

# VEGAS FANDOM WEEKLY

The rich brown Memorial Issue



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# Good-Bye, Dr. Gafia

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Rich brown was an unshakably loyal friend, an exemplary human being and one of the best damn fans of his era. He touched many lives, invariably for the good, including mine.

Rich wasn't the first fan I met and, even at the time, not the biggest BNF who had deigned to acknowledge my existence. Yet from the moment I met him, he exercised a powerful, positive influence on me as a human, a writer and a fan.

Without taking away from the many others who have taught me and helped me and nurtured me on a human level, rich did a lot of the "hands on" work that helped transform me from a mouthy and insecure teenager into the semi-suave, reasonably well-integrated and moderately successful adult I became.

Even before I met him, or even knew who he was, rich brown played a pivotal role in my life as a fan. After Lenny Bailes and I published *Cursed #1* in March 1963 in a successful effort to find Fandom, I spent the next year trying to learn about the hobby. I joined the N3F, went to ESFA and Lunarians, attended first Lunacon '73 and then Discon I (the 1963 worldcon) and generally searched for... something.

Emboldened by contact with Frank Willemczyk in N'APA (the N3F apa), I wrote to Ted White to ask for an invitation to visit the Fanoclasts. That was pretty ballsy for a Long Island high schooler and Ted, probably rightly, was about to consign my post card to the trash can when rich brown and Mike McInerney, visiting Ted at the time, convinced him to give the brash kid a chance.

When I actually went to Ted's Brooklyn apartment for one of the Fanoclasts' Friday-night gathering, rich was the friendliest and most approachable fan I met. I'd like to think he sized me up as good raw material, but whatever it was, we be-

came friends almost immediately.

Rich shepherded me through that meeting, pled my case for admission with the other Fanoclasts and quickly took over my fannish education. He told me anecdotes based on his personal experiences and his knowledge of fanhistory, explained things I didn't understand, and shared insights that were well beyond my powers of perception at that time.

Rich and Mike were co-hosting FISTFA on alternate Fridays to Fanoclasts meetings. With their encouragement, I began going to the open, informal club. Meetings ran late, but rich encouraged me to stay even later. I'd read his fanzines as he fed me stories and factoids about the fans associated with that particular zine. Between fanzines, we talked about Fandom and about Real Life.

In a way, rich was like an older brother. I kind of idolized Ted White when I was a teenager and, as I matured, came to think of him as a beloved fannish Uncle, but rich was more like the guy who took me places and showed me things.

Though rich is best-known in Fandom for his fanhistorical essays and blazing polemics, he also had a terrific sense of humor. I know this, because he always thought I was funny.

He was a master of the deadpan put-on. He had an awesome talent for gradually leading me down the path from reality to ridiculous paranoia and fantasy so adroitly that I would often make the journey before I even realized I'd put the first foot on that yellow brick road.

His best was the gradual revelation that there is a Fandom beyond ours. Little by little, sometimes by subtle indirection, rich disclosed this greatest secret of the microcosm. When great fans leave our ken, either by gafia or death, they are, in reality, graduating to a "higher Fandom." This net-

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# Arnie Katz

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work of ober-fans guides our fannish destinies and shapes our hobby.

He drove me crazy with that one. His sincerity and conviction, trained on my sensitive neofannish psyche for 12 hours or so in a row, could overcome skepticism and circumvent good sense.

It was only when he told me that he had been to a meeting and Certain Gafiated Fans had pushed for my admission to Super Fandom that I finally concluded he was kidding. I mean, how great could they be if they wanted a neo like me?

I never actually called rich brown “Dr. Gafia,” except when I first gave him the nickname. He was Dr. Gafia on paper, including the cover of *Quip #1*, but I always addressed him as “rich.” I may have been secretly afraid that calling him “Dr. Gafia” would touch off exactly the situation I so much wanted to avoid.

In a way, I dubbed him “Dr. Gafia” in self defense. His periodic gafiations scared the crap out of me and pinning a nickname to this recurring phenomenon made it seem a little more bearable.

The urge to gafiate, by which rich meant something more drastic than dropping out of FAPA or skipping the worldcon, overtook rich periodically, generally at times of great emotional stress and life upheaval.

Rich started in very modest circumstances and worked his life up in many ways through a combination of dogged determination and natural talent. He seldom talked about his South Pasadena childhood, though it evidently wasn't a very pleasant or nurturing environment. Yet rich completed high school, got additional training in the air Force and, through his experience in Fandom, made himself into a fine writer, editor and journalist.

Rich never had it easy and, sometimes, the obstacles seemed insurmountable and the reverses in fortune almost unbearable. This sometimes led to one of rich's dramatic declarations of gafia. Suddenly, he would announce that he was quitting Fandom, divesting himself of his fanzine collection and other mementos of the microcosm and moving to some far-off place.

These mercurial moods would terrify me. Not only did I identify with rich's struggle, but he was both a close friend and my fannish guide. There's no question that, overall, Ted White is my fannish

mentor, the fan who has inspired me to do whatever it is that I've done in the hobby. Rich brown watched over me in a more personal way. I spent more time with him than any of the other Fano-clasts after I joined the group in April, 1964 and came to think of him as an older brother.

Every Declaration of Gafiation hurled me into a tailspin. I couldn't accept the idea that rich was about to vanish from my life. My persuasive powers probably weren't what they are today, but I used everything I had to argue, cajole and convince rich that he should reconsider his (obviously) rash decision.

Besides that feeling of impending abandonment, I had an additional burden of guilt. Rich allowed accompanied his Gafia announcement with a fire sale of old and rare fanzines. His attitude toward his hoard of fannish treasures would shift dramatically. He couldn't get rid of them fast enough – and his low prices insured that fans would snap them up in a matter of minutes.

One Friday evening in the mid-1960's found me sitting with rich in the living room of the apartment he and Mike McInerney shared, trying to convince him not to sell his fanzines, especially his professionally bound copy of the FAPA 100<sup>th</sup> mailing post-mailings, including *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* and the *Spaceways* anthology. It was a beautiful thing in its white hardcover binding and I tried to sell rich on the idea of keeping it even if he let go of a lot of lesser fanzines.

He was unmoved by my neofannish eloquence. Almost worse, he insisted that I should buy it, since he knew it was something that I very much wanted to have. I did my best to resist this temptation and held out grimly until rich played his trump card. He pointed out that fans would soon be arriving for that night's FISTFA meeting. He threatened that, if I didn't buy it, he would sell it for an even lower price to one of the fuggheads that clung to the fringes of the informal, open club.

So I bought the volume for something like \$5, a ridiculously low price even then, but only after I told rich that he could buy back the volume at the same price if he should ever change his mind.

I kept that book near the door in our Brooklyn Heights apartment for 19 years, in a similar position at Toner Hall for over a decade and now in the hallway of the Launch Pad since our move. At

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first, I kept it there in case rich should ever knock on the door and want his bound volume.

After I returned to Fandom in late 1989, rich assured me that he would never want to take it away at that late date. I left it in what has become a position of honor, a personal fannish tradition. It's still there now. My fondest hope is that rich will show up to claim it.

What a pity rich was kidding about the Over

Fandom. It would be nice to think of him benignly nudging Core Fandom towards its next Golden Age. I guess I'll have to settle for a mental image of him at the Enchanted Convention, sitting in an endless room party next to Terry Carr with Burbee, Rotsler, Laney and Perdue on one hand and Willis, Shaw, White, Clark and Harris on the other.

— Arnie Katz

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# The Obituary

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Thanks largely to the Herculean efforts of Dan Joy, *The Washington Post* ran an obituary for rich brown on August 1. Although a *Post* reporter wrote the actual piece, Dan Joy provided the newspaper with all the pertinent information. It's far from complete, as will happen with obituaries, but it is fitting that rich brown's passing be recognized in this manner.

## **Rich Brown Writer, Editor**

Rich Brown, 64, an Arlington resident who held writing and editing jobs and was involved in editing and publishing science fiction fanzines, died July 6 at Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington. He had complications from bowel surgery in May.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Brown began editing or publishing at least a dozen fanzines, including Beardmutterings. The content ranged from personal essays to whimsical pieces about science fiction fandom. He was also involved in fanzine organizations.

He was born in Pasadena, Calif., and served in the Air Force from 1958 to 1962. He then was a New York-based editor for the Daily Bond Buyer, among other publications.

He settled in the Washington area in the mid-1970s and briefly worked as a reporter for Reuters and an editor at Air Force Times.

In the 1980s and 1990s he was a temp and then special assistant at Sallie Mae, the student loan organization. In the late 1990s, he was briefly an editor and writer at CollectingChannel.com.

His marriage to Colleen Woo Brown ended in divorce.

Survivors include a daughter, Alicia Brown of Manassas.

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# Dan Joy

# rich brown

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“You were his best friend, Ted,” Alicia Brown said to me. Colleen Stockmann, rich’s previous wife and Alicia’s mother, told me the same thing.

I never felt that. Which is to say, “best friend” seems to me a very arbitrary term, and one which did not agree with my perceptions. Rich and I were very close, yes. But our relationship was more fraternal – we were like brothers. Sometimes we got angry with each other. Occasionally we squabbled. But we were always there for each other. *We* could attack each other, but if someone else attacked one of us, the other always leapt to his defense.

When I think of rich’s close friends, I think of a number of people with whom he hung out. I think of Mike McInerney, with whom rich shared an apartment for several years in New York City in the ‘60s. They shared more than an apartment for a time, when Cindy Heap was having a relationship with them both.

And I think of Arnie Katz, who hung out a great deal with rich and Colleen in the late ‘60s, and whose relationship with Joyce more or less began in rich and Colleen’s Brooklyn apartment.

As a matter of fact, I’m reminded of when Arnie offered rich a job in Las Vegas, in the mid-‘90s. Rich accepted it and began preparations for the move. Then one day he showed up at my house, tears running down his face. “I can’t do it,” he sobbed. “I can’t leave this area. There’s too much of me invested here, now.” I think he was referring to his daughter, with whom he was always close – they read books to each other, starting when she was quite young, and never stopped – but he was probably also referring to his friends, myself among them. I hadn’t tried to talk rich out of the move, but I was selfishly glad that he changed his mind.

When Dan Joy moved back to this area (after an absence of over a decade), several things happened. One of them was that he and I got back together, transcribed a lot of old cassettes of his music onto CD, and formed a new band together. Another was that Dan started getting together with rich on Sundays to watch tapes and DVDs from rich’s vast library of old movies and TV shows. I’d say Dan and rich were pretty close friends.

Then there’s Olivia Stockmann, Alicia’s half-sister. While rich and Colleen had divorced more than 25 years ago, and Colleen eventually remarried, they never severed their “family” ties. Colleen has had my daughter and myself over for Christmas Eve every year since the end of the ‘70s, and rich was there every year as well. When Colleen married Leonard, and they had a daughter, Olivia, rich became the girl’s kinda-uncle. Olivia is now in her teens, and has been taking ballet lessons for years (she’s tall and slender). It was rich who every weekday would pick her up from school, take her over to his apartment to watch *Buff* on tape, and then to her ballet lesson.

But the guy I want to tell you about is Harlan Forbes. Despite the name, he was not a fan.

In June, 1999, on a Saturday in the late afternoon, I was waiting for rich to show up. We were going to go out to see a movie and then dinner. Rich was running late. At loose ends and prowling my yard, I noticed not for the first time the ginkgo tree growing under an azalea bush. I decided to transplant it while I waited for rich. This impulsive decision on my part was a foolish one. Without any forethought or preparation, I took a shovel down to the front of my property and climbed up onto the low stone wall which separated my property from the sidewalk. The wall was covered with English ivy vines. I caught one of my feet in the vines, lost my balance, and fell, out into the

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# Ted White



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street. My hip hit the curb and broke.

I ended up in the hospital – the same one rich was in on his hospital stays – and then for a week of rehab in a place called Manor Care. Rich came and visited every day, and after the first visit, he brought with him a deck of cards – two pinochle decks, actually, for double-deck pinochle, a game Linda Blanchard had

taught us both. Two-handed is a bit of a joke – you can look at the displayed dummies and your own hand and figure out what’s in your opponent’s hand – but for a light, quick game of a couple hands it suffices.

At Manor Care we had the use of a lounge with a large round table and a half dozen chairs (but I was in a wheelchair, of course), and that’s where we’d play our nightly games.

And one of the other guys in the lounge some nights would be Harlan Forbes.

I’d first noticed Harlan when I’d gone to Physical Therapy and he’d also been there. His left leg had been amputated at the knee. He seemed to me to have a lot of courage and good humor. In the lounge he wheeled up to the table and asked us about the game we were playing. We explained it to him and asked him if he’d like to join us (three-handed is more fun and partnership is best). He did.

Harlan was a man in his late 40s or early 50s who had led an active life – tennis every day – until a year earlier, when he had been hit hard by diabetes. In a short period of time his life had been turned upside down. He had recently lost his leg, and he had a shunt in his left arm for regular kidney dialysis. He had advanced neuropathy.

He was an engaging guy who could tell good stories, and he picked up the game fast and began playing it with us nightly. Then I was released. I was enormously grateful to be getting back home at last, but sorry to say goodbye to Harlan.

It was rich who suggested that we could join Harlan on Saturday nights for cards. And so we did, rich driving me over with my crutches, me



Rich brown and Ted Johnstone (David McDaniel), shown as part of a 1956 cover of *Cry of the Nameless*.

finding a wheelchair in Manor Care’s lobby, and then taking the elevator up to the third floor (rehab), to join Harlan in the lounge at the big round table. We started doing this at the end of June.

By the early fall Harlan was having trouble holding his cards. The neuropathy had reached his left hand and he could no longer feel anything with that hand.

Indeed, he was starting to lose joints from the fingers of his left hand after it had gotten caught in the spokes of his wheelchair.

Rich came up with a clever, elegant solution. In a thrift store he found an old fan – no jokes, please. When folded up, it was about 18 inches long and more than an inch of folds thick. When you held the open end shut with a rubber band, you could easily stick cards in the folds of the fan, while it sat on the table. This allowed Harlan to keep his cards displayed for his view.

It was in early January that Harlan told us that his neuropathy was “complete” and he could no longer feel anything in his body. I wish I’d been perceptive enough to understand what that meant. A week later Harlan was dead.

Rich and I went to his “viewing.” There we met his family. We’d already met both his son and his daughter, who had visited him occasionally at Manor Care. But we met for the first time his mother and father, elderly people who expressed considerable gratitude to us for having been Harlan’s “best friends” during his last half-year of life.

“He talked so much about you, and how much he looked forward to seeing you, Saturday nights,” his mother told us.

Rich said, “Well, we needed someone to play cards with, you know,” but we were both touched by the family’s gratitude.

That was rich brown for you. He was my friend and his death leaves my life a lot emptier. And right now that hurts.

—Ted White

# rich brown and the Coffee Table Book

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When arriving in Falls Church in 1974, there were just two fannish doorsteps that welcomed my arrival. The first, naturally, was Ted White's ancestral home on North Tuckahoe Street and the other, about a mile away, was the home of rich brown and his family on Linden Lane. (To be honest, there was also Goose Shit Farm, briefly the home of John D. Berry and Terry Hughes, where you *always* had to pay attention to where you were walking – which made its doorstep a lot less welcoming than the others. And a lot smellier, too.) Each household opened their doors to me and made me feel at home, and yet they were so very different. And yet they were somehow the same.

Ted's house was the nexus of all activity. Everything happened there. AMAZING and FANTASTIC were produced there. Everybody's fanzines were printed and collated there. All the wild parties and the heavy debates took place there. Ted and Robin's driveway was always full of VW buses and vans and loud music filled the air like the constant aroma of honeysuckle. There were always people coming and going at all hours, bringing with them new friends and new intoxicants. The place vibrated with life.

Over on Linden Lane it was quieter and more conventional. From the outside it looked like every other suburban ranch house on the block. If you peeked in the picture window you might see a few adults watching TV or sitting down to a meal or a game of cards. Decorated with a few pieces of conventional modern furniture, it seemed almost dull when compared with the interior at Tuckahoe Street. There were no ornate pump or-

gans, or piles of LPs stacked in the corner, or shelves overflowing with books. And yet it too vibrated, but at a lower frequency. More like a hum than a buzz.

Life in Falls Church Fandom – or Fabulous False Crutch Fandom, as we sometimes called it – revolved around these two houses. Communal meals were often shared at one house or the other. On any given evening you might find the Whites and the Browns together, sharing food with the rest of us detached and footloose fanboys. There was John D. Berry, Terry Hughes and his brother Craig, Ed Smith, and Richard Snead. Sometimes the crowd included Brad Balfour, or Michael Dobson. Other times locals like Michael and Edie Nally joined us, and, of course, let's not forget your humble narrator. Thankfully nobody ever complained if I didn't have any money to contribute or didn't bring a dish to share. Nobody kept track of who brought what; it was a family thing and we became like a family. One big hungry family.

At Ted's house the meals usually featured the bounty of the family's large vegetable garden and aromatic goodies that came from Robin's oven. At rich's house it was often spaghetti or the notorious battles for the best killer chili recipe, with Colleen and John each trying to permanently burn out the other's taste buds. I remember several occasions when I ate food that was so spicy that it would totally wipe out my palate by the second spoonful, yet was always just too tasty to stop shoveling it in. Eventually a truce was called in the Chili Wars when one pot's contents got so ex-

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# Dan Steffan



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cruciating that they had to finally set it aside to be used as seasoning in the next week's batch, instead of actually consuming it by itself.

These were big, noisy occasions. Music played and conversations competed for attention in every corner. The sound of voices raised in laughter and exultation could be deafening. In fact, the only time it was quiet was when it was time to eat and then it would be quiet as a church -- the silence broken only by the pathetic cries of chili-induced pain.

On occasion I was lucky enough to spend some solitary time on Linden Lane. Colleen would be off on some adventure with Terry or John, little Alicia in tow, and rich and I would kick back and relax. Brief lulls in the fannish storm, as it were. One lazy Saturday afternoon, rich and I decided to take some acid and watch the classic film, "King Kong," on television. Neither of us had seen it in years and I remember our giggling conversation about the primitive animation and the corny close-ups of the giant ape's face. We even discussed the legendary scene where Kong removes Fay Wray's dress in a fit of impish curiosity and lamented that neither of us had ever seen it, having been edited out of the film years earlier. It was a crime, we agreed, that a work of art should be censored so crassly. It was also a crime, we agreed, that neither of us had ever had the chance to see Ms. Wray nekkid.

"Gee whiz," rich lamented. "Even Kong got to see her bazooms... Why can't we?"

By the time the great ape was being shot by the circling planes we were both in tears. As his ragdoll body fell from the great pinnacle of the Empire State Building we sat in stunned silence, trying to stifle our sobs as he hit each of the building's terraces on his way down. Such cruelty. Such sadness. As the credits began to roll, we both agreed that we would never again watch this wretched film. We would never again condone the kind of heartless murder that we had just witnessed. Never again, we vowed.

But then rich began to giggle and lean towards me. "Never again," he said, taking me into his confidence. "Unless, of course, they show the version with her bazooms." Before long I was once again wiping tears from my eyes, but now they were tears of silly joy.

Damn, that was good acid.

Rich brown loved to laugh. He was one of the best audiences I've ever known. I always knew that I could get a laugh out of rich, no matter what I showed him. Sometimes it was a cartoon and other times it was something I'd written. He'd always laugh until he had trouble breathing. He would sputter and gasp like he was about to pass out. Sometimes, if I'd done something that I knew was only marginally funny, I'd try and show it to him before I showed it to anybody else. Getting one of his Bust A Gut reactions made it easier to then show the piece to Ted or somebody else who might not be so generous with their laughter. It made it easier to accept the truth.

I always thought that rich actually wanted to like whatever I was showing him, but I never thought he was giving me a free ride. He was always honest in his criticism, but would also take the time to look for something in the article that he genuinely liked or actually thought was amusing. Even if the article was shit, he would usually find the one or two good turns of a phrase or a joke that would make him laugh out loud. But if something *was* funny, he would laugh until he was gasping and wheezing. That's when I knew I'd done good.

The hardest I ever saw rich laugh was on another of those lazy afternoons on Linden Lane. We had no classic movies to watch on that particular day, nor were there any good drugs around for our amusement -- just the regular kind. As I remember it now, Colleen and Alicia were out for the day and rich and I were home alone, probably watching TV, or sitting around reading, or maybe even watching TV while sitting around reading -- or, in my case, sketching.

After a while, rich looked up from the fanzine he'd been looking at and asked me what I was drawing. I showed him a couple of doodles I'd done of fat, little aliens in different poses. One had a gun and the other was standing at attention, his arm cocked in a salute.

"That one looks like Judy-Lynn Benjamin," rich said, pointing to the second of the grotesque drawings. I could see the vague resemblance and added a bouffant hair-do, a matronly dress, a huge lip-sticked mouth, and a copy of GALAXY under her arm. rich looked at the improvements and started to laugh. There was a distinct twinkle in his eyes.

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“Why is she rubbing her forehead?” he asked, referring to what had once been the salute.

“I don’t know,” I answered hesitantly. “Why *is* she rubbing her forehead, rich?”

“Because she just walked into the coffee table,” he sputtered, alluding to Judy-Lynn’s legendary lack of stature. Then we laughed for ten



rich brown chats with Ross Chamberlain.

minutes. Ten minutes of totally unhinged silliness. Rich laughed and gasped and coughed and sputtered until he could no longer sit up. Tears ran down his face. Tears ran down my face. It was so unexpected. It was so wrong. It was so funny.

That was the day that rich and I created “The Judy-Lynn Benjamin Joke Book.” It was about a dozen – ahem – half-size pages of drawings and “jokes” that kept us laughing all afternoon. It was -- without a doubt -- the foulest, the cruelest, the crudest, and the dumbest object I have ever been associated with. And, of course, one of the funniest things I’ve ever been a part of as well.

Upon its completion, rich and I made a pact with each other that nobody should ever see the one and only copy of the book. I offered to destroy it on the spot in his fireplace, but he told me he’d hold on to it for safekeeping. After that, I didn’t see it again for more than ten years.

By the mid-1980s, rich was living with us in a big house that we had rented near the National Zoo, in Washington, DC. It was a huge old place. Lynn and I lived on the second floor and rich and Dan Joy lived on the third floor. One afternoon, while I was sitting in the kitchen, rich walked in and handed me an envelope. It was smudged and had been folded repeatedly over time.

“It’s your turn now,” he said, without further explanation. “You can take care of it for a few years.”

“What is it?” I asked him, holding it by the grungy corner of the envelope.

He raised his hand and pretended to rub his forehead. “The Judy-Lynn Benjamin Joke Book,” he replied with a smirk. I was utterly surprised.

“Did you read it?” I asked him as he started go-

ing back upstairs.

“No, I couldn’t bring myself to even look at it,” he shouted from the second floor landing. “I recommend you do the same,” he added as he continued up the stairs and out of earshot.

In 2005, nearly 20 years later, I once again found the envelope containing “The Judy-Lynn Benjamin Joke Book” among the papers I

was packing for our move to Portland. And like rich, I couldn’t bring myself to open it up and actually read the stupid thing. I knew it would be nothing but an embarrassment. I knew it wouldn’t be even remotely funny, but I still couldn’t bring myself to throw it away. I had the perfect opportunity, but I just couldn’t do it. It meant too much. It represented a time and a place that was, despite everything, special to me and special to rich – even though we both knew, in reality, that there was absolutely nothing special about it at all. Nevertheless, it was, as Sam Spade said of the Maltese Falcon, “The things that dreams are made of.”

The last time I saw rich was at our Going Away party in March of last year. I mentioned to him that I had found our Little Secret envelope and he just rolled his eyes and shook his head. A little grimace crossed his lips. “The next time I find that thing,” I scolded myself out loud, “I swear it is going right in the trash.”

A few minutes later, I glanced across the room and noticed rich looking right at me. Our eyes locked for a moment and he slowly and deliberately reached up and rubbed his forehead in mock pain and began to laugh. I wagged my finger at him, like you would at a mischievous child. He just grinned back defiantly.

I never saw or spoke to him again. I still have “The Judy-Lynn Benjamin Joke Book” in a box somewhere to remind me of our lazy afternoons on Linden Lane.

“Do you think you’ll ever open the envelope?” Lynn asked me after reading these recollections.

“I don’t have to,” I replied, touching my forehead. “I’ve got it all right up here.”

— Dan Steffan

# It Started with a LoC

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I received a very unusual letter of comment from rich brown in response to the first fanzine I ever wrote: rich thought I was a hoax perpetrated by Teresa and Patrick Nielsen Hayden, when the truth was that I was part of a small group of sf fans who'd been recruited to help collate a fanthology, and I'd been wooed by the camaraderie of fandom, and the elegance of Eric Mayer's piece on the birth of his child and the death of John Lennon.

I'd come a little late in life to fandom, or so it felt to me there in my ancient late 20s, so rich was fooled by the fact that I could write better than your average hopeless neo, but at the same time I'd run afoul of my attempt to kluge a word processor out of Basic language "lprint" commands and cassette tape storage system, so that my final product was less than elegant. The combination was too much for rich; he was convinced I was a fictional fan.

It didn't take too long for him to realize I was a genuine, flawed human, through letters and exchanges of fanzines and finally meeting at a convention. And I fell for his wit and charm in print and in person.

Eventually that resulted in us deciding to move in together, a small feat of geographical relocation involving me giving up my Washington (state) for his Washington (D.C.).

He accompanied me on the long drive across country, hauling a stuffed U-Haul behind my straining old hippie van, teaching me how to back it up without jackknifing it, which came to be quite a useful skill when he allowed me to waylay him into the hinterlands of North Dakota, looking for a writer and local historian I'd had a correspondence with, down blue highways that turned into dirt roads that became impassable -- ever try to do a 3-point turn with a trailer behind you? And visiting friends along the way -- we had a grand time.

A tribute like this should have lots of funny stories to tell, but for the most part, the ones I recall from more than twenty years ago are too private to share. The most amazing (public) incident I recall from all those years ago was when we were at the first Corflu and I

challenged Ted White to run a better convention and he and rich somehow turned this around to me wanting to (and volunteering to) run the next one in the vicinity of Falls Church.

How the man could be courting me but side with his best friend and still win my heart speaks to his charm. And he was deeply charming in a unique way, never failing to laugh at his own foibles, and to make you laugh at your own.

Once we arrived on the east coast, rich gave up his apartment and sprung for a house in the burbs, in lovely rural Woodbridge, where we had parties and pinochle games, and long commutes into and back from the city during which we'd read to each other, mostly fanzines.

We went to conventions, dined out and home-cooked in, and played more cards, and rich taught me a great deal about writing and about fannish history. To this day when I get up from my comfy chair and find, on my return, that it is occupied by my cat, I comment that he is "the reincarnation of a Fanoclast."

I say this to myself or whomever is around and no one gets the joke but me and I always feel I'm sharing it with rich "the old jokes are the best" brown.

It was an unfortunate thing that the house with the two of us in it became a bit overcrowded with the spirits of other fans involved in the brouhaha of the day. I don't think that's what broke rich and I up -- I think we weren't well suited to live together -- but it hastened the end. I left D.C. after less than a year, but brought away new friends in Georgette Heyer, and archy and mehitabel, among others.

We stayed in touch, though with long gaps between our conversations, it never felt as though we lost any of the affection we'd shared since that first letter of comment, and it seemed as if hardly any time was passing.

That's what fooled me, I guess, into believing he'd always be there, that when I had time again after my kids were grown, we could pick up our friendship right where we left off.

— Linda Blanchard

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# Linda Blanchard

# I Remember rich

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When I arrived in New York on Friday July 17, 1970, I was fit and ready, and prepared to conquer my new world. Heck, I had a Cashier's Check for \$200 in my pocket – that was just about 200 percent more than I had when I arrived in Hollywood in 1961. And that had been a snap: I walked down Hollywood Blvd. 'til I saw a Help Wanted sign in the window of a cafe, started waiting tables that afternoon, and that night used my tips to rent a room in a small hotel just off Hollywood on Wilshire Blvd.

There had been a lot of trauma, leaving St. Louis – pain and tears and more anguish than I care to discuss. I cried myself sick on the flight. But when I landed, I dried my eyes, and looked at the bright New York skyline, towers and spires glistening in the sunshine, and I knew I was seeing a new life

It was Friday, and I was at least eight years past my table-waiting days, so there'd be no quick employment and instant cash from tips. Not this time. I figured it might take several days to get a paycheck and be firmly on my feet.

I had no idea. I hadn't even imagined how much difference there'd be between New York and Hollywood.

I did have an ace-in-the-hole. I'd been in an apartment with rich brown and his then-wife Colleen, and when they'd learned my intent to move to NYC, they'd sent a cheery note saying "Come stay with us while you get your feet under you." So, although I was homeless and broke (though I hadn't yet realized that last part) I did have plans.

As I sat in the taxicab that took me to Brooklyn, my spirits rose to meet the horizon. I vowed to swallow sadness, leave regrets unvoiced, and open my heart to the new world I was entering.

When the luggage was dragged up to the fourth floor walkup, it was Colleen who welcomed me. It was the first time we'd met, and I instantly liked

the sprightly young woman. She was full of cheer and hospitality, wreathed with smiles, and quick to put me at ease on the sofa in the living room. We stacked the suitcases against the wall, to be joined the next day by my large wooden trunk-like box of household goods that rich and Arnie manhandled up the stairs. Altogether, it was quite a stack of stuff, a messy wall in their otherwise neat room.

When rich got home from work that afternoon, I liked him too. Energetic, optimistic, an easy conversationalist – my confidence leapt just being around this pair. And when I explained to them, over Colleen's delicious dinner, that I expected to be out of their way by the next weekend, I didn't even mark the shadow of doubt that flickered across rich's face. "You're welcome for as long as it takes," he assured me.

Monday, I was up-and-at-'em. I rode the subway with rich into the Wall Street District. He wished me luck and went to his office, and I went to the Fanning Employment Agency. They were slick, and I was sharp – they sent me on two interviews; I was offered both positions, and by mid-afternoon I was hired by an insurance agency in a gleaming tower that overlooked the beautiful East River with a view of Brooklyn beyond. The money wasn't bad – more than I had been making in St. Louis – and I'd start work the very next day. I felt pretty good about things when I went back to the Brown's apartment that afternoon.

But, there was one hitch – I wouldn't receive my first paycheck for three weeks. Berkshire Life Insurance Company, Westwood Agency, paid bi-weekly, with one pay period hold back. I was starting mid-pay period, so when I did get my first check, it would only be for the four days of my first week, and then another two weeks to get a full check.

No problem – I had that Cashier's Check. I'd

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# Joyce Katz



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open my checking account with it, and there'd be the subway, and lunch, and rent, and grocery money to get me through.

It was the lady at Chemical Bank who explained things to me. "That's a Cashier's Check from out-of-state," she snapped, clearly indicating this was only one step above a counterfeit note. "You won't be able to draw funds against it for one month."

"But...but...it's a Cashier's Check!" I sputtered, still deluded by the thought that was As Good As Cash. She explained to me that, although it doesn't happen often, it IS possible for someone to put a Stop Pay on Cashier's Checks. And it was just Too Bad, but I was Out of Luck.

I had twenty bucks or so in cash. That would just about pay my subway fares 'til I got my first check. Skipping lunches was no big deal; I seldom ate anyhow. But I couldn't get a place to stay, and I couldn't even help out with a few dollars to the Browns for groceries. I was truly down and out in Gotham City.

We don't really measure the kindness of strangers until we put them to the test. The Browns didn't lift an eyebrow when I told them my situation. Colleen stacked the boxes and suitcases a little more neatly in the corner of the living room, and gave me a plate of chicken. And rich just grinned and said, "We'll enjoy having you with us!" Their toddler, Alicia, played happily on the floor, ignoring my clutter, and offering me a generous supply of baby hugs and kisses.

Time passed. I tried to fit into their lives as best I could. I gradually learned my own way to the subway. I learned to look forward to Sunday morning trips to the corner bakery for buttered rolls. I enjoyed fan meetings at their house – the Brooklyn Insurgents were a new club then, and I enjoyed meeting people who had mostly just been names to me before – Ross Chamberlain, Steve Stiles, Bruce Telzer...rich and Colleen were in one of their infrequent spats with Ted and Robin White, so they were not around. Arnie usually took me out somewhere, exploring the city, on weekends, giving the Browns a little time to themselves.

Eventually, I got my first paycheck, and pretty



soon after that, I had access to the \$200 I'd brought to the city with me. I thought the Brown's ordeal would be ended. Arnie went with me to a real estate agency, and then I got my next shock.

They only had one apartment that was near my price range. It was in Brooklyn Heights – that was good, near a subway, good neighborhood, walking distance of groceries, etc. – but it was \$275. I had been paying \$85 for my St. Louis apartment; I was only earning \$150 per week before withholdings; this was a great deal more than I expected. But everyone assured me it wasn't bad for New York, and apartments were very scarce, and I'd be a fool to let it get away. So, I agreed.

Then I learned I had to come up with three times that amount. "First month, last month, and one month's security deposit." An overwhelming amount of money. And, according to all my friends, absolutely typical.

By that time, Arnie and I were thick as thieves. He was coming up to the end of his lease period with Andy Porter at the apartment they shared, so he gave Andy notice he'd be leaving, and agreed to move in with me. There was still a big problem – between us, we didn't have anywhere near the amount of money we needed, nor any furniture, nor money to turn on the utilities. So he got a loan from his parents for the amount we needed to get us in the door.

Another shock. The apartment wouldn't be available to us until October 1, a month away. When I got back to the Brown's place and told them the problem, Colleen let an involuntary sigh escape

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her lips, but never said another word about it. And rich, prince among fan men, just smiled and said, “We’ll enjoy having you with us.”

Time does pass slowly, when your suitcases and boxes are cluttering up another family’s living room, when you are eating another family’s food every day, when you are fully aware of just how In The Way you are, intruding on another family’s life. Not that they ever spoke of it, but I knew I was burdening them. By this point, I was able to kick in some dollars toward the groceries, and I tried to stay away from the apartment as much as possible to give them space. But, basically, I was there, under their feet and on their sofa most of the time.

But time passed, and in fact, those were pleasant days. Colleen was a great cook – I quit taking amphetamines, and began to gain weight. Alicia was a charming child, and rich was endlessly kind and pleasant. When moving day finally came, I know they were glad to be rid of me and my clutter, but they actually had the grace to say they’d miss me, so sincerely that I believed them. What great people they were! How wonderfully they treated me!

Well, the rest is history. Arnie’s family gathered up furniture – a table from Cousin Mike, some kitchen chairs that Cousin Rita reupholstered for us in bright blue plastic. His parents gave us a bureau and a couple of desks, then contributed two plastic love seats, with end tables and lamps for the living room. Aunt Mina bought us a mattress and frame. We had a home.

Early that winter, we saw the Browns very often. Arnie and rich were doing Focal Point (the newszine) so got together frequently for work sessions. They were still holding Insurgents meetings at their house, so we went there often. After a while, they had reconciled their differences with the Whites, so I finally got to attend Fanoclast meetings at Ted and Robin’s apartment.

But, there were changes. I think it was that winter, or maybe the next spring, when Ted and Robin moved to Falls Church, VA. Steve Stiles took over the Fanoclasts, and soon he married Gail. And around the same time, Joe Staton moved to New York, and stayed with the Browns for his settling in period.

It was strange about Joe. He and Arnie were the best of fan friends by mail, and through their brief

convention meetings. But proximity destroyed it; they were oil and water. Joe was obviously disappointed with Arnie in person, and they quickly fell out of contact.

Gradually, Arnie and rich had a falling out. First we only saw rich occasionally, for work sessions on Focal Point and the Bob Shaw Fund, then less often, then he turned FP over to Arnie to do alone, and then we didn’t see them at all. We had dinner with rich & Colleen at the Boston Worldcon, when we took out Bob Shaw. It was gala, and full of friendliness, but afterward, the relationship just didn’t continue. Took years for me to find out what went wrong there.

It wasn’t too long after that rich and Colleen went to Falls Church, too. We spent pleasant time with the Falls Church crew when we went to the Worldcon in D.C., in 1973 or so. I don’t think I ever saw Colleen again, or Robin, after that weekend.

And I don’t think I saw rich brown again until after Arnie and I returned from our long gafia-tion, in the early 1990s. Just about the first thing Arnie did, after he decided to go back into fandom, was attempt to straighten out his problems with Ted, and then with rich.

By the time we saw each other again for the first time, rich and Arnie had hammered out their differences. And when I greeted rich, it was just like that arrival day in New York, so many years before – same big smile, friendly laugh, big bear hug. I can honestly say that a cross word never passed between rich and me at any time; he was the same wonderful person that had taken me in when I was homeless, and just as easy to like.

I guess, if pressed, I’d have to say that rich brown is the greatest Insurgent fan there’s ever been. He had absolutely no patience with fugg-headedness, and he absolutely couldn’t compromise with truth. Naturally, this led him into some monumental arguments, especially when fandom went electronic.

And he was a formidable opponent to wrong thinking. He wouldn’t back down, not if faced by a tank – or, as sometimes happened, with an entire corps of fuggheaded tank-fans determined to mow him down with rhetoric. He had a great memory for facts, and tireless energy for replying to attackers. It was always a joy to watch him



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defend fannish righteousness, stand up against mundane attitudes, and put to rest fuggheads of all description.

I got into the habit of following these battles fairly closely. If he really seemed beleaguered, it was my great pleasure to throw my sword into the fray on his side. I'm not the talented debater that he was, yet I loved to support him. We used to laugh together about me being his Guardian-at-Arms, ready to defend him in any argument. He said he liked that....and I liked being on the side of the angels, which is where he always seemed to be.

Did I love rich brown? Well what do you think! He and Colleen took me in when I was homeless, and selflessly fed and housed me when I would have been on the street. They were endlessly, and

unfailingly kind to me. In the past 15 or so years, since I returned to fandom, rich brown was always a faithful friend. Plus, he's a hell of a lot of fun to party with.

Arnie and I tried several times to get him to move out here so we could look after him – but rich didn't want to leave Virginia, his daughter, his friends, his very dear companions there. I'm glad for them that he stayed with them, and I just wish Falls Church had been nearer. I wish I had the power to fold the space from here to there.

Now there's a real pain in my heart, and a terrible sense of great loss. My world became a lot smaller when he left.

-- Joyce Katz

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# Recalling rich

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Like so many others, I never had the pleasure of meeting rich brown in person. Our friendship thrived through emails and the occasional late-night chat sessions only.

When I first "discovered" fandom had an active, online presence and joined the Timebinders, it was rich brown and Gary Farber who first took me under their virtual wings and made me feel most welcome. I was delighted that two such fens would take an interest in me, and looked forward to every email correspondence.

Communicating with rich was a peculiar delight. Despite the fact that he lived in a time zone three hours earlier than mine, he was frequently online and ready to chat even at the latest of hours. And it didn't take long to realize that rich either had a cat who liked to walk on his keyboard or a problem with narcolepsy. I felt awkward the first time the subject came up, but rich was always in great humor about it.

When I wanted to contribute something back to the fandom I so loved, rich helped out by making his fan terms available for me to put online (a task I have sadly not maintained, but now, with this grim reminder, will take up once again).

Rich made my life a brighter one, and I'm not sure I can think of much else to say about him. I treasured our friendship, and I think I'm a better person for having known him however briefly and at whatever distance. I have no doubt that rich is looking down on us all now, wondering what all the fuss is about since he's having himself the grandest convention of all, with all the grand fens who have gone before. I just hope he saves a place for me. — Roxanne Mills

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# Roxanne Mills

# In Capital Letters

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When I heard of rich brown's death I was shocked but not surprised as I knew he had been very sick since Memorial Day and in the hospital. Still he beat cancer a few years ago and I had hoped and prayed that he would fight this off too. Alas, that didn't happen this time.

I went to work that day, but couldn't concentrate as I was too shaken up by the loss. When I got home that night I happened to look in the mirror where I saw my reflection looking back at me, but I wasn't alone. I clearly could see rich there too as I felt his influence on me continuing strongly still to this day. We were about the same height, build and age. We both had beards and we have been best friends for 47 years now. No actually, not just best friends, he was the "older" brother that I never had. He is still there.

Back in 1959 when I first got into fandom, the very first fanzine I received was *Cry of the Nameless*. Rich was one of the mainstays of the letter-column there. I'm sure he kept his CRY "Letterhack Club" card until his death. The zany lettercol was addicting and silly and very passionate. We became correspondents then. He used to send me 10 to 15 page long letters, maybe once a week, and I tried to keep up with him and respond in kind.

Rich became my advisor, telling me which fanzines to send sticky quarters and what apas or cons were about and gave tireless help with info on how to publish fanzines. He explained hecto, ditto, mimeo and suggested sources where I might find supplies.

He was maybe a year older but had been in fandom a couple years before I started so he was quite a good native guide and generous with his knowledge to a rank neo like me. I'm pretty sure he was in the USAF at that time stationed at Tyndall AFB in Florida.

I remember rich telling how when he tried to enlist in USAF he was a bit underweight so he went home and did the banana diet, which consisted of eating dozens of bananas a day and nothing else until he went back, got reweighed and was inducted.

rich sent me several contributions to my earliest fanzines that he had intended to publish himself, including a David R Bunch story, a David H Keller review and several "Les Norris" illustrations. I wound up using them in *HKLPLD* my first genzine. Thanks, rich.

Later we both wound up in NYC around 1963 or 64. We were roommates at my first apt on East 4th St after Earl Evers moved out. FISTFA (Faanish Insurgent ScienTiFictional Association) had recently been started by Earl and myself. Rich became a very gracious cohost. It was about this time when I awoke one night to hear laughter coming from the other room. I asked what is up and found rich and another fan smoking a funny cigarette and laughing their head off. So I began to smoke pot for the first time and started laughing too. Later on we experimented wiith peyote (you could buy the buttons mail order from this place in Texas!) And also hash, LSD, STP, and even dried banana peels. We read the literatue *Doors Of Perception*, anything by Leary, or Metzger. We lived on the Lower East Side by ghod and we were partaking of the prevailing neighborhood ethos. The peyote tasted awful but we sliced it into thin pieces and baked them slowly in the oven creating peyote chips (unsalted of course). I wandered around the New York Worlds Fair with a pocketful of chips eating some at every water fountain I passed.

I recall that rich and I took turns on our first LSD trips, reading to each other from *Tibetan Book Of The Dead*, casting I Ching hexagrams using the yarror stalks, and keeping the KLH HiFi

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# Mike McInerney

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record player playing Japanese Buddhist chants using wooden percussion and gongs banging in hypnotic rhythm. After 4-5 hours of that, we thought we were being amazingly brave to walk 2 blocks away from the Apt to buy a tunafish sandwich at the local deli. That was an AMAZING tuna fish sandwich.

Meanwhile we began coediting the first incarnation of FOCAL POINT the biweekly (usually) faanish newszine. This lasted a little more than a year and included a few actual news scoops such as about the new paperback edition of *The Lord Of The Rings* being pubbed by Ace Books. Our apt had been burglarized twice and someone had stolen our typewriter and tv set. rich started writing jokingly that Bruce Pelz was afraid of newszine competition and had flown in from LA just to put us out of business. Most of the imputus and humor of FOCAL POINT came from rich. I was more laid back, leave it to the deadline, not as funny. He had the good sense of humor and the energy and after he felt he couldn't continue I tried to go on alone but only managed to put out a couple of issues alone. It just wasn't the same.

I got my own apt and rich got his. We were still friends but needed some space.

Somewhere in this blur of activity were 2 cross country trips with the Fanoclast contingent, and NYCON 3 and APA F and FISTFA and FANOCLASTS and much of that has been written about already.

rich and I became roommates once more when I moved to 2 apts on West 16th between 7th and 8th. Ted White knocked down a wall between the two places creating one large living room and FISTFA continued onward still alternating with FANOCLASTS. I moved to San Francisco in 1969 and rich moved to DC area.

Throughout the years rich has always been very helpful, supportive and just plain there whenever I needed him, just like the big brother ought to be. I know he visited me in the 1970's in San Francisco, and I saw him at several Corflus including Corflu Vegas. I had the pleasure of printing stories and articles by him in my FAPazine NUMBER ONE. When I ran for DUFF he volunteered to be my "campaign man" and did a great job although I didn't win I think we put a scare in my opponent though! I wish I could have spent more time with

him during the last 20 years, but we never lost touch especially since email and elists.

I'm not very good at dates, or exact details but I am sure of 47 years of friendship and I feel a deep sense of loss. Others can tell you more of rich's accomplishments which include membership in many apas including CRAP, SAPS, FAPA, N'APA and APA F and publishing fanzines such as POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC, FOCAL POINT (newszine with Mike McInerney) FOCAL POINT (genzine with ARNIE KATZ) BASURA (perzine).

Others can tell you how for many years rich ran mailing lists for more than dozen fan editors and their zines including WARHOON. He kept track of who was supposed to get the zines and printed mailing labels at cost or maybe for free. I would also mention his editorship of half a dozen local Brookly area newspapers which he did for Roy Lindberg who I met at a Jay convention and introduced him to when I realized I couldn't do THAT job.

rich brown cared about fandom. He could stir up controversy with his abundance of passion, and dedication to faanish ways, as he saw them. I was very proud of him even when I felt to myself, rich you are going on and on too much on this subject. Summarize please! So he was too verbose too but it was in his nature. Remember those 15 page single spaced letters that I mentioned him writing to this neofan back in 1959. He just needed a bit of editing is all I'm saying I wish to ghod I still had those letters today. I wish we still had rich brown today. But his legacy is still with us. His attempts to clarify fan terms, his encouragement of University collections of fanzines, are still felt in fandom. He chose lower case for his name but if anyone deserves ALL CAPS it is rich.

RICH BROWN RIP

— Mike McInerney

Watch for more special fanzines in honor of rich brown, including an anthology of his fan-writing and an issue of *ConfuSion* to our late comrade.

# The Best Man

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Rich brown and I were roughly the same age when we first met in New York --I wish I could remember the exact circumstances, no doubt at a con. I do remember, however, when I first noticed rich --in 1957, in the pages of *Cry of the Nameless*, (Seattle fandom's ideal fanzine for teenagers), where we were both dedicated CRY letterhacks. One early issue (#121) featured a photo of rich looking somewhat like a 1950s jd. Soon we were exchanging letters, recognizing that we were members of the same tribe.

But I do remember the early days at East Filth street, the pad he shared with Mike McInerney (one of the most grungy apartment buildings I've ever seen), the great nights at FISTFA, and at the Fanoclasts, the enthusiasms, conversations, and laughs we used to have, rich and I playing chess in The Village, much to the scorn of a snotty little chess brat. Toking up for the first time together (we were the muggles pioneers in those days in N.Y. fandom) as a somewhat dubious Mike looked on, hanging shyly back in the doorway.

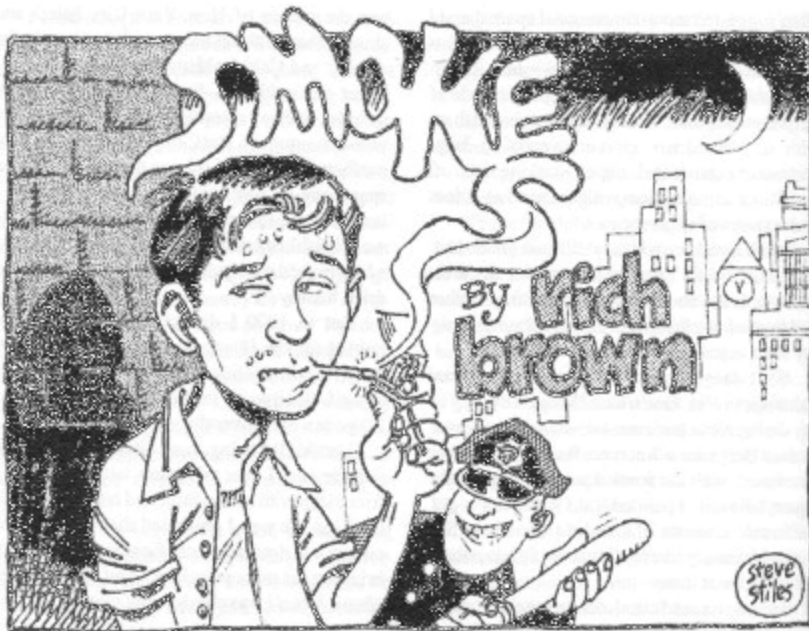
An "intervention" for Frank Willimcyzck (poor Frank! --one of the first of us to die). How *earnest* we were, trying to persuade him to get on the wagon, but it didn't work.

The entire evening we spent plotting out the Marvel comic to end all Marvel comics: Marvel Superheroes Versus God. A truly cosmic concept --which we neglected to write down. I *do* remember that Thor would take on Jesus (well, that's obvious), Angel versus Gabriel, Odin against Jehovah, but don't recall how we worked Spidey in that scenerio....

Spinning out more fantasies, there was our mutual Ayn Rand phase (blush!), which I'm guessing was in late '64, frequently reciting in unison The John Galt oath over on East Filth, half comically, half seriously. We both wised up to what was wrong with Objectivism within a few months, but at the time the whole Individual/Artiste versus Repressive Leveling Society struck a responsive chord in our idealistic youthful hearts. Plus there was the never trust Authority & Organized religion thing, which certainly stuck with us.

When Colin Cameron (who also knew rich) and I were stationed at Ft. Eustis together, we learned that Cindy Heap had broken off with rich and we imagined our poor friend deeply down in the basement at Heartbreak Hotel. So we phoned him for the morale boost we were sure he needed --he was out, but Colleen answered the phone. Suddenly we knew we didn't have to worry about "poor" rich anymore. We left the phone booth, grinning.

With rich and Colleen



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# Steve Stiles





Here's part of a comic strip ("FAN MUSCLEGUY!") I did -- no longer know when-- '96?-- or for who): It was based on a report that rich had ripped up an issue of *Habakkuk* (presumably because Donaho had edited a letter of rich's in a way that altered its meaning). rich is talking to Walter Miles in the last panel. — Steve Stiles

eventually married and in Bay Ridge, their apartment soon became a social center for a wide variety of mutual and future friends. Resulting in many fine evenings as we were also all more or less getting into the new rock n' roll together, at a time when fabulous early groups were breaking new ground with albums that would become legendary ----listening to "Tommy" for the first time together!

Going bananas over The Firesign Theater at the brown's apartment. Watching the moon landing together. Having my appendix burst there.

In 1970 rich was the Best Man at my wedding. We were both in a state of nervousness before the ceremony (those Ethical Culture weddings can be very intimidating!) and, having found a pack of cigarettes in the dressing room (we had both given up smoking months earlier), we both lit up. Moments later we were confronted with my future mother in law: "You boys have been *smoking*, haven't you?" Sheepishly we owned up to our lapse. Months later I learned that



Gale's mother thought that rich and I had gone through the ceremony stoned. (Perhaps I *should* have been, but so few of us are precognitive.) Mrs. Burnick also thought that joints came mentholated with filters.

But, with whatever regrets I have with that wedding, I have no regrets about rich brown as Best Man. He was made for the part. It was entirely appropriate.

Rich, "Dr. Gafia," was a real asset to fanzine fandom, as witness, for example, his articles on [Trufen.net](http://Trufen.net). And I'm sure that Arnie and/or Ted will give a fuller accounting of his fannish accomplishments. But more than that, rich was a real

mensh, with a big heart and a soul to match. It was rich who I could come to, not just for the pleasure of his company, but when I was in trouble, or in doubt; or needed advice, because he was a man who I could trust in every way. He was a friend. He mattered. He was absolutely unique. I will miss him for my duration.

So will a lot of others.  
-- Steve Stiles

# Dr. Gafia's Dictionary

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I never really knew rich brown in anything like the way that most of the other contributors to this issue will have done. But I just wanted to mention the importance – to me, at any rate – of rich’s “Dr. Gafia’s Fan Terms,” as available on the internet at [http://fanac.org/Fannish\\_Reference\\_Works/Fan\\_terms/](http://fanac.org/Fannish_Reference_Works/Fan_terms/).

Ironically, rich himself, in what proved to be his last article on the trufen.net website, identified the importance of a work like this when he wrote “Dick Eney’s Fancyclopedia II was published in 1959, just a few years after I entered fandom in 1956, and I read it cover to cover upon receipt. It was great -- no longer having to ask, one thing at a time, whenever I came across anything in a fanzine that puzzled me (as I frequently did), but having it all pretty much laid out before me -- and in alphabetical order, too!” I note that rich’s introduction to



“Dr.Gafia’s Fan Terms” explicitly states “Fancy III it isn’t,” but it served much the same purpose for me.

Actually, as well as its use as a reference for specific queries, “Dr. Gafia’s Fan Terms” also serves equally well as an introduction to the culture of science fiction fandom, as something that has built up over the years. Reading “Dr. Gafia’s Fan Terms,” you come away with an image of fans and fandom as a group of intelligent, funny and interesting people, whom you wanted to be with and be like. Even if they did get into feuds with each other from time to time.

So, on behalf of not just myself, but thousands of mute inglorious neos over the years, thanks to rich for “Dr. Gafia’s Fan Terms” – and here’s hoping that this work will continue to be available and cared for going forwards.

— Peter Sullivan

*Here’s a sample entry from the dictionary rich has compiled online:*

## **AH! SWEET IDIOCY!**

Title of Francis Towner Laney’s 130pp fannish memoirs (or “ME-moirs,” as he called them), written in the late 1940s, in which he detailed his fan career up to 1946 and the Pacifcon, excoriated a number of individuals in fandom in general (and LASFS in particular) for their pomposity and too-serious attitudes toward the microcosm, declared himself to be an amateur journalist rather than a fan, and explained what had caused him to become (along with his friend Charles Burbee) an Insurgent, moving from a sercon philosophy of FIAWOL to become the foremost exponent of the fannish philosophy FIJAGH [see these two terms; Laney is credited with coining the latter]. *ASI* provoked immediate pro-and-con comment in the microcosm itself; some disputed the facts and others the propriety of describing the LASFS as a nest of ineffectuals, homosexuals and fuggheads (which term Laney also coined). Today people frown on the cruelty of his gay-baiting but it is generally agreed that, this aside, FTL had an uncomfortable amount of truth and right on his side.

(8/12/2005)

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# Peter Sullivan



# My Friend rich

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*How do I put the rich brown I knew for over forty years into just a few lines?*

*It's impossible!*

*I wanted it to be dramatic, poetic, full of emotion and fervor. I wanted it to be a masterpiece. But it can't be done. I've worked at this for days, but I'm still not satisfied – it would take another forty years to do it right!*

*So here it is:*

It was like the proverbial breath of fresh air when, in the early 1960s, rich brown walked into Vick Mimeograph and introduced himself. He was a teenager, stationed at nearby Tyndall Field. The Willis Campaign and confusion were things of the past, but he remembered them well, and I was once more interested in fandom. We hit it off immediately. He had an exploring mind and a sharp wit which held nothing sacred – except, in a fashion, fandom. He could be kind and gentle and thoughtful but, if you were having trouble getting his point, he could be quite persistent to the point of agitation. He could shovel words on you until you gave up.

My wife Suzanne and I were deep into Little Theatre, and rich caught the bug immediately. He was in quite a few of our plays (doing great, of course) including “Visit To A Small Planet”, which was fitting.

He and a friend – usually Norm Metcalf – would spend weekends at our house, happily devouring whatever form of meals Suzanne could whip up. With our finances, it was often no more than dried lima beans, cooked with tomatoes, and corn bread, but he in-

sisted it was delightful after eating in the Tyndall mess hall.

And we talked.

There was also an intensity to rich, and buried anger best illustrated by the results of Suzanne's first pregnancy. She had premature twins and they didn't last twenty-four hours. When he called and got the news, rich cursed and violently slammed his fist into the wall, bruising his knuckles.

His time in our area was enjoyed greatly but, as is the way with the military, rich eventually was transferred. We swapped many letters afterwards (not email; this was before that.) Eventually he was discharged and settled in New York.

In the 1990s, I met him at a Tropicon. As some may not know, he was skinny as a teen. When I met him at Tropicon as an adult, he had grown hefty. I didn't even recognize him until he spoke to me. The face, while rounder, was still rich brown – especially when he grinned! None of it affected his mind. In ways, he remained a sharp-witted teen all his life. He was a true friend, as well as one of the trufen.

Fandom will miss his analytic ability and sense of humor.



I will remember his creativity and capability to take an ordinary story and twist it to something new and exciting.

Perhaps, in death, he will meet up with many fannish legends, as well as Suzanne. In his own way, he loved her as much as I did.

Adjusting to the world without rich brown will take some doing. The full extent of his passing hasn't really hit me yet; with luck, it never will. — Shelby Vick . .

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# Shelby Vick

# Farewell to a Fan

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I usually try to strike a cheery note of fannish silliness in my locs, but I know that this time I'm not going to make it. Since Ted posted the news about rich, I've been trying to put it together in my mind.

It was one of those pieces of news that left me blubbering into my keyboard. The first such was when Roy Tackett left the party, then Howard Devore, and others that I am leaving out. But rich seemed too much in the center of things to leave us just yet. I only knew him through Trufen, which is enough to make me glad that that bit of electronic fandom is there. He was among the first to greet me and make me feel like one of the group when I showed up on that list a few years ago. His name had stuck in my mind from some time before the long gafia that I had from the late sixties until I came back to fandom a few years ago. I may have first become aware of him from the "Clubhouse" column, or from some of his fiction in the White Amazing, or some way that I have forgotten, but no one needed to explain who he was. Somehow, I knew that rich was the quintessential science fiction person. And he was cheerful, friendly, and willing to talk about Things That Mattered with an obscure new guy. He did have a tendency to run on when he was seeking justice in one cause or another, and to seek resolutions to issues that most of us would have let go before putting another few thousand words into it. But even while he was doing that, I felt that he had a fannish lightness of spirit that sought only the same in return. In other words, it seemed to me that even through his sometimes overly lengthy and perhaps heavyhanded argumentation, he kept his shieldayuma ready to hand. If you were to pin me to the wall and command me to be dead earnest, I would have to allow that I don't really believe in an afterlife: what we have here on Earth is it, and the best we can do is make it good. But we are science fiction fans, and we are good at suspending disbelief. I would like to think that rich is somewhere, getting together with those folks who have gone before, and ironing out the last details of the panel on fan history, before the rest of us show up and start asking questions that will be argued long into the night. But, most of all, I wish that he hadn't left so soon — Jack Calvert

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## Jack Calvert

*Vegas Fandom Weekly #82, Volume 2 Number 29, August 8, 2006*, is written and produced by Arnie Katz (909 Eugene Cernan St., Las Vegas, NV 89145; Email: crossfire4@cox.net; phone: 702-648-5677).

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VFW is free by request — and you may get it anyway. It can be downloaded at the SNAFFU site and at efanzines.com. Only my heart is breaking during the production of this fanzine.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of richard wayne brown, who set me on the fannish path that led to its existence.

Member: fwa

Supporter: AFAL

Believer: United Fans of Vegas



## **Golden Halls of Mirth**

Let me breath trufannish air again,  
Where there's no lack or dearth;  
Let us drink in praise of the Good Old Days  
And the Golden Halls of Mirth.

We rot in the molds of fan clubs,  
we retch at their tainted breaths;  
Foul are their fuggheaded fanzines,  
Calling for trufandom's death.

We've tried each new convention hall  
And reckoned their true worth;  
Take us back again to the homes of fen  
And the cold gold Halls of Mirth.

The turning press is calling  
Fansmen back to their ways.  
All fans! Stand by! Returning!  
Back to by-gone days.

Out ride the sons of Fandom,  
To drive their thundering words;  
Up leaps the race of Fansmen,  
Above the common herds --

We pray for one last fanning  
At the cons that gave us birth;  
To rest ourselves on those moldy shelves  
At the Golden Halls of Mirth.

. . .We pray for one last reading  
Of the zines that we gave birth;  
Let us look again on the Home of Fen  
And its Golden Halls of Mirth.

rich brown and Paul Stansberry, "The Golden Halls of Mirth," Dafoe,  
1960; revised by rich brown, 1965; from Algol #10, September 1965