



Issue #5

Jan. 2001

Celebrate the Time

Most *Jackpot!* readers probably feel they've celebrated enough, but this won't be nearly as taxing as the year-end holidays we've all just survived. All that's required is that we commune in a Moment of Pleasure. For the first time in 12 months, the whole United States agrees



on which century, nay which millennium, we inhabit.

This must be pretty important stuff, because a sizable majority of the country was in such a hurry to hit this milestone that they moved it up a year! Minus a few dissenting sticklers-for-accuracy, our society agreed to ignore the facts and celebrate Y2K as the turn of the 21st century and the third millennium.

For 365 disorienting days, grim hold-outs reminded the rest of us that we'd jumped the gun by a year. You never knew when an offhand reference might embroil you in the most passionate arguments about the calendar since Pope Gregory decided we were all living in the wrong year.

Now that the teddy bears have had their Christmas and the nerds their New Year, what was sundered is now made whole. No longer must an earnest writer such as myself feel like I'm taking my life in my hands every time I refer to 21st century anything.

No one used the phrase "make good, "but Las Vegas busted its civic butt to bury the memory of last year's disappointing celebration. With the eyes of the world on the entertainment capital, Las Vegas didn't deliver the ultimate millennium bash that everyone expected.



A new year and a new mayor, erstwhile mouthpiece Oscar Goodman, brought a new attitude toward this year's celebration. The Fremont Street Experience drew 300,000 revelers to hear Kool and the Gang sing *Celebrate* and watch Hizzoner

Mayor Goodman Burst into Dance 'round Midnight. It was his finest moment, a triumph of glitzy excess and unbridled hedonism, since the election and



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a solid victor for his “anything you want 24/7” philosophy.

Joyce and I watched the fireworks roar down the Strip on our big screen TV, alone together after a New Year’s Eve Open House. We throw it for Las Vegrants, the local fanzine fan group, every year and again drew about a dozen at various points in the evening.

Many Vegrants have Big Plans for the evening, but drop by for a while during the course of the evening. It’s all very low-key. I sometimes think that’s the main attraction. It’s a quiet and homey interlude before launching into the chaos of Las Vegas on the final day of the year.

The intense multicolored display culminated at the Stratosphere Tower as a music mix climaxed with my hometown’s beloved anthem, *Viva Las Vegas!* (The radio station responsible for the 10-minute medley chose the Elvis Presley rendition, as befits an important occasion of state like the New Years celebration.)

Hovering helicopters showed pillars of fire erupting from neon-bright hotel rooftops as well as landmarks like the Paris’ Eiffel Tower. Billows of smoke, tinted various colors by each hotel’s characteristic colored lights floated in a wisp of breeze above the half-million tourists and uncounted (and uncountable and sometimes even no-account) locals.



... and Ch-ch-changes...

The coincidence of the arrival of the actual New Millennium and the changes you’ll notice in *Jackpot!* is definitely not coincidental. Sprucing up this fanzine a little seemed right in tune with a new year, a new century and a new epoch.



Not that I’ll wait until the next year, much less the next century, to institute additional ones. Lessons learned from a couple of excellent professional publishers, Steve Harris and Jay Rosenfeld, have rubbed off on my amateur efforts. I get uncomfortable when things become too automatic. Those two former

The intense multicolored display culminated at the Stratosphere Tower

bosses taught me that when a magazine gets too comfortable, reader interest declines.

Jackpot! #5 is hardly a bold departure from the first four, but I’m trying a few new things. Readers notoriously hate surprises, but paradoxically, they tend to stop reading (and start skimming or skipping) when things are too familiar.

The revised graphics won’t jolt you out of your chair with surprise, but I



If I can be serious for a minute... This is **Jackpot** #5, January 2001. Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107) is the editor, writer and enigma-in-residence..

Jackpot!

It is available for letters of comment or contributions of artwork. Both may be sent to the above snailmail address or electronically to:

crossfire@lvcm.com or statskatz@hotmail.com.

Abundant thanks to Joyce, Ken Forman and Marcy Waldie for all their help in the production and distribution of this fanzine. Thanks also go to Ben Wilson for technical advice, Irwin Hirsh for his help with Australian distribution and Alan White for answering my ignorant questions about digital graphics.

Member: fan writers of America.

think they'll make *Jackpot!* more attractive and appealing.

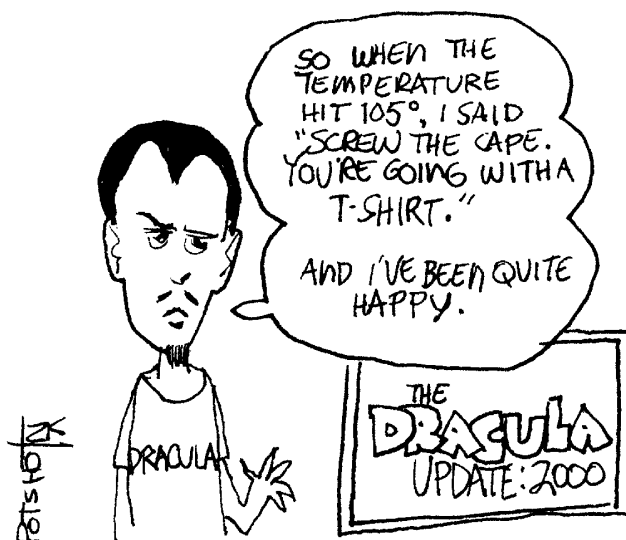
Even the colophon contains new information. I haven't had a change of address since resuming fanzine publishing in 1990, but now Crossfire has a new lair.

... by Design

The changes may seem ceaseless, but they aren't directionless. As I learn things and evaluate results, I add, subtract and modify elements. I'm trying to develop a new visual vocabulary for an electronic fanzine written by one person.

There's nothing wrong with the various graphic styles created for print fanzines, including the

fanzines to the capabilities that limited those of 40 or 50 years ago.



The Time Traveler, a Depression-era printed fanzine, was set in type and reproduced with a small printing press. The medium strongly influenced the presentation of the message.

Hand-set, printed fanzines look more like each other than any of them resemble the purple-and-rainbow-colored hectographed fanzines of the late 1930s and early 1940s or the pre-electronic mimeographed

fanzines of the 1946-1960 era. (My next fanhistory article will survey the technological history of fanzine publishing; get ready to dodge.)

The electronic fanzine medium presents peculiar challenges for those, like me, steeped in the creation of relaxed, personal mimeographed fanzines. Single-column layout, ragged margins, line art and lettering-guide headings are elements common to virtually all mimeographed fanzines until the advent of silk screen machines and electronic stencils.

If we limit today's fanzines to the choices that fit 50 years ago, then we are archivists, working in some ancient, dead mode. That's something that

The changes may seem ceaseless, but they aren't directionless

"Vegas Look" I helped pioneer with *Folly* and *Wild Heirs* in the early and mid 1990s. They fit the technology and respected the limitation of form and practicality. Still, there's no reason to limit today's

The Rotsler Site: An Update

Las Vegas fan Michael Bernstein continues to work toward the Bill Rotsler site, which will showcase WR's remarkable range of creativity as an artist and writer. (No word on the Rotsler Gallery of Girlfriends, but we can hope, eh?)

Michael has already secured a wonderful trio of domain names: <http://www.rotsler.com>, <http://www.rotsler.net> and <http://www.rotsler.org> and is working hard to adapt the search engine to the site's specific needs. He feels, and I tend to agree, that searchability is an important aspect

of the site. The Rotsler site will have lots of great material, but it won't mean much if users can't easily navigate it to find what they want..

Sensibly, he plans to build the site in stages to gain some credibility with

fandom to pave the way for the more ambitious parts of his agenda.

The first phase is to collect and post existing articles about Bill Rotsler.

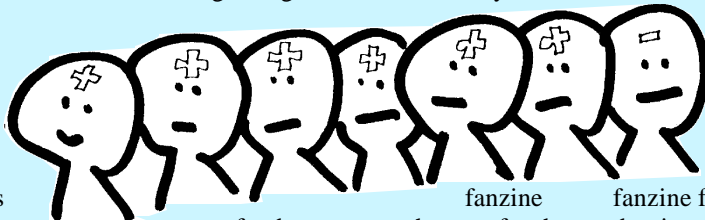
There's an obit on the site now, but Michael wants to expand the selection as much as possible.

If you've written a eulogy or appreciation of Rotsler, now is the time to send it to Michael Bernstein

(webmaven@lvcm.com).

Michael will get them posted as quickly as possible.

I hope everyone will cooperate with Michael. In a fanzine fandom that seems increasingly dominated by self-aggrandizing ego-maniacs, it's refreshing to see someone expending such effort to extol someone else.



may appeal to some, but I want to explore the possibilities and even stretch the limits of what is possible today.

Some will see connections between *Jackpot!* and some elements of offset fanzines back in the day. Type in multiple columns, denser illustrations and slicker headlines may remind them of elements they identify with stuffy and serious offset fanzines they used to dislike back in the 1960s.

In terms of formality, two-column, rag right text and three-column, justified copy aren't the same. That distinction wasn't meaningful when only a few offset fanzines even had the choice, but the rules have changed. I never wanted justified margins in a fanzine so the fact that I could have them with no effort is no temptation. I like the ability to revise my work right up to the moment of publication, something that was impossible when I banged out fanzine copy on mimeograph stencils, so I keep going over copy until hours before you see it.

You Say You Want a Resolution

I made three resolutions for 2001, four if you count a vague intention to rewatch *2001: A Space Odyssey* some time during the next 12 months. Viewing the genuine artistry of Kubrick and Clarke is the only possible antidote to the obnoxious TV commercials that exploit its iconic images, such as the current Toyota campaign.

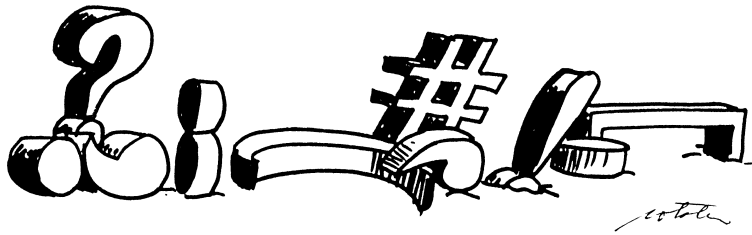
Given my current situation, two of the remaining three pledges are pretty obvious: I resolve to get

a full-time job and I plan to lose some of the excess weight I gained in 2000. Both are pretty necessary for the continuous of my cushy, sybaritic lifestyle.

I actually made the third resolution around Thanksgiving, but I decided to say nothing about it until the New Year.

I resolved to stop making That Noise when I get up or sit down on the living room couch.

You know the noises I mean. It's that grinding grunt that rises from the gut, aural accompaniment



WHERE OLD PUNCTUATION GOES TO DIE

***It's that grinding grunt
that rises
from the gut***

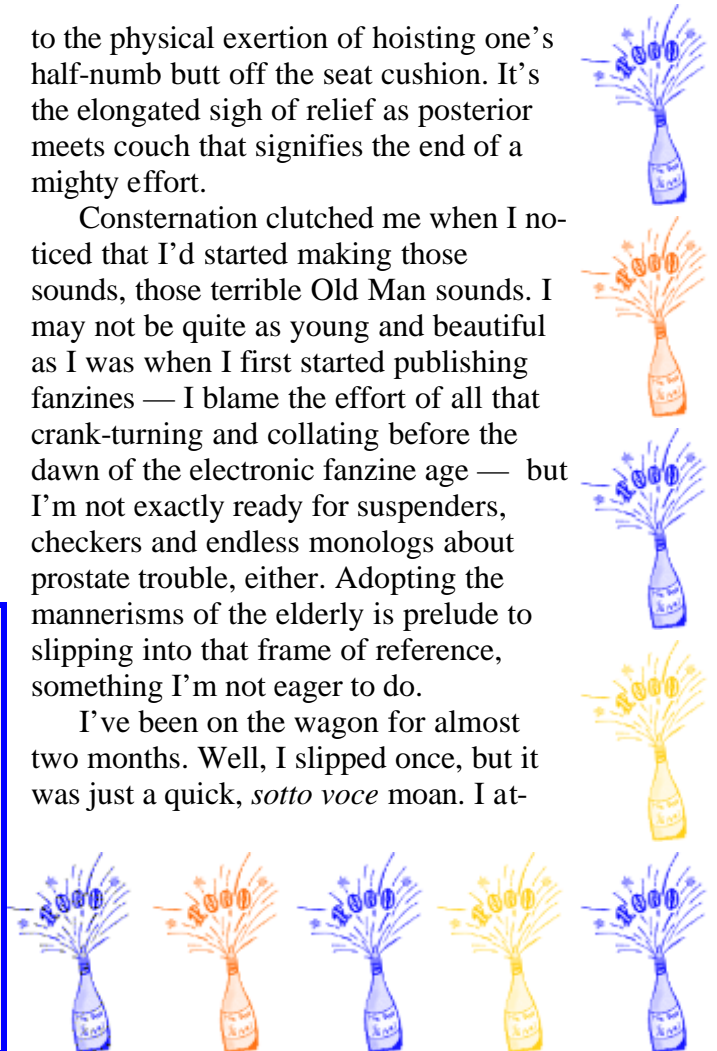
to the physical exertion of hoisting one's half-numb butt off the seat cushion. It's the elongated sigh of relief as posterior meets couch that signifies the end of a mighty effort.

Consternation clutched me when I noticed that I'd started making those sounds, those terrible Old Man sounds. I may not be quite as young and beautiful as I was when I first started publishing fanzines — I blame the effort of all that crank-turning and collating before the dawn of the electronic fanzine age — but I'm not exactly ready for suspenders, checkers and endless monologs about prostate trouble, either. Adopting the mannerisms of the elderly is prelude to slipping into that frame of reference, something I'm not eager to do.

I've been on the wagon for almost two months. Well, I slipped once, but it was just a quick, *sotto voce* moan. I at-

Art Credits

Steve Stiles: Cover, 8
Ross Chamberlain: Back Cover
Bill Kunkel: 4
Bill Rotsler: 4, 5, 6, 9, 14



tributed it to a damp day's effect on my slightly battered left knee, so I'm still counting it as two months of no grunts and sighs.

The Opposite

"No one sings a love song like Kenny Rogers," said the voice-over announcer.

"Now *that's* truth in advertising," I observed to Joyce. As if to underline my comment, ol' salt-and-pepper beard filled the screen with his burly magnificence and our ears with creamed country corn.

I switched to another station before we had to listen to several more excerpts from Kenny's book of love. It did remind me of one of the seldom-uttered axiom of advertising: If a product has a weak point, play it up as a strength.

Advertising increases sales by improving the image of a product or service. When a manufacturer or

***No one sings
a love long like
Kenny Rogers***

service provider detects a weak spot, they usually train the advertising guns on the problem in an attempt to persuade the public that no such flaw exists. The post office extols the reliability of Priority Mail because delivery is unreliable and not guaranteed. AOL commercials hammer home user-friendliness, because research shows that most consumers are scared of the complexity of Internet software. When you see a commercial that promises "you'll love the taste" of anything, don't be surprised when a commercial for the same item you see a few months later trumpets "great new taste!"

A fine recent example is the series of anti-cable

theft spots. One shows a sexy angel flying a man to heaven – until he offhandedly remarks that it's good that "they" don't count petty stuff like stealing cable. She then drops him in mid-flight and he plummets straight to Hell for his misdeed. Another shows a man who blows a job interview when he downplays his conviction for cable theft.

Another ad presents "show-and-tell" in a grammar school class. A little girl bumbles about her great dad and then adds that he gets them cable for free. "He says it's not stealing, because it's magic," she explains. The commercial ends with a classmate saying, "My dad's a policeman. He puts bad people in jail."

As a long-time fighter against software piracy, let me be the first to point out that people consider theft of cable service a peccadillo. They're often the same folks I've debated about illegally copying commercial software programs, so I've heard the arguments. I won't rehash them unless readers insist in the next letter column.

The average person wants that pay-per-view they'd never buy at that outrageous price. Since a program isn't tangible, it's easy for those who succumb to temptation to view cable theft as no more than a minor indiscretion. In a society that criminalizes many of its citizens with intrusive laws regulating drugs, gambling and sex, stealing cable is just another foray into the gray area where they keep the good stuff.

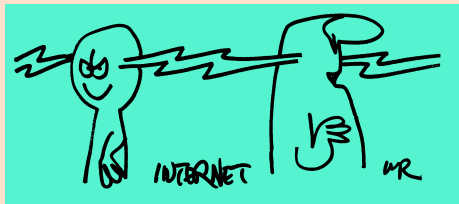
My absolute favorite "opposite" ads, though, are the campaigns that endlessly glorify the convenience of calling collect by dialing "1-800-C-O-L-L-E-C-T" or "1-800-C-A-L-L-A-T-T." The way those ads stress how easy those numbers are to remember and dial, you'd never know that the alternative is "0-0."

Share Jackpot!, with a Friend

Part of my agenda for *Jackpot!* is to make it as inviting and available as possible. I want as many people to see it, and react, as possible.

I give away my fanzines for an expression of interest (contribution of art or written material, letter of comment or fan-

zine in trade) so printing and mailing each additional copy (\$1-



\$2) made wider distribution too expensive.

Fortunately, times have

changed. It costs almost nothing to dispatch copies to everyone who wants it,

So feel free to share *Jackpot!* with your friends as much as you like.

I'd appreciate it if you would also mention to your friends that the only "payment" for my effort is letters of comment and that I would love to hear, even briefly, from all recipients.

First and Ten for the XFL



The Extreme Football League starts its first season in February and the media machine is already accelerating. Print and electronic media will be pushing stories that speculate on the potential success of this mammoth undertaking.

These predictions won't be very knowledgeable or accurate. The seers know professional football or professional wrestling; almost never both. A lot of people know one or the other better than me, but my knowledge is balanced, if not deep.

Not that this guarantees the accuracy of my predictions, either. A new professional sports league is a long-shot gamble as the number of past failures attests. Sports entrepreneurs like to point to the American Football League to prove that a new league can work, but they usually fail to mention costly failures like Major League Soccer and the World Football League.

A lot of things can happen; so many could go fatally wrong. I won't buy or sell that WWF stock based on anything you read here. This is what I think is *likely* to take place with the XFL.

A good time-saver for those who insist on reading other sets of predictions: if the author intimates that the games will be in any way scripted or fixed, you can stop reading without fear of missing anything intelligent.

The idea that XFL games will be any less spontaneous than the NFL is just plain stupid. Balanced against the minor advantage that scripting would

bring to the gridiron are titanic, undeniable factors.

NBC, which has a big financial stake in the XFL and ESPN2, which will broadcast games, can't afford the potential scandal. If the public discovered that XFL games were in any degree staged, they would shun not only the XFL, but any sporting event associated with it. The backflash would annihilate the ESPN franchise and wouldn't do NBC Sports much good.

Even without these calamitous consequences, the owners of the XFL would be crazy to fix games. The core of pro football's popularity is betting. Without the "action," many so-called fans would never watch a game. Pro football is perhaps the ideal betting sport, thanks to the ingenious "point spread" betting system and "proposition bets". Anything that disturbs this marriage strikes at the foundation of the XFL's consumer appeal.

If you think the people who set the lines and take the bets are dummies, you're already halfway to bankruptcy. They're dedicated scientists. If XFL games are fixed, the smart money in Vegas will know it immediately and take the league's games off the board. If that happens, the XFL will be lucky to finish the season, much less survive for another.

Vince McMahon's hand will be most visible in everything that surrounds the actual play of the games. The XFL will show its wrestling roots by spotlighting pre- and post-game interviews, heavy with catchphrases and trash talk. There'll be fewer mumbled, incomprehensible sounds bited from the athletes, because they'll get intensive training in microphone skills.

The XFL also plans to encourage activities classed under the general heading of "showboating": or "hot-dogging." Stuff like end-zone celebrations, leaps into the stands and taunting fallen foes are penalties in the NFL, but the new league practically requires them. Poor sportsmanship will be an asset in the XFL, because such antics pump up the trimmings that divert the fans' atten-





tion from the quality and style of football on display between the sidelines.

The WWF's luscious valets and lady semi-wrestlers get tremendous fan reaction, so cheerleaders will certainly get a lot of TV time. The XFL's Las Vegas Outlaws held a cheerleader tryout that was open to all except strippers and dancers and no one showed up to audition. That led the team, and by extension the league, to dump its squeaky clean, collegiate-style cheerleading concept. A second tryout, to which strippers and topless dancers were invited, drew 1,500 aspirants. The possibility that one of these goddesses will fling her clothes to the four winds in an ecstasy of team spirit should help keep fans sufficiently distracted.

The XFL needs all the distractions it can find or manufacture, because the games won't be much. The salary structure is strictly minor league, so the XFL will not have the smattering of top collegians or NFL stars that other leagues have fielded in their inaugural seasons. The teams will be a mix of overage former

sounds good to many, even most, fans.

Whether or not this is a good idea will be proven on the gridiron this winter and spring. This approach ignores the fact that those annoying, sissified rules are the basis of professional football. Without them, today's mobile, mammoth linemen would obliterate the fragile guys at the skill positions.

Some of the rules changes bring the XFL closer to college football, so some rollback is possible. The league may find that the sack-happy defenders they're recruiting may wipe out the starting quarterbacks by the second week. If the prototype Arena Football quarterback is a rubber-armed passing machine, the XFL field general will be a fullback who can throw the pigskin occasionally. The no-holds-barred XFL rulebook places quarterbacks in peril and may cause a pile up at hospital emergency wards in the league's eight cities.

Most XFL coaches will emulate college football and install a running-oriented offense, perhaps even the triple option. It's a lot easier to teach players the routes and blocking scheme for running plays than to train them to pass-protect. That translates into more rushes between the tackles, fewer long passes and lower scoring.

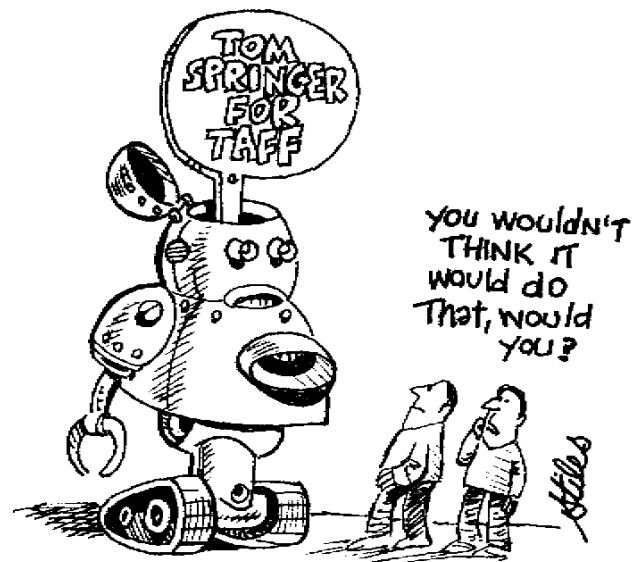
The National Football League has shown that it needs a kick in the pants every couple of decades. The XFL has weaknesses, but it will also be the most serious threat to the NFL's monopoly since the American Football League in the 1960s.

....fling her clothes to the four winds in an ecstasy of team spirit

NFLers, guys who couldn't make an NFL roster in training camp, marginal Canadian Football vets and college gridders who fell through the cracks in the NFL draft.

This is not the stuff of greatness. It takes talent to generate an NFL multiple offense and it's not likely that XFL teams will have the weapons to do so. The games figure to be hotly contested, but without the near-flawless execution that characterizes the NFL at the best.

When rhetoric and reality collide, words take a shot to the cup. The XFL promises to roll back rules changes and restore classic, hardnosed football. That



Good Housekeeping: Ready to Pass Out

Distribution remains the most hotly discussed and controversial aspect of electronic fanzine activity. Accordingly, this *Good Housekeeping* revisits the issue, to the vast disinterest of those who flip the pages in ceaseless quest for the minute quantity of cheese-cake I spoon into each issue.

Bill Burns has established the first newsstand site (<http://www.efanzines.com>) for online distribution of fanzines. Though extremely simple in layout and design, this electronic newsstand is a great jump station for anyone who wants to explore fanzine publishing on line, including both magazines and sites.

Alan White is working on a more elaborate presentation for a newsstand that will feature Las Vegas titles (*Jackpot!*, *Smokin' Rockets*, *Baloney Hairy Eyeball* and *crifanac*) and perhaps some others. *Smokin' Rockets'* estimable art director has produced a very impressive sample page that incorporates a cover photo and brief description for each posted fanzine. He's been traveling a lot lately, but I hope to have an update on his site in time for the next issue.

Bill and Alan will soon remove the only serious *logistical* objection to delivering electronic fanzines by posting them on web sites. As said in *Jackpot! #4*, my fear was that such sites would multiply to the point that no one would have time to visit them all to acquire the great number of electronic fanzines that will be

published. Newsstands, connected to each other with prominent links, centralize web site-based distribution. I urge everyone who plans to distribute in this manner to join a newsstand site.

I still have one problem with this method of distribution. I haven't explained it very well. Maybe that's because it's so close to my heart that it's hard for me to put into words. Ever fiber of my being as an amateur publisher shrieks, "No! No! No!" at the thought of consigning my precious *Jackpot!* to the impersonal vastness of web-based fanzine distribution.

So let me try again, please?

It begins with reasons for publishing fanzines. I'm not trying to build *Jackpot!* into a business nor

energy is good, but it doesn't give me back anything directly unless you share with me.

My professional writing addresses a large audience of indeterminate size and composition. I get paid for that effort, so I accept its rules. (In practice, most authors, including me, are delighted to hear from readers.)

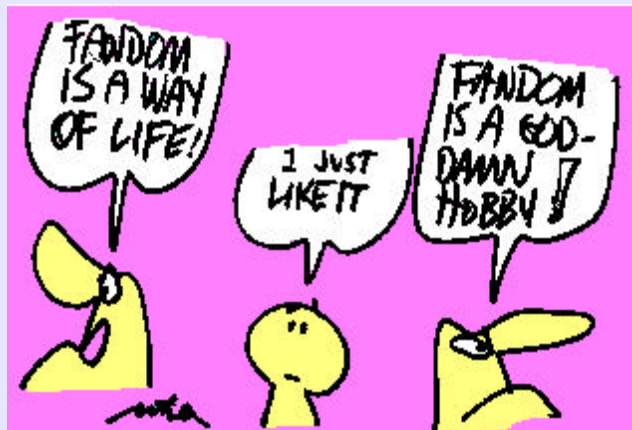
Posting *Jackpot!* gravely weakens direct contact with the people sitting in my digital living room. I wouldn't even know the names of my guests, because current newsstands have no way to report the names of the downloaders to me.

A technological fix is now possible and practical. Newsstands could require a user to enter name and email address before downloading a file. This would help me insure that the people who mean most to me haven't somehow missed the latest issue I've worked so hard to produce.

Although I understand that every reader won't write a full letter of comment to every fanzine, brief Acknowledgements can help fanzine editors feel that necessary community support. Starting

today, I'm going to do that for every fanzine I receive, pending full letters later, and I encourage everyone else to get in the habit.

I plan to start secondary distribution of *Jackpot!* with this issue or next. I'm really shaky about this in my mind, so I'm hoping that those who encounter this fanzine on an Internet newsstand will drop me a note and let me know you're here.



do I create it as a prelude to shamelessly seeking hollow awards and honors. It boils down to this: I want to entertain fans and in turn be entertained by their response to my effort.

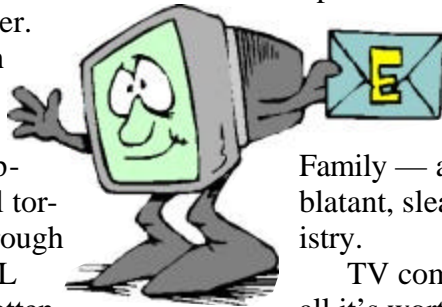
You can think friendly thoughts in my direction or tell your significant other what a fabulous fellow I am. You can, as one ardent reader confessed, have erotic dreams about me. Positive

SPAM Update 2001

Spam is not just for stuffing sandwiches any more. Now it stuffs the world's email boxes with strident appeals to every human frailty, fear and desire.

And its tenacious. It cling to the email queue like lint on a black wool sweater.

Some comes with a "remove" hot link, but more often the drip-drip-drip of this digital torture continues through inertia. If my AOL account hadn't gotten loused up just before Christmas, I'd still be hearing daily from the model car hub and those ever-hopeful folks



who are saying a daily prayer for me. It was almost worth losing my electronic address for over a decade just to be free of weight-loss gurus.

This is advertising's bargain basement, its oil stain on the Information Highway. Spam is written by unskilled amateurs and blasted across giant, indiscriminate mailing lists.

Spam is as subtle as a nocturnal visit from the Manson Family — and just about as welcome. It's blatant, sleazy and without any trace of artistry.

TV commercials exploit the medium for all it's worth, with cost-per-minute budgets that dwarf the shows they surround, but Spam is utilitarian. Most of them don't even use the most basic elements of layout.

Jan. 4

Janet starts off January 4 by writing to me full of concern about my credit card debt. She has some kind of magical system for wiping it out. She holds out no help for those suffering with student loan repayment and a line at the bottom says, cryptically, "Debts must equal \$5,000." I can almost see someone who owes \$4,800 going out on a spending spree to qualify for this miraculous aid. I appreciate the concern, but it doesn't prevent my index figure pounding the "delete" key. She must be pretty worried about me, because she wrote the same email to me again later in the day.

Not that Janet is the only person out there concerned about my financial well-being. Linda_Barnett also weighed in with an offer to cut my debts by 50% instantly. Perhaps with all the extra money I'll be able to take advantage of the two more car price deals that landed on my monitor screen today, too.

J10271 wrote to me twice today with two different "can't miss" propositions. The first offers one of those free vacations that no one can afford to accept, while the other wants to hook me up with an online casino so I can go broke without leaving home. Without visiting the latter, I assume it involves sports betting, because no one is gullible enough to play an online slot machine for real money. (Well, maybe some of the folks who bite on the free vacations....)

CuteCindy9969 claims that her porn site features "the best of the best." This must be yet another example of the adage that the bad drives out the good. The "best of the best" site is no longer on Angelfire, removed for violating its terms of service.

Hughsoi8s2 wants to double my money. If that works, Starpointsatellite wants to replace my cable TV with a new dish. I'd be more confident about his mastery of technology if the email wasn't a completely botched and well-nigh-incomprehensible HTML document.



Spam has an ability to annoy that would have shocked those who battled junk mail a generation ago. Accounts that are used for web surfing can easily draw 20 spam emails a day and some accounts receive *hundreds* of irritating letters.

Only auto-dialed recorded phone solicitations are more intrusive. Frederick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's 1950s science fiction novel *The Space Merchants* presents a world that is swamped by advertising. They even beam commercials onto the windows of commuter trains so that passengers watch

messages all the way to and from work.

Even Pohl and Kornbluth's

satiric vision didn't foresee the immensity of 21st Century Spam. The near-illiteracy of the text and the haphazard design are an amazing contrast with the print-based direct

mail industry. The people who painstakingly craft every minute detail of each mailer must freak when they examine the slapdash ads that undoubtedly clutter their email boxes, too.

Normally, I punch "delete" at the first sign of unsolicited advertising email. Being clumsy and poorly sighted, I clip off a letter from a friend along with the chaff about every 10 days, but it's still better than actually reading this stuff.

Suppressing my urge to wipe away the unsightly Spam as quickly as it arrives, I thought it might be interesting to benchmark the state of Spam at the start of the new century.

So, commencing January 3, I began accumulating bulk mail sent to my statskatz@hotmail.com instead of eliminating it all, unread. (For the record, this account has never visited a web site or signed up for anything; all this Spam has arrived without any overt prompt.)

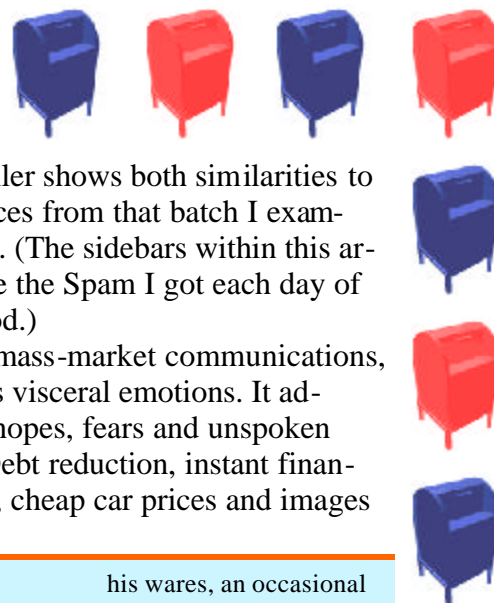
I did a Spam review about two years ago for *Xtreme*, a fanzine I published at

that time.

A look at 2001's first load of

email box filler shows both similarities to and differences from that batch I examined in 1999. (The sidebars within this article describe the Spam I got each day of the test period.)

Like all mass-market communications, Spam targets visceral emotions. It addresses our hopes, fears and unspoken yearnings. Debt reduction, instant financial security, cheap car prices and images



Jan. 3

The Financial Investment Center is right in step with the public's wavering confidence in the US economy. In a brief message composed entirely of large headlines, this outfit offers to help me, "Find Out How Smart Investors Make Their Money!" The company tips its hand a little with a couple of additional headlines, "Foreign Currencies Made Simple," and "Unlock the Secrets that successful Investors use to make profits trading currency."

I didn't actually write back to The Financial Investment Center, but I concluded that they have a potentially valuable idea so I tried on my own, unsupervised.

Fairness requires that I report that my currency transaction worked perfectly. I slipped Joyce a Canadian quarter in a batch of change and received five US nickels. That's a 40% profit on my very first transaction!

I can hardly wait.

Once you've made a pile in currency manipulation, why not enjoy the material rewards that go with such nouveau riches? The next two emails, from different sources, both promise to give me great prices on a new car. Digressive question: What happens when two car dealers in the same area both guarantee the lowest price on the same machine?

If I buy these "dream cars," as one Spammer calls

this wares, an occasional killing in the currency market may not be enough. Fortunately, someone named "Cramden19287" sent me an email that promises serious income for placing the company's free, pre-written ads in various places on the Internet.

This solicitation tries to create a sense of mystery rather than bowling over recipients with 72-pt. Screaming Headlines. In fact, it doesn't say what product the advertisement support or even why the company doesn't just place the ads themselves and reap the response.

"Hey mokes!" says the subject line of a Spam from Ungvle. Evidently, the sender doesn't have a high opinion of people who are looking for "live sex shows" and "hidden cams," not to mention "100,000 photos." For those who can't wait for their pay-per-view through windows and peepholes, the same email offers an "800" number where Rita will have phone sex with you for the usual exorbitant fee.

Linda7516, the last on the log for January 3, has the same basic idea as Ungvle, though the email is more restrained and free of deprecation. Those who accept her low-key invitation soon find themselves clicking through an endlessly repeating loop of adult sites, culminating in a small window with the headline, "Girls! Animals! Fun." I wasn't looking to adopt a puppy or anything, so I shut down the computer to wipe it off the screen.



Jan. 5

Phat.cars returns bright and early on January 5 with a blank letter headed by a subject line about that dream car that could be mine. Guess Phat is losing it. Perhaps he'd feel better if he knew that I don't drive.

This would also be bad news for Nospeedingtickets, who wants to sell me the Unwinder (accept to substitutes!) to keep that dream car above the speeding laws. "Legal to you in most states," says Nospeedingtickets with less than total persuasiveness.

I guess if I don't want to double my money with Hughsoi8s2, maybe I should consider halving my debts with Itrust. It is hard to take this spammer too seriously, since he, like Hughsoi8s2, doesn't know how to encode his HTML-based message so that it can be read.

Hgfkgm (most probably a nickname) is one of those shy spammers who slaps an enigmatic subject line on an old-and-tired offer. In this case, the letter opens to reveal a suggestion that I click the link to see "The young hot babes in action."



Here are two horny, but studious teens. Perhaps they are writing letters of comment.

That's fairly restrained as sexual solicitations go, but circumcision proves of no avail for the touted site, however, since Angelfire quickly removed the page for violation of its Terms of Service.

Hot_body is bolder. He heads the email "Kelly's nude teen body!!!" The author loves multiple punctuation marks. The ad copy within the email, a reference to female reproductive equipment, also carries three exclamation points. The letter leads to a pay-per-stroke porno site, 18 N' Horny, that specializes in girls who look a lot younger than their chronological ages.

You don't have to be 18 to be horny, at least in the opinion of Vicky43, whose subject line asks, "Are You Horny?": The short ad's lead invokes one of the staple double-entendres of the sex biz, "Cum see the best XXX site on the net guaranteed." I don't know when they held this election, but it must've resulted in a hundred-way tie for first, because that's about how many of these URLs purport to whisk netizens to "the best XXX site on the net."

This link led to the error message "You are not authorized to view this page," so evidently I am not horny enough. Odd, I expected to qualify with ease. I'll have to think dirtier thoughts.

of unobtainable women remain the favorites, as they were two years ago, and effortless weight-loss is still in the mix, too. The newest major category consists of solicitations aimed at those who want to make a buck with their own web site, probably ac-

quired as a consequence of some earlier, successful Spamodious invitation.

I was surprised to find one category entirely absent from my sample: offers to spy on my wife, relations and friends with the Secrets of the Internet.

Jan. 6

Fh8e72fow's subject line is a nod to old guard spammers, "Here's a No Brainer." I'm not sure I share his certainty that everyone will automatically click a blind link, even to reach "The Best of the Best, The Best on the Internet Today" and "Adult Entertainment at Its Finest." They're even less likely to come back after getting caught in Fh8e72fow's crazy quilt of automatic pop-ups and an elusive blank window that required shutdown and reboot to eliminate from the system.

"The Latest Craze" is the heading on an email from Vnbbksg. Closer examination reveals that the fad in question is to "See Young Hot Girls in Action." I had

thought that pederasty and chasing jail-bait predated the Internet.

"Keep up with the big guys!" sounds like another sexy come-on. I expected to find myself just a click away from wayward teens or top-heavy temptresses, but the succinct and well-laid-out text is a fairly straightforward business proposal. It offers small sites a way to add credit card acceptance to boost business. The only glitch is that it arrived about a month too late to improve holiday sales as the message promises. Maybe it's meant for people who believe it's never too early to prepare for Christmas. You know, the folks who actually *care* that there are 361 shopping days left.

"Be Secure in Your Financial Future," says the subject line of a spam that capitalizes on start-of-the-year uncertainty. Securefuture34 is a beacon in a

fog of uncertainty. "THE PROPER REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT MAY BE THE ANSWER!" the headline shouts. Much as I am drawn to a career of swooping down on people consumed by personal tragedies to buy their property at distress prices, I guess I'll have to leave my financial future unsettled.

I'd barely rejected Securefuture34's idea when I got a letter from Jade that bristled with urgent concern and exclamation points!!! My credit cards slumber peacefully in my wallet, hibernating until my finances improve, so I decided to ignore her offer to tame my out of control credit cards.

I also ignored a question posed by iartdrtag: "Are you tired of working for someone else?" Right now, I'd be delighted to work for someone else, so this is the last option I want to explore.

Jan. 7

Evidently Jade (*see 01-06-01*) has been talking to her gal-pal April about the danger represented by my credit cards. I like to think of the two of them lying on their king-size bed, a sheen of sweat glistening on their supple naked bodies as they gaze at each other with loving, sated smiles. As they cuddle in the afterglow of their passion, Jade whispers to April, "I'm worried about poor Arnie Katz and his potentially out of control credit cards!!!"

April sent me the exact same email as Jade, so it's clear who is the articulate one in the couple. Still, it was sweet of them to take time out to send me this meaningless

piece of advertising.

Fh8e72fow wrote again, reminding me about his "no-brainer." Think he's putting up a front and is really very insecure about the merits of his site. If it's such a no-brainer, he probably wouldn't have to nag me about it every day, wouldn't you think? Also returning with an encore is Hughsoi8s2, still yearning to add credit card acceptance to my non-existent web site to increase sales in a holiday season already finished.

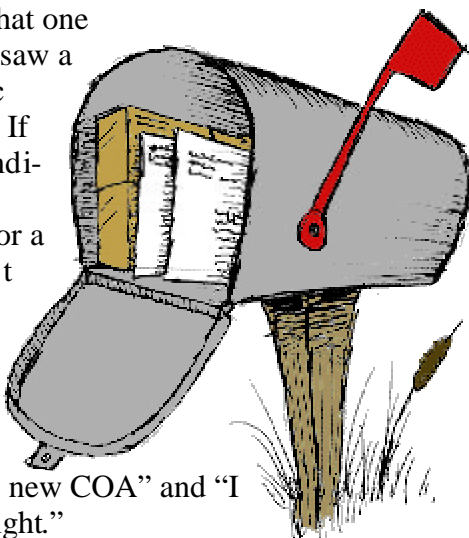
N8594 may not be much at coining screen handles, but his "Fresh Sexy Teens" spam includes a naughty pun in its lead headline: "Nothing 'butt' pre sex." If his link actually led to a site that revels in the female posterior, it would almost have been funny.

Come to think of it, I haven't seen that one since I dropped my AOL account. I saw a commercial in which an enthusiastic AOLer said that it's "like a family." If the prevalence of spy Spam is any indication, it's a dysfunctional one.

I'm not sure if it's a good thing or a bad thing, but the subject lines aren't nearly as clever as the last time I looked. It's much easier to divine the intent of a piece of Spam, but the battle of wits between sender and recipient is dead. My favorites, now seldom seen, were: "Here's my new COA" and "I got the pictures scanned from last night."

I almost find myself wishing for a new age of Spam duplicity. Maybe it's just around the corner, but I doubt that many Spam sources are willing to put that much thought into it.

And now, finally, I can hit that "delete" key.



Jan. 8

Timeliness is one of the strengths of the Internet, so it's curious that exactly a week after the rest of the world celebrated the start of 2001, I found a spam reunion going full blast on my mail queue. Four previous senders, led by the still-apoplectic April made reappearances today.

Anna_Marceau may be a relative of celebrated mime Marcel Marceau, be-

cause her email is very nearly as silent as the quiet clown. It's more a result of an ability to use HTML coding properly than artistic inspiration, though. I guess I'll never know about her "New Breakthrough Weight Loss System!!!"

L21819 may figure that recipients of his spam are getting tired of being so all-fired adult about credit cards, real estate investment, cutting their debts in half and enhancing their web sites by taking credit card orders. His solution is simple: online gambling. I wonder if the site also takes bets on wrestling and roller games?

Jan. 9

Jade and April must have had a pajama party or something, because now Sandy is alarmed about possible out-of-control credit cards, too. All this attention from three women whom I don't know even slightly made me wonder if this barrage of solicitude is not mere camouflage. Perhaps the three of them are trying to stampede me into a panic and then offer me the escape of salivating over their photos on what will no doubt be called "the best XXX adult site on the Internet!"

The no brainer is still a no brainer, or so the sender feels, but I'm just as immune to its siren call as ever. Likewise, the two additional proposals to sell me a car fell on deaf ears. Joyce's Chrysler still has less than 8,000 miles on it.

Finally, Frankie has come back to my mail queue! Once again, he's out to get me to accept credit cards on my web site to send sales through the virtual roof. Madison is a member of the same church, though he has his own pew. His service dangles the dizzying prospect of a 150% sales increase overnight, not just for the holidays, so he may prove to be a formidable competitor to Frankie's outfit.

Elise and UltimateDiet are also of one mind, though once again, their specific methods differ. Both want to help me keep my New Year's resolution by losing weight with their groundbreaking diet plans. I think I'll have a slice of Joyce's devil's food layer cake with the cherry filling while trying to decide which one to patronize.

CuteCindy9969's subject line reads: "Check out this game..." The letter it heads, however, is the same old "Best of the Best" spiel about a teen T&A site.

"Do You Have a Yen to be a Millionaire?" wonders a financially oriented spam. I half-expected an invitation from Regis to try out for his show, but it's just another opportunity to invest in currency exchange. At least the sender didn't put "Yen" in quotes.

Greg Benford

Good *Jackpot!* -- I read it straight through onscreen.

Arnie's being out of work makes me wonder if there's a correlation between recessions, which might increase numbers of outta work fans and fmz activity (LoCs plus Fmz minus P [ublishing costs money])?

((Arnie: Andy Hooper, who published *Apparatchik* weekly and biweekly in the early 1990s, made a very similar comment to me at the time. I think the correlation between extra free time and more fanac is fairly clear -- and the effect may well be more extreme for an unemployed writer.

I've been very careful to avoid letting fanac divert energy from job-hunting. Even so, electronic publishing reduces the mind-numbing physical tasks of doing a fanzine to such a low level that I suffer almost no down time between issues. Instead of ending the production cycle a hollow-eyed wreck, I seem to move right onto the next issue. The arrival of several letters of comment within days of release also has an energizing effect.))

I liked the piece on matchboxes. Odd, how tiny items of the past become treasured talismans. I wrote a story about ten years ago, *Centigrade 233* (=Fahrenheit Guess What?) that treats sf magazines and books as similarly useless but loved artifacts of a vanished age, when people thought there was a different, lively future ahead, and read about it from sentences pressed into the bodies of dead trees. It was set about 40 years from now, and Bradbury said he found it painful to read because he thought it could come to be so...

((Arnie: Books and magazines haven't quite sailed off the edge of the Earth yet, but our society seems bent on fulfilling your prediction. Punishing kids by forcing them to read, last popular in the 1950s, has made a startling media comeback. There is hardly a family sitcom that doesn't show parents threatening kids with books. If reading books becomes any more fringe than it is, fanzine fandom may rediscover its original source of recruits. Why, I could write

a book about this phenomenon. Of course, no one would read it except kids being punished.)).

Jeff Boser

For those worried somewhat about the cost in software, for getting going with PDF productions, postscript and PDF have been well supported for free on Unix platforms for years.

The postscript interpreter, ghostscript, which normally allows for the display/printing of postscript files, also displays PDF files (PDF is basically a compressed format for storing postscript pages). And there is a ps2pdf utility that will convert to them like distiller. There are a few limitations, it won't implant navigation in the PDF file, and it won't handle tables of contents, but for a straight production of a few pages, its perfect.

Now, I believe that you can go to www.ghostscript.com and get binaries for the latest version of ghostscript that will work on windows. If this works (I haven't tried it), all it takes is a program that can print in postscript and you're set. I believe Star Office, a free office suite, would fit some needs. Not page maker by any means, but suitable for producing a basic document.

((Arnie: Thanks for the info, which will help potential fanzine publishers who need to hold costs to the absolute minimum. My price quotes were meant to show how cheap it is to put together a deluxe setup, the equivalent of the old Selectric typewriter/silk screen mimeograph combo that ruled the fanzine world during much of the 1960s and 1970s.))



An Ohio All American box from the 1940s and very nice ones from the 1950s honor football hero Frank Gifford, who went on to make the Hall of Fame in Canton and a busty stewardess on a commercial jetliner who videotaped the encounter for posterity (and a springboard to a career in porn.

few in my time.

((Arnie: As a matter of fact, they do use something similar, but not in the size I prefer.

By the way Arnie, I've always wondered why they didn't use something similar to lollipop sticks for matches. The paper might need to be made slightly more flammable, but it would handle the effort of striking pretty easily and be much better than the cheap wood used these days. Back in my Boy Scout days, matches were a mild concern, and I've snapped more than a



Rotsler spoofs himself in this illustration from “That Old Fannish Line,” a faan fiction story I wrote for *Wild Heirs* #19. It shows MechaRotsler, a robotic fan artist whose prolific output implodes a convention hotel.

They come in miniature lengths so short that they burn my fingers and fireplace lengths that put the burning tip too far away for my monocular vision.))

Chris Kohler

Every time I read *Jackpot!* it makes me think of buying *Acrobat* and doing a fanzine online. Then I realize I don't even have the time... sniff. Someday...

Anyway, I enjoyed the issue. It still seems like you should be doing more with color and layout, since you're basically free to do whatever you want. Also, may I suggest a layout such that you don't have to keep scrolling up and down to get to the top of a new column?

((Arnie: Suggestions are always welcome, but I hope you won't mind too much if I don't follow this one. Single-column layout might be easier for on-screen reading, but I just can't bring myself to revert to the single-column design that I used so often in the past.))

Eric Mayer

Thanks for *Jackpot!* Is there some sort of continuity here, leading to the big payoff from the Wooden Nickel? Postage had to be a barrier to doing a once a week zine but now, heck, you could do a zine every day, or every hour!

I am surprised to hear your mailing list never exceeded 160. I certainly recall the miserable task of sorting through my own *Groggy* mailing list to figure out who to delete -- not just for postage reasons, although that was definitely a concern, but also because you can only get so many decent copies from a hectograph. (Or even from the manual ditto machine I also used).

I even had to decide who got the better, more colorful copies since hekto prints start to fade after maybe the fifteenth copy. So I thought Ned Brooks' scan of a couple those old covers was pretty cool. There is something pretty perverse

about digitizing hekto, however: From artist to cyberspace via the boiled up hooves of some poor cow. I dunno, having become vegetarian maybe I could no longer use a hectograph, in conscience, not that I have any plans to do so.

((Arnie: That brings back so many memories, only slightly dulled by the cumulative effect of insinuating fumes that billowed from my spirit duplicator. No, there's nothing quite like running off a long dittoed fanzine in a small, closed room.))

As I mentioned in my loc to Joyce I like the electronic newsstand idea and have seen a similar plan for Interaction Fiction. The IF community, however, has the use of an ftp site, which is actually a more efficient way to download, I think, although there are web entrances:

<http://baf.wurb.com/if/>

<http://ifarchive.org/>

“It still seems like you should be doing more with color and layout...”

Problem is, the typical IF game is maybe 1/10 to 1/5 the size of *Jackpot!* seems like you'd need a huge amount of space to use the IF method but editors could store zines on their own site and be linked. (Then, however, you don't have the archive to preserve everything)

Now were I to publish electronically I think I'd go the super-simple way and do a straight text ezine, but PDF zines can be very attractive, obviously, and sometimes photos can't be beat, as in the case of those matchbox covers. (I came across the fact, recently that the ancient Romans had matches - sticks dipped in sulfur)

(([Arnie](#): Full credit to those like Bob Tucker and Tommy Ferguson, who have produced regular ezines. That's not what I want to do at the moment, but the ease and immediacy of the form make it very appealing.))

. The bit on lame super powers was amusing. (Actually isn't looking like Lisa De Leuw a super power in itself? Actually I'm not familiar with her but it sounds like it would be.) But, let me tell you, all that snow you stopped from traveling from "upstate" to New York City -- well, hell Arnie I moved up-state! Is that why I was getting buried in 130 inches of snow every winter?

Years ago a fellow named John MacLeod was doing a comic, *Dishman*, where the hero developed the amazing power

Lamentably, some must suffer so that others may prosper.

of being able to tidy up miraculously. Last I knew he was trying to figure out how he could use this "power" to fight crime - don't think he ever did, though John mentions him on his page: <http://www.sentex.net/~sardine/small.press.html>.

(([Arnie](#): Exerting power always has consequences. Lamentably, some must suffer so that others may prosper. So that Joyce wouldn't get slush on her silk shoes, you had to live in a subterranean igloo. This is called The Balance of the Universe.))

Enjoy your unemployment. I collected unemployment in New York for a few months (well - OK - for as long as I was qualified to do so after I lost my job - heck, welfare is wasted on the wealthy!) As for contemptuous counselors -- you got it. Of course when you explain you're a writer/editor, that doesn't help.

Lloyd Penney

Daaaaaaahhh...da-daaaaaaahhhh...da-daaaaaaahhhh! DAAAAHHHH-DAAAAHHHH! BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM... Well, I'm already getting tired of hearing *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, so I won't continue on. Anyway, welcome to the 21st Century. I have an inkjet printout of *Jackpot! 4*, so onwards into the future!

Fanzines can be inclusive or exclusive. I think I prefer inclusive zines, but I hedge my bets...I go after as many as I think I can handle locwise, and that way, I travel extensively through the locs. I subscribe to *File 770*, and receive such esoterics as *Vanamonde*, Covert Communications from Zeta Corvi, *Counter-Clock*, *Barmaid*, *Warp* from Montreal and *Ethel the Aardvark*, the clubzine from Melbourne, Australia. For me, fanzines are a

fannish National Geographic. And who knows, Alan White may have to draw the scantily clad native women, just to make it complete.

(([Arnie](#): Much as I enjoy Alan White's incredible work on *Smokin' Rockets*, I prefer photo-realism when it comes to scantily clad natives. A good example is Midajah (Garcia O'Hearn).))

Yvonne and I have just finished producing a fanzine. Actually, it's a CUFF trip report, and we decided to do it the good old paper way, and I'm very happy. It has been a long time since I pubbed my ish and we're selling it for CUFF's bank account. I'd rather distribute than sell it, but already, the cash is starting to pour in.

The toner scam...only in America. Have you checked the various boxes of toner to make sure that is indeed what you have purchased? A fine black powder could be a number of things, and not necessarily photocopier toner.

Most .PDF zines come to me in 8.5x11 configuration. I would expect this means the greatest flexibility for the reader's use of the file. View it as a regular magazine, print it out onto 8.5x11 paper if you wish...the greatest number of people can convert it to what they want, or simply view as is.

I just responded to issues 5a, 5b and 6 of *eFNAC*...I wasn't about to print out over 100 pages...inkjet cartridges are expensive. As much as I enjoyed *eFNAC*, I found that the landscape configuration wasted a lot of space. And, as someone who's been trained not to waste space and to lay out a publication to the natural reading habits of those who want the publication, producing a pee-dee-effed zine for 8.5x11 is no crime, but is a further convenience for the reader. After all, aren't they who the publication is for?

I have had my own encounters with unemployment. I am currently working and like the work I was hired to do Like George Flynn and Arthur Hlavaty, I am a professional proofreader and editor, but am putting up with the workload of a janitor, a messenger and a secretary as well. I have been sending out resumes and cover letters for about 10 years now. I figure I send out as many resumes as I do locs, and once again, I sent out about 200 LoCs in 2000.

I've been unemployed for about 14 months at a stretch and your self-esteem takes a real beating. I had to file reports, too...I listed what newspapers I bought, what ads I responded to, what letters or telephone calls I received, where I looked, who I called...I never had a problem justifying my Unemployment Insurance cheque, for I worked like a dog to get back off it. With my current job, I am having problems deciding which is worse, unemployment, or employment where I work. Just let me win the lottery, and I'll stop all my kvetching.

The kitchen match...I used to collect boxes, too, but most of what I had were small, modern, commercial boxes, and I tossed most of them. Yvonne has a souvenir of Jamaica from a former co-worker...a small matchbox made of hardwood, with



Midajah graces World Championship Wrestling as a valet for champion Scott "Big Poppa Pump" Steiner.

Rebirth of the Reading Copy

An electronic fanzine fandom is not necessarily a paperless one. Even the advantages of electronic storage, as described in *J!* #4, don't eliminate all reasons for running off a copy on your printer.

I predict that, after awhile, a lot more fans will print out electronic fanzines than will save them in print form. "Reading copies" will account for the difference in the two totals.

Recipients will print out a fanzine to read on the commuter train, at lunch

hour or in the bathroom. They'll write notes in the margins, draw bikinis on the Rotsler girls and even draw in the blank spots that 1960s fanzines ostensibly reserved for doodles by Ed Cox (should this fad resurface in the digital age). They'll get folded every which way and jammed into pockets, purses and glove compartments.

And after the fanzine is read and the letter of comment written, they get chucked into the recycle bin to someday return to us as a copy of *The Con-*

gressional Record. It'll be hard for Old Pharts like me to get used to tossing that printout of *Trap Door*, but that is almost inevitable.

Electronic storage is better. Besides being more compact, it does not suffer ravages of time like paper and it can always be printed out at need. Since printer technology keeps improving, an electronic fanzine that is printed now and stored in paper form is unlikely to look as good as one that is printed out 10 years from now.

a special striking strip on the side. It's made to allow you to carry wooden matches in your pocket without the possibility of igniting yourself. Sealed into the top is a Jamaican postage stamp. Very pretty and a true conversation piece.

((**Arnie**: I'd hardly describe myself as a match box collector, but Joyce and I have an accumulation of souvenir match boxes and match books that more or less reflects 30 years of hedonistic living.

Several members of Las Vegrants are more technologically advanced and collect lighters. The current prize, envy of all lighter collectors hereabouts, is one for a restaurant called "Kum and Go." Of course, some of them consider grabbing up every lighter in sight and shoving it deep into their pocket a form of collecting.))

The appeal of snow continues on, as I'm sure you've seen the weather forecasts. Toronto has had its share, with about a foot on the ground. Buffalo has close to three feet...because of the lake effect, storms are drawn to Buffalo as tornadoes are drawn to trailer parks. After seeing the massive storm that made New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Boston look like suburbs of Winnipeg, and the ice storm that made Arkansas look so pretty and so torn-up. (One and the same storm, according to the Weather Network...the ice storm drifted up the coast, met up with another storm, and smashed the coast... hey, I learned all this on The Learning Channel!)

Glad to read you're enjoying the new technology...those faneds who decried photocopy and used ditto/Gestetner and twiltone exclusively must be utterly scandalized. Those arguments seem so silly, but perhaps we've got our own version, with paper vs. .PDF. To the Vegrants...*Hairy Eyeball*, *crifanac*, *Wild Heirs*... send them all to me! It'll be great to communicate with y'all again.

((**Arnie**: I sure hope you're wrong, because I like my scandals (if any) to be considerably more lurid. I think it's great that a few dedicated craftsman derive the same pleasure from doing fanzines in the time-honored way as I do from producing them with the latest technology.))

To answer Erika Maria Lacey, I expect that I'll have to

buy *Acrobat* at some time, but I'll continue to look for shareware or freeware that might do the same for me. Of course, there's the technicality that I'll have to create the zine first, but most fans don't let such things stand in their way...

Printing out a .PDF file on Twiltone...with deeds like this, this is truly some Creative Anachronism. SCA may have to give up its name! Well done, Steve Johnson! And Brenda Daverin, I tried downloading the *Acrobat* .PDF of the latest issue of *Unravelled Ferret*, but the reader couldn't handle it. Something about the beginning of the file not being %PDF.

Robert Lichtman

I hope I'm not too late with this to catch the next issue. Being on vacation and away from my computer from just before Christmas eve to the Sunday after New Year's has definitely put me behind in my fanac, and when I collected my mail on the first day back there were another 10-12 fanzines to put me even further behind. However...

Your listing *Attitude*, *Title* and *Hyphen* as "inclusive fanzines" made me wonder where you place *Trap Door* in that

An electronic fanzine fandom is not necessary a paperless one

continuum. I've never thought of *Hyphen* as a zine that did any more than I do not to be "determinedly esoteric, in-group and, maybe, elitist." I'd place it and *Trap Door* on more or less the same playing field, overall quality not considered. What's your opinion?

((**Arnie**: I also place *Trap Door* and *Hyphen* more or less adjacent on this continuum. Both have strong fannish elements that give their content an esoteric tinge, yet the high-quality writing generally transcends the knowledge gaps. I think *Jackpot!* is more accessible and *Smokin' Rockets* is a bit less so.))

I entirely agree with you, however, that "the constraints of hardcopy discouraged large circulation," although I've been

distributing 250 copies of *Trap Door* to your 160 copies of your various publications pre-electronic. Like you, I've anguished over who to cut and who to add whenever updating my mailing list in preparation for sending out a new issue; but in some ways this is made easy by those who take my fanzine so much for granted that they don't write in often enough to let me know they're still reading and enjoying it.

Although my own tiny home copier doesn't get enough use to warrant calls from the Toner Gypsies-I buy my cartridges two at a time from a small refiller here in Sonoma County-I'm familiar with these guys from where I work. A few times a year, we're plagued with calls from unscrupulous vendors of toner who speed-dial our switchboard. On such occasions we're all left exclaiming at the scattershot approach,

**"Not that
the script is a
prizewinner."**

but we've all been instructed to say no to such come-ons.

In your "Toner Hall" article, you killed off Laney four years before he actually passed away. You wrote 1954, but it was 1958.

(([Arnie](#):

You and Richard Lynch both reminded me of the actual year of Francis Towner Laney's demise. As I reflect on it, it seems incredible that I could've made such a mistake about someone whose fan career has so influenced mine. It seems doubly stupid in view of the fact that fanzine fandom calls 1958, when Laney and so many others want to the Enchanted Convention, "The Year of the Jackpot.")

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"The Great Gildersleeve" was one of the earliest radio shows I picked up on back in the '40s. I believe I was listening to it as early as five years of age, although I'm sure I didn't fully understand most of what was going on. Because at the present time my only Internet connection is at work, I haven't listened to very many of the shows that Wayback Old Time Radio is providing; but I've got the site bookmarked and am looking forward to more intense exposure to Gildy and the gang in future. Thanks for making me aware of this.

Buying kitchen matches in bulk was one of the tasks that fell to me when I was living on The Farm in Tennessee and running the community grocery store. With wood fires and propane stoves to be lit ongoingly, these were a staple of community life. There were partisans

for both Ohio and Diamond Match Company products, but I never saw much difference between the two and price was the primary determining factor. You wouldn't think so, but competition did exist in the kitchen match world on the wholesale level.

In your comment to Richard Brandt, you mention both *Microsoft Publisher* and *Adobe Acrobat*. I wonder if *Publisher* is necessary as a creation program for *Acrobat*? The reason for my curiosity is that the *WordPerfect 9* on my new computer has "Publish to PDF" capability. I also have *Adobe Acrobat*. You sort of address this further in your response to Lloyd Penney about *QuarkXPress*. Hmmmm....

(([Arnie](#): *Publisher* is definitely not required to produce electronic fanzines. Some fanzine editors just use a word processor. I think a DTP program adds options while making construction easier, but it is not a necessity.

Regarding your comment that "completist collectors will have quite a time classifying fanzines, especially during the transition to the electronic arena," I've added a new repro method to my fanzine listings (updated version soon to appear on the Memory Hole Web site): "E" for a fanzine that came to me electronically, even though so far I've printed all of them out for filing in my collection. If electronically produced fanzines really explode and I can't, or no longer want, to keep up

with them, I suspect I might begin saving them on CDs and accessing them through *Acrobat*. However, so far I find holding a paper copy much more satisfying and more conducive to writing letters of comment. I'm not sure how much I'd want to switch back and forth between *Acrobat* and *WordPerfect* to compose LoCs.

I was happy to see that several letter writers were favorable towards my idea of scanning and reprinting choice old fanzines on CDs, but I question Erika Maria Lacey's statement that "no doubt a great many people would shell out to get those." If my own experience in publishing in hard copy the collection of Walt Willis' fan columns from *Nebula*

is any indication, there's actually quite a limited market and one has to beat the bushes frequently and noisily to attract fans' attention to actually purchase such publications. (There are still a few copies left of *Fanorama*, still US\$10 postpaid to anywhere.)

I don't think I was exhibiting "blatant anti-Macintosh prejudice" in my comments about your scanner, but you're right that the scanning quality of the line art has improved over the past few issues. Still, there's a jaggedness



Here's Satin, whom Buffalo Jim has proclaimed "the eighth and ninth wonders of the world." This photo shows Satin/Minka's studious side.

How fortunate it is that Satin is not nearsighted.

to the edges of the lines that seems to me could be cleaned up. I wonder what resolution you're scanning at? Ross' two pieces in this issue were particularly nice, and I can't finish this letter without noting that while Jenna Jameson is an improvement over Satin/Minka she could use make-up pointers.

Bill Kunkel

Great issue of Jackpot, especially your article on local TV phenomenon Buffalo Jim Barrier. I'm not sure whether you mentioned it or not, Arn, but Buff has a website, www.bwf-wrestling.com, which not only covers his Buffalo Wrestling Federation and contains more information about, and pictures of Buffalo Jim than any sane person could want, but also offers an entire BWF TV show, with commercials! And, since I wasn't at the last taping, from which the matches on this show were extracted, it's pretty much pure Buffalo, which is to say it must be seen to be believed and makes the perfect complement to your feature.

In any case, I was sitting here reading my email when I was suddenly struck with a blinding insight -- Buffalo Jim is the Ed Wood of professional wrestling! Like Wood, the BWF is a total reflection of Buff's passions, his guts, and, of course, his massive ego. Also, as with Wood's best/worst work, the BWF might be viewed as a work of genius -- or simply written off as the most consummate example of ineptitude in the history of pro grappling. Also, like Wood, Buff has gathered about himself a company comprising mostly has-beens (the late Yokozuna, Honky Tonk Man and the Tonga Kid have all worked for him), never-weres, local marginal celebrities (Satin) and hopeless young wannabes from his wrestling school.

In fact, Buff and Yokozuna, a former WWF World Champion (actually a Samoan pretending to be a Japanese sumo champion) were eerily reminiscent of Wood's symbiotic rela-

tionship with Bela Lugosi (in terms of star quality) -- and maybe Tor Johnson (in terms of physique). Yoko had fallen on hard times after gaining so much weight that no state athletic commission would license him to wrestle. Yoko died recently, but he did color commentary with me on one of Buff's early shows a year or two ago and he could barely stand up he was so huge.

Satin is Buff's Vampira and the Bunny Breckenridge role is filled by a guy called "Hank the Crank" who has peroxide white hair and dresses like an albino Michael Jackson.

I guess this makes me Criswell.

Ah well, even the best metaphors can't be letter perfect. Or maybe I *am* Criswell, and I'm there because, as Jim's BWF catchphrase affirms: "You never know *what's* gonna happen!" In which case, a faux psychic may be a primary ingredient in that unique Buffalo



"Buffalo Jim is the Ed Wood of professional wrestling."

We Also Heard From: Dave Locke, Bill Burns, D Gary Grady, Bill Bowers, Steve Stiles, Ross Chamberlain, Terry Whittier, Dan Iacovelli.

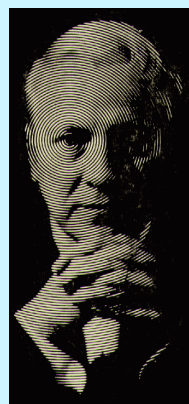
Next Issue: Expect *Jackpot!* #6 with the rest of the letters (and new ones) plus articles around 02/15. I'll hold down the memory a little better. Meanwhile, I hope you've enjoyed this. I'll be looking forward to your letters. — Arnie

All's Well that Criswell... Well, Almost

The Amazing Criswell, now best-remembered as the narrator who introduces *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, vaulted into charlatan history when he forecast, on a 1963 TV show, that John Kennedy would not run for reelection in 1964 due to "something that will happen in November 1963."

Even a broken watch is right twice a day, so Criswell continued to bombard the world with his bombastic prognostications. An expert at the art of "past posting," (predicting something that is already known to be imminent), Criswell's 1963 book *Criswell Predicts* contained many revelations including the one central to his fanati-

cally deluded cult: that the world was going to end on August 19 (his birthday) in 1999. To give you an idea of his florid style, the passage reads in part: "...a jet-black rainbow; an ebony rainbow; a black rainbow which will signify the coming suffocation of our world. This black rainbow will seemingly bring about, through some mysterious force beyond our comprehension, a lack of oxygen. It will draw the oxygen from our atmosphere, as a huge snake



encircling the world and feeding upon the oxygen which we need to exist. Hour after hour, it will grow worse. And we will grow weaker. It is through this that we will be so weakened that when the final end arrives, we will go silently, we will go gasping for breath, and then there will be only silence on the earth."

Though the world has continued past August 19, 1999, Criswell himself did not. He died some years before he had to take the heat for his fizzled apocalypse.

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Add new lights
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Miracle Workers or Scientific Discoveries –
The Pros and Cons.
How have other deities approached the problem?

