

WFS 114



GESUNDHEIT!

The Grand Finale!



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VFW #114, Volume 4 Number 12, Aoeuk 15, 2009, is written and produced by Arnie Katz (909 Eugene Cernan St., Las Vegas, NV 89145; Email: cross-fire4@cox.net; phone: 702-648-5677).

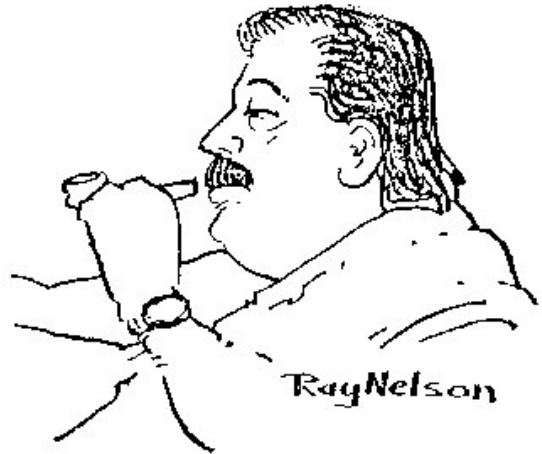
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VFW is free by request — and you may get it anyway. It can be downloaded at efanzines.com and LasVegrants.com. No sentimental fanzine editors were permanently hurt during the production of this fanzine.

Member: fwa

Supporter: AFAL



Arnie Katz

A Backward Glance

Katzenjammer

This is the letters issue, but I couldn't strike the tent and move on without a look back at VFW. This fanzine has played a big role in my life for over four years, so an issue by issue review would sum up things nicely and give me a shot at some closure.

I did a somewhat similar article back in VFW #100. This one is extensively revised and expanded, including a lot of things I didn't want to delve into while I was still publishing the fanzine. After all, a good magician doesn't explain all the flourishes of his tricks; he just does them.

VEGAS FANDOM
WEEKLY
Las Vegas Fandom's Sorta Weekly Newszine

I've published 114 issues of *Vegas Fandom Weekly* in a little over four years. That doesn't exactly live up to the "weekly" in the title, but it's pretty close to biweekly over that period. You can check out the index to see the details, but 114 issues represents a whole lot of writing and publishing even for even a highly prolific writer and editor.

Had I kept to my original ideas, *VFW* would've been a lot more frequent and a whole lot smaller. My original plans called for a two-page (one-sheet) fanzine that I would, after a while, expand to four pages. I haven't yet done the math, but the last couple of years of *VFW* average over 24 pages an issue with many topping 30 pages.

What were those "original ideas," you may ask? Las Vegas Fandom went moribund after a period during which three of the city's leading fan couples – the Formans, the Wilsons and the Springers –relocated away from Vegas and several other prominent locals cut back activities for one reason or another.

SNAFFU had sunk to meeting between rows of books at a Borders Bookstore that gradually decided it didn't want to be bothered. The Vegrants continued to get together twice a month, but attendance generally fell in the 7-10 range and there wasn't a lot of actual fanac getting done around the group, either.

I've always loved newszines ever since rich brown took me in as the co-editor of *Focal Point* in the late 1960's. We developed the concept of a fanzine that combined news and other timely items with a genzine that featured articles and columns. I've produced a variety of fanzines over the years, but that concept continued to

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captivate me.

Except that a lot of my friends around Fandom assured me that there was no way anyone could produce a newszine in this day of nearly instant Internet communication. The tradition that included such titles as *Fanac* and *Star-spinkle* appeared to be dead.

I can resist dares, but I *do* love a challenge. This was certainly a sizable one, so I put my mind to figuring out if all my friends were right.

They were – and they weren't. A fan who read all the listservs and websites could gather most of the fan news almost as soon as it happened, but the sources were so numerous and diverse that it took a lot of time to harvest all that intel.

A lot of the news disseminated through listservs and websites came directly from the fans involved in the story. It's hard to beat that kind of first-person reportage, even if the authors shade the truth on some points.

When I brought my thoughts closer to home, however, I saw that the local situation was completely different. No one was spreading the news in Las Vegas Fandom and no one was doing much that needed coverage.

I thought I could help revitalize the local fan scene by publicizing upcoming events, reporting on past ones and generally cheerleading the whole idea of doing fanac. *Vegas Fandom Weekly* could fill the local-level information gap. Volume 1:

1. I swiped the *Microsoft Publisher* template from the one I used for the *Bring Bruce Bayside Bulletin* for the first issue of *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, dated November 23, 2004. It was a good thing I noticed, and deleted, some elements from *4B* that somehow persisted into the file for the new fanzine until I snipped them just before I sent the .PDF. The lead story in the all-news issue concerned the annual Vegants' Tree Trim Party. It was more than a sneaky way to get help putting up the tree; the members all wanted a chance to get together before Christmas.

2. Since *VFW*'s main purpose was to stir up the local fan scene, the lead news item was another blurb for the tree trim party. Other big stories of another all-news issue were the visit of Ben and Cathi Wilson to Las Vegas and the news that a newly arrived couple, James & Kathryn Daugherty, planned to bid for Westercon. I added a box with contact information for Vegas' fan groups to the event calendar I had started in the first issue.

3. The first four-page issue also featured the first outside contributions, Woody Bernardi and Teresa Cochran's Loscon notes. A story about preparations for the Vegants/SNAFFU Christmas Party at the Launch Pad took a big chunk of the news section. It was the last Christmas Party in that series we've hosted. James and Kathryn Daugherty have hosted the last two under the United Fans of Vegas umbrella.

4. The most important news item in the issue wasn't the first or second story, but rather a small piece about SNAFFU starting a listserv. Although it has had its ups and downs, it has also drawn a number of potential fans into the club's orbit, a welcome side-effect.

5. My first article in *VFW* #5 was a report on the Christmas Party. It filled most of the issue. I also posted an invitation to Joyce's and my annual New Year's Eve Open House. We'd held them every year since arriving in Las Vegas, continuing our practice from Brooklyn, but they were always very low-key. Little did we know that was about to change.

6. Some organisms must die so that others may flourish. SNACCOA (Southern Nevada Alliance of Clubs, Organizations and Associations) was Trekkie and neofan Joshua Andrews' transparent attempt to create a mega-

bureaucracy that would've put all Las Vegas fan activities under Josh's supervision. His fan career, such as it was, lasted about as long as the run of *VFW*, though it might be hard to pinpoint much activity that Josh did beyond some bragging posts on the SNAFFI listserv.

7. In my extensive report on the Mew Year's Eve Open House, the most interesting thing may be the photo of Woody Bernardi embracing a Vegrants' Legend – Robbie the Chair. Although all efforts to glue its struts, legs and braces back into position have failed, Robbie the Chair continued to occupy its living room corner at the Launch Pad, daring the gravitationally challenged to sit on it.

8. *VFW* entered a new phase with the first of many articles aimed at educating local fans about what lurked beyond the Clark County border. I hoped that the Vegas neofans who read the news about themselves and their friends would venture into new territory if I did it slowly. My piece focused on Internet sites that might interest, entertain and inform fans. Fanac.org was still probably the top fannish site as 2005 opened, but efanzines.com was gathering strength.

9. My "Exploring Fandom" article series went in a somewhat different direction with an introduction to *The Enchanted Duplicator*, Walt Willis and Bob Shaw's prose epic of Trufandom. I've always considered it a touchstone – and a fairly good predictor of whether someone will eventually make a good fan. I monitored how newer Vegas fans reacted to it and was gratified when TED scored a big hit with Teresa Cochran. On the other hand, some of the folks in VSFA, reacted to it badly. Sure enough, none of them have become real fans and several have already gafiated. *The Enchanted Duplicator* becomes less powerful on a literal level as the Fandom it portrays slips into history, but it has many allegorical truths embellished with some brilliant humor.

10. After holding at four pages for seven issues, *VFW* doubled to eight pages with this number. Though #11 went back to the four-page format, that was only temporary. *VFW* #12 jumped back to eight pages and the zine seldom fell below 10 pages after that. An outing to see "The *Star Trek* Experience" at the Hilton Hotel/Casino proved two things: Fans will spend money if it's something they want to do; and that creating a bridge between the local stfnal and trek communities wasn't going to be easy. Quite a few local *ST* fans said they'd be there, but zero actually did. The eight-page issue also had a short piece about significant fannish numbers by me and a tongue-in-cheek article about fannish divination by Joyce. Again, this furthered my strategy of feeding local neofen tidbits of fanhistory along with the new.

11. One story of note in this news-dominated issue was SNAFFU's decision to conduct its election via email as well as permitting in-person votes. It was one of the first steps toward reuniting the club, which had started to fission into two groups. During this period, SNAFFU had two discussion meetings a month, one on each side of town. The aim was to give everyone at least one meeting that was convenient to their location. What actually happened was that a majority of the members began going *only* to the more convenient meeting and skipping the other one. Electronic balloting gave everyone a chance to participate in key decisions such as who was going to run it. This issue is also notable for the first mention of an impending letter column. A note says that the news crowded it out. That didn't continue for long, though, and the addition of "ChatBack" proved to be a major step in *VFW*'s evolution into a news-genzine.

12. The Science Fiction & Fantasy Day, announced in the 2/9/05 *VFW*, signaled a turning point in Las Vegas Fandom. This one-day event, scheduled for April 30, revived the idea of doing significant events. Not only did it involve all three local clubs – SNAFFU, Las Vegrants and VSFA —but we planned a weekend that featured a SNAFFU meeting the night before and a Vegrants Party after the formal convention ended. In *VFW*, my "Exploring Fandom" piece explained apas. This wasn't an idle choice; Joyce, JoHn Hardin and I had intentions of starting a local apa and wanted to build some interest before we sprang it on the fans. The issue also has the first installment of "Katzenjammer" in *VFW*, a short essay about the shame of being unable to contain the fanzine's page count. I'd used "Katzenjammer" as my main editorial column title in most of my fanzines since Andy Main generously gave it to me one night after a Fanoclasts meeting in the mid 1960's. My decision to start using it in *VFW* reflected both the increase in non-news content and a feeling that this fanzine might become one of my "major" fanzine titles.

13. The largest *VFW* to that point carried the first installment of "ChatBack." Robert Lichtman and Lloyd Penney led off the first letter column, which I'd call an auspicious beginning. These two "Best Letterhack" FAAn Awards winners became the pillars of "ChatBack" and helped make it the liveliest letter column among the electronic fanzines.

14. In an issue full of meeting reports and anticipation over the Bruce Gillespie visit, my choice for the most important story is easy: the news about Joyce's upcoming foot surgery. The road back to health turned out not to be nearly that straight-forward.

15. This issue's front-page headline announced the

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first Sunday Social, created by Woody Bernardi and me under the aegis of VSFA. The idea of a simple: a fairly inexpensive lunch built around a program item worked very well for the first few months, until Woody's departure to Boston. The remaining members of VSFA said they couldn't think of a topic so they eliminated the program – and that soon did the same to the Sunday Socials. I still think it's a good idea; the Vegrants may try it next winter.

16. The Gillespie Gala had special guests Earl Kemp and Billy Petit in addition to our visiting Australian. It proved to be the largest and most successful party of the Vegas Revival era. For the first time, the local neofan got to meet some prominent fans from outside southern Nevada. The popularity of these three guests did a lot to awaken interest in Core Fandom.

17. The first Sunday Social got a lot of space for three good reasons: I wanted to push the idea, the first one was wildly successful and it honored Joyce for her outstanding fan career. Reportage also included a written version of Aileen Forman's very good, emotional speech. Long-term, the full-page explanation of SNAPS probably rates as the most significant story in #17. At its inception, SNAPS was a monthly, hardcopy apa that had its mailings assembled during SNAFFU Discussion Meetings on the West Side,

18. Bruce Gillespie's warm-hearted letter to Vegas Fandom put a satisfying bow on the whole Bring Bruce Bayside fund package. I announced the first details about the one-day convention, including a slight name change to the Las Vegas Fantasy & Science Fiction Day. Woody Bernardi thought it was appropriate because our guest of honor was Steve Brust, better known for fantasy than SF.

19. The main story in the April 1 *VFW* was my account of a visit by aliens to a SNAFFU meeting. I attributed this to Woody Bernardi's penchant for recruiting new fans. He just reached out a little farther than usual. Evidence includes a "picture" of the flying saucer and an "artist's rendering" of the alien, who looked like a bikini-clad babe.

20. Even successful fanzines have setbacks and "The Trivia Challenge" was about *VFW*'s worst flop. My aim was to increase Vegas fans' knowledge of lo-

cal fanhistory. Even if they couldn't answer all the questions, reading the answers and asking follow-up questions would expose Vegas fans to their short, though rich fanhistory. It may or may not have achieved that purpose, but I quickly discovered that very few Vegas fans could answer even the simplest questions. It was one of the really obvious signs that Vegas Fandom had turned over its population pretty thoroughly.

21. One reason I've been able to do so many issues of *VFW* is that I've kept redefining it, setting fresh goals and tackling new challenges. With this issue, I started the practice of making changes every 10 issues. The overall look was still somewhat derivative of both *4B* and *Crifanac*, but it was also developing its distinctive presentation. The space eventually occupied by "Inside Story" on page 2 had a short piece about the issue, and an article by me filled page three, which would shortly become the regular location for "Katzenjammer."

22. This issue, dominated by my long report on the Big Weekend, gave me hope that *VFW* was helping to regenerate local activity. The Daugherty's gave a pool party, the Vegrants staged an Open Meeting and VSFA put on the Sunday Social. It showed what could be done with a little cooperation and led to many similar weekends over the next two years.

23. This one came out on the eve of the Las Vegas Fantasy & Science Fiction Day (4/30/05), so it focused on the event and local Fandom very heavily. Kent Hastings generously made some copies and, with Michael Bernstein's help, distributed them at the con.

24. Very few of the newer Vegas fans had ever seen a con report like the one that filled almost all of the issue's 12 pages. The Las Vegas Fantasy & Science Fiction Day was a tremendous success, even if a couple of the speakers had less-than-brilliant moments. I hoped that this would lead to more one-day cons or even something larger. But there hasn't been another F&SF Day. SNAFFU doesn't have the enthusiasm, VSFA doesn't have the resources, and the Vegrants would rather spend the group's con-hosting energy on Corflu and similar gatherings.

25. I billed it as the "Back to Abnormal" issue, sig-

nifying at least a pause in the drum-beating for various events. My "page three" article revealed some of the highlights of the history of Las Vegrants. The club had suffered some shrinkage during Vegas' early '00's decline. Explanations of what makes the club special and different from the others paved the way for bringing in a bunch of new members.

26. I was a little proud of myself for cutting back to eight pages for this issue, but that didn't last very long. The two subsequent issues were both 14 pages.

27. Rich brown started his series of fanhistory articles with a playful one about The Bheercan Tower to the Moon, a subject dear to both our hearts. The Sunday Social, devoted to pro and fan art, was the best-attended one of the series with nearly two-dozen fans chowing down, listening to panels and looking at the pictures. My essay tied in with that theme by taking fans on a "virtual artwalk" through various sites of interest on the Internet.

28. While I waited anxiously to see how Joyce's angiogram turned out, I wrote about the Chicago Science Fiction League, one of Vegas' oldest fannish traditions. It began when some of the fans, including Joyce and me, began occasionally eating at Chicago Hotdog before a Vegrants meeting. We started the Chicago SFL, ultimately sanctioned by the real group's survivor officer (Bob Tucker), to force cons that have been held in Chicago since 1940 to pay reparations for operating in CSFL territory.

29. The 14-page issue had a couple of SNAFFU-related reports by Kent Hastings and Michael Bernstein, but Bob Tucker took over my usual "page three" spot to write a remembrance of Al Ashley. My main essay this time concerned something that has held a unique fascination for me since I returned to Fandom: Gafia. My piece talked about the reasons why I gafiated and why I returned after so long an absence. I'm always a little shocked when I realize I have been active in Fandom much longer this second time than in my original stint.

30. A small piece with a couple of photos told fans about the Formans and the Wilsons "flipping for Flip-

pen, AR." I miss them a lot and have been especially sad to see Ben and Cathi go silent. Maybe that'll turn around in a year or three; I'd certainly welcome them back with open arms.

31. Two mildly Insurgent articles were the main attraction of the 14-page issue. Rich brown explained the intricacies of fannish religion and I tried to quell rampant gloom among local neofan about those who came, saw and left SNAFFU without making a ripple. Most people see things differently than we do and, many times, aren't happy about those differences. If everyone subscribed to Core Fandom's ethos, there wouldn't need to be a Core Fandom. Except that there'll always be a dissenting group, no matter what constitutes the mainstream. I eventually wrote a faan fiction story, "Up to Here," in which a form of Fandom captured true mainstream acceptance and status. This issue introduced a new, horizontal logo, a new style for column headings.

32. "London Calling," by Rob Hansen appeared for the second time with a story about the London Circle's new home. This was a sequel of sorts to his first installment, which details the group's history. Bill Kunkel's weekly cartoons began appearing as "Potshot's Cartoon Theater." As befits his blithe Insurgent spirit, Bill seldom trains his creative impulses on Fandom for an extended period. This lack of consistency tends to earn him less egoboo than is merited or than he would like, so I hit on this scheme to make his cartoons more of an event. I'd restart the series in a minute if Bill expressed interest.

33. Because SNAFFU picked *The Enchanted Duplicator* as a discussion topic, this issue included a photo of Joe Siclari's Tower of Trufandom, a painting of Jophan by Dan Steffan on the front page, and another article by me about Fandom's prose epic that greatly expanded and elaborated my original remarks.

34. Not many local fans went to Westercon, so everyone cooperated to hold the four-event NonCon II over the July 4th weekend. This issue gave a full report, including the Vegrants' Open Party to celebrate my birthday.



35. Steve Brust's dog bit Joyce when we knocked on the door for his filk/folk gathering. It was a very big dog and gave Joyce a very big bite on her thigh. Brust never even called to ask how she was. The departure of Woody Bernardi for Boston had a more lasting effect. His move East pretty much finished VSFA as an actual fan club. A few continue to watch videos together, but few other signs of fannish life are observable.

36. SNAPS went electronic with its 3rd monthly mailing, as announced in this issue, to become the second such group (after eAPA). Assembling the hard-copy mailings had disrupted the SNAFFU meetings a little. The people doing the fanzines liked the idea, and I wanted to see if we could break some new ground.

37. This issue answered the question of what I would do with *VFW* if Las Vegas Fandom had a weekend when nothing happened. It was one of those "fifth weekends," so none of the clubs had scheduled meeting and I think some of us wanted a little respite from Fandom En Masse. After much discussion, including a forum in *VFW*, SNAFFU accepted the donation of the bulk of our science fiction and fantasy collection and the use of our garage to erect the library. The Library Committee, under Lori Forbes' direction, began work and got big space in the news column as a result.

38. "Katzenjammer" described a very pleasant fannish dinner. What made it significant is that it was hosted by recently arrived Merric & Luba Anderson. They were mulling the idea of putting on a Toner II, with help from James Taylor and Teresa Cochran, but that plan was stillborn when Merric's job changed into one that required travel all week, every week. Things have gone a little strangely in that sector since then. The Andersons went their separate ways and Merric, now against using his given name of "Scott," decided to try to put on an exploitative, commercial inspired convention called Xanadu.

39. This issue is remarkably unremarkable. It's got some very good articles, including rich brown's essay on Francis Towner Laney, but it was one of the more ephemeral issues, I guess.

40. My motives for pouring so much energy into a

local-level fanzine were fairly pure, but not too pure for me to write an installment of "Katzenjammer" called: "How to Write a LoC." It's hard to believe how much better response to electronic fanzines is now than it was in 2005.

41. I didn't exactly draft Dick Lupoff as a columnist, as I did Chuch Harris in the early 1990's, but I did sort of pull him in when least expected. I was so delighted by his letter of comment, our first extensive communication in some years, that I ran it as a column called "The Daze." Dick continued to contribute to *VFW* through its entire existence, despite a very heavy professional writing and editing load. The graphic overhaul included a new logo that I also moved from the middle to the top of the front page. I also replaced the squared-off boxes of early issues with ones that had rounded corners.

42. "Katzenjammer" took a personal look at one of the major trends in Core Fandom: Old fans returning to the hobby after a long hiatus. One of the things I enjoy most about *VFW* is the way it has helped me reconnect with some old friends like Dick Lupoff and Hal Hughes. The trend is going stronger than ever; Earl Kemp, John Purcell and Mike Meara are only three of many revivals in the last year or so.

43. This issue ran a robust 16 pages, primarily because I had more time than usual on my hands. Joyce's operation left me jumpy and unable to sleep – and that gave me extra time to pound away at the keyboard. A box on the front page brought fans up to date about Joyce's ankle fusion. Ever optimistic, we had no idea of the complications and extended rehab in store for her.

44. It's not hard to tell where my mind was when I did this issue. The front page has a lengthy story about Joyce's return home after the ankle fusion, "Inside Story" was about a conversation with her, and "Katzenjammer" harked back to earlier days, including the period when Joyce and I got together. Fortunately, the other writers added a lot of topics to the mix. I didn't care; everything else receded into the background as I tried to make her comfortable, see to her needs and



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help her onto the road of recovery.

45. “The Four Kinds of Activity,” my “Katzenjammer” for the week, tried to explain the difference between fanac and simply taking up a seat in the audience. I saw VSFA slip out of Fandom and even some of the Vegrants were just too passive. The article didn’t cure the problem, but I hope it made a few folks think. Fandom is a great participation hobby, but a lousy one to watch from the sidelines. The club’s expansion has brought in a lot more folks who want to do fanac, so this has become a less pressing problem. Shelby Vick returned to my fanzines with an article about bringing Walt Willis to America in 1952. It was well-written, entertaining and, I think, gave newer fans some insight into the Fan Fund concept.

46. *VFW* had never run fanzine reviews, but I did write a “Katzenjammer” column in this issue that recommended several electronic fanzines. I’d also have mentioned hardcopy fanzines, but the aim was to get Vegas’ neofan to check out the zines and that’s a whole lot easier when all you have to do is download them. I think it’s very important that we remember that we aren’t in competition with each other; we’ve all at the same big party. I’ve always tried to do what I can to help other faneds, just as others have helped me, and I think it makes fandom a lot more pleasant.

47. The front page carried a letter from Chris Garcia to Vegas Fandom, thanking them for hosting his visit and for the gala Vegrants Open House that marked his stay in Glitter City. The same issue had my report on the party and surrounding events. Chris’ visit had a tremendously positive effect on the locals. Most other recent visits were more like Patriarchs, but Chris is actually younger than our neofan. His exuberance and energy set a very good example. He immediately became one of the Vegrants’ best out-of-town friends.

48. “Inside Story” veered from its usual range of topics to a short essay about the corrosive effect of fan politics and petty power-seeking called “The Law of the Sandbox.” The people who remained in VSFA didn’t seem to like fans very much and, as a result, had a hard time cooperating on things like not scheduling

events that conflict with other, open events. Las Vegas is a smallish Fandom and it simply isn’t possible for two competing “open” events to do very well if they are held opposite each other.

49. An especially large, 18-page issue celebrated a couple of pieces of good news for local Fandom. First, Joyce had her cast removed and, second, Lori Forbes directed a successful effort to scavenge bookshelves from a store that was redecorating, saving SNAFFU hundreds of dollars in the process. James Taylor also did a column that celebrated Lori’s heroic efforts.

50. Halloween dominated the news in an issue that also featured columns by Vick and Lupoff and a “Katzenjammer” about how to write for fanzines. I wasn’t just drumming up contributors; Las Vegas fans seem afflicted with a painful reticence when it comes to expressing themselves in print. They are, by and large, not as open to trying new things as one might wish. This, like SNAPS and the fanzine *Implications*, was meant as helpful nudges in the right direction. It worked pretty well in some cases – and the verdict is still out on others.

51. The lead story was about the non-arrival of Art Widner who was expected to visit. He has remained every bit as popular with Vegas Fandom’s “New Generation” as he was with the 1990’s gang, so it was all meant in fun. We love it when Art drives that imaginatively decorated car onto the Launch Pad’s driveway. I had lots of coverage of the ’05 Las Vegas Halloween Party. The event was only mildly successful, despite a lot of work and planning by the VSFA people. Honestly, I don’t know why this didn’t go better, unless it’s that local fans don’t feel close to the VSFAans. To the group’s considerable credit, they have stuck with sponsorship of the Halloween Party and made it, again, a major event on the local fan calendar.

52. John DeChancie made his debut as a *VFW* columnist in this issue. Luba and Merric Anderson brought him to a Las Vegrants meeting and I’ve seldom seen anyone fit in better, faster. I’d heard John described as “difficult” and even “confrontational,” based on his time in LASFS, but he is a sweet-natured

guy with a sharp mind who is, by Vegrants standards, maybe just a little shy about expressing his opinions. We're working on getting him to really cut loose.

53. Art Widner finally reached Las Vegas and our joy was Unalloyed, as reflected in this issue of *VFW*. He's the main news story on the front page and I also wrote an extensive report of the Vegrants meeting he attended. "The Golden Age" installment of "Katzenjammer" begins with the first filk song I'd written in several years and the first I'd actually published in well over a decade. I thought the parody of the "All in the Family" theme was fairly cute, but I must've been in the minority.

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54. I wrapped up the fanzine's first year with a 40-page Annish that reprinted some of the best material from the first 53 issues.

55. One of the things I liked best about *VFW* was that it blended fans from just about all eras. I really enjoy putting together an issue with (in order of fannish seniority): Shelby Vick, Dick Lupoff, James Taylor and Chris Garcia. This issue of *Vegas Fandom Weekly* introduced The Vegas Fan Awards, a poll I took a few weeks later at the end of the calendar year. We didn't do it again in 2007, but maybe it's an idea worth resurrecting in 2008.

56. The Daugherty's volunteered to host the '05 Las Vegas Fandom Christmas Party for the second year, so I gave it a strong push in the news – and wrote an "Inside Story" about being a little blue, because Joyce and I wouldn't be able to attend.

57. Lloyd Penney, besides being the inspiration for this ramble through 114 issues, was one of *VFW*'s most loyal letter-writers. This issue carried the first of his "Canadian" columns, about pubnigh in Toronto. I'd like to have a lot more of these local Fandom reports in *VFW*. I think they strike a chord, reminding fans of the similarities and connections that bind us together. "Inside Story" again turned to a subject of somewhat larger import than the issue itself: the nature of Fandom. I likened it to a parade. You can ignore the parade, watch the parade from the curb or march along in it. A neofan can find a place in the parade, but the parade doesn't change completely to suit the neofan's needs, desires and perceptions. The neofan affects the parade as a result of the process of marching along in it, but it is unrealistic for a newcomer to expect to be anointed Grand Marshal.

58. Two notable fan artists showed their writing skills in what turned out to be the largest regular issue of *VFW* to that point. Bill Kunkel wrote a letter so

good I turned it into a column and Bbob Stewart made his *VFW* debut with an article about Dick Clarkson.

59. Bill Kunkel has a constitutional need to, every few years, rake me over the coals in a semi-good-natured way. As part of my Christmas present to one of my oldest and best friends, I published without comment "Arnie Katz: Artist of Persuasion." I thought it was pretty funny.

60. One of my best-received "Katzenjammer" columns appeared in this issue, "She Hit Me!" Joyce, who is a compulsive eavesdropper, overheard part of a conversation, misunderstood it completely and gave me an unexpected zetz. My only available avenue of retaliation was to write a Funny Little Article – and I think I did pretty well.

61. The New Years Party got a lot of coverage, especially because it was our most successful one since we started throwing them in the 1990's.

62. As editor of *VFW*, I've stretched the truth a time or two and mangled it on more than one occasion, but this issue presented "The Mystery of David M. Gordon." David, one of the "New Generation" Vegas fans and a multiple contributor to *VFW*, is a most singular individual with a Past Shrouded in Mystery. He announced himself a complete neofan when he first showed up, but he has gradually revealed contacts and experiences that suggest a far longer association with the hobby. Accordingly, I fashioned a story in which David, as Laney's adopted son, goes forth to right the wrong of Fandom.

63. Ironically, this issue reports the gala pizza party at Metro Pizza that Roxanne Gibbs and Michael Bernstein organized to salute *VFW*'s year of weekly publication. Ironically, because this issue also reports that, for the first time, I'd fallen off the weekly schedule. This just reinforces my personal philosophy: celebrate now, before something kills the party.

64. Signs of both progress and regression abounded in this issue. The saddest news was the cancellation of Toner II. The good news included a shelf-building session for the SNAFFU Library, the first SNAFFood Dinner Meeting and a good session for the LV Filk-song Circle. The latter has not lasted as an organization, but music-making has become part of the local scene.

65. "The *Star Wars* Wealth-Building System," by Kent Hastings, is one of my favorite articles from this period. It purports to evaluate various *SW*-themed gambling machines as part of one of those get-rich schemes you see on TV infomercials.

66. The lead story touted the second *TGCG* one-shot the Vegrants produced around this time. The publication came out pretty well, but it fell short of my

objective, which was to involve the newer Vegrants in something more creative than drinking and yakking. We'll try again soon, I'm sure.

67. The news that Chris Garcia had gone and gotten himself elected president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation shocked me so thoroughly that I devoted an "Inside Story" to it. He started with bright hopes and rampant enthusiasm, but the ole NFFF wore him down rather quickly..

68. The March 11, 2006 edition trumpeted a new meeting set-up for SNAFFU. It was designed to eliminate the internal geographical split within the club by cutting back to one Discussion Meeting and substituting a Dinner Meeting for the Discussion Meeting formerly held on the East side of town. The Dinner Meetings eventually became SNAFFood. It helped, but the real problem was the meeting location. Borders Bookstore was very generous in allowing us to meet there, but the facilities were not really equal to the task. The club collected in a slightly wider space among the shelves and had to set up a temporary circle of seats among semi-dosing customers.

69. The big topic in "ChatBack" around this time was frequently misnamed "digital versus paper fanzines," when that is definitely *not* the issue. If this was merely a choice between hard copy and electronic fanzines, most fans would still pick hard copy and that would be the end of it. Unfortunately, it is coming to be more a case of "Digital versus Nothing." There are already far more digital fanzines published each year than traditional paper-and-ink ones – and the gap is widening. *Banana Wings* and *Chunga* are just about the only notable regularly appearing genzines that are primarily distributed in hard copy, while many of today's leading titles are electronic.

70. I congratulated the nominees for the Fan Hugos, and I meant it sincerely, but the FAAn Awards

rank higher in my mind. I also like the idea that, though someone places first in each category, all top finishers get a nice packet of egoboo. Even though they publish Hugo nominations, the spotlight really only falls on the winners in each of the three categories. I also profoundly distrust the knowledge, if not the taste, of those voting for the fan Hugos. The FAAn Awards standings diverge significantly from my ballot, but I can respect that difference because I respect the voters.

71. "The End of Vegas Fandom" and "The Return of Vegas Fandom" in #71, form a longish, slightly wacky story about the demise and resurrection of Las Vegrants. They all took the mild kidding with good grace and, I think, mostly loved being the subject of such an outrageous piece of fiction.

72. Bill Mills came up with the idea of a Vegrants audio oneshot, which he and I explained on the back page of this smaller-than-usual 16-page issue. This led to the creation of TheVoicesOfFandom.com, LasVegrants.com and Bill's entertaining series of podcasts.

73. Peter Sullivan, in the letter column, proposes that we jettison the Fan Hugos or just leave them to the people who campaign so hard to win them. I believe that the fan Hugos are well-intentioned, but the results aren't very inspiring. It might be better to leave the Hugos for the professional science fiction and fantasy folks and reward fannish excellence with the FAAn Awards. Chris Garcia's visit resulted in an unusually lively Vegrants meeting and a lengthy report in *VFW*. Chris' meteoric rise to fannish prominence proves how frequent, regular fanpublishing accelerates movement along the learning curb.

74. In my feckless (yet appealing) innocence, I used "Inside Story" in the May 8th issue to recount a conversation with Joyce in which she first manifested her desire to put on another Corflu. I took it as a joke and reported it that way, but Pat Virzi's noble bid only



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quelled that desire for about 10 months. Much praise is due to Dick Lupoff, whose series of “Them Daze” (eventually renamed “Dem Daze”) columns treated a wide range of topics in exemplary, entertaining fashion. I’m very proud of my role in bringing him back to fanwriting.

75. “Katzenjammer” contained a fairly extensive report on the 2007 FAAn Achievement Awards announced at Corflu Titanium in Toronto. One tradition I would like to see restored is full write-ups of the annual awards. This was standard back in the day, but no one has done it in a while. I like it, because it gives proper egoboo and acknowledgement to all the top finishers, not just the person who places first.

76. I finally got around to tabulating and annotating the 2006 Las Vegas Fan Awards. More than a year removed, the most intriguing aspect is what happened to the new editions that placed prominently in the two applicable categories: “Best New Las Vegas Fan” and “Best Addition to Las Vegas Fandom.” The former group has proven much more ephemeral than the later.

The “Best New LV Fans” in order were:

- * (1) Ayesha Ashley. She’s still a member of the Vegrants, but we don’t see much of her these days and she has not developed as a fan.
- * (2) James Willey and (3) Mindy Hutchings have been minimally active, but this may be due to the fact that they fell in love and set up housekeeping together. They haven’t developed much contact with Fandom, but they may be more receptive once they’ve settled into their new life together.
- * (4) Joelle Barnes shocked us with her naiveté and presumption, not to mention an unforgettably horrendous rendering — that is the

word, believe me – of “Stairway to Heaven.” She quit Fandom for the Methodist Church, leaving behind a lot of in-group references to Barry Manilow.

* (5) Sandra Bean is a nice woman and, in an alternate universe, may well be a Vegrant and an active fan. In this one, she looked like a casual visitor when she first showed up at SNAFFU and that’s what she turned out to be. Sandra would certainly be welcome to participate in Las Vegas Fandom, but I don’t see it happening.

The “Best Addition to Las Vegas Fandom” in order was:

- * (1) Teresa Cochran went on to be selected as “Best New Fan” in the 2007 FAAn Achievement Awards. She is a little less active than usual, due to her impending nuptials and a mission to learn to play every instrument that comes within reach.
- * (2) Lubov/Luba Anderson certainly was no stranger to the science fiction community, since she is a popular fantasy artist, but Las Vegrants is her first exposure to Core Fandom. She’s one of the most liked and respected members of Las Vegrants. She hasn’t really found a way to be active yet, but we are all hoping that she will.
- * (3) David Gordon is one of the smartest and most perceptive people to wander into Las Vegas Fandom. He has some competing interests and is also a Financial Wizard (as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*), so he hasn’t put a lot of energy into fannish writing, but he is a

fine contributor to *VFW* and always a welcome sight on Vegrants Saturday nights.

* (4) Merric Anderson breaks my heart whenever he goes into his “I won’t write” (or do anything else) shtick. He’s actually a pretty good writer with some interesting opinions and experiences, but the coward won’t put his butt on the line. He’s one of my best friends and I will not give up.

* (5) John DeChancie was already a good fan before he hit Vegas and he continues to be one during his (temporarily) exile in Los Angeles. His only defect is that he is not here so that we can enjoy his wit and intelligence on a regular basis.

77. Bridget Bradshaw’s decision to visit Las Vegas during her TAFF trip was a major event for Glitter City Fandom. For various reasons, it had been some years since a TAFF delegate visited and Bridget did a wonderful job of repairing the damage Abi Frost caused some years earlier.

78. My report on the SNAFFU meeting introduced a new approach. I captured individual comments on the main discussion topic “Why a Fan?” and wrote them up as windowed sidebars. I liked the effect and have done it when the topic seemed to justify the space in *VFW*, “They Shall Return” is one of my most experimental “Katzenjammer” columns. It starts as an essay about the causes of gafia and the reasons why some fans return. It then eases into an imaginary dialog between Robert Lichtman and Dick Lupoff and then to an out-and-out faan fiction section in which *all* fans return to activity, culminating in my receipt of a new issue of *Hyphen*. I even worked over the cover of an existing *Hyphen* to give it a credible number and date.

79. The July 7, 2006, issue was the smallest in a long time, just four pages. The reason was the subject matter, the announcement of the death of rich brown and fans’ reactions to the devastating news. I published, because I knew that rich would expect me to get out the news; I published so little because I was grief-stricken about the death of someone who’d been like a brother.

80. The new version of “The Fannish Worry Book” was distributed as *VFW #80*. I think the new version is superior to the old one in every way, except that the one I did way back when had a batch of fine illustrations by Jay Kinney.

81. I didn’t intend this issue to have a convention theme, but it sort of turned out that way. Ted White’s fine report on Corflu Titanium, Dick Lupoff’s account of two conventions and Chris Garcia’s “Baycon En-

counter” showed a range of events from small and intimate to big and commercial. The lead news story also involved cons: The Daugherty’s won the bid for Westercon ’08. I was amazed that it was even possible to put on a con like that over the July 4th weekend in Las Vegas – but less impressed by the lack of real connection to Las Vegas Fandom.

82. The rich brown Memorial Issue came together very well, thanks to outstanding cooperation from all the contributors. And they also turned out some tremendous pieces that did great credit to rich and to themselves.

Some fans’ reputations wane with the dimming passage of time, but I think rich brown will be rated more and more highly as his contributions to Fandom become more widely understood.

For a few issues, I used a logo that had “Focal Point” underneath the familiar “Vegas Fandom Weekly.” It was a salute to rich brown, but I did briefly toy with the idea of changing the name to *Focal Point*. I dunno, it just didn’t feel right, so I dropped the idea almost as fast as it occurred to me.

83. Bridget and Simon Bradshaw’s visit sparked a round of local events, highlighted by the Vegrants Open House on Saturday evening and inspired this 12-page issue about the visit and the weekend.

The Open House was also notable as the Vegrants debut of Terry Kemp, who came with his dad Earl. We’re trying to lure them back for another visit.

84. John DeChancie did a great job of honoring Bob Leman. Although I never had direct contact with Leman, I very much enjoyed his fanwriting and fanzines. I’d have liked to have a companion piece to John’s that delved more deeply into Leman the fan, but alas, the man who would have wanted to write it and who would’ve done it well was... rich brown.

85. One development that I covered in several issues, including this one, was the decision to open SNAPS to membership outside southern Nevada. Today the group is a very lively blend of fans around the world while it still maintains a pleasant southern Nevada accent.

86. Teresa Cochran and James Taylor provided his-and-hers world science fiction con reports in a 30-page issue that also had my tongue-in-cheek predictive article in which I postulated that all fans could move to a small town and take it over like one of those loopy religious cults. I’ve been mulling further use of the idea, but haven’t done anything material with it, yet. This might be considered a Faan Fiction Alert.

87. The Death of Bob Tucker, announced with a last-minute bulletin on the front page of #86, moved me to put together this memorial issue. Again, great

cooperation led to a collection of very appropriate essays about the man who did as much as anyone to bring the Core Fandom we enjoy today into existence.

Tucker meant a lot to me and he played a direct, pivotal role in my fan career. He sold me the boxes of fanzines that are the nucleus of my collection, often contributed to my fanzines and spent a lot of time with Joyce and me. Bob called just about everyone “grandson” or “grand daughter,” but he always called me his son. It was a compliment that meant a lot to me at the time and that I still cherish.

88. The postponement of the TAFF race certainly led to a lot of thinking about the need for such a fund. I’ve heard some say we ought to kill the thing, but that’s unnecessarily drastic. As long as enough people want to contribute the money to send someone across the Atlantic to a world SF convention or Eastercon, why should we stop them?

Core Fandom has taken the more adult course of action. The Corflu 50 subsidizes the trip to Corflu for a worthy fannish recipient. There is no competition for votes, no eccentric fundraising and no fan-political bullcrap. All it does is get someone Core Fandomites want to hang out with to Corflu. So far, the two recipients have been Steve Stiles and Curt Phillips, so it perfectly fills the bill.

TAFF will probably drift into the control of the people who think TAFF is a lottery for paper-shuffling con-runners, but who cares? It won’t hurt any of us if Fandom Prime sends a planeload of expert name badge typists and green room cleaners to some convention.

89. Except for the “Inside Story” installment “‘Fandom’ Is Our Middle Name,” the second anniversary devoted its 44 pages to reprints of some of the best of Volume Two. It was harder to pick the selections than the first Anniversary; I’d published a lot more pages and the quality was higher on average than in the fanzine’s first year.

90. A column debuted in this issue that had quite a strong impact. “TVoFacts” is a column by Bill Mills (with occasional help from me) to keep fans up-to-date on what’s happening on the audio-video site. I’d like to think that this column is gradually enticing fans to check out what is a very entertaining and worthwhile piece of fanac, TheVoicesOfFandom.com.

91. I called this 28-page *VFW* “The Arnish,” because I wrote all of it except the letter column. I enjoy editing a fanzine with a lot of different contributors, but sometimes it’s fun to demonstrate my prolificness (if not my prolixity), by producing a lot of creative work in a short period of time. That’s why I did it again for the fanzine’s last regular issue.

My favorite item in the issue is “One Pacificon

Night.” I think I evoked a somewhat different feeling than a lot of my stories with this somewhat touching tale of a fan who meets a movie star (Betty Boop) at the Pacificon.

92. The lead news story announced what I felt was the year’s most outstanding fan publication: *Ah! Sweet Laney!* by Robert Lichtman (editor) and Pat Virzi (publisher). For the first time, latter-day fans can read the essays of one of Fandom’s best and most forceful writers.

Sometimes I feel like Core Fandom could use a bit more of Laney’s firebrand Insurgentism. I’m not saying that Laney didn’t occasionally descend into excess, but I think Fandom is probably better when there is more of a balance between Trufannishness and Insurgentism.

The same issue touts the imminent appearance of another valuable fan publication, a CD with a complete file of Mike & Susan Wood Glicksohn’s *Energumen*. Taral honored his friend in a very constructive and, I would hope, satisfying way.

93. Talk about schizophrenic! This issue carried the heart-breaking news of the death of Lee Hoffman – and the incredible news that Las Vegas will be the site of Corflu in 2008 with Joyce as chairman.

We didn’t go to Corflu Quire, but somehow Joyce’s yearning to Do It Again translated into a groundswell in Austin. So far, at least, she hasn’t regretted her decision.

94. The 30-page “Corflu Special” is one of my favorite issues. It featured four articles about Corflu Quire by Randy Byers, David Bratman, James Taylor and Teresa Cochran, a rundown of the FAAn Awards – *VFW* was third behind *Banana Wings* and *Pixel* in the “Best Fanzine” category, and I came in third, behind Claire Brialey and Ted White, in the balloting for “Best Fanwriter.”

I wrote “My World Turned Upside Down,” in which I recounted in detail the events surrounding our acquisition of Corflu 2008, which we named Corflu Silver. It was meant to suggest both the number (25) in the series and an association with Nevada (“the Silver State”) and with Las Vegas’ fannish past (“Silvercon”).

Teresa Cochran’s selection as “Best New Fan” gladdened my heart as much as the egoboo cast in my direction. She is a remarkable woman and I am eager to see what she will write and publish when she really applies her Fine Mind.

95. Two fannish websites debuted as of this issue: LasVegrants.com and TheFaanStore.com, both thanks to Bill Mills. The former has flourished, presenting a mix of content about the Vegrants and the coming Corflu.

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The Faan Store, which Joyce and I own, is another story. The idea is to make great fan writing, art and fanzines of the past available to fans of the present. We want to post electronic versions, sell them for enough to run the site and keep our hobby from losing its birthright just because we're transitioning from mimeo to digital.

I'm hoping that fans will come to see how wide distribution of great fanstuff benefits all of us. If you have an idea for an electronic anthology – please, please write for details.

96. This issue's "Katzenjammer," "Who Are Fandom's All-Time Greats?" was the first of three survey articles that will soon lead to a poll. My hope, largely fulfilled, was that others would fill in my numerous omissions.

I thought a lot about what distinguishes a great fan from a good fan or even a great person before I wrote the article. I tried to limit my annotated list to fans that made major contributions to Fandom. I gave the most weight to pioneers who invented types of fanac or fanish institutions that had a major impact on the hobby and, secondarily, to those who displayed excellence in writing, drawing and publishing over an extended period. I also considered things like hosting well-known clubs, running Corflus, worldcons and other conventions. I also looked for fans that embodied the ideals that Core Fandom esteems.

What didn't count with me at all were things like attending clubs or cons, clerical work and watching movies or TV shows. I think raising these very ordinary activities to the same level as highly creative fanac is like those television commercials that portray people as bold adventurers because they pig out on snack foods.

97. The TAFF race restart led off the news in this issue, so I started campaigning for Chris Garcia again, while also saying nice things about Curt Phillips, who was also expected to run. When Curt decided not to stand for the honor, the administrators extended the

nominations period and came up with three candidates to stand with the BArea Publishing Giant.

"Katzenjammer" contained a mock expose of Corflu Silver. I especially liked the part about Human Meltdown Syndrome and the photo of the chorus girls identified as the local constabulary.

98. Several contributors debuted in this issue. Rich Coad's article explained The Corflu Fifty while Rob Jackson's piece threw some light on the arcane practices of UK Fandom's Astral Leauge.

99. My mother suddenly died while I was working on this issue. I finished it, welcoming the distraction. I wrote a short piece about her as an "Inside Story."

100. The 94-page third annish, which included the original version of this article, had a very appealing blend of some of *VFW*'s long-time contributors like Shelby Vick and Joyce and relative newcomers (to *VFW*) such as John Purcell, Terry Kemp, and Mark Plummer.

I published this issue in sections, emailed and posted over a short period of time. I had a lot of news about Corflu Silver and Fandom in general, so the temporary return to a frequent schedule allowed me to pump out stories as things developed

Chris Garcia and I had articles with the same title: "My Year as N3F President." Chris' recapitulated his year of dismal servitude of that perpetually moribund organization, while mine was a hypothetical essay about what I would do to the club if I somehow became N3F President. My plan was to break the N3F culture by extending free membership to all fans. The club is largely electronic, so it doesn't need a lot of revenue. The new members, being sensible Core Fandomites, would support the needed restructuring and come up with ways that N3F could legitimately aid fans and justify its existence.

101. We planted our tongues firmly in our (own) cheeks for this issue. My "Katzenjammer" ripped the shroud of mystery away from the world of Secret Underground Professional Neo Feuding. According to my

searing expose, a sinister organization enslaves helpless neofans and teaches them to feud viciously with each other while the patrons bet on their lives and laugh at their antics. How could I know that publication of that article would lead to a bidding war between two big, exploitative conventions for the rights to parimutuel Professional Neo Feuding.

102. The death of Calvin W *Biff* Demmon was uppermost in my mind as I put together this 26-page issue. Sadly, it also reported the death of long-time Southern Fandomite legend Hank Reinhardt. One of Fandom's strongest appeals, the opportunity to interact with colorful, original and unique people, is sometimes less of a blessing. It gives us the joy, but it means that we must eventually suffer the loss of these irreplaceable friends. Only the knowledge that Core Fandom continues to draw such people, each special in his or her own way, sustains us at such times of loss.

Since I'd done 94 pages for the 100th issue, it didn't seem like a good idea to Go Big again so soon for the Third Annish. I also didn't want to do a "best of" to represent a year with significantly fewer issues (though fairly high page count.) I ended up with a 30-pager that included material by Shelby Vick, Steve Styles, John Purcell, Warren Buff and Bill Mills.

Joe Flickinger, a long-time fan whose fanzining began about the time I was born, sent me a group of fanhistoric photos from the 1952 Midwescon that I ran with a bit of an article. I really enjoyed my contact with this venerable, and still-active, fan from the western New York area.

104. I tinkered with things a bit in this issue. For the first time on a regular issue, I used a full-page cover and repositioned the news as a column, "Fandom Newsbreaks" farther back in the zine. I knew, at that time, that the changes were all pointing in the direction of a new look for *Vegas Fandom Weekly*.

My favorite piece in this 34-page issue was Taral Wayne's reminiscence of the Toronto fan club OSFiC. He was the right fan to write it and he made the most of it. Close second was Alan White's entertaining Los-Con report, "Return from the Digs." Alan also pro-

vided a liberal selection of photos from the event.

105. Chapter Six of Chris Garcia's TAFF trip report tied a bow around *Vegas Fandom Weekly's* support for his candidacy. He was, as expected, an outstanding representative of US Fandom and the fact that he produced a sizable report so promptly is another worthy accomplishment.

106. I hadn't written a major con report for several years, mostly because I hadn't attended a con in that long. The 36-page "A Study in Silver" offered a fairly complete account, laced with asides and imaginings, along with a slew of photos by such as Nic Farey, Gary Mattingly, Bill Mills and Alan White.

107. "Corflu Silver, One More Time" was the slogan on the cover of this 30-page issue that gave some other fans a chance to share their Corflu Silver experience. Bill Mills, Shelby Vick and Nic Farey all started with lively articles about the 2008 Core Fandom World Convention.

Unconnected with the con reports, but of great importance to me, Bill Kunkel returned with a new installment of "Potshot's Cartoon Theater." I miss the old curmudgeon.

108. The 28-page issue ran the gamut from pathos to farce. The death of fannish icon Jack Speer supplied the former, and my description of a fannish arm wrestling event that never took place supplied the latter.

Another highlight was the return, after a short absence, of Dick Lupoff's column. I think it has been consistently entertaining and it's one of my personal favorites. Not that there aren't quite a few other fine columnists in this *Vegas Fandom Weekly*. I felt like Taral Wayne, John Purcell and Warren Buff all kicked it up a notch.

Besides the sad news about Juffus, "Fandom Newsbreaks" announced the much happier information that the 2010 Westercon had chosen John D. Berry as its Fan Guest of Honor. As the one who discovered John in Monster Fandom, got him to his first fan meeting and helped his first publishing efforts for our Fandom, I am delighted to see his many contributions recognized. I think I might go to that one, my dislike of

NUMBERED FANDOMS

A Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory



big cons notwithstanding to wave the Fanoclast Flag a little on his behalf.

109. I've written a lot of articles about fanhistory and fannish culture, but this was my first major opus since "The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory" in the third annish of *Wild Heirs*. What I tried to do this time was re-examine the Numbered Fandoms Theory and apply it with greater accuracy. In the process, it provides an illustrated history of Core Fandom.

This issue drew some of the smarter LoCs – and some of the most clueless. Evidently, some fans are uncomfortable with the idea that there is more than one way to interpret fanhistorical data. Others have trouble understand that a theory is a work-in-progress, a proposal that must be successively adjusted and modified as we learn more facts.

My essay featured a complete re-evaluation of the entire Numbered Fandoms Theory, coupled with an attempt to define and limit the theory's basic concepts to the only area of Fandom to which they apply, Core Fandom. I considered all that has been written by Jack Speer, Bob Silverberg, Ted White, rich brown and I on the subject, but I didn't take anything as gospel. I am very pleased with this piece and am thankful for both the egoboo and legitimate corrections and suggestions that I also received in abundance.

110. This issue premiered a new look for the fanzine, epitomized by the new logo and the decision to refer to the zine only by its initials. The advice came from Ted White at Corflu Silver in response to my comment to him that I found it hard to deal with "Vegas Fandom Weekly." It wasn't weekly or particularly about Las Vegas, so switching to initials evaded the inevitable questions about the appropriateness of the name.

There were changes in the editorial content, too, though the refurbished graphics got most of the attention. I eliminated "Inside Story" and moved the contents listing to page 2 from the spot it filled on the back page for the fanzine's entire run. The service features of interest largely to Las Vegas fans continued to diminish in importance. This time, I chopped the Calendar. There are now local fans interested in tracking southern Nevad fan events and I thought I would leave that to them.

111. I devoted this issue to the completely revised and rewritten Second Edition of *The Trufan's Advisor*, a 30-page guide to Core Fandom. The feedback on this pleased me. This rounded out my trio of major 2008 major productions, which also included *A Study in Silver* and *Numbered Fandoms*.

112. I was very pleased with this issue as I pulled it together. It pretty much fit with what I wanted to publish, going forward. Yet though I liked the resulting issue very much, it didn't seem a lot like an issue of *VFW*, in initialese or otherwise. That was when I decided to bring this fanzine to an a neat and tidy end.

113. The Fourth Annish turned into "The Arnish II" when I decided to get some of the pieces on which I have been working into print sooner rather than later. I wrote all of the 24-page.

I wanted to create some space between the end of one fanzine and the start of a fresh title. Besides, I couldn't go to Corflu Zed, so I needed some way to vent my fannish impulses. Left unchecked, these violent forces can harm the fannish headbone.

114. I decided to end with a Letters Issue, recalling how well Dick and Pat Lupoff wound up *Xero*. I am Officially Resisting suggestions that I continue *VFW* as a letterzine. — Arnie



The Stalwarts Your LoCs & My Quips ChatBack

It's time for the Last Stand of the Stalwarts, the final installment of the VFW letter column. And there is no more fitting fan to start (and end) it than the fanzine's most voluminous (and fascinating) letterhack...

Robert Lichtman

Pursuant to your writing in "Last Hurrah" that "As should now be obvious, I'm now in the midst of making some changes in *VFW*," I certainly noticed from the colophon that the fanzine's name is no longer *Vegas Fandom Weekly* but now simply *VFW*—and in that connection, I love the new logo you've used on the cover of No. 110. As for "A New Fannish Hope," my own is that you *do* manage to assume a schedule as ambitious as the one you mention of "somewhere between biweekly and monthly." I also look forward to completion of the projects you mention in this issue's "Katzenjammer," specifically the detailed 2008 FAAn Awards results zine and a revised edition of *The Trufan's Advisor* (this is not to say, though, that I *don't* keenly anticipate those "couple of lengthy faan fiction stories").

Regarding that "recent discussion focused on one fan's habit of cutting up fanzines to save his cartoons and trash the rest," I see that said fan's Website bearing all those cartoons is now up and running. I can't look at it without feeling that it's haunted by the Twiltone souls of all those dear departed hard-copy fanzines even though it was, as you say, well within the right of the owner of those fanzines to "dispose of...as he or she sees fit." But you're only looking at part of

the picture over the long term, in your assertion that "Electronic fanzines are immune to death by egocentric clipping." This will only happen if, as we go down the line towards newer and "better" software, at each step of the way the entire archive of electronic fanzines is updated to meet each new platform on which it can be viewed as the old one(s) go away. We're happy as clams with PDFs these days, but what about a decade from now? A century?

In the section about the Fan Sanity Council you write, "Imagine the horror, the pain and the anguished embarrassment we would all feel if some stalwart BNF, after a half-century or so of exemplary fanac, begins to act deranged or exhibited greatly diminished mental capacity."

Yes, I can imagine that—and since my mother succumbed to Alzheimer's it's something that occasionally gives me pause. But if you reduce the length of service for that "stalwart BNF" from "a half-century or so" to a decade or two, you have a couple examples of anguished embarrassment in the actions of Bill Donaho and Richard Bergeron. I don't mean to start a discussion of their respective Topics A, just to point out that dementia (partial or whole, and of the fannish variety) is sometimes self-induced.

All that said, thanks for nominating me to serve on the Council—and I fervently hope that if I'm elected to this position there will never be an occasion in which I'll have to Do Anything.

Near the end of your column you wrote, "I don't know how *you* sort fanzines, but I can't go through several hundred

fanzines without stopping to look, read and remember.” This is occasionally a problem for me, too, but it crops up more when I’ve received some new old fanzines and want to check them out before putting them in their place in my giant chrome and black plastic files. I’m usually able to deal with bulk movement of fanzines in a less lingering way. Just yesterday, for instance, I finally took the time to do a major rejiggering of my entire fanzine collection, which is housed in ten different file cabinets with a total of 42 drawers. (This doesn’t count mailings of various private apas, which are housed in well-labeled boxes in another room.) Some of them had become so tightly packed that extricating a fanzine from a file was very difficult. It took about three hours and a lot of heavy lifting and shifting, but the deed is done. It required finally boxing up Paul Williams’s *Crawdaddy!* and his *Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter* to achieve adequate wiggle room. Some drawers are still fairly tight, but they contain the fanzines I’m pretty sure are not going to have more issues because their editors have shuffled off to the big room party in the sky. But when it came to the drawers around the letter “K,” I made sure I left sufficient expansion room for the prolific outputs of you and that nice Mr. Kemp.

I’m glad to see Dick Lupoff’s account of his resurrection of SF writer and former fellow worker Fox Holden published in its entirety, and I’m looking forward to an update of his activities with this and other projects of Surinam Turtle Press in an upcoming issue—one that’s published *really* soon (as opposed to real soon now).

In the interests of not starting a mainstream political discussion in *VFW*, I was going to ignore Shelby’s “Politics is a Four-Letter Word.” But then I came to his assertion about socialism/utopias that “There will always be someone trying to take advantage of any weaknesses of any system,” and his belief that “Capitalism, on the other hand, takes human weaknesses into consideration—that is, the strongest will survive, and everyone has the opportunity to give it a shot.” And I couldn’t go on without noting that the “successful” capitalist *does* take advantage of those who for whatever reason (and there are many) fail to get a toehold in “the system,” and creates the vast injustices and man-made shortages that we see worldwide in the distribution of income, food, shelter, and much else. If there was an actual choice, I’d rather have people “taking advantage” amidst plenty.

Taral’s article piqued my curiosity to know more about the RPG he created of an alternate fandom in the town of Willow Run. The name itself caught my attention since back in the ‘60s I was a big user of Willow Run soy margarine which, as I recall, was at the time made in Canada. Because Taral is Canadian, I wondered if there was any connection.

Sorry, but although I tried I just couldn’t get interested in Warren Buff’s attempts to delineate Southern Fandom. He *almost* had me near the end with his “half-hearted means of determining the Southern identity of a place, is the tendency of the locals to correctly define barbecue as the meat rather than, Ghu forbid, the act of grilling a few burgers.” But since there are areas of the U.S. where barbecue is heavily practiced that aren’t in the old Confederacy or any of his stretched definitions, even that falls short. And given that over the years southern fans have moved all over the country and yet retained their ties to the south, it’s my view that Southern Fandom is more a state of mind rather than a strictly geographical construct.

John Purcell makes some interesting observations and comments in ranking his personal ten favorite fanzines, and I thank him for placing *Trap Door* so high. But what’s this “Bob Lichtman” stuff!? As you and other old-time fans know, during my first fannish incarnation (1958-71) I was known as Bob; but when I got involved in Stephen Gaskin’s Monday Night Class in San Francisco and as a result of that ended up being one of the founding members of The Farm, a commune in Tennessee, like nearly everyone there I reverted back to my real name and carried that renaming back into fandom when I left the commune and returned to fan activity in 1980. Early on I played games with it. For instance, in the colophon of the first issue of *Trap Door* I referred to myself as “Robert ‘Bob’ Lichtman,” and in the second and third issues as “Bob ‘Robert’ Lichtman.” And then I dropped it. Some fans who knew me back in the day still occasionally slip and call me Bob, and I smile beatifically and forgive them. I forgive John, too, but...watch it!

John says of *Prolapse* that he “thoroughly enjoys each issue—even though each of my locs gets relegated to the WAHF listing.” That’s happened to me, too, with one exception a couple issues ago—and it’s fine with me because I’d rather have the space devoted to the letters of the vast



underground of semi-lapsed and recently reupped British fans whose missives Weston does print, letters that are often just as interesting as the articles.

In the lettercol I notice that Chris Garcia continues to refer to all Corflus as “CorFlu,” apparently thinking that because the 2005 outing was called that in retrospect because so many attendees picked up a nasty flu bug there. Elsewhere in his letter he expresses the view that because “the Hugos treat the Fan Categories and the Pro Categories the same” that it “shows a tremendous amount of respect for the Fan sections.” To me it’s a simple matter of consistency, and his further argument that people vote “blind” all up and down the Hugo ballot “it’s inherent with the system.” Maybe so, but it doesn’t make for an honest result—and the pool of eligible voters is further skewed by limiting participation to those who’ve paid a minimum admission fee in the form of, at least, a supporting membership in the worldcon. You write, Arnie, that “if the worldcon opens the voting to all fans with no voting fee” the results might be more representative of quality in both fan and pro categories. I’ve argued a midway point between free and expensive fee in the form of a voting-only membership with no publications or attendance rights, but this has been met with scorn and elitist protectionism by some fans who I won’t name.

Claire Brialey writes: “Lots of people are SF fans.

Some of them are fans with whom I have a lot in common, many are fans in ways I hardly recognize and with whose activities I would thus not choose to get involved or be categorized, many more are fans with whom I have a reasonable intersection of interests but we nonetheless have quite different priorities. I don’t disagree that we sometimes need some terms to describe these different groups or their relationships to ourselves; and I obviously don’t reject the idea that sometimes we just want to have conventions, for instance, that are targeted at one of these groups rather than making everything appeal to everyone and thus diluting the overall experience. But I do question what feels like a need to assert the absolute primacy of any one group or make such primacy so intrinsic to our own identity. In my view of broader fandom there are many overlapping circles and what for you, say, is at the core of a set of concentric rings may still be significant for me but a little more off-centre in my mental map of my own fannish world.

If this was a list, I would simply say, “What she said.” But since this is a letter of comment I’ll add that Claire’s sensitively shaded description of how, in essence, we each create our own fandom based on our perceptions, associations and preferences is marvelously described.

Claire also write, concerning Corflu, that “it was calmer and quieter hanging out in the smoking con suite” and also “probably the best conversations, are in the smoking con suite; so there’s an edge to the centre of the con, and if I’m having a good time somewhere else I usually find I have all sorts of excuses to not quite make it down to the smoking room.” As someone who used to spend a lot of time at Corflus hanging out either in the smoking consuite or “Ted’s room” but now no longer smokes and is inclined to distribute my time between smoking and non-smoking, it’s my observation that good conversation happens equally in both venues—and that who’s specifically there has a lot to do with the quality of the conversation.

You write, “Fandom was a lot different in the mid-1950’s than it is today. The division into distinct sub-Fandoms hadn’t yet occurred.. In that homogenous, and much smaller, Fandom, a more inclusive definition of ‘fan’ was reasonable. At that time, the main distinction was between people who believed in the social contract of Fandom and those who didn’t, fans and non-fans.” I didn’t climb on board until the late ‘50s, but my recollection of those times was that there were three distinct classifications of fans: fanzine fan, convention fan, and various shadings of “reader.” There was a lot of overlap between the first two groups, but even then there were people who conducted their activity in just one of those arenas and a certain animosity between them (as expressed in events such as Don Ford winning TAFF in 1959 because the “fanzine fan” vote was split between Terry Carr and Bjo). The latter category took into account the people who, for instance, subscribed to *Science-Fiction Times* but had no other contact with fandom at large.

Chris Garcia writes that the N3F “Art Bureau put out a fine little art sampler last year, which I’ve had out at all the Fanzine Lounges.” Chris, which artists are represented—and is this available in electronic form? If not may I please have



a copy? It would be much appreciated.

Arnie: I did shorten the name in hopes of shedding some of the fanzine's original image as a weekly that focused on Las Vegas and only secondarily on the rest of Fandom. VFW hadn't been that sort of zine for some time, after all.

I figured that if Joyce and I could forget the Secret of the Universe, I could erase the memory of the original name. Sadly, the task proved more difficult than expected. That, in part, ultimately led to my decision to wind up VFW and go on to something new.

Aesthetics and writing are but two of the topics touched upon by an old friend who has returned periodically to Chat-Back....

Eric Mayer

Thanks for VFW. Lots of good material. I really enjoyed Dick Lupoff's article, although, since my memory is going, I kept trying to place where I'd read it before until I got to your explanation. But it was so interesting it was well worth reading twice.

Taral's tale of semi-gafiation was of particular interest to me since I drifted out beyond the orbit of fandom myself around twenty years ago and returned fairly recently to float around in the restful electron belt a safe distance from the massive paper zines swirling around in the center of the system.

If there wasn't an electron belt, filled with ezines, I wouldn't be around at all. During the mid-eighties it became apparent to me that I wasn't actually a part of fandom. I enjoyed a lot of fanzines and even contributed to zines and published my own but I just ultimately didn't feel a part of faanish society. Not surprising since I don't go to cons.

Aside from feeling a bit of an outsider, I also realized that my aesthetic sense didn't quite mesh with fandom's. Although I loved the old stuff, by the likes of Tucker, Willis and Burbee, more often than not I found myself puzzled by the new stuff others were getting enthused about. There was plenty of new fanac I did admire, but it wasn't usually the fanac that seemed generally to be thought of as the best.

It's true, I think, that we get out of a hobby what we put into it. As an outsider with few faanish topics to write about, and divergent tastes, I didn't feel like I could contribute enough to fandom for it to be fun. Standing on the sidelines isn't fun. Playing a game badly, for that matter, isn't fun. As Taral says of his local fandom that wasn't really about fanzines...what was there for me to do?

Somewhat like Taral (or so I gather from what he says) I found more suitable venues for my writing outside fandom. One thing I have learned is that it is the artist who needs to entertain the audience. You can't expect the audience to change its tastes to suit you.

Actually that's also a kind of round about response to Robert Lichtman's loc in which he hits on my decision to limit my fanac to electronic varieties. Don't we all limit our fanac in some way, given how many different kinds are available today? I enjoy reading certain fanzines and chatting with editors in loccols but I don't have enough to contribute

beyond that to warrant involving myself to the extent I did back in the seventies.

I should probably also, since he asked, assure Robert that the "deep psychological scars" I referred to were those I suffered while in thrall to a pan of hecto jelly. Which is to say, I was just trying to make a joke! I would've thought that was plain, even if not all that funny. I see locs as chat. I just bat them out. If anyone's honestly searching my locs for hidden meanings then the joke's on them even if they don't get the humor.

Speaking of humor. I like the idea of the egoboo bank. More than thirty years ago when I was writing for Title, Gene Wolfe gave my writing a kind word. Imagine if I'd squirreled that away, to collect interest, compounded daily. What would that be worth today? I'd probably be a bigger egobootocrat than John Scalzi.

Of course it would be even better to bundle up all that accumulating old egoboo and trade it to those who were willing to pay in fresh new egoboo, fully confident that egoboo keeps appreciating. They could then bundle up some more egoboo and exchange that and so forth. The egoboo would just keep multiplying.

Unless -- come to think of it -- people started to figure out that all they had was, for instance, a salutation from a Willis loc wrapped around five hundred encomiums to some forgotten fan fiction magazine and several glowing reviews by Warren Johnson.

Any idea where we'd find 700 billion Harry Warner locs to fix that mess? Well, OK. we probably could find 700 billion Harry Warner locs but there'd go half of Harry's locs just to pay off Fandom's egoboo debt.

But as for that fan sanity council...that's just...well...nuts!

Arnie: I don't think there is a universal aesthetic in Fandom any more than there is in the Mundane World. However much we try to objectify our judgments, subjectivity is impossible to factor out of the equation. Rest assured, I've had the same sort of thoughts, but probably about different fans than you have in mind. Rather than throw away all the good things of Fandom, I've found it better to simply distance myself from such fans and concentrate on the wonderful friends I've made in the hobby.

One of Fandom's finest editors says something so nice about The Trufan's Advisor that I couldn't stop myself from printing it...

Earl Kemp

Arnie, you did a great job with the second edition of the fan's guide. I liked all the visuals by Alan White. too.

Arnie: Much appreciated, Earl. I've seen some evidence that newer fans are reading it and I hope experienced fans will point the neos toward it.

Now comes a battle cry from the Lone Star State...

John Purcell

I just printed out a nice copy of The Trufan's Advisor, 2nd Edition. Glancing though it, this is nicely done. Defi-

nitely worth the effort. If my zine wasn't done already I would have put a plug in for it. Well, I will have to do so in the January issue.

FIJAGH, y'all!

Arnie: I see that you, too, favor the "old school" spelling for "FIJAGH (Fandom Is Just a Goddam Hobby). I'd hate to think of you as one of those revisionists who write "FIJAGDH."

While I can see the merits of your position, you should be aware that I have twice published runs of a fanzine called FIAWOL (Fandom Is a Way of Life)(a newszine co-edited by Joyce), which shows my commitment to that viewpoint. Hey, I might just go for a third time after my next fanzine runs its course.

Different situations call for different approaches to Fandom. I don't think Fandom can, or should, be a way of life for someone who has little or no access to live fans. On the

other hand, FIAWOL looks much more realistic when you are surrounded by about two-dozen fan friends. I'm married to a fan and, since most of my friends are fans, they figure hugely in any social plans. It may not be a way of life for many, but I would hate to think what my life would be like without my Vegrants cohorts.

From out of the cold, but gradually thawing North, comes frequent FAAN Award winner and ChatBack stalwart with the penultimate letter in the VFW run.

Lloyd Penney

Time finally allows...the story of my life. Just when I think I'm caught up... another story. I have VFW 110 and 111, *The Trufan's Advisor*, and both stories apply. I thought I was caught up, but now, I'm not, and time finally allows, so here's a loc on both.

Sorting through my software? I'd do that, too, but I'd need a 5-1/4" floppy reader. I have a small mountain of 3-1/2" disks, and they're still good, even if some of them have old software I don't need. (Saw a graphic online a while ago...a bathroom with 3-1/2" disks on the wall where you'd expect the tiles to be. Waste of good media, say I...)

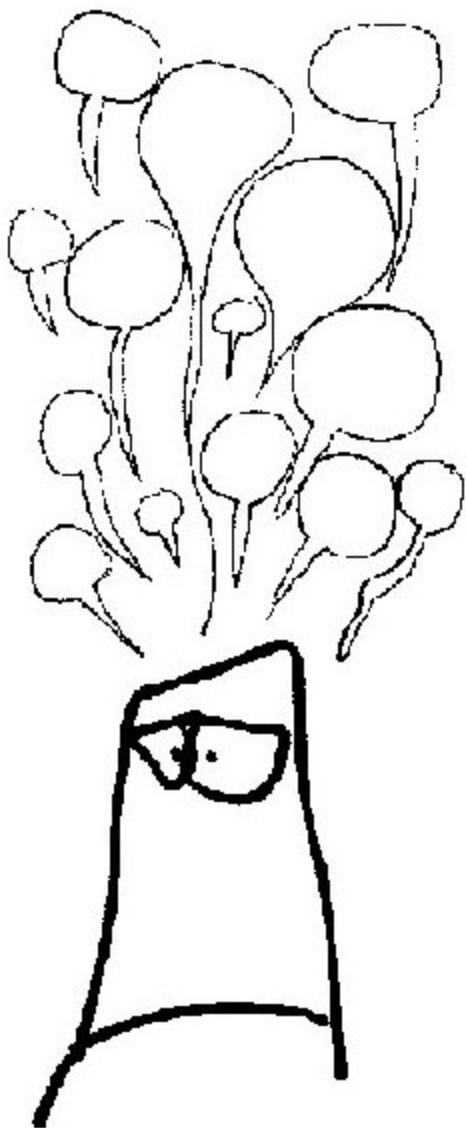
If the lack of chocolate improved your health as much as it did, Arnie, it might be an idea to see an allergist and find out if indeed you are allergic to chocolate. Yvonne had a wide-spectrum allergy test, and her health has improved greatly. There's also a lot of foods she can't eat any more, and that has virtually stopped the snacking and worthless calories.

FanHealthWatch.com, hm? As long as it reports on your health, and not tries to nag you into better health. Yes, I know, I should cut back on the Doritos... But you won't get me to believe that anything like a Fan Sanity Council would ever exist. Fannish sanity is a very relative term. Same for the Bank of Fandom, but I could believe in a fannish stock exchange, with each of us having our own egoboo index, and a daily Fandom 500 index. Maybe there's an egoboo to \$\$\$ exchange rate?

I probably said it the first time there was mention in this zine of Fox B. Holden, but we do need to keep alive the memories of those fine writers who gave us years of good reading, but who are names that seldom slip off our tongues the way Heinlein and Anderson and Simak do. It wouldn't be on the scale of Patricia Rogers' Speerological digs, but it would be of interest to see what Fox Holden kept in his own SFnal tickle trunk.

Whether Taral drifted away or not, or just wasn't as visible as before, he is back in a big way with his GoHship at next year's Worldcon, and with this year's Rotsler Award. Kudos to the Rotsler administrators and the Montreal Worldcon senior committee for bringing Taral back in a big way.

I haven't been able to participate with the Virtual Fan Lounge the way I'd like to...just haven't had the time. Long weeks mean hectic weekends, and not much time to simply sit and enjoy, or spend some time chatting with fannish friends via Ustream. I think there should be monthly gatherings, at least, but I do wonder if the novelty of such an event



has faded already. I wish there was an audiobook company in the Toronto area...I'd be pestering them to take me on.

Hello, Warren...there's an old joke that with the number of Snowbirds that fly south to Florida for the winter, Florida isn't a southern state but a Canadian province. We had plans to go to Florida in the new year, but because the dollar has fluctuated wildly over the past four months or so, we've effectively cancelled it. Perhaps in 2010 or 2011...

I've heard so much about the state of Forry Ackerman's health, or whether or not he's even alive. This guy's lived off the power of egoboo, and now it seems to be literally doing just that. A little love goes a long way. I think his birthday is just past, and I hope he can enjoy at least another Christmas. Confounding the experts seems to be Forry's specialty these days.

The local...I know that I may not agree with everything you've written about Core Fandom, Arnie, just as Chris Garcia has done. I've written about such disagreements as well, and I am pleased that we can easily agree to disagree about these things. Our experiences that lead us to our opinions are all different, and completely subjective. I understand what Chris says about the Hugos because in my own neofan days, when I learned about the Hugos, I remember hoping that I might be able to vote on them one of these days (a few years later, I did!). The silver rockets have lost a lot of their lustre, but there's still some, and that makes them the Big Trophy to win.

The local...lots of praise for your efforts re Corflu Silver, and all well-deserved to you and Joyce and the rest of your committee. Claire Brialey mentions something about a Con of the Dead, populated by flesh-eating zombies...well, that settles what to serve in the con suite, doesn't it? As Robert Lichtman says, you shouldn't try to comment on everything in a fanzine, or your loc could be longer than the fanzine it's commenting on. Guilty of all changes, m'lud, although I've tried to do better.

110 was a pleasure to read, and good to see it returned to print...I guess the name Vegas Fandom Weekly has changed to just VFW? I don't think anyone is expecting the W part any more, but we're pleased to see it appear in any format, any frequency. And now for 111, The Trufan's Advisor...

Trying to sum up any aspect of or interest within science fiction fandom brings that old saying about camels and needles...all we can do is try to explain it within our own experiences and memories. What you wrote under An Apology to Fandom Prime is just perfect. Well done. There is art in both paper and pixel zines; in the long run, content is the main thing. (I said the same thing during the twiltone vs. white bond arguments of eras past.) Well researched and well written all the way through, and as it should be, it is a dynamic publication, with the opportunity to append and update. I like fannish reference works like this one, for that is when we are at our most serious and constructive, without being sercon. Fine distinction, but there you are.

All set to jump onto page 3, so I'll sign off before getting too carried away. If you're keeping to your revived schedule, issue 112 should be here soon. I look forward to it. (By the way, if you didn't get a loc from me on issues 108

and 109, let me know, and I'll send that loc off to you.) Say hello to Joyce for me, and see you nextish.

Arnie: Some of the initial excitement surrounding Fan-HealthWatch.com has ebbed now that everyone understands that the system can't visit bad health on Certain Individuals, just monitor it. In a way, it's too bad. I had big-money offers to give members of FAPA senility and the N3Fers OCD.

Next is a fan with a meaningful correction....

Bill Mills

I meant to tell you the other day when we spoke that I read a lot of the Trufan's Advisor when you first sent it out. It is a monumental task which you have handed most comprehensively. It is a fine and worthy piece of work. Much applause, my friend!

Thanks for all the kind and encouraging words regarding my various fannish web activities and sites. The plugs are appreciated and, indeed, my cup of ego boo also now running over!

However... though I hate to mention it, in the section where you referred to The Voices of Fandom and The Fan Video Network you have wrong urls for both. For TVoF you gave <http://TheVoicesOfFandom.net> when it is <http://TheVoicesOfFandom.COM>, and the proper url for TFVN is <http://tfvn.renebooks.com>

I know you can't change it now... waaaaay too late for that. But I did think I ought to let ya' know. Ya' know?

Arnie: It might be a while until the Third Edition, but at least I can publish your correction here.

It had to happen, I suppose, a Stalwart is Cracking Up right in the middle of the letter column! This could be a job for... Ultraman!

Chris Garcia

Brad Foster cracks me up! That's a great cover. He's one of the Rotsler winners that I hope to be able to do a retrospective on in The Drink Tank sometime over the next year. He's a great artist and a funny guy.

You know, I think I had the very same conversation that Rotsler presaged on page 4 a couple of cons back with folks in the Fanzine Lounge.

I dunno, I kinda like the sound of Omni-Con...well, without the Trek Anal Sex.

More Taral! He's everywhere! He's had something in every zine I've LoCed over the last six weeks...plus he's had pieces in The Drink Tank! He's a busy, busy guy and I'm glad for it since all of his stuff been great. I like his breakdown of ages. Very simple and easy to grasp. Now, each of those broader divisions has it's own breakdown, but it's a great organizing principal. One way to look at Ages of Fandom is by the dominant personalities. I've never managed to do a good spread, but I'm pretty sure you could break down eras by who was doing the guiding of the age. I've gotta work on that.

I ran into John DeChancie at LosCon. I hadn't seen him since I ran into him at LASFS, I think. Maybe it was the last

time I was at a Vegrants meeting. Sadly, philosophy is a discipline that's past its peak. Everyone's a Philosopher of _____ now, cracking down into tiny compartments.

Philosophers of Technology are the scariest and most annoying, really. For every Kurzweil there's about 24 other completely stupefying philosophers who insist on pushing singularity concepts that really just pile on everyone else. Where are the big-picture thinkers like the Greeks? I mean, we've really gone backwards in that one field.

That's my favourite UNIVAC I photo out there. We're finally getting our UNIVAC I back for our timeline in a few months, which makes me happy. I used to clean it when I was at the Computer Museum in Boston. The set-up we had was based on that photo. You gotta love folks who are willing to talk about those old days in computer history. I love UNIVAC, especially since so much of Computer History is focused on IBM. UNISYS is a decent company, especially since they've got a very strong sense of history.

Beam was one of my faves this year, and sadly I've only gotten 1/3 of the way through the article I said I'd get for Nic. I'm having trouble coming up with the throughline for three very much entangled, but very different stories. I've been a big fan of the Knarley Knews and it's good that I can run into Henry every now and again around these parts. It's another cog in the BArea Fanzine Machine!

I am off to try and complete the Forry tribute issue of The Drink Tank and then it's time to try and get my FAPA zine copied...only three months late!

Arnie: I prefer pictures of large breasted women, but I think Core Fandom is spacious enough for both of us to have what they want.

No sooner is his name mentioned than he appears in the letter column...in all his glory...

John DeChancie

I loved your article on the Ideal Con; it was a good joke, complete with punch line. Taral Wayne gets it right about the Ages of Fandom, though I fear when the Digital/Retirement era ends, the only thing left is Last Fandom (As We Know it). I see you provided distraction from my column by running a pic of a swell babe alongside. How can I compete with that? (I also take issue with your layout of the column title and the title of the column, which I thought rather confusing, but this is minor stuff.)

Dick Lupoff's bittersweet reminiscence was near to my heart; I'm a little younger, but the era he describes I remember well. Shelby Vick and John Purcell also wrote good articles.

All in all, a great ish of VFW, for all that you ran something of mine. Stop doing that, and you'll have produced the Ideal Zine!

Arnie: I think you're unduly pessimistic. It is very obvious that Core Fandom is maintaining, and even slightly increasing, its numbers despite the inevitable deaths and gaffations.

You and I, Meyer, are getting older (though I am still lovely as Springtime). Core Fandom is getting younger as

people in their 30s and 40s replace folks in their 70s and 80s. Other segments of Fandom Prime, and other Fandoms for that matter, appeal to teens and college students more than our Fandom, but we are getting the people that want something with a bit more meat and meaning.

I don't know what the future holds for Fandom Prime. Many of the people who throng to the "big tent" conventions have only a casual interest. That suggests that, like most people, they will soon go on to other things; go on to whatever is the latest fad. There are quite a few fans in Fandom Prime who have more than a casual interest. It's hard to tell what they would do if the anonymous crowds stopped showing up.

No sooner has he been mentioned than he appears...

Dick Lupoff

Tnx for the latest VFW. As always, handsome design and good reading. Who cd ask for anything more?

Um, I will point out that there was a certain amount of jumbling of photos and captions accompanying my piece. Nothing disastrous. Just thought I'd mention it. You might want to take a look and see if you can figure out what went wrong, though.

Arnie: Sorry about the mix-up. I thought I had it right, but thank you for the correction.

I do wish, though, that you'd mentioned WWE Divas Kelly Kelly in your letter. I'd really liked to have heard from her...

He may not be the Hebrew Hottie, but the next contributor is our Lone Star Stalwart and always highly welcome in VFW's final letter column.

John Purcell

Finally! We've got a new browser setup on our home computer (or something like that; the screen view is a bit screwy), so it's taking me a bit of getting used to in order to get a couple windows open: #1 for the latest VFW to peruse while I use window #2 to write this loc. Fun and games...

Speaking of 'puters and new setups, when is the next *Wasted Hour* going to be posted? It has been awhile, so last night I poked my cyber-head into the Virtual Fan Lounge and nobody was home. Just curious since *WH#8* was created lo so many weeks ago. Idle minds (such as they are, and not only the name of a zine from Vegas Fandom) wanna know.

Onward to *VFW #112*, which is yet another stellar effort from the middle of the Great Southwest. That statement comes from one of the Great Unwashed, mainly because I haven't taken a shower yet this morning. A cup of coffee, daily vitamins, and exercise regimen are out of the way; now to loc a couple zines as I wake up a bit more. Then shower. Fanac before cleanliness. Just ask Graham Charnock.

Say, that new logo is quite spiffy, and Brad Foster's cover illo complements the logo very well. I have always wondered what a gruntle is; that will probably be the subject of Brad's next bit of art. His work is sooooo good! We faneds are blessed to have such a talent willing to supply

us with a stock of great work. Which reminds me: I have an anniversary to plan for March, 2009; I wonder who shall grace that cover...?

And, no, that is not an elliptical allusion to who's doing the cover. I honestly haven't a clue as of this morning. We shall see who gets the honor.

Your musings about the Ideal Convention were fun. "Omni-Con" sounds so unlike you that that's what makes this schtick work so well. Satisfying everybody who attends a con is, as we all know, an impossibility, sort of a fannish Heisenberg Theorem or a con-running Kobayashi Maru scenario. It Will Never Happen. But the punchline is effective, if only a wee bit predictable. Obviously, the Ideal Convention for many of us is a Free Corflu, which will likewise Never Happen. Oh, well. Fun stuff to read and fantasize about. Thank you for the chuckle

Tara Wayne's concept of Numbered Fandoms was also fun. Here was another great punch line, comparing his potential magnum opus to yet "another fabled Daugherty Project." Another nice chuckle. It really helps if one knows the reference, and at least most of the folks who read *VFW* should get it.

John DeChancie's article is a gentle reminder that I should make timely payments on my student loans once I finish my PhD. Repossessing a degree if you default on your student loans is a berserk concept, and one that, frankly, might happen given the current economic state. I have no idea how we're going to pay for Josie's college education once she graduates high school next May. At least she has been working at the same place for a year and a half now, so that's a good thing, and if she keeps her grades up, the odds



are good she'll get a scholarship. Stay tuned for further developments on that front.

Okay. Skipping ahead to the illo on page 14 - apologies to Dick Lupoff and Shelby Vick - but I must admit, Arnie, that I am glad you are finding such fine patriotic pictures to include in *VFW*. I tell ya, that's some mighty fine flag waving there...

As for ShelVy's arkle, I really don't want to say anything that hasn't been said before. This piece is rather dated, especially since locs responding to it will see print nearly two months after the election. Granted, there is a certain logic to ShelVy's argument, and it does make warped sense considering the political climate in America. Actually, I am bit surprised, Arnie, at your inclusion of this in *VFW*. Fans are very informed folks; I learned this ages ago, and for me this is one of fandom's major attractions. My hope here is that calm minds will prevail and not yell down ShelVy for being "fandom's Token Conservative." There are all stripes in fandom, which is fine by me. Marty Helgesen, for example, is an avowed Christian and one heckuva nice guy. And he's not alone, either. No question about it, fandom is truthfully one of the free-est exchanges of ideas and philosophies I have encountered in my life, and again, here is another example of fannish attraction. Fandom is indeed a great place to be.

Whoops! I didn't mean to comment too much there, but I did anyway. Sorry about that.

Hey, those fanzine covers repro'd nicely. And XX's and OO's for the freebie plugola. It is appreciated, kind sir. I have a good idea of which zine to review next time around: *Chunga #15* arrived in the mail a week or so ago, and it's another wonderful issue. So is *Steam Engine Time #9*, and... Oh, never mind. You'll find out when I write the damned column.

In ChatBack - always one of my favorite sections of *VFW* - Robert Lichtman is right that there are always traditionalists who complain about "things ain't what they used to be and that somehow the new form [of fanzine reproduction] was *wrong* or *unfannish*." This is so true, as is also the fact that eventually the changes are accepted and become part of the norm. It is such a normal human reaction to change, so it is to be expected. If there is anything predictable or constant about change it is that there will always be people who complain about change. Oh, well. (Sound of needle scratching across vinyl LP playing an REO Speedwagon song in the back of my brain).

I think Lloyd Penney has it nailed: "[fans] want to communicate with each other in a proactive manner." I agree. In person contact is naturally preferred, but most fans lingering from Days of Yore are literary-minded, so it's not surprising that we prefer to use writing in some shape or form to stay in contact with each other. Fans are certainly inventive when it comes down to this sort of thing.

David Bratman and Robert Lichtman wrap up this with interesting comments about where a focal point of modern day fandom is located. One might say that current fandom has several foci, and fanzine fandom (read: Core Fandom) orbits around the printed word. It is possible that at present we are not core-less but lack a focal point around which to

orbit. Maybe we're in a fannish version of the beginning of the cosmos. I dunno. As these gentlemen noted, there have been wonderful fanzines over the years that provided a fannish nucleus. Maybe the analogy we're looking for here is creating some kind of humongous Fannish Venn Diagram: overlap each interest group and see where they all converge.

Now *THERE'S* a Daugherty Project for somebody!

Arnie: Bill Mills has had a ton of professional obligations and some very time-consuming personal and family happenings that require his attention. I write the show and hog the camera, but "The Wasted Hour" is most definitely a collaboration between us. Until he has the time and energy, I wouldn't want to do an episode. That's a good thing, because I couldn't possibly do one without his mammoth contributions. I'm glad you like the shows and I encourage folks to check out the latest installment at LasVegrants.com.

You're a braver fan than I am, John. I would never mention Graham Charnock before breakfast. You could get a rupture or a blockage or something equally catastrophic.

I originally wrote "The Ideal Convention" for SNAPS with the intention of turning it into a "Wasted Hour" bit for Joyce and me. With the slow-down in production of the show and the other ideas I also wanted to use, we haven't had a chance to do it yet.

ChatBack is one of my favorite parts of VFW, too. I confess that, seeing this response, it takes my full willpower not to proclaim a second letters issue before proceeding to the first issue of my new fanzine. I'm resisting, because I'm not sure I want to do a letterzine.

From the thawing, North comes a multi-FAAn Award winner and one of the titans of Chatback...

Lloyd Penney

I do enjoy Worldcons, but an Omni-con, as you put it, usually fails because it tries to cater to all interests, and as a result, caters to none really. That might have been the beginning of the specialty conventions that started about 20 years ago, the demand for a convention that would showcase a particular interest that the general convention either couldn't focus on without ignoring or sacrificing other interests, or simply refused to deal with it because the committee didn't share or understand that interest. From that came conventions focusing on Trek, media, filk, Doctor Who, dare I say fanzines? Creation Conventions was chased out of Ontario because of failure to pay their taxes, and they run a regular convention in the Vancouver area, but that is the extent of their business in Canada

I've got my diploma, too...a B.A.A. in Journalism. Pretty piece of paper, too. It got me my start, I suppose, especially with companies who want a university grad to start. Perhaps I didn't have the driven need to go out and report; I got my degree and good marks, but I've never worked as a journalist, at least not after I graduated. All my degree got for me was my first qualification for work, and I've been scrambling for more work ever since. This goes directly into Dick Lupoff's article...the mad scramble for work, especially in publishing, is getting tougher. This financial mess we're all in, courtesy of Wall Street, means the arts always get hurt, and that



means firings, layoffs, mergers and cutbacks in various publishing and printing companies. The word used several times has been carnage. Many times, I feel like my future is in doubt, and the arts are dying.

With a future in mind, I doubt I'd ever retire. Shelby, I think you're doing it the right way. Retirement is a relative term. I think if I was ever to retire, and I have no illusions that I'll ever be able to do so, but if I was to retire, I would make sure that my level of activity stayed the same. Gotta stay busy and fruitful. Otherwise, the brain dries up like a prune. (Sure, Barack Obama doesn't have a lot of experience. But, he is surrounding himself with a cabinet that does. That cabinet so far also has the smarts and the background to get the job done.)

John Purcell...I'd better check that issue of The Knarley Knews. I'm usually right to deadline with a loc, but sometimes, I'll wind up with two in the next issue, so it all evens out. There are times when I e-mail a loc, and the Net is hungry, and must be fed, and nothing arrives in the destination in-box. C'est la vie.

I've been on the website a few times, but I have not seen any reference to a new Voices of Fandom podcast. Hello, Bill, hope you're doing well, and health is still good. Also, I miss the blether sessions in the Virtual Fan Lounge. Maybe we can resume some kind of schedule in the new year?

I am still waiting for my contributor's copy of The Drop. I plan to pester Josephine Omara, the producer, in the new year, but to be honest, I am not hopeful. Still, if it does arrive, I will ask if I can share it with those who might be interested.

I think I shall miss the Vegas fandom news. At least, I

missed it here. I hope there are suitable Christmas events to add a little ho-ho-ho to the warm, arid desert. (Just for the record, it's about 25F outside, with a few inches of snow. If anyone would like to take the snow away home, come on up. I've heard that if all the snow goes, we will be restocking in a few days.)

And, I think my work here is done. At least, without the chaos, panic and disorder. All of that seems to come with the territory. Thank you, Arnie for another fun read, and please pass on my greetings to the next gathering of the Vegrants, and a hug to Joyce. Happy end-of-year celebrations to all, and to all, a good night.

Arnie: I don't enjoy large conventions, even those that are fan-run with reasonably good intent like the Worldcon or (most years) Westercon, but I'm not insensitive to the reasons others enjoy them. I've never said they shouldn't exist, only that I would be unlikely to attend unless one of my friends is being honored.

The Omni-Con, as I outlined in the article, represents everything I hate about conventions, everything that I think is venal, stupid, greedy, commercial and exploitative. My distaste for such conventions and my aversion to those who take that low road is something entirely different.

The Sage of Fandom returns with a letter that delves into several fascinating topics, which is pretty much what we've come to expect

Robert Lichtman

You did a lovely job of updating *The Trufen's Advisor* – so much that, well, there really is no comparison to the original edition except in broad outline. While there may be those who will fault you for the term “Core Fandom,” I think that it's been pretty well established that it's *your* personal contribution to “fanspeak,” that it's been debated in the pages of *VFW* and other fanzines until some sort of acceptance (or perhaps resignation) has been reached. And in my opinion I don't think your using it here detracts from the overall excellence of your presentation.

There is one major glitch, though. On page 2 you make your first reference to “Fandom Prime.” You repeat it in the Corflu sidebar on page 6 and again in the statistics at the bottom of page 7 about how 300 million Americans breaks down to 1,200 participants in Core Fandom. And then I don't find it appearing again. Those of us who know Moshe Feder are aware that this is *his* term, but nowhere in these pages do you actually define it for the benefit of the “complete newcomer,” and in my view it should be part of “The Portable Dictionary of Core Fandom.”

Your updatings of the history of fandom and the Q&A section are well-considered, and I especially like your response to “Why should I write a LoC when I can download the fanzine for free?” That's one of the most important lessons to be learned by the “complete newcomer,” and one for established fans to take to heart as well.

Arnie: One of the reasons I think the term “Core Fandom” is a useful replacement for the term “Fanzine Fandom” that I haven't previously mentioned is that “Fanzine

Fandom” defines our subculture on the basis of one activity, while “Core Fandom” defines our subculture according to its beliefs.

What I'm getting at is that Core Fandomites engaging in the full gamut of fanac – costuming, con-running, gaming, filking, whatever. Other segments of Fandom can define themselves relative to a single form of fan activity, but there is no reason why we have to do so. Our fancestors, the fans of the 1930-1970 period, didn't restrict themselves to one type of fanac, even if they assigned the highest value to creative, word-based fanac.

I made the decision to substitute Moshe's term “Fandom Prime” for the one I'd been using “Al Known Fandom,” because I felt it had become accepted. I fixed the text, but neglected to add a definition. I guess the Third Edition might appear sooner than I anticipated.

Returning for the Last Stand of the Stalwarts is one of our favorite British contributors...

Mark Plummer

The appearance of *VFW #112* alerts me to the fact that I haven't said anything about the recent rather impressive run of *VFW's*, replete with Corflu news and fanhistorical musings. Like your correspondents in this most recent issue, if more belatedly, I'd mostly like to look back to #109 and your theory of core fandom fan history.

Firstly, and David Bratman says something similar here, your essay improves my understanding of fan history, especially for the sixties and seventies. I think you're absolutely right to focus on core fandom as a strand within the greater fan community, treating it merely as a strand without necessarily any claims of superiority. Even then, the enormity of what you're trying to cover means that, as Sandra Bond says, 'your efforts are simultaneously colossal and yet also slightly skimpy'. One specific point -- and perhaps this is just my



own suppressed nationalistic tendencies coming out -- is that unless you're saying that core fandom is a purely American thing I rather tend to view what you've produced here as a theory of US core fandom fan history as otherwise my fellow countrymen and women seemed somewhat underrepresented in the narrative. I wouldn't necessarily argue that this is a wrong approach, mind. I think that what you describe as core fandom is a less clearly defined group within this country anyway, simply because fandom as a whole is smaller, and it's more likely that the UK needs a different numbered fandom theory for all that it might occasionally intersect with that of the US.

As you may know, Vince Clarke had a stab at a UK version in an article 'Cycle -ology' which appeared in John Roles's and John Owens's *Space Diversions* #4 (January 1953).

I also think you're right to stop when you did in the nineties, to keep some distance from your subject. But this in turn makes me wonder whether it's actually helpful to continue from the Speer-as-extended-by-Silverberg numbering. You say that you think Speer erred in writing about events so close to his own time, but you do still for the most part let the early delineations stand and I wonder if that's for the best. From a 2008 perspective does that one-year-long second fandom really look like a fannish era any more compared with, say, the six years of seventh fandom? I'm guessing that your response here may well be that Speer numbering is sufficiently embedded in fannish thought that the only practical way forward is to build upon it, but perhaps because it's not so ingrained for me I still wonder about that. Personally, I think I lean more towards the idea of the longer eras with more fuzzy boundaries, something along the lines of Taral's 'Ages of Fandom' in #112. But as you say to Sandra in the #112 letter column, you don't claim to be definitive and there's certainly room for other interpretations.

And talking of Sandra, 'Johnny Hall's fanzine ... Motorway Dreamer [is] named for a Hawkwind track,' she says. Oh no, it isn't, I say. I know my way around Hawkwind's back catalogue pretty well and don't believe they've ever done a song of that name. 'Motorway City', yes, although that dates from 1979 and so can hardly be an influence on a fanzine originally projected for 1973. Forgive me while I briefly feel warm and fuzzy at the thought of catching Sandra out on a point British fanhistory.

Can I also mention one small point about your own chronology. You place Warhoon #28 as the 'high note' end for your ninth fandom but that seems a little optimistic. You have ninth fandom ending in 1976. Warhoon #28 carries a publication date of May 1978 and my understanding is that even then this was more hopeful than actual and copies weren't distributed until early in 1980, something which is backed up by the 1981 Hugo nomination for non-fiction book. This punts W#28 out of ninth fandom and up to the end of your ninth transition but I wonder -- and I'm hesitant here as I don't know the era well enough to truly judge -- whether there's actually a case to describe it as one of the kick-starts for your tenth fandom.

OK, another small point. You say that '[t]he election of

then-US resident Avedon Carol to the Eastercon in the UK [in 1983] was a major victory for fanzine fandom.' I'm curious about your thinking here. Grant Canfield, Larry Carmody and Taral Wayne were all also on the TAFF ballot that year and all have sound fanzine credentials so I'm not clear on why the fact that it was Avedon who actually won the trip makes it 'a major victory for fanzine fandom'.

And one last very small point, this one about #110 and entirely egocentric. John Purcell is very generous in his review of *Banana Wings* and I'm appropriately delighted but feel I should point out that we've never featured anything by Graham Charnock.

And in #112 John writes of Beam: 'Nic [Farey] knows his way around computer graphics and desktop publishing. In fact, I do believe that is his job (he can correct me if I'm wrong, and I am sure he will)'. In case he doesn't, I explain that while Nic has a background in IT he has for a number of years now worked in the construction industry, and the tools of his trade are hammer and drill rather PC and DTP. And 'Roll Over, Bob Lichtman' is Nic's own work rather than



being a Bill Mills composition.

You let these little things stand to give your correspondents something to write about, don't you? 'Cos you're generous like that.

Arnie: I am fairly sure that I made the right decision when I limited The Trufan's Advisor to Core Fandom. I felt it was important to show that we are the lineal descendants of the classic fans. I hope the other segments of Fandom have fanhistorians who will write guides for their new fans, but I don't really feel moved to do so. Besides, I know very little about the inner working of the special fandoms of which I am not a participant.

Let's all welcome a first-time writer from North of the Border...

R. Graeme Cameron

Lloyd Penney has inspired me to start writing locs. Ghu help us all!

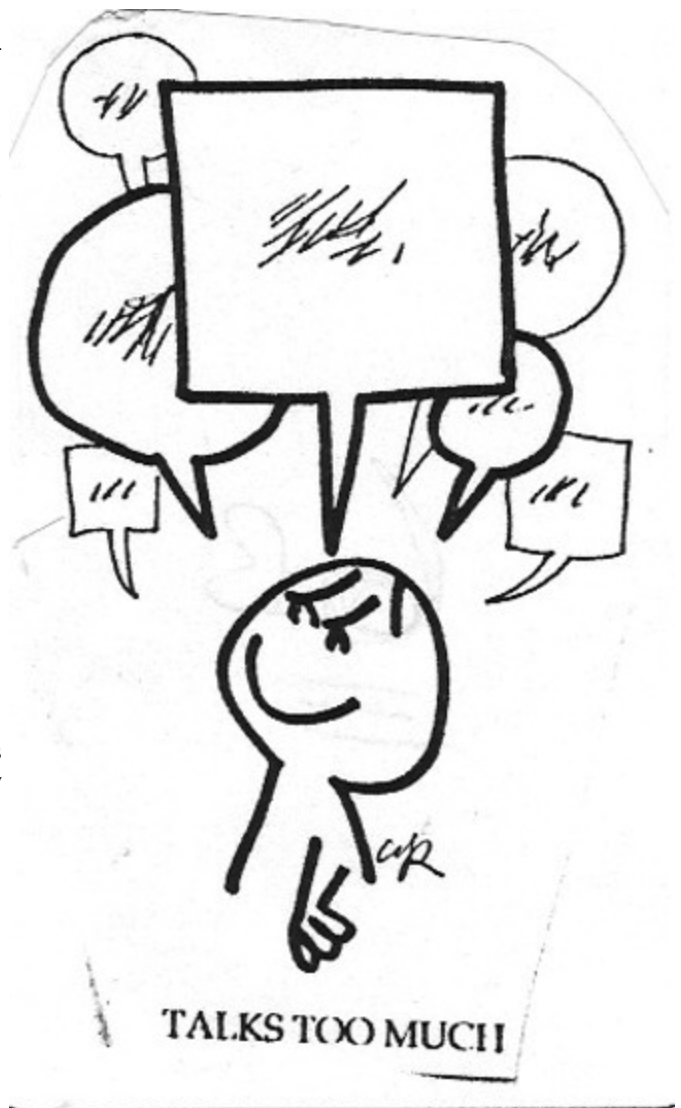
Your Omni-con sounds disturbingly similar to the Stargate/Atlantis cons held annually in Vancouver B.C. It's commercial all the way. No anal sex pay-per-view as far as I am aware, but the seating is individually numbered and pre-sold by event before the con even starts, so if you're a late-comer, forget it. Not to mention photos and autographs sold separately. Buy the photo, then get it autographed. Pay twice. Very much in keeping with the spirit of the age. Mind you, as you go into detail, Omni-con sounds vastly entertaining, as raw spectacle that is.... I like your concept of core fandom by the way. Almost makes us sound respectable...

Taral's comments on the AGES OF FANDOM are interesting. A communality of awareness that fades when key terms, memories and concepts slide out of usage and are replaced by new fen with a new situational awareness of what fandom is all about. But then comes the Daugherty Project of defining each period. I promised something similar to Murray Moore, to write a pamphlet on the stages and evolution of Canadian zinedom (for the upcoming Worldcon in Montreal) but it's a task more daunting than I initially presumed and it's beginning to look as if I won't be able to do it. Sigh. Maybe someday.

John DeChancie's article about opening a Philosophy Shop is delightful. Like him, I was practical, getting a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree which serves me well as a warehouse put-it-on-the-shelf-take-it-off-the-shelf-ship-it-out kinda guy. I tell you, the merry debates on the worth of modern art go on for hours! Makes the day go by faster. As for philosophy I lean towards Cicero, Voltaire & Montaigne, but I have to admit Daffy Duck beats them all as a role model and mentor. Enough said.

Dick Lupoff reveals that being hired by a major corporation in the 'prosperous' fifties wasn't the 'sure thing' that popular legend has it. More proof that the 'good old days', applied to any era, is a myth.

Shelby Vick is far too harsh on the American Voter. They didn't vote for Obama because of the political correct categories one can tick off, they voted for him because he's



the first level-headed, common-sensical, practical, SANE politician to show up in donkey's ages. Bush is a 'cowboy' in comparison. I know Americans love propaganda foofaw, all that fist-pumping and flag-waving & shouting maniacally etc as per football, commercials & the movies, but I think its dawned on a lot of voters that that approach to life & foreign policy is getting a lot of Americans killed and your country sucked down the drain. Fact is, people outside of the States are already beginning to think of America as the 'new' Britain, ie a former super-power in rapid decline. Obama may be your last chance, boyo. Now is not a good time to long for the 'old' way of doing things.

By the way, though I've always been proud to be Canadian (till Harper came along), I'm not one of those trendy anti-American types. Granted, your government's 'I'm the biggest kid on the block' attitude wears thin at times, but I still love the Hollywood dream factory, American SF, some of your TV, your historical literature, Steven Colbert, & lotsa other stuff. In fact, the only thing I'm really disappointed in these days is the caliber of Mad Magazine, which is nowhere near as funny as it was back in the fifties and sixties. And the

fading away of my faves, the Three Stooges, was another blow to American culture, I might add; one from which you've never really recovered.

And oh yes, mustn't forget, I really, really love it when your taxpayers spend millions and millions just to entertain me and stir my sense of wonder. I'm talking about the space probes to Mars & Titan & such. I just love it. I'm very grateful to each and every taxpayer one of you, really!

To put it another way, there's lots of problems in America, but you know every one of them and debate them endlessly, I'm sure. Other countries have similar problems. Even Canada, whose inhabitants are far too smug about themselves. The Alberta government used to sterilize handicapped people without telling them as late as the 1960s, for instance. And we developed a major chemical & biological weapons research program before the US did. The infamous Z gas (pronounced Zed gas), the first nerve gas to be colourless, odourless, and undetectable, killing instantly on contact with bare skin, was perfected in the 1930s. German agents moved heaven & earth to get the formula, though I can't recall if they succeeded. Point is, we're not so nice either. Or, well, to get to my main point, there's still lots of things to admire and even praise America for, like.... like... like core fandom!

And then there's the fact that, whatever your government does to displease me, most of the Americans I've met in my life have been perfectly decent and interesting folk well worth meeting. I believe Obama fits into that category (tho I haven't met him yet. He can drop by my apt any time!) Bush doesn't. Never did. Never will. Nor does the current Prime Minister of Canada. I wish Obama... oh never mind. No need to get all alternate history in the making here.

Enjoyed both John Purcell's zine reviews and your healthy loc column. Vegas Fandom Weekly always a treat!

Arnie: The commercial cons are missing a good money-making opportunity that has arisen in the sports field, but which could be adapted to the needs of a mercilessly greedy mega-event.

Sports teams now require their fans to buy something called a seat license. It's imaginary. The only purpose of the seat license, which costs thousands of dollars, is that it gives the fan the privilege of buying a season ticket at the same (or higher) price as it cost before the introduction of the seat license.

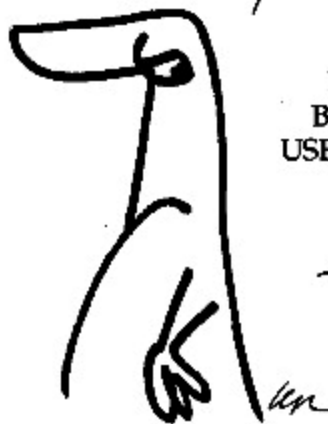
So the seat license is an entirely imaginary "product" which, by itself, has no value beyond what the team has decreed. And one of the NFL teams this year introduced a new, even more exploitative angle. They have informed holders of seat licenses, which are supposed to be lifetime purchases, that those licenses will be revoked for all season ticket holders who didn't pay the extra loot to attend a post-season play-off game.

Liberated from the sinking ship of Wegenheim comes one of the most popular British fans of the past, edging back toward his old friends in Fandom...

Mike Meara

Herewith, as half-promised, a few comments on VFW

THIS VERY FANZINE WAS ONCE INVOLVED IN A WIDESPREAD FANNISH SCANDAL!



IT WAS MIMOED BACK THEN AND USED DISMANTLED HYPHENS AS SLIPSHEETS!

#112. I'm afraid I haven't got anything big and meaty for you (as the bishop said to the actress), just a few vasectomies' worth of snippets. (What? Oh - two snippets to a vasectomy, of course.)

Lovely cover from Brad, but the theme seems familiar. Do I remember a Rotsler illo captioned "my gruntle is dis" or something like that? Speaking of whom, it really is great to see some examples of that master's work within your covers; I fear I took him for granted in the old days. I heard that Alexis Gilliland was doing an archive website - is anything similar in existence or planned for Bill?

The young lady on p9 is absolutely delightful, albeit in a squeaky-clean kind of way; if she's an example of the femmefans of today, then I'm glad I came back! (Is it PC to say "femmefan" these days, he asked, knowing the answer already?)

Ah, UNIVAC! I still think that's what a computer ought to look like. Modern PCs are so /dull/. Someone ought to do an animated version of a UNIVAC-style PC as a screen-saver.

I have recently come to know David Stone Martin as the author of many of those great jazz album sleeves of the 1950s, on labels such as Clef and Verve; It hadn't really registered with me that he did sf art as well. I would love to have a book of his work, in both fields if possible. A book does exist, but last time I looked it was out of print, and second-hand copies were hugely expensive.

They always used to say there are three things you should never discuss, except with people you know really, really well: sex, religion and politics. So I shan't rise to the bait which Shelby dangles on p14. Besides, I was distracted by the young lady - another femmefan, perhaps?

The label/cover on BEAM doesn't say "whiskey", it says "whimsy". Wishful thinking on John Purcell's part, perhaps. But you can't put whiskey, with or without the "e", in a fanzine. In a faned, yes (please).

I presume "Werewolves of Fandom" is based on the

Warren Zevon tune, and "Roll Over, Bob Lichtman" on Chuck Berry? I'd love to hear these - are there any sound clips online anywhere?

Speaking of the latter (Bob, not Chuck), I see he says on p19 that the Golden Age of D&D is 13. The Golden Age of /everything/ is 13, Robert. Everything legal at that age, anyway, and some things that aren't.

A 10-sided die - that would be a pentagonal trapezohedron or deltohedron (it says here in Wikipedia). I don't think I had any of those when I used to play; I used a 20-sided die (or icosahedron), which was easier to roll.

I agree with Lloyd Penney (p22) that there's nothing inherently fannish or otherwise about any kind of technology. We may all have our preferences, but the bottom line is: it's the message, not the medium. Of course, the medium must match, so if you're into filk-singing you'll need to use mp3 files or similar, and if you want to do interviews and such, then internet tv is a good idea, as you have found. At the moment I have no intention of pubbing my ish again, and if I did, I would still like it to be on paper, preferably Twil-tone or similar. However, if I did an ezine, it would make full use of the medium, with hyperlinks, audio and video clips, and odd electronic things happening all over the place. There wouldn't even be a table of contents or any kind of linear structure; perhaps the start point would be randomly selected, and you would have to "explore" each issue, as though it were on of those early computer versions of role-playing games. I would provide a little indicator to show how much of the contents you had discovered so far. I can't believe I'm the first to think of something so obvious - has

anyone else tried anything like this? If so, how was it received?

That's about it, I think. Lots of interesting bits here, but nothing to provoke a major response on my part. I hope it's of some interest, anyhow.

Arnie: Ah, yes, the woman on page 9 was a bit clean for my taste, too. Check out Idle Minds #3, out within the next couple of weeks, for my article about a woman who oozed a somewhat darker sexuality.

Much as I love to make the prime supporters of VFW happy, the next writer has a wish I don't think I can grant...

Chris Garcia

Say it ain't so! No more *VFW*? It's still one of the finest zines out there. Sorrow floods in from all corners!

That Brad Foster does some great robots. I think Brad's one of the great artists and specifically, I love his robots. It's a fine cover for the last regular issue.

And that's very sad to say. I might need to go and buy some candy beans to take my mind off of losing *VFW*.

The reviewing of fanzines is an interesting thing. It's hard to understand why someone would avoid it, though I understand the hobby aspect. There are good reasons to review fanzines, like giving exposure to zines that you might otherwise never hear of. That's why I enjoy The Zine Dump from Guy Lillian so much. It's introduced me to several zines I'd never have managed to get a hold of without.

The Knarley Knews is certainly not one of the worst fanzines out there. I'd rank The Drink Tank much lower than it as a handy example. The fact that we get stuff from Terry Jeeves in every issue alone is enough for me. It's a different kind of zine, there's no question, and it's a fine example of that type. Describing what exact kind it is is probably above my pay-level, but I know it when I see it.

I miss Forry. He was a big influence on me (He's the reason I got into the whole Museum thing) and he was the one I always thought of as The First Fan. I talked to him at LACon in 2006 and it was one of the more important conversations I had during that con. It was just one of those things where you make that connection and discover that no matter what, we're all fans, regardless of age. One of the harder things about being a slightly younger fan these days is that you end up having a fair number of friends who pass away. The good thing is that there are still others around who can tell you about the old days, about how we got here. That's a gift, and one I hope we can keep receiving for some time.

I would totally get my PhD in Fannish Studies at Stanford, since the programme at Harvard, the Stanford of the East, has stronger ties to NESFA, the organization which will be a part of the great Trans-Continental War that will be started when BASFA annexes LASFS.

Sounds like a hell of a shindig y'all had. I recently started writing an issue of Claims Department about my visit out there in early 2006. I had such a great time. I must return and bask in the glow of the Vegrants at some point. Sadly, time never seems to be enough. I can't even manage to get things done for SNAPS mailings!



The point on blogs is both true and false. There are millions of blogs and many of them have almost no readers. But if you look at the blogs that are regularly maintained by people in a fandom (and it doesn't matter what fandom it is), they tend to draw much larger followings. LJ has strong proof of that. On the other hand, Social Networking sites are bigger today than ever, and the weirdest thing is that every-time a new one becomes a big deal, everyone who was on the last big network flips over (MySpace in this case) and a new corral of people show up. That's why Facebook is so much bigger than any other network in the past. It's kinda scary the number of people on there.

I loved *The Wrestler*. Was it the best wrestling movie ever? Well, I gotta rewatch *Night & The City*, but I'm pretty sure it'll stand up as the winner. Mickey Rourke was great. He really managed to translate his own career failings into the character of The Ram. I thought that Marisa Tomei probably gave the best performance of her career, and that Todd Berry, the market manager, was perfectly cast. I'm used to him in dead-pan comedic roles, so this was a wonderful twist of that station. The scene of The Ram fighting Necro Butcher was hard to take, but it reminded me of hanging out after an ECW in the mid-1990s and seeing what those guys had put themselves through. The business is both a drug and a religion, as my friend Rosa, who's going through the APW training right now, puts it in her MySpace blog. It makes you feel good when you hear the crowds scream, and it convinces you that the audience is a Higher Power. *The Wrestler* captures that perfectly.

The Second Fannish Revolution brings up a lot of thoughts. Looking at the realities of fandoms today, there's no such thing as an island anymore. The river runs through everything. It's easy for me because I don't compartmentalize my fandoms, they're all a part of the things I do and I don't try to keep one from the other. Sci Fi, wrestling, zines, video games, Film Festivals, Crime novels, computer stuff, television, it's all a part of my fandom and they all exist at the same time. It might be why I like WorldCons so much, because they're all there. Then again, if I go to a CorFlu, it's all there too, but in smaller numbers. In any case, all fandoms are built on the same thing: conversations, and whether they take place on-line, in print, or in person, it's all the same.

It's hard to say goodbye. VFW was certainly one of the reasons I struck out to do *The Drink Tank*. It was certainly why SF/SF was started. In the biggest picture, eFanzines.com has certainly changed over the last four years. There've been more zines, more people in those zines, and an explosion of interest in eZines. It's very obvious when you go to a con and people who have no contact with fanzine fandom will actually be talking about *Time & Again* or eI. Part of what made that all possible was VFW exploding on the scene and those magical years of 2005 and 2006.

I'm gonna miss VFW.

Arnie: I'm going to miss VFW, too, Chris. It is very hard to walk away from a fanzine as successful as VFW, but I just felt it was time. And this being Fandom, I felt free to indulge my feelings, whims and idle thoughts.

THAT LOC
IS A RE-RUN
FROM 1988



My new fanzine will give me a platform not too dissimilar to this one, but without some of the editorial baggage. I expect almost all columnists and contributors to make the jump with me, so there'll be a good deal of continuity .

Al Sirous

Thanks, Arnie -- will read and LoC. (I think the last time I did that was for the final *OUTWORLDS*.)

As to me, well, I sort of fell out of fandom in the mid '80's after about ten years of craziness. I was ever more involved with online development and it fascinated me. Plus I was having a bit of success with writing. But time passes and things change... I have been very lucky in my life for the most part, and I really do live in a pretty determinedly crea-

tive way, playing music, writing and doing art. About to start painting again after a few years off due to post-divorce fucked-uppedness and dismay. I mostly am still living like I always did: just being as creative as I can be in as many arenas as possible without really caring much what anyone else thinks. Somehow I have gotten by without making too many compromises. All I know is, the energy flows through me and I am helpless to resist. It feels too good to stop!

Arnie: It's good to have you back, Al. I hope we'll see a further resurgence as you become acclimated to Core Fandom as it exists today.

One of my oldest friends and a multi-time contributor to VFW weighs in with some cogent comments about "The Wrestler."

Bill Kunkel

Nice run on *VFW*.

Yes, *The Wrestler* was marvelous, but you nailed the one weak spot. Aronofsky was so intent on depicting the downbeat side of Randy's life that he missed what could have been a great scene -- The Ram being recognized by old wrestling fans and given the star treatment again at that signing would have produced an elegant contrast with the rest of his existence.

I still think Rourke will show at WM25 after he wins the Oscar and esp if he doesn't.

Looking forward to the new fanzine. Let me know if you run out of my cartoons at any point and want more. Also, if anyone else in the Vegnants wants some cartoons I've been



drawing again since it helps my eyesight somewhat to practice. I can't draw as well, but I never could draw well, so at least the cartoons have to be funny.

Arnie: I'm sure you're right that Mickey Rourke will be among the celebrities at WrestleMania 25. Now that the awards shows are past Rourke may re-think his decision not to work as a wrestler on the show. I thought, and still do think, that was a good career decision, but it might be hard for the actor to resist the chance to make real life imitate art.

Randy Byers

Well, it's been a good, long run, eh? It's been a while since I wrote you a LOC, so I guess I better loc *VFW* again before it's too late.

Your article on why you don't write fanzine reviews is interesting. Just after I read it, I read a column about clubhouse conflict on the Seattle Mariners baseball team in which some players perceive the Japanese player, Ichiro Suzuki, as selfish and stand-offish. Robert Whiting, who wrote a book about Japanese baseball culture, is quoted on the differences between the Japanese and the American view of players:

"Japanese players talk much less than Americans. Americans expect people to voice their own opinions and express themselves freely. MLB players are always spouting off to the press.

"But in Japan, it's the opposite. You have to rein in your feelings to maintain harmony. At the same time, it's also a way to keep from having to form an opinion or putting yourself on the spot."

The idea of reining in your feelings to maintain harmony reminded me of your comment that you don't want to review fanzines honestly lest you bruise someone's feelings. I agree that because fanzines are a hobby and not a profession, the rules for reviewing are a little different. You don't necessarily need to judge a fanzine good or bad, but rather you need to engage with what it's trying to say, while perhaps also offering advice or perspective that may help future efforts. It's more like a conversation than a critique.

But I haven't written many fanzine reviews myself, because I've never discovered my own voice in the form. Probably the best fanzine review column I've seen in my relatively brief career in fanzines was Andy Hooper's *Fanzine Countdown* in *Apparatchik*, which did a good job of grappling with what each fanzine was trying to do and where it fit in the contemporary fannish ecosystem. It always felt like you came away from one of his columns with a perspective on fandom as much as on a passel of fanzines.

The perspective on fandom expressed in "The 2nd Fannish Revolution" is pretty alien to me, probably because I entered fandom after the revolution so I don't feel any nostalgia for the older form of fandom. To me it's just something I read about, while the revolution (if that's what it was) is what I live. On the other hand, I do get the feeling that folks ten or more years younger than me see fandom differently than I do, too. To them I'm an orthodox figure. So it goes! The revolution continues.

Best wishes for your next fanzine endeavor. I look for-

ward to seeing what form it takes. Thanks also for publishing a number of my pieces in *VFW*. I appreciated being given another forum in which to express my views, for better or worse.

Arnie: I can't imagine reviewing fanzines, or anything else, less than honestly. I just don't have time to lie. On the other hand, as you note in your letter, it's a hobby; peppering fanzine editors with undiluted criticism doesn't seem like a fair return for being sent the fanzine.

Andy Hooper also wrote fanzine reviews for *Crifanac*, which Ken Forman and I co-edited. I think my favorite fanzine review column was "Wailing Wall" in *Void* by the pseudonymous Franklin Ford, and "Happy Benford Fanzine Chatter" in several different *Katzines*.

And here he is, armed with some pleasing words for Joyce, me and *VFW*...

Greg Benford

I read the last *VFW* with pleasure. I've read them all -- maybe a megaword! -- and liked them. It's great fun to keep up with the motley momentum of Vegas fandom.

Sorry you're not going to continue -- but I'm betting you can't stay on the wagon long. I have -- fanzine free for near 50 years! -- but imbibe by writing for them, which I hold is a limited sin, a dwarf addiction.

Fandom needs continuity, and stalwarts such as you and Joyce are its true core.

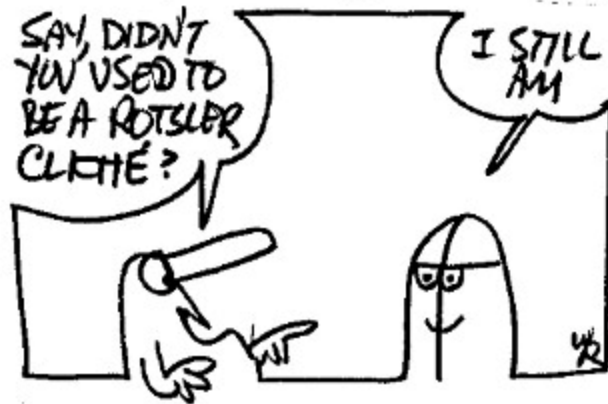
Arnie: Whenever someone says something like that about us, I am immediately reminded of an Ian Hunter song lyric, "you're not the chain, you're just a link." If Joyce and I have contributed something to Fandom, it just goes toward balancing the scales of everything we have gotten through participation in this subculture. Fandom is riddled with flaws and things that could stand improvement, but I'll still cast my lot with it.

Bringing with him a permutation of the Terry Carr line comes one of *VFW*'s most prolific UK contributors -- and perhaps the best new fan of the last five years.,

Peter Sullivan

So, 113 issues? Let me be the 113th person to do the "that's not too many" reference...

Your point about the high quality of today's fanzines (even if only just from a technical and production point of view) is, I think, a valid one. What we lack in these Latter Days of the Fandom-Formerly-Known-as-Fanzine-Fandom is not the top-level high-quality fanzines, but the crudzines of yore. Some might feel that this is a good thing, but even crudzines have their place in the fannish eco-system. As you say, the risk is that people will feel that unless they can match the quality and production values of a Banana Wings or Prolapse, that they shouldn't even try. And a fanzine produced by someone who'd never seen another fanzine before would be, well, a bit like the first issue of *Quip*, I'm guessing. I, of course, have done my part, by making sure that all my minor fanzine excursions (FAFIA, Virtual Tucker Hotel, etc.) fully fit the traditional fannish crudzine mould (or



should that be mold?).

I never met Forrest J. Ackerman, but his reputation was such that even as a mundane, I had heard of him. Whilst there are several former science fiction fen whose obits have in the past (and will in the future) make the BBC website, most of these will be for their other activities (mainly pro writing). 4SJ is probably the only person who will ever get a BBC obit *for* being a science fiction fan. Which sums up his importance for our sub-culture pretty well.

Teresa's insistence on calling her instrument a fiddle rather than a violin reminds me of the old, old joke:

Q) What's the difference between a violin and a fiddle
A) Nobody gets mad if you spill beer on a fiddle.

Gosh, an awful lot of Katzenjammers this time. Is this the result of you trying to use up pre-written stuff? Does this imply that the next Katz project won't feature op-ed pieces? And what could that project be? It can't be the proposed Worldcon bid for Las Vegas in 2013, since (with Reno now pretty much a shoo-in for 2011), you would actually be falling foul of the eligibility criteria. Which is, I'm sure, a tremendous regret to both you and that former Worldcon co-chair you know.

Arnie: I'd say that 113 issues may not be too many, but 114 issues is probably Enough. I promise, you'll hardly know I've gone when I will be back.

I'm not against high numbers for fanzines. I'm against them for my fanzines. It's self-image or something equally vain and preposterous. High numbers are great for some fanzines; I think I ought to make my statement in 30 issues or so and then go on to something else.

Neofen may find crudzines more approachable, less daunting. Even as they are rightly repulsed by the fanzine, they say to themselves, "I can do that -- and even better!".

If crudzines are missing, then is it not up to us, the experienced fans, to provide them? You, Peter, aren't well-suited to the task of producing crudzines nor, I like to hope, am I. I think we should leave it to the experts, guys who've been producing crudzines for decade like that Welch guy. Maybe we could achieve the desired result by distributing thousands of crudzines at "big tent" conventions.

You know, now that I write it out, that doesn't sound so good. It sounds a little like Seth Johnson's *Fanzine Clearing*

House. Oh well.

The penultimate ChatBack contribution comes from a fan who has certainly added a lot to this column over the last four years...

Lloyd Penney

And now...the end is near...we have to face...the final curtain... Thank you for what will be 114 issues of a great zine. 114? That's not too many, Meyer...but I guess it's enough. Here are comments on issue 113 of VFW.

John Purcell has written fanzine reviews for you, and I've tried my best to write fanzine reviews for him. Reviews like this are subjective, and I am not the most objective reviewer. I'm not about to call a modern fanzine a piece of crap; I like zines too much, and as others have said, it's nigh on to impossible to create a crudzine unless you try hard. I also have my doubts that if we were to be as positive as possible and offer constructive criticism on a zine, we effect some changes in it. We'd be as likely told to MYOB, it's my zine. I do feel that zine lists are more valuable, mostly because it's good to know what's out there, and to keep the interest vital, we should get the zines and read them and make quality judgments ourselves. KTF reviews did little if anything to build the interest, and as you've written here, just



created bruised feelings. We're here to enjoy ourselves and enjoy the efforts of others.

Another reminder that Forry is gone. It comes to us all, but his death is another reminder that the familiar world, the fandom, the science fiction that we know and hold around us, is crumbling yet further. I've been in communication with John D'Eall, an 80s Toronto fan who's been doing some effects work in Hollywood, and has been a member of Forry's entourage, one of his helpers and from what he says, the Ackermimansion's electrician. It's getting close to three months since Forry passed away; I know of LASFS's honours toward him, but I wonder what further plans they have to remember him. Could we get a webcam into that Enchanted Convention?

Fan history, like any other history, is mostly subjective, probably full of nonsense and propaganda, and honoured as the Real Thing. It's written by the victors, not the vanquished, and yet, we have different versions written by fans with different perspectives, and we've fought our wars over them. Fanzine history in books was fine, but there were only so many copies available, and so many fans would purchase the book, and in they'd go into their collections, never to see light again. With the Web, the book could be the centre of a webpage, and everyone could read it. (Some fans like to lord it over neofen because of their superior knowledge...this advantage will soon be gone.) I just hope that, as in this piece, there's people fifty years from now that might have even a shadow of a clue about what we're doing here and now.

One good thing you've done for LV fandom, Arnie, is bring in and welcome new people, to see if they fit into this fandom contraption. Sure, some people have come and gone, but at least they were welcomed and given the chance.

Interesting there is the perception that there's a decline in interest in blogs and social interest sites. LiveJournal is lagging, Facebook is fading? Guess people will have to (shudder) actually talk to one another. Give me facetime over Facebook any day. My own career in fan writing took a reverse angle; I started in apas, but moved to fanzines because I wanted to write for a larger audience. Maybe a couple of hundred readers as opposed to the 35 or so in the apa...you have to start somewhere.

Seeing the Oscars were on the other night, should Mickey Rourke have gotten that Best Actor Oscar, or was Sean Penn the right choice?

The last page. This issue and the first issue are quite different, and probably had different foci. As you say, it's been a good run, and for fandom and fanac to stay interesting, it has to be freshened every so often. Thank you for this lengthy run, and whatever your new project may be, fire it my way, and I will respond. I look forward to the letterzine, issue 114, and who knows, you might get a loc on that issue, too.

Arnie: I see a distinction between our Fandom, which is Core Fandom, and the much larger and more amorphous group of thousands of con attendees. The fate of that mass movement may well be linked to the strength or weakness of the science fiction field going forward, but I don't see it having much effect on Core Fandom.

After all, science fiction is just one fan-literary topic in a subculture that has embraced the widest possible range of subjects. I've gone 114 issues and I doubt there's enough SF content to fill even 1% of the pages.

Science Fiction is a fine subject, but I can live without it. Most of Core Fandom's recent additions are people who are not wedded to Scientifiction and I don't see that trend reversing itself as the genre dwindles.

Let's hear it for one of British Fandom's premier writers and publishers, back in this column after too long an absence.

Claire Brialey

It's a long time since I sent you a letter of comment. So long that when I last wrote I was commenting about all the post-Corflu Silver material that was being published, and now we're just back from Corflu Zed and we've learned that Corflu will be coming to the UK again next year

But now I learn that you're concluding the *VFW* project I had to write in response to it one last time. 113 issues is a remarkable endeavour by any measure; but to do that in four years, and with the transformation you've made from those early parish-magazine-of-Las-Vegas-fandom issues, seems particularly laudable.

One particular failure of response on my part that's been weighing on my mind is about #109, on numbered fandoms. It was useful also to see subsequent comments and clarifications from Robert Lichtman and Sandra Bond in particular, but I don't think that detracts from your work on this overall – quite the contrary, since it continues the process of refining it. Your essay was fascinating reading. But it gradually dawned on me that it felt rather like reading about politics in the US or Australia: interesting in its own right, and very relevant to people I know in those countries, and really quite illuminating in explaining both historical events and continuing movements within their social context – but not really much that seems to be directly about my own community or its history. Rather than binding 'our' fandom together, it made me feel all the more that your Core Fandom and my overlapping circles of fannish/fanzine/British fandom are co-existing and overlapping in turn, but are really not quite the same thing. Thus the numbered fandoms with their golden thread back to 1933 or even 1928 that you described and then extended forwards occasionally interacted with the British fandom that I know but did not wholly include it, even at those moments when a British fanzine was significant; again, it's very like reading about American political history and coming across occasional references to British Prime Ministers who exist only for a brief moment in the narrative during which they do something relevant to the US story – but then finding that what I've been reading is intended as a history of the English-speaking world

But this isn't intended as a criticism or a rejection of what you've done, or a statement of alienation or anything daft like that. It doesn't have to be all about me to be still, at least partly, for me. I thought both your factual updating and your more subjective theorising were truly interesting and

valuable contributions to the scholarship of fannish history; and we have sufficient shared roots and current points of connection, I think – I hope – that much of what you described is still relevant to and for my own fannish context.

I think it also shows how *VFW* has in some ways, as Robert Lichtman commented in one of his letters in #113, been a focal point fanzine of its time. I wouldn't agree that we could claim to share that distinction with you, but I appreciate that thought too.

I've also just written to John Purcell, partly about the conversation between the two of you that he reported in *Askance* #12, and which has inevitably continued on into the letter column in his latest issue, and that you also referenced in your first 'Katzenjammer' column in *Vegas Fandom Weekly* #113. Personally, I agree with you up to a point – and that's what I said to John too; in this case, I agree that fanzines can and should usefully be critiqued

But I am wet and weedy and the sort of person who finds points of agreement with both people having a lively argument, which leads me on to a point I've made before which is that I actively dislike negative reviewing when it's done in public as a form of entertainment for everyone else. It's not that I think that reviewing and criticism is intrinsically unfair for a hobby pursuit, but rather that I question



both the purpose for which and the tone in which fanzine reviewing is sometimes done. You wrote: ‘...the reviewer has a duty to give the best possible judgement about the fanzines he or she critiques.’ I presume that you mean that they need to write the fairest, most well-judged review they can, rather than that they should do everything they can to say the most positive things possible; even here I want to steer a middle course between those two possibilities, since I prefer reviews to focus on the good, the positive, the things that can be actively recommended to other people, and leave unmentioned the things that cannot, but not to exaggerate the good bits. To do that, of course, a reviewer needs to be able to cover a lot of the field since otherwise it’s unclear what’s been left out because (s)he can’t recommend it and what because there was no time or space to address it.

The thing here is that I probably want to be loved too – although I’m quite certain I am not lovable; I’m far too grumpy for that – and what sticks in my mind is how unloved bad reviews make me feel. As you say, delving into the imperfections of a fanzine may inflict pain on the editor in question. And, also as you say, personal relationships are part of this, whether influencing the original reviews or being affected by reactions to them. Personally, I even suspect that constructive criticism is an oxymoron, although maybe I’m just very bad at taking advice myself. Since I’m an oversensitive little flower, negative letters of comment make me feel nearly as unhappy as a searing review; but at least with letters sent to me direct I get to choose how much of the withering criticism I expose to the rest of my readership, fannish acquaintance, and people whose whole view of me may now be shaped by some other didactic fan’s opinion, and indeed when that happens. It isn’t sitting in a fanzine waiting to ambush me.

That said, I’m rather hoping that *Banana Wings* can return to carrying fanzine reviews in future (not by me), not least for the purpose of considering and discussing what’s happening in fanzines that should be of greater interest to fans. We shall have to see whether this presents me with my own philosophical or editorial dilemmas.

Meanwhile, congratulations on *VFW* and very best wishes for all your future fannish (and indeed other) endeavours. I have at least two fanzines from you in my email already, even before the closing *VFW* Chatback issue, so I presume that bodes well. And since there’s no time like the present, let me take the opportunity to say to all of the Actifan Element that I enjoyed *Home Kookin’* #1; very well-constructed fannish conversation (and I loved the way Tee brought it back round to your tilting-at-windmills comment at the end). The mood it conveyed reminded me a lot of conversations with a bunch of Croydon fans sitting around our dining table with beer and cheese, just riffing off one another for a few hours. I shall take comfort that it is still possible to get by if we have to miss a Corflu, and hope that Winchester works for at least some of you next year.

Arnie: Thank you for the kind words about the “Numbered Fandoms Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory.” As noted in the title, this is a theory, one of many possible ways to analyze and explain the history of our subculture. It

would be highly disingenuous for me to revise the theory as propounded by other fanhistorians without giving fans the same opportunity to fine-tune mine.

As far as VFW being the focal point — and let’s remember that the term doesn’t necessarily mean the “best” fanzine — I think fanhistory will have its verdict a few years down the road when fans can look back and evaluate this era. I purposely stopped the narrative in my mammoth article so that I would not repeat the error of commentators who have tried to analyze events that were still unfolding.

There’s a tear on my Sensitive Fannish Face as I beat the drums for the Final Letter. And who is more entitled to close ChatBack for the last time than the fan who has been an inspiration and a support since the very beginning...

Robert Lichtman

When I read in the cover e-mail that conveyed *VFW* No. 113 to me that it was the last issue, I got a little depressed. But then I read on the last page that you were going to begin another fanzine similar in nature but with a less evocative title immediately after the wrap-up all-letters issue, and my gloom lifted. Also, a question arose: If one writes a letter commenting on the all-letters issue, will it be orphaned or will it see publication in the first issue of your new fanzine?

Despite being entirely by you, this was a pretty good issue. Regarding your first article, I don’t review fanzines anymore, either. When I first got into fandom in 1958, some of my earliest activity was writing fanzine reviews. The initial issue of my first genzine, *Psi-Phi*, had short reviews of some of the relative handful of fanzines I’d received up to that point. (I’d been in fandom for less than six months when the publishing bug struck.) I had another column in the second issue, but discontinued the practice when enough to fill an issue without my resorting to that tactic began materializing. My reviews showed up again in some of the early revival issues of the LASFS’s *Shangri-L’Affaires* and I may have written them for other unremembered fanzines as well, but eventually I gave them up altogether.

Since getting back into fandom I’ve had a number of requests to do a fanzine review column, but with one exception I’ve declined them all. I had an invitation from Randy Byers and Andy Hooper to review fanzines for *Chunga*, though, and a column appeared in its second issue. In it I wrote about one paper fanzine (Ray Nelson’s *Uncle Smiley’s Bookcase*) and one electronic one (the late John Foyster’s *eFnac*), focusing on a number of issues in order to convey each fanzine’s sweep of interests and obsessions. It was a difficult exercise, drew little or no response, and I decided not to continue.

I’m well familiar with the concept you outline here that “people pursuing a hobby shouldn’t be graded on their performance.” A few years ago, as you may recall, there was a big hue and cry in support of that view initiated mostly by people whose fanzines had been judged and found wanting by fanzine reviewers. But I’m with you (and Laney in an article he wrote on his own “Fanzine Scope” column criteria) on this: if a fanzine doesn’t measure up by the normal stan-

dards of literacy, interesting subject material, and decent execution (and with electronic fanzines the latter isn't difficult—the days of illegible mimeo are thankfully far behind us—although some still manage it against all odds via bad organization and unattractive format), it *should* be brought to the producer's attention. But there's a balance to be struck, as you suggest. Is it really worth it to completely savage someone's fanzine publishing efforts and win their undying enmity, especially since like you I have no plans to leave fandom and will have to live with the fallout from such a review. It should be possible to be both candid and helpful, and if someone still thinks your review is mean-spirited the problem may be theirs.

I receive a lot of fanzines, although not all of them (does anyone?), but I don't routinely download and check out everything that's available through efanzines. Why? It's a matter of time, there simply not being enough of it to keep up with *all* fanzines and the other aspects of fanac in which I *do* wish to participate. So I've established and maintained priorities and limitations, even though now and then I suspect I could be missing out on something good. So I suppose there could be a worse genzine than your example of *The Knarley Knews*, but because I don't delve into all corners of the fanzine universe I'll never know. (And for the record, I don't find Henry's fanzine to be all that dire—mostly, I have problems getting interested in some of what his contributors write about, but Henry's own contributions are often pretty interesting.) The main effect of not seeing as high a percentage of fanzines as I used to is that I no longer feel competent to edit a best-of-year fanthology. As you know, I did three in a row back in the '90s—and before them, was not shy about providing lists of my favorite fanzine material to the editors of others.

In your memorial piece to Forry you write, "Forry was the man who started the hobby we know today as science fiction fandom." On the "street" level that's certainly true, but I always think that it was Gernsback's policy of printing the full name and address of contributors to *Amazing's* letter column that made fandom possible. You're certainly right that he was "the first real media fan." Looking at the contents of many fanzines from the early days, it's almost a rarity *not* to find one with one of those "scientific" reviews in it. For instance, in a just concluded eBay auction an issue of *Science Fiction Digest* from 1932 contains his "Late Scientificinema" column (and how's that for a mouthful!?).

You write that "he manifested his editorial skill by taking the letter column of a defunct LASFS clubzine *Imagination*, and turning it into one of the most popular fanzines of the mid 1940's, *VoM* (*Voice of the Imagination*)." It should be noted here that Forry was also the editor of *Imagination* and that *VoM* began just two months after *Madge* folded. Also, its primary period of publication was 1939 to 1945, covering the entire first half of the '40s, not just the mid '40s. (There were two issues after that, one apiece in 1946 and 1947.) But none of this detracts from its general fabulousness, especially in the way it served as a link between the fans in service during WW2 and the ones who remained on the home front. Another fanzine that did that, although more



restricted to British fandom, was Mike Rosenblum's *Futurian War Digest*, which was partially funded by Ackerman as described by Mike in the ninth issue:

"Most of you will be wondering somewhat, by now; so here is a little explanation. Firstly, the issue is dedicated to that truly 'top' American fan Forrest J (4e) Ackerman; who, not being satisfied with sending British fandom parcels of pro mags and copies of the Los Angeles fanzines, has sent us no less than four parcels of paper in the last month. So we decided to use most of the aforesaid paper for this particular issue of FIDO and thus conserve our own stocks, especially as the size of these sheets prevents them from 'mixing in' with ordinary issues. Pages 2 & 4 contain adverts for 'VoM', page 5 consists of gossip from a recent edition of that magazine which will be of great interest to most people, and page 8 is also from VoM. We thank you, Forry."

(By the way, Rob Hansen has done yeoman work in getting this fanzine on-line. Most issues are now available at <http://efanzines.com/FWD/FWD.htm>. I recommend checking them out.)

"Up To Here" was a delight, both its title and the story itself. I laughed out loud when I came across "the N3F's merger with the Republican Party," such a perfect match as both organizations are limited in their appeal to a small, mostly misinformed minority *and* have their organizational fingers and philosophies firmly up their collective butts. Elsewhere, I wondered if "Calvin W. *Buff* Demmon" was

a typo or a sign of incorrect memory of the earlier fandom. And I shuddered a little bit at “I could only wonder what might be stored on the racks of shiny silver disks if we could find some way to boot them.” This does speak to the need to continually update electronic storage media as the defaults change.

There are echoes of “Up To Here” in some parts of “The 2nd Fannish Revolution”: the idea that what you call “Reconstructed Fandom” is strikingly parallel to “the Great Expansion of 2009.”

I’d never heard of the movie, *Finding the Future*, before your article about it; but I see it has an entry on IMDB with quite an impressive list of participants. It is odd and annoying that given the people involved fandom isn’t specifically discussed. You mention Agberg, Forry and SNAPS’s own John DeChancie, but the full cast list also includes people with knowledge of fandom such as Jack Chalker, Leslie Fish, Orange Mike Lowrey and Mike Resnick. I suspect that at least some of them view fandom as some sort of science fiction cheering section that’s moved beyond mere books—a solitary thing, reading, done in private—to a large mass- and multi-media thing that translates to More Sales. In a way this is a realization, however bastardized, of the dreams of Original Fans such as Forry Ackerman to make a living from the literature they love. And given his love of “scientifilms,” how fitting that it’s media that’s fueled much of the explosion.

I have nothing to say about “A Look at ‘The Wrestler’”—this is your Other Fandom, not mine—but I much enjoyed your heavily illustrated article, “The Vegrants Celebrate.” In it, I was glad to read that JoHn Hardin’s job—the one that enabled him to move from Kingman back to Vegas—seems pretty secure, but sorry to see that “Unemployment has hit the Vegrants moderately hard.” I hope everyone lands on their feet. It was interesting to read Brenda Dupont’s view that the internet may no longer be the “in” thing. I haven’t noticed “the decline in blogs and social meeting sites” you mention—on the contrary, from what I’ve read the latter continue to sign up mass quantities—but I can see that there’s a point of diminishing returns on blogs since if one is *really* going to have an interesting one a choice has to be made between Real Life and constantly updating and maintaining the blog. The study that “pegged the average readership at seven” is an eye-opener. Since that’s an average, it would imply that there are some blogs that are read by no one other than their creator. In many cases, that’s as it should be.

It’s been a good run, Arnie. As you know, I’ve printed out every issue. Filing this one away, I took along a ruler. The entire run makes a stack five and half inches tall.

Arnie: How do you know it’s a less evocative title until you know what the title is? I thought Vegas Fandom Weekly was a good name, but it has an “official” sound that I won’t be sad to leave behind. Unless you’re just sick of getting fancrap from me on a frequent basis, the new zine should ameliorate your depression at least a little.

Wrestling is not my “Other Fandom,” Robert. I don’t get involved with wrestling fandom at all. I do a daily col-

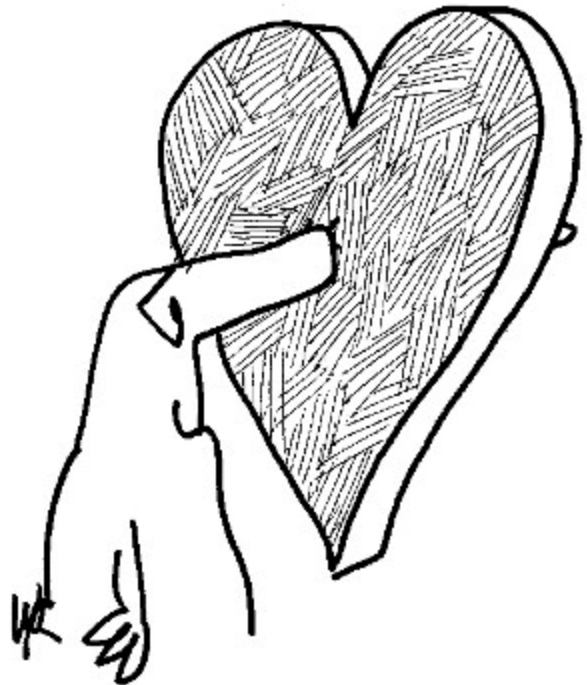
umn on one of the largest websites, *OnlineWorldOfWrestling.com*. I enjoy pro wrestling, but do not get involved in any form of wrestling fandom activity. Bill Kunkel has done some things for them over the years, but once you have known Trufandom, all others pale by comparison.

You are absolutely correct; those two pieces started out as one article. I wrote about half of it, didn’t like the way it read and decided that it would work better if I didn’t try to do so much in one piece. As you saw, it ended up as a faan fiction story and an essay.

I recommend that every fan watch “*Finding the Future*,” because I think it unintentionally illuminates the situation and the potential threat that *Reconstructed Fandom* poses to *Original Fandom* if we don’t insist on our own sub-culture, our own social contract.

The film discusses Fandom a lot; it’s fanzines that are never mentioned. I’m sure Silverberg and DeChancie would’ve invoked fan literary effort as central to Fandom, but they were probably unaware that the film was angled toward the mass fad of *Reconstructed Fandom*.

WAHF: Steve Green, Joy Smith (2), Nic Farey, Tom Feller, Dick Lupoff (2), Tim Bolgeo, John Purcell (2), R. Laurraine Tutihasi, Ted White, John DeChancie, Warren Buff, Shelby Vick,



Last Hurrah

The bell tolls.

The book closes.

In the distance, a beacon glows with trufannish light.

It's time to say a farewell to *Vegas Fandom Weekly* and, especially to thank everyone who made this such a fascinating and rewarding journey.

First and foremost is my beloved wife Joyce. Though she has endured a very bad run of health over the last few years, she provided unwavering support and, more practically, a lot of proofreading. Without her timely intervention, this section would be full of inscrutable passages like: "O eant yo tell you rgar O kuce tiy."

I can't say enough about the contributors. Shelby Vick, Dick Lupoff, the late rich brown, John DeChancie, Bill Mills, Joyce (of course), JTara Wayne, ohn Purcell, Peter Sullivan, Kent Hastings, Warren Buff, Terry Kemp, Chris Garcia and so many more.

The Stalwarts, those demon letter writers who filled "ChatBack" with so much lively discussion, are every bit as important to the fanzine and dear to my heart. I felt honored to have the two most decorated letterhacks, Robert Lichtman and Lloyd Penney, write so much and so well for *VFW*, but that is not meant to slight such stellar commenters as John Purcell, Dick Lupoff, Mark Plummer, Peter Sullivan and dozens more.

Egoboo goes also to artists Brad Foster, Steve Stiles, Ross Chamberlain, Bill Kunkel, Harry Bell, Bhob Stewart, Tara Wayne, Alan White and photographers Alan White, Bill Mills, Gary Mattingly, Nic Farey and all the others who made *VFW* fun to see as well as read. I will always miss Bill Rotsler.

A big "thank you," finally, to you readers. Well, except the ones who didn't send me even one loc in 114 issues. You can correct your karma with my next fanzine. And thanks are owed to the Vegrants, a wonderful bunch of heartless bastards who keep me humble. I love you all.

I see the beacon shining on the horizon. I'm going — don't you wanna come, too? — Arnie

