

# FOLLY #14

## KatzenJammer

### Corflu 9: The Fool's Tale

When the editor postpones, even for a few weeks, an issue stuffed with wonderful articles by the cream of fandom so he can fill the whole fanzine with his own interminably lengthy article, an explanation (and maybe an apology) is to be expected. This installment of "Katzenjammer" performs that needful function.

As I write this section of *Folly*, the last to go through the word processor, it is about a week since Corflu 9, my first real con in many years. I had one hell of a good time; in some ways, the best I've ever had at a convention. I want to share my excitement and pleasure while the experience is still fresh in my mind.

Some may wonder if a huge con report is the best way to express this joy, but it's my only viable option. A conrep is cheaper than sending each of

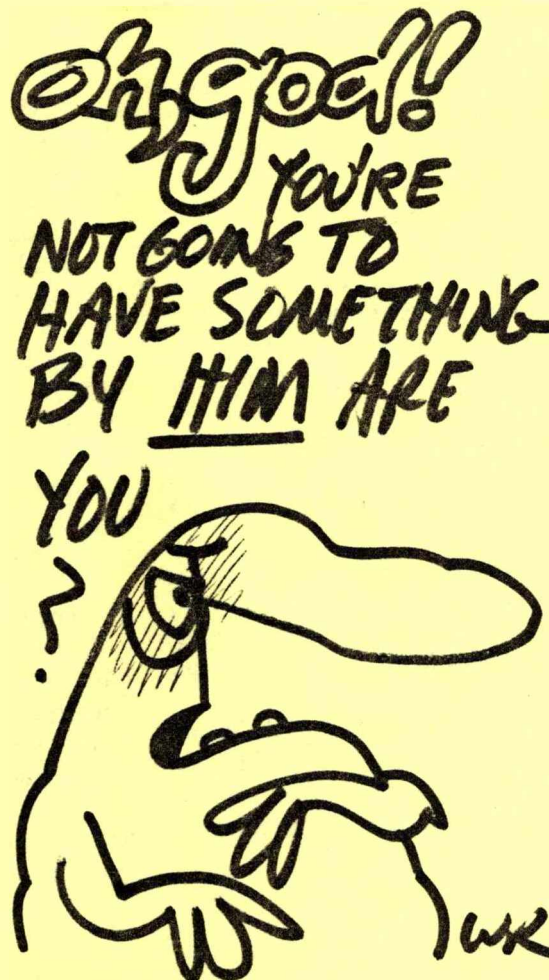
you a bouquet and more personal than an anonymous contribution in the name of the *Folly* readership to an anti-illiteracy campaign.

I learned many things at Corflu. Not the least of these is that my handwriting, which deteriorated alarmingly during the cataract troubles, has not improved even to the level of my traditional near-illegible scrawl. If I've put you at the wrong party or not gotten your words exactly right or failed to even note something brilliant you said to me, please accept my sincere regrets. Inaccuracies are not due to lack of effort, and I'll practice my cursive writing diligently between now and Magicon.

This con report won't win

kudos from those who want facts and figures. Hopefully, other accounts of Corflu 9 with more specifics will rectify this deficiency. I just want to tell you about my ver-sion of the conven-tion, and leave the his-tory book notation to someone else. Maybe it'll spur fond memor-ies among the other at-tendees and wist-ful thoughts from those who couldn't attend.

This issue is dedicated to the re-cuperating Charles Burbee, who could have been twice as funny in one-tenth the space.





# FOLLY Goes to Corflu

## Chapter 1: On the Road

"Look at this, Arnie," Joyce said as she glanced up from the latest Corflu 9 progress report.

"Uhhh?" I said, looking up from "The Incomplete Burbee". We were sitting side-by-side on the couch, occasionally suspending solitary pursuits to discuss an item of mutual interest. Since she found the baseball metaphors, so clear to me, utterly opaque, Joyce often called on me to serve as a baseball-to-fandom dictionary.

But no, it wasn't a baseball question at all. "It says here that Corflu picks its guest of honor by lot during the convention," she said. She read the applicable section to me, and there was no mistaking the meaning.

"What a delightful idea!" I exclaimed before returning to "The Mind of Chow". But even as I reread this fan classic, my mind played with the giddy prospect of becoming Corflu 9 GoH.

That night, like any neo on the eve of his first con, I dreamed about Corflu. I forgot many of the details after I awoke at 6 am to make last-minute preparations for the drive to Los Angeles. I recall lots of cheering when Bruce Pelz selected my name. This must've convinced my subconscious that it wasn't real anyway, because the scenario got Very Strange.

The finale of my GoHship is still all too clear in my mind, though. I saw myself standing at a podium, beaming benignly at a sea of well-fed faces. I had even lost a few extra pounds in time for the event.

Then things went wrong. My speech, written in magic marker on toilet paper liberated from the Cockatoo Inn, rolled off the speaker's platform, unwinding as it skipped across the banquet hall's marble floor in all its flowered pink splendor.

This unusual happening, coupled with my shriek of dismay and the uncontrollable laughter from my previously rapt audience, frightened the cockatoos, who began running around the room, cackling raucously and doing what birds do all over the previously gleaming floor.

Like a member of a movie audience, I saw some helpful fans wiping up the mess with the remnants of my no-doubt-electrifying talk. A wave of panic rippled through me. My mental camera closed in on my anguished face and, suddenly, it was all transformed into a television setting I knew only too well. Eyes bugged wide, I leaned forward into the camera and began to shout:

"When you're pubbing your ish...

Slannin' and trufannin'

Boppin' and desktoppin'...

You've got to remember this:

To *be* the focal point

You've got to *beat* the focal point

And it all comes down to this:

Whether you like it -- or you don't like it

You'd better learn to love it

Cuz it's the best thing going....

Woooooooooooooooooooo

I waved the FWA Championship Belt triumphantly in the air. I headed toward the ring, accompanied by my beauteous valet, for a title bout with Andy Hooper. Then my radio alarm brought me out of this nightmarish combination of fandom and wrestling.

Well, the truth is that I wrote this in the car as Joyce drove through the nearly empty streets of Las Vegas to the home of Woody Bernardi's sister to collect him after first scooping up Laurie Yates at the condo she now shares with Bill Kunkel. (Bill decided to skip Corflu, though he'd have had to cancel anyway due to illness.)

It's toof o bad really. If my psyche had cooperated, it would've made an interesting introduction to this account my first *real* convention since 1973.

Oh well, I'll find something...

The comment about my first real convention deserves a little explanation. Those who've read my reports on the NonCon and Vegascon I may feel that I've milked my in-person return to fandom as thoroughly as any rocker on his eighth annual farewell tour.

In my defense, I really did feel the excitement of a first con the night before we left for Corflu. After all, the NonCon 91 took place in our house. It was just an overgrown party, and we've given plenty of them in the last year or so. The

Vegascon turned out to be more of a gaming event than a fannish one, and it drew almost exclusively from local fandom. Great as it was to see Bruce Pelz, Fred Patten, Don Simpson, and Larry Niven, it felt more like an extended SNAFFU gathering than a fullblown convention.

Nervousness had loosened Woody's tongue. From the minute Joyce swung the LeBaron out of his driveway, he overflowed with questions about how he could help, liberally sprinkled with warnings of possible road hazards and commentary on merits of alternative routes.

"You are a passenger!" Laurie announced with unexpected steel in her voice. It was her clear intention to crush this bid for authority over automotive matters before it got rolling. They eventually agreed that Woody should captain the watch for Ontario, California, due to appear in the front windshield in five hours. In exchange for performing this service (and otherwise butting out of the driving), Laurie consented to allow Woody to remain inside the car during the trip. This was quite a concession, actually, since her opening position was that Woody should be tied to the rear bumper and dragged to the convention. Laurie would mutter something like "speed bumps," and cackle in a most unelfin manner.

A little background may enhance understanding of the human dynamic which governs Laurie and Woody's behavior towards each other. Numerous fans have used the vocabulary of blood kinship to describe their feelings for another fan. Chuch Harris is Geri Sullivan's son, and in the long ago, coeditor of *Niekas* Felice Rolfe became my grandma.

I've always found these heartfelt expressions quite touching. Such an intimate bond between fans speaks volumes about the the joy of fandom.

Woody and Laurie have a new twist. None of that mushy stuff for this ersatz brother-and-sister. They leave all the shmorgy stuff for others and deal heavily in sibling rivalry.

As I listened to the exuberant pair chitterchatter about the coming event, my mind whirled with more ambiguous thoughts. Fandom has treated me handsomely since my return, and the warmth and friendship I have felt is responsible for my great enthusiasm for fanac which some have noted. Would I do as well in face-to-face contact, or would long-dead animosities and previously undetected personality clashes burst my little bubble?

I had an irrational desire to plead illness and hide behind my word processor for another six months or so, but my anticipation overcame my reticence. Sooner, I was burbling

right along with my three traveling companions.

The subject turned to Woody's recent efforts to spread the s.f. gospel to southwestern Las Vegas and Boulder City. I'd done a couple of flyers, so I was interested in how the meetings themselves had gone.

As Woody told the story, my nearly identical posters had contrary effects. Evidently, its blandishments failed to impress the sophisticates who dwell West of Jones Boulevard. The scheduled meeting in the southwest never took place, because only one person showed up. And that one person was *not* Woody.

He decided to skip the meeting. I guess promises of book discussions and the opportunity to meet fellow zealots do not spin magic webs of enchantment among the Southwestern Vegans.

Not only did my cunning prose and meticulous layout lure Woody to Boulder City, a small town near Las Vegas, but six people also showed up for the inaugural session. Four of them were high school girls. Why didn't I manifest this magnetism in the sixties, when I could've used it to great advantage? Maybe if I keep practicing, I can learn to design meeting flyers that entrance more mature women.

The possibility of effortless egoboo jerked Joyce from her silent concentration on the interstate rapidly taking us to the Nevada-California border. "We ought to go to the next meeting," she said. "Maybe we could convince them that it's a fan tradition that clubs from small towns must worship groups in larger cities."

She went on to describe an idyllic fandom in which step-saving neos scurry to and fro, performing the simple tasks to which she considers this breed so well suited. We may try it; it's 15 years since a femmefan last brought me a diet soda or sat on my lap.

Woody risked Joyce's wrath with a comment intended to ingratiate himself. He referred to the desirability and superiority of "older women" and got a deathray stare in the rearview mirror for his effort.

"Not older, Woody," Joyce explained. "More sophisticated."

He is now working hard to expunge all trace of that offensive three-letter word from his conversation. So if he offers to pay top prices for "sophisticated fanzines", you'll know he doesn't mean "the kind *real* fen like".

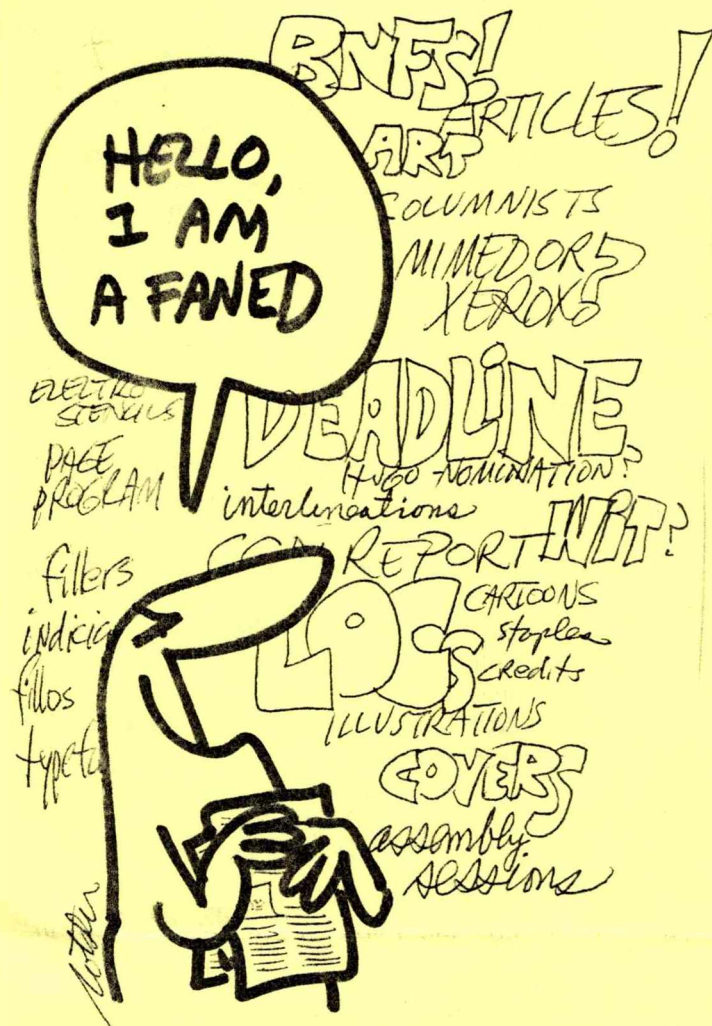
"Are we going through Death Valley?" Woody asked Laurie, our map reader, as we neared the trip's halfway point.

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"No-o-o-o..." Laurie paused to recheck her calculations. "Well, we *do* go along the edge of it," she amended.

"Good," I said, "then we'll only get a little sick." Why does a soft drink taste better if someone else gets it for you?

Laurie and Woody, who had ridden this route many times, began considering the best place to stop for lunch when we reached Barstow, CA., the midpoint of our journey.

"There's a Greek restaurant in Barstow," Woody offered.

"Would we have to go through the back door?" I asked. Woody gave me a Hurt Look. "Don't mind me, Woody," I soothed. "It's like a violinist doing a few scales before a concert." I silently prayed that practice would make me funnier by the time I got to Corflu.

At the risk of shocking those who see me as a traditionalist, steeped in fanhistory, I'm breaking with the time-honored custom of describing every morsel of sustenance crammed into my mouth during a convention trip. The only thing noteworthy about our simple meal was the flirtatious blonde waitress who served it. And

since we didn't take her with us to Corflu, even she is of only marginal concern in this narrative.

Back on the road, it wasn't long before the parade of signs heralding our increasing proximity to L.A. caused the inevitable question to pop out of my mouth of its own volition: "Are we there yet?"

By this point, Laurie had taken the wheel and Joyce had become custodian of the roadmap. "We're about a golf pencil away," she informed me.

"We'd be even closer if you'd gotten the lead out," I replied.

At least she didn't order me out of the car.

## Chapter 2: Cantering Thru Corflu

The unusual construction and ambience of the Cockatoo Inn Grand Hotel was apparent when we turned onto the sidestreet that bisected it, dividing most of the rooms and the parking garage from the convention facilities, lobby, and restaurant. The hostelry had long since overflowed the original complex into the assorted buildings that lined both sides of the lightly traveled road. This led to pleasantly innocuous anomalies like our rooms being on the 7th floor of a three-story building (it started with the 5th level).

We registered, parked, and unloaded the luggage. Joyce and I discovered the maid just about to set our room to rights, which we used as an excuse to delay unpacking and get right into the convention.

No anonymous toiler in the con-running vineyards greeted us at the registration desk. Bruce Pelz got our con stuff together, let us choose from among the seven designs created by Jack Harness, and used an impressively large press to stamp out the membership buttons.

I'm too much the Corflu novice to know if multiple badge options are part of the tradition, but it's a great idea. I always felt sorry for those who looked longingly at customized nametags. Picking from among a set of designs isn't *quite* the same thing, but it echoes the feeling of specialness.

I intend to wring another article out of the various fan publications I acquired during the con, but it would be rude to pass through registration without acknowledging their excellence. *The Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan*, revised and annotated by T. Bruce Yerke is an especially fine job. Both it and *Fanthology '88* are exemplary zines that will go on my five-foot shelf of especially prized items.

Do fanzines for sales have an aroma? Do they send out an inaudible siren call? I had barely pinned on the button when something drew me inexorably into the large fanzine room. It's perimeter was lined with tables, some of which already displayed fanzines. I was drawn to a couple of

cartons stuffed with bound volumes with some very famous titles on the spines, but I was quickly assured that these bound volumes were just for show. I edged over to an adjoining table, where I spent my lust and some of my ready cash on tidbits like the Dan Steffan edition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*.

The next happening made me feel at one with fans across the ages: I shook hands with Forrest J Ackerman. I'd met Forry several times, but never immediately upon arrival at a con, as I had read in so many, many con reports. Now I, too, had participated in this ancient rite.

I wasn't surprised that Forry didn't recognize me after 26 years. I reminded him of the Fanoclast visit to the Ackermansion, when we pushed his Caddy up Sunset Strip after it conked out. I got a 4e smile of recognition, which sated my vanity.

The most famous of all monsters evidenced no similar difficulty placing Joyce. Whether this resulted from good memory or good taste in blondes is hard to say, but he took her hand warmly and said, "Now I've touched a living legend."

"And so have I, Forry," she replied, lowering her eyes with a demureness that might surprise those who know her Mae Westian aspect.

From then on, the reunions came without respite. Robert Lichtman and I were chatting about the first Silvercon, at which he is Fan Guest of Honor, one minute, and I was renewing old friendship with Jerry Kaufman the next.

Jerry seemed a trifle mystified when I told him Joyce intended to publish a new fanzine called *Jerry & Suzle* until I pointed out that he'd just staged a convention called Potlatch (like Joyce's fanzine during the period Jerry attended Brooklyn Insurgents meetings in the early 1970s). At if in response to the invocation of her name, Suzle herself joined us almost immediately.

"You ready to publish another issue of *Guess Who?*?" a short, good-looking fellow asked me. No one had mentioned *Guess Who?*, an obscure oneshot done for the N3F apa, to me since roughly 1964, and it took me a few seconds to pin down the reference made by the fan who once said: "all the world's an allusion."

It was Lenny (gotta remember not to say Len) Bailes (one syllable on the surname these days), friend of my youth and co-editor of my first dozen or so genzines. He gafiated in the late 1960s before my best fanning days, and I gafiated before he returned. We'd talked on the phone and exchanged fanzines since I resurfaced in 1990, but neither of us is a demon correspondent. Discovering him at Corflu was an unexpected pleasure and a perfect opportunity to renew acquaintances with one of the most fertile and original minds I've ever encountered.

It was especially good to see Lenny looking and sounding so healthy and enthusiastic, so much more the person I recollect so fondly than he when I saw him nearly 20 years ago.

Our common interest in computing prompted Lenny to report fannish developments on Genie. I do seminars for that service's chief rival, America on Line, which earns me free

use of AOL. I haven't rushed to pay for access to Genie, but they ought to put Bailes on the payroll as a salesman. He did an expert job of nurturing my interest without once nagging me about logging onto the network. He whetted my appetite by telling me about Larry Stark and Bbob Stewart on line, and then compounded that by mentioning the fine pieces Teresa Nielsen-Hayden has written on the net. Genie may get my dollar yet.

Another name from my earliest period as a fan is Don Franson, whom I saw on my second trip to the fanzine room after changing out of my traveling clothes. He was the president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation when Judi Sephton recruited me out of the *Amazing* letter column in 1963. Don's rationality and intelligence encouraged my active participation in the club for a brief period, before I experienced some of the less congenial N3F bureaucrats.

In the con suite, Dick Lynch had a stack of unidentified photos for possible inclusion in *A Wealth of Fable*. Lichtman and a few others were already poring over these visual stumpers when I pulled up a chair and joined the investigation. Robert and I thought we had one fresh-faced lass pinned as Ethel Lindsay, but then we found another shot of the same woman and had to recant. That was my closest approach to giving Dick any tangible help. That disappointed me, because I really admire the job he and Nicki are doing on the Warner book, not to mention *Mimosa*.

Once the pictures disappeared back into their envelope, I gave Robert a very special fanzine I'd brought from Las Vegas for him. It was a copy of the original *ATom Anthology*. Not just any copy, mind you. It's the one inscribed to Bob Lichtman. It had passed through several collections by the time it reached mine, and there it stayed through the Gafia Years. Since I have two copies, I'd offered to return one to its proper spot in Lichtman's trove in exchange for issues of *Trap Door*..

I've got a note here that says "Vijay Bowen is beautiful" which seems to entirely cover the subject. I'd enjoyed her FAPA contributions, and her elegant looks completed her urbane image.

Lichtman had been making my mouth water with his tales of deli delights to be found at Canter's. The only comparable restaurant in Las Vegas, the New York Deli, fell victim to faulty wiring and closed for repairs, never to reopen its doors. We'd made a tentative dinner date a few weeks before Corflu, and it didn't take any convincing when Robert suggested we make it our first meet in L.A. (Actually, Mr. Lichtman reportedly had three consecutive meals at Canter's, even though it was about a half-hour away from the hotel.)

LennyB stunned us all by revealing that he couldn't have dinner with us because his bus to the air port left before we were likely to get back from the deli. He then topped himself by adding that he was going home to fulfill a professional commitment, but that he would be coming right back the next afternoon to resume Corflu. He didn't want to default on his obligations, he explained, but that wasn't going to prevent him from attending the con.

An unusual feature of Corflu is that the committee negotiated with the hotel in tandem with the Friends of the



English Regency. Several cons have shared facilities with other groups, including the dreaded Sigma Alpha Rho high school fraternity, enshrined forever in a host of 1963 Discon reports as "Sigma Frap", and none were remotely like this one.

"They're so polite," Joyce marveled after a covey of ladies and gentlemen had glided serenely past and nodded at us in greeting. She was right. A better-behaved and more sumptuously dressed crew would be hard to find. And I'm sure I'm not the only male who noted that Regency *couturiers* cut some fascinatingly swoopy necklines.

Besides the Vegas quartet, the two-car caravan included Robert, Geri Sullivan, Andy Hooper and Eric Lindsay. As we devoured mountains of corned beef and pastrami, the talk turned to other meals eaten at other cons. Geri told a cute story, which may not even be apocryphal, about an SCA fighter going into a hotel eatery, presumably to carbo-load before the clamor of battle. This guy was big, beefy, and dressed as a sword-swinging barbarian.

He was really roleplaying the part, too, Geri said, shambling along with his single eyebrow knit menacingly. His character was supposed to be stupid as well as mean, so terse gutturals constituted the bulk of his conversation.

"And what would you like, sir?" the waitress asked.

The barbarian looked around as though scouting for food on the hoof. "Meat!" came his rumbling, one-word reply.

"What kind of meat?" the ever-helpful servitor asked.

The barbarian pulled out a token, threw it in the air, and gravely regarded the face of the now-still coin lying on the table. He nodded, satisfied that Fate had spoken. "Cooked."

We tried to get Geri to come to Silvercon with stories about the thriving fandom now furiously fanacing on the rim of the Mojave. "You still haven't used the 'c' word," she said.

"The C-word?" I asked. Joyce, Laurie and I tried several possibilities, all of which caused Geri to turn up her nose disdainfully.

Finally, exasperated by our feeble efforts to concoct a big enough bribe, she introduced us to the mysteries of the arcane science of vegetology. "You want carrots?" I guessed, ever quick on the trigger. Carrots would be Bad News, since they're high on Joyce's allergy list. How tragic if two such famous femmefans remained estranged due to such an irreconcilable incompatibility.

"No, no no," she hissed without the aid of a single sibilant. "Chocolate. And you haven't even mentioned Ethel M."

"Las Vegas has Ethel M," I said. Oh, I am a quick one.

"Yes, I know, Arnie."

Laurie quickly picked up my fumble and streaked for the goal line, if I may use a gridiron image in a report about a convention so given to baseball metaphor. She not only promised to conduct Geri on a tour of the Ethel M plant, where visitors get free chocolate, but also volunteered junkets to a company that makes marshmallows and another that turns out potato chips.

Geri won't make Silvercon '92, but I think we've got a chance at getting her to come see us in paradise before too long. As a choc-o-holic, I know the compulsion that drives Geri, and I've got faith in Ethel M's succulent wares. The truffles are calling, Geri..... They want yooooooooooooo...

Robert hadn't exaggerated the merits of the cuisine. Canter's would gallup away with any *fressers'* poll. The wonderful food worked in concert with the congenial company to turn the conversation to absent friends. I pumped Geri for details of her forthcoming excursion to England and Northern Ireland, scheduled for mid-March, and we speculated about who would make it to Magicon.

Ving Clarke's ears probably tingled as we praised his contributions to fandom and character – and lamented the modesty that keeps him from realizing how much U.S. fanzine fans admire him.

Some mutual friends dreaded the first encounter between myself and Ted White. No one said anything to me directly, but apprehension was in the air.

This worry proved unnecessary. I'll admit we both showed a little nervousness initially, but we ended up spending a lot of time in each other's company during the convention without the slightest hint of acrimony.

For my part, I quickly rediscovered Ted's many fine qualities. I hope he found me easier to take than the last time our paths crossed. I was keenly aware of being on Ted's turf – after all, he started Corflu – and how easily he could have made the con unpleasant. Instead, he was magnanimous, humane, and friendly. Remaking his acquaintance definitely led to more fun for Joyce and me and earned him many Kind Thots from a pair of revenants.

In the 50s, some members of the sercon set accused faanish fans of forsaking the true faith of science fiction for discussions of jazz and sports cars. Fanzine fans continued to demonstrate their independence of spirit at Corflu 9, but the graying of the hobby has brought a few changes. When Andy Hooper, Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Geri Sullivan, Joyce and I gathered in my room after dinner, the leading topics were spectacles and station wagons.

Ted propounded an intriguing theory about the effect of stronger prescriptions on the myopic. He wondered if nearsighted eyes learn to compensate for the new correction, gradually reducing its effectiveness in the process. Vision can compensate for distortion glasses, so a slight shift in the eye's focus point doesn't sound impossible. Ophthalmologists reading this are probably shouting vital facts bearing on the question in the general direction of Las Vegas, but Ted built a believable argument to support his idea.

The differences between nearsightedness and farsightedness have become very important to me since last year's cataract operation. After a lifetime of wearing coke bottle lenses and holding books as close as my nose permitted, I now see things more clearly at a distance. Sometimes I forget and bring objects closer to get a better look instead of pushing them further away.

The topic somehow evolved into a discussion of the worst fanzine titles of all time. Though this is, obviously,

quite subjective, the consensus was that the champion is still *Thurban I*. Ted furnished an interesting kicker: because *Turban I* serialized a Roger Zelazny story, it copies sell for as much as \$500!

Joyce and I saw those onetime *Granfalloon* co-editors Linda Bushyager and Suzle Thompkins, sitting in the con suite and accepted their invitation to join them. After a little computer chatter, the subject turned to an interesting similarity between Las Vegas of today and the Pittsburgh crew that burst on the scene in the mid-1960s.

When Linda and Suzle led their black-garbed gang into contact with the rest of fandom, there was a definite shortage of young women in most of the northeastern and midwestern fan centers. Pittsburgh had an endless supply of intelligent, vivacious, and appealing women, and their arrival in fandom made things a lot less lonely for male fans of a comparable age.

Vegas fandom could have a similar effect on the much-discussed graying of fandom. It's no coincidence that the two youngest fans at Corflu were Laurie and Woody; most club members are under 30. For instance, newly minted FAPAn Peggy Burke is four years younger than either of them.

Joyce and I braved the terrors of air pollution by visiting the "smoking" con suite just around the corner from the tobacco-free one. Our reward was a great fanhistory bullfest with Art Widner, Don Fitch, and Leah and David Smith.

Art introduced the topic with the news that he's considering a fanhistory project about the 1960s. "Not a comprehensive book like 'A Wealth of Fable' or 'All Our Yesterdays'," he explained, "but an anthology of articles about the most important trends." I can't think of anyone better suited to compiling such a volume than fanzine fandom's most celebrated retread.

Art offered two quotes, both from *Double Bill*, about the relationship between apas and fanzine fandom as a whole. Art Rapp termed the press groups the glue that holds fandom together, while Richard Bergeron characterized them as likely to atomize fandom into isolated pockets.

Both of these major insights have more than a colonel of

truth. Apas sometimes keep the fanzine fires burning when the genzine crop withers, as it did immediately after the Boondoggle and Topic A. Yet apas concentrate fans' attention on small sub-groups so that many apas have no way to get an accurate overview of the whole hobby. There are more than 200 apas currently in operation, and most hardly know the others exist, much less what topics rage through these unknown mailings.

Art challenged me, as a fan active during the era, to pick the 60s trends that most altered the shape of fandom in the ensuing decades. The lateness of the hour may have limited my analytical abilities, but I came up with three I thought that deserved to be included: the Boondoggle, the apa boom, and the creation of special fandoms.

During the discussion, I got first-hand experience of how touchy the Bergeron Wars/TAFF Wars/Topic A are to some fans, eight years after the fact. I was drawing an analogy between the effects produced by the Boondoggle in the 1960s to those caused by the major fannish conflict of the 80s and referred to the 'Bergeron Wars'. Leah thought my nomenclature was a fanpolitical statement, and she practically jumped off the couch in her eagerness to debate the merits of Martha Beck as a TAFF candidate. I felt like a DamnYankee who blithely refers to the mid-19th century unpleasantness as the "The Civil War" in a room full of southerners. Leah calmed down once I explained that I intended no fanpolitical meaning, that "Topic A" was a fine name by me, and that I was only concerned with the *effects* of these two fandom-wide crises.

And I do think the two Fan Wars may have produced at least one similar result: gafiation or severe cutbacks in fanac by a large number of formerly active fans. I'm only going by fragmentary evidence, but it seems like genzine publishing decreased and apac rose after both feuds. Maybe someone who was around during both periods can shed additional light.

I hope Art does this anthology. Harry Warner plans no sequels to *A Wealth of Fable*, and the rest of us fanhistorians may have to pool our talents to approach his standard.

Joyce and I made a last stop at the con suite, room 109, where about a dozen fans refused to surrender to the clock. Knowing that our own stamina was about to run out, Joyce

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and I decided to make one more tour and then call it a night.

We said our "good nights" and strolled out the door. We walked up corridors, and we walked down corridors. We turned left, and we turned right. My memory is a little blurry, possible due to mental fatigue, but I think there may have been a sliding pole, an elevator, and a floating platform. Well, maybe that was "Sonic the Hedgehog"...

Whatever the precise route was, it is indisputable that we wended through many twists and turns before arriving at another room marked 109!

Joyce and I stood before this unnaturally numbered portal. We had just come from 109, and here it was again, yet it was definitely *not* the same door.

Gad we entered the fannish twilight zone. I felt readers of *Folly* would want to know so I pushed open the door and found....

The same group we had just left. They looked at us quizzically. "I believe I can return us to our own universe," I said to Joyce with as much gravity as I could muster at 2:30 am. She nodded vigorously. With a final wave to the denizens of this extra-dimensional con suite, we retraced our steps and went to our room.

## Chapter 3: Give It to Woody!

Joyce and I slept late (for us) on Saturday, but we still got to the public rooms too early. Among the few other early risers were Len and June Moffatt. The four of us decided breakfast would be a good idea, and we headed for hotel's restaurant.

The service was poor, but it gave us an excuse to stall over the meal and talk about fandom with the Moffatts. Len brought me up to date on that on-going phenomenon, CAPA, and they also had the latest about Burbee's recent illness and progressing recuperation. Joyce and I signed a card that circulated through the con for Burb, who was sorely missed at Corflu.

The free continental breakfast ate up enough time so that we found fans in the con suite when we returned. This is a good spot to laud Don Fitch. I'm in no position to evaluate the relative merits of *any* phase of a modern con, but the food and drink far exceeded my expectations. Other fans expressed awe at the lavishness of his hospitality. I've been watching my weight more conscientiously than usual, so I resisted most of the temptations. Don laid before Corfluvians, but an icy diet coke is sublime when the party goes into the early morning.

"So what have you been doing since 1969?" Bill Bowers asked when Joyce and I joined a group in the suite that also included Laurie Yates and Pat Mueller

Virzi. "Well, Bill," I said, exhuming an ancient joke for the occasion, "I went home and made myself a tuna fish sandwich." We laughed about the impossibility of filling in a 15-year gap in a single conversation.

On a slightly more serious note, I told Bill how glad I was to see him publishing so much again. He modestly disparaged his recent fanzine feats. "I'm not doing so much," he said, casting his gaze downward and stubbing his toe with becoming humility for such a latter-day publishing giant. I guess the 66-page *Outworlds* that arrived the day before Corflu temporarily slipped his mind.

I saw a tractor trailer with "Digby" stenciled on the side during the drive to Los Angeles, and I'd speculated to Joyce, Woody, and Laurie that this was an omen that might herald the appearance of the fan of the same name. It was. Tom showed up in the consuite during the late morning, an eye-catching sight with his thick, blond, long hair.

Since most of our previous contact had come about as a result of participation in Apa L, I asked for an update on this venerable group. Tom delivered the startling information that Apa L has joined Minneapa and now submits its collations as contributions to the latter. Is one apa becoming a member of another something new in fandom? Whatever its originality, it sounds like a good way to combat flagging enthusiasm.

Fans once creebed about the iniquities of the post office; now they're as likely to vent their frustrations about the telephone system. Somehow, the general conversation in the suite became wrong numbers. Jerry and Suzle evoked groans of sympathy when they revealed they'd once had a phone one digit away from an all-night pizzeria. "And then there are the people who do 10-key all day and then go home and dial," added Pat Virzi.

Las Vegas, as I informed everyone in self-pitying tones, is the wrong number capital of the Southwest, if not the galaxy. We have three lines, and a day never passes without at least a half-dozen misdirected calls.

"The worst is when someone thinks your line is connected to a fax or BBS," I said. "They just keep dialing, hoping that this time they'll be able to make that connection."

I told them about one particularly tenacious caller of this type. It happened on a Friday before a three-day holiday weekend. I didn't think much about it when the phone rang about 10 am. As I said, wrong numbers are all too common here. But then there was another at about noon. Both calls were identical; just long loud silence.

When the phone rang at one, I tried shouting, "this is not a fax line" into the receiver in the forlorn hope that the originator of the message might open the voice channel. They didn't. Which led inexorably to another call at 1:40... and yet another at 2:15.

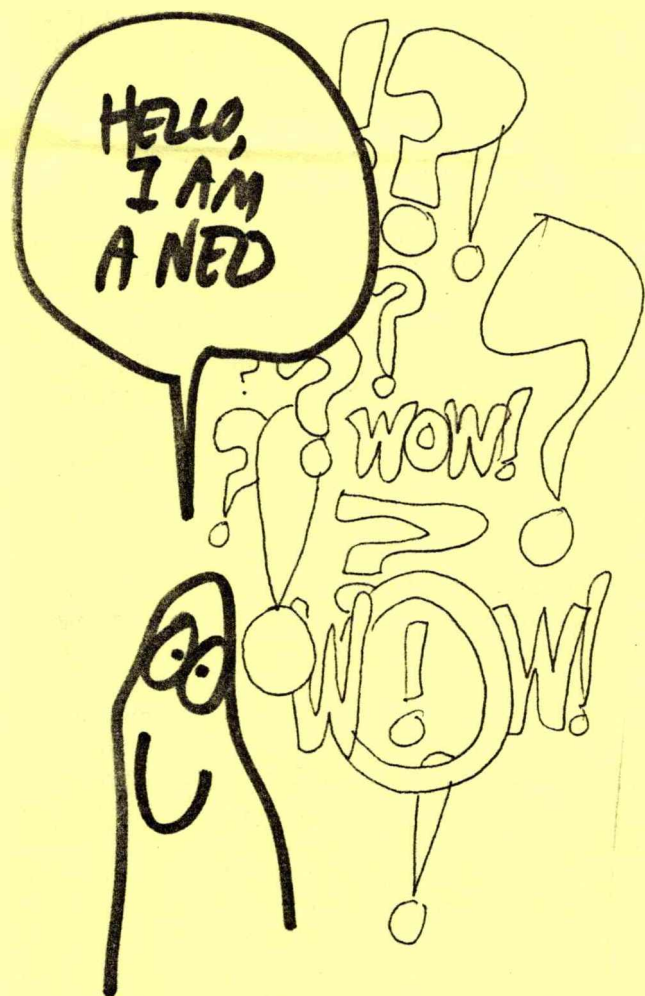
The escalating miscalls had sown the seeds of a theory in my fertile imagination. I visualized an office worker, eagerly watching the clock so that the 72 hours of unrestricted revelry could begin. I see this vacation-bound individual trying to send that last all-important fax before going home. And as quitting time approaches, the need to polish off that last chore and Get the Hell Out takes on the aspect of a Holy Mission. All thoughts of a long lunch and an early exit are long since



gone, replaced by grim determination not to spend the whole weekend at work.

The frequency of the calls had risen to one every five minutes by 5 o'clock. After that, silence returned. I saw this hypothetical caller look up at the clock on the office wall, note the time, and sigh deeply. It was quitting time. No one could get pissed off because the fax wasn't sent. They'd be satisfied when they learned the attempts had continued right up to the end of the business day. And with a light heart, the office worker goes home and parties till Monday.

My observation is that some wrong numbers are so thick skinned that they will listen to an answering machine tape and *still* leave a message. Jerry Kaufman mentioned how much he prefers today's systems to the early ones, primarily because they now give a well-defined signal for the caller to start the message. "I like beeps on a woman," he said, indicating his preferences in voice gender and caller message singals.



"Yeah," I said, "Wild women with Big Beeps." These are the notes, friends.

News of Rotsler's arrival reached the con suite, and I was soon hurrying over to the registration area. We somehow passed each other enroute, but I soon found him in the fanzine room.

"After awhile, all these cons seem alike," he said to me.

"Not if you only go to one every couple of decades," I advised from personal experience.

"I can see that," he said, nodding. He stroke the pose of a fan recollecting con adventures of the past. "Ah, yes," he said, "that was the con with the platform shoes."

We talked for awhile longer before I succumbed to the powerful drive that motivates the editor of a frequent fanzine: material. Bill told me to line up behind Len Moffatt, who was already paging through the stacks of available illos. Len chose a cover for *Moonshine*, the Moffatt's FAPazine, and a few fillo-sized cartoons.

Then Len handed the files to me, and I was in fan art heaven. I tried to straddle the line between getting enough art to meet the needs of *Folly*, *BBB*, and other Vegas pubs and wallowing in this abundance of riches like the greedy faned I am. I gave the the still-bulging folders back to Rotsler and rushed to put my bounty of cartoons in a safe place.

Moshe Feder's announcement that he's considering buying a car, gathered a crowd of helpful autophiles in the suite. Soon debate raged over the merits of the Civic versus the Accord.

"This sounds like a conversation of fandom in the 50s," Moshe whispered to me.

"Or the conversation of fans in their 50s," I replied.

Gradually, the subject changed from buying new and used cars to maintaining ones already owned. Art Widner listened quietly as Ted White and Pat Virzi discussed recent upgrades. "I bought all factory parts," Ted said.

"Oh?" said Widner with all the feigned innocence he could muster, "is something wrong with your nose?"

Joyce, Art, and I were anxious to continue our fanhistorical analysis from Friday evening, so we decided to do it over lunch. Naturally, when we actually started gabbing, we didn't come within shouting distance of that topic. Mostly, we talked about Art's participation in the co-op movement in the 1960s and his experiences trying to get one launched in the Northwest. I hope Art follows through on his intention to attend Silvercon; few people I've met can match his erudition, common sense, and wit.

I'd never met Elst Weinstein before Corflu 9, but we quickly discovered acres of common ground. Elst has put a lot of thought into the idea of transferring the great fanzines of the past to CD-ROM. This would avoid the slow disintegration of the material on those crumbling pages. He's worked out the costs, and it's feasible. I hope he'll follow through on this as soon as enough fans have MPC (multimedia personal computer) systems. That could be as soon as 1994, according to some experts.

"We can save the text, illos, and everything," Elst pointed out.

"We could even enhance the original fanzines," I

suggested.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Remember when so many fanzine editors listed the music that accompanied the zine's production?" I could see he did. "Couldn't we use the audio data storage capability of CD-ROM to put that music right into each issue?" I gestured grandly. "I can see it, Elst, I can see it! Not only a whole set of *Beabohenna*, but a full stereo recording of 'Inna Gadda da Vida' right on the same disk." To show that he forgave my feeble flight of fancy, Elst gave me rare copies of both volumes of his *Fillostrated Dictionary*.

His timing couldn't have been better. So many Las Vegas fans have asked me questions about fanzine fandom that I decided, before Corflu, to try to write an fan-educational booklet. It's not *The Neofan's Guide*, but a somewhat different approach to inculcating neofen. The working title is *The Trufan's Home Companion*, and I hope to have it ready in a few months after getting comments from a few fans.

I told Marty Cantor about my plan. He endorsed the idea and graciously offered permission to photocopy his edition of *The Neofan's Guide* if it would help Vegans acclimate to fandom.

Spike Parsons introduced herself, and we talked about absent friends. She faunched for some recent issues of *Folly* so engagingly that I went back to the room, got some back issues, and gave them to her on the spot. "The usual" in *Folly's* colophon definitely includes "sincere faunching" as well as contributions, locs, and trades.

Despite this promising start, Spike remains two tiny flaws shy of perfection: She didn't give me a copy of her new fanzine, and she hasn't yet sent a letter of comment on mine. Well, I *still* think Spike Parsons is a Ghodd Fan.

The program listed the collation of the Corflu oneshot for late afternoon. I thought I ought to put my fanzine assembly skills at the service of the convention. I might as well have napped in my room. But then, I would never have seen the Queen of Collators in action.

"You've got to see this," Joyce said as soon as I hit the fanzine room. "She's unbelievable!" Joyce pointed toward the table on which the computer to type in entries and a bin for prepared pages had stood since the previous afternoon.

A collating apparatus consisting of closely spaced vertical bins, filled the whole table. I instantly wished Las Vegas fandom owned such a mighty collating engine. It would also come in handy when putting together the 1,000 copies of our electronic gaming newsletter *megagaming*.

More miraculous by far than even the collator was the human whirlwind whose fingers deftly plucked pages in a blur of motion. My ambidexterity has earned me a local rep as a collator, but I willingly bend the knee to Robbie. Los Angeles fandom should cherish and guard her, lest the Detroit or Bay Area collating combines snatch her away to spend the rest of her days trudging in the long line of silent fen who collate *Locus* and *Lan's Lantern*.

Watching all that work made me think about taking a little rest. On the way to the room, Joyce and I stopped to talk to Geri Sullivan, about my closest fan friend among

those met since my degafiation.

I'd been anticipating the meeting between Geri and Joyce since I found out we'd all be at Corflu. I'd hoped the fanhistorical significance of the meeting would propel these BNFs to new heights of wit and fannishness. I had to settle for them lining up back to back to see who's taller. Let the record show that Geri Sullivan is at least an inch higher than the one-time High Priestess of Brooklyn Fandom.

Rotsler told me about a bizarre conversation he had a few years ago. A fan artist known for both talent and eccentricity approached him at a party. "Can I ask you a question?" The Amiable One assented. The wkf learned forward and, with earnestness in every syllable, asked, "How do you join the inner circle?"

"I didn't know what to say," Rotsler explained. "I asked him what he meant." The questioner mentioned a few fans whom he believed belonged to this fannish conspiracy. "I tried to explain that they were just some of my friends," Rotsler continued, "but he refused to believe me. What could I do?"

"You could have done like my mother taught me," I replied. "I remember how she said to me, when I was very young, 'When someone is angry or stupid or turns out to be a crazy person, take three small slow steps backward, pivot slowly and then run.'"

I returned to the fanzine room, site of all con meetings, in time for the tail end of Bruce Pelz's fanzine trivia competition. I won prize tokens for two of the four questions asked while I was there, not too shabby for someone whose fannish memory could still use a few refreshers.

It only took a little prodding by Joyce, Woody, and Laurie, who had snagged print rights for *BBB*, to get me to try the whole test. Without competition from a roomful of trivial pursuers, I got 38 out of 90. I was disappointed by my showing until I realized that, in terms of Corflu 9's baseball theme, I hadn't done badly. A .422 batting average is worth about \$8 million a year in the majors these days.

Despite the dose of humility the test administered to my ego, I thought Bruce did a terrific job. I seldom see 90 questions about *anything* with so few ambiguities and quibbles, and he tincluded rivia from almost every period and clique.

The massive wave of nostalgia sparked by answering all those questions put me in a fanhistorical mood. Earlier in the day, Laurie had chafed about being labeled a neofan, an honorable and accurate description of her status in fanzine fandom.

"Everyone is a neofan for awhile," I pointed out. I used the Brooklyn Insurgents of the early 1970s as an example of the progression from neo to BNF. "If you'd taken all the members of the club and ranked them in order of fame and fannish stature in 1971," I said, "the bottom names on the list would have been Moshe Feder and Stu Shiffman." I paused to let it sink in. "And they've both gone on to do big things in fandom and earned lots of egoboo and respect."

"And let's not forget the Fanoclast," Joyce added, bringing my own apprenticeship into the discussion. "If you





ranked the Fanoclasts in order of fannish reputation in 1965, Andy Porter and Arnie would've been at the bottom of *that* list." I think she mumbled something about how anyone could succeed if Porter and I could,, but my attention was totally absorbed by a flashback to my first meeting and the great relief when rich brown told me I'd done well enough to be allowed to come to another one.

The topic back in the main meeting room was the future of fanzine fandom rather than its past. In response to exhortations to "get active," Moshe Feder quipped that we needed younger blood than him to assure that fanzines fly high in the 21st Century. "I've only got 40 years left," he asserted.

"Maybe not even that long," I amended. "You could wear out your welcome."

"This is true," he acknowledged, a trifle reluctantly it seemed to me.

"That's why I gafiated for 15 years," I said. "I saved that decade and a half and added it to the end of my fan career."

Where will we get the new fanzine fans, Andy Hooper wanted to know. He advocates more intensive

proselytizing among science fiction fans, while I want to refocus recruitment on people who are already publishing amateur magazines. Andy sometimes likes to glory in his cynicism, but he spoke very movingly of the mystical bond that unites enthusiasts of science fiction, which he contrasted with "the shared experience of the mechanical process or publishing".

"If love of science fiction is the bond that has brought us here," I countered, "then we are in severe trouble, because I don't read more than one or two SF books a year." It seems to me that Corflu celebrates the mystical bond that exists among those whose mania is to write their hearts and minds deep into the night -- and send the results to a couple of hundred kindred souls.

Both strategies have merit, and greater effort in *any* direction would probably yield positive results. The discussion, besides being highly enjoyable, helped me clarify my thoughts, soon to exhaust your patience in some fanzine I am sure.

The mid-con meeting started at 7:00 pm in the fanzine room, with most of the 58 attendees present for the ceremonies. Mike Glycer introduced the committee, after which the annual rite of selecting Corflu's guest of honor got a new twist. Dressed in a crimson suit of undeniable elegance, Bruce Pelz explained the computerized number generator that replaced the names-in-a-hat method at this year's con.

The computer passed this crucial test of reliability by picking Linda Bushyager. Once the rest of us convinced her that she didn't have to do anything more than speak at the next day's banquet to justify this honor, Linda appeared justifiably pleased with her special status.

It made me happy, too. When I returned to fandom in 1990, she provided most of the addresses for my first mailing list. It may not sound monumental to you, but the mind boggles at how high those unsent copies of *Folly* would be piled right now without her aid. Linda has always worked hard for fandom, and I liked seeing her get a shot of egoboo out of the blue. It also worked out well that she got the free room night as a gift from the concomm, because she probably spent more getting to Corflu (from Pennsylvania) than almost anyone there except Eric Lindsay and Nigel Rowe, both of whom were visiting from Down Under.

Ted White coordinated the selection of the 1991 Past President of the Fanzine Writers of America with a genial blend of solemnity and lightheartedness. The prestige of this office may be guessed from the fact that no past president responded to Ted's request to stand up although several were in the audience. After a half-dozen nominations and a lot of enthusiastic voting, Robert Lichtman emerged as the fwa's standard-bearer for last year.

Everything moved so swiftly that the assembly decided to polish off voting for the site of Corflu 10. The fact that Madison was unopposed didn't prevent the crowd from demanding Andy Hooper's entire presentation. Andy and Carrie are in process of moving to Seattle, but no one doubt the abilities of Jeanne Gomoll and the rest of Madison fandom to host the event.

Laurie's consternation about not being able to get hold of Bill Kunkel, who'd fallen ill on Thursday, mounted through Saturday. Finally, in the late afternoon, she found out that he'd gotten sicker on Saturday and gone to Quick Care Medical Center. They'd arrested his dehydration and some other symptoms and sent him home.

When she finally spoke to Bill, Laurie became so alarmed as his evident poor condition that she considered flying home to be with her boyfriend. For the rest of the evening, Laurie divided her attention between Corflu and the Kunkel sickbed.

Lenny Bailes, his debt to the computer world paid in full, had returned in time to join Ted White, Robert Lichtman, Woody Bernardi, Joyce and I for some quiet conversation that developed into a quest for a suitable restaurant. We all wanted to get back in time for the auction, but no one knew much about places in what was really a rather ramshackle neighborhood apart from the Cockatoo Inn.

Founerding in indecision, we turned to former Angeleno Lichtman for guidance. "I don't recommend eating anything around here," he stated.

"Another rave review from Robert Lichtman!" I shouted.

"I have some soy milk and a very interesting Danish," Robert said. I was touched. He knew it wasn't much, but he was willing to share his meager ration with the rest of us.

"And a hair shirt?" Ted asked, breaking up the room.

Lenny, Ted, and Robert resolved to try the hotel restaurant with us. Woody went off to check on Laurie, who by this time had given into uncontrollable worry about her boyfriend all alone in far off Las Vegas.

We'd heard rumors that Greg Benford had staked out a spot in the bar and was waiting for *tout le beaux fandom* to cluster around his stool. We passed through the bar on the way to the food and enlisted him in the dinner party.

Fans are timebinders, but Greg may be tapping the fountain of youth for extra age-retarding power. Apart from the eternally youthful Lenny Bailes, Greg more closely resembled my mental image of him, formed 20 years ago, than anyone else at Corflu 9. He's a living ad for his outdoorsy lifestyle.

A little after-dinner gathering reunited our bunch with another band that included Laurie Yates, Andy Hooper, Eric Lindsay, and Barnaby Rapoport.

Encounters with mindless violence took over the conversation and produced some fascinating stories. Ted described an incident from his job as a comic book rack jobber. When a guy started fiddling with the old comics as Ted was placing the new ones, his gentle admonitions for the customer to wait just a minute to see the newest titles produced an explosion. The man became so violent that it took a restraining friend to haul him out of the store.

Greg reported a physical confrontation in a BART station. One of his fellow patrons found the erstwhile Void Bhoy so objectionable that he spit in his face. Greg didn't mess around with one of those cutting lines for which he is so justly famous; he just beat hell out of the guy.

Wasn't Greg worried about his foe pulling a weapon?

The scholarly Mr. Benford allowed that he wasn't worried at all, since he always carries a concealed knife and frequently packs a luger in risky circumstances.

This macho stance works for Greg, but Bailes' position is nearer my own outlook. He said that he'd rather just walk away if someone spit in his face if the alternative is wearing a gun.

The late-night auction surprised me with the quality of the offerings. I was also flattered to see so many of Joyce and my fanzines fetch decent prices. Woody bought a cellophaned package containing the Bob Shaw and Egoboo Poll issues of *Focal Point*, which shows that a fannish prophet is not entirely without honor in his own land.

Geri Sullivan snagged the item that intrigued me most, though it was perhaps the smallest treasure up for bid. It was a postcard, ostensibly an issue of a newszine. The contents consisted of a glowing description, complete with photo, of one Bob Tucker. It was addressed to Mary Wheeler. Possibly Mr. Tucker would care to explain this oddity>

Someone decided that Woody Bernardi looks a lot like Jophan in Dan Steffan's illos for *The Enchanted Duplicator*. Gary Hunnewell, an Arnold, MO, fan whom I did not know before the con, completed the picture by loaning Woody a beautiful, multi-colored propeller beanie for most of the weekend.

I saw Woody, sitting in the front row at the auction. He was wearing the beanie and had a broad grin on his sensitive fannish face. This new image struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the assembled fans, some of whom began to bid for items to give to him. Fans being who they are, others would raise the stakes on the item in the name of *not* giving it to Woody. The prices went up and good causes made a little extra money.

The cry, "Let's give to Woody!" rang out several times that evening. It reached its natural limit, however, when Geri Sullivan turned to Jeanne Bowman and Laurie Yates and said, "Let's auction off Woody! We can get \$15."

"Let's see how much we can get for *not* auctioning off Woody!" said Jeanne. Geri laughed herself off her chair and took a new seat out of range of any further Bowman notions..

Easy-going friendliness ruled, even during the auction. Andy Hooper found himself asked to auction a set of his own fanzine, *Spent Brass*. "You don't need me," he said, a little embarrassed at the prospect of singing his own praises.

"That's right," said head auctioneer Pelz as though he'd received an Amazing Revelation. "You've already published them."

I like the Corflu attitude toward the program. For the first time in my spotty history of con-going, I was among people as indifferent to panels and speeches as I am. I don't automatically hate convention programs, but I prefer to view formal presentations selectively rather than try to view as many as possible.

The committee provided a range of topics and asked fans to sign up for ones they wanted. I think there were a couple of such program items at most.



That doesn't count impromptu group discussions, like the one which sprang up on the staircase that linked the public convention rooms with the lobby level of the Cockatoo Inn.

It started small, just a "remember when?" festivals with Lenny Bailes, Joyce, and I sitting and standing on the stairs. Soon Moshe sat down beside the railing of the upper landing to join the conversation. Ted White sat down next to Moshe. After awhile, Geri Sullivan, Robert Lichtman, and Art Widner took seats on the floor against the wall opposite the upper end of the staircase, and a splendidly dressed John Hertz, attired as befits a notable of the English Regency, came up the stairs to add his effervescent personality to the group.

The prime topic was the relationship between print and electronic communication. Bailes described the fanac on the Genie computer network, and we got into the question of whether writing on bulletin boards can replace paper fanzines.

Lenny likened Genie to an apa and lauded some of the fine material produced by Teresa Nielsen-Hayden and others. Ted thought it was more like conversation, with the same ephemeral nature. The chief point of debate seemed to be how long fans would find electronic communication satisfying. Joyce, a compu-network participant for the last six years, believes that the fascination fades, after which participants may find the communication a bit shallow.

We didn't settle any issues, but it was the kind of freewheeling conversation, serious analysis laced with humor, I missed most when I was out of fandom. If any of us had brought a computer, a oneshot might've broken out.

## Chapter 4: Rotsler Plays China

Sunday began on a fannish note; someone (Dave Rike?) told me a Burbee story. At the LACon in 1984, a pretty young femmefan approached Burb, her eyes glittering with awe and admiration.

"You invented sex in 1927," she gushed. Ever the appreciator of women, Burb looked at her and definitely liked what he saw.

"Come here," he beckoned. "I'm thinking of reinventing it."

A little later, I walked into a conversation about TAFF reports -- and the job of publishing the parts of Terry Carr's unfinished report in one volume. BEP suggested it and even volunteered to collect copies of all the installments. Memories of Terry were so much with me during Corflu 9 that I accepted this project without hesitation.

Once Bruce had secured a pair of willing hands for this crifanac, the conversation switched to reminiscences of Los Angeles fandom, primarily by him and the Moffatts. "We

have our own latter day John Van Couvering," I confided to Len.

"You mean he walked through a glass door?"

"Not exactly," I admitted, "but it was almost as good."

Everyone wanted to hear about the Van Couvering of the 90s. It happened at the 1991 Las Vegas Noncon over Labor Day weekend. It was the first visit to our home, the Subway Station, for most locals, so few were familiar with the layout.

The very reserved Ray Waldie walked into our bedroom, through the master bathroom and out to our yard. Ray evidently attached little significance to our jacuzzi's solar cover. He didn't slacken his pace as his feet left the firm ground of the jacuzzi rim. He took several confident steps, almost reaching the middle, before the cover started to sink under his weight and he disappeared beneath the bubbling, heated waters of the jacuzzi.

"So it's not that Ray Waldie can't walk on water," I assured everyone, "it's just that he can't do it for long periods of time." I didn't elaborate, but I knew my confident expression would leave the impression that Ray Waldie will be the first TAFF candidate who walks to the con.

Woody wanted more information about Pittsburgh fandom from Linda and Suzle.

"So many new women must have made a big difference," he suggested.

"Yes," I quipped. "It meant we didn't have to dance with each other."

"The same thing happened with LASFS," said Len Moffatt.

"That never stopped LASFS before enough women showed up," I said.

As if conjured by the reference to the club he shaped for so long, Forry Ackerman stopped by for a round of "good by"s. That part of a con, starting during the late morning of the last day, when fans start to disperse, hasn't gotten emotionally easier while I was away.

Forry removed much of the sadness by revealing that he had to leave so early to get to the weekly class he teaches for eight would-be speakers of Esperanto. Maybe they'll do a little club newsletter, possibly on a hekto, and he'll have something to do with his free time for the next 40 or 50 years.

The banquet was a joint production of the two conventions. I don't know what the Regency folks thought about our motley barbarians, but they certainly lent an unexpectedly lofty tone to the whole affair.

With a 1:30 plane to catch, Ted White could only stay at table for the start of the banquet. I was surprised and pleased when he walked around the table and stuck out his hand. "I didn't know if I would enjoy seeing you," he said, "but I did." So did I, Ted. We shook hands. "See you in the fanzines," he said and rushed from the hall.

Always the loose cannon, Rotsler immediately began to undermine this air of languid nobility. He picked up his butter disk and soon had graced it with an original Rotsler. Then he did the same to my butter disk. Pretty soon, he'd branched out to cups, saucers, and even a multi-piece flying saucer done for Woody.

His masterpiece, however, was a dinner plate. Emboldened by this larger canvas after apprenticing on butter plates, Rotsler gave us his vision of the entire history of fandom. Part of it read: "In the beginning was the Void... And then there was Hyphen."

Schemes for smuggling crockery out of the banquet hall superseded all other topics. "Where did you get the Rotsler china?" Bernie Phillips wondered.

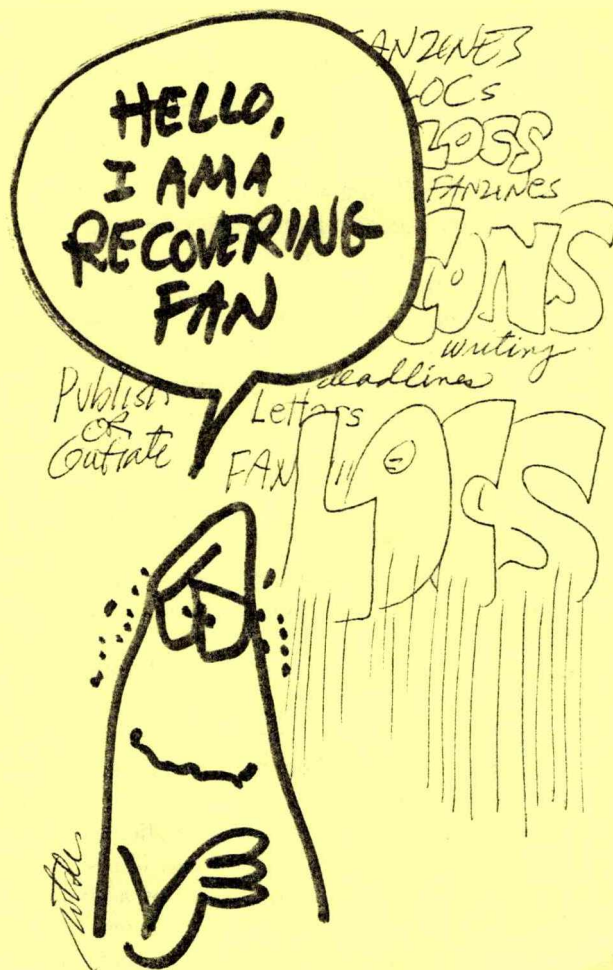
"From the Rotsler at our table," I told her. "Everyone should have one."

Word of Rotsler's activity spread, drawing the curious to our table. Soon, we were surrounded by fans snapping photos of the cartoons and pleading for a Rotsler dish of their own as a Corflu souvenir.

Then it was our turn to hug and kiss everyone in sight before reclaiming our car. Lichtman and Lindsay walked over to the garage with us, a last gesture of friendship on a weekend that had witnessed many such.

And then like four neofans, giddy with the afterglow of their first con, the four of us talked about Corflu through every one of the 250 miles to Las Vegas. Somewhere along the way, Joyce announced her intention to start a newszine called *Spindizzy*. Laurie reported getting cornered by a number of fans who convinced her it was time to do a genzine called *Bad Folly Clone*. Woody sat quietly in his seat behind the driver and mentally composed editorials for *Marquee*.

Me? Well, you're reading it now.



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