

Western Romance #1

Western Romance #1 is done for FAPA and Fandom by Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107, in May 2000. Thanks to **Arnie** for the layout and copying help. Email: Joyworley@aol.com. Member fwa and afal.

WESTERN ROMANCE is what happens when you know the time is at hand and you have to make a definite commitment, but you're far past waiting for what you intended. Many a lass has seen the midnight hour approach, and asked Billy to walk her home instead of holding out for Jim. Thus it is with me; all of April raced past with my publishing intent reaching pinnacles of plans. May approached, then arrived, and QUANT Suff seemed no closer to completion than when I closed the file last February. The second week pinned me down; I opened that file and even added a line to what was there before.

Now, the day is at hand, the elder ghods of fandom are frowning at me in displeasure, and I know desperate measures are required to make the mailing.

Oh, well. I've always wanted a fanzine named for those wonderful pulpzines that shared space with science fiction. A moon, a maid, a guy and his horse:: a bucolic view of sand and sage, and a story that always ends well.

I'VE ALSO BEEN THINKING LATELY that it might be fun to revisit the past. It wasn't that long ago I was typing POTLATCH on the almost new bright red Selectric. Now and then I'd plop in a picture, or leave a space for Ross Chamberlain, Jay Kinney, Ned Sonntag or Bill Kunkel to fill. Typography? That was what came off the keyboard. Justification? You gotta be nuts; there were few reasons that justified that kind of double work. Good layout for my type-written zines came down to neat headings and at least some white space on all four sides.

We've all been realigned on this brave new page of computer graphics, with instant justification, an overwhelming variety of typographical tricks, and unlimited artistic parameters.

So consider **WESTERN ROMANCE NO. ONE** as a deliberate attempt to recall the old fashioned layout of yesterday, a lovesong to the dedicated typefaces and simple style that rolled so easily onto the page.

THERE'S ANOTHER REASON, OF COURSE. After years, decades, of being



loyal Macintosh users, it all came to an end a few years ago when I started writing for Internet sites. My publisher, two or three turns of the worley-gig back, allowed as how it was easier and better for me to be on PC. Of course he was right, and in fact I've gradually come to love my PC for its own particular charms.

Still, no computer ever quite stole my heart the way the Macintosh did. I've had 'em all, too, from the Apples that the company first grew, to the first tiny baby Mac with it's tiny baby screen. Old Macs are stacked around here like cordwood; the things never wear out, they're always been so solidly built they'll probably still be operational when the sun goes nova. (The new image of trash moves us away from the stacked up televisions, to the stacked up computers and monitors so many of us have.) Even though I lived and died on PC professionally, for fanac I was still wedded to the Macintosh. And so were my data disks.

Alas, my Mac died. There had been warning, coughing fits and various moans that showed the disease, whatever it was, was gradually spreading. And, I take full blame, because I should have Taken Heed.

Last month the Mac on my desk expired. I'm sure it could be fixed, but at a healthy cost, and there seems little need. So that old dependable true love of my computing life slipped away. Unfortunately, taking the Katz master mailing list with it, our prime publishing program (QUARK) and access to the Mac printer.

TIME FOR A CHANGE arrived with that crash. Arnie picked out and installed a new PC publishing program to his taste. A trooper, he jumped right in and learned its operation, made new templates, even made a new template for QUARK Suff. In less time than it takes to tell, he was ready to emerge from our Mac cocoon, as a PC-publishing butterfly.

Of course, our mailing list had to be reconstructed. I had an old printout from about a year ago, so I started with that, picked up a few more names from the Corflu 2000 list. Robert Lichtman kindly checked my list against his own to provide more changes of address. So I am now back in synch again. (I hope I haven't lost anyone; I hope they'll let me know if I have.)

I'M A BA-A-A-D GIRL, though. Even though I completed the mailing list, I never quite got around to even opening the new publishing program or the templates Arnie created for me.

Drums Along the Mojave

A VISIT TO AN ANTIQUE SHOW a couple of weeks ago was a special treat for Aileen Forman and me. (Well, it was certainly a treat for me, and I leap to the conclusion...) Las Vegas doesn't have as many of these shows as most comparable-sized cities. In fact, it appears that some of the Antique Show Series have been completely discontinued, leaving only one or two survivors.

I like antique shows somewhat better than going antiques in various stores. Probably most people would agree, since it produces the most things to see in the smallest acreage. On the other hand, prices at shows tend to be a bit higher than in stores. This is balanced off by a cheerful willingness to dicker.

The show was small, especially compared with the giant Atlantic City convention that the Collecting Channel editors covered a year ago. Ted White, Andy Hooper, Bill Kunkel, Tammy Springer and I had to divide up that convention center, and each of us saw only a small section. It was touted as the world's largest antique show, and I believe it, at least on this side of the Atlantic. I had never seen so many, nor such fabulously beautiful wares.

By contrast, the Cashman Field Center seemed small. Simultaneously with the antique show, there were also kick boxing and martial arts shows going on, in two other sectors of the Center.

We oohed and aahed over furniture and glasswares. Aileen is well schooled in antiques, since that was the section she covered in CollectingChannel.com. She has proved herself a good and quick journalistic study, and is now a font of information about the beautiful and rare. As we strolled through, we compared information, informing and amusing each other. This was apparently a magnet for the dealers manning the booths; they were all anxious to talk and compare notes.

I was a little surprised to find a couple of displays of Native American artifacts. One dealer had an impressive collection of arrowheads; another had a variety of leather bound coup sticks, iron and stone tools, pottery and blankets. I was most impressed, because I'd never seen the like, by a display of Iroquois beaded items. These included various ornaments, vests, and bead-laden moccasins of great beauty.

I am somewhat bemused at the collection of antiques. I presume some of the more beautiful items, the Iroquois beaded pieces, may have been newly manufactured. But I know some of these things were very very old.

My first instinct is to say these things belong to the tribe; should be returned to the council house. "They're not for you," scream my basic thoughts. But I balance this off with a certain happiness that more and more people are interested in such things; that more honor is now given to the accomplishments of the past.

I've been particularly moved, in my own family, at the return to old customs. My two nieces, their children, and especially their grandchildren are increasingly caught up in New Age Indian affairs. This is so much the truth that my great-great nephews and nieces are about a hundred percent more Cherokee than either my siblings or me ever were. They attend powwows in Oklahoma and Tennessee, and one of my great great nephews produces Indian art of considerable worth. In fact, his modern twist on the dream catcher is sold at the Smithsonian gift shop.

The avidness of their interest has led them to do research, tracing down the family roots. They've managed to move the family tree back a couple of generations further than it was known by my mother, including even locating Our Number. Cherokees were assigned numbers, just one more degradation that was laid on them. Now the authenticity of claim to membership in the tribe hangs on proving your relationship to a numbered family. How strange that the whip with which they regimented us is now the code for mutual recognition between us.

But my family doesn't concern itself much with historical ills. Certainly, they're well read, versed in the litany of tragedies. But they've adopted a forward-looking philosophy.

It does seem to me that now, in a new millennium, it is best to move forward. The history we all memorize is the history of both the Native American and the citizens of the United States. We shared the tragedy together. We were on different ends of the stick, but nonetheless it happened to us mutually. We both must learn to live with what happened.

I'm learning a lot from these New Age Indians that are my kin. They all work and raise their children; they all sit down to Sunday dinner and get up from backyard barbecues. But they seem to never completely submerge themselves; they seem to keep a cord attached to their tribal beliefs. And in fact, the family ties seem to be their tribal ties; they stay closer than me and my siblings ever did.

There was another unexpected display at the antique show. One merchant had a large showing of Russian imports. Although they certainly were not antiques, I was pleased to see them there. Trading on eBay and websites, I've developed a strong taste for Russian craftsmanship. This was a fine display. Enameled wares included traditional boxes, plates, and book covers. There was a large selection of hand-painted brooches; these are my particular weakness. Painted by artisans outside of Moscow, they feature jewel-tones against black or burgundy, painted on wooden ovals and rounds. I have a couple that I bought on eBay. One is a floral wreath centered on a mother-of-pearl backdrop. The other, my favorite, is a winter scene of great beauty -- ice-laden trees along a small frozen stream, the spire of a steeple in the village over yon. It's a sort of Russian version of Currier & Ives' *Winter*.

There was also a huge, to my eye, display of amber jewelry. Stone of every size were set in modern and traditional rings, brooches and pendants. I admire them -- the golden glow they give off practically lights a room! -- but I have a strange aversion to them, too, the same distaste I feel with fossils. I suspect my totem is clouded if I handle dead things; I also dislike the scorpions sealed in lucite that are a hallmark of the Southwest.

Eleven survivors of the Negro Leagues were there, with a large display of pictures, uniforms and autographed items. I was excited by the display, and priced a baseball for Arnie with all eleven signatures. Then I decided that he'd be so happy for an opportunity to meet these guys, that I'd bring him to the show the next day. That was a mistake, since we didn't make it. Ah, well...another show.

My only purchase was a Russian hair barrette for \$15. It's a large black oval, hand-painted with red roses, and framed in gold. It's a beaut...and strong, too. When I got it home and put it on, I found that the strong Russian steel had such a spring to it that it slammed my fingers when I released the catch. Sort of overkill for the purpose. But it's jim-dandy at holding back hair; I don't think even a microbe could escape that clutch!

And I suppose I came away with a few dreams, as well, of crystal lamps and porcelain bowls, of carved wooden tables and lions-feet chairs.

Of nested Russian dolls and Navajo blankets, silver samovars and lace-trimmed shawls.

And of Iroquois moccasins silently treading forest paths, of carved stone pipes and feather-trimmed drums.

An Eyeful of Trouble

(Not to be read by the squeamish)

Don't read this if medical problems make you ill. There's nothing here you need to know, anyhow.

It's been a year since I penned those hopeful words, "I am in charge of my own destiny again." Reading what I wrote in QS#8, it seems there's been little movement in my life and yet the time has been filled with constant small upheavals. Still, the end is not so far from the beginning, after all is tallied.

A year ago I reported my eye disorders, cataract surgery, and hopes for improvement with a second operation. Now, a year later, my vision is about the same as it was then, but with less hope attached.

How well I see mostly depends on how much inflammation there is in the eyes. All the drug therapy during the last year was largely ineffective to stop the retinopathy that caused the growth of abnormal blood veins behind my eyes. The veins swell, bleed, and leave debris — hundreds of strings and floaters turning my view black.

Eventually the specialist found that steroid pills reduced the inflammation, which reduced the retinal bleeding and the growth of veins. My vision improved to a livable level. I also had the disagreeable side effects that go with steroids: weight gain, mood swings, body pains, etc. Eventually Doc took me off steroids. Unfortunately, at my last visit, he found the inflammation returning, the veins reappearing, some bleeding, and my vision about 20 points worse than the month before.

The bottom line is that the condition would, left untreated, eventually cause total blindness. But of course we won't leave it untreated; my future probably holds a number of surgeries and more or less constant experimentation with different means to inhibit the retinopathy and preserve vision.

The next thing they will do will be a series of steroid injections directly into the eye. This has been effectively used by some doctors in similar situations. Although I certainly don't look forward to this, it is a relief to know that there's other things to try.

On the other hand, my heart seems a bit stronger. At this point, I do not expect to have any invasive heart treatments, at least not for the foreseeable future. A low-fat diet, plenty of rest and avoiding stress keeps me more or less on an even keel.

So there you have it — a window on the life of Joyce. Not exactly in control of my own destiny, but not exactly a ship cast adrift either! And, who would believe it! I finished in time to make the mailing!

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