought about that much. I've been a fan longer than I've known what fandom is, having been brought to my first con before I could speak or walk, but really, I think it's far more important to think of why I've become a fan again, having drifted away for so long. The answer to that's much harder, I guess.

I think it's because I like tacos.

I started going to cons again because the Computer History Museum got invited to BayCon by Kathryn Daugherty. Someone had to go, and I had been to cons as a kid with Pops, so I was the one chosen. I hadn't thought much about fandom for years, and stepping back into BayCon, I realized that this was a place I wanted to be. A couple of years later, at the Seattle Westercon, I found fanzines again, for the first time in more than a decade, and I started reading *Mimosa*, *Niekas*, *Emerald City*, the fine zines that had a web presence. It was 2004 when I discovered eFanzines, sent my first LoC off to Earl Kemp and my first article off to Jan Stinson. At that point, I was hooked.

None of that answers why I'm a fan, though. That's a very easy, and I imagine, a much more boring one to read. It's because I've found so many great friends of every type in fandom. Some of my closest friends are scattered around the world, some of them I've only met in the pages of zines, in the pixels that scream across my screen from blogs and eMail. I've got good friends in cities like London, Los Angeles, Boston, Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington, and Vegas. Fandom is responsible for amazing people coming into my life, and once you've got a taste of that, how can you give it up?

So, why am I a fan? Certainly part of the answer is you, the good folks who are reading this. You're a part of a long line of good people who I've met in fandom who I've come to consider as friends, even if we've never met. You've taken the time to become a part of something wonderful, and that makes you a part of the answer.

John Nielsen Hall

Once upon a very gloomy time, back in post-war, post-imperial England, there was a sickie kid who read a lot. He read so much that not a few adults thought he would be still sicker if he didn't stop reading so much and go play football or cricket or indeed anything rather than sit in doors all day hogging the fire, head in a book. (You will gather from this it was the school holidays.) Well, that sickie boy had a few friends at school he swapped comics with (these were weekly papers, not comic books like you may be familiar with) and he didn't mind reading about football and cricket, but he didn't really see himself actually running about or standing in a field doing either. (Later in life he did a bit of cricket, but retired when he achieved his life-time best of 20 off of three overs, out caught behind.)

But then he got older, and music and girls came into his life (that's probably the right order) and Little Johnny (for it was he), came into his own. Motivated to actually go out and socialize (because he wanted to ride in cars and meet girls), he met lots more people , and found from talking to them that they actually liked a lot of the things he liked. Chiefly these things were girls (or boys— it varied according to who you might be talking to and not always because they might be wearing a dress-- the person you were talking to, that is... err, yeah) and cars, but he also found that a lot of them also liked music, and some even liked Science Fiction! “What,!” you gasp “ Science Fiction? Where did that come from? Is that the same thing as cricket?” No. I reply.

Lets rewind a bit – the comics, remember those? Well most of them featured endless funnies, but some of them had strips that told stories. There was a Western and a long running saga of the Foreign Legion, and on the cover was a Science Fiction strip – the inimitable Dan Dare— Pilot Of The Future! (*I've pirated a sample page from the web). Dan Dare, though he was basically a stiff-upper lip “What-ho chaps” sort of flying ace (who smoked a pipe in the early strips) transplanted to outer space. But he sparked something in me, and soon after I first read those strips I was devouring written SF by any and all means. And one day around 1963. I was reading a magazine and I saw an ad for the British Science Fiction Association. Gosh-wowoboyoboy, that looked like exactly the thing I should belong to. I wrote off with a postal order, toute suite!

And I heard from a strange cove called Archie Mercer. Archie, was the soul of kindness- he not only sent me a lot of info about the BSFA itself, but included with it info about Fanzines and addresses to write to for

sample copies of these. I duly wrote off for these, and was amazed at what I got back in the post. I remember getting fanzines like LES SPINGE, ALIEN, and NADIR. These were the first fanzines I ever received, and LES SPINGE was just wonderful, having writers like Mike Moorcock within. Archie also put me in touch with other fans, and I got busy writing to them. Within a couple of months, I was sure I could put out a fanzine. Within a couple of years, I did. ZINE was predictably lamentable.

Archie Mercer was actually way too efficient. It was clear to me within three or four years that I really had no interest in the BSFA. Fandom was where it was at. It wasn't simply a case of having discovered a bunch of people who read Science Fiction; the more interesting thing was what we all had in common, of which Science Fiction was only a part. The less interesting thing was Science Fiction itself, though nowadays, in my dotage, I am reading it again avidly.

Cars sort of faded from my life. For many years I was too strapped for cash to do anything much with them. Music remained a big focus as did Girls, of course, who remained a very constant and often pressing interest. But there was plenty of other folk interested in music in fandom, and there were girls, too. I met my first wife through fandom, the late and ever-missed Julia Stone, who I first met in the company of Mary Reed. Before Julia and I really seriously got it on there were one or two other fannish affairs, and of course there was the time I spent in the free love free for all that the SF writer John Brunner had contrived for a home life. (I've written about that in PROLAPSE 7, available on eFanzines.com). So, all in all, fandom provided most things that I needed.

The biggest influence on my fannish life was Ratfandom. The Rats were a group of fans in London that began in the early seventies after its twin founders — Roy Kettle and Greg Pickersgill— met in the late sixties. I lived for a while in an adjoining bedsit to Roy, and Greg shared a hovel about a mile away with John Brosnan. Also present was Robert Holdstock, whose girlfriend lived very close to us, even if he didn't (and the least said about that even after all these years, the better.) The Rats changed British fandom, I would say forever, and even had an effect in America. We were loud, rude and very disrespectful, and we got drunk and fell over quite a lot. The Rats fanzines had titles that most reflected that- FOULER, TRUE RAT, BIG SCAB for instance, and they were, at least in the early days, the antithesis of the values of fanzines up to that point. They were badly duplicated, badly laid out and contained lots of scurrilous gossip and four letter words. They were marvellous. For a flavour of what Ratfan-

dom was like, I recommend looking at the collection of John Brosnan's writings published after his death by Kim Huett. It's called YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE and it's available on eFanzines.com. My favourite is the story THE GOOD OLD DAYS WENT THATAWAY. Mind you, it's all a pack of lies.

Though I drifted away (actually, I was never really that far away) it was inevitable I would be back, and I now inhabit InTheBar on line and at last produce something approaching what I hope is a decent fanzine. (MOTORWAY DREAMER- it's on eFanzines.com- but you knew that.) I am very old. Most dwellers In-TheBar are. But fandom is our life, and it's been very good to us all. My fan friends are nearly all my oldest and dearest friends. I owe them so much, did they but know it. And THAT'S why I am still a fan.

Rob Hansen

Why Am I a Fan? I became a fan when I attended my first convention as a reader of science fiction who was keen to actually meet some of those who wrote my favourite literature, and realized that those attending were My People, that I had found my tribe. That's a powerful thing to have happen to you. I wasn't at all unhappy with my life pre-fandom, but now I had found others who viewed things much as I did, people who understood. That was more than thirty years ago and despite my enthusiasm waxing and waning several times over that period, and a few unpleasant incidents, I'm still here. Why? Like I said, these are my people.

Why would I want to leave?

Jay Kinney

To put it succinctly, it's the enduring friendships. I started out in comics fandom, but by the end of highschool I'd largely shifted into SF fandom. However, once I came under the Svengali-like influence of, ahem, Arnie Katz, as well as rich brown, Ted White, and other NY fans, I began to enjoy fandom for its own sake. These days I don't read much SF at all and have more contact with comics fandom than I'd had for decades (largely due to the Timely/Atlas Yahoo list and Roy Thomas's revived Alter Ego zine). But fannish fandom continues to contain a significant number of my friends. I enjoy receiving fanzines, going to Corflu, and taking long walks on the beach. No, wait! Where'd that personal ad come from? These days, with the increased contact between Brits and Yanks, it is an added bonus to have an ocean-spanning network of other fans to meet up with in our travels. OK, my fannish participation is pretty low-key and

admittedly sporadic, but I'm still here and am glad I am.

Guy Lillian

First of all, let me thank Arnie for including me on his "little prohect". (I imagine "prohect" means "project" in Veganese.) I first learned about Arnie from the memoirs of Lon Atkins in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, and later got a chance to scan NEMESIS #1, El Katz's first publication for that group. I have eagerly sought exposure to Arnie's words and zines from that point onward.

So while I'm brown-nosing, I'll answer the basic questions Arnie asked in his invitation, especially #3 and #4, by saying the greatest moment I had in fandom was meeting Arnie and Joyce at their house after Confrancisco, and basking in the glow of ... Oh, I can't go on. In all seriousness, that WAS a very nice visit. Got to meet Chamberlain, as well as eat every doughnut in the house.

Let's answer Arnie's questions for real. I got into fandom first, by reading and watching SF since Day One -- comics, SF movies, Andre Norton, Heinlein juveniles -- nothing original in that. I got into ORGANZIED fandom through the kindness of Poul Anderson, who lived in my neck of the woods, tolerated a visit from me when I was 18, and invited me to meet the Little Men, the great Northern California SF club. Simultaneously, my teenaged letters to comics got me asked to join the New Orleans Science Fiction Association, a younger group (my family had moved there) and it was as member of both these hallowed groups that I began to experience fandom as an in-person, social community. The answer to question #2 -- I was "captured" by the community of like souls -- and, the opportunity to bloviate on paper in oneshot fanzines. I still do that -- October will mark the 40th *gad* anniversary of the GHLE Press.

#3 -- my happiest day in fandom. Probably it was the day in 1977 when Rose-Marie Green, the most beautiful girl in science fiction, came up to me at a DeepSouthCon in Birmingham and asked if she could join me at the convention banquet and talk. 26 years later we flew to Australia as DUFF delegates (the day we climbed Hanging Rock -- *that* was a wonder), and 32 years later, we're planning our trip to the Montreal worldcon.

I imagine the above mush would make readers think that I'd name Rosy as the most memorable fan I've ever known, and I suppose that's so -- but outside of matrimony I'd name Julie Schwartz. He published the letters to DC Comics I wrote as a teenager. He became my

sponsor and one of my bosses when I worked for DC Comics as (very) young man. He became my corridor-crawling companion at innumerable conventions after he retired. Next to my father he's the man who most influenced my life. I miss him more than I can say.

Why am I a fan? That's like asking, why do I metabolize? Fandom has brought me adventure and stability, excitement and relaxation, extraordinary recognition and the comfort of being one of a great crowd, and an outlet for my creativity. Plus the joy of knowing people like Julie, Joe Green, Roger Sims, Lynn Hickman, Robin Johnson, Peggy Rae Sapienza, the Sons of the Sand, Roy Lafferty, Poul, Mike Resnick, a million others, and yes, Arnie and Joyce and the Veggrants. Why don't you guys run for a worldcon? We'll show up.

Dick Lupoff

The first six years were wonderful. I was a Depression Baby but my father was a shrewd and very hard-working businessman and we weathered the economic storm nicely. We were an extended family: parents, maternal grandmother, mildly eccentric aunt and her husband or boyfriend *du jour*, my older brother and myself. And a white, cheerful dog named -- Whitey.

The first home I remember was a comfortable combination brick and *faux* Tudor in a comfortable middle-class section of New York City.

Then my mother died. Scratched her shoulder on a rusty screen, developed septicemia and died. In her thirties. If there had been antibiotics she would have been up and around in a few days. But even penicillin, the great-granddaddy of antibiotics, was yet to be available, and that was her end. I have only a few, small-boy memories of her.

As Kurt Vonnegut would say, So it goes.

My home life had been idyllic. Plenty of emotional nurturing, intellectual stimulation, freedom and love and encouragement of creativity. I could read before I ever saw the inside of a school, wrote and illustrated my first book, such as it was, at age five. It was called *An Adventure*.

And suddenly Jerry and I were packed off to military school. My world was turned upside down. Affection was replaced by discipline. Intellectual stimulation was replaced by rote learning. Freedom and love and creativity were replaced by obedience and punishment and conformity.

Hell on Earth? You got it!

After a while my father married again. You've probably heard horror stories about stepmothers. Yup. That was her. To a tee.

And then I discovered science fiction. Talk about escape literature! No longer was I restricted to those stringent rules, that choking uniform, those harsh punishments. That *verdammt* school might hold my body prisoner but my mind was free.

Did I mention that my family was Jewish? We weren't very observant and I wouldn't have minded a purely secular environment, but the military school was also a Christian institution. Daily chapel services and Sunday worship mandatory.

I made up my own lyrics to go with the hymns and while the rest of the congregation was singing *What a Friend we have in Jesus* or *The Old Rugged Cross*, I was singing along to their tune but with my own words. And I would smuggle outside reading matter into church and hide it inside my hymnal. The preacher might be waving his arms and threatening sinners with eternal fire and brimstone. Didn't bother me a bit. I was either cruising the starlanes with Kimball Kinnison of the Galactic Patrol or tramping across the moors of Staffordshire with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson or shuddering at the eldritch horrors of ghoulish Arkham.

And then – then! – I discovered fandom. I read the feature columns in *Startling Stories* and *Amazing Stories* and *Imagination* and learned about something called fanzines. I received an allowance of fifty cents a week in those days, and I managed to get work in the school kitchen and dining room waiting tables and washing dishes for fifty cents a meal. I made a tidy little income that way.

I mailed off my proverbial sticky dimes and quarters and back came copies of *Quandry* and *Oops!* and *Hypphen* and *Grue* and soon I was corresponding with Lee Hoffman and Gregg Calkins and Walt Willis and Dean Grennel. They might or might not have known that I was a miserable prisoner in a military school. They were science fiction fans and I was a science fiction fan and that was all that mattered.

Fandom was a world whose values were respect for intelligence, encouragement of creativity, individualism, freedom, and a goodly degree of mutual emotional support. That last, fan-feuds notwithstanding.

If science fiction had freed my mind from imprisonment, fandom now freed my soul.

Eventually I got out of that miserable school. I understand that it no longer exists, bypassed by changing *mores* and values, and good riddance to it and its ilk. College was better, and the rest of my life has been better than that. But if ever anyone owed a debt of gratitude to fandom, I'm it.

Why a fan? Hey, Why a duck?

Now you know.

Mike McInerney

How I got into fandom isn't much of a story since it was the usual way that most fans did it back in 1959. Why might be more interesting I guess. I was 15 years old, living in a brand new house in a brand new neighborhood and commuting 20 miles each way on the train to high school. There were no classmates living near me. There were no kids my age living near me. I was feeling isolated. I had no one to talk to, so I got heavily into books especially sf and fantasy. I read everything the library had on the shelves. All the H G Wells, Jules Verne, Poe, all the Bradbury, Heinlein, Clarke and then I read all the sf anthologies. This was easier to do back then as they only had about 100 sf books in the public library.

So I realized that the anthologies had stories from the sf magazines and decided to give them a try. Starting with *Astounding*, *F & SF*, *Galaxy* and *Fantastic Universe* I soon grew to really enjoy the letter columns. These folks shared my interest and I started noticing some names recurring. To really spark my entry into fandom I found fanzine reviews in *Fantastic Universe* and decided to send off some sticky quarters to 3 or 4 zines.

The first fanzine I received back was *Cry Of The Nameless* and to my amazement my name was mentioned in the WAHF column! I was hooked right then and have never regretted "joining" fandom. Since that day I have considered myself a "fanzine fan."

One of my first correspondents was rich brown. We traded letters at least once a week and some of those letters were 15 to 20 pages of advice on fandom and stories of its history and people. Robert Lichtman also became a mentor, convincing me that I could publish my own fanzine and telling me about apas. He recommended N'APA the N3F apa as a good starting place. When my fanzines were so badly reproduced (by me) I decided that for my first genzine I needed help and I "hired" Ted White to run it for me. I made a trip to NYC and crashed on Dick Lupoff's couch at night and spent the days at Towner Hall where Ted showed me how to cut a stencil, slip sheet, and even got Bob Stewart to do the cover and illos for my ish! Six months before none of these fen had ever met or heard of me, but they were so helpful to this young neo, that I've been happy to be their friend for lo these 50 years!

My happiest day in fandom is hard to pick. Probably the first day when I started FISTFA (Faanish, Insurgent, Scientifictional Association) and people actually came to my apartment in NYC to sit around and have a mini party every other Friday night. I was glad that most of the Fanoclasts came, and very happy to also

find other fans from different segments of NYC fandom could come and get along so well together. Other than conventions it was the only place that all fans were welcome without dues, rules, regulations or blackballs

It always delighted me when pros, Lunarians or members of CCSF or ESFA came by to spend an evening at my place on the lower east side!

Fandom is a place with a long memory. Yes there are occasional feuds and arguments, but friendships are more common and last longer. About 5 or 6 years ago I needed a new computer. Billy Pettit heard about this and arranged for me to pick up an orange IMAC which the company he was working for was getting rid of at cost. He showed me how to use and set it up. He spent a long time helping me learn how to use it and even threw in a brand new printer for \$50. When I asked him why he was being so nice to me he said that he remembered how nice I had been to him in the mid 1960's when he visited NYC and crashed at my place for 3 or 4 days. I had forgotten all about that, but Billy is a trufan and exemplified the goodness that fandom can bring out in people. Thanks Billy, I really appreciate it.

So in summary fandom is more like a real family than my blood family, and the thing is, they don't have to be so nice. They just are because they WANT to be like that. So I don't feel isolated any more wherever I go, I feel like I have friends and family. That is why I am a fan!

Lloyd Penney

What a question to ask, hm? Sometimes, I wonder myself. Not only why, but why so long. A look at the years of travel, good times, good friends and acquaintances answers the question every time. But, the reason why I'm a fan goes back to my initial interests, namely science fiction.

Some of this, I've already disclosed in past locs, but... I first got interested in science fiction when I was a kid. My mother was looking for books of short stories to read in between household chores, and she wound up bringing home anthologies by Donald Wollheim, Terry Carr, Horace Gold and many more. Bookworm that I've always been, I had a look, and was instantly hooked, reading tales of alternate realities, strange characters, time travel and exotic worlds just beyond the Rim. Around that same time, the family was watching Star Trek, Thursdays at 8pm, and then Fridays at 10:30pm, on NBC, and not only did this show bring the family together at least once a week, but it also opened my eyes to exotic lands and people. If people ask me if I'm a lifan or a mediafan, I am tempted to say yes...

My interests in both literary and media SF sometimes made me a target at school, especially a high school famed for its thugs and sports teams. And, as I suspect many of us were, I was a loner because of that. There was no one to share that interest with, no one to tell it to, no outlet for that interest. Because I was into both books and television, I bought books on Star Trek, especially those by Gene Roddenberry, Steven Whitfield and David Gerrold, which detailed something called fandom, which seemed to be a group of people who shared my particular interests, and who I could mingle with. I hoped that I might find this fandom at some point, and it took a move across country to do just that. I was very lucky; I believe that there are many potential fans out there who never come across fandom. The right book, the right notice on television, the right group, the right move...very lucky.

I needed an outlet for my interest in science fiction, I needed a way to break out of my shell and stop being a loner, and I needed an outlet for expression and to do something. Fandom provided it all. For writing, fanzines have always done it for me, and allowed me to do what I've always wanted to do...didn't get to do it for a living, but still... For creative outlet, we've participated in masquerades in the past, allowing Yvonne to create costumes, and use her dressmaking and tailoring skills. We're getting back into costuming a little bit, and having more fun. To create something and help the good times happen, we've created and managed conventions, which help develop valuable business and people skills. Looks good on the resume. Finally, as a loner in high school, fandom has allowed me to meet people, not only friends to last a lifetime, but also a wife and lover, 26 years and still going. I cannot think of anything else I could do that would allow me the license to do the things I like, have a helluva good time on a regular basis, do something creative and constructive, and have the friends and acquaintances I have, all over the world.

So, why am I a fan? To have a life I've always wanted, to surround myself with friends, and to pursue all my interests. I am a fan to be a person, as much of a person as I can.

Mark Plummer

It's difficult to resist the temptation to be flip in explaining 'Why I am a fan' -- because I was too tall for the numismatists league -- or to fall back on simple pragmatics: because I have nowhere to keep a collection of classic cars, because I was never any good at soccer, because it's cheaper than playing golf (although I'm not convinced by that last one).

A true albeit negative reason is that I no longer know how not to be a fan, so comprehensively is fandom entwined throughout every aspect of my life outside of my workplace. And as my partner's a fan we have to sink or swim on this one together.

A better answer is to simply list some names, past and present: fannish greats, influences, friends, in the UK and overseas. I'm a fan because they are. It'd need to be a long list and to pick out only a few examples seems invidious. And yes, I admit that I could probably compile a not inconsiderable list of names that contraindicate participation in fandom but we just ignore them, right? They don't count. They're not us.

Or maybe I just need to dish out copies of the 50th anniversary issue of *Amazing Science Fiction Stories*, June 1976, edited by Ted White. Not for any of the stories, but for Susan Wood's 'Clubhouse' column wherein she explains rather neatly, I think, why I am a fan. We never met,

Susan and I -- she died several years before I discovered fandom -- and she was ostensibly writing about events that took place on the far side of the globe (the first Australian Worldcon) when I was eleven years old, but that just makes her achievement all the more remarkable.

All of that's rather more about why I remain a fan though, so if I'm looking for a pivotal event it would have to be a convention, Mexicon II, in Birmingham, in February 1986. I've revisited that convention on paper again and again in the intervening twenty-four years, and sometimes I wish I could revisit it (with Claire this time) for real. I'd been a fan to some extent for about a year by then, and went along to Mexicon II rather than any other convention on a whim, driven as much by the chance of a cheap rail ticket as anything else. Looking back, I can't be sure how much of its personal influence comes from the fact that it was simply my first convention, when staying in a hotel was in itself a novelty, but I know that it left me with a profound sense that there's something going on around here even if what it is ain't exactly clear -- and yet equally I think I knew from the off that it was something I wanted to understand, to be a part of. I remember steeling myself to attempt to articulate this to Greg Pickersgill just after the closing ceremony although I fear articulacy was not a characteristic of whatever it was I said. It took me a few years more to get what was going on, and sometimes I wonder whether there are aspects still to get and whether that's necessarily a bad thing.

Andy Porter

My father had died in 1955 when I was 9, and the

family moved back to NYC from Detroit. (We moved to NYC the weekend of NYCon 2, in 1956, definitely a weird coincidence.) For me, born in Detroit, NYC was a totally alien environment, with different words for things, different accents, apartment buildings and crowded streets instead of leafy houses with wide lawns, a hated school system determined to pound me into conformity. Within a few years I found escape and comfort in reading SF: first the *Ace Doubles*, which I got from my older brother, then the magazines, starting with *AMAZING's* 35th anniversary issue with its Sense of Wonder Frank R. Paul cover, and *F&SF*, with a cover showing a robot watching the moon rise over a blasted landscape.

Donald A. Wollheim changed my life. When I was very wet behind the ears, barely a teenager, not even aware of fandom, before I even knew what the word "neo" meant, I was making quite a name for myself in fannish circles, as "the phone fan"—a very immature proto-fan. Trying to make contact with SF authors, I scoured the Bronx and Manhattan phone books, looking for writers to call.

And call them I did—in some cases using Bob Silverberg's name as an entry wedge, because I was Andy Silverberg then, before my Mom remarried and changed my name—and wasted their time. What I suppose I was really doing was trying to make contact, to show appreciation for the SF writers who allowed me to escape a confused and rather lonely existence. By

I IMPOSE SANCTIONS
AGAINST THIS FANZINE!



calling authors, I was reaching out. There they were, listed in the phone book, where lonely kids could contact them. Many authors allowed me to blather on. I discovered later that I was becoming quite an amusing figure in fanzine letter columns of the day.

Don Wollheim was one of the few who took me seriously, as a young person trying, needing to communicate. I must have been 13, maybe 14 at the time; I'd been reading SF since I was 10.

"What you need is fandom," is more or less what Don told me, and more to the point, he told me how I could contact this miraculous community. He gave me the names and phone numbers of two fans.

One was Frank Dietz, who headed the New York SF Society, the Lunarians, which had an annual convention, Lunacon. Back then, of course, Lunacon was a one afternoon event which attracted fewer than a hundred attendees. The other was Ted White, host of the New York Fanoclats, an ultra-fannish group whose ranks at one time or another have included Pat and Dick Lupoff, Bob and Barbara Silverberg, Larry and Noreen Shaw, Don and Elsie Wollheim, Lin Carter, Dave Van Arnam, Rich Brown, Steve Stiles, Jon White and many others.

Ted refused to have anything to do with me. I was, I now know, way too neoish—too young, enthusiastic, inexperienced in fannish ways—to fit into his crowd. But I did fit right in with the Lunarians. My first fannish contact, I dimly remember now, was the Lunarians Christmas party in December, 1960. There I met people like Sam Moskowitz, Frank and Belle Dietz, Milt Spahn, George Nims Raybin, who smoked a pipe that looked like a cigar, James Taurasi, Frank Prieto, and other people, most of whom had been active fans since the 1940s or even earlier.

I found an outlet for my proto-fannish energies with the Lunarians, and with fanzines published by some members. Incredible as it seems now, by early 1962 I was doing a column for Jimmy Taurasi in *Science Fiction Times* about what future paperbacks were coming out. In fandom I made new friends, very important for someone who was looked down on, belittled for reading SF. I found people who would accept me for my abilities, for my potential, for what I could contribute to a conversation, whether in person or in print. By 1963, I was publishing my first fanzine.

I've got a copy of that very first fanzine in front of me. It was pre-ditto, pre-mimeo. Done using carbon paper with heavy pressure on the typewriter keys, in an edition of 3 copies. Yes, *Algol* #1, sent to 3 people: Ed Meskys, Donald Wollheim, and Frank Wilimczyk. Frank—a book designer at John Wylie whose mother gave away his SF collection while he trained for the

invasion of Japan—alas, died in the mid 1970s. Ed presses on, still publishing fanzines and attending convention, his eyesight gone but not his enthusiasm. And, Don Wollheim..

This man, this fan, who changed my life, who set me on the path I'm on now, and have been, quite happily, for more than three quarters of my life, is gone now, but his legacy lives on, both in fandom, and through DAW Books, which he founded and which his daughter carries on. And who can forget Don's publishing Tolkien, which changed SF/Fantasy publishing forever. Some of the things you read in SF are true: Heinlein told us all, and instilled in me the value, that debts must be paid. I pay this debt always willingly, never ending the acknowledgment that if it hadn't been for Don, I have no idea where I'd be now. It's a debt that I can never repay, but perhaps can pay forward, by setting others on the path to enlightenment, to a fannish way of life.

Does this make any sense? Don Wollheim was the first to give me a sense of what fandom could be like, what a life lived in fandom could be. And it's no longer a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. I've met so many good friends, so many wonderful people that I would never have come in contact with under any other circumstances. More, I'm a member of a worldwide community, a global village. This is so much truer today, with the Internet, and the Yahoo groups called Pulp-mags, Trufen, Fmzfen that I'm in and which take up so much of my time. But it all started with Don Wollheim, and I can't say it often enough.

John Purcell

It was pure serendipity when Arnie Katz requested a brief "something" from me for enlightening new Vegants. Recently I've been thinking about what really appealed to me about fandom and why I stayed. There have been a few things which convinced me that Fandom was a great place to be.

The first thing that did it was the people. I found SF Fandom in Minneapolis in 1973, that fact by itself should send ghosh-whow shivers up any reputable fan's spine. Like all of the fans I have met over the years, Minneapolis fans then – and now – were the friendliest, most accepting people I ever met. Over the years that feeling has been affirmed through meeting fans from around the world. It is very simple: fans are great people, and I count them among my closest friends.

The second big appeal of Fandom was the chance to write and express myself. I can thank Fred Haskell for this; he was the editor of RUNE, the clubzine of the

Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc. in the mid-70's, who encouraged me to write book reviews and locs. So I did. Then I started pubbing and mailing out my own zines in 1976. Getting response from other like-minded fans only fueled this fire. It was a lot of fun, and it *still* is a lot of fun to pub zines. Only the medium has changed. And boy, has it! But the fun hasn't changed, and that is A Good Thing.

Finally I would have to say that attending my first non-Minneapolis convention in July, 1975 hammered the last twill-toned nail into my fannish coffin. My best friend from high school, who also joined Minn-stf at about the same time I did, and I drove down to Kansas City for Byobcon 5 (now known as ConQuest) and we had a grand old time. That's where I met Gil Gaier, Bill Fesselmeyer, Ken Keller, and scores of other really fine fen, plus I even had the chance to meet and talk for a long time with writers like Harlan Ellison, James Gunn, and Bob Tucker in a relaxed atmosphere. It was just as much fun as going to Minicons, and that Byobcon convinced me that fandom is truly a wonderful place to hang out with your friends. It didn't matter where you were, so long as your friends were there, it was worth it.

Quite frankly, I wouldn't have it any other way.

Dan Steffan

Bat-mania, Eric Roberts, *The Runaway Robot*, "He who controls magnetism controls the Universe," Robert E. Howard, *Castle of Frankenstein*, Frank Frazetta, Wally Wood, *Galaxy*, Robert Sheckley, Jack Gaughan, *Worlds of IF*, Vaughn Bode, "Our Man in Fandom," *Yandro*, Roger Zelazny, *Le Zombie*, Kurt Shoemaker, *Granfalloon*, Pghlange 2, Jeff Schalles, *Beabohema*, Jay Kay Klein, William Rotsler, *Lizard Inn*, Jerry Lapidus, *Amazing Stories*, Lisa Tuttle, *The Neo-fan's Guide*, Harlan Ellison, *Energumen*, Grant Canfield, *Focal Point*, Joyce Katz, *Rats!*, John D. Berry, *Syndrome*, Frank Lunney, "Ensign Fred," Terry Carr, *Torcon 2*, Jay Kinney, "And now for something completely different," Bill Bowers, *Warhoon*, Phil Dick, *Science Fiction Review*, The Dillons, *The Wizard of Earthsea*, Ted White, *Hot Shit*.

Fabulous False Crutch Fandom, *Egoboo*, richard wayne brown, Pink Floyd, *Carandaith*, Calvin Demmon, *Lighthouse*, "Uncle John's Van," *Mota*, Terry Hughes, *Starling*, Michael Nally, *Apa*, Robin White, Paul Williams, *Hyphen*, Boyd Raeburn, The Non-con, "Remember Your Level," *Gafiate's Intelligencer*, King Crimson, "The Artifact," Lou Stathis, *Those Annoying Post Bros.*, Brian Eno, *Science Fiction Five Yearly*, Leeh Hoffman, *The Wrinkled Shrew*, Peter Roberts,

Boonfark, "Mario's," *Ansible*, Arthur Thompson, Jeanne Gomoll, *Dope Comix*, Steve Stiles, Lynn Collier, "WGTB," Matthew Moore, "Books n Friends," Big Jim, "The 823 Club," Bridget Dziedzic, *Pong*, Lucy Huntzinger, *Warhoon 28*, Wally "the snake" Mind, Corflu 3, Greg Pickersgill, Steve Brown, *City Come A'Walkin*, Dan Joy, *Science Fiction Eye*, Paul Di Fillipo, *Neuromancer*, Jerry Jacks, Catherine Jackson.

Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk, Andy Hooper, *Blat!*, Silvercon, Burb, "The Shrimp Bros.," Bhob, *Chuch*, Corflu 11, TAFFboy, *Deliverence*, Victor Gonzalez, John and Eve Harvey, *Apparatchik*, Lauren Anders, *TrapDoor*, "Chatting with Ted," "Old Town News," Barry Nelson, Simon Ownsley, *Banana Wings*, "You can't polish a turd," *Chunga*, Randy Byers, Earl Kemp, Eileen Gunn, Craig Smith, "Sam's Billiards," Art Widner, Robert & Carol, *Pixel*, Graham & Pat, "Powell's," Sam & Max, and you.

Ask me tomorrow and the list will be different. I am a fan because my name is *STeF-FAN*, and the rest was just fate.

Steve Stiles

Arnie asked me to write a short essay about Why I'm In Fandom. I'm a little uncomfortable with that; it brings back my oh so long ago youth as a New York Southern Baptist (a very rare breed) where you had to get up and testify before a bunch of *total strangers*: I was once a *sinner* (naïve little square), but then I got me the *Good Book* (science fiction), Hallelujah! And, brethren and sisteren, it was there that I found *Jesus* (Ray Bradbury)! Double Hallelujah! Amen! Boop-Boop-A-Doop-Boop!

Actually, Ray Bradbury didn't come first; the first step towards fandom came when my grandmother gave me a copy of MAD #11 and I opened it and there was this marvelous satire of Flash Gordon written by Harvey Kurtzman and illustrated by Wallace Wood: a screaming Dr. Noah Zark is being held down on what is obviously a dinner table by a drooling multi-tentacled bemb in a bib, holding a knife and fork. And Flash, or Flesh, is saying "Let us not leap to conclusions, Dale!... What makes you think this alien creature is going to eat Dr. Zark?"

Hoohah! MAD was heady stuff for an eleven year old: there was nothing else like it for kids in the 1950s, and Kurtzman's publisher, E.C. Comics, had two science fiction titles, *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, where there were brilliantly illustrated stories, some of them penned by... Ray Bradbury ("Sound Of Thunder," "Million Year Picnic," "The Flying Machine")! I was soon devouring all these (and deciding that I

wanted to be a cartoonist), but eventually E.C. was shut down by the Moral Majority types of those days. Which forced me to seek out more Ray Bradbury in the library. And then Robert Heinlein. And Isaac Asimov (who would someday call me a bastard!). And, and.....

As for fandom itself, I answered an ad for penpals, from a fellow E.C. fanatic, in the pages of Larry Shaw's *Science Fiction Adventures*. Eventually I sent my fellow addict a letter with a cartoon scribbled at the top. He in turn sent the scribble to a fanzine....

And in the fall of 1957 I opened up my mailbox and there was CRY OF THE NAMELESS #116. A cute alien on the cover, drawn by Arthur Thompson, is drooling over a photo of a busty woman in a bikini.

And in the letter column was my cartoon: I was hooked (*saved*)!

Triple Hallelujah! Amen!

Peter Sullivan

Quentin Crisp, raconteur and the original "Englishman in New York" once noted "There are three reasons for becoming a writer: the first is that you need the money; the second that you have something to say that you think the world should know; the third is that you can't think what to do with the long winter evenings."

Well, fandom is hardly the road to riches, but both of the second two reasons could apply to fandom as well. So I could simply stop there, and say that's why I'm a fan.

I was a fanzine fan (of a sort) for a long time before I discovered fanzine fandom, having been active in board games fandom (think postal Diplomacy) from my late teens, and produced a 142-issue run of a postal games fanzine myself in under 10 years.

I'd always been vaguely aware of science fiction fanzines, but never really explored them, until in a friends' livejournal, I found a reference to Peter Weston's *With Stars In My Eyes*, along with a link to efanzines.com. Over that summer, I downloaded more and more fanzines, read them, and even sent off for some paper ones as well. Within a few weeks I was hooked.

What's interesting is that, reading other fans' stories of their introduction to fandom, this seems to be a common theme. The people who seem to take to fandom in a big way are those who have a chance to immerse themselves in a large fanzine collection at their point of first contact with fandom. I call it the "kill or cure" method. But what has changed is the logistics of this. Previously, the main way to get immersed in a large fanzine collection was to know or meet a fan who

already had one. The beauty of efanzines.com was that I no longer needed to know anyone in fandom in order to discover it, and the many different fanzines available in it.

So, in short, the reason I am a fan is -- because it's all Bill Burns' fault. So now you know who to blame.

Shelby Vick

What else could I be? I'm different from the average guy; not just because I read SF, but because of my 'accepting' attitude; that is, I have friends who are atheists, others who are devoutly religious; I have friends who are liberal and others who are avid conservatives. I blend with them all, which -- to me -- is one of the key elements to fandom.

When you can accept dragons and rayguns, time travel and BEMs, faster-than-light travel and alternate reality, then your mind is broadened so that you can accept almost anything -- thus, you are a fan.

Peter Weston

Here's a little story which isn't in *The Book**. It's both my earliest memory and the defining moment of my life.

When I was a very little boy my auntie and I were walking one evening along the main road in Erdington, the Birmingham suburb in which I was born.

I remember the exact spot, and have since calculated that the year was probably 1947, or 1948 at the latest, because the following year my family moved to the other side of the city. It was winter, or at least late autumn because the sky was black and the stars were very bright. Since my birthday is in October that means I was just four, or possibly five years old.

In my mind's-eye I can still see the yellow half-moon hanging low over the buildings in front of us. I thought it was an orange and called it 'The Juice'. And I wondered about those bright sparkly lights in the sky, and asked my auntie if people could go to them.

"No", she said. "Not even that very bright one?" I persevered hopefully, pointing to what must surely have been Venus, or possibly Jupiter, though I didn't know their names.

"No, not even that one," she said.

Somehow I felt tremendously disappointed by her answer and from that moment onwards I was fascinated by the sky, by 'Flash Gordon' and 'Destination Moon', by space travel, astronomy, and all the rest. I had become a science fiction fan.

* *WITH STARS IN MY EYES*, an autobiography of an SF fan. NESFA Press, 2004.

Art Widner

At the last Corflu (Zed in Seattle) I was buzzing around at the opening, greeting old friends & such, when somebody said “Tom Whitmore has something U shd C.”

I went over & Tom showed me the Nov 1934 Amazing Stories. “Was this yr beginning, Art?” he askt.

“No, but dam near it,” I replied. I then lookt at the lettercol. A VERY GOOD AND AMUSING LETTER FROM A YOUNG CORRESPONDENT, WE PRESUME was the ultrasquare heading by the ultrasquare editor, T. O’Conor Sloane, PhD. (see attachment) I’m as old now as he was then, & I kno that “square” is no longer current hip, but I don’t kno what is.

suppose “dorky” or “nerdy” wd fill the bill, but even those r receding rapidly into the past. But to my 16 yrold self it was embarrassing.

So how did this soso effort “create fandom”? Well, it happened that in that same lettercol, there were letters from Leslie A. Croutch & FS Reckert, not as well known now as Croutch & yhos (yr hmbl obt svt), as well as EE Smith, Oliver Saari & others to bcom BNFs & pros.

So I flaunted my egoboo to Steve & Les, & we became “coros” (early fan-speak for correspondents.) This went on for a year or so, adding a cupl of coros w every ish of a prozine, until it became abundantly clear that “some-thing had to be done.” The frenetic pace of a letter a week to all was the first crack in the edifice.

A letter a month soon became inop-erable, & carbon paper to the rescue!

That workt 4 a while, but pretty soon the 5th carbon drew complaints from the recipients for illegibility, then lo, from the “rich” fen (meaning one whose daddy had a steady job) the fanzine was born! They were cald fanmags at first, until LR Chauvenet came along, & felt that “fanmag” was too clunky & had suggestions of Hollywood fan magazines, wch we were horrified to be lumped in with.

(purists shd shut up at this point or I’ll bore U with the story of how Winston Churchill answerd a brash MP who criticizd his ending a sentence w a preposition. Yes I kno I made it 2, but shut up anyway)

I labord on w carbons, eating my hart out w getting Harry Warner’s Spaceways,

Jack Speer’s Suspro & Synapse, & Gloryosky Zero, FAPA! My whole abortive apa history started there. I was blown away by Shroyer’s Sweetness & Light, & Damon Knight’s Snide, so I playd jiggery pokery w the Stranger Club’s treasury . . . (oh, didn’t I tell U that by the same magic of the prozine lettercols I had got a stf club started in Boston? That was a real

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



That’s a
well-known
rule of tentacle!

fannish project: out of a dozen or so members, not one lived in the city of Boston itself—all suburbos) & put a down payment on a primitive hand-crankd mimeo, to continue the “club organ” Fanfare.

I had done the 1st ish of Yhos for Fapa on a hekto, & quickly cot on that was not the way to go. To get back to the start of this pgf (boy, do I digress!) S&L promptly folded.

34 yrs later I rejoind to get the su-perlativ efforts of Dean Grennel, & he departd for parts unown. Stil later I joind SAPS to get the benefit of the rytings of the great Redd Boggs, & he minact out. *sy*

So that’s how it goes, & Joe I knoe yr gettin anxious to close, so make it one for my baby--& what? U wanna kno abt the dam near it?

No U don’t—not really, bcoz my 1st prozine letr was in the October 1934 Astounding & that led to my ungafiating 34 yrs later & a 2nd career in fandom, but that’s a hole nother story...

Lenny Bailes

Arnie Katz asks me to write (at least) a hundred words on the topic "Why am I in Fandom?" to commemorate the publication of Earl Kemp's historic issue of Safari that asks the question "Why Is a Fan?"

I actually prefer to spin off Earl's earlier question, which is closely related to the question Arnie asks. "Why Am I a *Fan*?" My answer to that is: "Because I've always been one. I wouldn't know how not to be."

In the early 1970s, when I was well on my way to transforming from college student to hippie dropout, I loved to listen to the Grateful Dead. Bob Weir, their intense, smooth-voiced rhythm guitar player, popularized a cover version of a Merle Haggard song that stated the case for dropout Deadhead-dom:

First thing I remember knowin' was the lonesome whistle blowin'

And a youngun's dream of growin' up to ride.

On a freight train leavin' town, not knowin' where I was bound

No one changed my mind, but mama tried.

Well, I loved to listen to that whistle blow. From the time I was five years old, railroad trains were my secret ally. Arnie Katz and I began racing locomotives in our basements at a tender age through the grace of the Lionel Corporation and Gilbert/American Flyer.

But that whistle was not the first thing I remember knowin'. In point of fact, while all the other five and six-year-olds in my neighborhood were dressing up in cowboy outfits with six-shooters on their hips, I was mailing in cereal boxtops for space helmets and plastic rocketships. While the other kids shot cap pistols at each other, I was tossing cap *rockets* into the air.

The first thing I remember knowin' might have been surfing channels on the family TV set and discovering the Dumont Network of the Air, which featured the adventures of Captain Video. One of my great early discoveries in play was that you could turn a toy six-shooter on its side, open the mock rotating bullet chamber, and bingo!—the result looked just like the entry hatch to Tom Corbett's spaceship. This youngun's dream was growing up to *fly!*

One of the themes that materialized in Earl's classic *Why Is a Fan?* symposium was the number of people who reported drifting into s-f fandom because they were lonely for someone to talk to, on their own level.



WHY
AM I IN
FANDOM?

They longed to talk to someone about things they couldn't tell their peers in ordinary mundane life.

Up until I was at least twelve years old, I didn't know how to talk to the other kids in my neighborhood and in my class at school. The main source of popularity I had with my peer group was owning the largest comic book collection in the neighborhood. I taught myself to read at age 4 from an issue of *Superman* that I inherited from an older cousin. My father read that issue aloud to me many times, until I had it memorized. The first words I learned to recognize in print were probably "Great Scott!" While other kids were digesting the adventures of Dick, Jane, and Spot, I learned about terrible weapons from ancient Krypton that must never be deployed Earth—and how the flying man with the red cape could never permit the world to learn his secret identity.

I started buying comic books out of my allowance soon after that. *Detective Comics*, *Strange Adventures*, *Marge's Little Lulu* and *Marge's Tubby* were all more interesting and advanced than *My Weekly Reader* and *The Adventures of Dick and Jane*. Sharing comic books aside, most of my social life consisted of conversations with older cousins and grownups. One of my uncles was an air traffic controller. Another uncle was a master electrician, who was also a dedicated baseball fan and soda pop enthusiast. (He mixed his own "cherry phosphates" for everyone in the family from syrup and seltzer.) I could talk to my uncles about the experiments I did with my Gilbert Chemistry Set, and about the TV shows I watched on model railroading and mathematics. In my school peer group, I mostly had to avoid getting my hat stolen and passed around at recess. (In the 4th grade, I managed to impress a cute girl I had a crush on by demonstrating how you can rub your thumb on an ink signature and turn it into a "reverse writing" stamp that will transfer your name to other sheets of paper. I was the most popular kid in the class for about 10 minutes with that.)

At age 10, I wrote letters to C.S. Lewis asking him to continue the Narnia series, because I was disappointed in *The Last Battle*. I took excursions into New York City to visit the offices of DC comics and I read Mort Weisinger a list of all the contradictions I found in his Superman stories. I watched my older cousin Philip build a crystal radio set and, when my father bought me a kit of my own, I assembled it and made an amazing discovery. I heard really interesting voices coming out of thin air from WOR radio. The voices identified themselves as Jean Shepherd and Long John Nebel. My parents wanted me to be asleep, but I stayed up all night listening to those interesting voices and their guests: Lester Del Rey, Frederic Pohl, and John W.

Campbell, Jr. I still remember Long John, Del Rey, and Pohl taking the wind out of the sails of Christian radio evangelist Herbert Armstrong. This was exciting! Not the kind of stuff the other 12-year-olds in my class were into.

But, amazingly, I eventually found a kid on my block who was into the same kind of shit that I was into. My first recollection of Arnold Katz is seeing this tall kid (he had at least two feet on me) tell the leader of the kids from the south side of our block that he wouldn't grab a garden rake and join the War on Kids From The North Side. "I'm a pacifist," Arnold said, hefting an armload of books and striding past the assemblage of kids armed with rakes, hoes, and other lawn tools. I was a North Side kid who thought the whole thing was bullshit, but I'd allowed myself to be intimidated into putting a pot on my head and taking my position. After Arnie's speech, I returned my family's garden rake to the garage and went back to reading a Freddy-the-Pig book.

I started talking to Arnie Katz after that. I discovered that both of us a) made faithful journeys twice a week to our local candy stores to buy and collect comic books, b) had a habit of checking out and returning at least 10 library books a week, c) had read all the science fiction novels in our local library, d) had model railroads in our basements, and e) listened to Long John Nebel on WOR at night when we were supposed to be sleeping. When Arnie eventually suggested that we co-edit a fanzine and make a pilgrimage to the World Science Fiction Convention in Washington DC, how could I say no?

The beginning of my activity in what Arnie now calls "Core Fandom" was all the projects we started in the 1960s: a) going to s-f conventions and s-f club meetings in the New York metropolitan area (proceeding from there to Worldcons), b) launching a "general circulation" fanzine, and c) joining and participating in amateur press associations (N'APA, SAPS, OMPA, The Cult, and eventually FAPA). But I hope that my description of What Came Before in my life will impress you with an important point: As far as what attracted me to science fiction fandom (and has kept me involved in it from teenage years on into my early 60s): I was always a fan. For values of the word "fan" debated and elucidated in Earl Kemp's excellent *Safari Symposium*, I will probably always be a fan. I believe that this will hold true whatever the future has in store for the small, gallant tribe that wots of Willis, Bloch, Burbee, and Tucker.

My introduction to that tribe occurred at Discon I, in 1963, when I visited the Advent Press table in the dealer's room. I purchased a copy of Bob Bloch's *The*

Eighth Stage of Fandom from Earl Kemp, himself. Until reading Bloch's book, I was tribeless. I'd been a solitary social critic and parodist—writing subversive burlesque about my high school teachers and passing it under the desks to anyone willing to read it. Bloch showed me a family of smart, self-publishing wise guys (and wise gals) *that it might be possible for me to join*. Some of them were the same s-f writers and editors I'd already started thinking of as older and wiser big brothers.

Two paragraphs ago, I said I would always be a fan? no matter what happens to the tribe that grew up reading (and trying to emulate) Willis, Bloch, Burbee, and Tucker. In the present day, I find myself seriously missing that tribe and wondering whether it still exists. This is where the Arnie of the present and I start experiencing variable mileage. While Arnie spent ten to fifteen years evangelizing the gospel of our old tribe in a new city to a new audience, I followed my career as a computer journalist into the newly evolving "online fandom," which lives in electronic discussion forums, blogs, and modern science fiction conventions. I've been appreciative of Arnie's efforts to keep the faith and traditions of our old tribe alive. It's a great tribe that's given us a family of articulate writers and artists—in a world where interesting noncommercial self-expression has always been hard to come by. Arnie is a fannish computer pioneer in his own right, starting and popularizing the notion of PDF fanzines to defy the crippling decline of the United States Post Office. With Arnie's efforts (and those of Bill Burns and Earl Kemp

- In jams with fellow musicians at various Minneapolis s-f conventions. (They once liked my harmonica playing enough over there that they invited me to be a Fan Guest of Honor.)
- In reading and dropping comments at Avedon Carol's weblog, *The Sideshow* (<http://sideshow.me.uk/>). I was inspired by Avedon, recently, to post a link-collage 4th- of-July musical plea on my Livejournal (at <http://spacecrab.livejournal.com/25256.html>)
- In performing at various Corflus in plays written by Andy Hooper. I published my favorite of Andy's plays in a fanzine. "Fanotchka is now accompanied by great illustrations from Alan White and Steve Stiles. See <http://efanzines.com/Fanotchka/index.htm>"
- In listening to Samuel R. Delany interview Joanna Russ at *WisCon* (the world's first and foremost feminist s-f convention), watching Chip abet Joanna in ending twenty years of isolation from the fan community that reads and loves them both. (Excerpt at <http://www.broaduniverse.org/broadsheet/0702jrsrd.html>)
- In working on programming for Bay Area versions of Potlatch, a small West Coast literary science fiction convention. If you want to or need to be reminded of why Robert Sheckley was the Gary Trudeau of the 1950s, check out these panel proceedings: <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/potlatch16/pot16pro.html#sheck>. Philip K. Dick? Go to <http://www.potlatch-sf.org/potlatch14/pot14pro.html#boh>. This year I helped organize a panel with Ursula Le Guin on "what's hot and worth paying attention to in comic books."
- In hanging out in the smoking suite at Las Vegas *Corflus*. Just being in a place where so many people who've mattered in my intellectual and creative life float in and out: World's Finest Faneds in one adventure, together!

on efanzines.com), fanzine publishing and distribution has continued in the 21st century on something resembling the scale of the 20th.

But a sea change has gradually taken place in this community. It's not really the last bastion of a group of young motley writers and artists anymore, the way it managed to be for almost fifty years. With some outlier exceptions (hi Mark and Claire), it's also not so much tangled up in running and participating in science fiction conventions. The specific energy that used to be concentrated in a group of about 250 people who all hung out with one another has diffused all over the English speaking and non-English speaking world. That energy has coalesced into a wide number of new affiliations and specializations. We still have a small "core" of fanzine publishers who honor their connection to the tribe that came before them. But science fiction conventions are now managed and organized by people who are less and less linearly connected to "the tribe that wots of Willis, Bloch, Burbee, and Tucker."

"OK," Arnie says to this. "I hope all those people have a good time. But I don't need them. Who needs science fiction and science fiction conventions, anymore, anyway?"

I guess I do—since I haven't yet found any other place and community that combines all of the elements that have kept me attached to the science fiction community. *Corflu* is good. Yes. *Efanzines.com* is good, yes. But where's the door to the Coexistence Candy Store?

I could make a chant out of that—maybe something like the old Merry Pranksters meme: *How was your staaaay in San Josaaay?* But interlineations are more fannish.

Where is the door to the Coexistence Candy Store?

Ted White might tell you, if he had time to spare. With his multiple hobby involvements, I think Ted is one fan who still shops in that metaphorical place. (Ted might also be willing to tell you about the physical, historical "Coexistence Candy Store," which has its own entry in the Canadian Fancyclopedia at <http://efanzines.com/CanFan/CanFan-Q.pdf> .)

I don't want to make out that you'll find that door (and the room it opens into) at the World Science Fiction Convention. I'm not capable of calculating and comparing the statistical odds of finding it in various locations—but I still look for it in a number of different places associated with science fiction fandom:

— Lenny Bailes

Andy Hooper

Dear Sam,

I'm puffed up with satisfaction after the visit that your Grandma and I made to you this past week, but I've returned home to Seattle to face up to the sad reality of an impending deadline. Arnie Katz, publishing giant, has sent me a typically billowing request to contribute to another of his fanzines, and as we have successfully exchanged articles and hostages in seasons past, it is profoundly tempting to meet his request. It's typical high comedy from Arnie; he asks me to ponder "Why I am a Fan," and suggests a minimum length of 500 words or so. Why be stingy? Arnie's fanzine will likely appear only in electronic form, viewed on a computer or cell phone screen, with no printing charges to assume. And heck, your Grandpa could probably extrude 10,000 words and still not really get his arms around the subject....

Yes, Sam, your Grandpa is a Faan. Not merely a reader, a consumer, a would-be producer and traducer of science fiction, but a self-identified member of its Volunteer Auxiliary of amateur artists, publishers and convention hacks. Like many of my fellows, I have flirted with professionalism, and more frequently with hucksterism, but whenever fandom threatens to become just a source of income to me, I seem to revert to less profitable forms of expression before long. Not that anybody can really make a living writing science fiction anyway – and by the time you are old enough to read this, it may seem like a comical conceit that anyone ever tried. Not even the "SciFi Channel" wants to be associated with science fiction any more – they just changed their name to "SyFy," and some of their highest rated programs are professional wrestling matches. On the other hand, more than 120,000 people attended Comic Con this past weekend, so we have a ways to go before it is once more a proud and lonely thing to be a fan.

That's because science fiction more or less conquered the world over 30 years before you were born, Sam; *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* and Ronald Reagan all made loveable alien muppets and robots into household names. And the ideas and gadgets and relationships featured in those works of science fiction were so attractive, so tantalizing, that people went out and invented them in the real world. Tiny telephones that also record visuals and connect you to a global network? Silent electric



A Letter TO MY Grandson

cars? Celebrity sex-change media programs? For you, these are everyday realities, Sam, even clichés, but you have to trust me: they were all imagined in science fiction years before they were actually created. Inspiration from imagination has always been part of human culture, but in the 20th Century, the process of making speculation into concrete reality was accelerated to an unprecedented rate. And SF was a significant element in that process.

With all the things happening in the world when I was young, I don't know how I could really have resisted the pull of speculation and fantasy. I wasn't old enough to talk when President Kennedy promised we would be on the moon within the decade, and I grew up amazed as that promise was kept. Technical innovation was an American pastime like baseball or bridge. But the love of things shiny and fast is only part of what makes a Fan.

There's also an attraction to the weird, to things grotesque and unexpected. I was also lucky enough to grow up in the Golden Age of Monster Movies. Classic gothic horror characters like Dracula and Frankenstein's monster shared the stage with aliens and atomic mutants, on weekly TV shows hosted by a gallery of eccentric personalities. Science Fiction and Horror were often packaged and marketed together, and if space travel and computing machines had become suddenly part of mainstream culture, Japanese Insect Fear films still were not. Horrific and Gothic fantasy often hinted at hidden truths as exciting as anything uncovered by science, and there were sexual connotations to horror that precocious viewers found irresistible. I think that secret pleasure was the first stirring of conspiracy in my mind, a vague plan to find or build a society of souls who shared that secret thrill of the racing imagination. A plan that came to fruition when I made formal contact with fandom only 4 or 5 years later. It was certainly a relief when I discovered that Forry Ackerman had already invented fandom, so that I didn't have to generate it entirely by myself!

Beyond that long-forgotten moment when I pointed a finger and accused myself of being "weird," there are a dozen little anecdotes I could send Arnie to publish. Reading *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, especially the ads in the back. Walking in on my first genuine comic dealer, camped out in the back of a Persian Rug shop on Monroe Street in Madison, Wisconsin. A gracious invitation to join fellow 9th grade nerd Lynne Anne Morse's "Star Trek Club" in 1975. Countless afternoons spent war-gaming and playing Dungeons and Dragons with older university students, with experience of *cons* and *bid parties* and best of all, *fanzines*. And then of course I was in the center of a particularly vi-

brant and active fandom in Madison in the late -1970s, and had the chance to work on conventions, collate and compose daily fanzines, join and found amateur press associations, all those networking rituals so important before the internet age. The science fiction fan subculture gave me complete freedom to work in any medium or mode that appealed to me, from drama to historical essay, and has always remained a warm, receptive audience, even while debating some or all of my conclusions.

In fact, science fiction fandom was such a successful model of subculture and social peer group, that it was re-invented by a thousand other subcultures in the last decades of the 20th Century, until we have reached a state where "Mundane" life is perhaps the most imaginary construct of all. All politics are local politics; all classics are "cult" classics. People blog and chirp effortlessly in ways that once took hours of struggle with mimeograph stencils and weeks of delivery time to accomplish. Interactivity, that cornerstone of 21st Century life, was once likewise one of the essential elements of fandom. Millions might watch a movie or thousands read a book, but only a handful are moved to find others equally moved by the experience. And that was, and is, fandom.

Visiting you and your mom and dad in Pasadena felt like stepping into Kim Stanley Robinson's SF novel *The Gold Coast*, and I indulge myself in a little wish that your world will grow to resemble that hopeful fantasy of sustainability and affluence. Your mom and dad share leisure time by role-playing in the same virtual world on their separate computer screens, as you burp and drowse between them. That too is fandom – wistfully fantasizing even as reality exceeds our every rational expectation. Even at just seven weeks old, you are a fuzzy wonder, and the world of Hobbit tomb wardens and troll hunters must frequently stand on "pause."

It makes me feel like the essence of fandom is still very much with us. Despite the many failures and dead-ends of the Space Age, and looming consequences of centuries of industrialization, there are still people curious about our eventual place in the universe, still eager to make what they can of it. Will we learn to be more careful what we wish for, since we seem to be so accomplished at making such wishes come true? Like I said, I'm hopeful, Sam, but the answer is probably up to you. Let me know when you have fully digested *Hop on Pop* and *Goodnight, Moon*; I have a subscription to *Asimov's* with our name on it.

Love,
Grandpa Andy
July 27th, 2009

Robert Lichtman

1. How I got into Fandom

In 1958 there was still one prozine running fanzine reviews: Bill Hamling's *Imagination* with Robert Bloch's fan column, "Fandora's Box." I was lucky to buy the final issue before it folded—my attention caught by the spaceship on the cover and the "Special Science Feature: What We Will Find On Venus"—in which Bloch wrote compellingly about fanzines being a bastion of True Free Speech when compared to paid spokespersons and "authorities" in the mainstream press and followed it with a descriptive list of current fanzines. I sent off for a few, and the deed was done. The first to arrive was Gregg Calkins's *Oopsla!*, a "fannish" fanzine, in which I was most captivated by Walt Willis's "The Harp That Once Or Twice" column, which led off with:

It is Christmas morning and Ireland is covered with a soft mantle of mud as I sit here in the Oblique House attic, shivering over an inadequate electric fire...

This seemed incredibly exotic to me, a fifteen-year old and not very worldly. Coupled with other contributions from Bob Tucker, John Berry and Gregg—and with Bloch's column still in mind—everything seemed amazingly accessible and definitely exotic.

After a few more fanzines arrived and were absorbed, my nearly sixteen-year old self thought, "I could do this"—and within six months I was. That was the beginning, and the end is not yet at hand.

2. The first fan thing (fanzine, site, con, whatever...) that really captured me

I've partially answered this above—living in fan-nish isolation in the middle of Los Angeles, my captivation was entirely about the contents of the fanzines that I'd chosen from Bloch's column. Not long after that *Oopsla!* I got what turned out to be the final genzine issue of Dean Grennell's *Grue*, and in it I was most fantisted by a long article on *Wild West Weekly* by



FANDOM IN FOUR PARTS

Redd Boggs. Wow, I thought, fandom isn't just about science fiction. *Grue* was also a "fannish" fanzine, and both it and Calkins's zine were much more interesting than the more SF-oriented zines I received early on. The mold was cast; I was then and forever a "fannish" fan. Since I read little SF anymore, my interest in the personalities and mythologies of fandom has served well to keep me interested and active.

3. My happiest/most memorable day in Fandom

That would have to be the day I won TAFF. I knew I was well-regarded for publishing a decent fanzine, but this was *real* validation. Closely behind was the year I was voted past president of FWA and the year I was Number One Fan Face.

Winning FAAn awards for best fanzine and best letterhack were great, too. Awards aren't everything, but they don't hurt. Friendships are the true measure of fandom, though.

4. The most memorable fan I've ever met. (Be prepared with anecdotes...)

There have been a lot over the years, but the first one who really struck me as unusually memorable was the late Elmer Perdue. I wrote above about my "fannish isolation"—that was broken in January 1959 after I published and sent out my first fanzine, using the time-honored method of gathering a mailing list by culling names and addresses from the letter and fanzine review columns of the several dozen fanzines I'd received up to that time. Some of them were in Southern California, and one evening I was surprised by a call from one George Fields informing me of the existence of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and its relentlessly weekly Thursday night meetings.

At one of the first meetings I attended, Elmer was there handing out copies of *Burblings c/w Elmurmurings* "#3 or 4 or possibly 7." I'm not sure what moved him to give me a copy—I don't think he'd been on the mailing list for my first fanzine, so perhaps someone told him I was a Promising Young Thing—but I expressed great gobs of appreciation and fell into conversation with him, subject unremembered but I found him fascinating.

And I was deeply appreciative of someone who appeared much older deigning to talk with me. Later I learned he was forty at that time to my sixteen, but because of the way he dressed (somewhat formal with suit, white shirt and perhaps tie) and his affect he seemed *much* older.

When I got home that night, I read his lengthy es-

say on the relationship of nooks and fardels and much more, in that delightfully loopy way Elmer *always* wrote (although I didn't know that then). That issue also contained my first exposure to the writing of Charles Burbee, who I didn't meet until some months later, and to the artwork of Bjo then-Wells. All of this completely fantisted me, and I read and reread the fanzine many times as it introduced me to the amazing Insurgent world of Burbee, Laney, G. Gordon Dewey, player piano rolls, science-fiction conventions (especially the Solacon, the 1958 worldcon held in L.A. just months previously—of which I'd been aware but hadn't attended due to shyness) and more.

I wrote Elmer an enthusiastic letter of comment, which apparently led to a life-long friendship of that strange kind that prevails in fandom—where you don't see people for long periods of time, but when you do there is no awkwardness, conversations are picked up where they left off, new ones started, and so forth until the next parting. Although at that time in his life Elmer almost never wrote anything for fanzines other than his annual FAPA membership saver, when I was publishing *Frap* in 1963-64 he sent me a couple of short shaggy dog stories which I happily published. And both then and when I was first publishing *Trap Door* he sent me little but not insignificant "angel" sums out of the blue. These would come, like all his occasional correspondence over the years, in ancient yellowed envelopes with an assortment of equally ancient stamps on them, the letters themselves typed on matching paper.

The last time I saw Elmer was when he magically appeared at the 1985 Corflu in Napa, California. He was bearded then, unlike his earlier self, and more casually dressed—but when we encountered each other the conversation once again resumed as it had off and on, on paper and in person, for many years. He died, too young, in 1989, and knew it was coming. In our final exchanges of letters, he described to me a plan he had devised to maintain his FAPA membership posthumously. He would publish a series of eight-page fanzines in the requisite number of copies and prepay his dues, sending all to me since I was by then (and still am) the FAPA Secretary-Treasurer. Since at that time the OE was in the Bay Area, it would be my job every February to take that year's zine to the collation. This never happened, but that Elmer could even consider it says it all for me. I think of him up there in fan heaven, trading stories with Burbee and Laney and all the rest, and still puzzling out whether a nook is equal to two fardels, or only one.

—Robert Lichtman

Curt Phillips

I think, in the final analysis, that I am a Fan because I can't bear the thought of being alone on this planet; of having only the company of non-fans around me. Being a part of Fandom isn't something that I feel I really have any choice about anymore. I'm 50 years old at present and I've been a Fan for nearly 40 years. If I had to give it up now...

My story is a very familiar one in Fandom. A fairly bright and intelligent child – at least as compared to the other kids at my school – who wasn't bright enough to understand that differences matter in the so-called “real world” – which I soon enough learned to think of as the mundane world – and so in spite of the intelligence and joy in learning that I delighted in, I was very slow to understand that no, not every kid in my class could understand those concepts, and no, not every kid was bored by the books in the “age appropriate” section of the library and went looking for something more challenging (thank you, Mrs. Jennie Rose Dameron, Librarian at Cleveland Elementary School in my childhood years, for recognizing that the objectionable little kid that the other teachers all thought was a troublemaker really *needed* to read *THE ROLLING STONES* by Robert A. Heinlein; the first SF book that ever entranced me), and no, not every kid watched *STAR TREK* (this was the late 60's kids; I watched *STAR TREK* when all those cheesy special effects looked high-tech...) not for the monsters and the green dancing chick, but for the *ideas* like “war is stupid, creates nothing, and can destroy everything”, and “so the other guy is black, or white, or blue with white hair and antennas, or maybe a living rock monster who attacks only because it's trying to protect it's children... it's all about *life* itself”, and my favorite; “Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination”. These were ideas like none I'd ever heard in school, or in church, or much of anyplace else. And those ideas led me to search out more ideas, and eventually I realized that I was a lifelong reader.

And what I was reading for the most part was science fiction. I had given up on ever fitting in socially with my peers; my cohort, as the child behavioralists like to say. I could make myself speak their language and frequently did just to get along, but with rare exception none of them seemed to be able to speak mine.

But then, I discovered Fandom. And I found that I wasn't alone anymore.

Let's be honest; in many ways, fans are no better than



A FAN OF TWO WORLDS

our non-fannish friends and associates. Fans can be foolish and frustrating, egotistical and egalitarian, disappointing and dopey. But there is one crucial, essential, and overwhelming difference that forgives all shortcomings and settles all scores; Fans think. Fans understand that they have a rational mind that has either been designed or somehow evolved to question, probe, and examine every thought that comes to its attention. And, fans know how to *use* their minds to a degree that most non-fans never even suspect is possible. Fans, in fact, are not satisfied to live their lives without using their minds; without – as Theodore Sturgeon liked to say – “asking the next question”. I look around me as I live my life here in a small Virginia town and though most everyone in my town is a perfectly normal and very nice person, they don’t seem to ask those “next questions” of themselves very often. And the thought of living like that saddens me.

Has this ever happened to you? You’re sitting out in public somewhere – at a restaurant, a park bench, anywhere – and you’re reading a novel. Probably a science fiction novel, but it could be anything. Then, sooner or later, someone you know comes over and interrupts you with some inanity like “What ya doing, there, *readin’ a book?*” I feel like replying, “no, I just found this thing here, and I’m holding it open like this so that if a fly happens to land on the pages I can slam it shut and squash it like a bug...” You see, a lot of those smiling, empty faces walking around out there think that if you’re sitting around reading a book, *you must not really be doing anything!* Therefore you must be looking for somebody to come along and liven up your day with a little snappy patter. This or something like it happens to me in my home town – oh, not every day, but often enough to make me wonder why I was abandoned at birth on this strange planet. But that’s where Fandom comes in. Fans can think, and talk, and



share ideas and communicate on a level that enriches rather than dulls the mind. I’m on a handful of fannish Internet discussion groups (Trufen, Pulpmags, Southern Fandom Classic, and a few others) that have roughly 1000 other fans as members altogether. That’s an insignificant number when compared to the general population, but I can ask those groups any question at all; absolutely anything, and someone in that crowd is either going to know the answer off-hand, know someone else who’ll know it and is ready to consult them on your behalf, or will know how to research the question to a successful conclusion. I have never seen this fail. Fandom not only knows how to use their minds, they enjoy doing so. I wonder if any of us really understand just how rare a thing that is?

Fans even know how to disagree and fight – sometimes bitterly – without letting the disagreement interfere with other, separate matters. Ted White and I have done exactly that just a few years ago; fiercely and aggressively arguing a certain topic till we were both argued out with neither willing to budge the slightest bit. In the mundane world that sort of thing would mean bitterness, anger, rivalries, and ill-feelings. Ted and I just shrugged and moved that topic to a back burner and went on talking about other matters as though we’d never argued. The topic is still there if we ever decide to go back and bat it around some more, but the point is, we don’t let it interfere with being friends with each other and affecting other things that we want to talk about. In my experience non-fans are rarely able to do that sort of thing. Fans seem to instinctively understand that thoughts, ideas, and positions can stand alone and that they don’t need shoring up by our other mental baggage. Fans, I’ve noticed, make damned good debaters. We understand languages, we understand the power of words, and we have a certain knack, I think, for understanding the process of idea development. We use, as I’ve said, our minds, and often to very good effect indeed.

Talking with a group of fans – preferably in person at a convention or some such function – or on a Internet discussion group or “Virtual Con Suite” – is like coming home to a family of people who don’t think you’re an alien, who don’t become afraid in the face of new ideas, and who enjoy the dance of ideas as much as you do yourself. Fandom is – when it’s done just right – an assembled family. And like any good family, the members accept and support each other through good times and bad; always striving towards a common goal of better communication and better understanding. I simply can’t imagine not wanting to be a part of all that. And so, I am a Fan. — Curt Phillips

Shelby Vick

One hundred words?

Arnie, you must be kidding -- ONE HUNDRED WORDS, to explain how I became a fan? Yeah, yeah; I know. In the last few years I have become very parsimonious with my words, writing columns only a few hundred words long instead of a few thousand. But --

ONE HUNDRED WORDS???

--Oh, but wait; you modified that with 'at least'. Sneaky, sneaky; it's a challenge, an attempt to get me to expand.

Okay, okay; here goes:

By age five, I was reading. Not many years later, I had an epileptic seizure. After a hospital stay, my doctor issued an edict that I was not to engage in physical activities at school.

For instance, no baseball.

Well, my attempts at baseball had been pitiful at best. Every time the ball came toward me, I swung at it -- in self-defense, if nothing else.

And never connected.

So, not only did I fail to regret his edict -- it had a very pleasant side effect: Whilst classmates were battling the ball, I would sit inside. . .and read!

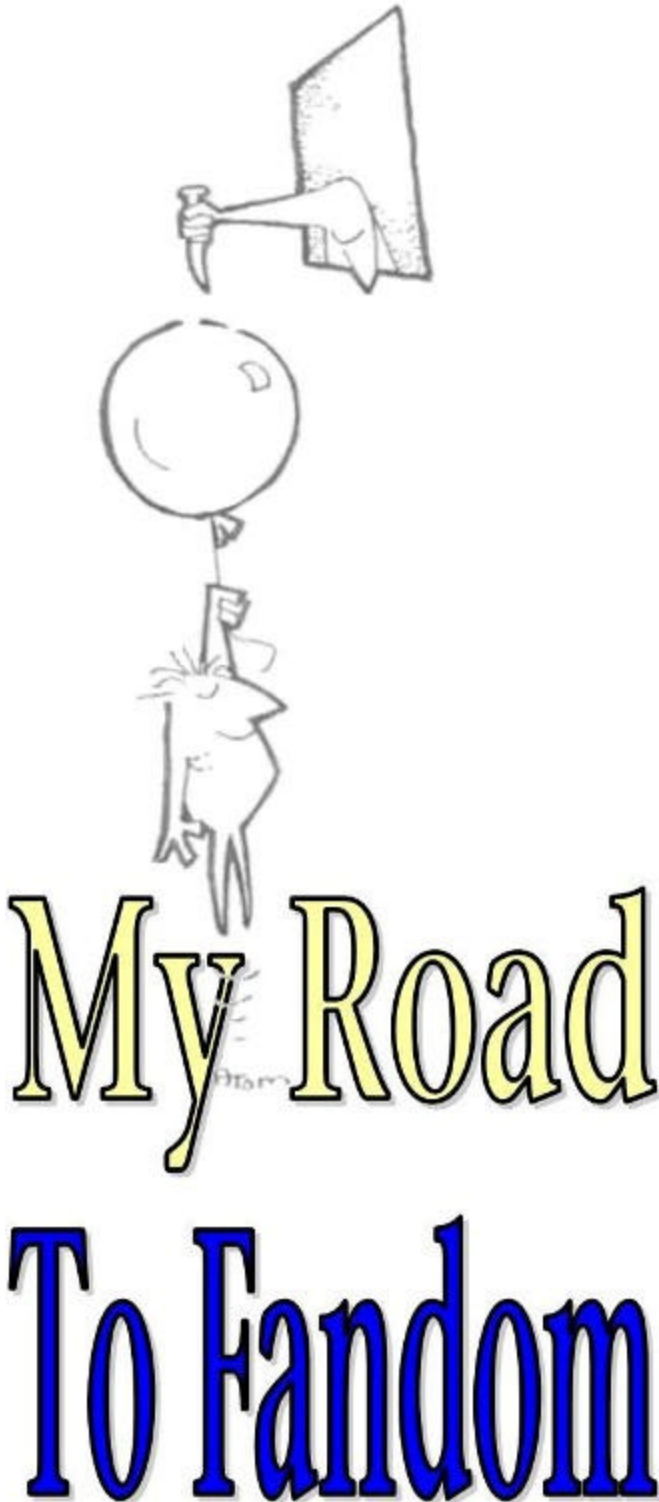
Before I finished grammar school, I had totally exhausted the school library.

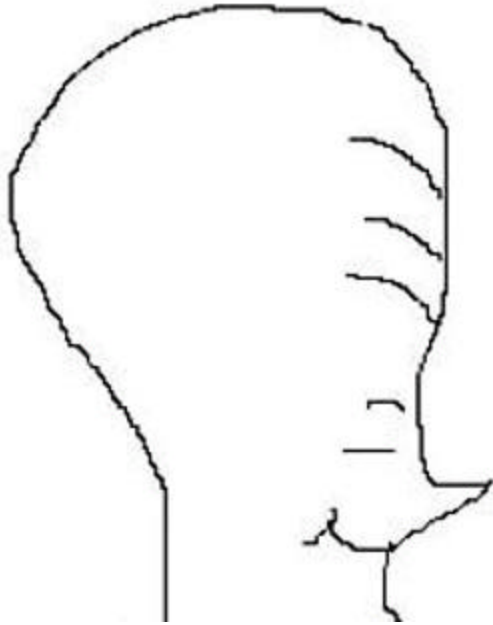
By the time I reached high school, I volunteered to help -- of course! -- in the school library.

Now, this 'handicapped' childhood -- where I was not allowed to play with my peers, where I was isolated from others and spent most of my time reading - - could well have warped me. Instead, I was proud of my singularity. It probably had to do with my primary choice of reading -- fantasy and sf.

Of course, I was also influenced by the fact that, before I could read, my mother read to me each night, and she chose stories like the Alice books, as well as Hiawatha.

In any case, reading sf pulps and discovering, thru their letter columns, that there were OTHERS out there like me gave me a thrill. Naturally, I had to start writing letters.





Before I get any deeper into that, let me mention one of the greatest gifts I was given in my early teens – A typewriter!

Of course, there were reasons for the gift -- and the primary reason was also a drawback: It was disassembled. Seems my young cousin had decided that taking one apart was a challenge he couldn't resist. Resulted in his father gathering it all up in a box and asking me if I wanted it.

Having never tried such a thing, but badly wanting a typer, I gleefully accepted the gift. Strangely enuf, the pieces pretty well told me where they went; when it came to putting the keys in place, I was momentarily stumped -- but then I realized that all I had to do was press the keyboard and look to see which letter responded.

When the typer was complete -- together with dabbing a few drops of 3-in-One Oil on the ribbon, which would renew usability until holes were worn in the tape -- I immediately started in. The most noticeable result was in my grades; now that teachers could actually READ my homework, my scores soared pleasantly upward.

And I started writing letters. And stories. And eventually did my first fanzine. Discovered Quandry, with Lee Hoffman and Walt Willis predominating. Absolutely enthralled with Willis, I organized the Willis Campaign, which then led to TAFF.

--WHOA! Let me rephrase that, or at least alter one word: 'organized' has NEVER applied to any of my efforts. What happened was I came up with the idea, pounded fandom with it, fandom (and Walt Willis) responded, and it grew.

LynnHavention. Nolacon. Chicon. Tropicon. MagiCon. And several different really wonderful cons in Vegas, culminating with Corflu Silver. And here I am.

(Maybe I really WAS warped by my childhood.)

— Shelby Vick

Our Contributing Writers

The Vegrants want to thank all the fine fans who contributed to this memorable First Annish. They are, in order of appearance with page numbers in parenthesis):

Arnie Katz (3, 21, 53)

Earl Kemp (4)

Teresa Cochran (7)

Bryan Follins (8)

Joyce Katz (8)

Bill Mills (9)

Jacq Monahan (10)

James Taylor (11)

Ross Chamberlain (12)

Brenda Dupont (15)

Nic Farey (17)

Greg Benford (22)

Tracy Benton (22)

Warren Buff (23)

Randy Byers (24)

Jack Calvert (24)

Marty Cantor (25)

Jim Caughran (26)

John Coxon (27)

Dian Crayne (27)

Ken Forman (28)

Chris Garcia (29)

John Nielsen Hall
(29)

Rob Hansen (30)

Jay Kinney (30)

Guy Lillian (31)

Dick Lupoff (31)

Mike McInerney
(32)

Lloyd Penney (33)

Mark Plummer (33)

Andy Porter (34)

John Purcell (35)

Dan Steffan (36)

Steve Stiles (36)

Pete Sullivan (37)

Shelby Vick (37, 48)

Peter Weston (38)

Art Widner (39)

Lenny Bailes (39)

Andy Hooper (42)

Robert Lichtman (44)

Curt Phillips (46)

Taral Wayne (50)

Thanks also to the artists and photographers whose work enliven and enhance the written content.

Taral Wayne

There almost is no meaningful answer to the question, “why am I a fan?” *Because*, that’s why. I am what I am. If it’s good enough for Popeye, it’s good enough for me.



One is also tempted to try to quote Howard the Duck as well, and blame it on being a stranger in a world I never made. But there’s something to that, actually. The grown-up world is a big scary place that I never really wanted to join, and have never proved to my satisfaction that I’m fit to compete in. Who would I be without fandom? A guy working in the sales office, pasting up quarterly catalogs of garden tools. Or maybe someone in a product design department, who decides where to put Yogi Bear on a kid’s lunch pail. That’s if I had been lucky, and didn’t have to settle for being a cog in accounts receivable at Sears. No locs, no egoboo, no Hugo nominations, no GoH at the worldcon. In short, fandom makes me somebody.

It’s just too big a world out there to make your mark on, and while most people are content to be husbands, wives, parents, and breadwinners, not all of us are as domestically inclined. We want to leave our footprints in the sands of time, or at least a scuff print on the linoleum of next week. Some turn to religion – God loves them. Others join political parties – the nation owes them. Other callings to come to mind – the military, the arts, science, Esperantists, golfing associations, Burning Man, Skull & Bones, white supremacist groups, Amway, model railroading clubs, Dead Heads, Greenpeace, and, yes, even fandom... They all have this in common: they scale down to a human size a world grown far too big

Still, this doesn’t explain why I’m not on a seat cheering a WWF championship match, or practicing Tai Chi four times a week. What was there about science fiction fandom that appealed to me more than canvassing for the Marxist-Leninist party of Canada, or breeding poodles like my Dear Old Mum?

The reasons are straight-forward enough. I wasn’t into physical activities like hockey or shaving heads (hot rod slang, not barbering). I liked to read. I liked to read about things that were surprising or unusual, whether it be gold-mad KGB paymasters in Jamaica, or experimental spacecraft testing the first faster-than-light drive. Another attraction was the possibility of

I YAM

WHAT

I YAM

using my skills at drawing and writing. Best of all, it was possible to pursue these interests in the company of like-minded people.

That some of those people became friends for life goes without saying. That my fanac has gained me desired notoriety is obvious. Both only re-state that fandom gives me a purpose and a place in life that I doubt I'd have found stocking grocery shelves, or designing the labels of non-prescription cough syrups

How I Got Into Fandom – In very specific terms, I am a fan because I was reading science fiction heavily at the time I discovered an ad for a local club in the back of a used issue of *Fantastic* magazine that I bought for fifteen cents. It told me when and where the next meeting was, so I screwed up my undeveloped sense of adventure, and attended. The meeting itself was something of a bore. I thought talking about SF with other readers would be fun, but listening to older members of OSFiC talk at me from the front of the room was not. Fortunately, I met a couple of fellow-travelers who were also new to the club. We stayed up all night in some donut shop, and my fate was sealed.

So, you see, there was a strong random element to my becoming a fan, just as there was a certain poetic inevitability. I am a fan, because I became a fan. I am what I am.

The First Fan Thing That Really Hooked Me – I could say donuts, and be a smart-ass. It would be myth-making to say it was the sight of Energumen being passed around at the OSFiC meeting, but the truth is I only saw it at a distance. I was nobody, and those fabulous copies steered well clear of me as they circulated. It would be closer to the truth to say that the club quarterly, imaginatively named OSFiC Quarterly, was the first fanzine I ever got a good look at and that I grew excited over. Or I might broaden the question a few degrees, and claim *Torcon II* was the first fannish thing to make a big impression on me. But again, truth is a little less romantic. I attended a local comics convention called *Cosmicon* several months before that Labour Day. I even met Vaughn Bodé, who awarded me a minor prize for something in the art show. Perhaps what hooked me was the first time I laid my hand on a mimeograph handle, to crank out pages of the club's newszine a few months later. But no, I wasn't cranking out *my own* zine yet. Also, I had visited Mike Glicksohn in his lair, and had already seen a mimeograph. Could it have been the first zine I got in trade when I was finally pubbing my own ish? In hindsight, no. It was *Riverside Quarterly* that came in the mail, and what sort of an impression did that make on a neo? Getting into fandom was

really not a single flash of insight, nor an unpremeditated leap into the unknown, but a series of steps that led me deeper and deeper into the mire. No one of them was critical... except *making friends*.

My Happiest, Most Memorable Day in Fandom – You're going to hate me for this. Many events and incidents have gladdened me before, and after, the day I'm going to describe. Not least among them were being asked to be Guest of Honour at Anticipation. There was the time I got my first Hugo nomination, for another instance. And, too, the time Bill Bowers asked me to be toastmaster at his Corflu. But my endorphins never flowed as freely as they did on the final day of the first furry convention I attended. I was not only the GoH, but a dealer. I'd had a great time at the con, and looked forward to spending another two weeks crashing with Marc Schirmeister. Our itinerary included touring the city, hiking the mountains and desert, and filling myself with more Mexican food in a short time than I had ever eaten at home in Toronto. The real high spot of the trip and the con, though, was when the dealers room closed on Sunday. I held over \$2,500 in cold hard cash in my hand, virtually all of it profit. The money was in U.S. greenbacks at a time when they were worth about a third more in Canadian loonies. I know how this must sound – pretty crass. And it is. But I had never had \$2,500 cash before. I'm not sure I have since. Just fanning those twenties, fifties, and hundreds caused my heart to race. Counting the money again and again, I felt like Uncle Scrooge in his money bin. Pure, unadulterated joy unlike anything I had ever experienced. Nothing in my life, baby, ever felt that good, and maybe nothing ever will again... except maybe \$3,000. Sorry, if I dash your expectations.

The Most Memorable Fan I Ever Met – Um... I forget. Seriously, I tend to grow into friendships, and rarely gain instant impressions of a person that are any use later. There are exceptions. I can't say why, but I liked Moshe Feder the moment I met him at *Torcon II*. We hardly spoke, and he was preoccupied at the time with the recent death of a fellow New York fan, but an impression was made. Similarly, I fell into a conversation with an odd stranger, one time, at a party held by Bakka Books. He was into Dark Fantasy and looked the part with his hair parted in the middle, and Turkish mustache. I wasn't much into Dark Fantasy at all, but we seemed to find grounds for an accord anyway. Robert Hadji and I only met again some years later. We both recalled the earlier time and became good friends for a number of years.

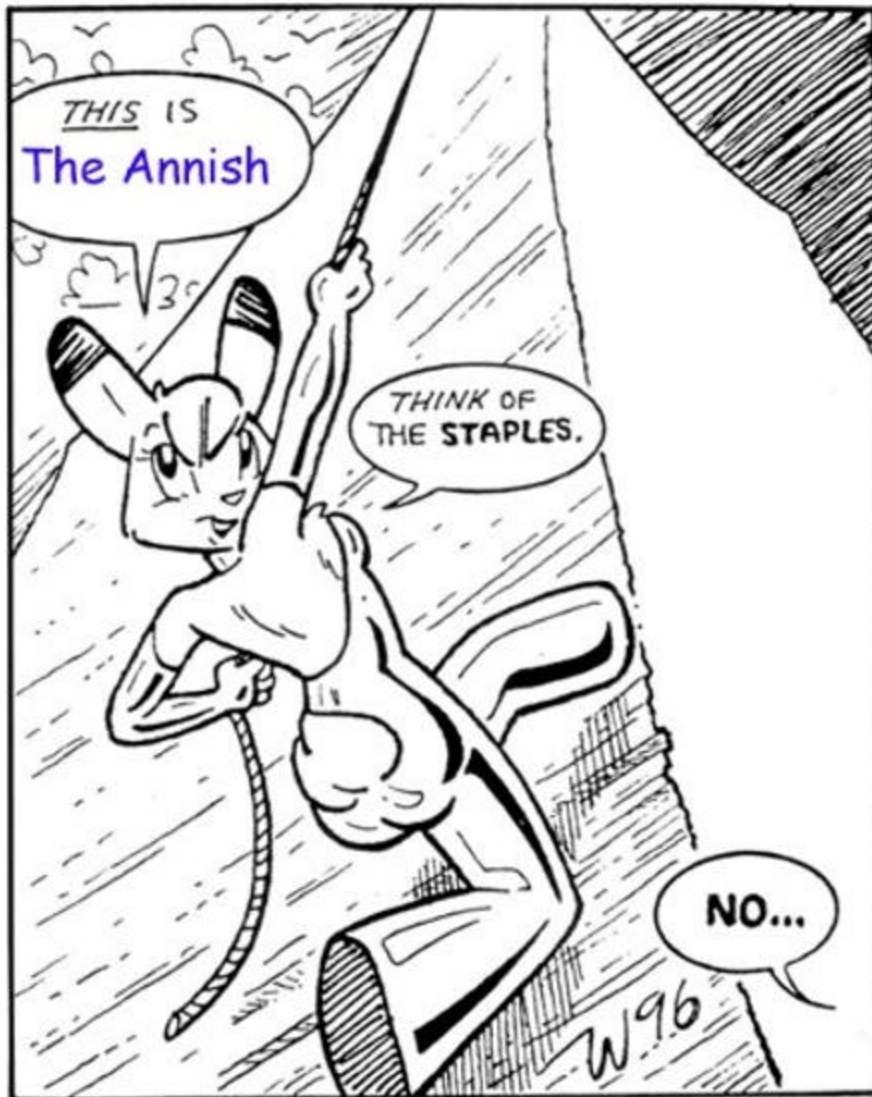
There have been many others I've found unforgettable, of course. No, not Walt Willis or Terry Carr or Dave Langford, the sort of people fans want to hear

about. Mostly I never met those people, or made only a fleeting acquaintance. The fans I remember were Ken Fletcher, Bob Wilson, Victoria Wayne, and others who I forged lasting relationships with.

But perhaps the most striking example of meeting someone who left a sudden, indelible impression on me was at Iggy. I had known Marc Schirmeister as a name in fanzine, who drew some of the goofiest, stylistically unmistakable fan art I had ever seen. But I had never met him, or even corresponded. We bumped into each other somehow at the '78 worldcon, and instantly became fast friends. Nor is Schirm memorable only as a matter of friendship. Anyone who has met Schirm is bound to have noticed that he's one of a kind. He talks different, he dresses different, he draws different, he *is* different in his interests, activities, and opinions. Who

else would own a house and leave it to his sister and brother-in-law to live in, because he preferred the rustic charms of a flat over the garage that hadn't been re-decorated since Teddy Roosevelt was president? Who else under the age of 50 collected 78 rpm recordings of 30's foxtrots and novelty songs? Who else hung authentic George Herriman and Wally Wood originals on his walls? Who else walked two Akitas the size of wooly mammoths around his neighborhood every day, or poisoned ants with a syrup from an innocent looking tin he kept in the kitchen? I can't think of anyone else who can name the directors of every major cartoon studio before 1960, or who can sing more offbeat songs than most of us can bear listening to. If all that doesn't qualify for memorable, I don't know what does.

— Taral Wayne



Now, It's Your Turn

We hope you've enjoyed *Idle Minds #4*. Now it's time for you fine folks to do your stuff. There are several ways to participate:

1. Write a letter of comment.
There are plenty of comment hooks and we're expecting to publish your observations and opinions in the very next issue. Obviously, that will work a lot better if you send us those LoCs.
2. A number of fans replied affirmatively to the request for material, but circumstances of various types intervened. You've got a second chance, because we plan to run a section of short and full-length contributions on the subject "Why I Am a Fan" in *Idle Minds #5*. After the issue comes out, we'll most likely combine all the contributions into a single volume, so this is definitely a chance to redeem your promise and be part of a fairly significant symposium.
3. If you thought, "I'd like to write one of those," as you read the work of more than 40 contributors, this is an open invitation for you to do so. The minimum length is 100 words and article-length contributions are *encouraged*.

The Vegrants look forward to hearing from you. The email address is:

Crossfire4@cox.net



ahem!
HI! MY NAME IS DAN
AND I'M A **FAAAN!**

