

Plasma

November, 2004

COMMENTS IN A FAPA VEIN

When I published the first Glorious Revival issue of *Plasma*, I had no inkling that it would be yet another example of FAPA slackerism, the once-a-year publication. I've poured quite a bit into the mailings, especially this one, but I'm somewhat ashamed about the irregularity of this title.

The best way to improve on that dubious record, I suspect, is to get right into the *raison d'être* for *Plasma* — FAPA Mailing Comments.

The Fantasy Amateur #268

Uncle Milt

My abundant thanks to all who voted for me in the annual Pavlat Poll. There are few honors I cherish more. I'm especially pleased to be acclaimed FAPA's best humorist, an accolade I plan to justify by saying something funny some time Real Soon in this fanzine.

The Fantasy Amateur is looking very good these days, Milt. Despite his occasional struggles with the deadline, Ken Forman is a hard act to follow and it looks like you're well on your way to establishing the

Stevens Era. A small point, though, about my contact information on page two. My phone number is (702) 648-5677 and my email address is crossfire4@cox.net. Cox changed the email addresses of all Las Vegas cable modem subscribers and we shed the 647 number (and kept the 648 one) when we moved to our new home last September.

Visions of Paradise #99

Ole 99 Himself

We differ with regard to your dislike of fiction set in the real world, but I'm right with you when it comes to an aversion to "hard" science fiction. Although I read all the magazines, from *F&SF* to *Analog* in the 1960s and early 1970's, I gravitated toward science fiction that emphasized character development and the so-called "soft" sciences like sociology and psychology. I suspect that my interest in mystery and detective fiction arises partially from my fascination with those aspects of science fiction.

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Email: Crossfire4@cox.net.

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Given your expressed desire — they were fourth on your list —to see the New York Yankees win the pennant that you died just a little during the incredible ALCS showdown with the Boston Red Sox. As I write this, it is not yet clear how the BoSox will vindicate the Curse of the Bambino by blowing the World Series against the Cardinals. But we shall all know the sad story by the time *Plasma* arrives in the November mailing.

Have you ever tried baseball simulation games? Andy Hooper, Alan Rosenthal and I are in a league that could use another player...

Bird of Prey #3

Sweet Jan Stinson

While I regret your plan to focus your Fine Mind (and entertaining writing style) on reviewing amateur science fiction, I wouldn't want you to feel that this response to your comment about the "original purpose" of fanzines means that I would in any way infringe on your right to fill your fanzine with such reviews. One of the best things about fanzine fandom, I think, is that you don't have to do it anyone's way but your own. So I hope you'll take what follows as an excursion into fanhistory rather than an exercise in peer pressure.

It seems like a red herring to talk about the original purpose of Fanzine Fandom for a couple of reasons:

1. The role and purpose of fanzines has evolved continuously from the very first issue of the very first fanzine. Fanzine Fandom has *never* stood still. That is part of the reason it is alive and reasonably well after about 75 years.

It doesn't follow that, because fanzines performed a particular function in 1930 that the same function is necessary or even desirable today.

2. One of the saving graces of Fandom (including Fanzine Fandom) is that it has never really had a purpose. Pioneer fanzine fans may have floated a little bullshit about the glorification of scientifiction, but fans bickered about the alleged "purpose" of fanzines (and Fandom) right from the start.

Cosmology, generally recognized as the first fanzine, embodied a rather schizophrenic view of the purpose of fanzines. While part of it related to speculative fiction, a much larger portion focused on speculative science and home experimentation. For close to a decade after the first fanzine, fans hotly debated whether fandom should focus on the science or the fiction.

One of the most marvelous aspects of our subculture's proud history is the way fanzines reached their present state of variety and sophistication. The first fanzines were almost an extension of the prozine letter columns. Besides the science stuff, fanzines at first focused on previewing the contents of upcoming prozines and biographies and interviews of pros.

As the faction that loved fiction (and was too lazy to build home laboratories) gained the upper hand, fanzines began a slow metamorphosis. They started with obsessive concern with the prozines and then expanded to discuss not just the stories but the ideas they contained.

That led to discussion of "science fiction ideas," futuristic and speculative concepts that hadn't appeared in any specific story. Then came two momentous developments: fans started to write about fandom itself and also introduced discussion of ideas that did not originate in science fiction or fantasy.

If this explication hasn't sufficiently bored you, may I immodestly recommend my article "The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory."? I believe it's available online.

Ben's Beat #77

Broadway Ben Indick

I'm sure Joyce appreciates your kind words on her double ankle injury and will probably tell you so herself if she bestirs herself to do produce a FAPazine for this mailing. Meanwhile, I'll update you with the information that she now walks without any prosthetic, drives her car hither and yon through Glitter City and plans to run for FAPA President against me next year. The fact that she feels recovered sufficiently to shoulder the immense burden that is the Presidency shows that it takes more than broken ankles to permanently fell the High Priestess.

Joyce's injury and convalescence reminds me of an exchange you and I had on the subject of friendship in fandom. In the wake of an issue of *Wild Heirs*, you commented that you couldn't imagine spending a whole day with a fan. My response was equal parts shock, hurt and disbelief.

I thought about that discussion several times during Joyce's protracted injury. "Ben is a perceptive guy," I said to myself, "so maybe examples would speak louder than mere assertions."

My only problem is that my fan friends did so much for Joyce and me during this period that any catalogue is bound to miss more good deeds than

it hits. So these are some of the things people did to ease our burden:

* Su Williams came to the rescue during the initial fall and the next day helped get Joyce to the hospital.

* Ken and Aileen Forman, who already had Ben Cathi and Megan (age four) Wilson as houseguests offered — insisted, really — that Joyce come stay with them in Yucaipa, CA, so the four adults could give Joyce round-the-clock care in a wheelchair-friendly house.

* Su drove me back and forth from Yucaipa to see Joyce. Ben Wilson drove Joyce to Las Vegas and back to Yucaipa virtually non-stop when she got homesick.

* Marcie Waldie did my laundry and Su Williams did all the shopping while Joyce was on the disabled list.

There's more, a lot more, but I am sure you get the idea. If these people (and others I've met through fandom) aren't friends, then I truly do not understand the definition you are using.

FAPAment #504

Fair-Weather John Davis

I try not to harp on the evils of small print in fanzines, because my poor vision is widely known to all, but I do sympathize with your comment about teeny-tiny print.

Fanzine Fandom has more than its share of participants with vision problems — and there are more every year as former eagle eyes suffer the pangs of presbyopia. I always keep the type size in my own fanzines to at least 10 pt (and usually 12 pt), because a piece that goes unread might as well not have been written. I've already heard my comments; the object here is to get them across to others. Anything that interferes with that process, including excessively small type and bad ink-and-paper color combinations sabotages that.

Opuntia #54.3

Dale "Without Fail" Spiers

Any system that uses decimal points for fractional issues is not yet quite as simplified as it could be. Of course, the person writing to you has not yet figured out what issue number would be correct for his own FAPAzine. (If no one rescues me with the number of the last "old" *Plasma*, I may have to sink to the disreputable practice of designating this incarnation as "new series" and starting again.

The use of "you know" is, indeed, annoying, but there are more contemporary locutions that can be positively maddening. "Whatever" as a substitute for any level of information is now depressingly common.

If you want to be depressed, check out any of the TV court shows. Too many of the participants are unable to give Judge Mathis a coherent account of even the least complicated incident.

Nice Distinctions #6

Hlaugh-a-Minute Hlavaty

Every fan should be worried about the recent wave of censorship. The gusto with which the blue noses have stolen our freedom of speech, using Janet Jackson's peek-a-boob fiasco as the excuse, is a little frightening.

I figured that Americans who would surrender their political freedom without a murmur would fight to the death for porn and smut. I expect marches in the streets and civil disobedience if these would-be censors actually threaten the one trillion Internet sex sites.

I'm always pleased to see someone beating the drums for John Barth. I think he has written several excellent novels — and he was my faculty advisor at the University of Buffalo.

Snickersnee

Grandmaster Bob

Congratulations on a richly deserved honor. I can't think of a contemporary science fiction writer whose works have so consistently given me pleasure.

Since you're one of FAPA's chief ornaments, I'm glad you talk of you 54 years in the group in such a positive vein. It gives me great hope that you will stay with it, despite other demands on your tie, so I can continue to enjoy your yearly excursions into the fanzine field.

Did you ever think, during your first couple of years in FAPA, that someday it would be *your* name at the head of a list of FAPA's luminaries?

As you may have noticed in *Flicker*, elsewhere in this mailing, I use some fairly sexy pin-ups as illustrations, but only for April Hunter's column. (I used some girly photos in *Jackpot!*, too, but mostly in conjunction with something in the text.

I use April's photos because it amuses me to affirm the firm credentials of the most beautiful fanzine column today — and quite possibly in the

history of fandom. *Crazy from the Heat* uses pastiche/parody covers of old fanzines and I have been thinking about doing a recreation of the Trina cover of the *Fannish II*

It is funny how the aesthetic has shifted. At the time I entered fandom, the ultimate in fanzine erotica were the multicolored spirit duplicated drawings of Bo Stenfors and, if you were on his mailing list, Christmas cards from Bill Rotsler.

Today, both are well within the compass of "polite fandom."

Alphabet Soup #43

Marvelous Milt Stevens

The reason for the provision that contributions must be from fanzines in two different metropolitan areas may, as you say, be an anti-hoax measure. Fandom had already experienced John Bristol, so it could've been a consideration.

I see another possible reason, however. It could have been designed to keep casual fanzine fans from filling up the roster. There are, or at any rate were, quite a few people who occasionally contributed to a local fanzine, probably because it *was* local. FAPA may have been attempting to dissuade such sporadic fanzine fans from joining on a whim and turning out to be unproductive members.

There could be some even more esoteric reason, now lost to us. Unless, of course, Jack Speer will enlighten us.

I can't completely share your outrage at the listing of the Big Heart Award winners in the program, regardless of its merit while those ridiculous fan Hugos continue. I'll start to think of fans as mature adults *after* Fandom drops the squalid charade and leave the Hugos for the professionals.

Target: FAPA (twice)

Rocket Richard Eney

I've heard several people use, as an argument that bowling is a sport rather than a game, the observation that there is no other sport in which the participants perform *better* after they've had too much to drink. Babe Ruth might've disagreed with that statement and I believe Mickey Mantle also put in his autobiography that he sometimes came to the plate drunk.

Did you know that a study conducted about five years ago found that league bowlers have a higher IQ than golfers? I could have told you that based on the fact that you don't have to walk a mile between

your game's two lanes.

I think the use of the word "harlot" in British tabloids is more about vocabulary than bravery. The Brits call them 'harlots'; we call 'em "Divas."

Voice of the Habu Volume 7, No. 3

Ranking Roger Wells

Joyce and I made a radical change in our telephone arrangements when we moved to The Launch Pad in September '03. We dropped standard telephone service in favor of Vonnage. This internet-based service charges a flat rate for all calls in the United States and Canada.

The monthly plan costs \$24.95, complete with the usual extras like voice mail and call back. If you have cable modem, this can be an exceedingly good deal. Due to professional work, our phone bill averaged close to \$100 a month despite Joyce's strenuous efforts to always have the lowest prevailing rates, so it's a consider savings.

Feline Mewsings #17

The catlike R-L Tutihasi

You may not be aware, but some years ago I copyrighted all variations and permutations on titles involving cats. In fact, if you say, someone is "jumpy as a cat" or even something about "nine lives," I am owed a royalty. My legal representatives will be in touch with you shortly to arrange convenient payments to cover both past and future transgressions,

Seriously, I wouldn't touch a letter of your title. Andy Main once, with no prompting from me, gave me the title he had used as the name of his editorial in *Bhis*. I thanked him profusely and immediately started using it in *Quip*. And to this day, "Katzenjammer" remains my favorite column title. (I'm not using it currently, but I'm sure I will resume now that this mailing comment has brought it to mind.)

This year, two of my friends — and two of fandom's greatest cartoonists — Ray Nelson published fanzines called *Black Cat* and *Big Cat*. The fanzines are distinct in my mind, but I won't even try to assign the proper title to each of these fine fellows. Maybe they should club in together and co-edit *Big Black Cat*.

Your comment that you don't classify alternate history novels as science fiction because they have no technology seems a little rash. I would say that

science fiction consists of stories that feature logical extrapolation of possible futures. History is not a hard science, but neither is psychology or sociology — and both have inspired science fiction.

One of the newest members of Las Vegrants, Kent Hastings has co-authored an alternative history novel in which the other side won the Spanish Civil War. It's supposed to be out about the same time as this FAPA mailing.

I've often thought that I ought to write an alternative history fanfiction story, but I have not yet settled on the pivotal fanhistoric change. I'm mulling a few possibilities, though, so this is something that you may need to avoid in 2005, (I promise to mention you in it, so there may be a slight temptation...)

Sweet Jane #41

Flash Gordon Eklund

It seems strange to be hearing about your retirement (and thinking about mine). Of course, I have taken mine in installments, being a wastrel, but I have already qualified for AARP so the pasture is just around the corner.

What makes it feel so peculiar is that I remember when you and I, Meyer, were the Bright Kids in fandom. Two boisterous youths who wanted little more than to get off a good Demmonesque line.

And here we are... me still young and gorgeous, you a wizened old codger.

Still, I believe you and I have a vital role to play in Fandom of the Future. A gap, a void if you will, has appeared in the ranks of Fandom that you and I can help fill. The Ultimate Gafiator has harvested quite a few fans in recent years with the result that there is a shortage of Crazy Old Guys.

The two of us, plus maybe Robert Lichtman, can fill that niche. Well, assuming we calm down and straighten up a little.

Speaking of Jack Kerouac, I recently heard a marvelous old time radio show, Jean Shepherd, who is actually a character in *On the Road*, devoted his nightly radio show on the day Kerouac died to a tribute to the writer. It included both personal reminiscences and readings from Kerouac's novels.

I never met Kerouac, but did have an encounter with beat poet Gregory Corso. When I was student at the University of Buffalo, I had an English class that met first thing in the morning on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. One Saturday morning, my teacher and his wingman lurched into the trailer that served as a classroom.

Both my teacher and his buddy had on very dark sunglasses and generally looked the worse for wear. My teacher flopped into a chair and his friend hauled a sheaf of papers out of his briefcase. He introduced himself as Gregory Corso and began to read some tremendous poetry to us despite his hangover.

A Propos de Rien

Gentleman Jim Caughran

I've made many fanzines available in electronic form, but I have not yet felt moved to depart from the paper magazine format. This article has given me pause, though, so I may well prepare alternative online versions of some future publications.

I think the reason is that I really like the magazine format and think of my efforts as traditional fanzines delivered to readers in a new way. I lay out *Flicker* as a hard copy fanzine, though it probably has more readers who obtain it electronically, because I find the process of creating a little magazine very pleasurable. My professional work primarily involves writing for web sites these days, so it is more of a kick to diddle around with a magazine-like fanzine than one intended for on-line reading.

Earl Kemp and the late John Foyster have done some excellent work in the design on a purely online publication. I have enjoyed their efforts without wanting to emulate them. At least to this point.

Big Fish #4

Sandra, the Brit Angler

It was great meeting you at Corflu Blackjack, Sandra, and I think I can have the temerity to speak for The Virtual Fanclub when I say that you really fit into fanzine fandom's most infamous cabal. You are welcome to avail yourself of our spare bedroom any time you wish to return to Las Vegas,

Las Vegas is in the desert? That explains a lot. I thought that the tide had been out an unusually long time and this certainly explains it. It's still one hell of a beach, though.

I see my plan worked. I know if I carried a miniature tape recorder that my periodic bouts of talking to myself wouldn't seem so weird. This is an adaptation of Lily Tomlin's suggestion that crazy people who mutter to themselves constantly as they walk down the street should pair up so that it looks like they're having a conversation.

The tape recorder was an experiment to see if

it would be a good alternative to a notebook. It came out well enough to repeat. My worry, going into it, was that people would think I was surreptitiously recording their utterances. I made a point of never speaking into the machine while I was with fans, hence the frequent sight of me rushing into a corner and gibbering like a madman.

Fish Wrap World Gazette

Wrappin' Marty Cantor

What can match the optimism that one feels when booting a new computer for the first time? There are no adware and spyware files and very few that have enigmatic names and even more esoteric functions.

And what can match the despair, the total feeling of helplessness when that computer begins to manifest the seemingly inevitable quirks and crotchets? That sinking feeling when the screen goes blue or a dialogue box that shrieks incomprehensibly about some problem you have no way to fix (and probably don't even understand).

XP wasn't the easiest problem to add to my computer, but it has performed much better than Windows 98 since I installed it. I don't get nearly as many crashes and have suffered fewer corrupted files during reboots.

Joyce doesn't begrudge LASFS its clubhouse, Marty. What she, and others, have said is that it leads LASFS to a preoccupation with commercialism and money raising that may not lead to the most entertaining fanac.

As much as I would love to have a clubhouse even half as good as the LASFS' magnificent one, I would never willingly go down the road that LASFS now travels to maintain its solvency. I would consider it a bad bargain. LASFS obviously considers it a good bargain. Therefore, they have the right to make it (and I have the right to make fun.)

It is hard not to regret the near-disappearance of LASFS fanzine fanac outside its two hometown apas. Where oh where, we nostalgic fans moan, is *Shaggy*? Where is the Bjo Trimble, the Ron Ellik, the Al Lewis of today?

No disrespect to you, Marty, but we miss the days when Los Angeles fans took vital roles in national fandom. Almost every LASFS member I have met in the last 10 years has displayed little or no knowledge of fandom's history, literature and customs.

Ouroborus #12

The Peripatetic Ogdens

Although Joyce and I never did give our Brooklyn Heights apartment, but we called our first Las Vegas home Toner Hall. It was a play on the name of Ted White's famous village abode, Towner Hall, which itself is a play on Town Hall.

I was a little stumped when we moved to our new place. I called it The Little House for a while. It didn't catch on, not even with me. We finally settled on the Launch Pad, partly a reference to its location on Eugene Cernan Street. (For the forgetful, Cernan is the most recent astronaut to walk on the Moon.)

Bird of Prey (encore)

Jazzy Jan Stinson

Most people probably share your feeling that the really complex programs require a bit too much of a commitment, but if you want to know the sensation of humble inadequacy, become a friend of Ross Chamberlain.

Ross can be extremely focused and diligent when feeling motivated. Since he is also awesomely talented, the combination is lethal to everyone else's self-esteem. From Etch-a-Sketch to a professional-level graphics program, give it to Ross and he'll return with stuff about 10 times better than anyone else can do with it.

I'm glad to see Alan White, Joyce's co-editor and art director, getting notice for the visuals of *Smokin' Rockets*. He's one of the best, and most under-appreciate artists in fanzine fandom today. I'm trying to get him to pony up FAPA dues and join us.

It was Alan who donated the color covers we used on the copies distributed at Corflu Blackjack and through FAPA. Unfortunately, the supply was limited and we had to send out some with a black-and-white version of the cover.

I had more comments, but I just got an email from Shelby Vick — and I'm reasonably sure you'd all like to hear from him, especially considering how much of me there is in this mailing.

— Arnie Katz

My Lucky Day

By Shelby Vick

Many a time I've said that I have the best kind of bad luck.

As a kid, I had a head injury which caused me to have seizures. . . and set me apart from others in a way I considered "special." For one thing, at school, I spent lots of time in the library (instead of recess or any outdoor activity), where I immediately took to reading.

Next bit of bad luck was catching polio. . . with no noticeable side effects, but with six months off from work – with pay – which left a fair amount of time for fanac.

Then there was August 29th of this year, 2004. Driving home, I came up to Tyndall Parkway, a fairly busy highway. I was waiting for a gap in the traffic – ...And then I woke up on a gurney in the ER of a local hospital. Okay, okay; it was the Intensive Care Unit. ICU/ER. Aren't they both about the same?

Anyway, seems a 22-year-old girl driving a pickup truck had slammed into the side of my car, real close to where I was sitting. SO close that the driver of the wrecker that came out to take away my car took one look and said, "No hurry; he ain't getting out of there alive!"

My left thigh was broken, as well as my left collarbone, and there was possible damage to the left side of my skull. The girl was dismissed with "minor injuries"; of course, I think that sometimes injures are "minor" any time they don't nearly kill you.

She said I ran right out in front of her. That isn't the way I remember it. Of course, this entire affair has greatly changed my ideas of reality.

Why? To start with, most doctors involved agree I had a stroke, but none will put it in writing! One specifically said to me, "I'm sure you had a stroke, just don't ask me to put it in writing!" (Actually, I think the reason nobody would put it in writing was that no tests revealed anything that could be interpreted as a stroke's aftereffect. Meaning that – surprise, surprise! – some medical tests aren't all that accurate!)

Went into ICU on 8/29, on 9/03, went into therapy. Then, as bleeding of the brain restarted, back into ICU for a few more days. Finally, back into therapy.

That's a quick overview; now, let me tell you all the fun details:

Disappearing wall patterns. With no forewarning, a piece of the wall would have an entirely dif-

ferent pattern, different color, different everything. But when I looked away and looked back, it would be as before.

Then varied-sized small colored balls would appear on the wall, static at first, but then moving and clustered about. Then the cluster would go flying across the room! Much more interesting than the dull pattern on the hospital wallpaper.

I started to ask others if they saw what I was seeing until a certain amount of reason took over; if the stuff disappeared when I looked away, then obviously I was hallucinating. Why make others jealous when they realize what they are missing?

Then I would wake up and find someone sitting beside my bed – where there was no chair. Look away, they disappeared – or were replaced by someone standing there! At first, just one person at a time, but then, two, three or more would show up. Skinny, fat, young, old; white or black, yellow or brown, varied, if nothing else!

Now, don't misunderstand me; there were real people, too; nurses, doctors, friends, family, a law representative or two. None were as intriguing as my phantom visitors who would sometimes fill the room.

But none would look at me.

Well, I took a nap. When I woke up, there was my grand daughter and Cheryl, standing beside my bed and smiling at me. Only I did too good a job of creating; soon the crowd filled the room again and, social creature that she is, Brittany started mingling with them.

Then I was informed I was being moved. In fact, I was being put into a wheelchair where I could actually move about! (Shows you how bad off – morale-wise – I was, to be happy to get into a wheelchair!)

Little did I know things were about to move into high-gear!

It struck me as strange that the hospital, in establishing a rehabilitation wing, had combined with the county courthouse. It did not strike me as strange that the courthouse had a division that included property mapping and parcel location. And it was only right that, in an attempt to get me back on my feet (both literally and figuratively) I was put back to work, only in a wheelchair and with a hospital bed nearby. (Looking back, the fact that I could swallow all this shows how bad off I was. At the

time, it only seemed a little odd. Previously I had visitors and interacted with reality. Not here! Of course, I didn't realize that at the time.)

Towards the end of my first "on duty" day, a customer came in with a problem. As is not unusual, looking for a solution led to past closing time. WAY past closing time. My superior - who was, of course, also a nurse - stepped in and we all worked on the problem.

When we finished, I took the customer to the back door to let him out. At the back door was another customer who I had worked with before on a sticky problem. "I know you're closed, but - just one quick look at this? Please?"

Naturally, I let him in and, equally naturally, it wasn't quick. My superior reminded me I was supposed to be resting and recovering, not staying up all night helping someone. When we *finally* finished, I accidentally locked myself out.

And had no key for getting back inside.

Of course, my boss eventually discovered my predicament and threatened to make me sleep outside. Ended up, I got under two hours' sleep.

The next day, I was reprimanded and told I might have to return to ICU if I didn't get more rest. And then I was sent to another building where they were taking photos. I would assume they were ID photos, as other county employees were there.

The building was unique. It was several stories high, with the upper stories separated by at least twenty feet of empty space, all the way up to the ceiling. To add to the unusual aspect, you could drive a car to the third floor. At that point, the car's hood aimed at the emptiness between the walls. Apparently there had once been a bridge joining the walls at this junction. However, it was no longer there. Then - don't ask me how - I was driving my car up there, pressing the brakes, throwing the gear into reverse, but continually edging out into the overhang. I finally brought it to a stop, right at that sensitive balancing point where one wrong breath would've send me smashing down.

Across the space was a little balcony. Several costumed players appeared on it. One I recognized as Cheryl and managed a very weak, "Help!"

She saw, and started making motions in my direction. Next thing I knew, the car was being pulled back to safety; some men had come along to my rescue.

As you can tell, the hallucinations had taken over completely. Fortunately, some of their treatment/medication/whatever began to take affect and dull Reality returned.

Then I was in HealthSouth Rehab, being in-

formed I could not swallow. I don't mean they me I was not ALLOWED to swallow. No, I was being told my ability to swallow had been severely damaged. My Alice-in-Wonderland stroke appeared to have affected mainly the lower part of my brain which, among other things, almost shattered control of my swallowing. The swallowing reflex was very, very weak but, most important, whatever I *did* swallow was as likely to go into my lungs as my stomach.

Even as mentally challenged as I was, I could see the disadvantages there, so agreed to accept treatment under a new instrument which would, all things being equal, return my control of swallowing in two or three weeks. (Otherwise, it could be months or never!)

They put in a tube to allow liquid food to be injected directly into my stomach. Not exactly fun, but it did have one advantage: Medicine went in that way, too.

Now, you know me; I could go on and on about this, but I've already taken nearly 1500 words to, basically, say that I was in an auto accident, badly injured, but pulled thru.

Should mention that, years ago, I had set up a living will and a trust in which I appointed my oldest daughter, Diane, trustee and gave her full power of attorney. The last two months she has worked her tail off proving she was worthy of it.

Still, there's a problem. Seems I'm taking to being taken care of. Getting spoiled. Gonna take some readjusting when I can take care of myself! Cheryl and Diane are always doing things for me.

I am now living in a retirement center where they feed me, do my housekeeping and laundry, and provide me with cable for my computer.

Yeah.

Took three days just getting the computer stuff all together in the proper order so's they would operate and we *still* don't have it cable-ready! I phoned in early and had the account transferred. They said, 'Soon as you get the computer hooked up, you should get on line!'

Sure.

Then we questioned the ethernet cable we were using - one end didn't fit just right. We finally got the missing ethernet cable, attached it -

Nothing.

Called their tollfree service line. They ran us thru several things and then said, "Oh! Your area is temporarily out of service! As soon as we get that fixed, you should be ready."

If you are reading this, I finally got it all hooked up! And now I have hundreds of emails to respond to. — Shelby Vick