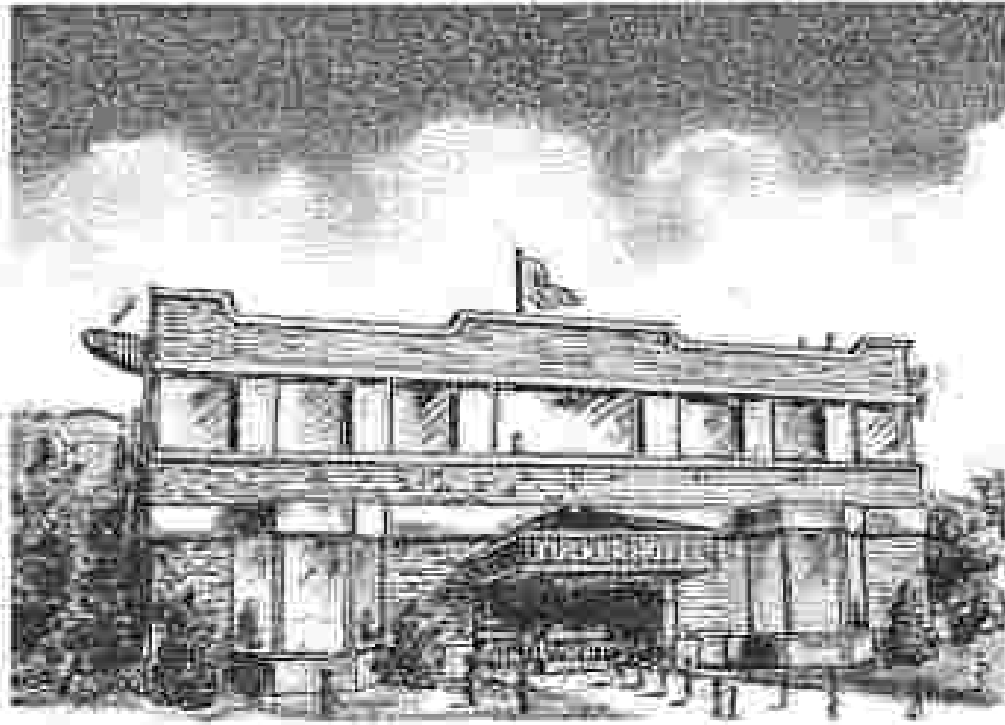


Virtual Tucker Hotel



Issue Two

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/the-virtual-fan-lounge>

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Boring webpage at <http://www.burdonvale.co.uk>
Slightly less boring livejournal at <http://ceemage.livejournal.com>

VTH is primarily an electronic fanzine, available on <http://www.efanzines.com>. Paper copies of this fanzine do exist, however, and will be available for the fannish usual. In any case, e-mails and letters of comment are, of course, welcome.

Thanks to: Bill Mills ("FanLounge"), without whom The Virtual Fan Lounge wouldn't exist. Also to Curt Phillips, Arnie Katz and Geri Sullivan for inspiration and advice. And to everyone else who's played a part, great or small, in getting this fan project to where it is now.

Member fwa. A Startling Press Production. Today is Thursday, 8th May, 2008.

The First Weekend

For the first weekend of The Virtual Fan Lounge, there were two sessions – an invite to the Vegrants' Party on the Saturday and a “Regular Weekly Chat Session” on the Sunday. Summaries of the transcripts for both sessions are further on in this issue.

How To Take Part

To use the chat-room, just go to <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/the-virtual-fan-lounge>. On the left hand side of the page is the live video feed – replaced by a slide show when there isn't anything happening. On the right is the actual chat-room. You can see what everyone else is typing in the top window, and add your own contribution in the smaller box at the bottom.

You will be assigned an initial user name in the format “ustreamer-12345.” If you'd rather change this – to your real name, livejournal name, or whatever – you can do this by clicking

the “Sign Up” link at the top to register for free. Some people have been slightly put off by the amount of information that the registration form asks for, which I can empathise with. But registration is entirely optional – you can simply stay as “ustreamer-12345” if you prefer.

Art Credits

Front Cover: Tucker Hotel, by Ross Chamberlain.

Pages 5 and 6: Sundry archive photos from previous Vegrants meetings, by Bill Mills. Yes, we forgot to take any screenshots this time.

Page 9: Oscar the wonder dog, photo by A.

And We're Done

Short and sweet on the editorial front this time, as I wanted to get this issue out ahead of this weekend's events. Speaking of which...

Schedule for this week

Sunday Night Chat Session 2

The second instalment of the everlasting convention will feature some ad-hoc video sessions from Bill and Peter as they do some live public testing with the “Cohosts” functionality of ustream. Come and provide feedback, or even take part with your own webcam.

- Sunday 11th May, 12.00 noon PDT (Pacific Daylight Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 3.00 pm EDT (Eastern Daylight Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 7.00 pm UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time)
- Sunday 11th May, 8.00 pm BST (British Summer Time)
- Monday 12th May, 3.00 am WAST (Western Australian Standard Time)
- Monday 12th May, 5.00 am EAST (Eastern Australian Standard Time)

Vegrants Party

The Vegrants invite you to join them for their meeting, which is likely to include a special event of some kind. More details, once we have them, in next week's VTH.

- Saturday 17rd May, 8.00 pm PDT (Pacific Daylight Time)
- Saturday 17rd May, 11.00 pm EDT (Eastern Daylight Time)
- Sunday 17th May, 3.00 am UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time)
- Sunday 17th May, 4.00 am BST (British Summer Time)
- Sunday 17th May, 11.00 am WAST (Western Australian Standard Time)
- Sunday 17th May, 1.00 pm EAST (Eastern Australian Standard Time)

Vegrants Party, 3rd May

For those that don't know, the Vegrants are Las Vegas' longest-running(?) fan group, who meet at the house of Arnie and Joyce Katz every two weeks. Possibly the secret of their longevity is an emphasis on food, hospitality and good conversation. For the post-Corflu Vegrants party, Arnie and Joyce kindly invited The Virtual Fan Lounge to join proceedings at The Launch Pad.

People had been lurking in the chatroom for much of Saturday, but the first arrival specifically for the Vegrants party was ShelVy. ShelVy noted that the chat-room showed his local time. (Editor's note - it appears to show Pacific time until you start typing, then changes to whatever the local time is on your computer.) ShelVy confirmed "I'm on Central, so it's nearly SEVEN here in beautiful Panama City Beach!" DianCrayne noted "I once rode back from New York on a Grayhound bus with a fan from Panama Beach. To Los Angeles. That was a loooong trip." ShelVy wondered "who the fan coulda been; we don't have but a handful around here these days!" DianCrayne was "trying to remember who that guy was. He had a name with an ambiguous pronunciation. I asked him how it was pronounced and he told me that he could tell where people were from by the way they pronounced his name -- but he never did tell me how HE pronounced it."

MarkPlummer and FishlifterC joined, and were duly welcomed, and sorted out their drinks orders with each other. DianCrayne commented "I love this -- a next-room booze request shunted through ustreamTV." JoHnHardin agreed - "The Internet. Is there anything it can't do?" DianCrayne suggested "Balance on its nose and eat fish." JoHnHardin agreed, but suggested "the net can show you a million pictures of naked people, balancing on their noses and eating fish." FishlifterC resisted "the urge to Google naked people balancing on their noses and eating fish. Because they would be there." DianCrayne agreed - "Probably in Sweden, right after the sauna." JoHnHardin asked "If it's in Sweden, would they be eating lutefisk?"

rocmills complained "i told myself i wasn't going

to come back here until we got to the launch pad - then i was just gonna have a peek - next thing you know, i'm signed in and chatting." JoHnHardin said "You're hooked." rocmills confessed "it's true." DianCrayne added "Addicting, isn't it?" JoHnHardin asked "So, when does Dr. Mills anticipate turning on the camera at the launch pad?" rocmills replied "as soon as we get there." JoHnHardin felt this was a "Good answer." rocmills explained "we need food, and we can't possibly get there any sooner than an hour from now or we would probably be intruding too soon - i don't think joyce and arnie are used to anyone showing up much before 6:30 since the "official" start time is 8."

JoHnHardin suggested "I think the next, logical step in this is to mount cameras all over Arnie and Joyce's house." DianCrayne felt "It would be sort of like Wharhol and the guy sleeping but MUCH more fannish." FishlifterC was enthusiastic - "Wow, a KatzKam." rocmills said cats were certainly possible - "they have kittens!" - and her own pet ferret, "candy matson will be in attendance." FishlifterC said "Oh, I definitely want to see the kittens." rocmills guessed "i can probably sneak one inside for a mew if joyce and momma kitty aren't watching." There were many puns about 'mewvies.' rocmills added "and candy says "ook ook" at you." DianCrayne queried "Ferrets "ook"?" JoHnHardin confirmed: "Much like orangutans." rocmills agreed - "they can be quite talkative, ook eep dook" ShelVy did an "ook back at Candy!"

As the pace quickened and the spelling deteriorated, DianCrayne noted "Of course, if we stopped to spell check, we'd never keep up. It's bad enough as it is!" JoHnHardin said "Actually, this is probably the best-spelled chat room I've ever been in." rocmills felt this was down to the "quality of the company, no doubt." DianCrayne agreed - "Fans are slans -- and can spell too. Although, there was one gal I recall who made the most incredible typos. Of course, she also printed the backing sheet on her dittomasters once."

FishlifterC complained "I go away for two minutes to look at handwriting analysis on another site and I come back to find it's full of ferrets!" JoHnHardin wanted to know "Whose

handwriting were you analysing?" FishlifterC explained "Oh, there were about a dozen samples from the party earlier today. It started with a comment on someone's LJ yesterday about how many people's handwriting you would recognise without other clues, how long you've known them, whether you can always read your own etc. So at the party today some samples were collected for SCIENCE! I was there and can only be certain now about half a dozen, either than mine..." ShelVy feared that "Science would go WILD at MY handwriting!" FishlifterC pointed to "Samples and poll here: <http://flickr.livejournal.com/706965.html>"

CurtPhillips declared "My soundtrack for this evening's chat starts with a collection of the greatest hits of Yes. How many here remember Yes?" JoHnHardin asked "How young do you think we are?" He "always liked Roundabout, but was never big on prog rock." Curt explained "YES was the Gene Krupa band of it's day. Big in the middle 70's." ShelVy replied "Gene Krupa I recognize! But I fear my knowledge of rock'n'such ended with Les Paul and Mary Ford." CurtPhillips said he "never even heard of Prog until a couple of years ago, and then discovered that it was all the music that I grew up on." JoHnHardin agreed - "Yeah, the pigeon-hole label came along much later than the actual music." FishlifterC complained "I still have random 1980s pop tracks in my head that were playing in casinos as we walked past last weekend" at Corflu. DianCrayne noted "When we were in England in '79 we wound up riding from London to Brighton on a bus with a Maltese tour group and the PA system playing Elvis. Bizarre." CurtPhillips confessed "When I want to drive people at work crazy, I'll put on some Artie Shaw or Bennie Goodman. Most of them are in their 20's and can't seem to stand Big Band." No-one could see anything wrong with that. There was much singing of the words to Rag Mop!

DianCrayne asked "Remember Cecil the Seasick Sea Serpent singing "Ragmop"?" CurtPhillips replied "As in Beanie & Cecil? Oh Gawd..." Vegasite clarified "Beany and Cecil - Bob Clampett's show," noting "In Long Beach, Cal, there was an official Beanie and Cecil Restaurant." ShelVy said "'Course, Kukla Fran and Ollie were the royalty of hand puppets."

CurtPhillips disagreed - "Always more of a Sharie Lewis fan myself, ShelVy..." Vegasite noted "Lampchop is in the Smithsonian." CurtPhillips remembered th "'83 Worldcon in Baltimore; they had the original Muppets on display in the convention hall lobby. Anyone remember that? My wife Liz was studying them closely and noticed a face studying her around the other side of the glass case... she stepped back to look and found Jim Henson grinning at her! He told her he'd been watching her study his Muppets for several minutes and was impressed by her concentration, they had a nice talk. I didn't get to meet him."

rocmills had gotten "stranded in baltimore after that con - had old family friends in town who came to my rescue and put me up for a week until i could get money for a different flight - i still don't know how i missed the group going to the airport, but thank god i remembered that glen and donna had moved to baltimore years before." CurtPhillips noted "Baltimore in '83 was really not a great town to get stuck in unless you did have friends. The area around the con site was a bit rough as I recall." But "since we're in fandom I think *we* have something of an advantage as far as getting stranded goes. If a strange person contacted me here in Abingdon I'd be disinclined to take them into my home, but..." rocmills agreed - "in that regard, fandom has never let me down and i have always tried to return the favor." DianCrayne remembered "oh, many long years ago, Larry Niven wound up without any accommodation somewhere and wound up sleeping on the floor of a fan household with the rest of us. In the morning he told Bjo that was the first time he'd ever slept on a floor. She asked what else he could have done... and he said he could have gone to a hotel in town where his family kept a permanent suite."

CurtPhillips remembered "Back in '98 mike weber (David Weber's brother) called me at home. He was passing Abingdon and looking for a place to crash... Unfortunately the night before I'd been in a serious fire truck wreck and was laid up. Couldn't move out of bed! And so I missed mike's call. To this day I think he thinks I gave him the brush off, but geez! I'd been in a fire truck that rolled over 4 or 5 times less than 24 hours before!" DianCrayne

was just "glad you're still with us!" rocmills surmised "ghod saved him for the virtual fan lounge - he had a Destiny - now, you see, if he ever logs out of this chat room he will be struck by a meteor and vaporized." CurtPhillips disagreed - "Nah, meteors just bounce off my pointy head. Comets on the other hand... - 'Course, that's what the propellers on out beanies are really for, you know. To blow the errant comets off course and thus save the world..." DianCrayne replied "I always wondered about that!" ShelVy confirmed "Wot, you thought those propellers were just for fun?" CurtPhillips had "read it in a fanzine somewhere, so it *must* be true..."

CurtPhillips asked "So what's everybody reading at present? I'm reading a great mystery called MURDER AT THE WORLDCON by J. D. Crayne." ShelVy was "reading Creation In Death, a scifi detective by J D Robb." JoHnHardin asked "That's a nom de plume, no?" rocmills confirmed "Nora Roberts - when she writes science fiction, she's jd robb." ShelVy noted "she's a Romance writer, but the JD Robbs are NOT straight romances."

People discussed their introduction to fandom. DianCrayne said that "I've been pretty much gafia since around 1967. I wandered into LASFS in 1961, via a college kid I knew. The Trimble's were living in a slant shack called the Fan Hilton then, with a bunch of fan boarders, and LASFS met in their living room." AlBouchard said "I was a reader first. My first con was Balticon 12. I got roped into cons by a college friend - I still see him every so often, if I'm at a con in the Baltimore area." DianCrayne confessed "Oh, sure -- I was a reader first too! My father had a big collection of sf paperbacks and a lot of mags from the 40s and 50s." ShelVy "I got into SF thanx to my grandfather, who had some of ERBs Mars books. I was about 9 or 10."

As the camera was set up at Arnie and Joyce Katz's house, a picture of a table with a blue tablecloth came into view. Vegasite said "Well, somebody better go there or we'll have nothing to watch." LindaBushyager had "read a story once about that - everyone sat at home watching their computers and got their food sent in somehow (or maybe there were household robots!) and I think they sent sperm by mail for procreation." LindaBushyager noted

"As I learned from Corflu, it is somewhat difficult for the participants who are onsite to react to what is being typed in by the virtual people, because the readout on the computer is very small and you have to be close to it to see it. And after a while you tend to forget that the camera is there." CurtPhillips "thought we saw you and Ron in the Corflu video but I don't recall talking to you that weekend." Different people, reflecting their own personal priorities, faunched over the food and/or kittens on display. grebbsy said "Arnie -- thanks again for VFW, very fine as ever (This has been a comment of comment...)" JoHnHardin felt "They need to elect a person to announce our comments to the room. Our comments matter, damn it!" grebbsy agreed - "Yeah! We demand a voice! The VOICE OF FANDOM! We are the plain people of fandom! We are normal and we want our freedom!"



There was some discussion of books about fandom at the party. CurtPhillips asked "You mean Bimbos of the Death Sun, Arnie? Did you read the sequel Zombies of the Gene Pool? I helped Sharytn (a family friend) with the fannish research on that one." grebbsy said "Curt: I've read it! And you're in it!" JoHnHardin "started reading Zombies but was too new to fandom to get most of the references, so didn't finish it - that was years ago." CurtPhillips replied "Thank you! (for catching my name in the book...)"

Burbank396 shared some fannish news about Elliot Shorter's illness. CurtPhillips noted "Total kidney failure is not easily fixed. He'll have to be maintained on dialysis or get a transplant - and he's probably not a good candidate..." eFanzines added "Elliot has been frail for quite a while now. Last time I saw him was at Lunacon 2007 - he wasn't there this year." FanLounge asked "has anyone heard from ted [White]"

since corflu?" People noted that he hadn't posted on mailing lists this week. FanLounge added "arnie is worried, so far we can't find anyone who has heard from him since corflu." CurtPhillips had "Got Ted's phone number. Calling him now... Ted's ok!"

As the fans at the party began to tuck in, LindaBushyager noted "Damn that pie looks [nice] from here. I hear that giggle from Lori too" JoHnHardin agreed - "I wasn't hungry before this started." jzak felt "This isn't helping my diet :)" MikeGlyer said "This reminds me of a scene in Tom Jones."

eFanzines announced "Here's another first for on line chat - I just finished proofing the latest issue of Chris Garcia's The Drink Tank, the Handicapping the Hugos issue, and it's now on line at <http://efanzines.com>" ShelVy was "TRYING to get Planetary Stories Five to PDF. ." DianCrayne asked "Handicapping the Hugos? What are the odds?" eFanzines said "Odds vary by category - Chris discusses and gives odds for each contender."

LloydPenney was welcomed, and said that his trip to Corflu had been "marvellous, marvellous fun. Got to meet so many I'd never met before, and they got to meet me. And, they gave me their fanzines anyway." CurtPhillips asked whether there had been a "Good fanzine haul? We could see several being distributed." eFanzines had "brought home 15 fanzines (some of them one-sheets)." LloydPenney said "I think I got the best stash of all. After Chunga, Inca, Light in the Bushel, Motorway Dreamer and so many more, I counted 15." CurtPhillips asked "Oh, did Richard Brandt pass out a new issue? I hope I'm on his mailing list." LloydPenney confirmed "First issue in quite some time."



A can of beer was placed tantalisingly in front of the web-cam. Burbank396 complained "Is that *BHEER* HE knows how to really hurt a guy." DianCrayne added "Not only that, a TALL can!" CurtPhillips asked "Oh, is that beer for *us*, then, Bill?" DianCrayne noted "We've got virtual beer AND virtual Bill." LindaBushyager signed back in again, and noted "During process I somehow got a list of what is being shown now live on Ustream, and one was "Live Bigfoot" - he wasn't there right now...shot in dark spot in woods..." FanLounge commented "bigfoot is never there when you want him." LindaBushyager said "Joyce told me and others about this webcam set up in S. Africa which shows a pond where African wildlife goes by. I suddenly had a vision that somewhere in Africa the animals are watching this..."

As Bill Mills started playing some music at the party, there were some problems with the sound. LennyB noted "All the world is a giant kazoo on my speakers - but human language is distinguishable, along with Arnie's deep voice." CurtPhillips suspected "it's basically a buffering problem." LennyB noted "Except for Arnie, who walks through the buffer like Ming the Merciless through fire." CurtPhillips agreed - "Arnie's a different case. I'm convinced that Arnie Katz is the fulcrum upon which the world moves..."

LloydPenney asked "Any commentary on Corflu Silver? Good, bad, indifferent parts?" CurtPhillips commented "I'm told that you had a good time Lloyd..." LloydPenney agreed - "Yvonne and I did some early celebrating of our 25th anniversary, coming up on May 28. It was Silver for us, too."

CurtPhillips asked "How late do these parties run, Linda?" ceemage suggested "until arnie throws 'em all out?" LindaBushyager replied "Vegrants run from about 7:30 (or a bit earlier) til maybe midnight - if enough people hang around, they might even be a bit later - I don't know how Joyce does it." ceemage noted "joyce is our fannish queen." CurtPhillips agreed - "Yeah, when you're the Queen of the Fannish universe, these things work themselves out..."

At the party, Bill Mills gave a rendition of "little tiny hands for milking mice by tom digby" There was much appreciation from the chat-room. CurtPhillips asked "Does Bill know a lot of

older filksongs? Does he happen to know one called "The Last NASA Song"?, but the answer was no. LindaBushyager suggested "My advice would be search the internet for "The Last NASA Song" - but my quick search just now only found NASA sending the Beatles music from space. One time I searched for fannish birthday song (more like a birthday dirdge) and found it...there are filksong sites." CurtPhillips replied "Thanks Linda. I heard it at a Rivercon long ago. It may be that only the fellow I heard sing it then has it - and I don't know who he was at this late date." DianCrayne remembered "when filk sessions were held in the hallways" at conventions. LindaBushyager said "They still filk at cons butmnow it is more of a showplace for individual singers than a group get together." CurtPhillips noted "One recent development at cons in my region is drumming. A big room with 100 or more fand with drums of all types. It's all spontaneous and runs for hours." He had "seen some clips of fannish drumming on Youtube, but don't recall the titles. Usually at the DeepSouthCon they do this." JoHnHardin noted "Drum circles are a staple of SCA events these days. Lots of drumming and belly dancing..." CurtPhillips missed "the way we used to have "hall Parties" at cons. Tucker used to do that a lot, and he always had a good crown of interesting folks with him." FanLounge agreed - "hall parties were the best, as long as there was a soda machine or a con suite nearby." LindaBushyager asked "How about those elevator parties where people put couches in them!" DianCrayne reminisced "When the suites got too full, the parties spilled out into the halls, and became separate parties on their own. It IS one of the reasons that hotels tried to block rooms, so all the noisy fans were in one place." LindaBushyager noted "Actually hall parties still occur- look for them at larger cons like worldcon."

Bill and the chat-room talked about how well the web cam had worked at Corflu. CurtPhillips complained that he "saw at least two things in the auction that I'd have bid more on than it actually sold for." And ceemage noted "we never got any food at the corflu banquet - of course, we had'nt paid - so i guess there's some kind of karmic justice there." DianCrayne agreed, "but they could have wafted a plate in

front of the camera and we could sniff it like the gods on Olympus." LindaBushyager reported "The banquet food was very good - we were too busy eating it to think of u poor people." CurtPhillips noted "We *did* notice that conversation pretty much ceased while you all were eating at Corflu..."

CurtPhillips reported that Ted White had had a tough trip back from Corflu - "Ted left LV at something like 2:30 a.m. after a delay at that airport, missed a connecting flight, had another long delay in NY, got home about 2:00 p.m. Tuesday. No sleep for 26 hours and He had to work the next day." There was much sympathy from the chat-room. ceemage said "I guess the one positive is that at least with Ted he won;t go "Maybe I shouldn't bother next year" - Does anyone else have a 100% corflu attendance" record over the years? DianCrayne replied "I have complete Corflu non-attendance..." JoHnHardin said "I've been to 100% of Las Vegas corflus."

As one of the Vegrants helped themselves to some more food, ceemage went into hyper-begging mode : "hi nice lady - can we have some nibbles too?" Several dishes were shown to the webcam. LindaBushyager wanted some "yummy meat." DianCrayne rejoiced "Yey, she's feeding us!!" ceemage agreed - "this is hospitality!" LindaBushyager asked "those were peppers?" FanLounge clarified "very hot chilies and carrots." ceemage thought he saw "mom's apple pie - waht could be more american?" LindaBushyager noted "What we dont see is what goes on in the other room - thats the good stuff going on. I hear Lori laughing out there." DianCrayne feared "This could make us paranoid..." ceemage noted "just beacuse your'e paranoid..." ustreamer-99577 completed "all together now...doesn't mean they aren't out to get you."

ustreamer-99577 suggested "Name tags! We need name tags for the video viewers!" FanLounge felt that "bar codes would be more 21st century." But ustreamer-99577 replied "i can't read bar codes! heck I go nuts even trying to figure out everyone's LJ nicknames." FanLounge retorted "of course you can it just takes a lot of practice."

katster noted "you can connect to the chat without the website. You can connect with an

IRC client." ceemage said "that may actually help me - as i was asking bill for extra stuff to make it more irc-like - if we can just connect via irc anyway, solves that." katster said that the web page interface was "just a Flash IRC client. ;)" ceemage said that making it web-based was important, "as it allows people to participate without their own IRC client - lowers the barriers to entry." katster agreed - "this is a nice happy medium. Web version with more complicated fun on the backend if you're up to it." FanLounge asked "would irc require less bandwidth than video, it should I'm thinking?" LennyB said "IRC requires only the same bandwidth as the text chat portion of this. The main issue is in the compression of the video and sound. U-Stream, itself, may have suggestions. The sound input can be monitored through a virtual VU meter to keep it from breaking up with high gain settings. A good mic can also help, but essentially, you need enough Internet bandwidth." ceemage said that bandwidth problems could be either with the upload to ustream or the download to people's computers, but was "impressed that lloyd manages to use this with dial-up." LennyB thought "It might also be possible to pick up clues by monitoring other Ustream broadcasts to see if other groups are successfully broadcasting music. There may be an inbuilt limit on what can be done through the U-Stream server. ...[All of this is the tech geek in me speaking]."

Arnie gave a short farewell to the webcam before Bill Mills switched it off. ceemage said "thanks to arnie & joyce for letting us in their house - no more video for the moment."

Regular Chat Session, 4th May

As with the previous day, people started gathering in the chat-room several hours early. Sildan managed to trigger the censorbot with a fairly mild expletive. ceemage explained "Bill has been trying to switch off the censor bot, with only limited success so far - really annoying is when it starts censoring <censored> Lupoff." Burbank396 asked whether the session was planned to have a specific subject "or a free for all." ceemage thought "even if we intended the former, it'd end up the latter," adding "no video feed planned." FanLounge said he had "tried to turn off the censorbot... so tell me if you see

profanity following: <censored> of dear!" Burbank396 "never could find the need to curse if there weren't other words to get the idea across, though it is a pain to have it <sensor> PKD's name." FanLounge finally got the censorbot to accept the "!censoroff" command, and checked it with a quick burst of profanity.

Burbank396 said "Last night was interesting Took me back to the old NOSFA days. There are a couple of New Orleans based fan groups but mostly media types and over an hour away drive time so I keep in touch with the puter." Sildan agreed - "this reminds me of IRC days way back in the 1990s." FanLounge replied "yeah there's similarities, but as Arnie points out, the big difference is this is a room that should really be full of only freinds and fellow fen... unlike IRC days of old - thus perhaps much more attractive to current fen." Also, "I am hoping we can gather a list of who has which other chat and VOiP programs, like MSN, Yahoo or Skype - They could also be useful for more interactive chats... especially Skype which would allow for multiple voice chats, moderated a'course."

Burbank396 said that he had "just noticed no slide show." FanLounge explained "it was all Vegrants (appropriate for last night but not so much for general use of the room. Ya' know?) - so I took 'em out." He also set "!topic Fan Chat. Host: Peter Sullivan." ceemage said "ok i'm here - i don't really have any plan for this - might see if I can get some video going with bill's help." katster asked "aren't the best fannish endeavors those where the participants are flying by the seat of their pants? ;)" ceemage said he was "also not at all distressed if we don't have too many people - as if I'm going to urkl up, a small audience is better."

FishlifterC was "just dropping by briefly to apologise that we can't stay! We have a regular Croydon meeting on Sunday evenings for which we usually leave about now..." ceemage asked "could this be a possible location for a video feed sometime?" FishlifterC suspected "one or two of our Croydon confreres would have Views! And probably quite a few of the other people in the pub. Although they might join in..."

In the meantime, ceemage and FanLounge

worked on trying to get a video feed from ceemage's computer, before ceemage had to leave temporarily - "back in 5 - attending to dog." Burbank396 stepped in - "So our host is busy what is every one reading?" FanLounge said he was still working through the "Corflu Silver chat transcripts - still 10 pages from the frakkin end." ceemage apologised "ok., i'm back - sorry about that - he just went in the garden and came back black... = emergency bath." He set the web-cam going and declared "ok, this is what I look like after having done an emergency dog wash," before realising "oops - helps if i push the on button." FanLounge reported "aha... there he is folks direct from the UK." ceemage spoke to the web-cam, saying he was pleased this was working, as it proved that you didn't have to be a 'tech god' like Bill Mills to do a webcast - if he could do it, anyone could. FanLounge felt this was a "good, if self effacing, point."

ceemage said to the web-cam that he assumed they wanted to see the dog that had been the cause of the previous interruption. FanLounge said "yeah... your imaginary dog - we wanna see it." ceemage went to fetch him. Burbank396 saw "An ear!" FanLounge asked for "better composition... closer to center.... Awwwwwwwwwwwwww... lookit the puppydog - wet puppydog - the picture is excellent and the sound is not giving us drop outs... it's excellent and I am VERY pleased! TY Peter for taking the effort to try this out." To finish the beta test session, and add a sercon veneer, ceemage read a short ("fair use") extract from the Philip K. Dick novel "Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said," in which one character describes to another the phone sex grid - which sounded suspiciously like the chat-room in its addictive qualities!

FanLounge felt it was a "great start... as you said... we proved we can do it... you can do it... and I'd call the experiment a rousing success." ceemage felt it "opens up whole vistas of potential content." FanLounge said "I'm telling ya' it looked wonderful here in Las Vegas and the sound, though it dropped out or buffered occasionally, was ALSO excellent... hell I hear the door squeek when you went out to find the pup." LloydPenney asked "What did I miss? Peter's dog? I thought this was supposed to be

chat only?" FanLounge explained "it was LP, but Peter wanted to try vid to see if he could do it and it worked beautifully - we heard his voice, say his face and met Oscar the wonder dog." Burbank396 felt the video feed quality was "At least as good as last night and the audio was better."

LloydPenney explained "I took Bill Mills' advice, and set the buffer to 0, but a dialup line just can't handle the videoflow." FanLounge had "feared that would be the bottom line Lloyd... sorry bud." LloydPenney was philosophical: "Not to worry...at least I got a look at the Katzes' dining room, and saw how people come to Eugene Cernan Dr. to party." FanLounge explained " It was a smaller than usual group... not a surprise the first weekend after Corflu... but yeah, it looked like a Vegrants meeting on the cam." ceemage agreed - "we even got fed." FanLounge added "and about time too." LloydPenney said he was investigating the costs of getting a better internet connection - "Bell Canada and Rogers are always nagging us about bundling our phone, television and cellphone bills to save money. If I can do soemthing like that, a dedicated cable to the back of the 'puter will get me better connected." He also noted "Oh, yes, let's irritate everyone with this... Happy Star Wars Day! May the 4th be with you...always..."



FanLounge played some filk as an audio feed - "It's Bill Beard of First Fandom - an intrumental called "First Fen" he wrote and performed - you can find mp3 files of Bill's stuff at TVoF.info on the Fannish Music pages." He explained "the broadcasts can be audio only... kinda like a

podcast - so I have my mixer set to wave instead of mic and you get the audio from my mp3 player." Burbank396 said it "sounds like a 45 at 33 1/3." FanLounge said "it IS a strange track to start with - I have the audio setting to max in the ustream controls... hoping it would make the sound listenable." He added "wow... I just listened to the play back (turned up my speakers) SHIT OH DEAR - connection speeds and such I suspect... ustream itself is our server so when they are busy and have lots of traffic it most likely affects all the streams." ceemage added "I tested my upload speed this afternoon - after seeing that ustream recommend a min of 330k for uploads. Was only getting about 180k. Was worried - but it seemed to be "alright on the night"."

JoHnHardin noted "The live feed from the Vegrants only made me want to be there MORE. I can imagine that the Corflu Virtual Consuite was only moreso for those not in attendance." ceemage agreed - he had seen "some discussion on mailing lists about the impact of doing video feeds i.e. will it make people need to attend in person less - general consensus = no way, jose." JoHnHardin agreed - "More along the lines of "See what you're missing?"" Burbank396 felt it "has the same effect as eric flint giving away e-text - more sales after getting you hooked." LloydPenney wondered "if there are other places we can do this? Perhaps the fanzine lounges in Denver and Montreal? I will be putting this idea to the Montreal committee, and see if we can do this there. I won't have much of a budget, but we can explore the idea." ceemage didn't think budget would be an issue - "as i proved tonight, a naff webcam and a reasonable internet connection are all you need." He felt that "the dynamics of it are - that we need video to *attract* the audience - but that, once they're here, they get so into the chat - that we keep them anyway."

LloydPenney, struggling with his dial-up connection, reported "I turned the buffer up all the way to 5, and I'm actually getting snippets I can understand." He felt that "Something in Virtual Tucker Hotel about how best to get what you want out of this system would be very helpful, and might get more people participating."

ceemage asked about the service being used to host the virtual fan lounge - "do we know what ustream's business model is? no obvious advertising - no subscriptions - discreet google ads wouldn't honk people off too much." FanLounge suspected they were more concerned with building an audience at the moment. ceemage said "tech has never been a problem for fans before - heck, hecto is a form of tech. I think the thing is that we are really where fandom has always been - some people understand the tech and make it available for themselves and others to be creative with - whether the tech in question is mimeo or video." Burbank396 agreed - "a fan reads fanzines ... A FAN has a mimeo Light box letter guides and shading plater."

LindaBushyager "just thought I would see if fans were still fanning and see there is a scheduled chat. I hear Teresa (I think) playing on audio. At least today the audio sounds good." ceemage explained "we did some test video earlier - just chatting now." LindaBushyager said "I see there will be another Vegrants meeting lounge on May 24. Someone should post this on Trufans or other list and then I'm sure there will be a lot more participants." FanLounge said "We are gonna try to have the cam and chat set up for every Vegrants meeting IF possible... and we'll start doing regular themed talks at some point. LloydPenney thought "We may need to come up with a list of topics, and see where the interest lies." LindaBushyager replied "Definitely this technology is goshwow to me too," but "My fear is that the chitchat might degenerate into what I've seen that is more typical of chat boards I've seen - just hi and bye and silly comments without a lot of substance." ceemage agreed - "tonight was intended to be pretty loose - other than allowing me to test doing a non-Vegas video feed - but we probably need more structure/focus for future weeks," although "there's a fine line between over- and under-organising." LindaBushyager thought "if you keep it to a once or twice basis you probably will find it more effective than if you try to go to a very frequent schedule which might lead to too much addiction or time wasting or lack of interest or all of the above." ceemage asked "does weekly sound about right, or too frequent? I suspect that with corflu and 2 sessions this weekend we may have over-

dosed." LindaBushyager replied "Frequency might depend on how many people there are. For me I'm already overdosing a bit! But if you have enough people to support a weekly session or whatever than that could work. I know a lot of somewhat out of touch fans might like to join." She added "You might need to put up a tutorial to talk people through setting up their own individual "shows" with video on this channel (I presume others can be on the same channel)."

DianCrayne turned up, and FanLounge told her "you missed a video feed from Peter Sullivan in the UK! It was most excellent! we hadn't touted video... it was a sudden decision to try out the possibilities of turning over the controls to someone else and letting them be the broadcaster. he did great, the feed was as strong as any we've had, the image was good and colorful and the sound excellent... few drop outs and we got to here that neat accent... oh and meet his dog Oscar!" DianCrayne said "One of the bouncy kind of dogs, I bet!" FanLounge explained "it was soaking wet and sitting in Peter's lap... so I couldn't really say - if memory serves he said something about washing the dog... or it may have just been out in the rain.... but it was a wet puppy." DianCrayne recalled "Ah... the smell of wet

dog. I remember it well." FanLounge agreed "yeah... Peter commented we should be happy we have yet got smellovision."

LloydPenney asked FanLounge about Corflu. He replied "OMG! I haven't been able to order my thots about that enuff to write anything (nor have I had the time) partly because I know once I get started it will voluminous - In short... it was a fanboy's dream-come-true. LloydPenney agreed - "As much as I have enjoyed being a part of this fandom, it suddenly got personal for me to meet some of the people whose writing and artistry I've seen for decades. It was great to shake hands with some of these folks I've been corresponding with for years, and they may have wondered who was sending out all those letters from Etobicoke, Ontario. Getting to Vegas took some special saving of funds to purchase the flights, hotel room and foods, not to mention getting the time off work. Being at the con was great fun, but I cannot see when I might be able to return to a Corflu. This was my second one, Corflu Toronto being my first a couple of years ago. Doesn't look like Seattle will be feasible, with commitments to Montreal, and a trip to Florida to go to the International Space Development Conference."