



**Issue #6**

**Feb. 2001**

## Again So Soon?

One problem with switching to electronic genzines after doing a thousand or so of the printed kind is that I always seem to run out of pages. When the snowballing guilt of committing such a memory-heavy fanzine grew to be more than I could bear, I still had two feature articles, a big chunk of letter column and a list of suitable topics for "Chatterboxing."

So far, the largest issue of *Jackpot!* is 26 pages; 20 is about optimal for an electronic fanzine in this format at the current state of widely implemented technology. By comparison, the typical *Wild Heirs* averaged 40-50 and the second anniversary issue reached 100 pages. Even *Folly*, my early 1990s fanzine, was generally closer to 30 than 20 pages.

The page count gap causes my creative flow to back up like a clogged sewer. There's no literary Roto Rooter to clean the pipe, either. If I don't get this fixed soon, I run the risk of embarrassing nocturnal effusions. It's terrible to wake up in the morn-



ing and see the telltale signs of a short humorous essay lying on the sheet beside you.

The new distribution system delayed the January 2000 issue until the end of the month, which probably accounts for the sudden excess of material. I may rue this profligacy when I'm scrounging for an article idea six months from now, but I've decided to catch up a little on my non-existent schedule and produce the February *Jackpot!* sooner than you may've expected.

## All That Jazz

Ken Burns, chronicler of the Civil War and Baseball to intellectuals, has now applied his viewer-tested techniques to the subject of Jazz in a 10-part miniseries for PBS. I watched it all and enjoyed most of it. This slightly surprised me, because I've never listened to much jazz.

Not that I have ever doubted the artistry of the musicians or the sophistication of their music. I might as well admit it; I'm a lowbrow with a penchant for popular music. My 10,000-title LP/CD collection is dominated by Rock with Blues, Folk, Rhythm & Blues, Reggae and Cajun the next largest categories. There's even a section of Country

## *In This Issue...*

**Chatterboxing ::: Arnie rambles to hell and back ::: page 2**

Again So Soon ::: 2

Rotsler site: Work Continues ::: 4

Share *Jackpot!* with a Friend ::: 6

Visit the Fanzine Newsstand ::: 8

All That Jazz::: 23

XFL: The Hate We ::: 5

What's wrong with Videogames?::: 7

Arnie on the Net ::: 8

**Good Housekeeping: Closing the Loop ::: More on fan publishing ::: 9**

**Saturday Night & Sunday Mourning ::: Arnie on TV weirdness ::: page 10**

The Vast Wasteland Spreads ::: 12

**Digital Discourse ::: The readers express their opinions ::: page 13**

Where's Lichtman? ::: 21



and Western, mostly Jimmy Rodgers and Hank Williams Sr.

I have maybe one Miles Davis record, which came with Joyce as part of her dowry that also included an IBM Selectric. The typewriter, on which Joyce and I produced many professional articles and amateur magazines, got a lot more play than Miles.

Like many writers and English Majors, I like lyrics. Much of my favorite music has words that resonate to something in me. I want to feel emotionally stirred by the music. Rock does that for me, which is why I like almost every type from Chuck Berry to Everclear. I'm not against complexity and multi-layered composition, but they don't engage me the way Bob Dylan, Muddy Waters and Lou Reed do. Except for heavy metal, which is mostly too simple and repetitive even for me, my least favorite styles are progressive rock and fusion.

"Heard" is a better description of the Jazz experience despite a wealth of vintage photography and illuminating interviews. Rightly, you're never far from a performance clip in this huge documentary.

Even so, this is not a complete or ex-



### *The typewriter... Got more play Than Miles*

haustive survey. Besides the logistical impossibility of representing all of the genre's major figures, the subjective impressions and tastes of Burns and his crew caused them to emphasize some jazz giants

and relegate others to mere mentions or even less. Cab Calloway, a personal favorite of mine, is mentioned once and his name is shown on a marquee in one photo.

Fans of West Coast jazz may feel snubbed. I find some of it a little too laid back, but *Jazz* doesn't reflect its importance. It's also hard to believe that nine of the 10 episodes cover 1900 to 1956 and it polishes off the last 45 years in part of one episode.

Omissions notwithstanding,



*Jazz* paid more attention to Louis Armstrong than any other performer, because of his seminal role in jazz in the 1920s.



Hey yo! Survey says... This is **Jackpot #6**, February 2001. Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107) is the editor, writer and enigma-in-residence..

It

# Jackpot!

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

[crossfire@lvcn.com](mailto:crossfire@lvcn.com) or [statskatz@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

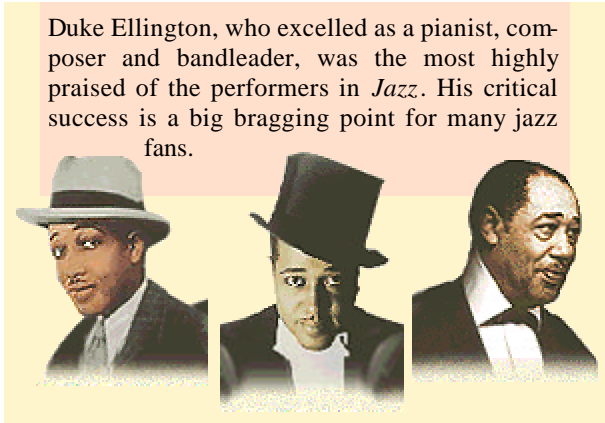
Member: fan writers of America.

*Jazz* does present a lot of seminal musicians, bandleaders and composers. Giants like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, John Coltrane and Miles Davis perform multiple selections that mark pivotal turning points in their career.

Trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis stands out among the engaging interview subjects. He's on screen far more than anyone else, the connective fiber for a narrative that covers a lot of diverse material. Marsalis knows his stuff and displays a poetic turn of phrase in his descriptions of jazz's stars and styles. He also has the skill to blow and scat musical phrases to make concrete points that keep him from getting too metaphorical.

The emphasis on *Jazz*'s older forms fit my personal taste quite well. The way the miniseries jumped back to Armstrong and Ellington after its brief foray into Free Jazz suggests that my taste is not too far out of the mainstream.

The more jazz pulls away from its blues roots and dis-



Duke Ellington, who excelled as a pianist, composer and bandleader, was the most highly praised of the performers in *Jazz*. His critical success is a big bragging point for many jazz fans.

tances itself from people, the less I like it. Free jazz is impressive in many ways, but I wouldn't want to spend hours listening to it. Burns may've felt that this attitude was typical for viewers, because the miniseries goes to some lengths to follow the mathematical, experimental stuff with a half hour or so of more traditional material.

(Popularity doesn't equal quality, but some 1950s and 1960s jazz musicians act like they would be just as happy to continue their explorations without an audience. That could be highly satisfying for them, but a dead loss for me. That appears to be the central paradox of jazz. Though it came from the people, it lost its common touch as it gained artistic credentials.

I'm still not a jazz-maniac, but *Jazz* provided both the impetus and basis for further exploration. I



John Coltrane (left) and Charlie "Bird" Parker (right) got the most attention from the miniseries among post-World War II jazz stars.

West Coast Jazz, Charles Mingus and Stan Kenton were among those slighted by the seemingly truncated final two episodes.

## The Rotsler Site: Work Continues

The Bill Rotsler Appreciation Site, the mission of Michael Bernstein ([webmaven@lvcm.com](mailto:webmaven@lvcm.com)), progresses at a measured pace. The Rotsler site's primary URL is <http://www.rotsler.com>, though Michael has also reserved the .net and .org alternatives and is using forwarders to bring surfers to the One True Rotsler Page.

A big immediate need is articles about Bill Rotsler, most definitely including stuff that has already seen pub-

lication. There's no minimum length, though I'd guess that a good, meaty paragraph would be the minimum. We don't want to swamp Michael with a lot of marginal material when he could be posting Rotsler art and writing.

Michael, only slightly handicapped by voluminous advice from we who aren't doing the work, is formulating a classification system for the artwork. It's hard to resist the impulse to plunge ahead and start collecting art-

work, but he's right that extra thought now will save a lot of trouble later.

Michael must make a pile of picky, trivial decisions that add up to an absolutely necessary control system for a vast and diverse archive site. A typical conundrum: What is the status of an image that is a mimeograph or spirit duplicated copy of a Rotsler illo stenciled/mastered by someone other than WR? He should have it all squared away in the next issue.

imagine my CD collection will have more jazz in a year than it does now, which probably meets Burns' objective.

### **XFL: They Hate We**

No one said it would be easy for the Xtreme Football League. The hostility of many sports journalists, so apparent before the league's official opening on February 3, continued unabated during the ensuing two weeks.

Too many commentators seemed more eager to find, or invent, flaws than tried to objectively analyze the upstart football league. The second week, during which TV ratings dropped to the level Dick Ebersole originally predicted for the league, drew even more abuse. Many adopted a gloating tone and prophesied various terrible fates for the XFL.

Even Arena Football never incited such over-heated opposition. The banner first weekend gained the XFL much less ground with the media than Rod "He Hate Me" Smart did against the tentative New York Hitmen defense in NBC's inaugural Saturday night game. The usually perceptive Jim Rome, who damned the league before hand for "not being about

football" led off his Monday radio show with complaints about how the XFL was too much about football and not enough of a sideshow. (He compared the level of play to junior college, which only goes to show that people see what they want to see.)

Is it a grudge against wrestling promoter and XFL founder Vince McMahon Jr? There's no question that sports media people have grown accustomed to thinking of McMahon as an evil force whose WWF diverts attention from endless discussions of Sean Kemp's eight or nine out-of-wedlock

## ***No one said it would be easy for the Xtreme Football League***

children and Ray Caruth's murderous proclivities.

The XFL is already making on-the-fly adjustments. They'll need to make more to keep fans returning once the novelties start to become predictable.

The first move, announced after the first slate of games, shook up the announce teams. Matt Vasgersian got demoted to NBC's secondary broadcast unit after pairing with color man Jesse "The Body" Ventura on the Outlaws-Hitmen contest in week one.

Vasgersian *was* tentative and flat the first week. He did much better the second week when an LA power blackout caused an emergency shift to the back-up game for a few minutes.

Jim Ross, who has become the lead play-by-play voice, has a lot more spirit and calls a better game. Ross' big drawback is his identification with wrestling as the co-host of *Monday Night Raw*. It would be in the XFL's interest to give Vasgersian a chance to reclaim his job if he shows continued improvement.

I wonder how long it will take Vince McMahon to realize that Jesse Ventura, despite a year as an NFL color analyst, is awful. He doesn't know the players, the plays, the strategy or anything much be-



## **Art Credits**

Alan White: Cover

Ross Chamberlain: Back Cover

Bill Kunkel: 9

Bill Rotsler: 2, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15

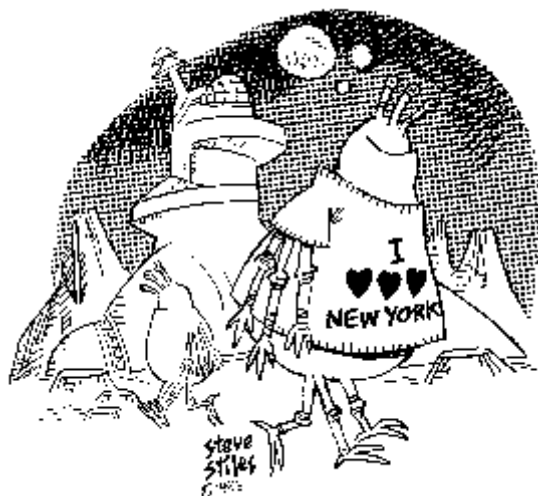
Steve Stiles: 6



yond a few already boring promotional catch-phrases. He's got precious little to say and doesn't think twice about hogging the microphone to say it.

Jesse should refocus on his day job, Governorship of Minnesota, and quit looking like a fool to a nation of football fans every Saturday night. The XFL is going to find it hard to command media respect as long as "The Body" is so visible.

NBC also toned down some features of its coverage that caught flak the first week. They virtually abandoned the "behind the quarterback" view, adapted from video and com-



the pre-game introduction ceremony and celebrate the victory with teammates at the end of the game.

Between those two events, most of the players should be encouraged to keep their helmets on tight.

XFL trams may be playing minor league football, but the NFL could take lessons when it comes to eye candy. The Las Vegas cheerleaders do, indeed, make the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders look like a Sunday school class. The league's other teams don't come quite to this high standard, but it isn't for lack of trying. They're going to have a problem when they play in the colder cities, though.

The funniest thing to come out of the whole XFL launch so far is the verbal battle between Dick Ebersole and Lorne Michaels. The two former colleagues had a very public falling out when Ebersole's XFL game went to double overtime and pushed Michaels' *Saturday Night Live* back 40 minutes. If the XFL had drawn another 10.3, no one would have been angry, but they didn't and Michaels hit the ceiling.

The Ebersole-Michaels exchange brought an endorsement of the XFL from NBC top management. I hope no one ever gives me one like that. Buried among the meaningless phrases was the fact that NBC is definitely still committed to the XFL "through the end of this season."

This is so typical of corporate double-speak. NBC and Titan Sports started this as a five-year project to establish a viable pro football league with all that means in terms of ratings and revenue. So here they are, two weeks into the five-year plan and already NBC is getting impatient for results!

**He has precious little to say and doesn't think twice about hogging the mic..**

puter football games. Journalists seemed shocked by the perspective; I was equally shocked that not one mentioned its derivation.

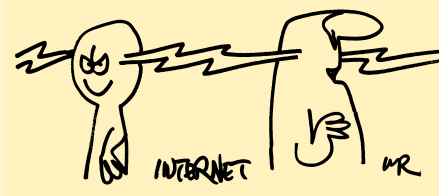
Another revision is that NBC cut the players' mic time during the second week's games. This is one instance in which the XFL hasn't learned enough from pro wrestling. The league needs to identify the handful of guys on each team who know how to talk. The rest can shout out their names in

**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.

That kind of thinking certainly has the power to turn the XFL into a one-season wonder, a footnote in both sports and broadcasting histories.

This *is* The Longest Yard.

### **What's Wrong with Electronic Gaming?**

At first I thought the dullness of the video and computer game field was more about me than the hardware and software. After 20 years, I'm no longer caught up in the daily events and crises of electronic gaming. I theorized that lessened involvement had dimmed my enthusiasm and rubbed off some of the sparkle.

It's a plausible hypothesis, but it turns out to be wrong.

First, other electronic gamers began asking me what's wrong with the field and whether there's a crash on the way. A second, harder look convinced me that the problems are real – and serious.

Sega's decision to kill the Dreamcast is at least a worrying symptom and perhaps a harbinger of harder times to come. The system, like the same company's Saturn, did well but not well enough. Its audience was measured in millions, but it never captured a strong share of the market. It looks like Sega will get out of the hardware business entirely and concentrate on software. Some may think that's a strange strategy, since Sega gets more praise for its machines than the games they run.

Another symptom is that the PlayStation 2 didn't match the meteoric rise of the original unit. Many factors, including generally uninspiring games, are cited, but the bottom line is that PS2 hasn't taken its loyal following to the next generation of game devices. It would not be out of corporate character for Sony to turn away from video gaming as swiftly as the company embraced it in the early 1990s.

Nintendo remains a potent force. It should lead the market for at least the next five years. That's good for stability, but



maybe not for creativity. Nintendo's belief in track record makes it more likely to elaborate an existing game than break the mold with a new one.

The company's focus on young male players, though softened slightly in the 1990s, still keeps Nintendo from satisfying adults. Unlike young players, who have peak reflexes and hand-eye coordination, older ones care less about pure physical challenge and high scores than an enjoyable play experience. Nintendo games are often long and repetitive and few adults ever see upper game-levels, much less beat them.

Nintendo's likely main competitor debuted at the January 2001 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Microsoft's Xbox game machine drew crowd attention and media headlines. Bill Gates and the Rock introduced it, so everyone damn sure *knew* it must be important.

The Xbox is a milestone in video gaming for reasons that have nothing to do with the quality and quantity of its as-yet-nonexistent software. The

***I thought the dullness of the video and computer game field was about me...***

Xbox, expected to contend for Christmas 2001 business, is the first American-made game console since the underpowered and feebly exploited Atari Jaguar. Many of us thought the game hardware indus-



try had migrated overseas, never to return, so it's nice to see some business returning.

Microsoft's entry into electronic gaming hardware is also

a significant event. Microsoft has the muscle to revolutionize the electronic games world, but its original designs often lack that intangible spark of addictive

game-play. Maybe Microsoft and its third-party software company allies will rise to the occasion with games as groundbreaking as the hardware,



Dreamcast (above) an advanced system Sega launched with bright promise less than two years ago years ago, is dead as of February 2001. Sega plans to continue to publish games for other companies' hardware.

short games with a blend of strategy and action are in much shorter supply.

Video game companies cater to their primary

audience at the expense of a potentially larger group. Games that require the ultimate in physical dexterity or which take 50 hours to solve are more game than most people want. There's definitely a market for such games, but targeting it to the exclusion of all other segments of the audience can do nothing but limit the appeal of video games.



An influx of low-priced, generic games has all but killed sales of Sony's PlayStation 2, the successor to its first video game console.

I don't think there's a 1984-style crash headed

this way. Electronic gaming is too entrenched as a hobby for that. I do think, however, that the size of the audience will continue to shrink despite the ever-improving hardware. It's software that counts and its sales probably won't rise to former heights until software starts exciting players again.

## Sometime I wonder if videogaming has the same basic problem as jazz.

Sometimes I wonder if video gaming has the same basis problem as Jazz, The more technologically advanced the games become, the fewer people who want to play them. The gamers who want the ultimate in complexity, sophistication and long-form campaign-style play are well served, but relatively

## Arnie on the Net

Not getting enough Arnie Katz insanity in your literary diet? Check out my daily column now running on <http://www.prowrestlingdaily.com>. I'm currently the guest writer of the site's main column, *The Rose Report* and will shortly begin one of my own called *The Katz Files*.

## Visit the Fanzine Newsstand

If I was in the habit of awarding medals, and assuming that I actually had a medal or medals to award, I would award a medal to Bill Burns. The medal, the one I would give if I gave medals and had a medal to give, would be inscribed (in 24K gold, to read: "To Bill Burns, creator of eFanzines.com, for services to the electronic fanzine publishing community."

Well, that's what I'd saw if it was a big medal with lots of room for such a wordy inscription. Come

to think of it, maybe it should be a loving cup or a trophy. Plenty of room for inscriptions on those, especially the tall kind that have a bowler on the top.



So it's settled. The first chance I get – and who knows when that will be – I'm going to award a trophy with that inscripti0on to Bill Burns.

He deserves it, assuming I get around to giving it to him. The Newsstand (<http://www.efanzines.com>) is gaining new electronic fanzines to display at a rapid rate. Ebeb better, Bill has made a strong effort to link his electronic newsstand to other sites with downloadable fanzines and ones with archives of information about fandom.



# Good Housekeeping: Closing the Loop

The point of publishing a fanzine is not just to disseminate copies, but to get back response. *Jackpot!* continues to be a laboratory for experiments with both sides of that equation.

For the first time with issue #5, I distributed *Jackpot!* using a combination of email-delivered attachments and Bill Burns' electronic fanzine newsstand. When I gave the 230 or so Internet recipients a choice, a little over 40 picked email delivery.

What I don't know, because I'm still waiting for you to tell me, is how many of the people on the original list carried through and downloaded *Jackpot!* and how many had every intention of clicking the hot link or typing the URL but never quite did it.

That's a scary thought, because I really want the people on the mailing list to read, enjoy and respond to this fanzine. Without that feedback loop, this would become little more than a miniature version of the marginal magazines that fill out shelf space at really gigantic newsstands.

That's why I feel that the most important need for online fanzine newsstands is a procedure that collects the email addresses of everyone who downloads a given file. A short-term patch might be to install off-the-shelf "guest book" software on each of the pages on which a given fanzine can be downloaded. It's not as good as an automated capture system, but it

would give the editor some idea of who is actually reading the fanzine.

There is one other thing that would let me (otherwise known as "the noble, selfless editor") know that you are reading and perhaps even enjoying, *Jackpot!*. You could drop me a paragraph of two after you read the latest issue.

I know that may seem like a sneaky plug for letters of comment, but it's not meant that way. It's simply a recognition of the fact that letters of comment drive



fanzines. If we want this and other electronic fan pushing ventures to survive, we have to support them as fanzine readers have traditional supported print fanzines. (The plea for letters of comment will come soon enough.)

Really, what else do I get out of this? I love producing this fanzine, but part of that love comes from interacting with all the fine folks on my distribution list.

I don't think I'm alone in this feeling. When someone consider-

ing an electronic fanzine asks me questions, one is always front and center: How is the response?

I'd characterize response to *Jackpot!* as "highly encouraging." The letter column runs six-to-10 pages of 10-pt. type in every issue. That's not too shabby, especially after adding the WAHFs and fanzines sent in trade. (In that regard, I want to thank those who continue to trade their print fanzines for my electronic one. I appreciate your friendship and cooperative spirit.)

I hate to sound greedy, but I would be shading the truth if I didn't admit that the response has also been frustrating. I feel nothing but gratitude and affection for those who've become letter column regulars, but I also feel bad that many of my best fan friends have been so silent on five issues of a pretty nice monthly fanzine I hope they'll give this fresh medium a try, but there's not much I can really say.

One thing that may hold down letter response is that quite a few people on the mailing list may not be used to getting fanzines. They haven't yet absorbed the essence of this fanzine thing: readers "pay" with letters.

Letters of Comment (LoCs) don't have to be fancy or immensely long. Things you read and see may give rise to thoughts or recall experiences. Just share it with the rest of us.

See, I told you the plug for letter was coming.

# Saturday Night & Sunday Mourning

Marriage is a series of adjustments and one of mine is that I need a lot less sleep than Joyce. She takes more afternoon naps and often a couple of hours more a night. Most of this free time goes to *Jackpot!*, but I don't always feel sufficiently ambitious, energetic and creative to tackle the next article.

That's when you'll find me surfing the TV dial for something I can watch. Sometimes the picking aren't just thin, they're anorexic.

Nick at Night and TV Land are oases of golden age television, but sometimes even they let me down. The latter currently wallow in Andy Griffith, *Gomer Pyle* and similar rustic and heartwarming comedies, while the former descends to infomercials just when I most need its normal programming.

The early morning, 3:00 AM to 5:00 AM, is Newton Minnow's "vast wasteland" made real. The strident voice of the shop-at-home huckster rules the middle-of-the-night airwaves,

haranguing viewers about the absolutely necessity of buying second edition Japanese Pokéémon cards. Quite a few otherwise respectable stations turn over the wee hours to these relentless pitchmen, so the surfer often finds several channels blasting out the same high-pressure spiel.

Cable networks sometimes dump programs that failed in better timeslots. They've paid for a program that turns out to be ratings death or an outright embarrassment, so they run it at 4:00 AM. That's what Las Vegas' Channel Five does with a misogynistic mess called *Guy Talk*, for example.

When I found myself looking for something to watch at 1:00 AM on a December Sunday morning, I didn't anticipate trouble finding an appealing show. After all, that's not so late for Saturday night.

I quickly discovered my error. Nik and TV Land had marathons of series I don't like, the WB affiliate was running two-week-old WCW wrestling and a bunch of talentless yokels were belting out karaoke dressed like their favorite stars on the Fox outlet. Even ESPN2 offered no more comfort than a barrel-tossing competition.

I went around the entire dial twice without stopping for more than 30 seconds at any one spot. It was the third time through the list that I found not one but two shows worthy of comment.

*The Cindy Margolis Show* comes on after *Saturday Night Live*. It stars the alleged "most downloaded girl on the Internet," Cindy Margolis in an hour of shameless T&A, record scratching and pseudo-hip party-mania. The program is an impossible-to-explain mix of Spring Break on MTV, *WCW Monday Nitro* without the wrestling, E!'s *Wild On* travelogues and a honky *Soul Train*.

The 32-year-old (<http://www.cindymargolis.com>) Cindy, wearing next to nothing, introduces dancers who also wear next to nothing as



Cindy Margolis, the Internet babe who has inspired a million digital dreams, hosts a TV show that probably inspires many millions more.



they gyrate and, alas, pontificate as much as limited vocabularies and intelligence allow.

One of the several segments I saw featured a

dance contest. Instead of the usual couples posturing lewdly and flinging themselves around the floor like demented gymnasts, it was five women who were competing for the right to be exploited on the (inevitable) Internet site (<http://www.cindymargolis.com/>) as Web-Queenie of 2001.”

Each of the contestants wore microscopic thong-style swim suits to show their stuff as they hopped up and down and shook their booties at the excited, if oblivious crowd. One girl reached up and popped her breasts out of the flimsy top as she hit the stage, giving TV viewers the chance to stare at a couple of pixelated virtual pasties.

I might have stuck with *The Cindy Margolis Show*, but my remaining good eye wasn't up to the challenge of reconverting those pixels into bouncing bare breasts.

When I turned to Las Vegas' newest station, KTUD, I found the latest thing in reality programming, *Cheaters*. Even the promise of more jiggle from Cindy Herself, enshrined in *The Guinness Book of World Records* for being downloaded 70,000 times in 24 hours, could not force my finger to punch the channel button.

Forget about *When Beloved Pets Go Mad* or even those videos *The Jerry Springer Show*

began using at the start of the 2000 season. *Cheaters* reaches a new low in insensitivity and a new high in tasteless exploitation of others' misery. The only good thing that can be said for this overheated hour is that at least its producers didn't feel they needed to add the artificial streaks and breaks that are supposed to lend grittiness and authenticity to Jerry Springer's videos of trailer park marital bust-ups.

*Cheaters* specializes in wayward husbands and roving wives. The show gets cases by offering worried spouses a free detective service. *Cheaters* shadows the possibly unfaithful mate until they detect extramarital activity.

That's when the Good Samaritan mask starts to slip a bit. By this point, the show has a complete dossier on the target's daily routine so they can pre-

***Cheaters reaches a new low in insensitivity and a new low in tastelessness***

dict when and where the next tryst is likely to occur. That's when they collect the wronged spouse, crank up the cameras and mount an ATF-like raid to catch the transgressor in the act.



PORN STAR AT HOME

Insult to human dignity aside, the confrontations are undeniably riveting television. The wife or husband who called in *Cheaters* is enraged, crying or both while the object of the investigation is so shocked that they react in bizarre, wildly inappropriate ways.

The case I saw began when a distraught wife brought in *Cheaters* to tail her husband, who had been acting suspiciously. Video clips show him being mildly affectionate with a coworker and show the pair going various places during the lunch break.

After running the clips for the wife, accompa-

## ***Insult to human dignity aside the confrontation are undeniable riveting***

nied by the host's lamentations about the perfidy of men, the stunned spouse is whisked off by the show's crew and driven to a park where the cheater in question is expected to bring his girlfriend. Lots of hand-held camerawork shows the group's frantic preparations for the coming TV ambush. All they needed were jackets with "Police" or "FBI" or maybe "Nosy Broadcaster" on the back in big yellow letters.

With stealth that seemed impossible for such a large and hyperkinetic band, they cruise over the meadows and emerge from a cluster of obscuring trees to land practically on top of the husband and his girlfriend. Red handed! The couple is furiously sexing in the grass. Most of her clothes are off and his pants are down.

He looks up from his activity full in the face of his semi-hysterical wife and says, "Hi, glad you could come by to say hello." As the girlfriend gathers up her pantyhose and other undergarments, the program's host explains that they've come to the park especially to see him.

"That makes it even nicer," he mutters as he yanks at his pants, which suddenly seem six sizes too small. The girlfriend, hugging her clothes like a life preserver, disappears in the distance. Her humiliation is just a foretaste of what awaits when other coworkers hear the story and see the video.

He is remorseful, even contrite, as he finally wrestles his pants back into some semblance of propriety. He acknowledges his wrongdoing and expresses the hope that he and his wife can work it out. "A good first step," he suggests, "would be to send these people home and talk it over together."

The announcer's expression makes it plain that the husband has uttered the ultimate heresy. Nothing and no one is turning off those cameras until they have caught every morsel of anguish. *Cheaters* has brought the thrill of being hounded by *papazzi*, once reserved for NSync and Princess Di, to the trailer park.

The emcee immediately assumes an even more intrusive role to prevent a premature, and off-camera, reconciliation. He alternates egging on the wife and telling the suddenly estranged couple that the three of them should have a sincere, private talk.

The pair, a little dazed by the *Cheaters* staff swirling around them, actually starts to walk toward a secluded place with the host. That's when the husband realizes that the cameras are still running. He declares his intention to say nothing and go home if the *Cheaters* gang doesn't shut down and leave him alone to make peace with his wife.

The host is so obviously relieved that nothing positive will mar the caught-on-tape marital disintegration that he stops trying for the nose-to-nose spite fest and settles for preventing the couple from talking to each other.

After one last futile effort to get the couple to ride home together in one of the show's cars with him and a cameraman in the front seat, the host allows the husband to leave the scene of his thwarted lust. Emmy bait, for sure!

## **The Vast Wasteland Spreads**

I thought those two shows were TV's current worst, but two contender-candidates aired last week.

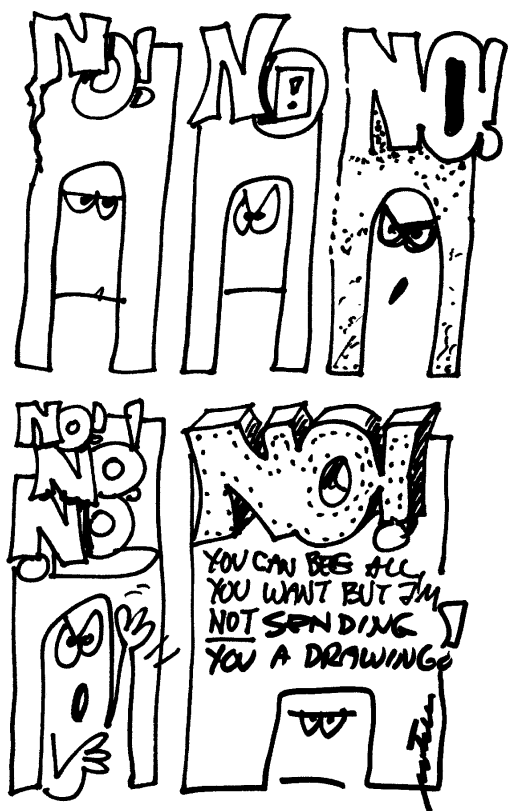
Fox offered a "documentary" purporting to show that no one landed on the Moon. A few aging coots, some facile science and a government zom-

bie to "refute" the allegations added up to a sad, strange hour.

The other show, on UPN featured "Cheaters Caught on Video." The innuendo-laden hour made the apparently cancelled "Cheaters" look good by comparison. They shot lots of hard-

core footage they can't show on TV. There were so many blurry spots on the screen I thought my cataract had come back.

If TV must hit bottom to begin its recovery, this source of *Jackpot!* material won't dry up any time soon.



**Michael Bernstein**

On the issue of electronic collecting, I remembered an article that Isaac Asimov had written on the subject: 'The Future of Collecting' published in 'The Roving Mind', 1989. In this article (as I recall, I can't find the book just now), Asimov presented the idea that collections would be digitized for the purpose of sharing them, but he didn't make the leap to all-electronic collections per-se.

Now that people seem to be collecting electronic facsimiles of actual collectibles (such as digital photos) and even collecting indistinguishable copies of files that were electronic to begin with (such as e-Fanzines), I wonder if this trend can be extrapolated to collecting indistinguishable physical copies of actual collectible objects, if/when nano-technology makes such things possible.

((**Arnie:** Collectors have always distinguished between copies and originals, even when the copies are better, as with Depression Glass. I don't think the real crunch comes until we have *Star Trek*-like matter emulation.))

Regarding the 'Virtual Newsstand'; some of the techniques I'll be using for storing and searching large numbers of images may be applicable to storing and searching large numbers of electronic Fanzines and so may help implement what you've discussed. However, the file sizes for fanzines are going to be considerably larger than those for images, so it requires a bit of thought as to how to

prevent costs from spiraling out of control.

((**Arnie:** I hope you'll get with Bill Burns and Alan White and share technology. This is a hobby, not a business, and hobbies thrive on that kind of cooperation.))

Arnie, regarding the number of copies that you are distributing for each issue, can we have some numbers? You might consider including a circulation statistic for the previous issue in each issues masthead.

{{**Arnie:** I distributed approximately 320 copies of *Jackpot!* #5, approximately 250 of which went out electronically.

Until the newsstands add an info capture system, there's no way to tell the circulation of an electronic fanzine that's distributed as a web site download in whole or part.}}

Your comment to Erika Maria Lacey that AOL is an ISP, is technically no longer true. AOL sold off its actual dial-up subsidiary to Worldcom back in 1997 in a three-way deal that also got it CompuServe's user base (<http://news.cnet.com/news/0-1003-200-321928.html>), and is now no longer its own dial-up provider.

Robert Lichtman's comment about sufficiently large breasts becoming an 'impediment to closeness', definitely reveals a lack of, ahem, topological imagination.

((**Arnie:** Mow, now, Michael. Let us not be more-orally-fixated-than-thou in this sparkling new electronic fandom of tomorrow, today. They come in all sizes that we might enjoy their diversity.

I must, albeit reluctantly, agree with Brer Lichtman in this particular instance. When a woman's bust measurement is 20% greater than her height, the proportions may not be classic.))

Thanks for your kind mention of my Rotsler Project in *Jackpot!* #3. At this point, I believe I've solved the underlying technical issues of storing and presenting such a massive archive of images, and I'm trying to determine what information to store \*about\* each image.

I have been encouraged in my project by my conversations with you and the mentions in the letter column of *Jackpot!* #4. I have set up a website for the project at [rotsler.com](http://rotsler.com), a domain that I had previously registered along with the .net and .org variants. I am definitely interested in additional ideas for the site, whether related to the archive or not, so please feel free to contact me about it.

Material that I'm looking for right now includes: I would like to replace the SFWA obituary

# Digital Discourse

that I have on the site with something a bit more personal, so if anyone has an obituary or retrospective that they wrote at the time, I'd be more than happy to add it to the site.

Also, I'm wondering if WR ever created a rendering of his own name that could serve as the sites logo. Something like a drawing of the letters R O T S L E R as monolithic statuary, perhaps being looked up at by his 'pointy-nosed guy' (do his characters have names?).

*Rotsler's Rules for \_\_\_\_*. WR had several sets of rules, most famously his rules for masquerades (the 'no peanut-butter and jelly' rule is my favorite of those), but I have not been able to find a complete copy of any rule-set, just a few scattered quotations. If anyone has copies of his rules for masquerades, for life, or for anything else, I would be very grateful.

(([Arnie](#): I hope that your quest for relatively minor works like *Rotsler's Rules for \_\_\_\_* won't prevent putting Bill major fanzines, *Masque*, *Kteic* and the *Tattooed Dragon* series, which constituted his core body of fan writing and art.

I'm sending you a .BMP of the cover shown on the facing page. The lettering at the bottom, when rendered full-size, may be just what you want.))

### Tom Feller

I had understood that the word "tube steak" dates from World War II. "Frankfurter" was considered unpatriotic.

When I took freshman English in college many years ago, our teacher let us bring the lyrics of popular songs to the last class of the semester. We had been studying poetry and drama. One of my classmates brought "Tell Laura I Love Her," and we ripped it to shreds.

One of the nostalgia concerts Anita and I have attended included Dickie Lee, author of "Teen Angel." He sang, played the guitar, and danced around the stage until he was halfway through the set. Then he stopped to rest and said, "This isn't as easy as it was 40 years ago."

My take on *Eyes Wide Shut* was that it was

Hi! I'm Dickie Lee, legendary Sun Records recording artist. I just stopped by to say that, whatever you may have heard, I didn't write or sing *Teen Angel*. My biggie was *Patches*, the heart-rending story of a trailer park hottie who got pregnant by a rich kid and drowned herself.



Much Angst About Nothing. A man's wife has a sexual fantasy. They both flirt with other people at a party. Big deal. What counts is what they do about it or try anyway, in which case the man has more to be apologetic about.

Your article on clichés reminded me of the short film *Hardware Wars*, a spoof of *Star Wars*. When the pseudo-Kenobi asked the pseudo-Han whether he has a fast ship, the pseudo-Han replies, "You bet your sweet ass [pause] teroid."

I remember Henry Morgan. I don't think I've seen him since he was a semi-regular on the short TV series *My World and Welcome to It*, which was based on the cartoons of James Thurber.

Your point comparing Aquaman to the kids on the Internet is well taken. Unfortunately, Aquaman could only stay out of the water for an hour at a time. I hope the kids will be able to do the same. I know I get nervous if I don't check my e-mail every day.

(([Arnie](#): I don't recall Aquaman having that limitation. I believe Prince Namor the Submarine needed to stay wet, though some writers allowed him to fly through the air with the little wings on his feet.))

### Jan Stinson

Something potent is certainly brewing out there in Nevada, for two fmz of such fine presentation - your *Jackpot!* and Joyce's *Smokin' Rockets* — to arrive in my e-mail box. I like the overall style and attitude of both fmz and look forward to reading more copies down the road. However, any more than three columns per page would look too crowded to me. Single columns tend to be sleep-inducing.

(([Arnie](#): We gnarled veterans of the Mimeo Era got awful used to those one-column-per-page fanzines. And, honestly, I don't recall me or anyone else floating off to dreamland right in the middle of *Hyphen*, *Void* or *Innuendo*.

Still, I see no reason to tempt fate. I'll stick to the two- and three- column layouts I've played with through *Folly*, *Wild Heirs* and *crifanac*. Multiple-column design opens so many intriguing graphics possibilities; I hope to explore a few of them here.))

I know what you mean about trying to decide which toys to use; I've been moving very slowly in creating my own Website, because I don't want it to be just another chunk of space taken up on the Web by inane nonsense, although there's bound to be someone who'll think that about whatever I eventually

### *Teen Angel*

Teen angel, teen angel, teen angel, 0000

That fateful night, the car was stalled  
Upon the railroad track  
I pulled you out and we were safe  
But you went running back

Teen angel, can you hear me?  
Teen angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above?  
And am I still your one true love?

What was it you were looking for  
That took your life that night?  
They say they found my high school ring  
Clutched in your fingers tight

Teen angel, can you hear me?  
Teen angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above?  
And am I still your one true love?

Just sweet 16, and now you're gone  
They've taken you away  
I can no longer kiss your lips  
They buried you today

Teen angel, can you hear me?  
Teen angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above?  
And am I still your one true love?

Teen angel, teen angel, teen angel, 0000

present. Can't please everyone. I wish the #3 cover art had come across less fuzzy, but I trust you will be able to correct that in future

Of course, it's a never-ending pleasure to see Rotslers almost everywhere I look in fmz these days. It's welcome news to hear of Michael Bernstein's Web project, too.

((**Arnie:** I've always enjoyed publishing Bill's stuff and I am especially pleased that I got to do a number of projects with him after I returned to fanzine publishing in 1989. Now I also feel a little consolation when I use Rotsler illos or see them in other fanzines. Part of his legacy is thousands of cartoons that will continue to entertain fandom for at least another decade.))

"Street Smarts" puts me in mind of all the thefts American TV has committed against the BBC. My husband tells me the BBC's *Casualty* came before the U.S. *ER* series. Apparently the same holds true with *Castaway* and *Survivor* and *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* was snatched in whole cloth from Canadian TV. It seems all that American network TV producers can come up with are more knock-offs; there's one of *Survivor* and MTV's *Real World* has apparently spawned *Big Brother*.

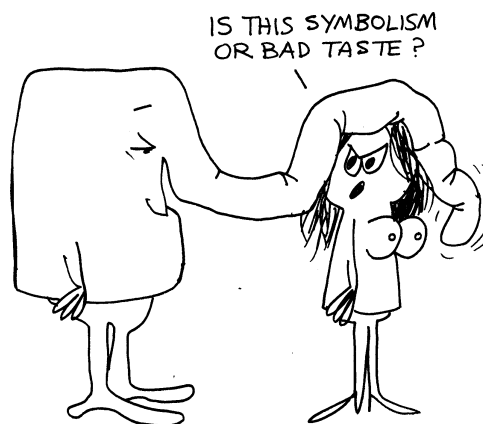
What a shame that creativity is so lacking in Hollywood. Then again, some of the independents aren't all that great, either. "Queen of Swords"? Ack!

((**Arnie:** Some of what you write may need verification before repetition. I think *Big Brother* was based on a show done in Europe, there are US TV series like *ER* as far back as Richard Boone's *Medic* in the mid-1950s and I believe *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* is a licensed property that pays royalties to its creators. I think it can also be argued that all versions of *Survivor* and similar programs trace back to the Japanese stunt and endurance shows that have enjoyed enormous popularity for the last decade.

Which is not to say that I dispute your premise, only your examples. US television takes from everywhere — and the rest of the world buys and/or copies our programs, too.))

Like you, I was nonplussed by *Eyes Wide Shut*. There were moments I found incomprehensible. And there were scenes, like the one of the discussion between Tom Cruise and Sidney Pollock (I think that was him, he's also a director) in the billiards room, that were played so slow I could have fixed

# The CURSE of the TATTOOED DRAGON



WILLIAM ROTSLER

and drank cups of tea in the time it took for one of them to stop speaking and the other to start. How disappointing.

Since you hubbubbed *LeZombie* so emphatically, I must read it. How do I get in touch with Mr. Tucker?

((**Arnie:** No amount of hype could do justice to Bob Tucker, who is fanzine fandom's very own Will Rogers.))

"Why I Write and Publish Fanzines" and "Why I Read Fanzines" both made tons of sense. Huzzah!

Cliché mangling is usually a quick laugh-getter because they're easy for most people to "get." George Carlin sometimes still does a bit where he wonders aloud why some words and phrases don't have

exact opposites, which I find very funny.

The photo of Minka in #3 reminded me of a former roommate who also had large breasts and often complained of backaches. She was petite otherwise. Having breasts the size of small watermelons must be very painful unless Minka got some sort of muscular realignment to support them. Anything that large just gets in the way, I'd think.

**Of course, it's a never-ending pleasure to see Rotslers everywhere.**

By the way, I printed out both ishes, because sitting at the computer too long makes my legs ache and I prefer to read lying down. I haven't had any problems in printing out the ishes, either. As for viewing on screen in landscape, as John Foster has asked, why not obviate the need for it by just printing a paper copy?

I congratulate you on a stellar piece of writing in "I've Met My Match" — anyone who can make kitchen matches sound interesting definitely Has Something. "Snow Business of Mine" was no slouch, either - thanks for two great reads.

((**Arnie:** And thank you for the first of what I hope will

be many letters of comment to *Jackpot!* in the future. Welcome aboard!))

### **Erika Maria Lacey**

Another good issue to while away the tedious holiday season (and forget about the heat and insects).

Hmm ... I have to agree about anyone wanting to get into "the Big Online Fandom" community doing something that amounts to research. Most of the fanzines that I read would go over my head had I not spent hours going to historical fansites, personal websites and just about every website that I could imagine and just simply read. That's not to say that a lot still doesn't go over my head ...

(([Arnie](#): I applaud your initiative, but there is a much easier, and probably more enjoyable, way to acquire this knowledge. When you've got a question about fanzines, fanhistory and the like — ask a fan. Most of the time, they're as garrulous on these subjects as the old codger working on his seventeenth drink at the end of the seedy bar.))

That toner of yours could be resalable ... eBay would be an idea just to give it a go (if you're itching for space). Just about everything imaginable gets sold there, and a few things that I'd rather not imagine.

The whole soft drink phenomenon has expanded beyond belief, truly. People are no longer content with their 250ml can of Coke ('oz'? Whassat?) but run out to buy the 1 litre

## ***I have to agree about anyone wanting to get into the "Big Online Fandom."***

stuff - if not heading for the nearest supermarket to get Red Eye or the like.

It's truly frightening to see some people drink four or more cans of \*that\* stuff in a day - especially when no more than two are recommended per daily intake. Considering what one can of coke or small coffee does to me (bouncing off the walls) I'm aghast that someone can drink so much caffeine and not have a heart attack. The only time I ever had three coffees in a row my heart skipped beats for the next few hours, guaranteeing that I'd never drink that much again (though my intake has gone down to once a month or so).

Some folks are addicted ... I know some who become terribly irritable if they don't get their Coke/Red Eye/other caffeine drinks. When living on *Pampero II* in the City Botanic Gardens (loooooong story, for another time, perhaps) there was a couple living on one of the other yachts who were in deep withdrawal from the stuff when their doctors told them that they'd have major health complications if they didn't stop.

They did ... for a short while. I never did find out what happened after that because we moved and I didn't have the interest to keep in touch (plus I was 12 at the time; they wouldn't have been interested in keeping in touch with a teenybopper).

(([Arnie](#): I've seen individual soft drink servings as big as

84 oz. at some convenience stores. The next step in a big tank you can strap to your back and drink through a straw mouth-piece.))

Unemployment benefits in Australia isn't something I'm too familiar with (but should be before soon) but they're pretty much indefinite, though one now has to "work for the dole" after a specified time. A friend of mine is doing this at the moment, and she's having the most boring time of her life. Three choices: do gardening, learn how to use computers, or be a teacher aide. The first was out because she's fair and in the Australian sun you quickly learn your folly if you do go out; the third because she'd heard of someone who took that choice and then spent their time cutting up sandwiches in the tuckshop. She hasn't had much luck with the second one, though; the first week they spent carting computers around, the second learning what the parts were, the third "this is how you start a computer", when not sitting outside waiting for them to allocate something to do. All the more reason for why I'd rather stay away from it for as long as possible, for the more time I could put that day off, the more time I can lounge around and be unemployed (well, no, not really ... but still, a bit more interesting). Besides which, I'm not even certain I can get it, what with the ridiculous policies and all!

The humble matchbox - a source of much fun when I was still living aboard the yacht! Ahh, all of those fires my brother and I started, giving every adult in radius a heart attack.

Those good (not so) old days. Using matches when overseas was the only way to start the gas stove, for the electric lighter was unreliable and cigarette lighters were for cigarettes. So lighting the gas stove became an Art and a Challenge. It was 1. quick, light the thing! 2. turn on the gas 3. shove match by the stove 4. drop match and pull fingers away quickly 5. repeat until stove catches on. Many a time we burnt ourselves on the things, but it never stopped us using them.

For the most part they were in the same boring boxes - in fact, we still have an unfinished surplus of matches from overseas somewhere in the kitchen. The boxes are quite thick and the matches made of a waxed paper with a pink head on them.

But most memorable of all the matches were the ones that we found packed into the lifeboat. My father told us that they were guaranteed to light no matter what, soggy or not. They were packed into an aluminum tube and wrapped in plastic the last time that I saw them - again, probably to be found somewhere in the house. My brother and I used to wonder about using them for ages, but didn't only because of the fact that if the yacht sank in the middle of the ocean somewhere, we might need them. Happily enough, we didn't.

(([Arnie](#): Fire is the enemy of all book, magazine and fanzine collectors. I'm all three, so I have to make sure to keep the paper and the matches

I have no trouble with your snow globes - hell, at this time of year we'd even appreciate a few snowdrops ... but it would be nothing short of a miracle, for we never get snow here (where I live, that is). Put some of that miraculous power of yours to directing it our way - at the very least we'd end up



with cooler weather! Admittedly, today's storm cooled things down a tad, but sitting here wearing next to nothing and feeling warm means that it's still too hot.

Some obligatory notes on PDFs and the like ... I've been testing out FreePDF <<http://over.to/freepdf>> recently and have been quite impressed. The name says it all - create free PDF files. All you have to do is print your files to FreePDF using the print function in one's program (MS Word, etc). It's a bit fiddly to install - one has to install FreePDF, Ghostscript and Redmon and then tweak various printing settings to get it working. It only took me an hour or so to read the instructions, which are quite comprehensive, and then work it all out. There are also instructions for how to make it work to do colour PDFs. It only does very simple and plain files, though; no bookmarking, thumbnails, etc. Drawback: it's only for Windows. In fact, most of the programs out there are for Windows.

Another program that I've been using is HTMLDOC <<http://www.easysw.com/>>. This one does do bookmarking and creates books in the form of PDF files. Unfortunately it only converts HTML to PDF (and PS to PDF, I think) but still, it's a neat little feature for turning all of those online HTML fanzines that are in several pages into the one file as a book. (But to do this the HTML files need to have <h1>Headers</h1> etc tags.)

Having Adobe Acrobat would make everything all the much more simpler, though, truly. If one cares to, it \*is\* available on the Internet quite illegally - my one attempt to download it failed, so I went looking for alternatives.

While on the subject still, there's a webring for stuff to do with PDFs <<http://www.pdfzone.com/webring/>> is the home-page for it. There is information for folks wanting to get the most out of Adobe Acrobat and how to use it as well as alternative programs with which to produce PDFs and some dud sites with nothing more than PDF files on them.

### Tracy Benton

This is pretty cool. How about getting Baloney up there too?

Unfortunately this doesn't solve my problem of my home connection being too slow to download the ezines. I still have to download them at work, where of course I can't read them, so I have to print them out anyway.

And I'll put in my vote for single-column layout too. If they were just a tad easier to read on-screen, I could read them at lunchtime... why not play around with it?

### Tom Feller

My favorite active NFL player wears #4, Bret Favre.

The way my wife Anita and I consume colas, you could consider it a vice. The only mitigating circumstance is that we buy Diet-Rite to drink at home. It lacks caffeine and sugar and is low in sodium. It was also endorsed by the magazine Diabetes Forecast, official magazine of the American Diabetes Association, as the safest soft drink available

### Erika Maria Lacey

Last year was indeed very strange what with the whole It's The New Millennium No It Isn't That's Next Year! argument. I fell into it myself a number of times -- never did have

much of an opinion on it, but it sure gave me opportunity to lay claim to party at the end of 2000. With the added bonus of annoying all parties, for all thought it somewhat of a cop out to be celebrating both.

I'm alive; good enough reason to celebrate, in my opinion ... most of those I know made it through another year, too. At least you guys got some glitz and glamour -- we got a few rather pathetic sort of fireworks along with a crush of people at Southbank, where we congregate every year on New Year's Eve in Brisbane. There are always the private fireworks, too, though I think those are illegal in this state. At least, that is what I am told.

((**Arnie**: Who needs an excuse to celebrate? I'm willing to agree that *next* New Years marks the start of the real, really for real New Millennium, if that would help.))

People lose interest when reading becomes too familiar? Strange. I'd have thought that people would give up reading if things were too hard to make head or tail of. Still, it might just be me that way. I don't like much of a challenge when reading -- plain ol' ascii does it for me most of the time, especially when I am reading a lot. That way I don't have to put up with people's strange colour schemes. Especially on

***I'm alive — Good enough reason to celebrate, in my opinion.***

web pages, where sometimes folk have white text on an aqua background and then expect folk to stick around for a while ... not likely.

*Jackpot!* can hardly be called hard to read, regardless. An interesting zine because of the way in which it is laid out, with good emphasis in places. Although waiting for some of the images to load on a page does take a few too many seconds for me (blame it on poor ol' Nest).

((**Arnie**: Effective magazine graphics walk the thin line between jolting the reader out of the necessary rhythm with innovative visuals and keeping them from being put to sleep by familiar and comfortable ones.))

All fanzines hardly look the same -- and it is not how they look that should be reason to read them, but the content. Often, if something does not interest me it gets put away for a very long time, until I am ready to face the challenge of reading something not to my interest. A lot of books get this done to them, for example, and is why well over half of my library is unread. Not too many fanzines have had this done to them, though at times I forget that I have one.

New Year resolutions -- never make them. When I do it's the same thing that I always say: what you do. Find a job. Lose that weight that is making clothes feel a bit tight. Finish University has been at the top of the list for a few years now, but I've not quite made it yet. Hopefully that one will come to pass this year without any more troubles!

Those are some rather strange advertisements that you have over there in the US. Sometimes we get to see them over here and they're always a subject of hilarity. As at times I get tapes of US shows without the advertisements edited out of them. Myself and the others who watch them see the advertisements and laugh our heads off at the American accents -- no offense, but you guys sound hilarious at times -- or simply forward though the really bad ones.

(([Arnie](#): That makes me feel a little less guilty about laughing when US television presents Australian commercials for their humor value. It's obviously a matter of perspective.

At the moment, American TV has a surplus of ads in which bears menace people, steal their food and chase them out of the woods.

Well, except for the commercials for Disney's new California Adventure park. They use a 100-ft-tall mechanical bear to get people to come through the gates. Of course, once the tourists are all inside, the big bruin may slaughter them all and steal their picnic baskets.))

Sports isn't something that I understand too well -- I know that there are many different groups who help players, that there are dedicated sports channels -- as shown on the cable supplier that my brother is going to cut us off of in a week's time. Sniff.

(([Arnie](#): I try to write articles about sports, and sports entertainment, to spotlight aspects that even those who don't follow sports can appreciate. Sometimes, I hope, I even succeed.))

Regarding the web site newsstand ... you are part of Yahoo! Groups, once eGroups, yes? If something along the lines of that was set up, only, instead of mailing lists they were fan-

## ***Those are some rather strange advertisement you have over there in the US.***

zine lists ... or subscriptions, and everyone had to join up to get access to a certain fanzine, then that would work. A way in which to see how many times one's zine has been downloaded or accessed, a way in which to make sure that someone you don't want doesn't get your zine from that avenue (although there is always the fact that someone who does have it can send it on).

It's a fair bit of work for someone to write all of the coding, but perhaps something like that exists somewhere. And then ... well. Sometimes I think too much for my own good. I think that this is very feasible, though, and if I had the computer, the permanent connection, the domain name and the knowledge with which to do this, I'd do it. But since I don't ... it's easy enough to set up username/password access on a Unix system with htaccess etc. I've done it myself, in fact, and it worked admirably to secure my online journal from folk I didn't want reading it, not that there were many.

(([Arnie](#): I think what a lot of us want to avoid is turning fanzine fandom into something that one has to *join*. A simple sign in system for downloaders at online newsstands seems like a reasonable compromise. Maybe you could contact Bill Burns and lend a hand?))

Goodness. I've been considering doing away with my current e-mail address and purchase myself a domain name so that I can change my e-mail address and site URL for good. The amount of spam that I get is sheer torture. I started with this e-addy before I was even halfway net savvy and now I pay for it. My fault for sending e-mail to newsgroups, joining up with various less than reputable sites for access to services and the like. I've now learnt better.

What you get sounds a lot more interesting than mine ... not that I know what I get, actually. For the most part it all gets deleted. Especially the porn sites. And advertisements. There are a few spam e-mails that I get from the same folk constantly. Not that I've been able to figure out one of them, which is written in some strange foreign language that comes across as gibberish on my screen.

There is one particular annoying thing about porn sites -- not that I actively go looking for them. I do my best to stay away from them. I was *\*looks around furtively\** attempting to find a warez version of *Adobe Acrobat*. I can safely say that there is no such thing online at the moment, unless you are *really* in the know.

Every effort of mine was confounded ... I think I spent a few hours looking. Anyhow, the annoying thing about porn (and warez!) sites are the nasty javascript windows that keep popping up when you open them. Up one pops. You close it. To punish you for closing that window, up pop two more to replace it. While you're frantically trying to close those two, a couple more pop up just to keep one's fingers really comfortable with CTRL + F4 (I use Opera). Enough to drive a person bananas and then slice those responsible into kebab for the cat's consumption. I wonder if she'd like that, incidentally ...

I know I get a lot of the spam on spying on folks. The one time that I've attempted to go spying on someone backfired on me -- not that I know much of the industry. Complete amateur, that's who I am. Still, it was amusing, and was composed of my trying to find out someone's real identity. It was an amusing few months, but I've since given up on that one, coming to the conclusion that all of the information that I had, if it were true, would have given me the person a long time ago. Since they hadn't, they must have been red herrings put out by the person in question just in case nosy parkers like myself went looking.

(([Arnie](#): Perhaps the person whom you investigated is, in reality, a masked crime-fighter with a secret identity to protect. Maybe you're just Lois Lane to somebody's Superman.))

I've never gotten the term "no brainer." Every time that I hear/see it I think "wow, someone is claiming to not have a brain. How charming. Makes a difference from all of those claiming to have one but so obviously lack one. I suppose that my interpretation is a wrong one, but it gives me amusement to think otherwise.

Unix and Linux users are always very happy to point out

that a lot of things are available for free in doing it their way ... ignoring, I suppose, that there are the same for other OSs. A great many of my friends, whenever I ask if they know of a free version of a specific program or the like, immediately chorus: "You can do that for free in Linux!" It makes me want to thump their collective heads from time to time, especially when they're not being very helpful by saying that. MacOS, Windows, BeOS and Linux all have free PS to PDF converters, if you know where to find them. Just a matter of looking and asking questions to find out where. I know where to get the Linux (because I use it) and Windows (I use this too) ones, but not of the others, but I've seen a PS file get converted to PDF in MacOS before by a friend of mine.

Regarding Lloyd writing 200 LoCs ... 200! Goodness. That's a lot of LoCs. 200 for 2000. Impressive. 201 for 2001 perhaps, too.

((**Arnie**: Were there 200 fanzines published in 2000? I know print publishing increased and electronic fanzines added to the total, but I didn't think there were quite that many. I'm sure Robert Lichtman will be toting them up in the next issue of *Trap Door*..))

The fact that one has to keep tally of all of the jobs that one has gone for when on the unemployment benefit is one of the reasons that I've not gone on it, even though I'm entitled to it, or some form of it since I'm only studying part-time. Friends of mine who are doing that are becoming a bit strange and their faces tic whenever one mentions the paper or job or anything even remotely like it. Simple things set them off into rabid tic mode and makes one want to run away.

What Robert Lichtman said about folk not wanting CDs with scanning and reprinting fanzines on CD ... one of the reasons that I thought it would work is because I've seen it done elsewhere, and when something is available for small sums folk are often more willing to get copies ... though as always I could be wrong. (What would it cost to do? US\$5-10? Something like that, I suppose.)

You know, the back cover of *Jackpot!* reminds me of the covers on *SF Commentary 76* where Turner's head looks down on a scene in a godlike fashion. What with the things being espoused on the rest of the cover, it's not too surprising! The halo effect put to good use.

((**Arnie**: Except, of course, that Ross was satirizing narcissistic self-absorption. I think his reputation as the most self-effacing and non-pushy of fans makes the joke that much sweeter..))

#### **Michael Bernstein**

Your XFL article was entertaining, and I thought you might appreciate a couple of additional facts:

XFL players do not get medical coverage. This strikes me as sheer idiocy on the part of the franchise owners, as I suspect a few broken arms and legs (not to mention collar-

bones and necks) that take out a player for a season with no compensation and no medical will make the rest of the players far more careful (dare I say timid?) than the mere prospect of physical injury would.

I also found an amusing parallel between the XFL cheerleaders and their counterparts in the movie *BaseketBall*. While I haven't found any really good pictures of the XFL cheerleaders, I did find a few of the Cheerleaders for the Milwaukee Beers, the L.A. Riots, and the Detroit Felons Baseket-Ball teams. Enjoy!



Finally, I'm bemused by the possible parallel to the James Caan movie, *Rollerball*.

It remains to be seen if the XFL will evolve (devolve?) in that direction.

((**Arnie**: Part of the XFL's problem is that it is becoming somewhat more like *Rollerball*, albeit without the excitement or fan support. The lack of medical coverage and the policy of dropping injured players, combined with sloppy officiating and loose rules causes poorer play — and quality was an XFL problem from the opening kick-off..))

Report from the Rotsler Front:

I've gotten permission to include a little more content that I've dug up around the web, which I'll incorporate over the weekend.

### ***Part of the XFL's problem is that it is becoming more like Rollerball.***

I ordered a used book (out-of-print) from Amazon by Bill Rotsler called 'Science Fictionisms' (1995) containing a myriad of amusing quotes from various SF authors (and a few of them by WR). I'm enjoying reading it.

#### **Don Anderson**

Well, I've successfully downloaded *Jackpot! #3, #4, & #5*, so, in all fairness, I ought to acknowledge that they've been read and enjoyed.

And they have.

First, the format. It is still a pain to have to scroll the page for each column. For that reason I prefer a single column format. If I reduce the page size to get it all in on my pre-historic 15-inch monitor, I can't read the tiny print. However, I understand the artistic desires that dictate the need for multi-column format, so I'll just have to learn to live with it.

Second, the electronic delivery. I admire the graphics and color content and I scroll my way through the entire issue in

order to peruse same. But when it comes time to actually read the content, I print it all out in B & W. Except I may do the cover in color. I prefer the freedom to sit in my favorite chair or legs-up on the davenport to read in comfort and the ability to change position if I desire. It's just no fun to sit at the computer, with its limited positions, for the length of time needed to read a zine.

Bitching completed, it's time to address the content. Great! About characterizes it. *Jackpot!* is just the sort of personal zine that I enjoyed 'way back in the '50s and '60s when I was a semi-active fringe fan and letterhack.

I can identify with your making That Noise when arising from chair or couch. With advancing years (71) and advancing weight (250), I have become an expert at producing That Noise. While there isn't much I can do about the advancing years, I have definitely (er, sort of) decided that I might think about the possibility of starting to lose some of that excess weight, with a target of 200. I only wish that That Noise was the only noise I seem to have become expert at producing.

Sue and I would never consider stealing cable service. Mainly because we fight over the seven channels we get for free, now. Actually, we tried cable for several months, and just found it wasn't worth the expense. I find myself watching less and less TV, anyhow. Just not that interesting, anymore.

Except for the notorious African Nation Scam (which has also appeared a number of times in my snail-mail), I really haven't gotten too much spam. Whether CompuServe has a better method of filtering spam or not, I don't really know. Perhaps it's because I have a fairly consistent habit of deleting about all of the cookies each night when I shut down. Actually

***I was never too wild  
about Gildersleeve on TV,  
but enjoyed him on radio.***

your spam sounds more interesting than a lot of the stuff I've encountered on regular web sites that I've visited.

I was never too wild about *Gildersleeve* on TV, but enjoyed him on radio. I was always filled with wonderment at how similar were the voices of the two actors who played Gildersleeve. So similar, in fact, that the change was seamless, and I could never tell the difference.

(([Arnie](#): I'll go into cast changes in *The Great Gildersleeve* when I tackle a full-length piece. Your mention of Gildy on TV gave me pause. I dimly remember that there was a TV series, but I've been unable to find information about it. I've begun to wonder if especially vivid childhood memories of heaving it on the radio produced an illusory memory of watching it on television.))

#### **Mike Palisano**

How are things going - sorry to hear of your recent work troubles, but I wouldn't worry about it. Something is bound to come up, just be careful this time and don't rush into something that could turn rotten in six months.

(([Arnie](#): As I've already written, my experience is that writing/editing jobs last maybe two years at best. I go into every new situation hoping for the best but expecting to be job-hunting again all too soon.))

I just re-read *Jackpot #5* - great issue once again, you seem to be a roll and as always the issue was entertaining and fun. As far as your distribution questions go - either downloading it from a site or personally emailing it the end result is the same.

I understand your concerns about not knowing who's reading the issues, but on the other hand, it might be a good way to attract new fans to the hobby. It's a little strange reading a fanzine onscreen, but once you get used to it, it's fine. Printing out the issues is a good alternative, but the cost of printing in color is mucho expensive, and as far as my experience goes, color prints on desktop printers leave much to be desired. It's nice to have the option, but I pretty much read them and keep them on the computer. I do appreciate the effort that you put into making it format perfect, and I feel a bit guilty not printing them out, on the other hand. I'm a bit torn about this. The layout looks really good this time. It's a lot brighter and more colorful than previous issues.

(([Arnie](#): I'm eager to add as many new fanzine fans as possible. Anyone who is familiar with such previous Katzines as *Folly*, *Wild Heirs* and *crifanac*, can certainly tell that I'm making an effort to keep *Jackpot!* open, inviting and accessible. But I must also say that I want people who interact with me and each other, not a thousand extra readers whom I don't even know by name. That's why I'm lobbying so hard to get online fanzine newsstands to start tracking downloaders.))

One suggestion, a little lighter on the clip-art this was especially noticeable on the first few pages, since you used the same image and the reader loads them up one at a time. It wasn't horrible but it was distracting. It doesn't really do much to add to the zine and clutters things up unnecessarily — less is more, I always say.

And then there was the piece on Internet spam and as always, you seem to have a gift for making the banal hilarious. It's a great comic piece that's far more entertaining than the actual spam itself.

Just a thought - perhaps since you examined the Spam at the start of the year, you encountered a group of newbies and that's why it doesn't seem as slick as the other group you did that may have had more experience writing ineffective come-ons.

Another thought is that maybe there's been a dot-com shakeout at the bottom of the barrel as well, with the smarter spammers going back to the stability and consistency of traditional cold calling. I mention this because I seem to be getting more of these calls while the number of email spams I've been getting has been declining.

On that topic, you mentioned that you've left AOL and alluded to a screw up with your account. Any more details to share? I've had many problems with the AOL as well, with emails vanishing or never getting to their destinations? Just curious. Of course, I'm sending this via AOL, so guess that makes me an empty chicken, doesn't it?

(([Arnie](#): My next Spam Review won't be in the January 2002 issue. In retrospect, picking a week so soon after the holidays didn't give a fair sample. I guess a lot of the spammers had so much fun spending their ill-gotten gains during the holiday that they didn't get back to work until late January. I'd have had at least twice as much trash to mine for the article if I'd waited even a couple of weeks.))

### **Eric Mayer**

When I downloaded Jackpot I glanced through to see if there was anything interesting. [WARNING: Obligatory ego-scanning joke] After I spotted my name I paged through scanning the contents. Seeing "XFL" and "Vince McMahon" I thought, good one Arnie. That's bound to be funny.

Then the next day, checking to see how my favorite bullies, the Yankees, were doing buying up players to at least give me something to be happy about, my eye was caught by a football headline. You didn't make it up. The XFL really exists.

Mind you, I think you're a little sanguine about the games not being rigged. This is the era of *Survivor* remember, not to mention *Fornication Island* (Or whatever it's called). I mean, our elections are rigged and the Supreme Court does its imitation of a pro wrestling ref when the flamethrower comes out of the tights. Not to say it might not be exciting, bring back some big names from the past:

Namath hands off to Brown again and Jim's down to the one. First and goal for the Maniacs. Nothing's slowed Brown down today, except for that little disagreement with the cheerleaders, but the latest report from the hospital is they're OK. Namath was guaranteeing a win prior to the game. Refrigerator Perry took exception (the report from the hospital is that the cameraman is OK) but with thirty seconds left in the game it looks like -- wait a minute, what's this? The Fridge is climbing the goal post.

Where are the officials? They're conferring about something out in the middle of the field, pointing at someone up in the stands. They don't see Perry! The Fridge is up to the crossbar. .

(([Arnie](#): *Temptation Island* disappointed me. There wasn't nearly as much fornication as I expected. The way the supposedly "committed couples" failed to maintain their pre-series mutual understanding through the first five minutes of separation made me feel that all of these pairs would be better off going their separate ways.

It would've been a much more entertaining show if one of the couples had approached the stay on the island as a competition to see which half of the couple could ravish more of the singles.))

Your commentary on spam reminded me that one discovery I've made since connecting to the internet is that teenaged girls apparently find me much more attractive than they did when I was a teenager. Imagine if someone had predicted 35 years ago, when I was a skinny, agonizingly backward bookworm: in the distant future world of the twenty-first century "hot babes" (which is what they will call attractive young women in that advanced civilization) will flood you with desperate, begging messages, communicating via your remark-

able computer-television (with a color picture too) with which you can communicate instantaneously with anyone anywhere in the world. Would've been hard to believe it would actually come true. Is this some kind of great life or what? [The foregoing was \*FOR PURPOSES OF ENTERTAINMENT ONLY\*]

It isn't all XXX offerings. For quite a few weeks I kept getting something about ancient herbal Chinese remedies, purportedly sent directly from China. It was kind of hard to read, in a peculiar font, kind of like Worn-Out Underwood Manual Font. I wondered if maybe it was crude on purpose, to make you think this was some wise old Chinese guys who'd got hold of some ancient 286 and a 14 bps crystal modem and so this was really *Authentic Stuff*.

Do spammers make money? I've heard the theory that if you just tell enough people about your product, or scam, even if a small percentage go for it, you can make a fortune. But my own thought about that is that a million different people can all come to exactly the same conclusion, if the proposition is patently ridiculous. That is to say, intelligence trumps chance, so to speak, so that, no you don't have a "chance" that if you ask a million people for \$100 for nothing a certain number will just, odds are, give it to you. But maybe I'm wrong. Has it been tried?

I've got an automatic page minder on the ezines site and so grabbed *Jackpot!* right away. I prefer downloading stuff myself, because even though download times aren't that long something large will invariably manage to arrive just when you're checking your mail before rushing off someplace, or retiring for the night. But I was surprised you didn't send out an email announcing it was ready to download with a link (which would be clickable in most email programs) — or maybe mine just went astray.

Let's face it, knowing who's getting your zine is impor-

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as much fornication  
as I expected.***

tant. And, to the extent the fan editor wants, locs are a kind of necessary payment. With a normal zine, if you don't loc you risk not getting more issues, but not so if the zine is freely downloadable.

**We Also Heard From:** Jim Trash, Lenny Bailes, Alison Scott, Don Anderson, Ned Brooks, Marty Cantor, Erika Lacey, Mike Glycer, Andy Hooper, Steve Stiles, Stu Shiffman, Moshe Feder, Colin Hinz, Claire Brialey, Dick Lupoff, Gregg Trend, Bruce Pelz, Ross Chamberlain.

### **Where's Lichtman**

Robert Lichtman, the Sage of Glen Ellen, had a nasty accident (multiple ankle fractures) at our deadline, but wrote that, "You should look out for a double-size letter of comment" to preserve his streak of *J!* appearances

Vol. 8 No. 2

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# NONPLUSSING STORIES

25  
CENTS  
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