

Inside Story Annish or Death!

The tradition of the special anniversary issue (annish) is over a half-century old in Fandom. Some of the most memorable single fanzine issues were the annishes of top fanzines. *Quandry*, *Vega*, *Innuendo*, *Fanac*, *Quip* and *Wild Heirs* are a few of the zines that really pulled out all the stop for mammoth issues to mark publishing milestones. Sometimes, unfortunately they also marked the temporary or permanent gaffiation of the perpetrator when the work involved burned out their enthusiasm in one super-nova-like eruption.

When I began to realize that I would, in fact, live to see the first Annish, I began to think about what might go into such a publication. I considered putting together a 100-page extravaganza with BNF contributions from both the living and dead, but that didn't seem quite right this time. If I make it through a second year that might be a possibility.

Instead I decided on a blend of new material about the fanzine along with reprints of some of the most entertaining non-news material *VFW* has published in its inaugural year. So you'll find a lengthy behind-the-scenes article about *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, an index to the first year and some articles and columns you may have missed.

It has been one hell of a year. I can't wait to see what the next one will bring.

— Arnie

November is still a warm month in Las Vegas, a time when the hardy try to do without a windbreaker and the young moms still venture forth to impress the world in short-shorts.

It was November, 2004 when I started to think about what eventually became *Vegas Fandom Weekly*. Despite the mild weather, there was a chill in Las Vegas Fandom.

Local Fandom was sinking ever faster in a slide that began in the late 1990's. Tom & Tammy Springer, Ken & Aileen Forman, Marc Cram and Karl Kreder all moved out of town and some formerly active Vegas fans like Laurie Kunkel, Peggy Burke Kurilla, Marcy & Ray Waldie, Ron & Raven Pehr and Marcie McDonald gaffiated or reduced their activity.

Local events were scarce and actual fanac had become just about non-existent. SNAFFU drew a handful of fans to its two monthly meetings and

the club had largely lost its connection to the rest of Fandom.

Las Vegants continued to meet, but the group wasn't nearly as large or as active as in the mid-1990's. Corflu Blackjack, chaired by Ken Forman and Ben Wilson, sparked a lot of activity, but the Wilsons' departure to California's Inland Empire in 2004 negated any boost from the convention.

Joyce and I talked about the state of Vegas Fandom. She suggested that I publish some kind of local newszine. She suggested it several times, in fact, before I agreed to try something. Fanhistorians please note that Joyce Katz, instigator of *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, lined me up for all the work. (I fooled her; she ended up proofreading the entire run, except for the issues that came out

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VFW is free by request — and you may get it anyway. It can be downloaded at the SNAFFU and VSFA sites as well as at efanzines.com. No celebrating fanzine editors were harmed during the production of this fanzine.

Member: fwa. Supporter: AFAL. Believer: United Fans of Vegas; Toner II in 2006! Vegas Westercon in '08

FM Busby: The 'Beat' Goes On **Katzenjammer**

I enjoyed FM Busby's science fiction, especially his paradox-laden time travel series. It may seem odd to say this about the author of 20 novels, but I never think of him that way. I knew him so long as the number one fan in the Pacific Northwest that it's hard not to think of him solely in that way despite his late-in-life eminence as an SF writer.

I encountered Buz — fans speculated about those initials, until dogged harassment unearthed "Francis Marion" — on paper before I met him in person. I entered Fandom in 1963, by which time Cry had become



a legend. He and his cohorts did a few more issues, but my main contact with Buz came in the Spectator Amateur Press Association (SAPS). He was a star on a very strong and active roster, so I got to read a lot of his stuff and exchanged many mailing comments with him.

We got along so well that he let me turn a particularly interesting letter into a column for Excalibur, which Lenny Bailes and I published in our neofan days. We were so elated that, when John Berry (the one in England, not my old friend John D. Berry of Seattle) sent us an article, too, and the late Ed Cox also volunteered a column, it emboldened us to fold Excalibur and begin our first good fanzine, Quip. It was probably fortunate that I didn't yet have enough knowledge of Fandom at that time to realize the enormity of my presumption in asking him for a column; he had authored columns that scored heavily in the

annual Fanac Poll for both Cry and Aphorreta. He produced columns regularly over Quip's 13-issue life.

It was Buz who introduced me to a man who became like a second father to me, Charles Burbee. Since it happened at the 1965 Westercon in Long Beach, CA, he could have introduced me to Alan White, who was attending his first convention. He probably spared Alan years of fan artistic toil.

My next face-to-face meeting with Buz occurred at the Baycon, the 1968 worldcon at the Claremont Hotel on the border between Berkeley and San Francisco. The counter-culture was at an all-time high (and so were most of us), so the con committee hired three rock bands and a light show.

I saw Joyce, her eyes as big as saucers, peering in every direction for a friendly face in all the sonic and visual fury. She was not yet the High Priestess, of course, but we were already buddies and, besides, she looked incredibly hot.

So I chatted with her, trying to seem infinitely hip. I felt a nudge and realized that a skinny little plastic hippie was trying to inject himself into the conversation. He came complete with oversized neck medallion and a huge nimbus of unruly curly hair. He kept pushing his way between Joyce and me. I didn't want a confrontation, so I contented myself

with partially successful attempts to close any gap to keep him from getting in the way.

Things went along like this, with me subtly fending off the increasingly offensive intrusions. The hippie just smiled vacantly, flashed an occasional piece sign and just kept pushing. Finally, my frustration sparked a little temper. I turned toward him, ready to blow him away with a stinging verbal blast, when he yanked off the hair to reveal a smiling, bald FM Busby! We laughed and made room for him in the conversation, once he promised to ditch the wig.

— Arnie

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Katzenjammer Life Among the Neffers

Recently, Ruth Davidson, president of the NFFF (National Fantasy Fan Federation) had her first contact with Las Vegas Fandom. The following is written in honor of her debut.

Recent contact with N3F president Ruth Davidson prompted me to sign up for the Forum on the NFFF website. And after a little behind-the-scenes tinkering by that self-same Fan Executive, I am now able to post.

I felt a rush of that ole Sense of Wonder as I read a post by neffer Lyne Masamitsu, in which she said she'd been away from the NFFF for "a long time." I imagine her hiatus can be measured in weeks, or at least months, but it sent my mind barreling down an old, track, rusty with 40 years of disuse. That's how long it has been since my last brush with the N3F.

I joined the group in 1963 at the behest of Judi Sephton. She was the first fan who contacted me after Lenny Bailes and I used the unique strategy of publishing a fanzine to bring us to Fandom's notice after other attempts to make contact proved fruitless. (We knew Fandom was there; we just didn't know how to get in touch with it.)

Judi saw my letter in AMAZING and, just as we'd hoped, wrote us a letter and enclosed copies of her genzine and her N'APazine. So we both joined the NFFF and soon found ourselves swapping mailing comments with the likes of Bruce Pelz, Fred Patten, Roy Tackett and other N'APA luminaries of the mid-'60s.

Since I was a total neofan and knew absolutely nothing about Fandom, they made me the head of the Welcommittee so I could pass along my ignorance to the raw recruits. I resolved to not only get the Welcommittee to actual welcome new fans, but to learn enough about Fandom so that I would be able to answer questions and impart information.

My greatest achievement as Welcommittee Bureau Chief was not anything I did, but rather something I didn't do. Rick Sneary joined under the name



"R. Monroe Sneary," possibly in an attempt to recreate intentionally Charles Burbee's hilarious encounter with the N3F. (You can read it in The Incomplete Burbee).

Rick's ploy failed, because I recognized "South Gate" in his address and, paired with the name "Sneary," suggested that the new neffer in question was not a neo at all, but one of Fandom's most popular BNFs! I believe he'd actually been president of the N3F at one point and was certainly a Director for at least one term.

What I *didn't* do was welcome him to Fandom. And through the Welcommittee newsletter I'd started, I warned other Welcommittee members against doing so, too.

Maybe they thought I'd learned *too* much for the Welcommittee. The N3F Powers soon had me trying to pump life into the Correspondence Bureau. The only problem was that the Correspondence Bureau had no function not already addressed by other N3F Bureaus.

Since it sometimes seemed, in those days, that the N3F had more Bureaus than members, I suggested that the Welcommittee and Correspondence Bureaus be merged. And to avoid any incipient clash of egos, I offered to resign so that the Welcommittee Bureau Chief could assume control of the combined entity.

That shows you how much of a neofan I was. To 102 per cent neffers like Racy Higgs, Art Hayes, GM Carr and Alma Hill, any move to reduce the number of Bureaus smacked of treason. So I ceased to be Correspondence Bureau Chairman.

Actually, that was a pretty good thing. The Correspondence Bureau continued exactly as before, doing nothing, and I explored Fandom outside the N3F with very satisfying results. So it ended happily for everyone. — Arnie

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The Dear Departed

Katzenjammer

Linda Bushyager, in a recent post on one of the local listservs, brought up the many Vegas fans who did *not* attend the Las Vegas Fantasy & Science Fiction Day. It really was an outstanding event (kudos to Woody as chairman) and it struck her odd that everyone wouldn't want to be there on such a momentous day.

Linda expressed a degree of surprise that they didn't show up and suggested that they should be contacted to find out what had kept them away. This drew strong comment from Darmon Thornton and several others. There was much quoting of, "Fandom Is Just A Goddam Hobby."

I've been a fan even longer than Linda and, I must admit, I felt that way as I counted the missing at the con. Then I thought about it more and realized that there's be a difference between an active fan like me (or Linda) missing the Fantasy & Science Fiction Day and someone who is barely on the fringe of Las Vegas Fandom doing the same.

It's a matter of priorities. It has nothing to do with "being busy" or "working hard" or any of that stuff. Everyone is busy; everyone works hard; everyone has things in their lives that require attention. People make time for the things they *want* to make time for.

For various reasons, including VFW, going to local fan events has a high priority for me at the present time. Yet I can also remember times when attending such a thing ranked below other activities. Surely, we can't begrudge someone the right to a different set of priorities from ours.

Fanhistory teaches us a lot about new fans. Many rush in the front door — but many rush out the back door, too. A lot of these folks are absolutely wonderful in many ways. I was very fond of many of those who were neos about the same time as I was, but almost all have gone on to other pursuits. I miss some of those folks a lot, but it doesn't blind me to the fact that, for now at least, they are not thinking of Fandom (and former fan friends like me).

Even among those who find Fandom and stick, there's a wide range of possible levels of commitment. Most will elect to take minor roles that require rela-

tively little time and energy while others make a huge personal investment. You can't expect these two types of fans to feel the same way — and they don't.

Not, I want to assure you, that Linda was in any way saying they are bad people. Her thought, as she elaborated on it at last week's SNAFFU meeting, is that some of those very nice folks retrenched activity for transitory reasons. For example, they may have hit Vegas Fandom during its recent three-year lull and not liked the ambience. Or maybe there was so little happening at the points of contact that nothing grabbed their attention and mandated continuing involvement.

Linda has a valid point here. There may be some who simply don't know how things are developing and might possibly find the revitalized local scene more to their taste. The question is: What can be done to let

those on the fringe know what's happening?

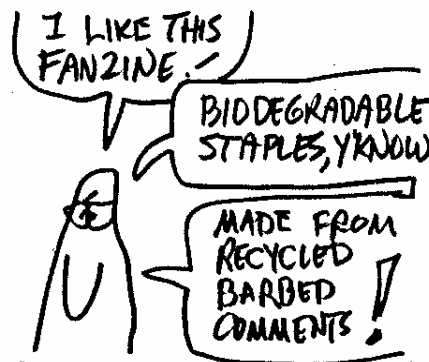
In a general way, making sure news of local events gets maximum distribution. This might mean encouraging fringe fan friends to check out *Vegas Fandom Weekly* or join one of the local listservs.

Until they have new information, they'll continue to order their priorities based on the information they have. And *that* means they'll continue to stay away.

Another thing that can be done is person-to-person contact. I remember Andy Porter seeking out Lee Hoffman at her Manhattan apartment and bringing her back to activity with the Fanoclasts after she had done almost nothing in Fandom for several years. A little personal caring and concern often produces better results than a lot of generalized cheerleading for "faanish spirit."

By all means, let's help the fine folks on the fanish fringe in LV find out what we're doing, but let's also not be too disappointed — or take it personally — if they simply don't have the interest to actually participate even when they know.

— Arnie



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It's rare to meet a neofan who, upon contacting Fandom for the first time, doesn't expect fanzines to be full of amateur science fiction and fantasy stories. It's a logical assumption that people who admire professional fiction enough to make it their hobby would also want to read and write the amateur variety.

Logical, yes, but untrue. Early fanzines sometimes ran stories that pro authors could not sell to the prozines, but the practice fell into disuse when small circulation hectographed fanzines replaced the large-circulation, lithographed ones.

Ray Bradbury published one story in a fanzine, but it was very early in his fan career — and before he sold anything. The most likely explanation is that it was a reject story and he didn't know enough to just shove it into a drawer.

Roger Zelazny also donated a rejected story to a fanzine called Thurband I. That isn't the issue number; that's the name. So Roger's story appeared in Thurband I #1.)

As he readily admitted, the story was terrible. He was both proud and embarrassed that the presence of his story in what is widely acclaimed as the worst genzine of all time, made it one of the most value fanzines of all time. The last copy sold on eBay went for over \$100!

When Lenny Bailes and I produced our first fanzine *Cursed* without benefit of seeing even one fanzine, we each wrote short amateur stories. Once we got the hang of fanzines, we stopped printing all amateur SF and Fantasy.

What changed? We learned enough about Fandom to realize that our "logical" assessment missed the mark. Once we discarded our preconceptions, the reasons why fanzines don't run amateur SF and Fantasy grew more convincing.

The basic problem with amateur SF is quality. If it's good, it ought to be printed in a professional magazine or book.

Considering how bad some professionally published SF is, why would anyone want to waste space putting it in a fanzine or waste time reading it?

This is where someone will raise the question of "overlooked gems." Such stories are theoretically possible, but it takes a very special set of circumstances for it to happen.

The first issue of Walt Willis' *Slant* printed a short-short that eventually sold professionally, proving that it was worth printing. Willis published from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and SF markets were not so numerous in Great Britain at mid-century. It's also worth noting that the story was also of the most defensible type: a parody of professional stories. There might be one or two such stories in the entire history

of Fandom. The odds are not encouraging.

Some fanzine editors champion amateur SF as a way for beginning writers to improve enough to sell professionally. That's high-minded and generous, but it doesn't jibe with reality. Writers of amateur SF and Fantasy almost never become professional science fiction authors. Ted White stunned an audience of fanzine editors at CORFLU a few years back with data gathered from a close examination of the 30-plus years of the monthly fanzine *Yandro*.

The Coulsons, probably from the motives I just mentioned, published an amateur story in every issue. Not a single author of such a story has sold. Although Buck & Juanita Coulson both sold professionally, neither "warmed up" with amateur fiction in *Yandro* or anywhere else. Even fan friends who contributed to their fanzine, like Gene Wolfe, did not write amateur fiction.

Fandom is a lot of things, for sure, but it's a lousy place to look for detailed, constructive criticism that would help a potential pro. If you want that kind of interaction, a writer's workshop or writer's group will yield much better results in far less time.

Yet fans become professional writers. Many SF and Fantasy writers, from Isaac Asimov to Steven Brust have used Fandom as a springboard to SF and Fantasy writing.

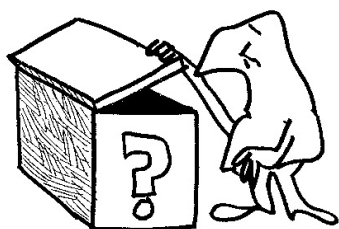
Some do little or no writing in Fandom. The RPG games hobby has generated an endless parade of pulp fantasy writers who turned their campaigns into novels. A few fans-turned-pro seem to have parallel, but separate, interests in Fandom and professional writing.

Most professional writers who've spent any time in Fandom gravitate to fanzines were they find kindred souls interested in written communication and entertainment.

And what do they write? To the chagrin of the sercon fans, they mostly write fannish articles, con reports and the like. Bob Tucker, Robert Silverberg, Greg Benford, Ted White, Joe Haldeman and Bob Shaw are just some of the many professional SF authors who learned characterizations, narrative and other fictive techniques as they recounted anecdotes about themselves and their fellow fans. (Fandom has also spawned many non-fiction writers, including Joyce, Bill Kunkel, Aileen Forman, Ross Chamberlain and JoHn Hardin.)

No one can stop you from writing or (gasp!) publishing amateur Science Fiction and Fantasy. No one can stop you from farting in public, either, but that doesn't make it a good idea,

— Arnie



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Faan Fiction... Yes! Katzenjammer

“Aha!” said James Taylor triumphantly, as though he had just caught me in a horrendous gaffe. You know, like maybe masturbating into some femme fan’s thong.

In truth, it was a passing comment I made about working on a faan fiction story. James interpreted this as a violation on my self-imposed ban on amateur science fiction and fantasy. So it is to my good friend James that the following article is dedicated.

While amateur science fiction and fantasy are generally not worth printing/posting, at least two types of fiction are legitimate fodder for fanzines.

The first is the parody or pastiche. Alice in Blunderland, by P. Schuyler Miller (known to a half-century of *Astounding/Analog* readers as a book reviewer) is one of the earliest examples of this kind of colossal in joke. Others of note include Lin Carter’s “Kiss the Blood” series of pastiches for Richard & Patricia Lupoff’s Xero and Joyce Katz’s A Tom with No Ease for Wild Heirs.

A particular type of satire acquired the name “Brandonization” in honor of its most celebrated practitioner, Carl Joshua Brandon Jr. The BArea BNF, who turned out to be the fabrication of Terry Carr, Ron Ellik, Pete Gramham and Dave Rike in the mid-to-late 1950’s, specialized in transposing the elements of mainstream literature into fan-ish terms to humorous effect.

Carl wrote numerous such stories, the best-known of which are “Cacher of the Rye,” “The BNF of Iz” and “The Purple Pastures.” Terry wrote some faan fiction under his own byline, too, including a couple of versions of “Night of the Living Oldpharts.” (One mentioned Joyce and me, then gafiated.)

The second, and much more common, exception is faan fiction, meaning fiction about fans and Fandom. It is acceptable in fanzines because it is totally non-commercial and has a direct connection to Fandom.

The genre goes back to the 1930’s, when fans like Sam Moskowitz did little stories about the vicissitudes of fanac. Charles Burbee’s “Big Name Fan” and “I Was Captain of a Spaceship” satirized Fandom’s pomposity, while Walt Willis and Bob Shaw’s The Enchanted Duplicator instructed and inspired.

TED has inspired no fewer than three sequels. Walt Willis and James White produced *Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator to the Enchanted Convention*, Rob Hansen penned a modern restatement called *Redemption* and I produced *Beyond the Enchanted Convention to the Netherregional* as a bit of a laugh at the whole idea.

In the mid-1950’s, John Berry (then of Belfast, Northern Ireland) combined his personal experiences as a police detective and fingerprint expert with his love of the BBC

comedy show “The Goons,” and a good deal of talent to create Goon Bleary, head of the Goon Defective Agency.

Bleary — the name was a corruption of Berry’s moniker, taken from a messily written envelope addressed to him — used his detective skills to solve the crimes of Fandom. The humorous detective yarns swept through Fandom, propelled by the bimonthly fanzine *Retribution* (co-edited by Arthur Thomsom), and soon Berry was letting other fans open branches of the GDA and tell their own stories.

In January, 1996, Las Vegrants published *Trufan Detective Magazine (Wild Heirs 12.5)* with new and reprinted fan-ish mysteries. My contribution was the first in a projected series that paid homage to the Goon stories of 35 years earlier. My hero, Andre Kasino, used his experience as a criminal to bring justice to Fandom.

Marion Zimmer Bradley’s faan fiction embodied a radically different approach. She wrote serious stories designed to illuminate the fannish condition. My favorite, “Way Out West in Texas,” is the poignant account of a youngish male fan and a slightly older female one who grow close as correspondents only to find that their supposed close relationship disintegrates when they meet face to face.

Bradley’s stories weren’t meant to be funny or generate laughs. Her goal was to write serious fiction in a fan setting. Kent Moomaw was another who appeared to share her goal with a long short story, “The Adversaries,” that dissected a fan feud. James White made even hardened fans shed tears with “The Exorsists of IF,” a story that evokes the glory days of Irish Fandom as its ghosts play ghoomdinton in the attic of 180 Upper Newtownards Road (Walt & Madeleine Willis’s home) shortly before its demolition. My own stories along these lines include ones about prejudice in Fandom and another about a fan whose friends find out he works for the FBI.

Ted White didn’t invent faan fiction, but his magnificent fanzine *Stellar* raised fannish consciousness about this type of fanzine content. The 1950’s fanzine reprinted classics and published new examples of the breed under some of the most breathtaking color mimeographed covers ever seen in Fandom. It was reading those old zines that inspired me to become such a prolific writer of faan fiction.

British fan Archie Mercer’s Meadows of Fantasy is the closest approach to the Great Fannish Novel, but most feel it is yet to be written. I’ve done several longish short stories — 15-25 pages — such as *Willis Plays Vegas* and *The Science Fiction League of Extraordinary Fuggheads* that showed me how difficult it would be to sustain a novel-length narrative. Doesn’t mean I won’t try, though.

On my Personal “to do” list is an anthology of faan fiction in all its variety. I’d like to make a broad selection of such stories available on line and perhaps do for faan fiction in the ‘00’s what Ted White did in the ‘50’s.

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— Arnie

Katzenjammer How to Write a LoC

Every now and then, I like to depart from the usual snooping and rumor-mongering that passes for *VFW*'s editorial policy to present something of genuine lasting worth. No, don't thank me; I do it because I am Good.

I'll be sitting here, working on one of my professional projects, writing for Fandom or trying to decide whether Lotta Top or Busty Bubbles has the largest breasts and the mood will just come over me. "It's time to do something worthwhile," I will say to myself. "You must put aside your indolent, Insurgent ways and create something with Redeeming Faanish Social Value."

It's in that pure Spirit of Trufanishness that I bring you this treatise on how to commit a letter of comment. I will show you the ropes, teach you the angles, reveal the trade secrets that make such as Robert Lichtman, Rob Hansen and Lloyd Penney superstar letterhacks.

The prerequisite for a letter of comment is the same, reading a fanzine. If you avoid reading one, it's a safe bet that you won't have to write a letter of comment. This admittedly has its attractions, but it also means you'll miss out on a lot of entertainment and information.

In any case, you have passed the point of no return by downloading *Vegas Fandom Weekly* and wending halfway down page eight. You have incontrovertibly received and, to some extent, read a fanzine. The die is cast and you might as well surrender to fanzine's siren call.

Whether you call it an "ell-oh-see" (like old-time fans) or a "lock" (like newer ones), the letter of comment is one of the best ways to complete the exchange that began when you got the fanzine. It's kind of like the Native American custom of Potlatch in which increasing expensive gifts are exchanged until one party buckles and admits they cannot out-do the other in generosity. (Other ways are to write or draw something or trade your fanzine for the ones you receive.)

Some fanzines are available for subscription, but that's just an affectation. Ironically, the better the fanzine, the less likely it is to be obtainable for mere money. Most fanzine editors would rather give it away — and that's no cheap gift when it comes to hard copy fanzines — in the hopes of getting a response.

Fandom is a paper party, with the fanzine editor as genial (it says here) host. And when you have been entertained, it is nice to show appreciation to the host — and the fannish way is to write something back.

I'VE COME ALL
THE WAY FROM
VEGAS TO TELL
YOU, LOC OR
ELSE—!



Many newer fans indicate that the toughest thing about a LoC is how to start it. Honestly, that couldn't be easier. "Dear Arnie" will do just fine.

You thought maybe I would teach you how to write one of these things and then send you to some *other* fanzine editor and let him or her reap the pay-off? If I teach you how to do this essential piece of fanac, you owe me at least your maiden LoC.

Although as you write your LoC, you will no doubt be tempted to swamp the fanzine editor (me) with extravagant praise and flowery adjectives. While some of this is inevitable, fanzine editors really aren't look for a review or a rating. Commending someone's efforts, accolades for a particularly fine article or drawing or a brief comment about the overall

quality of the fanzine, possibly touching on its indispensability, is always welcome.

That shouldn't be the main thrust of the letter, though. It's a letter of *comment*. The fanzine editor is hoping you will respond to things in the fanzine.

Some letterhacks take notes, while others put checkmarks in the margins of the fanzine to remind them of something they want to say. Naturally, the checkmark system doesn't work very well when you're reading a fanzine as a .PDF. Or you can do what I do and trust your memory to retain the main items you want to mention in your letter.

There are a lot of ways to generate a response to a fanzine. Something may remind you of a life experience, an anecdote you can tell. Or a writer's opinion about something may encourage you to state your opinion on the same subject. Sometimes, a writer may ask a question that you can answer or raise a topic to which you can add relevant information.

Writing a LoC is easier than doing an article precisely because it *is* reactive. Every fanzine — well, the ones worth reading — is jammed with comment hooks. Many won't be particularly good for you, but the likelihood is that you'll easily find one or more.

Give it a try. It's fun to do and I happen to know at least one fanzine editor who will be Helpless with Smiles if you fill his mail queue with letters of comment. — Arnie

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Medium & Message

Katzenjammer

Everybody knows that I love Fandom. I mean, I've been doing it for 40 years and I still perform fanac *several* times a week. I can still leave a co-editor Limp with Smiles. So when I regret some of the changes in the basic substance of All Known Fandom, you'll understand that I still love Fandom every bit as much — and we all know that Fandom doesn't have to be any more perfect than anything else to be worth our time and energy.

I'm also known as something of a fanhistorian, but I'd never say that everything older is automatically better. My favorite fanzine (*Void*) and fanwriter (Walt Willis) are classic, but I like a lot of current fanwriters and fanzines, too. I think Shakespeare is the greatest English playwright, but I cling to the hope that his peer or superior can rise in the future.

Fandom has had some incredible people, but it *still* has participants as colorful, gifted and original as their fancesors. If WAW is the greatest fanwriter as of September 8, 2005, it doesn't necessary follow that he will still be the greatest on the same date in 2020.

All Known Fandom — everyone who does something beyond being part of the SF/Fantasy audience — certainly has changed, and not for the better. Yet I'd also argue that the part of Fandom that remains true to its classic values, ethics, standards and aesthetics is healthier than it has ever been, though it does face a problem.

Subjectivity distorts perception. I hear a lot about how Classic Fandom is dying, but the facts support the opposite conclusion.

The population of Fanzine Fandom has grown steadily over the years. After the crash of the printed fanzines in the 1930's, which effectively weeded out passive fans (subscribers), the typical fanzine went to 50 recipients. That's how many copies you could get with a hectograph.

Lee Hoffman sent out 100-125 copies of *Quandry* in the early 1950's while today Robert Lichtman distributes over 200 copies of each *Trap Door*. And Lee was certainly covering a much larger percentage of active Fandom than Robert is. (I don't know the exactly circulation of *Vegas Fandom Weekly*, but it appears to be at least several hundred.)

So why do these "classic fans" often bemoan the imminent dying of their strange tribe? It's because that nicely growing little circle is part of All Known Fandom, which has grown exponentially during the same period.

Classic fans hark back to a time when their approach to Fandom represented the dominant consensus. It would be ridiculous to claim that's still the case. All Known Fandom had no more than 1,000 participants in 1945, but it had

grown tenfold by 1995. The Internet and activities like forums, news groups and listservs may have swelled that number to over 25,000! So knowledgeable active fans, who might've constituted as much as 50% of mid-1940's Fandom represent less than 5% today — and that doesn't even count the thousands who are spectators at large conventions.

Classic Fandom has changed a little with the times, as it should, but that other, much larger group is distinctly different than it was in the past. The acceptance of SF/Fantasy themes, the swing from science fiction toward fantasy and the decline of fan literacy are all factors that attract a different kind of person from the ones who embraced Fandom before those forces came into play.

That's fine. I like diversity, though I will always gravitate toward activities that involve my friends. Yet it also reduces the odds that someone coming into All Known Fandom will fit that classic paradigm.

What's missing? Whether you go with Jack Speer's Handicap Theory of Fandom, my Special Needs Concept or Laney's description of fans as neurotic messes, one thing is clear, Classic Fans are a lot less "well-adjusted," a lot less "normal," than most of the fine folks who now fill All Known Fandom.

What made Classic Fandom great is that so many of its practitioners put energy into the hobby that their alienation prevented them from employing in mainstream society. You can call them "inner directed," "outlaws" or "social misfits," but it's what gives Classic Fandom a lot of its zest. (Some other parts of Fandom could use a stronger application of Zest or Ivory or Palm Olive, but that's another topic.)

The problem for classic Fandom is that All Known Fandom is no longer a filter that deposits these glorious square pegs on our front doorstep. Where will the pariahs of tomorrow come from? We need the men and women who will maintain this complex subculture in basic opposition to the inhospitable mainstream society.

The glib answer is: "Scour the sanitariums!" Unfortunately, while that will produce plenty of nuts, they won't be quite the type we want. We want the brilliant neurotics not the victims of borderline personality disorder (though we have a few of them, anyway).

All Known Fandom has a place for all kinds of people, including the folks we used to think of as Mundanes. What we have to do is nurture the uncommon men and women who still feel the pull of the unfettered literature of imagination so that we mine for Our Kind more efficiently.

When we don't do that, we lose people who might've become our friends and who would've done their best to entertain us. And the very type of person we want might, alas, be the same type that would encounter Fandom and, if they didn't find us quick, move onto something that better fitted their counter-cultural (in the true sense) worldview.

— Arnie

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in
Vegas Fandom Weekly #43

Katzenjammer Four Kinds of Fanac

“We ought to do more fanac!” I said, in the throes of my occasional enthusiasm for such things. My listeners looked at me bravely, but dumbly. And so another *Katzenjammer* topic was born. I can’t expect the neofans to *do* fanac if they don’t exactly know what it is.

Activity and a consciousness of Fandom are what separate fans from mere enthusiasts. A fan is someone who does something beyond watch, read or hear primary science fiction and fantasy content. You can divide that “something more” into four types of activity. When they are done within the context of Fandom the people performing them are fans. All have merit, but some have more substance, have more to do with the reason Fandom exists and we are part of it.

The lowest level of fanac consists of group-audience activities. This is one step above non-fannish enthusiasts who watch *Surface* and *Invasion* on TV. It’s fanac, because it involves fans being together to watch. .

Group-audience activities rate low on the fanac scale, because watching/reading/listening is essentially passive. This is part of being a science fiction enthusiast, but it is not especially expressive of the fannish subculture.

The second kind of fanac, in ascending order, is organization and bureaucracy. Sometimes, it takes some organizing to make something worthwhile happen, like a convention or fanzine. And by that I mean the least possible amount of organization, regimentation and bureaucracy needed to do a needed job, not the most rigmarole that can be heaped on a basically simple and straightforward task to gratify people who might be happier at the PTA or Elks Clubs.

Anything more represents a mis-ordering of priorities. If it is more important who gets the credit than what result is achieved, things have gotten pretty damn far off the rails.

People who think drafting constitutions, voting on meaningless rules, fussing over logos and stationary and other time-dishonored time-wasters are fooling themselves into thinking they are

really doing fanac. Bureaucracy and organization add absolutely nothing if they don’t facilitate something better; otherwise it’s occupational therapy. These people are entitled to their delusion and their therapy, but real fans shouldn’t get caught by the City of Serious Constructivism.

The next level is social fanac. It’s an integral part of being a fan and participating in Fandom. An Interest Group is a hobby structure in which there is little or no socializing. What makes Fandom special is that we become each other’s friend and acquaintances (and wives and husbands and fathers-in-law).

Las Vegas Fandom has always excelled in this area. No group has more events, more parties, and more social interaction than Glitter City. Fanhistorically, no one out-does Vegas Fandom’s hosts.

At the top, above all other types of activity, is creative fanac. Fans ability to put forth their own imaginative and entertaining productions gives the hobby its style and character — not to mention a significant point to all that good carousing.

Without creative fanac, we’re just another bunch of partiers, older and more staid than most. Fans’ creativity is the key ingredient that makes Fandom what it is a— and it’s what separates us from, say, a retirement community in Boca Raton.

Las Vegas Fandom should, by all means, continue to be ablaze with social activities, but I would sure like to see a little more creative fanac.

Let’s not only *listen* to music, let’s *write* some!

Let’s not only *see* a movie, let’s *make* a movie!

Let’s not only *go* to clubs and cons, let’s *participate* in the programs and discussion.

Let’s not only *play* games, let’s *invent* one!

Let’s not only *visit* sites, let’s *create* our own!

Let’s not only *read* fanzines, let’s *do* them!

Let’s not stop the partying, but let’s find time to follow our fancestors’ example and create, too.

— Arnie

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in
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Ages of Fan

Katzenjammer

Longer term is a different matter. I am probably the last generation to whom the postal fanzine as physical artifact has any special resonance. There are still young fen out there - taking your definition of people who want to do something beyond just watching, reading and listening to the primary SF/F content - but they are using websites, blogs and e-mail discussion lists instead of fanzeens (whether dead tree or electronic).

*But that's OK. As long as people feel called to share their experiences in a fannish way, there will be *a* fandom. I'm sure that there were those who bemoaned parchment as the death of cave painting fandom. — From a letter by [Peter Sullivan](#)*

[Peter Sullivan](#) was second to [Bob Tucker](#) in saying, “40 Weeks... that’s not too many!” He therefore waited in the WAHF’s while Bob became the subject of an “Inside Story” piece. Now Peter, who is surely the most outstanding addition to British Fandom this year, has earned a whole “Katzenjammer.” What’s next? Perhaps being Tuckerized in a novel... maybe even by Tucker.

What singled him out is all that pessimistic, wet-eyed nostalgia for dear old, soon-to-be-dead-old, fanzine fandom. While some British fans have seemingly dedicated their fanlives to pessimism, I would like to see our Golden Neofan in a sunnier frame of mind. Not just because I’d like him to be happy and write more articles for *VFW* and *Implications*, but because I sincerely believe that there will be fanzine fans 50 years hence who will be telling the legends of [Peter Sullivan](#) to their neofen. (It’ll be inspirational, you can bet.)

One of the things that distinguish Fanzine Fandom from Mundane Ayjay is that the message has always counted more in fanzines than the medium. Though you can cite exceptions, Mundane Amateur Journalism has declined dramatically from the early 20th Century, because they allowed the medium to become a higher priority than what they communicated.

Most of the early major fanzines like *The Time Traveler* and *Fantasy Magazine* were similar to Mundane Ayjay titles in that they were done with hand-set type and then printed on small offset presses.

There came a time, in the mid-1930’s, when circumstances combined to wipe out those impeccably printed fanzines. It was like the death of the Dinosaurs, only telescoped into a matter of months.

At first, it looked like fanzines would cease to exist. Then fans discovered the humble hectograph. It looked like a pan of jelly, stained hands a hideous purple and could do

no more than 50 copies, but fans put aside their dreams of fabulous printed fanzines and embraced hekto. The Mundane amateur press associations (apas) reacted completely differently when the number of small press owners began to decline precipitously. They clung to the old medium like grim death — and all too soon a lot of Mundane Ayjay zines began to look like elegantly printed holiday cards. They held tight to the medium and they saw their version of the amateur publishing hobby go into long-term decline.

Eventually, fans found the mimeograph. The cost per printed page was microscopic, even teenaged fans could scrape together the cash for a low-end machine and the device let fanzines bust through the 50-copy ceiling.

Yet the mimeograph passed out of fashion, supplies and repairs became difficult and Fanzine Fandom could no longer rely on its time-tested workhorse.

Did Fanzine Fandom fold up shop? No, they went to the shop and had the folks who owned the copiers duplicate and collate their fanzines. Once again, Fanzine Fandom showed that it could distinguish between the appearance of things and the essence of things.

DTP fanzine preparation and copier/compu-printer repro elevated the quality of the entire fanzine field. Fanzines have never looked as good or had as few typos as the ones published today.

Yet like every other medium, the DTP/copier system has limitations. The cost of professional duplication and collating, plus the enormous cost of postage, has pushed doing a fanzine beyond the means of many fans.

And so Fanzine Fandom finds itself moving to a new medium, the digiverse. The cost becomes negligible, the value of sweat equity is restored and sending out a fanzine has never been easier. Some fans read ‘em online and some fans print ‘em out, but electronic fanzines are the linear descendant of the ones done on letter press, hekto, mimeo and copier. And so are websites like Trufen.net and Fanac.org.

Sure fanzines may mutate as the medium changes, as they have every time the medium changed, but there’s no reason to think it still won’t be an extension of our very own Fanzine Fandom. It’s no coincidence that the three most active fanzine publishers — [Chris Garcia](#) (28 years old), me (59 years old) and [Earl Kemp](#) (70-something) — are among those fanzine fans who have most completely embraced the digital fanzine medium. And most importantly, all three are producing fanzines that are rich in fannish context and as authentically by, for and of Fanzine Fandom as *Void*, *Innuendo* and *Hyphen*.

So weep no more, proud neofan. The future is so bright I’ve got to wear shades.

— Arnie

Original Published
in
Vegas Fandom Weekly #47

Continued from page 2

during her two hospital stays.)

The first story in *VFW* had this to say:

Welcome to Vegas Fandom Weekly

Once upon a time, and it wasn't really more than a few years ago, Las Vegas boasted one of the most active local fan scenes in the country. Now, there seems to be less happening and less communication among the fans of Glitter City.

Vegas Fandom Weekly hopes to put Vegas fans in better touch with each other by spreading the news of upcoming events and reporting on the ones which have taken place. It probably won't *really* come out weekly, but I liked the name.

If I ever succumb to the delusion that I have the Gift of Prophecy, reading the last sentence should work an instant cure. I made the fanzine's slogan "Las Vegas Fandom's Sorta Weekly Newszine" because I figured I'd start missing issues after the first few weeks and I didn't want the heckling from Robert Lichtman and Andy Hooper.

Somehow, my plans changed. I'd think to myself, "Why not skip next week?" but there was always something I wanted to report on or preview or analyze. By Sunday or Monday, despite any earlier resolve, I'd find myself at the keyboard, busily working on the next issue.

Based on my newszine experience, chiefly as co-editor of *Focal Point*, weekly publication for any extended period looked pretty daunting. If it was hard for rich brown and me to keep up a bi-weekly schedule, how could I keep up a weekly one?

Had someone told me that *VFW* would grow from the original two pages to an average of 14, I might've just given up the idea. I would've assumed the goal was simply out of reach.

A lot of the trepidation arose, because I didn't think through how different the process would be. I should've seen it earlier, given the number of electronic fanzines I've produced, but I didn't.

One big difference is that, despite the schedule, we had to write and stencil the news portion of *Focal Point* as close to the mailing date as possible. I can work on bits and pieces of *VFW* any time I have a few minutes. And if a big story comes in at the very last minute, I can slot it into the fanzine at the front of the issue without the restenciling that would be required on a mimeographed newszine.

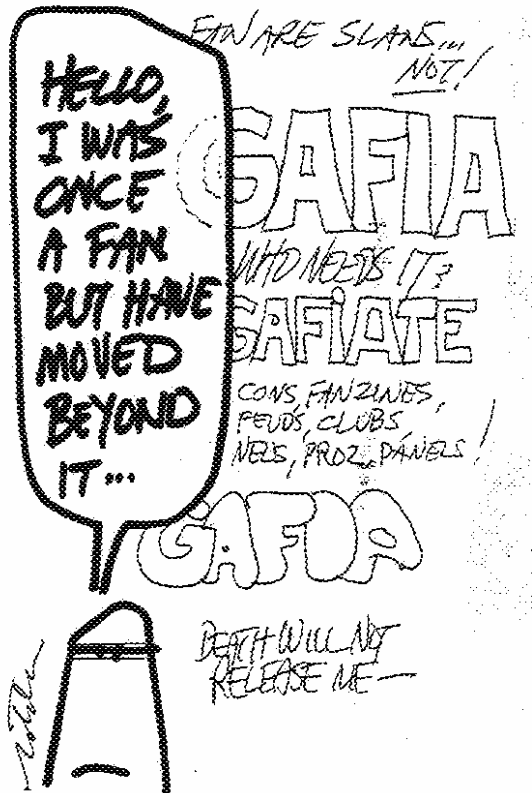
Electronic publishing also eliminates time-consuming tasks like duplicating, collating and stapling. Once I lay out an issue and Joyce proof-reads it, it's ready to go. No more addressing each copy and schlepping the stacks to the Post Office!

The cost of doing a mimeographed newszine with anything like the circulation *VFW* has attained would be well beyond my present means. Thanks to electronic publishing, though, I'm spending a lot less on Fandom than I did in the 1990's.

The quoted news item focused on my desire to support and encourage local activity, but that was actually part of a more sweeping mission: to regenerate Las Vegas Fandom.

My plan was to foster more local activities and then introduce all the resulting newcomers to Fandom. As a newszine, *VFW* was in an excellent position to help with both objectives.

Enthusiastic previews build interest in up-



coming events. The event reports expressed the fun of attending, gave locals a chance to read articles about themselves and created incentive to go to the *next* event.

I hit on the practice of underlining names as a way to teach ego-scanning without making a big issue out of it. I believe that people like to see themselves mentioned, especially in a favorable light, and underlining made the names stand out.

It wasn't long after *VFW* started that I began to run two kinds of articles: fanhistory pieces and survey articles about aspects of current Fandom. An article on what I called "fannish numerology" in #10 and another on fannish nicknames in #12 got the ball rolling, Rich brown made his debut with the "Fanhistory Corner" in #27,

Two issues earlier, in #25, Rob Hansen's "London Calling" became the first *VGW* column devoted to local doings in other fan centers. My initial thought was to give Vegas fans a taste of what their brothers and sisters were doing in other places, but it has evolved into what I call "the Local Fandom Movement," an attempt to help reinvigorate Fandom at the grass roots level.

Not everything I tried worked perfectly. The Vegas Fandom Trivia Challenge tried to encourage interest in local fanhistory starting in #14, but it never caught on with more than two or three fans. The rest didn't know the answers, knew they didn't know them and didn't bother to enter.

"Potshot's Cartoon Theater" first hit the pages of *VFW* in #32 and has been in every issue since. It came about because Bill Kunkel was feeling a bit down about his degree of fannish fame and I decided to put his cartoons in the spotlight. It has become one of *VFW*'s more popular features, so I think it's probably having the desired effect.

I want to thank so many fans who have helped me pull off this bit of publishing. First and foremost is Joyce, who has helped in too many ways to mention, including the odious job of proofing my fumble-fingered typing. Bill Burns, Roxanne Gibbs, Woody Bernardi, and Mindy Hutchings all helped distribute and post each issue.

A reverential spin of the propeller beanie goes to columnists rich brown, Rob Hansen, Bruce Gillespie, Bill Wright, Randy Byers, Dick Lupoff and Shelby Vick I wish I could reprint even more of your stuff that I do in this issue; it's that good.



And I hope all of them, augmented by even more fine fans, will contribute to *VFW* in the coming year.

You can't have a newszine without reporters. Among the many who have contributed reports and stories, I must single out Roxanne Gibbs, David Gordon, Michael Bernstein, Laurie Kunkel, Merric Anderson, Teresa Cochran, Charles Fuller, Aileen Forman, JoHn Hardin, Johua Andrews, Rebecca Hardin and, of course, Joyce.

The letter column has become one of the most important parts of *VFW* since I introduced it in #13. I ran it every couple of issues at first, but the quality and quantity of letters soon made Chat-Back one of the fanzine's main features. Now, *VFW* is becoming almost as well known as a letterzine as it is as a newszine.

None of that would be possible without the terrific letterhacks. It's easy to have a good letter column when you've got the likes of Robert Lichtman, Chris Garcia, Peter Sullivan, Lloyd Penney, Eric Mayer, Dick Lupoff and the other stalwarts.

And let's not forget the talents folks who draw the cartoons and take the photos. Alan White, Bill Kunkel and Ross Chamberlain have kept me well supplied with illos — with a good assist from the late great William Rotsler. Thanks also to Lee Hoffman, Shelby Vick and Steve Stiles for their fine contributions.

Alan White has been *Vegas Fandom Weekly*'s chief photographer right from the first, but David Gordon, Rob Hansen and Carol Kern have also shared many photos with *VFW* readers.

And thank you, too, to the hundreds of readers who are the reason for this fanzine in the first place.

— Arnie

Tower to the Moon

rich brown's fanhistory corner

We're approaching the 50th anniversary of the true beginnings of space exploration. Pioneering rocket work was done long before that, of course, but realistically speaking things got underway during the International Geophysical Year -- which actually spanned the 18 months between July 1957 and December 1958 (those "wacky" scientists, eh?) when both the US and the USSR began their efforts to launch satellites into outer space.

The USSR was first to do so, and it was a genuine accomplishment -- no matter how many Americans tried to downplay it by pointing out how Russia's Sputnik went over like a lead balloon. The US was in too great a haste in trying to duplicate the effort, the end result being that the

televised launch showed the first Vanguard rocket falling flat on its face.

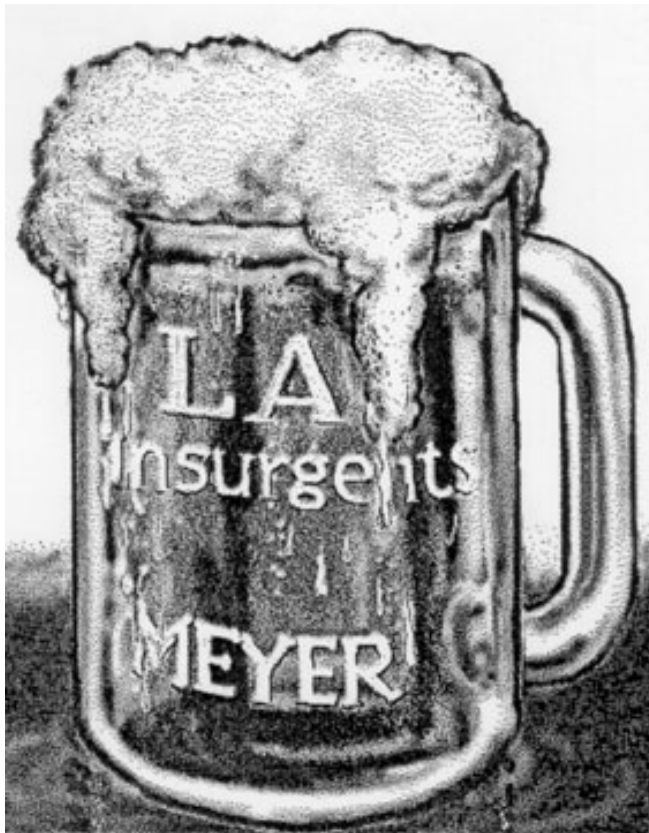
And how (you might well wonder) did sf fandom react to this? How did we face the possible impact this could have on the genre we love?

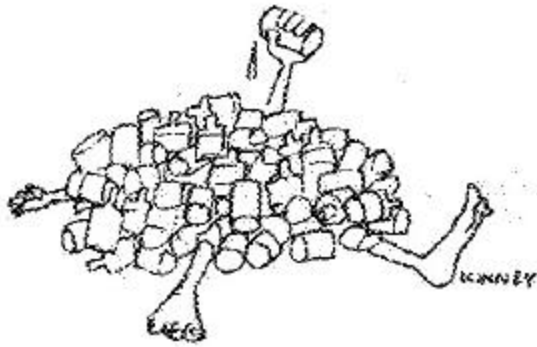
Well, I don't want to minimize the contribution of Brooklyn fan Les Gerber -- but may wind up doing so anyway, because while it needs to be mentioned it really isn't the subject I wish to expound upon. Suffice it to say that Les wrote a short article regarding the model of the Vanguard which he'd eagerly cut out and constructed off the back of a box of Cheerios. After folding as directed and inserting the various lettered "tabs" into the correspondingly lettered "slots," he not only had a cardboard Vanguard but a cardboard "launching pad" as well. He attached a rubber band, per instructions, placed the rocket on the pad, tested the band for tautness, quickly let go -- and the rocket promptly fell over. Gerber titled his piece, "The Authentic Model."

But this represented only individual effort. Not to be sniffed at, but at the same time it did not attempt to galvanize all of organized fandom into a concerted force in support of the US space race for the benefit of all mankind.

That task fell to the Publishing Giants of Berkeley Fandom -- Terry Carr, Ron Ellik, Pete Graham, Dave Rike, Bob Stewart and "Carl Brandon" (a hoax fan, about whom I may write more in subsequent installments).

Now Carl was probably the most successful fan hoax ever and Terry and Ron were co-editing a fanzine called *Fanac* which was destined to win the "Best Fanzine" Hugo, but neither of these facts need concern us here. Nor for the purpose of this piece do we care, except to mention it in passing, that Terry went on to a very successful career as





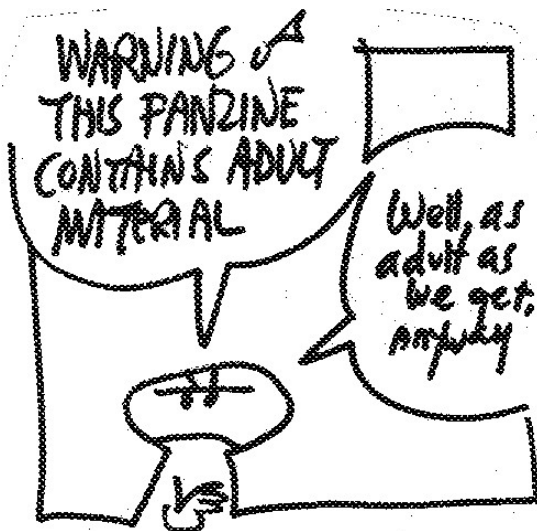
an SF anthologist, editor and writer. Interesting stuff, no doubt, but right now we are here to focus on Berkeley Fandom's contribution to the space race.

Terry used principles of trigonometry which he had learned in a college astronomy course to determine the distance between the Earth and the moon. Getting a parallax view of the moon from two different vantage points in Carl Brandon's back yard, Terry was able to calculate that the moon was about 20 feet in diameter and only approximately 150 feet above ground level. From this observation, he was able to devise an excellent, nay, a brilliant plan.

Terry proposed that he and his fellow Berkeley fans should build a Tower of Bheer Cans to the Moon.

Terry's proposal was breathtaking in its simplicity, as well as in its downright daring stupidity

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qualities fandom always applauds. In a series of editorials in his fanzine *Innuendo*, he appealed to his fellow Berkeley fan's love of sf to get them to use not just all the "profits" but every red cent they received in subscriptions to the fanzines they published, not to defray the costs of publishing said fanzines, but to buy six packs of bheer, which they would then be called upon to drink, quite selflessly, so as to use the empties as building blocks to create a Tower to the Moon in Carl Brandon's back yard. The offer of aid by fans outside the area to forward their empties for the project was rejected out of hand -- Berkeley Fandom wanted to do it themselves -- but cash donations, either direct or in the form of "subscriptions" to fanzines published by Berkeley fans, were gladly accepted.

As the Tower rose, various plans were suggested in the *Innuendo* letter column regarding how it should be utilized, ranging from using it as a vantage point to harpoon the moon with a church key and anchor it to the ground, to climbing the Tower to bring the moon back down to the surface of the Earth where it would be kept forever safe from the hands of the Russians who were trying to grab it before we could. After all, it was reasoned, if it floated 150 feet off the ground, it couldn't weigh very much.

Just what happened to the Tower remains a matter of conjecture. Some say Carl Brandon took it with him when he left in disgust after so many fans were told and actually believed he was a hoax. Others say that from the proper vantage point in San Francisco you can look out over the goodminton greens and deep blue water of the sparkling bay, beyond the stately sentinel of Alcatraz, over the Oakland and Golden Gate Bridges spanning the water from peninsula to peninsula, island to island, and see above them all the narrow, shiny, fountain of steel stabbing into the sky that is the Tower of Bheer Cans to the Moon. But they're probably just funning you when they say that.

Occasionally, partying fans at conventions across the land will try to construct such a Tower in Terry Carr's memory. At Magicon, the 50th Worldcon, this was attempted on a night on which there was no moon, but undaunted Art Widner was heard to intone, "If you build it, it will come."

--rich brown.

A Tale of the Outlands

rich brown's Fanhistory Corner

Sometimes, if the stars are in proper alignment and fans are willful and inventive enough, dreams come true. They have once, at least, and could again.

The world's oldest regularly meeting sf club, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS), was in turmoil in the mid-1940s. The reasons aren't important here, since I want to talk about the peaceful alternative for fans who lived in the "outland" communities of Los Angeles, a bit too far away to attend LASFS regularly -- a club called the Outlander Society. It was a light-hearted informal group, in no way a real rival to LASFS, based on the notion of having a good time. The founder was a little man who came to be known as the Sage of South Gate (the municipality in the greater Los Angeles area where he lived) -- Rick Sneary.

Rick was known for his "inspired" misspellings. They appeared not just in fanzines and personal correspondence but in the missives he wrote for the lettercolumns of pulp sf magazines like THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING STORIES and PLANET. Rick was a dwarf who'd suffered such severe birth defects that he'd never been allowed to attend school: He was severely disfigured, his body twisted, one arm ending with a couple of small finger nubs only good for grasping. Rick typed his letters one-handed on a manual typewriter, and often claimed that if he'd waited to learn how to spell he probably never would have started writing, so he decided writing was

more important than learning to spell. Rick was generally a gentle soul -- he had strong opinions but didn't take "sides" and even people at odds with each other tended to be on their best behavior around him.

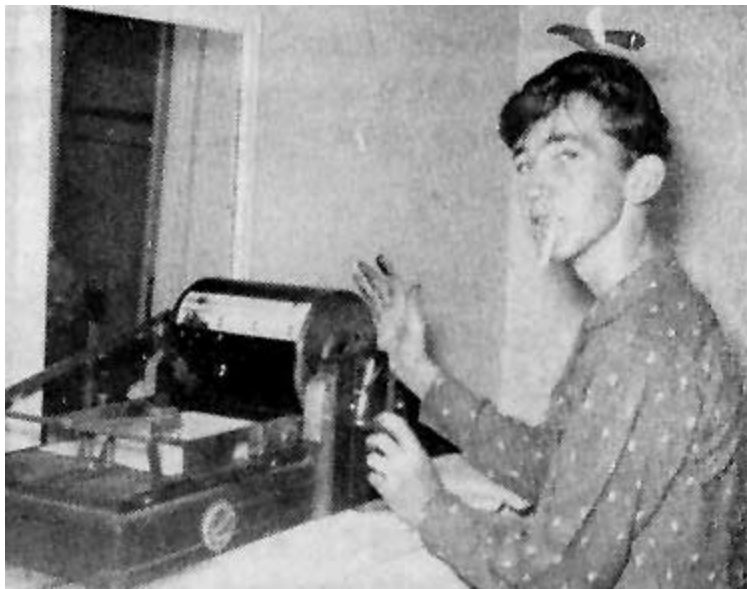
His club, the Outlanders, disbanded in 1948. Members moved away and it seemed pointless to continue to call irregular get-togethers of a few friends a club. But departing members suggested a reunion, perhaps after 10 years. Maybe as a convention in the club's home town. Someone eventually said it -- "South Gate in '58" -- and the euphony of the phrase was recognized, picked up by Rick and others for use in their letters and fanzines.

Fanzine publishers were always on the lookout for one-liners and fannish catchphrases they could use as fillers. And for the first half of the '50s, it was a popular practice for fans to send "quote cards" along with their correspondence -- 3x5 cards, most often, with a fannish phrase or a captioned newspaper illustration taped to them, which the recipients were supposed to sign and pass on to their correspondents, which would then be returned to the originator when completely filled. The phrase might be "Yngvi Is A Louse," or "Dave Kyle Says You Can't Sit Here," or "It Certainly Is A Wonderful Thing," or even "South Gate in '58."

Just as fans were beginning to think perhaps "South Gate in '58" should be a Worldcon, two impediments popped up -- one fannish, one not.

The fannish one was the "rotation plan." Site selection in those years involved the members of the year's Worldcon picking the site of the next -- and most years the bids were hashed out in the pages





Rich brown fans it up at solacon! Photo from Earl Kemp's superb *el*, available at efanazines.com.

of fanzines before the Worldcon took place. Active fans went to the 1952 Chicago Worldcon fully expecting San Francisco to win the nod for 1953, but a Philadelphia bid appeared and won instead by appealing to walk-in voters who had no knowledge of the fanzine debates and who based their decision at least partly on proximity. The rotation plan was meant to keep proximity out of the voting -- but its institution sent the 1954 Worldcon to the west coast, the 1955 Worldcon to the midwest, the 1956 Worldcon to the east coast, which meant the 1957 Worldcon should go back to the west and 1958 -- the "South Gate" year -- to the Midwest.

Fortunately, the hardy breed of Trufen active in the United Kingdom at the time stepped forward to save the day by promoting "London in '57 and South Gate in '58." It resulted in the first Worldcon to be held outside the North American continent -- and allowed the dream to continue.

The mundane impediment was that, in 1958, there was not a hotel in South Gate large enough to accommodate 500+ people (yes, Worldcons really were that small then). Forry Ackerman, standing in a box of soil flown all the way to England from Rick Sneary's back yard, placed the successful bid

for the Solacon at the Worldcon in London -- but the convention itself had to be held in the Alexandria Hotel in Los Angeles. On the opening day, however, the Mayor of Los Angeles ceded the hotel, for the duration of the Labor Day weekend, to the Mayor of South Gate. The dream held sway.

It's a little known fact that the one detail which had been agreed upon among the Outlanders was that the reunion should be held at noon on the Saturday of the convention on the steps of the South Gate City Hall. Or that, on the Saturday of the Solacon, just a bit before noon, two figures, an old woman and a little man, stood on the low stone steps of the city hall to confront the Outlanders who could only make it there in spirit. The two were Rick Sneary and the 98-year-old Rory Faulkner. Rick

was holding a small worn sign with a short phrase painted on it in black: "Outlander Society -- South Gate in '58." The dream had become reality.

Neither Rick nor Rory are with us any longer, but it might come true again. You see, another slogan got started immediately after the Solacon -- "South Gate Again in 2010!" I grant you I haven't seen it picked up with the fervor of the first, and I'm not aware of any bid being mounted for it. Arguing against the possibility is the fact that the 2006 Worldcon will be held in Los Angeles. But countering the argument somewhat is the fact that in 2007 it'll be in Japan, which means the rotation plan -- the first impediment which nearly prevented the 1958 dream, recall -- will bring the Worldcon back to the west coast in 2010 barring any additional out-of-rotation bids. It would go against precedent to have it in the same city in two consecutive eligible years, of course -- but then again, the first London Worldcon was unprecedented in its time, too.

I'm observing, not promoting or urging -- the fact that the dream came true once is sufficient, so the *possibility* that it could happen again is all that's really important. If it's still a dream and if the dream is made real a second time, that would only be -- pardon the terrible word play -- LAGniappe.

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in
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— rich brown

The Laney Laugh

rich brown's Fanhistory Corner

The microcosm is not just about things and events, it's about people and the personalities on display there. It's been observed that while clubs and conventions may have their presiding officers, *no one* runs the microcosm as a whole. That said, quite a number of individuals have had profound and long-lasting influences on fandom. In any examination of fan history, be it as lighthearted as this one has tried to be or as serious as many others have been, it's necessary to have an understanding of these people and what they did and said.

One such person was indisputably Francis Towner Laney. I'll write about others later, but I've picked Laney first because he was a man with feet of clay, and I think it's important to establish that the "fancestor worship" we are engaging in here is not (or at least should not be) an exercise in ignoring facts to elevate real fans into wholly imagined paragons of virtue. Any attempt to do so, in my opinion, would be like putting square wheels on the vehicle we've chosen for viewing the history of fandom, in that it would lead to a very bumpy ride, indeed.

Most of the fans I'll be writing about were also not without flaw, but where their flaws had no impact on their accomplishments, they most likely won't get mentioned, so might come out *sounding* more like paragons than they actually were or are. Better to start here.

In the early 1940s, Francis T. Laney was already regarded as a Big Name Fan -- or BNF for short, as is more often used in fandom. One cannot proclaim one's self to be a BNF, it's some-

thing that has to come from the perceptions of others, and to be valid the perception has to be widespread in the microcosm. Laney had achieved this status by editing a very fine serious fanzine, *The Acolyte*, devoted in the main to critical examination of the works of H. P. Lovecraft. Hugos were not established until the 1950s and fanzines did not routinely receive them until the 1960s, but his fanzine appeared at or near the top of many of the polls conducted during the period.

As did *Shangri-L'Affaires*, the generally-circulated fanzine of the Los Angeles Science-Fantasy Society (LASFS), edited by another figure who had a considerable impact on fandom, Charles Burbee. (Quick aside: In his final years, Burbee had a very positive influence on modern-day Las Vegas fandom. Ask Arnie or others involved for details.)

In truth, their major impact on the microcosm was as a duo: Laney and Burbee became friends when Laney moved to southern California; their fanzines, while topping popularity polls, were not in serious competition because they were different types of fanzines and (if you'll pardon the double entendre) poles apart in both content and attitude.

Burbee was a humorist -- one of the best; in many people's opinion, mine included; his only real rival for the spot of fandom's best-ever being Walt Willis, who entered fandom somewhat later. (Calvin Demmon would be in contention if his body of fanzine works had been of comparable size.) And one of the things Burbee did in the pages of *Shaggy* (as the LASFS club zine was affectionately known) was to lampoon some of the club's more sober-sided members. That, and the fact that he did not wait when lazier LASFS members dawdled in coming up with promised material but published more reliable contributors outside

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the membership in their place, was what eventually led the club to remove him as editor.

Laney, feeling that Burbee had been scolded and admonished for poking harmless fun at people who took themselves and fandom far too seriously, joined his friend in exile. In a series of one-shots for FAPA, in a number of issues *Wild Hair* which they co-edited, and in *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!*, his serialized fannish memoirs (which he pronounced ME-moirs) he embarked with Burbee on an insurgency which lambasted the attitude of FIA-WOL (Fandom Is A Way Of Life) which he saw as detri-

mental in LASFS in particular and fandom in general, and extolled the virtues of the alternate fannish philosophy, FIJAGH (Fandom Is Just A God-damned Hobby). From that point forward Laney claimed he was no longer a “fan” but -- taking his cue from the mundane amateur press associations - - was instead now an amateur journalist.

As I said at the outset, in some of this, judged from today’s perspective, Laney revealed feet of clay. When fans spoke of “the Laney laugh,” they were not referring to his sense of humor but to public sneers and locker room humor that bordered on cruelty. Laney, a bit of a misogynist who yet considered himself a “lady’s man,” dated women who advertised for romance in newspaper “personals” columns and dropped them as soon as he achieved his aim of having sex with them, and no doubt as part of maintaining this self-image was sneeringly anti-gay: Laney claimed LASFS was a hotbed of homosexual activity and took obvious delight in saying or implying that members he held in low esteem were homosexuals, effeminate and/or incapable of satisfying a women.



The cover of a 1945 issue of *The Acolyte*, Laney’s celebrated fanzine.

The kindest thing we can say about this today, and then only to explain rather than justify, is that FTL was a product of his times. It needs to be pointed out, perhaps, that in the late 1940s in the U.S., the most “liberal” attitude toward homosexuality was that it was a “sickness” for which participants could or should not be blamed but should be urged to seek some psychological “cure.” It’s a sad observation, but perhaps understandable why, in a microcosm devoted to a form of literature aimed at adolescent males which attracted only a handful of females, very few had the courage to

speak up against him. No doubt there was more than one reason for this, but a primary one was almost certainly that they didn’t want to be branded as homosexuals who *preferred* fandom to remain a mostly male province.

Even with these acknowledged short-comings, however, it’s impossible to dismiss Laney’s legitimate insights, which have been a seminal influence on the microcosm. While Burbee continued to puncture the pomposity of practitioners of FIA-WOL with the barbs of humor, Laney -- particularly in his memoirs -- focused his critical faculties on skewering with an acid pen everything he considered immature, dishonest, pretentious and self-serving in LASFS and in fandom, while articulating what he felt was a better way of approaching the hobby.

His critical examination, his eye for detail, his dismissal of pomposity in the late 1940s and early 1950s had a profound impact and influenced the shaping of the microcosm for many years beyond his death in 1958.



— rich brown

Who's on First?

rich brown's Fanhistory Corner

Robert A. Heinlein, borrowing from general semantics for an early Worldcon GoH speech, complimented fans on being “timebinders.” Timebinding is not as unique to humans as semanticists first maintained, but it’s one of the things that helps to make humans what we are -- the passing on of information from one generation to the next, so the wheel doesn’t continually have to be reinvented. So, in fact, that the previously invented wheel becomes subject to new innovation. This little column is an exercise in timebinding -- passing on information about what has happened in the microcosm in part to prevent embarrassment on the part of new fans who might otherwise rush forward to try something they think new and daring only to be told that it was all done ages ago.

It’s an excellent practice, with much to commend it, but its utility lies in passing on useful and accurate information. And there are a number of places where our “firsts” are uncertain. Still, as long as all sides are presented, we can pass on the information to some effect.

Ready for a little controversy? In fandom, we have differences of opinion over what was the first fanzine and what was the first convention.

Let’s begin with sf conventions -- and hey, you punsters, we’re *not* talking about time travel, post-atomic war or ftl drives (those are conventions “of” science fiction, not science fiction conventions). The present consensus is that the first science fiction convention was held in Leeds, England, in 1937.



Photograph by Amy Madsen
Donald A. Wollheim sparked the first US con. He probably didn’t look like this, even at the end of it.

So where’s the controversy? Well, before Leeds could hold their convention but unquestionably inspired by the announcement of it, Donald A. Wollheim and other members of the New York Futurians hit on the notion of calling the social outing they had planned to meet with fans in Philadelphia a convention. This meeting took place on October 22, 1936, and convened in the home of Philadelphia fan Milt Rothman where, per Wollheim’s suggestion, they declared themselves to be a sf convention, and thus Sam Moskowitz’s history of early sf fandom, **The Immortal Storm**, lists it as the first.

But eventually fan historians set this aside out of fundamental fairness, reasoning that it seemed inspired primarily to “beat” the Brits to the claim of being first, bore little resemblance to an actual convention (it was held in someone’s home rather than in a hired meeting space, was not announced or programmed in advance, could be attended only by members of the two groups invited, *etc.*) and, finally, it was pointed out that if they had instead proclaimed themselves to be a plate of lime jello, it would not follow that people who came later would be under any obligation to agree that they were, in fact, a plate of lime jello. I admit I’m one of the few who presented a counter-argument, to the effect that the motivation for putting on a convention is irrelevant, even if it’s not a particularly admirable one, and once you start requiring conventions to have some modern aspect of conventions to be called a convention you’ve drawn a broad line in the sand that could wind up disqualifying many other early conventions as well. But, hey, I was just being a gadfly, arguing because I thought it amusing at the time to pull a few fans’ chains. Truth is, I’m actually convinced by the argument that it was a blatant attempt to steal the

Leeds' fans thunder and doesn't deserve to be rewarded with our complicity.

There's no easy way to make this old idea disappear entirely, however, since fans in Philadelphia hold an annual conclave called Philcon which includes in its numbering this 1936 gathering. They're understandably reluctant to go back and say their second was actually the first, their third was actually the second, their fourth was actually the third, *etc.*, &c. Amusingly enough, they named their most recent Worldcon the Millennium Philcon, but it only works as a homage to *Star Wars* -- in the matter of their holding the "first" convention, we have to say that The Force simply was not with them.

Then there's the matter of the first fanzine. To begin the discussion, there are some notions about this which most fan historians feel are totally ineligible. There are fans who want to define "fanzine" as an amateur publication which touches on sf and fantasy -- and quite a number of 18th and 19th century literary figures (*e.g.*, William Blake, the Bronte sisters, "Lewis Carroll" [Charles Lutwidge Dodgson]) published them. H. P. Lovecraft published "papers" for the mundane amateur press associations around the time of WWI that sometimes had fantasy stories or discussions of same. These are indeed legitimate "ancestors" of fanzines but it's pretentious beyond permission to pretend that fanzines existed before fandom.

At the other remove, pettifoggery replaces pretension when fans hold that the first fanzine was the October 1940 issue of *Contours*, since that's where its editor, Louis Russell Chauvenet, coined the term "fanzine." A thing is what it is, not what it's called -- and we're talking about the first fanzine, not the first thing that called itself a fanzine. Up to the time Chauvenet coined the term, they'd been called "fan magazines" (abbreviated "fan mags" or even "fmz") -- and its form and content were obviously not changed upon the renaming.

The most commonly accepted definition of a fanzine is an amateur publication intended to be read (largely if not necessarily exclusively) by other participants in the microcosm of science fic-

tion fandom. So the first fanzine has to come after the first US prozine, which facilitated fans getting in contact with each other by printing the full addresses of people whose letters were published in their pages. These enthusiasts not only began corresponding with each other but forming clubs -- which in turn published the first fanzines.

But we have two legitimate contenders. The announced aims of the two earliest known fan clubs were as one with Gernsback in their belief that their interest in scientifiction should lead them to careers in science, which fact was reflected in the names they chose for themselves -- the Science Correspondence Club (later the International Scientific Association) and the Scienceers.

The SCC's club publication, *The Comet* (later called *Cosmology*), published its first issue in May 1930 under the editorship of Ray Palmer (who went on to edit *Amazing Stories* and give us the shameful Shaver Mystery in the 1940s) -- and it is generally regarded as the first fanzine. But there are those who argue that, since its content through 17 issues focused more on the science that appeared in the stories than it did on the stories themselves, it wasn't really a fanzine.

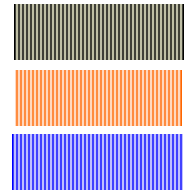
The Scienceers was the first known New York City fan club; it began meeting in 1929 and ran concurrently with the SCC. While the Scienceers claimed the same aims as the SCC, in actual practice they were more inclined to discuss the stories in their meetings, as well as in their club magazine *The Planet*, edited by Allen Glasser, which came a close second with six monthly issues between June and December of 1930.

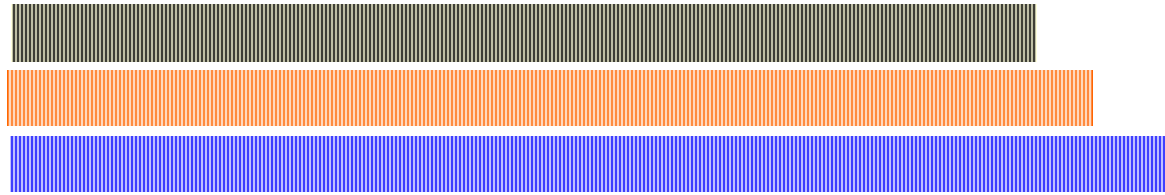
The determination of which of the two is the actual first fanzine depends on what you think a "real" fanzine is. The current accepted definition indicates that fanzines are not tied to any particular subject matter but rather are the amateur publications intended to be read by other fans in the microcosm -- and by that definition *The Comet* is the clear winner. But there are (or at least have been) those who felt that the large part of its content devoted to science rather than scientifiction *per se* somehow disqualified it, so for them the first fanzine is *The Planet*.

You don't "have" to take a stand on the issues. We're not that serious about it. You can always flip a coin. --rich brown

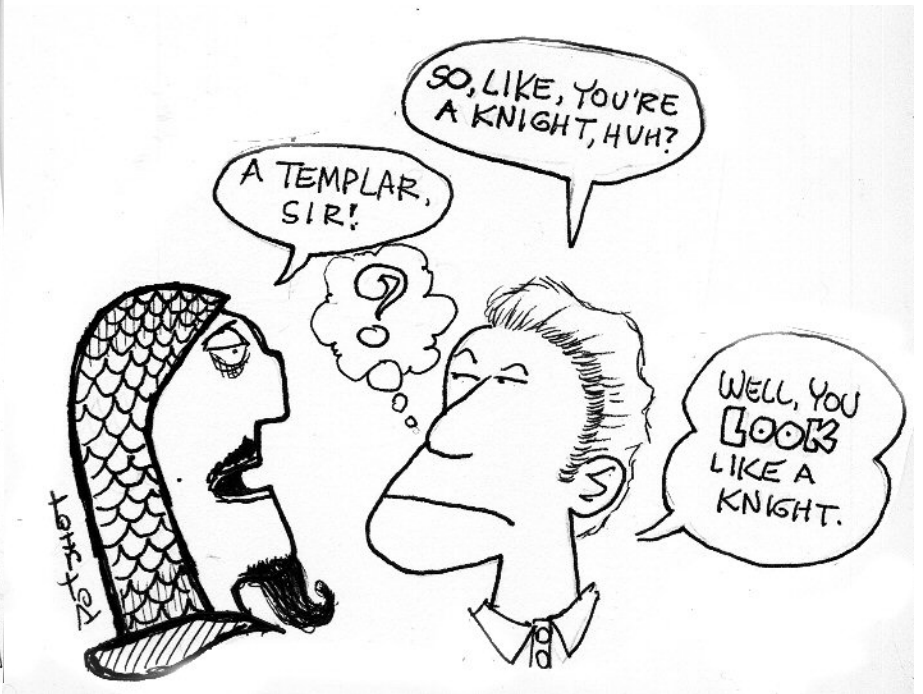
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Potshot's Cartoon Theater





The Cartoon Creations of Bill "Potshot" Kunkel



Hoaxed!

Arnie talks about fannish hoaxes



This week's column deals with one of Fandom's more colorful aspects, the perpetration of hoaxes.

READY... AIM...



I'd have written it last week, but I was afraid you'd think I made it up out of whole cloth.

It wasn't long after Fandom began that fans started perpetrating hoaxes. They come in all shapes and sizes, from humorous to malignant. Let me tell you about a few of notable ones...

The first recognized hoax, which took place in *Astounding's* letter column, boomeranged on the fan who pulled it. Bob Tucker must've been in a strange mood when he wrote to the prozine, in the guise of a bereaved reader, to report the untimely death of — Bob Tucker. When the editor found out it was a joke, he banned Tucker from the letter column. Karma caught up with Tucker 20 years or so later, in the post-war 1940's, when a misguided young fan name Ben Singer told Fandom that Tucker had perished in a movie theater fire while working as a projectionist.

Jack Speer, a frequent visitor to Las Vegas Fandom, sprung the first hoax within Fandom (as opposed to the prozines). True to his personality, it was quite benign. He invented a fan named John Bristol, who became more active than Speer himself for awhile in the 1930's. Jack eventually worked things around so he feuded with himself — and laughed about the private pledges of support both he and Bristol received from the very same fans.

A hoax rocked the 1941 worldcon, the Denvention. Fans had no sooner reached the Mile High City than the convention received a telegram of greeting from outer space! Well, that's what it *said*. Most of those at the con laughed, but one

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young neofan had a much more extreme reaction. He didn't stop at claiming to believe that the telegram was an interstellar communication, despite the lack of Western Union offices beyond the Earth, he created a whole philosophy based on the belief that fans were the sons and daughters of aliens from beyond the stars. Claude Degler cut quite a swathe through Fandom, but that's a story for another time.

In 1952, Rich Elsberry made up an entire convention, the Invention. It was supposed to be the ultimate convention, and the con reports the hoaxers wrote sure made it seem like a catastrophe for anyone who hadn't attended.

When Lee Hoffman, the greatest female fan of all time, came into the hobby, she didn't correct the misapprehension that she was a teenage boy. Once it got started, this hoax took on a life of its own and she preserved the illusion until she went to the Nolacon (New Orleans Worldcon) in 1950 to reveal that her full first name is "Shirley."

The greatest hoax in fanhistory had only one downside: people were very sad when they learned that Carl Joshua Brandon was the imaginary creation of Terry Carr, Dave Rike and Pete Graham, three San Francisco fans. Carl pioneered a type of parody that is still called a Brandonization in his

honor and he was extremely popular, too.

When the hoax was exposed at the 1958 worldcon (Solacon), Ted White turned to Terry Carr and said, "I wish you were the hoax." He couldn't contain his disappointment. (In the mid-1960's, Carl Brandon Jr. contacted US Fandom and began producing fanzines, some English language, from Sweden. That was more *homage* than hoax, though. He eventually dropped the whole thing and has fanned successfully as John-Henri Holmberg ever since.)

Some of us lazy types are too slothful to perpetrate a hoax in real-time, so we write articles about them, instead. Las Vegas has been party to several, beginning with a retro-bid for the 1973 worldcon (to oppose Minneapolis' equally fanciful bid) and including the Chicago Science Fiction League.

This club has met sporadically at Chicago Hot Dog for over a decade. The CSFL claims it is the rightful continuation of the Chicago Science Fiction League, an organization that disbanded after it hosted the ChiCon. The current group claims that, as heir to the original organization, it deserves a share of the proceeds from all Chicago conventions, including the worldcons which have been held on its turf!

And in 2004, Gordon Eklund won the "Best Fanwriter" FAAn Award largely on the strength of a long faan fiction story that claimed Las Vegas Fandom invented me. —Arnie



The Secret History of Las Vegrants

Arnie reveals the Hidden Truth

Joyce and I formed Las Vegrants as an informal, invitational group centered on, but definitely not limited to, those interested in fanzines and related creative expressions. We wanted to provide a radically different form of activity than SNAFFU. (We love SNAFFU, but variety is the spice of Fandom.)

The urge to build institutions and nail down rules for organizations is an understandable impulse in or out of Fandom. Fans have started formal clubs and written elaborate constitutions ever since Forry Ackerman was a neo. There are clubs that become fixated on such bureaucracy. They spend a lot of energy on such dubious items that could be put to use on genuine fanac.

One of Fandom's charms is its diversity. There's room for a lot of different ideas. It's the interplay among the various fan philosophies that

produces results that are beyond the reach of any one, single-minded view of Fandom. Fans who felt constrained by rigid and formal organizations and wanted a more relaxed and, as they saw it, mature social structure, developed a very different concept.

Las Vegrants only dates back to 1993, but its ideals trace back at least a half-century. Ironically, some of the fans who had most to do with forming the fan philosophy on which Las Vegrants is largely based became closely associated with Las Vegas Fandom.

Stirrings of Insurgentism began in the 1930's with Bob Tucker, who held pomposity up to the mirror of satire as Hoy Ping Pong, but the concept matured in Los Angeles in the early 1940's. That's when Charles Burbee, Francis Towner Laney and Elmer Perdue spearheaded the LA Insurgents.

The dynamic combination of Fandom's best humorist (Burbee), most trenchant essayist (Laney) and most outrageous character (Perdue) made Insurgentism one of Fandom's most important movements. When Bill Rotsler joined the LA Insurgents in 1946, it ratcheted up things another notch.

Though they originally opposed the formalism, bureaucracy and phony boosterism of the Los Angeles Science fantasy society (LASFS), they soon applied the same attitudes to Fandom as a whole.

The LA Insurgents soon inspired other free-thinking fans to start their own local groups and it wasn't long before Art Rapp had begun leading a similar group called the Wolverine Insurgents. When Uncle Sam abruptly sent Sgt. Rapp to Korea to fight in the Police Action, he turned over his focal point fanzine *Spacewarp* to Burbee, Laney



and Rotsler for two incredible issues, the second of which is one of the all-time greatest issues of a fanzine.

Those two fanzines and Laney's controversial memoirs (*Ah, Sweet Idiocy!*, published in 1947) spread the gospel of Insurgentism even more. Toronto's active fans formed The Derelicts and produced the highly literate and devilishly funny *A Bas*. Boyd Raeburn, who spearheaded the group and its fanzine, invented one of the most unique and fascinating forms of insurgent writing — the Derelicti Derrogation. Each Derrogation consisted of a playlet that featured a number of the Derelicts as well as one or more fans who'd written or spoken particularly stupid things. The Derrogation uses the target's *own words* to tie the noose and drop the trap door.

The Fanarchists pioneered Insurgentism in New York in the mid-1950's, a reaction against the lawsuit-happy, over-organized clubs in New York City. The Fanarchists made their main impact on



the local scene and paved the way for the much more successful Fanoclasts.

Formed by four couples — Ted & Sylvia (Dees) White, Terry & Carol (now Lichtman) Carr, Bob & Barbara Silverberg and Dick & Pat Lupoff — the set-up of the group has become the pattern for all the Insurgent fan groups that have followed in its illustrious tradition.

Robert's Rules of Order never stood a chance with this crew! The Fanoclasts had no written constitution and only about two informal rules. One held that the club was invita-

tional, primarily for fanzine fans and met every other Friday. The other rule confirmed the host's right to bar anyone from his or her home, regardless of membership status.

Fanoclasts worked exceedingly well. The group not only produced lots of fanzines, art and writing, but even put on the 1967 worldcon without succumbing to bureaucracy. Two other groups, FISTFA (The Fannish & Insurgent Scientifiction Association) and the Brooklyn Insurgents, sprang from the Fanoclasts. (FISTFA differed in that it was open to all, though it was even more unstructured, if that's possible.)

St. Louis also acquired a similar group, dubbed The Saturday People, which met in the home of co-founders Ray & Joyce (Worley Katz) Fisher in the late 1960's. And when Ted White and rich brown relocated to northern Virginia circa 1970, it was only natural that these Fanoclasts would start a similar outfit called Fabulous Falls Church Fandom. Seattle, San Francisco and Yucaipa (CA) are three fan centers that have had such clubs in more recent times. And, of course, there is Las Vegrants.

— Arnie



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The Fannish Way

Arnie examines Fandom's central concept.

One of the keys to understanding Fandom is summed up in the phrase “the fannish way.” (Sometimes, we say, “The Trufannish Way,” but the added confusion with the fan philosophy of Trufannishness just makes it harder to understand.) A lot of newer local fans seem confused about what we mean.

A fundamental change in the topography of Fandom causes a lot of the bewilderment. At one time, the border between Fandom and Mundane was more clearly marked. If you performed fanac and acknowledged your membership in the subculture of Fandom, you were a fan. If you didn't do those things, you were a Mundane or, at most, an SF enthusiast.

That's how it was from 1930 (the founding of Fandom) to roughly 1965 (the Burroughs-, *Trek*- and Tolkein-spawned population boom). There were 200-800 (depending on the decade) fans and a billion-plus Mundanes.

There are now approximately 25,000 people (All Known Fandom) who engage in some form of fanac — writing to listservs, publishing fanzines, running cons and clubs, filking and so forth — and a million (Mega-Fandom) who do something that takes them beyond the primary source material.

The terms “fan” and “Fandom” are overused and misused so relentlessly that they barely retain a shred of meaning. The 80 million Americans who like some form of science fiction or fantasy think they're “fans,” too. The girl who comes to a con-

vention to get blitzed and see how many strangers she can blow thinks she's a fan, too.

Yet words *do* have meanings. “Fan” and “Fandom” have very specific ones in our hobby, just as “fanzine,” “sercon” and “fugghead” do. That these words also exist in the mainstream English vocabulary with different definitions is not relevant to way way we fans use them.

The guy who watches *Star Trek Voyager* to ogle Seven of Nine's chest and Andy Hooper both can call themselves fans — it's still a marginally free country — but only Seattle Fandom's Pride and Joy is legitimately a fan in the specialized meaning of the word *within Fandom itself*.

“Are you a fan?” is no longer a yes/no question. A great many people occupy places on the spectrum between Mundane and Fandom and all of them can claim to be fans with some justice.

Today, the world of Fandom consists of a series of concentric circles, each orders of magnitude larger than the ones they enclose. Mundania surrounds Mega-Fandom as it once enveloped Classic Fandom.

One of the factors that determines where an individual fits between Classic Fandom and Mundania is their degree of adherence to the ethics, aesthetics and mores of Fandom. It is that set of values that ultimately spells the difference between someone being fannish or mundane.

Without those values, Science Fiction Fandom doesn't actually qualify as a ‘Fandom’ at all! It would be more properly termed an Interest Group.

That's what it is for the majority of fringefans (members of Mega-Fandom).

Those folks for whom it is an Inter-



"ZAP, YOU'RE A FAN!"

TELL ME ABOUT
WHEN FIRST
FANDOM RULED
THE EARTH.



est Group are as entitled to that form of pastime as are we who want a Fandom. I wouldn't dream of disturbing their fun, but I have no intention of seeing my brand of fun swallowed up by theirs.

For me, and for others like me, what makes it Fandom is its unique social structure that offers an alternative to the standards of mainstream society. I am very conversant with the Wide World and have played its games and negotiated its treacherous waters with some success, but those are not the standards by which I want to conduct my life.

I became a fan precisely because Fandom offered an environment in which a person like me could thrive and be happy. I would not willingly surrender those values, because then I would be right back in mainstream society, not a very congenial place for folks like me

The Fannish Way is neither a set of rules nor "required" procedures. It is the social contract that established Fandom in the first place. The Fannish Way is an approach to dealing with other fans within the context of Fandom.

Let's look at three important tenets of this approach to fannish living:

Fandom Is a Meritocracy. We should esteem our fellow fans for what they do, not who they are or how much money they have accumulated. Fan-

dom has forgotten this one more than once to its detriment, as when VJ Bowen won a TAFF election contrived for her benefit only to loot the treasury, space her duties as administrator and, effectively, quit Fandom.

A corollary is that, no matter how big you talk or how much energy you expend, it is what you produce that ultimately determines your "status" in Fandom.

A Fan in Need Is a Fan, Indeed. Part of "The Fannish Way" is to recognize that we are all connected and that we must help the members of our tribe who may not be in a position to fully help themselves. You show me a fan who is up against it and I will show you a hundred fans ready to help with time, money or whatever else is needed.

Fandom Is a Hobby, Not a Competition. Mainstream society is about striving, about getting, about pushing to the head of the line. From the first, fans have shown much more interest in cooperating for mutual benefit than in undercutting each other. This is expressed in numerous ways such as the sharing of mailing lists and the avoidance of scheduling conflicts among conventions and local events. That's why Corflu does not have a bidding system. It's needless competition.

No one *has* to follow The Fannish Way. Clearly, it is a path marked out for the uncommon few rather than the throngs. Those folks in Mega-Fandom (or even All Known Fandom) aren't the same as non-fans, but they aren't quite the same as classic fans, either.

Those who don't want to practice The Fannish Way must be careful about enjoying its benefits. The Fannish Way, as a social contract, has a mutuality that others are wise to respect. If you don't treat fans in The Fannish Way, it's likely that they will soon stop extending similar courtesy to you

Some fans don't enter into that social contract, but the wise ones don't look to suck up vast amounts of fannish hospitality. Being a fan is a privilege; those who abuse that privilege risk not getting treated like fellow fans.

Part of the reason I'm in Fandom is that I love The Fannish Way. That's why I encourage those who take substantial part in Fandom to embrace it as well. It is the thing that most completely sets Fandom apart from the Mundane.

— Arnie

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NOW & Again Confessions of an Insurance Salesman

Surprise, surprise – I'm back!

(Well, let's be honest; I did this right after the first one. How else can I possibly do it? I'm not like Arnie; I can't turn out tons of brilliance day-by-day, week after week.)

Let me bring everybody, as they say, up to speed. I am retired – for the second time. In my mid-fifties, I retired from Met Life; they had a plan where, if you were my age and had been with them as long as I had, you could take early retirement.

I should mention, by the way (because it has a connection in an upcoming column) that the key to my success in life insurance was the telephone. The only amazing thing about that is that I fought it! Good friend of mine, who also worked for Met, kept after me. "You can't beat the telephone for prospecting," he kept telling me. I even read articles in insurance magazines about it. But I didn't like the telephone. We had one at home, but I stayed away from it unless I was the only one home when it rang.

Finally, when I had run out of excuses and sales were down, I took a high school directory which contained names and addresses and phone numbers of students, and started calling their parents. Told myself, "Don't stop until you've made fifty calls. Fifty!" So there we were, me and the phone and the directory. Eventually, I started dialing. Determined!

The first call was murder, but I finished it – and learned an opening. The second call was easier. The third, I made an appointment. After that. . .

In a few weeks, my manager asked me to do a class on telephone prospecting.

(Little did I know the day would come when I would be a full-fledged telemarketer!)

Well, back to early retirement.

To me retirement is not a great idea. However, my speciality in life insurance was – well – life insurance! In particular, financial planning. . . and that planning included planning for retirement. What's that old saw: Do as I say, not as I do!

To begin with, have something to do when you retire. Thousands of people die each

year within a year of taking retirement – because they have nothing to do! They had figured retirement was a long vacation, where they could hunt, fish, play golf – whatever they enjoyed. Only to find that you can't live your life for nothing but fun! In my case, I intended to get back into writing when I retired; had even been doing some writing while in the insurance business.

Then – things changed.

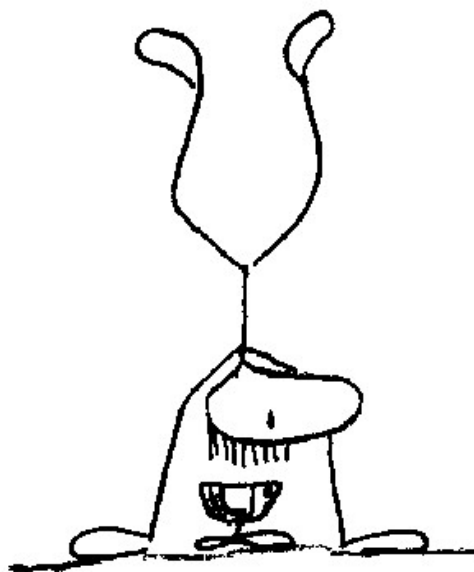
Met Life got into the casualty field (auto insurance, homeowners, etc) and I figured that was great; lots of my clients had needs for casualty insurance. So I took the necessary courses, got all my licenses. . .and then, after a few months, they announced that selling casualty insurance was a *necessity* and we had a quota to meet if we wanted to stay with Met!

It didn't take me long to realize that early (and unplanned!) retirement had its benefits!

Now, I know lots of you are saying, "That's insurance companies for you! Can't rely on them." And: "First duty of an insurance company is to get out of paying!" Well, Met Life had been a good company and they really worked for their policyowners. In fact, the weekly policies (which had been their mainstay in the old days) were actually declared Fully Paid Up in, as I recall, the late '70s or early '80s! (Of course, there was a benefit for the company, as well; up to that point, 'Industrial Representative' was a salesman category in Met. They were responsible for collecting weekly premiums and received a renewal commission for doing that – even tho, by that time, most of the weekly premiums was paid by the year and, generally, mailed in! By paying up all weekly policies, no more renewal commissions were paid.)

And insurance companies (your big ones, at least) had something in common with religion. Yeah, that's what I said; 'with religion'. Y'see, in both cases (religion and insurance) lotsa money is spent At The Top (head churches, home offices) on Appearance.

Look at the great architecture and art in the Vatican, and look at the expensive stuff in Met's home office. (It was in the Empire State Building when I worked there; guess it still is.) Aside from really



luxurious offices for the bigwigs, there was one room – a holdover from Way Back When – where the walls were lined in gold leaf! (No one could explain to me how this benefitted policyowners.)

A CONNECTED “ASIDE”

Connected both thru sf and life insurance

In my later years with Met Life, someone published a story that was interesting, but that came to what I, as an insurance salesman, thought was a very erroneous conclusion. The premise was that a box had been developed that could tell you when you were going to die. The boxes were arranged with coin-operated gadgets and sat around like telephone booths. The author stated that, knowing when they were going

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to die, people would stop buying life insurance and just make plans and live accordingly.

Huh-uh!

I guarantee such boxes would gather more dust than coins. While it would be quite practical, you'll find people would rather go thru life uninformed. They don't want to think about dying! Otherwise more wills would be written, more trusts set up, more savings and investment plans would be established – and stuck to! You find out all this when dealing with financial planning.

There *is* a connection between my insurance career and fandom. There were trips I won, and there were schools I was sent to. One trip was to New Orleans. . . where I couldn't find Harry B Moore. One school was in New York, and I met rich brown, Ted White, and a bunch of other fans that rich got together. One school was in Orlando, and Joe Siclari happened to be in town. — Shelby Vick

The Rise & Fall of Elk City Fandom!

Katzenjammer

Shed a tear, my fellow fans, for the dear dead Elk City Fandom.

It did not last long, but it leaves an indelible memory in the minds of all the fans who knew and loved it during its brief life. They were a horny bunch, of course, and they made a few moose-takes, but its record stands as testimony to the greatness of a Fandom that will never be forgotten by the fans who lived it.

Elk City, OK, Fandom began on Saturday, August 27, with bright hopes. That's when its first two members, esteemed and well-known fans both, Ben & Cathi Wilson, motored into town. The club wasn't a particularly formal organization, in line with their fannish history. It is rumored that the very first night featured Wild Sexual Excess. That's a great start for any fan club and the Elk City fans hoped that the fact that all Elk City fans were having sex with all other Elk City fans might soon induce other fans to this new Center of Fandom.

It's no over-statement to call Elk City Fandom an overnight sensation. Its leading fans had spent overnight together and, reportedly, there were plenty of sensations.

It took only that one, first night to firmly establish Elk City Fandom. The next morning, its two foremost fans discovered that they just couldn't leave. Maybe it was the magnetic lure of a new local Fandom being born or maybe it was the dead starter in their car, but they both literally could not leave the fast-rising fan center. (Going from no fans to two BNFs in 24 hours is, after all, unparalleled in fanhistory.)

Through Saturday, Sunday and Monday they reveled in the round of meetings, meals and other events that made Elk City Fandom so memorable. That was the Golden Age of Elk City Fandom, Meyer, and it will never be forgotten.

Then as happens to all too many local Fandoms, circumstances caused by the Mundane World brought a quick and noisy end to Elk City Fandom. The repair shop installed a starter and, suddenly, all of Elk City Fandom decided to embark on a road trip to Flippin, AR.

Reports are that, like Woody Bernardi's road trip to Boston, it has turned into permanent relocation.

Shorn of its leading fans, Elk City Fandom is no more. Prospects for a resurgence aren't good, though former Elk City fans Ben & Cathi Wilson are expected to add its special flavor to the budding fannish metro-polis of Flippin.

Elk City Fandom is gone, but its spirit will live on in fannish hearts.

And I say that's a Damn Good Thing.

— Arnie

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in
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NOW & Again Confessions of a Telemarketer

Yeah, bad enuf that I used to sell insurance – but, after retiring, I really went off the deep end. I became a telemarketeer!

Well, now, with a major difference. You're thinking of the phone ringing and there's someone at the other end who has The World's Greatest Deal!

Nope. Not me. I worked for a telemarketing firm where the people called me! (Or my employer, anyway.) Postcards containing 'winning numbers' went out saying: "You have won one of the prizes listed below! Call to claim your prize!"

Listed below the winning number was a mink coat, a 17 inch color TV, a \$1000 savings bond . . . and a new car! Now, they really gave away one car each year, two savings bonds, three TVs (since these cards went thru the mail, it was clear that the government would be watching, so they had to really give the things away). . . and lots and lots of mink coats!

What's the catch? (Naturally, there has to be a catch!)

The mink coats were real mink. . . bits and pieces sewn together in China. They told us (for our own info, not to be passed out) that they paid \$89 for each mink.

Well, y'say, still ain't bad – a free mink coat, bits-n-pieces or not. But then your skeptical side raises an eyebrow.

"Yes, sir; you have won a free mink coat! All you will need to do is give us \$149 dollars for insurance, shipping and handling, and it's yours."

"One-hundred-forty-nine-dollars?" It came out as one word.

"Of course! You wouldn't want us to send you an uninsured mink coat, would you? Now, if you would get out your credit card, we can send you your mink coat."

"Credit card? I was always told not to give my credit card information over the phone."

"Quite wise! However, when you call one of those TV offers, they

always ask for your credit card, don't they?"

"Well, yes, but. . . ."

"Do you use Visa or Mastercard?"

". . . Well, Visa."

"Please read the numbers slowly, so I don't make a mistake transcribing them." Of course, I was putting the number into one of those credit card machines, so we could be certain the card was valid – and, of course, certain we put it in correctly.

One reason I stayed with this outfit was that they told us to always answer all questions, don't lie, and take as long as necessary. Generally I would have a sale wrapped up in five minutes – but some sales took as much as fifteen. And another reason I stayed with them was they paid us \$300 a week for only five hours a day – and the hours, two til seven weekdays, two til five on Saturdays, fit in fine with my convenience store work – the midnight shift.

You might wonder why I kept two jobs, particularly when one paid so well for short hours.

'Cause I knew it wouldn't last! They were bound to run out of cards or mink coats or whatever before too many weeks passed by.

Now, in addition to \$300 a week, three top salesmen of the day got bonuses. The leader got an additional fifty, second place got twenty five, and third place an additional ten bucks.

At least three days a week I would be in first place.

We got the bonus (in cash, which was a bonus in another way) at the end of each day. After seven, the phones were turned off and we gathered around our leader (a really stacked blonde, by the way; no male would have any objection to gathering around her!) to see who got bonuses. (*Y'know, 'bonuses' just doesn't sound right. 'Bonus' seems like one of those words where the plural should end in 'I', or . . . 'ice'? Bonice???*) ANYway, the third or fourth time bonuses were handed out, our Leader Lady said, "I want to con-



gratulate Shelby. Hardly a day goes by he doesn't get a bonus! Shelby, how do you do it?"

"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking..." But I take egoboo gladly. "I just go in expecting a sale," I said. "I use the old 'Ask questions you know they'll answer' routine. Ask their name, address, card number, etc. Then, while they're in the habit of agreeing, go in for the sale: 'Is this your correct address?' Then: 'Visa or MasterCard?'" I shrugged. "Assume they're buying, and they probably will."

Nobody applauded, but our Lady Leader smiled at me, and that (plus the cash!) was enuf.

Then they went to vitamins. Your card would say, "Buy our vitamins and you will win one of

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our prizes." Same list. Same routine. . .but, instead of paying \$149 shipping and handling, you paid \$89 for a year's supply of vitamins. (The year's supply cost us, we were told, \$19; \$70 profit on each sale!)

"I'll bet I can buy 'em all for \$29 at WalMart!"

"Not all of them, sir. But, more importantly, those from super stores either have no expiry date on the label, or it's many years in the future. Our vitamins have only a one year expiry date, which is very important." (This was quite true.) Again, five minutes usually brought in a sale.

Ordinarily, our group would wrap up a hundred sales a day – or more! But as time went by, some began sloughing off, sales went down, and we were finally told they would have to close up shop. From there, my spare time went into politics.

— Shelby Vick

A Big Hand for the Little Lady **The Daze**

We missed the '61 Worldcon because our first baby was about to be born -- Ken arrived on September 7 of that year. And we spent yesterday babysitting with Ken and his wife, Crystal's, firstborn, Ethan Jude Lupoff.

As our friends the Flying Karamazov Brothers often say, "Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana." Anyway, by '62 we were back on the Worldcon scene. I think that was the convention where some bright soul had planned the costume competition so that the costumers would parade past an audience, then proceed inward in a spiral formation as more and more space-travelers, aliens,

mutants, and superheroes packed in behind them. Unfortunately there was no "exit strategy," and it was a miracle that nobody got crushed to death in the middle of the spiral.

Getting back to the photo -- I'm also struck by the relatively formal attire on so many of those fans, and by the incredible gender imbalance of the crowd. What was the male/female ratio? Must have been close to ten-to-one!

A great pleasure to see ATom cartoons again. Reminds me of the time Arthur Thomson visited the US. He'd been contributing cartoons to Xero and Pat and I had the pleasure of ATom's company much of the time while he was in New York. We had a dinner date with ATom and Don & Elsie Wollheim.

The five of us assembled at our apartment on East 73rd Street, then set out for the restaurant. As we were crossing a major Manhattan thoroughfare I'm afraid I reached down and patted my darling wifey's darling derriere. Pat and I were leading the procession, followed by ATom and Don & Elsie. Suddenly I heard Elsie's distinctive voice commanding me, "Richard, stop that, you'll embarrass Arthur!"

Ah, them wuz the daze, Arnie, them shore wuz the daze.

— Richard Lupoff



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London Calling 'Good-Bye' to John Brosnan

Ever seeking to strengthen transatlantic links, Arnie has offered me a regular to occasional (depending on how often I write, naturally) column in this fine newsletter. The title I've chosen comes from the song by the Clash, of course, but I don't live by the river, alas. You need big bucks to be able to do that here in London these days.

I've been in fandom 30 years now, more than long enough to qualify as an Old Fart (Flatus Geriatricus), and one of the sadder aspects of such a lengthy tenure



Malcolm Edwards, Linda Krawecke, and Peter Roberts

is the number of friends and acquaintances who start dying off. Fan and writer John Brosnan - author of many fine novels and books on the movies (bibliography at: www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/authors/John_Brosnan.htm) and of such wonderfully scurrilous fanzines as SCAB and BIG SCAB - is the latest of these. On Friday, I attended his funeral at the West London Crematorium. It was a secular ceremony - John was an avowed atheist - and the speakers were Malcolm Edwards and John's fellow Aussie, John Baxter. His casket was committed to the flames to the sound of the James Bond theme. Others at the ceremony included Harry Harrison, Christopher Priest, Garry Kilworth, Lisa Tuttle, Pat Cadigan, Chris Evans, David Langford, Roz Kaveney, and old time fans Ian Maule, Peter Roberts, Leroy Kettle, and Pat & Graham Charnock, a roll call of most of those Londoners who had been Big Name Fans (Flatus Maximus) during John's fannish heyday back in the 1970s. (An account of those days can be found in the fourth part of *THEN*, my history of the first 50 years of UK fandom, at: www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Then/then_4-1.html) After the ceremony we reconvened for a wake/celebration of John's life in a private room at The French House in London's Soho, a pub which

served as the unofficial HQ of the Free French in London during WWII. It was a hot, very bright day, and the sun blazing in through the windows mostly played havoc with my attempts to take decent photos with the somewhat inflexible camera in my Palm Zire, alas, though I hope Arnie has found one of the photos I'm sending along with this column usable.

I'd expected a pay bar with maybe a few bowls of nuts and potato chips to be laid on, but in fact there was an impressive buffet lunch with lots of wine, and the food and the drinks just kept coming, paid for, I gather, by one of John's publishers. A whole bunch of other people joined us here, bringing the number up to around 50 I'd say, and along with Alun Harries and Linda Krawecke, who I've seen recently, were others such as John Hall, Jimmy Robertson, and John Jarrold, whom I hadn't seen in years. Malcolm Edwards, Rob Holdstock, and Leroy Kettle had organized the funeral and the later event, and all three spoke both movingly and entertainingly about John. As Malcolm had commented at the ceremony: "When you've known someone for 35 years they become more than a friend - they become part of the fabric of your life."

Ever seeking to strengthen transatlantic links, Arnie has offered me a regular to occasional (depending on how often I write, naturally) column in this fine newsletter. The title I've chosen comes from the song by the Clash, of course, but I don't live by the river, alas. You need big bucks to be able to do that here in London these days.

I was particularly pleased to make contact with people like Malcolm, Leroy, Rob, and the Charnocks again after what had been far too many years. Though older and greyer, I still recognized most of them immediately. Back in the 1980s we and John all used to meet up regularly at a pub in Haringey to play pool, drink beer, and talk about pretty much anything and everything - which is the thing about fannish friendships I probably value most. As so often happens, life took us in different directions and I mostly lost touch with them. I hope the next time we meet it will be under happier circumstances.

. — Rob Hansen

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in
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Remembering Al Ashley BT: His Page



Bob Tucker

Note: Bob Tucker — he's "Wilson Tucker" only when putting his byline on his science fiction and mystery novels and stories — is the fan most responsible for the things most of us enjoy in this hobby. He practically invented humor and

fannishness. (See rich brown's column in VFW #28 for an account of one of Tucker's most storied exploits, the Great Staple War.)

When Bob responded to a reference to Al Ashley in VFW #27, my inquiring email brought forth this article.

Al Ashley was a colorful character who, together with his wife Abby Lou and a motley collection of fans, inhabited history's first Slan Shack in Battle Creek, Michigan during the war years 1941-45.

He was a taxi driver who always knew where to find groceries despite the food rationing of those years, and he provided food during those weekend parties at his house -- fans galore, sometimes as many as 20 of them would descend on Slan Shack for a weekend of entertainment. Just like a con suite.

Slan Shack was a large two-storey-plus-huge-attic-house that accomodated 20 fans without crowding if you didn't mind sharing beds or floor space with other fans. Claude Degler was denied entrance. Claude appeared one weekend and wanted to join the gaiety, claiming he had an invitation, but Al Ashley blocked the door and never let him in.

Six fans lived there and shared the rent: Al and Abby Lou, Walt Liebscher, E.E. Evans, Jack Wiedenbeck, and Thelma Morgan. Wiedenbeck got married there and moved his wife in (name not remembered). Evans' daughter (name not remembered) sometimes lived there a few weeks at a time. My date and I spent countless weekends there. Al -- the taxi driver with an inside knowledge of rationed food -- fed us all.



The first Slan Shack broke up in either 1944 or 45 when the troupe moved to Los Angeles and took a large apartment next door to the L.A. club-rooms. And Al Ashley met Francis T. Laney, Elmer Perdue, and Charles Burbee at the club meetings -- to the enrichment of fan history. One of that trio (I suspect Burbee) wrote a piece of fan fiction having this punchline: "'You bastard,' said Al Ashley."

Fandom seized upon that line and immortalized it. In later years it was repeated in any number of fan writings and it may now be in the FanEncyclopedia. Ah, fame.

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in
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— Bob Tucker

VEGAS FANDOM WEEKLY

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Vegas Fandom Celebrate (Christmas Party '04) ::: Arnie Katz

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Ross Chamberlain Holliday Card ::: Ross Chamberlain

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Exploring Fandom: The Enchanted Duplicator ::: Arnie Katz

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