



**Western Romance #8** is done for FAPA and Fandom by Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107, in November 2004.

Thanks to **Arnie** for production help. The lovely logo is by Alan White, and the rest of the pix are cast cartoons, photos by Aileen Forman. Email [JoyceWorley1@cox.net](mailto:JoyceWorley1@cox.net) . Member fwa and afal.

## Mojave Mojo

My Mojo failed me this year; a disastrous accident in April played havoc with my regular haunts and habits. On the other hand, it gave me opportunity to measure my own strength (disappointingly small), my own stamina (better than I thought), and the depth of my friendships (I am wealthy beyond words.) I'm going to record much of what happened here, and I'll put up spoiler warnings on those sections that might contain medical unpleasanties, in recognition that many people don't like to read such accounts. The first of these is:

### **Sunday: The Accident**

Following Corflu, I came down with the expected cold. (Have you noted how conventions trigger illnesses, due to exposure to germs from other parts of the country?) It hung on, turned to flu, and I was fairly miserable in April.

On April 18, after watching the wrestling pay-per-view, Arnie went into the kitchen to rustle up some refreshments. Suddenly I felt much worse. "I'm going to the bedroom to lie down," I called out to Arnie. "Stay where you are; I'll come help you," he replied. But too late — I was already half way down the hall. Abruptly, faintness overtook me. "I can't stay up" I whimpered to Arnie as he ran toward me, then slumped unceremoniously to the floor.

I was only unconscious for a couple of seconds. When I looked down at my legs, my feet were pointed in impossible directions, and I knew I had Trouble.

I tried to get up...no hope. Arnie tried to hoist me, but I was an ungainly mass of flesh and pain. My mind racing, I remembered that \*Su Williams\* (put that name in stars) had always said "Call me" in case of emergency, and she'd even pasted her numbers to my computer. She also lives nearest to us of all our friends. "Call Su," I told Arnie. And, bless her forever, she immediately came.

While he was talking to her on the phone, I dragged myself into the bedroom, but there was no hope of gaining that height. I reached up and pulled down a pillow to put under my head, and dragged a blanket over me. Then, I must have gone into shock.

When Su came, she and Arnie each grabbed an arm, and dragged me up onto the bed. She looked at my ankles, shook her head gravely, and said I really should go to the emergency room. I knew I was too ill to move, so she went out and bought ace bandages, wrapped both ankles, and propped my legs up on pillows. Surprisingly, I suppose because of shock, I was able to get through the night, even sleeping a good part of the time. The next day Arnie rolled me from room to room on a desk chair, until Su returned to take me to the hospital.

## **Monday: The Emergency Room**

Arnie and Su managed to roll the desk chair to her car, and slid me over into the passenger seat. When we got to emergency, a reception nurse came out to meet us with a wheelchair, but there was no provision for moving me from the car seat into the chair. "Just stand on one foot and pivot into the chair," she repeated several times. Over and over we explained that I didn't have a good foot to stand on, but she offered no alternative. Finally, I just did it, despite the pain. Su tried to hold me up, until I got into position and fell into the chair.

After the paperwork and a brief wait, they put me on the "fast track" line, and got me into the treatment area. I was able to slide from the wheelchair onto a big treatment lounge. When the doctor eventually came, she unwrapped my legs, blanched and said, "Oh my God!" She said my right leg was dislocated, and they'd have to straighten it. I thought for five seconds and said, "I can't permit you to do that unless you put me to sleep."

They brought a gurney to take me to x-ray, but there was no way I could hoist myself onto it without standing on my feet, which was now even less possible than before. After much fuss and ado, a heroine came to my aid: a practical nurse, with a practical approach to pain. She had me drape myself over her shoulder, and simply hoisted me over her hip, levering me onto the gurney. I never learned her name, and I never saw her again, but I'll never forget her.

## **Don't Read This: The Straightening**

After x-rays, the doctor returned with three young medics, such handsome young men that I felt the worst must be over. "We've got to straighten that leg," she said, and told Su to move down the hall away from me. She administered a sedative, and had me count backward.

It was months before Su told me the rest. When I was sufficiently fuzzed, each of the medics took hold of a limb to restrain me, the doctor grabbed my dislocated leg, and with a mighty jerk, wrenched it into place. Su said she was down the hall when she heard me scream, for a long time.

Of course, I remember nothing. I am, however, dismayed that they lowered my resistance and self-control to the point that I couldn't maintain my courage, but not enough to eliminate the pain. It seems somehow wrong to me that my will toward bravery was broken. It seems to me that my body remembers and resents this humiliation.

## **A Week in Valley Hospital**

I don't really remember much about the next couple of days. I was in a very lovely double room, nicely equipped with a t.v. facing each bed, a clock on the wall, and a very comfortable bed. Su brought Arnie to see me that first evening, and almost every evening thereafter. I had visitors, and received flowers. They brought me meals on trays, mostly jello and liquids, good, if rather plain. I slept most of the time, had x-rays and EKGs and other pre-op tests.

Tuesday night, a wonderful surgeon came to see me, and explained that I had one break in the left ankle, and three in the right. Surgery was definitely required on the worst one, and since they were doing it, they'd also patch up the other one at the same time. Wednesday, after the surgery, the doctor told us that it had gone superbly, and that he was very happy with the results. However, I was going to be off my feet for a substantial amount of time.

My legs were ensconced in temporary casts that covered me from below the knees to my toes, which peeped out like black sausages. I could sorta roll from one side to another, but there was no question of standing, and even less of walking. And, although I didn't yet know it, there was no possibility of my returning home for a long time yet to come.

### **Friday: The Emergency Vehicle**

Friday night at about 9:30 pm, I was moved from Valley Hospital across town to the rehab facility. I had been dreading the change, fearing the pain when I was hoisted from the bed to the gurney, but I shouldn't have. Two extremely attractive young emergency medics gently lifted me on my blankets without so much as a bump or groan, to a gurney that they rolled out to the emergency vehicle. After an elevator lift hoisted the gurney and me into the truck, one drove, while the other sat with me during the trip.

I have always been impressed by Las Vegas' emergency vehicle crews. After years of seeing Manhattan's ambulances caught in grid locks, the Nevada crews seemed especially wonderful. They take great pride in getting the patient there in time. It is not at all uncommon to see them come barreling across town, taking the center meridian if necessary, going down the wrong side of the road, even driving on the sidewalk if other routes fail. These guys are determined to get to the wounded, and to get the wounded to the hospital in the speediest time possible, taking great personal risks to save their charges. I was glad of the opportunity to tell the young man beside me how much I admired and appreciated their good works.

### **Friday Night: Harmon Rehabilitation Hospital**

Now commences the only really bad experience I had during this episode. At Harmon, I was put into the Observation Ward to wait for a bed assignment, and suddenly I arrived in Hell. The ambulance crew carefully ensconced me in a bed, then left me to some very un-tender mercies.

The two or three nurses in the Ward were passing the night in conversation. Eventually the skinny one broke off to take my vitals. She began, then stopped, saying "I'm going to take a break." She left me lying, not even a glass of water for comfort. Eventually she returned, and her fingers stank of cigarettes as she shoved a thermometer into my mouth.

I asked for a bedpan, and a male assistant unceremoniously pushed it under me. I was embarrassed, but obediently made water. When he finally returned to remove the pan, he spilled it into the bed but made no effort to clean it, leaving me lying in a pool of urine.

Eventually I caught the attention of the second female on duty, and asked her for a dry pad to lie on. She agreed, but returned to her friends, sat down, and resumed chatting. About a half hour passed before she came back with a change of bed pads.

The night wore on with no prospect of transfer to a regular room, no assistance, no sedatives, no water, no tissues to dry my eyes. At one point, two of the nurses actually left the hospital leaving the room severely understaffed for about an hour.

Four or five other patients checked in, and were sent to their rooms, but not me. Then I heard the skinny one admit she'd mixed the charts. Mrs. Hooper was now Mrs. Katz, and comfortably installed in the room reserved for me.

It wasn't too hard to regain my identity, but I was in the cold so far as a room was concerned. So there I was, in the incoming ward with nurses from Hell, and no treatment at all. Lying crooked on the



bed, head flat and feet jammed against the footboard, my lungs filled with flem and I began to cough. I remembered that my old friend Diane died in one of these rehab hospitals, of pneumonia. I began to seriously believe that this might be happening to me, while the three nurses on duty sat gossiping.

At seven a.m., an angel appeared unto me. Ida came in like an avenger, making right of my many wrongs. She straightened my body on the bed, aligned my legs and rested them on pillows, changed the linen, got me ice water and tissues. Ida's shift-mate, Bea, the RN on duty, got pain killers for me, hugged and kissed me, and comforted me to sleep with promises that she'd see me in a room before she went off duty.

I'll never forget these two women, truly angels of mercy. They saw me through a bad time, and I don't think I would have survived without them.

### **Saturday: The Start of a Strange Story**

Bea kept her promise, and shortly after noon I was taken into a bright cheerful double room. The walls were clean and white, except for one mottled sky blue wall, and all around the top, an attractive blue feather pattern. I settled in comfortably, and almost immediately fell asleep.

I awakened quickly to screams from my roomy, an elderly woman (I later learned she was 89) who had slipped into dementia. She alternated between bloodcurdling screams and shouts: "Help me, help me, help me" and "Up, up, up, up, up" and "Let me up, let me out, I've got to get out of here." While she screamed, she flailed her hands like a four year old throwing a tantrum, occasionally picking up something to bang against the bed frame.

An endless night followed, with the non-stop tantrum of screams and demands. I am quickly exhausted by it, but each time I begin to doze, a new cacophony wrenches me awake. My own legs throb and ache, and I can't halt the slow tears oozing from my eyes. I begin to think about those occasionally murderous nurses, and I clearly understand. It seemed the old lady would be better off if someone put a pillow over her face, and I confess I was nearly ready to do the deed. As nurses came and went, I was half afraid I'd see something I truly didn't wish to witness.

She finally fell asleep at about 5 a.m., and I sank instantly into restless dreams.

### **Saturday Afternoon: The Sliding Board**

The head of the therapy department arrived at about two o'clock, to talk to me and evaluate my condition. He promised that my therapy would begin in earnest on Monday. As a preface, he brought with him a wheelchair and a board measuring about four feet long, six inches wide, and about an inch and a half thick. It was highly polished like top quality butcher board, and slick to the touch.

He showed me how to position one end of the board under my hips, at the edge of the bed, and the other in the seat of the wheelchair. Then, while he kept his arms around me to halt my fear of falling, he had me slide over the board, inch by careful inch, from the bed to the chair. He rolled me through the halls, showing me how to use my hands to move the wheels, and how to make turns. We went to the therapy wing, a bright airy room with exercise equipment, not unlike a health club. (Here I saw the first mirror since I'd been injured, and was startled by how white-faced I'd become.) He showed me the equipment, and explained they'd give me exercises to strengthen my upper body. Then he allowed me to propel myself most of the way back to the room, and helped me slide across the board, back into my bed.

I was exultant. The sliding board was my route to some degree of maneuverability. Although I was terrified of falling, and not strong enough to move rapidly over it, I knew that the

board would slide me into better times. For the first time since the accident, my heart took wing, because I could see hope ahead.

### **Sunday Night: Hazel Departs**

Unfortunately, Hazel didn't sleep long, and the day and evening were punctuated by her screams and cries. The nurses explained that Hazel had slipped into this dismaying state a day or two earlier, following administration of a dose of morphine. She seemed to be very gradually improving, but it was temporary.

Sunday night, her condition worsened, and to make matters worse, she started having trouble breathing, even though she was on oxygen. I awoke to see firemen surrounding her bed, lifting the poor woman onto a gurney, and learned she was being taken to a real hospital for care. (I hadn't known 'til then that Vegas firemen do double-duty, providing emergency help for respiratory patients.) After she left, I sank into deep restful sleep for the first time since I'd left Valley Hospital.

### **Monday Morning: Hazel Returns**

Maids, orderlies and nurses scrubbed and sanitized the room, and made ready for a new patient. I was eager to meet my new roommate. Then, when firemen again appeared, I had a shock: it was Hazel that they brought to the bed. She was quiet, under sedation, and I inquired what had happened. It seemed that the hospital had determined there was nothing really wrong, and they shipped her back to the rehab facility.

When she awakened, she was steadier, alternating between her miserable cries and moments of lucidity. As the day passed, I came to realize that my own welfare was deeply entwined with hers, and I tried to think what to do.

So I began to sing to her. I'm no great shakes in the vocal department; you'll never hear me at a filk meet. But I know about a million old songs, and in fact I do enjoy singing for my own pleasure. Each time she'd grow restive, I'd sing...and it seemed to hold her attention. She'd stop her cries, and strain to hear. So I kept it up, and she gradually grew calmer.

### **Monday Afternoon: A Taste of Freedom**

The therapist arrived on schedule, to help me slide into the wheelchair, and roll into the therapy department, where I did a number of not too strenuous exercises, and practiced using the sliding board. After, they told me I could look around the hospital as much as I liked, before returning to my room.

As I wheeled around, I found that the Harmon Rehab Center was a beautiful place. A one-story facility, it has five wings, each with its own set of nurses stations and patient rooms. They are connected by broad hallways with large windows that look out to enchanted gardens, fountains, blooming shrubbery, and stone walkways to be explored. All the common areas were



lined with good prints, mostly landscapes and florals. Everything was hospital clean, but not barren — it was styled more like a resort than a hospital.

For the rest of my time there, I spent an hour or so each day wheeling through the halls, gaining ability to control the wheelchair, and enjoying the surroundings. The staff started calling me “Smiley” because I so clearly evidenced happiness at my own ability to get around.

And, my therapy went well. The staff were impressed with my motivation, and my pleasant attitude. After all, I was about 20 years younger than their average patient, and no doubt it was a treat for them to work with someone who hadn’t given up in anticipation of death.

In fact, I was happy about many things. I was seeing progress — the ability to get out of bed, to move about in a wheelchair, was very liberating. I was getting excellent care. Throughout the entire ordeal, with the obvious exceptions, the doctors and nurses were wonderful. I even enjoyed the food. My level of pain was decreasing, and they provided me painkillers when I needed, which was now only to enable me to sleep at night.

And, I was pleased with my roommate. Hazel was settling down, becoming good company.

### **Tuesday Morning: Hazel Comes Around**

By Tuesday, Hazel was feeling much better, and we started to become friends. She kept asking me to sing more, and eventually started singing with me. The hospital staff was thoroughly amused by us, and tickled that I had helped calm Hazel.

In response to questions designed to get her talking about herself, Hazel told me about her young life. Born in 1915 on a Massachusetts farm, her mother died soon after her birth. Her father eventually remarried, and her step-mother took special interest in her, providing her with motherly attention and guidance. The family moved to Boston, but her father was dissatisfied, and when she was 8 or 9, took his entire brood to England. She described the sea voyage to me, and also described the pretty dress she wore for arrival day.

They only stayed in England a couple of years, then came back to New York City. We talked about her teen years, and her marriage when she was 19. And always, between the stories of olden days, we sang. She liked to sing “Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do” and “Row Row Row your boat.”



She told me that while she had been screaming, she had known she was irrational, but just couldn’t control it. She blamed the morphine, just as the nurses had, and kept repeating, “Please don’t ever let them give me morphine again.”

Each time I left the room to go to therapy, she’d fret, asking the nurses to find and bring me back. But she remained lucid. That night, I told her I planned to dream that she and I were going on a picnic in Central Park, and about the fields of daffodils we’d see there. This pleased her, and she smiled herself to sleep.

### **Wednesday: My kitten**

Hazel didn’t sleep well Tuesday night, and awoke feeling much worse. She needed someone to poor her brow and hold her hand; she was ex-

exhibiting fear. I tried to calm her, because I knew if she'd fall asleep, it would be better for us both. I got her to take deep breaths of her oxygen, and that quietened her for a minute, but then she began to weep again.

As I worried and fretted about her, I began to understand what was happening: Hazel was my kitten. By trying to help her, by fixing my mind on her instead of myself, I was moving outside my own pain. Although she was my tormenter, I was becoming unaccountably affectionate toward her. Suddenly I understood the Stockholm Syndrome better, because Hazel and I were, in a sense, chained together.

### **Wednesday Afternoon: A Wonderful Breakthrough**

Preparatory to my release, various medical supplies were delivered to my room, including my very own sliding board, and a potty chair that I'd be taking home with me. This freed me from the bedpan...oh happy day, indeed! My spirits rose; this was a wonderful breakthrough.

A wheelchair was delivered to the house, but for some reason, they sent a giant chair. It was so wide it wouldn't even go down our hallway when Arnie tested it, so we had to arrange for an exchange. It took several days to work it out, but finally a normal size chair was delivered. The signs all pointed to my release soon.

### **Thursday: Hazel's Crash**

The ailment that had Hazel in the hospital was a giant open bedsore on the heel of her foot. The doctor arrived early Thursday morning to have a look. He removed her bandages, probed the infected spot a bit, then walked away, leaving her sore foot unprotected and lying direct on the bed. Hazel had very little resistance to pain, and she quickly hit her limit. She began to panic, then started screaming. The doctor said, "Give her a shot of morphine."

I spoke up: "She had a bad reaction to morphine the last time she had it." He looked at her chart and said, "I see nothing about that here." And Hazel got another massive shot.

For the rest of the day, she screamed at least once a minute, uncontrollably. And this time, even singing to her didn't make her stop. It continued all that night; no one in our wing of the hospital slept at all. By morning, the nurses were telling me I should ask to be transferred to another room, to get away from Hazel, since I was unable to rest.

"I just can't abandon her," I explained. "This could happen to any of us; I just can't bring myself to leave her."

All that day, and the following night, her screams continued. This time she was much worse than the first episode, and nothing any of us did could bring her back to herself.

At one point, I even tried being bad to her, hoping this would shock her. "Help me God, please help me God" she said, and I replied, "Why would God help you when you're being so bad?" Another time I said,



“Shut up, Hazel; you’ve got to keep still.” The nurses also were trying various experiments in communication. But we made no headway with the poor soul at all.

Finally, after three days and nights, I did something I will always feel bad about: I telephoned the hospital administrator and asked that either Hazel or I be moved. I felt rotten about it; I was not living up to my own standards. I knew in my heart I should stay and try to comfort her, try to help her grab hold of her own sanity. But I was exhausted, getting more ill by the sleepless hour. Although I considered it bad mark against me, I abandoned her.

They promised they’d change us when the next room came available. But fate intervened. Instead, Hazel’s worsening condition made them again transfer her to the regular hospital.

I never saw Hazel again. I ran into a member of her family, whom I had met when she visited, and I learned that after a few days she once again began to regain sanity, as the drugs left her body. Her sister told me she had asked for me. But she was so ill, they didn’t return her to the rehab facility. I gave her sister my name and phone number, and asked they let me know about her. But of course, promises on shipboard, friendships on stalled subway trains, people caught on stuck elevators....it was not to be. I don’t know what became of her, or if she is dead or alive.

### **Monday: I Get New Casts**

I was taken via medical transport to the surgeon’s office, far to the northwest of Harmon Rehab Hospital. They took off the temporary casts, to examine the wounds and install new hard casts. After the doctor looked me over and expressed approval, two assistants built plaster casts on my limbs. They apparently were racing for their own amusement, because they didn’t spare even a moment for my comfort. The one on the right leg, in particular, hurt me badly, pushing my foot into a 90-degree angle from the leg, as it would be if I were walking.

Now that I had the permanent (well, six-week) casts, the doc said I could go home as soon as the therapist was convinced I could manage. But this wasn’t actually going to happen: our house was not wheelchair friendly, with narrow hallways, and abrupt turns that the wheelchair couldn’t manipulate. And, Arnie would obviously have a very difficult time caring for me. Ken and Aileen suggested that I come to Yucaipa, CA to stay with them, where they and the Wilsons could do the necessities for my recovery.

I explained the plan to the doctor and to the therapist, and they agreed this was best. They saw the appeal: I’d have the company of four caring adults, a brilliant and very amusing child, three cats, a genius dog, and even a horse. I didn’t even tell them about Cathi’s great cooking, Aileen’s compassion, or Ken’s and Ben’s strengths that were more than enough to lift and carry me over any obstacles in my path.





### **Tuesday, May 4: A Different Story Begins**

I was released from Harmon in the late evening. Su drove me by our house, and while she gathered up some clothes for me, I waited in the car and was entertained by Arnie, Bill Kunkel, and Derek Stazinsky. Then Su drove me, my wheelchair, the potty chair, the sliding board, and tons of other medical necessities to California, and an entirely different experience. The next month was filled with relaxing days in the California sun, endless games of ball-toss with the dog, wonderful games, hours of friendship and love, tireless attention, and marvelous food.

But I'll let you read about that in my article "The Month Long Convention" in the next issue of **Crazy From The Heat**.

And what did I learn from all this? I learned that bones are more fragile than my carpet, my courage is outweighed by a sedative, that my good intentions mean less than a night's sleep. I learned that the love of good friends weighs more than the greatest physician. And I learned that the next time I feel faint, I damn well better just sit down.



## Council Fires (Mailing Comments)

Here's thanks to several of you who were interested enough to inquire about the CRAZY cover by Alan White. Yes, that's me in the center. Stan "The Inferno" Jaekowitz is top left, and JoHn Hardin is top right. Lower right, with his back to the viewer, is Alan himself. Next to him, pointing at me, is Arnie. Ben Wilson is seated, and that's Bill Kunkel to his left. Cathi Wilson is laughing at Don Miller, I think (but it could be Ken; I'm not sure.) And Ross Chamberlain is in the lower left foreground, laughing at us all.

I think the Vegranti are so lucky, to have two of fandom's greatest artists here (Ross and Alan, of course.) Add to that Bill "Potshot" Kunkel's hilarious cartoons, Don Miller's rare work, Cathi's fine line drawings, and a couple of others of us who muddle through a cartoon now and then — I believe we may be the richest fan community there's ever been, so far as fanart is concerned.



**Fantasy Amateur** I don't think I've ever mentioned how much I appreciate the good job done on this. It's clear, concise, and always easy to understand. And, #268 was enhanced by a great cartoon by **Ray Nelson**. — I note we have a large treasury. Too bad we can't all get together for a FAPA picnic. — My thanks to those concerned, for voting for me in several categories of the Poll. I am thrilled.

**Bird of Prey 3 (Janine Stinson)** Congratulation on the publication of your essay, and on getting a quote used in a book. It's my opinion that, no longer how long you write professionally, you never get tired of seeing your own name.

You say, "Where there are doves, raptors are usually not far behind." I don't know raptors, except those beasts in Jurassic Park. I trust there are none of those here, at least not now. In the past, well probably. I'm told the Nevada desert's white gypsum rocks are made up of the decayed bones of prehistoric marine life. Only Stephen King could begin to guess what horrific monsters might be sleeping beneath our feet.

**Ben's Beat 77 (Ben Indick)** I grinned and grimaced my way through your pages of Quotes on Aging; there's some comfort in knowing smarter people than I have been able to keep their sense of humor through this. The one good thing is that now I always get a seat at fan meetings. Come to think of it, that makes it almost worthwhile! (I trust you are feeling better now, too.)

**FAPAlement \$504 (John Davis)** You have lucky students, to be exposed to such good music. I'm sorry that your school has given up Music Classes. That seems to be true in a great many places. I really hate it that Chorus is not longer a common touchstone for us all. I am constantly disappointed to realize that the younger generation no longer know the Great American Standards, such as "My Grandfather's Clock", "The Oaken Bucket", "Tenting Tonight", "The Dying Cowboy's Lament" and the hundreds of others that, at one point, were known by every schoolchild. I think our culture loses a lot by giving up these elements of common knowledge.

Four million points on Troubled Souls?!! I am deeply impressed.

Thank you for remembering Max Keasler. He was, indeed, a great guy. And no, Ray Nelson was never from Poplar Bluff, but he had the most profound effect on Poplar Bluff Fandom by coming to visit for about six weeks, bringing his bohemian attitudes with him, which they all caught, and eventually passed to me.

I was extremely impressed by Ghu Saplement #1202, indeed a Very Very Strange Issue. Now this was Creative (with a capitol C!) It is still lying on my desk, and I show it to all the local fans as an example of Something Wonderful and Unique. (Thank you for letting me see it!)

**Alphabet Soup #43 (Milt Stevens)** I think you put your finger on something significant, when you suggest the reason LoCs are so scarce for electronic zines, ie, since they receive nothing tangible, they feel no obligation to send a reply. You suggest evening up the cost factor by paying for LoCs, as a way of recompensing the readers for printing out the zine. This has a certain kind of logic, although it doesn't take into consideration that the intellectual property (the creation of the zine) has value. However, Lloyd Penney, ardent and faithful letterhack, suggested something similar, that the fan editor should make a big to-do over LoCs received, giving prizes for the best, making stars of the writers, publishing their photos, etc.

It is somewhat galling to think that these extreme methods may become necessary, if fanzines are to receive any response at all. It seems to betray the ideals of Joyous Fandom, in which people participate not because of obligation, but because of their own desire. Sad.

**A Propos de Rien (Jim Caughran)** No, pigeons are not flying rats! They are birds. In fact, they are birds which, like dogs, have chosen to be around humans, at the sacrifice of their usual nests. Their normal habitats used to be cliffs and mountains, but we seduced them into the cities with skyscrapers. And the poor things have a considerable amount of trouble staying alive, and need a little help. I had never realized this, until I saw a t.v. special about them (all knowledge that isn't contained in fanzines is contained on late-night television.) They mate for life, and both the male and female bird are able to produce a milk-like substance with which to nourish their young. I'm quite fond of them. (But I never touch them.)

But in fact, no pigeons feed in my back yard; I only get doves and a few smaller birds. For some reason, the larger pigeons have never found their way to my crumbs, though I'd welcome them. (But the doves are pretty, and make such lovely cooing noises, one can't help but like them.) And Foggie, my cat, loves to watch them from his perch. \*\*\*



