

FOOLY #11

KatzenJammer

Uncle Forry Wants You!

I met Andy Hooper, publishing giant and traveling fan, for the first time at Corflu 9 over the Leap Year Day weekend. I expected to like him, and I did. We had several conversations of exceptional interest, one of which concerned the recruitment of new fanzine fans.

Andy took the traditionalist view that the way to get more fanzine fans is to spread the gospel among science fiction fans who don't already do fanzine fanac, and to readers of the professional science fiction magazines.

I can't disagree. It works. In fact, that's how I became a fan. I contacted fandom after letterhacking in *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, and it was a letter from a fan who got my address from the letter column that brought me into the hobby in March,

1963.

More proselytizing among sf and fantasy fans probably *would* yield a few additional fanzine fans. And in an activity which has never boasted huge numbers, a few more artists, writers, and editors would be worth the effort.

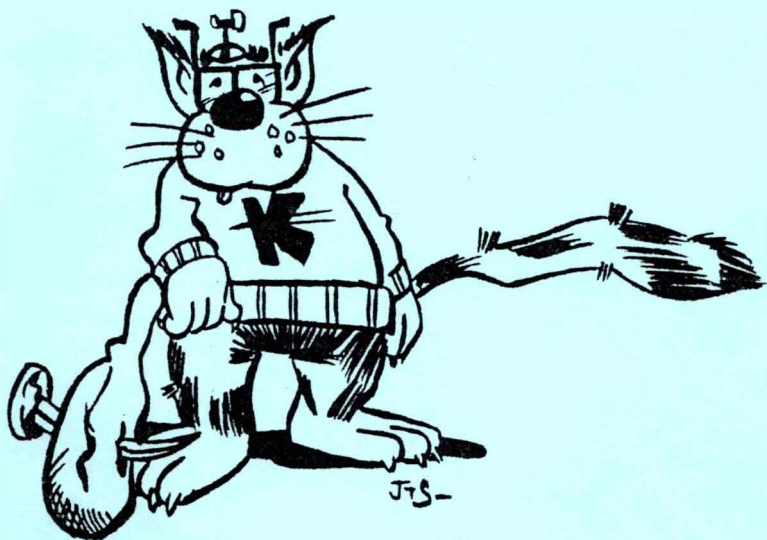
I believe that fandom has a better option. Let's tell our message to a group that may be more receptive than sf fans -- people already involved in personal publishing.

Andy spoke of a "mystical connection" among science fiction enthusiasts. When being a science fiction fan meant reading books and magazines, there may well have been such a spiritual union of all fans. They had all read, and loved, pretty much the same books and magazines. Widner, Speer, and Moskowitz could talk more meaningfully about this.

Does such a mystic connection exist today? If so, I think it is more tenuous than 30 or 40 years ago.

Today's fans don't share a common experience of science fiction. Some have a traditional background of reading books and magazines, but many others follow only the electronic media or comic books. Costumery and gaming are other major interests which sf fans espouse in preference to speculative literature in print form.

Like society as a whole, fan-



dom has gone from a subculture dominated by generalists to one composed primarily of specialists. When I was a neo, BNFs tried all forms of fanac. Bruce Pelz is a classic fan for all seasons; he's done everything from fanzines to masquerades, gaming to filksongs. Today's fan is more likely to emphasize one type of fanac to the exclusion of all others.

In the Classic Period (1930-1962), fans shared an interest in the written word. It wasn't a big leap from reading science fiction to writing – or writing about – it. If being a fan means going beyond a passive interest, then producing a fanzine is an extension of reading the prozines.

Is there a connection between creating eye-catching and authentic costumes and the urge to publish? Both impulses may coexist within the same fan,

but there doesn't seem to be a natural link between them.

If Andy's "mystical connection" is applicable, I think it better describes that overwhelming imperative to publish thoughts and opinions in small circulation magazines. It wasn't science fiction that drew me to Corflu so I could enjoy that chat with Andy, but rather a shared interest in personal publishing.

Las Vegas fandom comes up in any such discussion. The appearance of a slew of enthusiastic young publishers sure looks like support for Andy's viewpoint. In fact, it is. There's something about the Vegas All-Stars that must be considered, though; the new fanzine fans here are voracious readers. We've got plenty of specialized fans, including an enormous contingent of gamers, but the publishers are all traditional

print-oriented fans. That may've made it easier for me to pique their interest in fanzines.

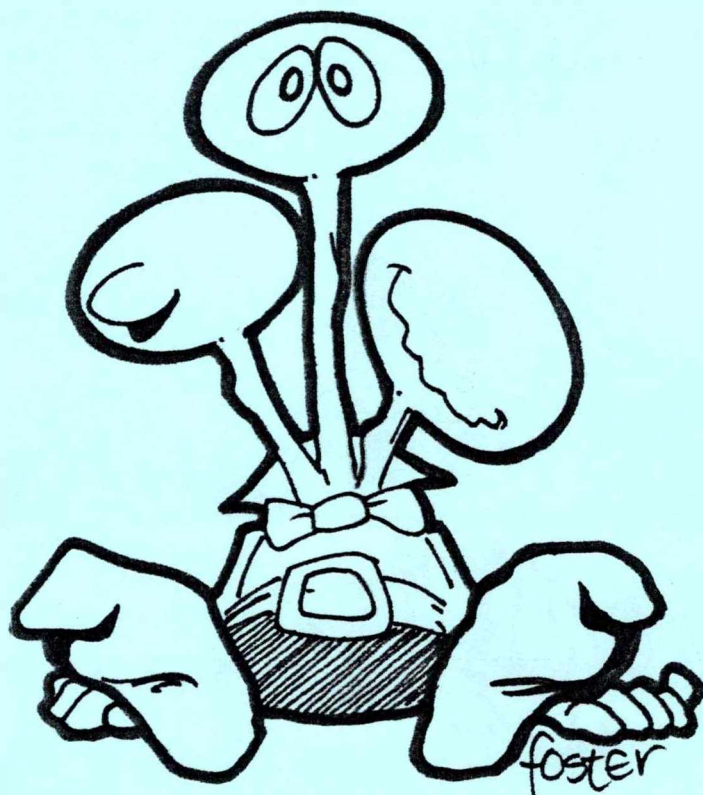
I suggest we propagandize producers of amateur magazines. They've already jumped the biggest hurdle, enjoying fanzines. What remains is to convince them that our fanzine fandom offers them advantages.

At the risk of being overly academic, I'd identify four types of fanzine enthusiasts outside "our" fanzine fandom: participants in other fanzine fandoms, electronic amateur publishers, members of mundane ayjays, and independent hobbyist publishers. Mundane ayjay could possibly be further subdivided into two categories, groups that predate our fandom and groups modeled on our apas but which have no direct connection to our fandom.

Some fans have written worriedly about the graying of fandom and the dearth of fanzine fans under 30. Since I would like to be a Grand Old Man in about 30 years, this requires that there be energetic young fans to sing my praises, fetch my diet cokes, and perhaps tie my shoes. So I've spent a lot of time on this gray thing.

What I did was look around. And do you know what I found? There's absolutely no shortage of young publishers! They're just not connected to our fandom. The Wrestling Underground (as they call their fandom) has at least a half-dozen newsletters, all biweekly or weekly, as good as any of our news-oriented zines, and they're more journalistically enterprising.

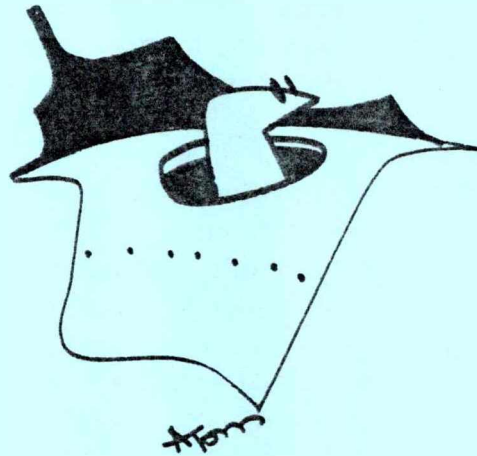
Or how about electronic



gaming fandom? I told readers of *Video Games & Computer Entertainment* about the glories of fanzine publishing in my February 1991 "Inside Gaming" column. Electronic Gaming Fandom now has more genzines than ours. The quality varies astonishingly, but that's because some editors are in their 20s and 30s, and some are 12!

Who says younger people aren't interested in fanzines? Despite the allure of instant telecommunication, thousands of people produce small circulation amateur publications in the United States.

I've had the rare chance to interact with a fandom, Las Vegas, which had almost no fan contact outside the city. Vegas Fandom had few preconceptions about *any* form of fanac. The last FAPA mailing had fanzines from three Vegas -- Laurie Yates, Woody Bernardi, and Peggy Burke -- who are some years from their 30th birthday. Aileen Forman, co-editor of *BBB*, is only a couple of years older than this trio. New fanartist Greg Dees is 29. Ken Forman, who also published his first fanzine last winter, *Dalmatian Alley*, is the oldest at a creaky 33. There are others of similar age in the club who may emulate their example. Some will tire and move on, but it'll have an impact if even two or



three become long-time fanzine fans.

Some of my recent articles reconsidered widely accepted notions about fandom. One worth a second look is the tie between our fanzine fandom and Science Fiction Fandom. Our group has always defined itself in relation to SF, but is this still valid?

I may not be a typical fan or even a typical fanzine fan, but I don't think I am too far from the mainstream. And it has been quite a few years since science fiction had any great personal relevance to my life or fanac.

I started as a fan of science fiction, but that's become a minor interest. I read it only occasionally, and I'm shockingly ignorant of current authors. I probably know more about

specialty fandoms like comics, fantasy gaming and electronic sf, than I do about books and prozines.

I propose dual citizenship for fanzine fans. We can still justifiably claim kinship with Science Fiction Fandom, yet we also belong to Personal Publishing Fandom. Don't we have as much in common with the publisher of *Pro Wrestling Sushi*, as we do with a fan who plays fantasy roleplaying games?

Dual citizenship isn't an unalloyed blessing. No use fooling about that. It means that we might need to look at the history of our hobby (fanzine fandom) slightly differently than in Warner and Moskowitz. Why not trace our origins to the small press publishers of the 19th century as well as to Gernback? How about supplementing Wells and Verne with Addison, Steele, and Swift, all of whom produced small circulation periodicals for a tiny ingroup audience? We might have to loosen our grip on our self-appointed custodianship of the entire history of science fiction and admit that fanzine-dom is only one branch of a mighty tree, but I have confidence that everyone's egos will recover.

This mythical Personal Publishing Fandom -- mythical because it doesn't exhibit the

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Folly is available for letter of comment, contribution of artwork or writing, or (arranged) all-for-all trade.

self-awareness that seems to go with a Fandom – can be divided into two categories: sercon and general. I'm using "sercon" to represent devotion to a subject or closely associated group of subjects and "general" to mean more eclectic subject selection.

So far as I know, fanzine fandoms start sercon. Science fiction fans first published to spread their opinions and news about SF. It's the same for other fandoms.

Sercon fanzine publishers are the most devoted to the fandom from which they sprang and therefore the least likely to want a more general fanzine fandom like ours. Those grown tired of their sercon focus might be interested if they knew they could keep the fun of publishing while writing about other things. And remember, these

wouldn't be raw fanzine novices, either.

Unfortunately, fannishness is pretty rudimentary in most fandoms, though there are elements of it in all of them. Of course, the positive view of *that* is that when a fan with non-sercon inclinations surfaces in one of these groups, we want to redirect his or her energies toward our fanzine fandom.

Independent publishers, who fill page after page of listings in *Factsheet Five*, could be the easiest recruits. Many have no sercon interest and should be well-suited to the freewheeling content of our fanzines.

It may take time to develop an effective recruiting method to reach fanzine lovers from outside our circle. One way to begin is to send sample copies of

our fanzines to likely looking prospects. These can be culled from *Factsheet Five* initially. Word-of-mouth among our fanzine editors can help follow up on anyone who shows interest in our brand of personal publishing. Another possibility is for someone to start reviewing all current fanzines in a publication that can be distributed to those prospects and let *them* send for the ones that strike sparks.

Where are the new fanzine fans coming from? They may already be here, just in the next room.



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Silvercrowned Among the Gulled

Faan Fiction about SNAFFU's First Convention by Arnie Katz

The arid wind blew across the desolate landscape of North Las Vegas. The machine gun crack of a desert thunderstorm rumbled into the tiny valley from the nearby mountains, now shrouded in ominous black clouds. Tons of other atmospheric stuff was happening as the three cars pulled into the parking lot of the Carl's Junior.

Another series of deafening claps drowned out the echoing thumps of cars doors opening on luxury sedans and the sound of expensively tooled boots crunching on gravel.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the Secret Master of Fandom to his two henchmen. "Let us conclude our business and get away from this foul place."

"Yes, Master," said His righthand man, the Secret Semi-Master of Fandom. "This storm can't last forever, and soon that blue sky and big yellow ball will be back."

"That's the Sun," offered the Secret Master's lefthand man, the Semi-Secret Master of Fandom.

"Then I'd hate to see the father," said the Semi-Master.

"Your quip is fodder for more bon mots," replied Semi-Secret one.

"That's taking puns fodder than either of you should go," said the Secret Master. He laughed. It was not



a pleasant laugh. It was a sinister laugh, the laugh of a freshly dead corpse.

The Semi-Secret Master and the Secret Semi-Master wished they could laugh like that. The best either could muster was a Major Frank Burns cackle. Someday, maybe one of them could become the Secret Master. Things would improve.

"Brilliant story!" the acolytes chorused.

"Thank you, thank you." The Secret Master raised his arms in what he assumed was a jovial gesture of self-deprecation but really looked more

like Richard M. Nixon giving the double-for-Victory sign.

That would have pleased the Secret Master, who had voted for Richard M. Nixon. He had voted for him for President in 1988 and planned to do so again in '92.

The syrupy slosh of egoboo being slopped on with a bucket roused the Secret Master from his political reverie. There was work to be done. Fortunately, he had others to do it.

"You're probably wondering why I called you here," he said. He waited for the appreciative laughs. It took only a couple of extra stern looks to prompt his minions. He prided himself on the Expression of Disapproval which had humbled many a once-haughty convention chairman. "Let me tell you The Plan," he said after allowing the homage of his wit to continue for a suitable number of minutes.

The Secret Semi-Master and the Semi-Secret Master, both a little breathless from their exertion, listened raptly.

The bright sun filled the parking convention revelers gathered at the Subway Station, home of Arnie and Joyce Katz in the popular North Las Vegas area of Las Vegas, with a feeling of well-being. Birds twittered through

the flowering trees after the swooping Monarch butterflies, too satiated by earlier meals to hurry the chase. Hummingbirds sang their song and traced unfathomably intricate flight patterns around the gaily painted feeder hanging from the wooden slate roof that kept some of the sun off the fans relaxing in the jacuzzi.

The Silvercon was almost upon them, and Ken Forman, the Mainspring of Las Vegas Fandom, needed to unwind.

Running a first convention was no cinch. Many had offered help, but the independent-minded Mainspring liked to do things for himself. He did wish, however, that he'd listened when someone mentioned an existing system to deliver progress reports and flyers to fans' homes. A few broad hints elicited an invitation for him and Aileen to visit the Katzes for a little decompression before the start of the event the next day. Within an hour, Ken, Aileen, Arnie, Joyce, and several dozen tag-alongs were splashing in the pool, gobbling freshly barbecued hamburgers and doing a lot of other things in life-affirming counterpoint to the previously described meeting in the Carl's Jr. parking lot. Of such contrasts is dramatic tension, so necessary to the faan fiction story, born.

Had they known of the dire fate gathering on its haunches to spring upon them in a frenzy of rending teeth, the Vegas All-Stars might have ceased their carefree merrymaking. But they did not know, and the party continued under the stars for many hours.

II

Silvercon's Vice Chairman Greg Dees found several unexpected attractions when he'd arrived at the Plaza Suites Hotel. The one he noticed first was the big room with the handsomely lettered sign on an easel next to its double doors. A banner with the Legend "Game Championships" hung over the door, with an arrow pointing inside. The placard on the easel enlarged upon this theme by offering free entry to all science fiction and fantasy gamers and

promising prizes ranging from a top-of-the-line VCR to a dream date with Peggy Burke.

For a moment, Greg thought about resigning from the committee and trying to win that complete video tape collection of "Go-Bots", but he was not a man to easily shirk his duty. Still, he couldn't contain his admiration for Silvercon's director of gaming, Karl Kreder, who had obviously pulled off a major coup.

As if following the stage directions of an unseen dramatist, the tall young teacher ambled up to him and stared, slackjawed, at the still-closed doors. "Karl, how did you set this up?" asked Greg Dees.

"Me?" Karl started back in surprise. "I thought *you* did it." Greg shook his head. "Well, if you didn't do it, and I didn't do it, I wonder who did it." They might've speculated on this matter for another hour, in the leisurely manner of Las Vegas fans, but Dandi Ashton bounded up with a question about the Hospitality Room that demanded an immediate answer.

"No, Dandi," Greg said after she had outlined the situation. "Only Official Silvercon members have unrestricted access to the Official Silvercon bathroom." He was proud that his fellow fans turned to him to make the tough decisions, the controversial calls. He hoped no one would ask him to pay his back dues in front of the out-of-towners. "Everyone else has to put a quarter in the 'Silver for Silvercon' canister."

Karl felt a brief urge to resume the discussion of the Game Championship room after Dandi had bounced off down the hall to implement the Vice Chairman's edict. It was a mystery, and his keen mind, tempered by 80 hours of gaming a week, loved a mystery.

Greg, too, wanted to kick around this enigma a bit more. But other things pressed for his attention, including a particularly winsome cocktail waitress in the hotel bar. He pulled his thoughts away from that scantily clad vision and recalled his promise to oversee the installation of the microphones in the program room.

Unfortunately for the safety and

well-being of Fandom, circumstances intervened. Perhaps these two Fine Minds could have discovered the clockwork machinations of the Secret Master which ensnared the Silvercon and plunged it into a living hell on earth.

With promises to see what they could find out, the two Vegans turned to their time-critical tasks. From an unseen hiding place came a high-pitched staccato laugh. The Secret Master of Fandom would be pleased.

Elsewhere in the Silvercon complex, Arnie Katz, Joyce Katz, and Robert Lichtman had found a room scarcely less remarkable than the one which had aroused Karl and Greg's curiosity.

"Do you know anything about this fanzine Hall of Fame?" Lichtman asked, as they admired the gold trimmed banner draped over the entryway.

"No," Joyce answered. "This must be something the committee dreamed up."

"What a wonderful group of neos!" Arnie said. "This is just like those little rascals! I'll bet they assembled the display as a special surprise for you, Robert!" He beamed genially at the visitor from San Francisco.

"Do you really think they could have every general circulation fanzine published in the United States since 1930?" Robert asked, thumbing toward the signboard that proclaimed this fact.

"I can't believe Pelz or Moskowitz or Ackerman loaned their collections," Arnie admitted. "And I don't think all three together could live up to that boast."

"It certainly is a wonderful thing," said Robert. Joyce and Arnie agreed that it was.

It's doubtful they would've felt the same reverence had they peeked inside the door and seen, not rows of display tables but rather a super-scientific apparatus with a menacing tube aimed at a point just inside the threshold. The Semi-Secret Master of Fandom permitted himself a satisfied smile. The convention hadn't started,



and everything was absolutely ready.

"Win a Gilded Suit of Armor!" the rolypoly accountant said the words aloud as he read them. "Grand Tourney TONIGHT!". He fought down the quaver in his voice and waved his short sword bravely, but he was still an accountant dressed up like an English Squire of the Age of Feudalism. His regalia would have looked less familiar to a Medieval Noble than to an executive at MGM, Republic Pictures, 20th Century Fox, or Paramount. His spindly legs and partially exposed concave chest gave his costume a Disneyish air that the wearer did not altogether intend.

The list of prizes made him gasp with pangs of yearning. He longed for the helm with the hawk's crest. He *wanted* that two-handed broadsword. And he didn't know if he could face the rest of his life without the autographed picture of Elizabeth Taylor from "Ivanhoe".

The Squirely accountant reread the large flyer on the stand next to the door to make sure he had fully grasped its meaning. He was more fluent in Hollywood Medieval English than the contemporary version of the language, but the meaning was unmistakable. Winners of the various jousts, duels, and other contests would be rewarded beyond the wildest dreams of even the most creative anachronists.

"It passeth wonderment," he said to the girl dressed as a Duke's daughter whose interest was also caught by the proclamation of the Grand Tourney. What was proper Creative Anachronism parlance for bodacious ta-tas? "Yon Majestic Knockers" didn't sound right. "Bountiful Bosoms"? Might be. He couldn't think of it and contented himself with dividing his attention between the sign and the beckoning valley revealed by the scooped neck of her tunic.

But not even a date with the ducal heir would dissuade the intrepid accountant from trying his luck in the Grand Tourney.

The Secret Master of Fandom studied the Silvercon program schedule. It couldn't be better, he congratulated himself. The panels, speeches and presentations had their merits, he guessed, but none seemed likely to divert fans' attention from the three rooms he and his two helpers had introduced into the proceedings.

And once those vital, young fans entered those three rooms – zap! – it was all over. He marveled at the vision and daring that had led him to create his crowning achievement, The Plan.

Too bad these Las Vegas twits wouldn't be around to bask in the reflected glow of his egoboo. This time, even he thought his laugh

sounded especially evil.

III

"What do you mean you can't get rid of the signs?" Ken Forman roared when Ben Wilson told him of the difficulty. Ben was on the slender side true, but tall and even somewhat athletically inclined. "Just pick up the easel and carry it off!"

"The easel is bolted to the floor right *through* the carpet," Ben explained. "I can't remove the bolt without tearing huge holes in the carpet, and you know what that means."

Ken did. It meant that the hotel would press the con committee with a bill for damages. "So take the signs off the easels."

"They're crazy glued on something, Ken," Ben said. I can't pull them off the stands."

"Could you put something else on top?" the chairman asked.

"Yes, if you wanna cause a riot," Ben replied. He pointed to the throng already lining up at the doorway identified as the entrance of the Grand Tourney. "If we cancel these events the fans'll scream for our scalps."

"This is entirely unfair!" Ken moaned, because it wasn't fair. "Who set up these rooms? We didn't. Yet here they are, and they're drawing people away from all the entertaining

activities which we have planned for their amusement."

There wasn't anything more to say about it, so Ken abruptly found compelling interest in a list of pre-registrants. Ben set off in the general direction of the con sponsored game room, already frowning at what he expected to find.

The Game Room was empty. Bewildered gamemasters slumped at their tables, morosely waiting for the eager players who now might never come. Ben exchanged hellos with a few dispirited SNAFFU-ites and then made an excuse to check some other corner of the convention.

The Secret Master of Fandom, flanked by the Semi-Secret Master of Fandom and the Secret Semi-Master of Fandom, stood in the main milling area and surveyed their handiwork. They sorely missed the reverential treatment they normally required of all who approached them, but all had agreed it was more important to mask their identities. The Semi-Secret Master, for one, felt a little ambivalent about the fact that no one had spied him beneath the false nose, extra skin pigment, and hairpiece.

"The traps are in place, and the rats have taken the bait," said the Secret Semi-Master. "Everything opens at 10 pm tonight, when the con attendance reaches its height.

"It's only a matter of time," added the Semi-Secret Master.

"The Great Rejuvenation of the Fanation is Here!" the Secret Master declared. "And they'll owe it all to us!" He shivered with pleasure at the thought of all the praise that would surely shower down upon him when his part in this visionary project became known. And he had already had Secret Semi and Semi Secret pub a flyer that he intended to mail from the main Las Vegas post office Saturday morning.

"Silvercon is falling apart!" Aileen announced. "All they can see are those three rooms. What if no one comes to the virtual astro-phrenology panel or the symposium on the scientific measurement of the girth and length of the fannish penis?"



"I don't see how anyone could resist either of those!" said Dandi.

"If there was only something I could do," Aileen said. "How about a panel called Panelology 101, explaining how to be on a convention panel?"

"Ghod knows, you'll be an expert in that by the end of this convention," said her husband. "Five panels, that's not too many," he added. "But a sixth might be pushing it for a relaxicon."

It was then that Woody Bernardi, Las Vegas' answer to the young Jophan, offered the suggestion that saved the day.

"We're taking the wrong tack," he paused, ordering his words. "I don't know why they want to take all the fans away from the official activities," he continued, "but they can do it. They've got great stuff."

Murmurs of assent came from every fan present for this emergency meeting to deal with the rogue events that had sprung up in the midst of their cherished Silvercon. When the group was silent again, Woody continued. "Let's face it, most of us would rather be at one of those events than ours. How can we expect strangers to feel differently?" He shook his head, slightly dislodging the multi-colored propeller beanie he had donned for the convention.

"Woody has plumbed the pit of truth at the center of the fruit," Ken Forman stated. Decisiveness lent an unaccustomed edge to his voice. "We must capture the imaginations of the convention attendees..."

"... even if we have to lie through our teeth to do it," Aileen finished the sentence for him. Ken nodded. His wife had spoken the plain truth.

"We must have activities that sound even more outstanding than the Game Championships, Grand Tourney, and Fanzine Hall of Fame," Ken summarized.

"What good will that do?" Dandi asked.

"We just keep people occupied until those strange events wither and die for lack of support," he explained.

"That's pretty good," Joyce agreed. "but I think there are a few things we can add to the basic plan." She quickly explained what she had in mind, and everyone promised they would help.

So it was that Ken-not-Ken Gregg produced an emergency issue of *Situation Normal* with an instant revision of the Silvercon program. Gone were the learned excavations into tarot and poker, and the feckless fun of filking. In their place were items no fan could possibly resist. The only thing more lurid than the panel titles were their descriptions.

"This'll even get them away from that Fanzine Hall of Fame," admitted Arnie Katz, who wondered if anyone would miss him if he disappeared into that seductive room for the balance of the weekend. "What fanzine fan would dare miss a panel called 'Sex Secrets of the Ancient Trufen'? And the ATom cartoon of John Berry leaping at his wife from the top of the bedroom wardrobe is sure a grabber!"

"Or how about 'Drawing Erotic Fantasy Art from Life Models?'" Greg Dees put in. "You don't think anyone will recognize the photo we clipped from the May, 1992 issue of *Mountainous Mammaries*, do you?"

"If it were last month's issue, I might be worried," Arnie Katz said. "But how many other fans get their subscription copies sent Federal Express?"

"And the presentation with Marina Sirtis and Linda Hamilton will be a magnet for the Trekkies and Tunnel-dwellers," Bill Kunkel observed.

"Yes," said Arnie, "And I think the convention owes you a debt of thanks, Bill, for coming up with the idea of having them mud wrestle for the TV Actress Title."

"Our work here is done," Ken announced. "Let's rock 'n' roll!"

IV

Behind the closed door of the Fanzine Hall of Fame, the Secret Master of Fandom and his followers surveyed the reception awaiting any fan unwise enough to fall for the bait.

"This looks very complicated," said the Secret Semi-Master dubiously.

"Don't worry about that," replied the Semi-Secret Master. "Its like a roach motel: Fans check in, but they don't check out."

"Maybe our friend would feel more confident if you briefly reviewed its operation," prompted the Secret Master. Dissension was the rankest division of all, and this operation couldn't afford personal friction.

"Very well," sighed the Semi-Secret Master. He would get the Secret Semi-Master for this impertinence. Maybe a few days of collating *Lan's Lantern* would improve his attitude. "The fans enter through the door and find themselves standing on the carpet that covers the entire area to a distance of five feet from the door. The pressure of feet on the carpet makes sleeping gas spurt from nozzles

hidden in the rug's weave.

"As each one falls to the floor, we roll them onto the conveyor belt, which takes them to the back of the room where the Vita-Extractor plunks 20 years of their lives and stores the temporal surplus in containers of a unique design." He was darn proud of those containers, too. He'd eaten enough peanut butter to grow his own shell. "A team of flunkies is standing by at the rear entrance of the hotel. They rush to the airport, where an America West jetliner is scheduled to depart for Cincinnati. Within 24 hours, every Midwest BNF will again taste the sweet wine of youth!"

Fortunately for the schemers, the room was thoroughly soundproof. Otherwise, the unsuspecting con-goers outside would have heard the chilling sound of their laughter

The new program schedule and the garish signs extolling the con's incredible new attractions galvanized the already over-excited crowd. As word spread among people on line for one of the three renegade program items, the argumentative voices screeched to a disharmonious crescendo. Friend fought friend, husband battled wife over whether to stay on line or defect to one of Silvercon's newly announced extravaganzas.

Grotesquely ornate curses, many utilizing vocabulary not heard in a half-dozen centuries, rent the air as, one by one, fans expressed a preference for the Silvercon committee's labors with their feet.

"It's working!" said Arnie Katz. "By Ghu, it's working!" He had to restrain himself from a triumphal leap into the air.

"They are switching lines, but a doors open in a half-hour," Aileen reminded. "There are still fans waiting for our three problem rooms."

"Then we must depend for our salvation on Emergency Plan B," said Ken Forman. "Alert the troupe."

The power of a woman's scream interminably long and oscillating cannot be overstated. Certainly nothing less than a wall-shaking howl of female outrage is the only thing that could've quelled the cacophony so quickly.

She didn't scream at first when Matt Waugh came up to her. "F there, sweet thing," the curly-haired 16-year-old said to the blue-haired matron preparing to attend the Grand Tourney. He hoped he had delivered his little speech like Dandi had spent 10 minutes coaching him to do. Now it was time to implement Aileen's instruction for flirting at a convention: "Let's be friends," he said as he reached down, caught the woman by the ankle and flipped her moccasin off with his other hand. Then he began gently massaging the sole and toes as he had seen others do.

That was when the screaming got loud enough for others to notice and cease their own babble.

The tug-of-war involving the woman, her outraged husband, and Matt probably would've drawn a lot more attention if John Hardin hadn't run through the hall wearing fluorescent speedos and hauling a large kite decorated with a life-size picture of Elvira. Those whom John didn't bowl over in his head-long rush through the middle of the line for the Game Championship, got caught between the people running toward John for a closer look at the kite, and those putting distance between themselves and this apparition madman.

"I love cons!" boomed a disheveled woman who suddenly



materialized at the head of what remained of the Grand Tourney line, dragging two garbage-filled shopping carts behind her. She was wearing five sweaters, three pairs of muddy jeans, and two scarves which bore evidence of being used as handkerchiefs.

Her dirt-smeared face, distorted by a spittle-flecked grin, frightened the essentially middle class group. They probably wouldn't have been half so scared if Marci McDowell hadn't pulled the nametag off Joyce Katz's outermost sweater before Joyce began her performance. "Yessir, I bin to a lot of 'em," she repeated in a slurred voice that broadcast the reek of alcohol to everyone within 10 feet.

"Hey, fella, I'll bet you don't like cons as much as I like cons," she said pugnaciously as she stood toe-to-toe with a bespectacled barbarian. "I oughtta punch you in the face," she said. "Yeah, that'd suit ya, ya hairy ape."

"Why I oughtta throw up in yer face, you fake fan," she ranted, growing more belligerent by the second. Her retching noises were enough to persuade several Creative Anachronists that watching a good mud wrestling match might be better

than a sword fight, if only just for that night. They left, dragging their swords behind them.

By the time the Silvercon opened officially, the crisis was over.

"Ghoddam those accursed Vegans!" snarled the Secret Master. "If we could have gotten them into those rooms..."

"Yes, yes," the Semi-Secret Master soothed. "We could have knocked them out, drained their blood and compounded the magic elixir to give aging Midwest fandom a chance to reclaim lost youth!"

"It was a great idea!" said the Secret Semi-Master.

"We were only going to age them a couple of decades each," said the Secret Master. "They had the years to spare... and old-timers like Bill Bowers need that Youth Serum now!"

"That's the fate of great minds throughout history," intoned the Semi-Secret Master. "Misunderstood and unappreciated by lesser intellects."

"Let's go somewhere and get some bheer," said the Secret Master. He wanted to wash down the failure of today and think ahead to the smoke-filled rooms of tomorrow. Was he not

the Secret Master of Fandom?

Epilogue

Ken Forman awoke at the crack of noon. His return to consciousness was not smooth, since he hadn't been up this early in months. Today was a special occasion, so he struggled to throw off the last tendrils of sleep.

He reached over and patted Aileen, who growled a few times.

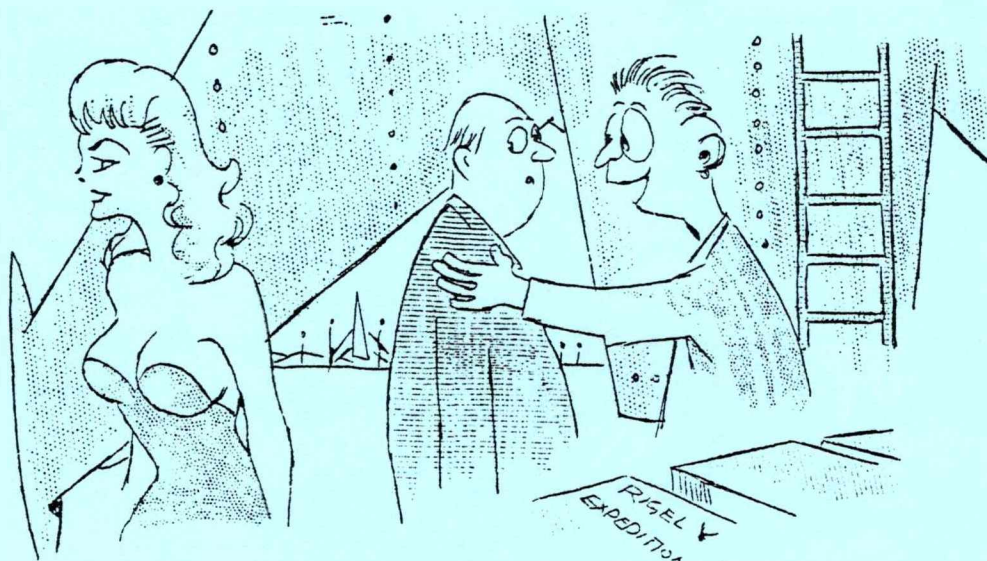
"Time to get up," he said as sweetly as he could manage at such an early hour. He shook her a few times.

"Wha-wha-wha?" she said, still not quite sure of her surroundings. Then it all locked into crystalline clarity. "The con!"

"Yes, my dear, Silvercon," Ken said. "We've got about three hours to get down to the Plaza Suites Hotel to help with final preparations."

"I think it's going to come off very well," Aileen replied as she rolled out of bed. "First for the shower," she called as she walked toward the bathroom.

Ken Forman took advantage of the next few minutes to reflect on his dream. But this was reality, and it was going to be All Right.



"I'm sure she's been included in the crew for some good reason, prof".

Arnie Katz' Silvercon Confidential

Ten Days Before the Masthead

It All Started When...

Every fan's convention starts at a different place, and at a different time. My Silvercon began when we drove to McCarran International Airport (named for the legislator who spent his life trying to keep out immigrants) to welcome Robert Lichtman and convey him to the Plaza Suites Hotel.

Hmmm... I don't think that's quite it.

My Silvercon began when the doorbell rang and a man in a police uniform arrested Dandi Ashton for reading Tarot Cards without a license.

No, that's still not right.

My Silvercon began when I spotted an issue of *Amazing Stories* on the newsstand. I had never bought an S.F. mag before, but a cover blurb for the first part of section of "The Status Civilization" by Robert Sheckley distracted me from surreptitious scrutiny of the girlie magazines.

That may be a bit *too* far back.

My convention started when we went to McCarran International Airport to collect Ross Chamberlain on the Friday evening a week before the official opening of the Silvercon.

Ahhhhhh... That's more like it!

We'd anticipated Ross' arrival in Paradise with mounting excitement, ever since it became clear that a deal then in negotiation would allow us to hire him.

This was only a scouting trip, to size up Vegas and look at housing, but we were tremendously excited nonetheless. Ross shares a lot of history with Joyce and I (and Bill Kunkel, for that matter). The Brooklyn Insurgents, the *Quip* covers, the Fanoclasts and FISTFA, Ross and I had experienced it all as friends. Not instant "best buddies", but a long, pleasurable friendship that had survived hyperfanac and gafiation to become my longest-lived continuous association I've had with anyone outside my family.

I met Ross when I was a 17-year-old high school student, and I've always counted that as a stroke of great good fortune. When Joyce moved to New York in 1970, she and Ross also became friends, cementing the tie. And now he was Coming West to join us in the most exciting journalistic endeavor of my professional life. It doesn't get much better than that, folks.

It was almost midnight when Ross exited the terminal and I hailed him from the front seat of the LeBaron. Ross had begun his day 22 hours earlier and, though he'd slept intermittently during the flight, he walked with the hesitant step of a man thinking about sleep, if not hibernation. Yet he couldn't bear to sleep while neon fantasies strobed at him from every direction.

A midnight snack at the Rio provided a good introduction to The Fabulous Las Vegas. One of the city's newest landmark, this red neon striped tower has earned a special place in the hearts of casino connoisseurs for features like the real sand beach that borders its pool and the luscious nearly-bare-below-the-waist cocktail waitresses.

Ross expressed appreciation of both. We talked about old times over a pleasant meal in the Beach Cafe. We brought him up to date on our negotiations, and he told us of his and Joy-Lynd's plans to finally get to live together in the same city again after a forced separation. (She was in graduate school in Ohio while his job tied him to New York City.)

Saturday Night Fanac

I had to stay home to accept a FedEx package that never came, but Joyce and Ross spent Saturday morning touring area apartment complexes. While they were gone, I wallowed in an unabashed publishing frenzy.

The monthly Social was scheduled for that night, so I finished preparations for the night's oneshot fanzine, the eighth excursion of The Vegas All-Stars into Instant Fanzining. These little zines are popular with the locals, even those who aren't ardent fanzine fans. The first time we tried a oneshot, at the 1991 Vegas NonCon, I had to drag people to the Macintosh to take a turn. Now they line up four-deep waiting for a chance to strut their fanwriting.

My first task, therefore, was to put together last month's creation, *The Vegas All-Stars Spring into Fanac!* The copier chugged along happily while I did the advance work for oneshot #8, *The Vegas All-Stars (Silver) Con the World!*

Charlene Komar Storey, Bill's ex-wife, was in town for a Credit Union convention, so I anticipated a Grand Reunion of five Brooklyn Insurgents. I decided to set up a second oneshot, just for Ross, Bill, Joyce, Charl, and me in the megagaming office, which is just down the hall from the

living room. (*The results, such as they were, arede i my file s as a warning to other revennants.*)

Next I collated *Tales of Vegas Fandom*, a collection for sale at Silvercon to earn a little money for the con. It contained six pieces about the local fan scene. I reprinted my articles about our search for, and first contact with, Vegas Fandom from *Folly*, my Vegascon I report from Woody Bernardi's *Marquee*, and an article about Vegas nicknames scheduled for the first issue of Laurie Yates' *Doodle Bug*. The bulk of the zine consisted of two all-new items: a long article about Las Vegas Fandom as a cargo cult, and faan fiction about a nefarious plot against the Silvercon.

I had a pretty good head of fannish steam by that time, so I zipped through the final touches on a little art portfolio we'd put together in honor of Ross' visit. Joyce had pulled originals off the wall, and I'd found a cache of original *Quip* covers. I was pleased with the quality of the reproduction, and the yellow paper gave it a nice visual pop.

The *Quip* covers yanked me back to my youngfan days. Why does Lenny look so much *better* than his cartoon representation, while Ross and I have become more decrepid?

By the time Joyce and Ross returned from visits to the area's most attractive apartment complexes, it was time to get things set up for the Social. With time out for lunch at Blueberry Hill, a pleasant coffee shop distinguished by a free jukebox, we got the jacuzzi and pool hot, distributed our chairs to all the strategic spots, and bought the food, beverages, and ice for the party in plenty of time.

It shaped up as an extraordinary gathering. Besides our two guests, it was also Dandi Ashton's birthday and Joyce and my 21st anniversary. Matt Waugh, one of the club's leading RPGamers, turned 16 the previous day, so we planned to celebrate his birthday, too.

Poor Aileen! She baked a pair of cakes, bought a balloon bouquet and a present, and arranged for a Surprise for sister-in-law Dandi. Until 5:00, she thought she'd be there to deliver all this largesse personally. Then she got a call from another dealer at the Hilton with whom she'd switched shifts, and found out that her coworker had changed her mind and switched *back*. She stopped by briefly at about 6:00 to drop off the edibles, bouquet, and gift, but she wasn't able to stay and share the fun.

The first early arriver was an uncharacteristically ebullient James Ward. It turned out he had good reason: On his birthday the previous evening, he'd proposed to Carol Kern (no relation to John). After she arrived, the happy couple floated through the evening gathering congratulations from every quarter.

Disappointment awaits those who expect a name-by-name account of the evenings arrivals. I went into the master bedroom to find a fanzine I wanted to show Peggy Burke. I was only out of sight for five minutes, but the Social had gained two-dozen fans by the time I returned.

I certainly *do* remember Peggy Burke's arrival. She was already wearing a sleek blue bikini for the pool, and the Bright Young Thing's mind is not her only impressive attribute. I think Matt Waugh will remember her arrival,

too, since she bestowed an enthusiastic birthday kiss on the curly-haired 16-year-old.

I can't even name the guests. Las Vegas Fandom has exploded so rapidly that I doubt I could identify half of the 70-plus fans who eventually passed through The Subway Station that night.

Admittedly, this "open door" policy is a change from my long-standing penchant for small, invitational groups like New York's Fanoclasts. We've got so many neofans here that it might be years before cliques define themselves. Meanwhile it's more fun to be inclusive than exclusive. That many people tromping through a house does cause a little wear and tear, but Joyce and I have been fairly pleased with the way fans have treated our furniture and possessions. A couple of chairs is about the limit of the breakage.

They sure can eat, though. Joyce puts out a buffet of cold cuts, cheeses, garnishes, breads, and side dishes, and several members, including Su Williams and Raven, bring hot dishes. It was gone before I got to the table, though I was enjoying the fannish conversation too much to worry about missing dinner. It's wonderfully egoboosting for Joyce and the cooks, and it transports me back to those days when legendary trenchermen like John D. Berry and Ross Chamberlain battled through one of Joyce's 27-course Friday night dinners before Brooklyn Insurgents meetings.

The Social drew an unusual number of first-timers. The most impressive, aside from an impressive number of strikingly beautiful women, was Vic (?). He's a former puppeteer who now makes special items for the Excalibur's medieval show. I've heard that his latest project is a 40-foot dragon, which should provide impressive opposition for the pageant's knights.

Scarcely less exciting to me than Ross' visit was the reunion with Charlene Storey. The passage of time has treated Charl's looks most tenderly, and her journalistic career has grown steadily, too. Besides her newspaper job, Charl publishes her own newsletter for travelers to Ireland. I spent too much of the evening playing Genial Host to have the long rambling conversation with her I wanted, but perhaps she'll slip through this minute opening in the Glades of Gafia again soon. Her incisive intelligence and ready wit are always missed.

Barry Friedman, our friend and partner, winged back from southern California is time to wish us a happy anniversary. Barry is now a resident of New Brunswick, Canada, but he's spent more time in Vegas than eastern Canada so far in 1992.

He arrived in mid-March to help his client Westwood Associates, a leading development house, conduct high-level negotiations. Then those negotiations fell apart, but another, even bigger, potential agreement landed on the table. Meanwhile, desultory talks between KKW, Inc. (our outfit) and Steve Harris of Sendai Publishing exploded into a fullfledged deal that also required his attention.

I knew Barry had been here a long time when I overheard Su Williams proselytizing him on behalf of fandom in the jacuzzi. "Why aren't you a fan?" she demanded.

"I love science fiction," Barry protested. "I ran an art

agency that did SF paperback covers." He tried his best to look appealingly sensitive and fannish.

This connection to the Mother Lode evidently pleased Su, who favored him with an approving smile. Still, it was not enough. I discreetly retired before Barry ended up applying for membership in FAPA – or maybe the N3F.

The policeman knocked on the door at 9:00. He wanted Dandi Ashton. When he walked up to her, sitting in the big stuffed chair in the living room, he arrested the bouncy blonde for "reading tarot cards without a license". Dandi might have suspected that Something Was Up, but it's true that Las Vegas seems to require a license for just about everything under its blazing sun. He handcuffed her.

Then the music started to build. The policeman was a male stripper, engaged by Aileen and Dandi's husband Steve Ashton. When the shirt came off that well-muscled body, most of the woman at the Social had suddenly discovered a compelling reason for rushing to the living room.

Me? I was talking about the History of the Mailing Comment with John Hardin at the opposite end of the house. Therefore, I can't report all the details of Dandi's encounter with Mike the Stripper, but she seemed well-pleased with her surprise. Mike contributed to the Social tradition of leaving something behind; we found his black sequinned g-string draped over a chair.

I got shanghai'd into a big discussion, incited by Su Williams, about the definition of a fan. Possibly because she has had little contact with them during her 10 years on the fannish fringe, Su has a highly idealized view of the hobby's participants.

Most of those participating in the discussion seemed to like my definition of a fan as "someone who goes beyond passive appreciation of a subject or activity." When Su advanced the proposition that fans are virtually a breed apart from Mundanes, though, the debate heated up noticeably. She claimed that fans are more creative and sensitive, and that they possess a more liberal social and political philosophy than nonfans.

All right, I laughed. It was impossible not to while listening to Su's rhapsody and thinking about some less-than-delightful fans. The last thing I wanted to do was stain her shiny vision of fans, but George Modole, Claude Degler, Russell K. Watkins, and too many other examples made it impossible to join in her panegyric.

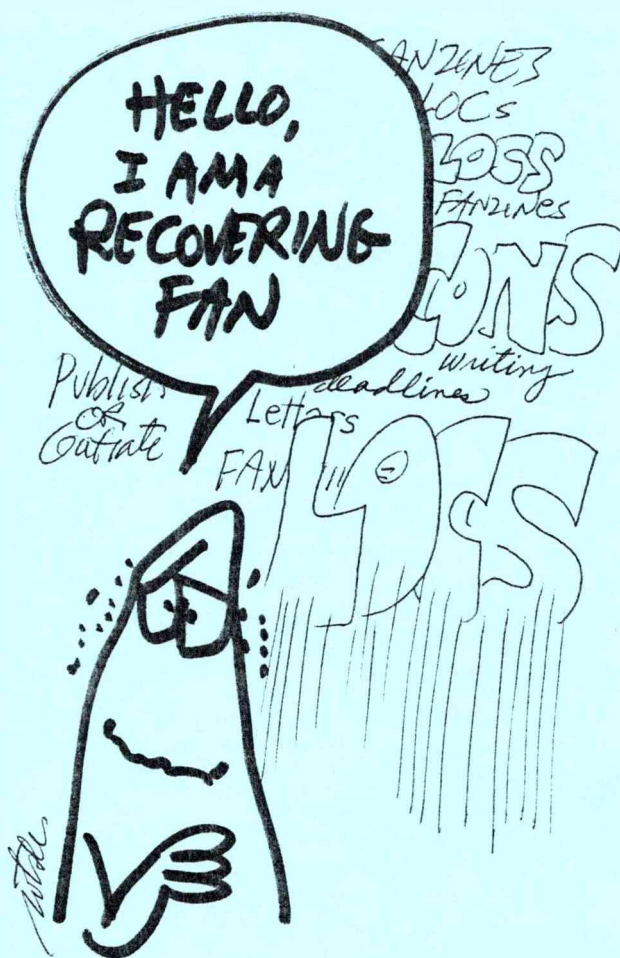
She based her assertions on comparisons between fandom and her office co-workers. Frankly, I wasn't impressed by this anecdotal evidence and suggested several Mundane subgroups that might match fandom more closely in education, open-mindedness, and imagination. Ron Pehr disputed my examples, especially "university professors". He may be right that my view of academics is too exalted, but he couldn't shake my belief that fans as a group are not particularly different.

One of her tests was asking each person in both groups who they would expunge from the Earth if somehow given the power to obliterate one irritating segment of society. "We already offed the lawyers before you say down," observed Ron, our resident legal eagle.

Su contended that fans gave more imaginative answers, while folks at work either said something like "inconsiderate people" or declined to speculate. I saw some problems with her method, not the least of which is that some people wear a mask at work and avoid revelatory discussions.

I also pointed out that it's hard to frame generalizations that accurately portray all of today's fans. This led away from the best way to prune the population to a more general discussion of how fandom has evolved from a relatively small group with similar education, background, and experience, into a diverse hobby composed of semi-connected subfandoms.

It's hard to see many connections between the typical fanzine fan and the typical convention fan though randomly selected individuals from each group might well have common ground. It's simplistic to pigeonhole a whole group with adjectives, but that didn't stop me from trying. I characterized fanzine fans as introspective, literary, and intellectual, while I termed confans as extroverted and social. I wonder if fanzine fans have more in common with those who publish fanzines in other fandoms than with science fiction fans who do not





share that interest?

Ross, Joyce, and I talked for awhile after everyone went home at about 1:30. Ken Forman, who is the evening maitre d' at Play It Again, Sam, called to say he'd be there in 25 minutes. Unfortunately for this plan, business got heavy at the restaurant, and Ken ended up calling to cancel out shortly after 2 am.

Simply a SNAFFU Sunday

The three of us spent the next morning tidying the house, breakfasting at LJ's, and talking about the glittering prospect of a new magazine. Ross wanted to know more about his duties, and we also discussed some of the ramifications of his June move.

We were just heading to the car to drive crosstown to the Asylum, home of the biweekly SNAFFU meetings, when Woody called to beg a ride. Woody decided that being a passenger wasn't a big enough contribution to the Sunday afternoon excursion, so he offered Joyce a string of Helpful Hints from the backseat. Joyce encouraged him to lean back and watch the ride. This helped Joyce's nerves and didn't hurt the soles of Woody's shoes, which might have sustained significant wear had she implemented her proposal to make him run along just in front of her car.

Ken Forman, Greg Dees, Karl Kreder, and Ben Wilson had completed one wooden easel for the Silvercon art show and were working hard on the second when we drove into the cul-de-sac. Some folks say The Subway Station is on a block plucked from "Andy Hardy" movies; The Asylum's surroundings always put me in mind of "Knots Landing". And though Donna Mills was nowhere to be seen, Aileen Forman in her tiny sundress seemed a properly fannish substitute.

The wooden frames for hanging art looked very good. I

later learned that Ken had designed them and cut the wood, and the result looked sturdy and attractive. I suspect that other groups will be wanting to borrow our easels for their events.

When John Hardin joined us in the garage, I took the opportunity to bring up a slightly sore subject. I'd begun a lighthearted monthly local newszine called *Abnormal*, but my friends had proven skittish about supplying news tidbits.

"We're afraid you might write something bad about us," said One Who Shall Go Unnamed.

"No one wants something nasty written about them," I conceded, "but when have I written anything bad about *anyone* in Las Vegas?"

"You haven't," OWSGU conceded.

"And I won't be cutting friends up in print in the future, either," I said, "When I make a really broad joke, it's usually at my own expense?"

"Well, yes, I have noticed that," OWSGU admitted. "Why's that?"

"The best person to make a joke about is yourself," I answered. "I know I won't take offense."

My pleas must've struck home, because several people have chimed in with news bits since then. I can foresee the day when I might not make up more than half of *Abnormal* out of whole cloth.

Attendance at the meeting was light compared to most recent ones. I had an uneasy feeling that a few folks had decided to keep a low profile while Ken, Greg, and Aileen quested for Silvercon volunteers. Of course, Saturday's late party may have contributed, and I made a mental note to keep Socials off the same weekend as the formal SNAFFU meetings in the future.

Whatever their excuses, the absent missed a pretty good meeting. The old and new business concerned convention odds and ends, but the Asimov discussion and reading went well. I prefer an informal setting for in-person fanac, but there's no denying that President Greg Dees and Meeting Director John Hardin have done a good job. At the very least, making the meetings more engrossing has reduced verbal grandstanding and heavy tension.

Joyce capped it with a decidedly parental lecture, complete with a little playlet costarring Aileen, about how members of the host club should behave at a convention. It boiled down to elementary politeness; like introducing yourself to strangers and helping them find their way at Silvercon. It was generally good advice, especially for a convention in a city unused to such events with first-time hosts.

The charming skit had the dramatic intensity of a language-teaching record. This was intentional. Exaggeration communicated the essentials of etiquette better than a more restrained approach. Joyce and Aileen's theatrics seemed to mesmerize the audience, many of whom forgot to heckle.

Ross cleared his throat. I sat forward, attentive to anything he might say in his deep and quiet voice. We'd returned to the house after the meeting, and we were talking

about the exciting possibilities of his impending move.

Ross may not speak as thunderously as some of us, but his command of English expression is excellent. Yet I could see the anguish on his face as he mentally juggled words to find the right combination. His words finally arrayed to his own satisfaction, Ross blurted out his query: "Is *Folly* part of some larger plan?"

"Larger plan?" I said, all innocence. "Whatever do you mean?"

"I mean something more... prestigious," he said, fixing me with his gaze. "Something with six-page cartoon covers?" He said the final phrase with a dramatic flourish not unlike Perry Mason driving home a telling bit of jurisprudence to a breathlessly waiting courtroom.

"No, absolutely not," I said. "I love *Folly*, and it's the fanzine I really want to produce."

He sighed and visibly relaxed. Now he could move to Las Vegas and live in the bright sunshine without the threat of an unending line of multi-page comic strip covers hanging over him. The good life beckoned.

"I've never enjoyed publishing any fanzine more than *Folly*," I declared. "It's an end in itself, not a means to resurrecting *Quip* or some such thing." I waved his suspicions away with a diffident gesture. A smile had replaced the worried look.

Now, I had him cold.

Now.

"Of course," I began as though it was a inconsequential trifle, "my 30th anniversary in fandom is coming up in about a year, and I *was* thinking about doing one gala fanzine." I paused, pretending that a wonderful idea had just occurred to me. "You know, it would be Really Nice to have one of those comic strip covers -- maybe just a three-pager -- for that fanzine."

Now I know the expression on a mouse's face when the trap snaps shut. Actually, I thought Ross took it well, especially after Joyce revived him with the smelling salts, and we got him safely strapped down in the chair. That wild thrashing and those moans are quite a distraction, you know. I had to wait several minutes before Ross was fit to listen to my grandiose publishing plans.

This Was the Week That Was

Non-fannish activities, principally the annual Consumer Electronics Show Software Showcase judging, filled Monday until we took Ross to the airport for the return trip. He seemed enthusiastic about both the new job and the city of Las Vegas and will be joining The Fandom of Good Cheer in a short time.

Fandom was seldom far from our door from Tuesday through Friday, even if I was too occupied to do much more than run off *A Taste of Frap* for distribution at the convention and *Glitz* #5 for the May FAPA mailing. Woody Bernardi and Marci McDowell both spent days at our extra Macintosh, working on fanzines.

Night Music is Marci's first fanzine, intended primarily as credentials for the FAPA waitlist, but I think it's an

auspicious start. It all started during one of her visits when asked her what she liked to do when she wasn't working at an "eye in the sky" at the Sahara Hotel Casino or attending fan meetings.

"I like to sit in my room and write little stories," she said.

"Stories?" I said, silently rehearsing the Standard Amateur Fiction Lecture.

"Some I hope to sell," she began. A budding pro in our midst? Could be. "and some just little articles. Essays."

"Essays?" Marci's benign friend was instantly replaced by a rapacious fanzine editor. "What are they about, these essays?" I hunched forward in my seat.

"Oh, just little articles about current events and personal experiences and things in the arts," she said.

"And what do you do with these... essays," I inquired. I felt like Count Dracula asking for directions to the nearest blood bank.

"Oh, nothing really," she answered, her habitual warm smile a few amps less intense. "I don't know anyone who'd want to read them."

"I do," I said quickly. "In fact, I know 65 people who'd love to read all those little articles, and they'd even comment on them and maybe write little articles of their own in response."

I explained apas in general and FAPA in specific to Marci and the sun rose in her eyes. It was as though Donald A. Wolheim had created this marvelous organization just for her. I knew right then that fanzine fandom had another Vegas recruit.

The 10-page *Night Music* #1 lived up to my expectations. It may be the best first issue produced by any of our neofaneds thus far. I helped a little with layout, since I know DTP better than most of the locals, but it's an engaging mix of material -- and very poised for an inaugural effort.

Woody's *Marquee* #2 is a big step forward from his first try. Joyce and I may've helped more than we should've on *Marquee* #1, but Woody took more direct control of his second issue. I produced some headings, but he took full charge of the selection and preparation of the content. I tend to judge new fanziners by the issue-to-issue improvement, and it was satisfying to see one of Las Vegas fandom's most lovable and friendly guys progress so much.

The Con Begins

Due to a blown fuse on the Gestetner copier, I greeted Friday's dawn sitting at the collating table, turning a bunch of little piles into one big one. I'd given Ken Forman the first installment of a column for *Dalmatian Alley* called "Thots While Collating", and I'd expected to gather enough musings for the next several issues from this orgy of fanzine assemblage. Alas, I'd collated so many zines in the previous week that my mind went blank as I picked up sheets with methodical precision. Somehow I doubt that readers of *Dalmatian Alley* are waiting for a column that's one long "duhhhhh."

We'd barely finished packing for our weekend stay at the con when it was time to head for McCarran International to

pick up Robert Lichtman. I *knew* we were earlier than we needed to be, and in the absence of any Car Adventures with which to regale Wally Weber, we got to curbside with plenty of time to spare.

Once Robert wedged his lanky form into the back seat of the LeBaron, we all agreed that checking out the hotel was the first priority. Despite good intentions, Joyce and I hadn't gotten around to casing The Plaza Suites, since it's a little out of our usual way. So we were just as anxious as Robert to discover what accommodations Silvercon had obtained.

They chose well. In fact, if Las Vegas ever holds a Corflu or Ditto, Plaza Suites should get first consideration. The well-maintained six-story building has a huge atrium that ascends to the roof. Anyone standing on any of the balconies facing this inner courtyard can see up or down to the other floors. The effect is like a Grand Hyatt, only more intimate. Plaza Suites has no casino, plenty of seating nooks, and a decent coffee shop, all of which make it great as the site of a small convention.

All rooms are one-bedroom suites, and moderately spacious ones at that. The one used for the hospitality room was small for the purpose, which may indicate unavailability of parlor suites. Counterbalancing the cramped quarters of the consuite itself, a balcony area with couches and chairs, provided plenty of relaxed space for spur-of-the-moment parties.

Dandi Ashton did a fantastic job running this phase of the convention, ably assisted by Joyce, Raven, Su Williams and several others. Her ability to cadge freebies from local restaurants, including some terrific pizza, was a delightful surprise. Joyce also gave high marks to the salsa, contributed by Ken Forman's employer, the Play It Again, Sam restaurant.

Our room was extremely comfortable, but we barely paused to drop off luggage and convey some painting we had agreed to show in the art room. Our display consisted of a beautiful Ross Chamberlain water color from "The Enchanted Duplicator", a Ken Fletcher color cartoon in which I am rising from the dead, and a hand-colored Ned Sonntag calendar page. Ken gave us the painting at a long-ago con, and it may strike readers as oddly prophetic. At the time, it was one of a set (the other is called "Crucified Kat"), Ken did to commemorate a short hiatus I took from publishing in winter 1970-71. Little did he know. Recent events have given the piece Special Relevance.

After registering, we met Vegas Fandom's most engaging recent arrival, Boe Powell. A puppeteer at the Excalibur, Boe strolled through the public areas cuddling a little shaggy dragon who greeted all con-goers cheerfully. We thought this was such a nice shtick, that we invited him to our room to get acquainted with Robert Lichtman.

Joyce and I hadn't had much chance to get to know this self-styled conman and master manipulator, and doing

so was one of the great pleasures of the convention. Boe has many amazing stories, some of them true, with which he plans to regale fandom. If he can write as well as he talks, Las Vegas may have another promising fanzine fan.

Robert, Joyce, and I wanted food. We enticed Art Widner into joining us and set off to give our favorite tourists their first taste of the Las Vegas Experience. Our destination, the Rio, is not as well-known as many of the city's hotel/casinos. It's small by the standards of the 5,000-room joints like the Riviera and the Mirage and is across a bridge from the other places on the Tropicana offshoot of The Strip.

Shortly after the hostess conducted us to a booth, Woody Bernardi and Laurie appeared. We'd hoped to include them in the lunch expedition, but somehow we'd lost contact at Plaza Suites. They knew where we were going, though, and they caught up with us. Laurie decided she needed to go home before eating, but Woody stayed. That left us with five diners and a four-seat booth. The Beach Cafe gave us an adjacent table for Joyce and Woody, which avoided the necessity of any one sitting alone.

Talk about recruiting fans brought up the desktop publishing phenomenon. My contention was that if we are recruiting new fanzine fans the right way, how come there's a boom in independent-of-fandom zines without appreciable increase in our group's output?

Aileen looked worried when we met her at the registration desk, located amidst the hotel's first floor splendor. Aileen vied with the opulent lobby in a stunningly abbreviated black sundress. A slight spillover of the Rodney King sympathy riots had hit Vegas the previous evening, and though everyone expected things to calm down rapidly, Aileen fretted that the threat of trouble would keep fans away.

She was also worried about the Las Vegas Creation Con, which switched from its original date to the same weekend as Silvercon to choke off what it perceived as a new competitor. Someone said that Leslie Fish, Silvercon's co-Guest of Honor, is writing a protest filksong about the perfidy of the Creation Con. This will make some people feel very good, I imagine, but Soulless Hucksters who run that glorified dealer's room won't lose a lot of sleep over the matter. They made a business decision, legal if not kindly, and I am sure they feel the outcome was satisfactory. Creation Con targets enthusiasts unaffiliated with fandom, which reduces any potential impact of a fannish musical lampoon.

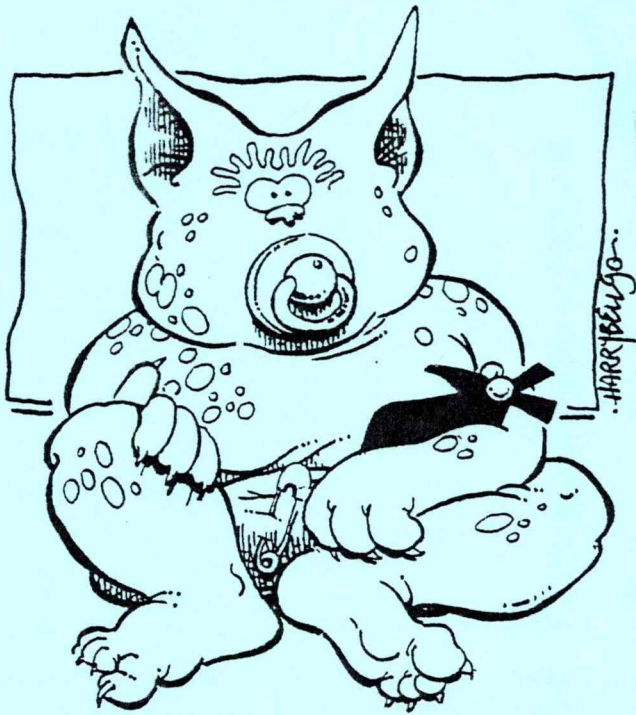
Nervousness made it impossible for Aileen to stand still for too long, and she soon hustled off on some convention errand. "We'll see more of her later," Joyce promised Robert. I watched her retreating form, only black wisps separating her from competing with those Rio girls.

"I don't think that's possible," I said.

I caught up with Woody at the hospitality suite. I hadn't seen him during the week, so his still-stubbily blondish beard was a surprise. "You're participating in a great and long-standing fannish tradition," I told him.

"How so?" he inquired.

"It's common for guys to add hair at the bottom of the face as the crop at the top gets sparser," I said. My own wavy brown



locks artfully cover a hairline that has gone from a strategic withdrawal to a full-scale retreat.

Woody ran a hand over his thinning hair. He nodded ruefully. "I guess I exposed myself to that one."

Joyce, Robert, and I decided to cruise again, but soon crossed paths with three prominent SNAFFUtes. I knew Ken Forman, John Hardin, and Greg Dees would shortly be up to their necks in committee work, so I invited them to sample some Katzian hospitality in our suite. It also gave the trio a chance to sit down and get to know Robert a bit, and vice versa.

Ken told Robert what an influence *Trap Door* exerted on the second issue of his *Dalmatian Alley*. I'd made some editorial suggestions following the Mainspring's publishing debut and loaned him the new -- and still unread -- *Trap Door* as a concrete example.

Talk of influences prompted me to acknowledge the way *Frap* affected my zines. "I have to thank you, meyer," I said. "You have saved me from Senseless Gigantism."

Mr. Lichtman's response Was Not Recorded for Posterity.

Joyce took the opportunity to describe her forthcoming poetry fanzine. As many may recall, Joyce was known as a poet before she moved to New York in 1970. Now she's decided to produce a series of small collections for FAPA and a few interested others.

She's mapped out an ambitious publishing schedule, starting with some science fiction poems, moving through a volume of protest verse and then to a group of Zen poems from her murky past. "I need a title for that one," she moaned in the general direction of the Fine Minds.

"These are older poems?" Ken asked. She nodded. "Well, then I have a title for you: 'That was Zen, This is Now'."

We decided to let the room air out a bit after that one, and I wandered back to the consuite. Art Widner welcomed me there with my recently submitted article for *Yhos* in hand. He had ideas for making it more accessible to the readers, as did Robert. Art hopes the piece, an analysis of major fannish events of the 1960s, will be the springboard for a fanhistory anthology about the decade. The editorship couldn't be in safer hands; Art's objective and his suggestions improved my original piece.

We swung through the art show to see our display and discovered a small but interesting exhibit. Jerry Johnson's combination of fantasy and superheroics continues to impress, but my personal favorite was a game-oriented cartoon by Robert Lane. Robert is avidly studying fanzine fandom, and a bit of knowledge is all he needs to blossom as a popular fan cartoonist. I'd liken the one I saw to Ken Fletcher, who has influenced Robert through his ground-level comics.

I was back in the hospitality area when a woman identified for me as Leslie Fish came into the room. The curvacious, mature brunette took in a seat in the corner, obviously unfamiliar with the suite's other occupants. I'd heard about her from the Vegas filkers and wanted to meet this high-living legend. I crossed the room and, extending my hand, introduced myself. She grunted a monosyllabic greeting. I smiled and withdrew to my seat. Robert Lichtman answered my question about whether he knew Leslie in the negative, so I conducted him to her and performed the amenities. This might have promoted all kinds of Wonderful Feeling between Filkers and Fanziners had Leslie deigned to say more than a curt "hello."

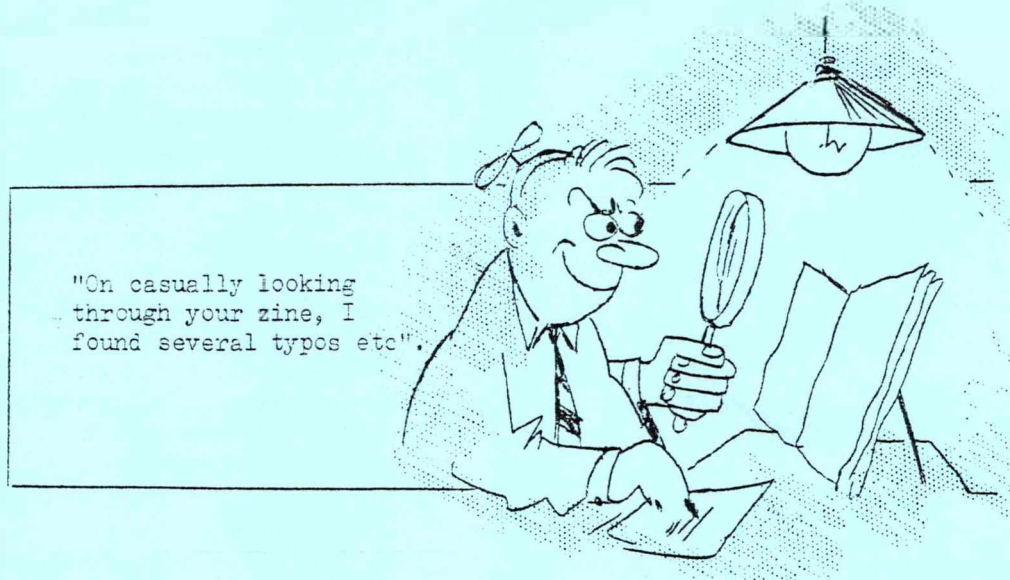
Maybe I'm slow, but when Greg Dees appeared, I led him to Leslie, too. "This is Greg Dees," I said in my most jovial tone. "He's president of SNAFFU, the club that's sponsoring the Silvercon." Neither his status nor his good looks cut any ice with the frosty songstress, who favored him with the identical curt greeting she had lavished on Robert and I. I took the hint and stayed away from her for the greater part of the con.

The Soapbox, just outside the consuite, was one of Silvercon's odder innovations. Giving fans a soapbox to encourage them to spout their opinions is like putting a flamethrower in the hands of a pyromaniac.

Aileen did get good use out of it during the "Meet the Guests of Honor" party early Friday evening, though. She had gotten so busy with concomitant chores that almost everyone had beaten her to the punch, not to mention the solid food. She mounted the platform and delivered an impassioned plea for a taste of the pizza. The sounds of mastication drowned out her oratory, but it galvanized those standing near enough to hear (and get a good look at those very long, bare legs). I handed her a plate and Ken Forman snatched a slice on its way to someone's mouth. A mollified Aileen hopped down from the Soapbox and slipped off to enjoy the bounty from her speech-making.

When I went back into the consuite at around 7:00, Su Williams was demonstrating her mastery of foot massage on Raven's willing tootsies. Whimpers of pleasure testified to the efficacy of her ministrations.

"Will you sit still for this?" Su asked me.



"For what?"

"This," she reiterated, waggling Raven's foot for emphasis.

"No thank you, Su," I said. "I have higher aspirations."

"But then I'd want you to move."

Silvercon scheduled several program items for Friday night, and we all agreed that a little solidarity at the start on the convention wouldn't hurt. After achieving a suitably sercon state of mind in preparation for the event, our band of trufen reached the hall just in time for the convening of "Gambling 101", a symposium on wagering for neophytes with Aileen Forman, Marci McDowell, and Chris Devine.

"This is gambling," Aileen announced in an effort to stifle the usual pre-session chitterchatter in the audience. I thought it was false advertising, since she refused to accept my offer of a double or nothing bet on the cost of my con membership.

The panelists overcame this lame start to put on one of Silvercon's most enjoyable, and informative, presentations. Aileen and Marci explained the intricacies and pitfalls of gambling with good-humored gusto, and their knowledge of the subject was unimpeachable.

Descriptions of cheating schemes, keyed to anecdotes about casino work, kept the audience's attention throughout the hour. The panel also tried to help con attendees keep a little more of their money with a cogent analysis of betting fallacies. One which Marci described has cleaned out its full share of supposedly savvy bettors. "If you flip a coin, heads or tails, 10 times and it comes up heads every time," Marci said, "some people think the 11th toss favors tails. It doesn't."

"There's a name for betting like that," Chris interjected.

"Yeah," said Aileen, "Stupid." Marci then explained "The Law of Independent Trials" which governs the odds in such situations.

The high level of expertise distinguished "Gambling 101" from its fellows, since the committee disdained experts for most of its other panels and instead filled them with (mostly

the same) members of SNAFFU. Egoboosting as this was for some club members, it gave the public little incentive to attend the formal portion of the convention.

Joyce found considerable incentive to skip the following panel on Tarot Card readings; the incense gave her an instantaneous and severe allergic reaction that caused her to bolt from the meeting room at top speed. (Presumably, she would have sashayed out with her customary grace except for this emergency.)

Robert Lichtman and I caught up with her a few minutes later, by which time her attack had largely subsided. The FAPA Party was set for 10:30 in our room, so we went to a neighborhood convenience store for some soft drinks and cookies. The people we saw were wary, a hangover from the previous night's violence, but everyone seemed determined to distance themselves from the troubles. I began to hope that, after a night of peace, Vegans would venture forth the next day to partake of Silvercon.

Soon after Robert, Joyce, and I returned from the shopping trip, Art Widner and Don Fitch arrived. The latter took one look at our meager provisions and vanished. Had I offended the saintly Fitch with our spavined larder? Self-doubts evaporated when Fandom's Foremost Host returned with trays of cheese, chocolates, and chips. Added to our cookies and cola, that made so many "c"s I thought Joyce would ask for dramamine.

Art Widner had researched a question raised at Corflu 9: which fanzine had issues in the most decades. Adding the condition that the same editor must be responsible for all issues, Harry Warner's *Horizons* stands as the only seven-decade title. Art had unearthed a six-decade string I'd missed when I tabbed *Spacewarp* (Art Rapp) as the only fanzine in that category: Bill Danner's *Stefantasy*. Art Widner's own *Yhos* may be the only fanzine published in five *non-consecutive* decades,

Perhaps Art felt the FAPA party was too amiable, because he threw a grenade into the conversation. He briefly

described Walter Breen's recent arrest and confession to charges stemming from sexual relations with an under-age boy. When Art had everyone's total attention, he turned in my general direction and asked, all innocence, "So, what would Ted White say about this?"

"I wouldn't presume to put words in Ted's mouth," I replied, a little discomfited by the responsibility my bearded buddy had thrust upon me, "but I know what I'd say about it — as someone who had no strong personal ties to either faction. Ted's opinion might not be too far different." (Forgive me, Ted, for even this presumption, but the whole room was staring at me like I actually had a clue.)

"And what's that?" Art prompted, trying to get me to stop hemming and hawing.

"Although I recognize the sincerity of many of the Pacifcon committee's supporters, I would say that The 1964 Exclusion Act was still a mistake, and that subsequent developments, though interesting, don't bear on the merits of the original decision." Sometimes when I'm nervous, I use long sentences. "I would say that Walter Breen deserved the same presumption of innocent as everyone else, and that in the absence of criminal prosecution or even solid, corroborated evidence, denying him access to the convention abridged his constitutional rights."

Jack Speer took advantage of the pause to inform me that "presumption of innocence" might not apply to this case, I readily bowed to his legal expertise, but expressed the hope that fans might voluntarily extend that presumption to their fellow fans.

"If the con committee genuinely feared for minors' safety at the con, then I would've advised announcing that concern -- and then watching like hawks for potential incidents.

"And I would also say that Walter Breen wasn't the only threatening presence." I recounted my 1963 Discon encounter with an adult male who evidently had plans for my teenaged bod. I also mentioned a renowned science fiction author who often got roving hands with girls as young as 12-14 as another instance.

The best thing about the discussion was the lack of personal heat; we debated ideas and concepts without anyone feeling that they had to prove that those with differing beliefs should be rounded up and shot.

"How many Martians does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" Art asked, decisively changing the subject after everyone had had a say. We waited for the punchline with blank, expectant expressions. "Only two, but they have to be very small to fit inside."

It was only a hop from the arid sands of the red planet to Joyce's carbonated soft drink crisis. "I'm so addicted to soda that I can only drink water by pouring it into an empty Tab can," she admitted.

There weren't more than two-dozen dry eyes in the house as she described her great sorrow; the Tab phase-out. Every week, fewer supermarkets stock her beloved red cans. Restaurants have all replaced Tab with Diet Coke, an understandable marketing move by Coca-Cola, so the

spectre of Tab-less Years now looms over her, a glowering cloud that obscures the sunlit horizon.

Woody restored the high spirits, somewhat dented by Joyce's heart-wrenching recitation. He turned to Jack Speer, who was assembling *Synapse* for the May mailing, and inquired, "Are you in FAPA?"

"He's just one of the charter members," Don Fitch whispered. Everyone laughed, including Jack and Woody. It was good to have a neo around the place, again.

A few of the partiers were prospective FAPAns, including John Hardin, Ron Pehr and Raven, so the subject of application to the waitlist was a natural.

Someone suggested that FAPA might filch LASFS' unofficial slogan, "Death Does Not Release You", to good purpose. Mr. Lichtman, the venerable organization's Secretary-Treasurer, described buttonholing relatives of deceased members at graveside. He even had a surefire icebreaker to get the conversation going. "Say, do you happen to have your checkbook handy?"

"But then dead people would fill up the roster," someone worried aloud.

"Would anyone notice the difference?" came the inevitable reply.

"You can only stay on the roster, dead, for three mailings," said one of the constitutionalists in the room.

"Unless they prepaid," amended Mr. Lichtman, who appeared unwilling to surrender this potential source of Fapish income. Not that we didn't appreciate his point. If the Post Office can make money by printing stamps never used for mail, then why shouldn't apas collect dues from members who never have to be sent a mailing?

Good conversation made the hours fly, but soon stifled yawns signaled that it was time to exchange "good nights". Robert, Joyce, and I made one final tour of the consuite and then called it a night.

Testing the Fandom of Good Cheer

Joyce drove home before breakfast on Saturday to feed Sluggie, collect the fixings for the ham & egg breakfast, and do other chores. I read a little in the room and then, restless, swept through the con's public areas. Naturally, almost everyone, except a few fretful committee members, was still hibernating. The throngs of eager con-goers hadn't materialized in the lobby by 10:00, and gloom reigned among the Silvercon's prime movers.

Steve Ashton offered an interesting diversion for morning visitors to the consuite in the form of a computerized compatibility test. The ostensible purpose was to pair up con attendees who might enjoy talking to each other. Joyce, Dandi, and Raven entered their profiles, a definite spur to get the males at the con to fill out the brief questionnaire.

As people logged into the database during Silvercon, the compatibility rankings kept shifting. Many ran compatibility checks several times, hoping to find their name linked with someone especially enticing. More about this aspect of the con in a bit...

A group including Ken Forman, Marci, John Hardin, Ron, Raven, and Joyce started a late-morning room party. Lighthearted analysis of the compatibility test somehow led to a discussion of interpersonal greetings. Several of the women complained about the bonecrunching handshakes some men feel impelled to deliver, and Ron showed everyone how a slight shift in finger position blocked such vise-like grips. This new technique captivated everyone, and we spent the next few minutes practicing with each other.

"This is certainly going to make interesting reading in my conreport," I remarked as someone pumped my hand enthusiastically. "I went to a room party, got sercon, and shook hands with a lot of people."

Just before noon, Robert and I went up to my room to discuss our afternoon fanzine panel. The committee had neglected to ask either of us about subject matter and had, instead, written a couple of nebulous paragraphs which provided little direction.

I was just saying Nice Things about the third member of the panel, Peggy Burke, when a knock at the door heralded the arrival of the Bright Young Thing herself. It took only a couple of minutes for us to agree that an introductory approach would be best at a con with so few established fans. Robert and I would give historical perspective, and Peggy would add the youngfan's view of personal publishing.

As soon as we took our seats in the meeting room, Robert, Peggy, and I realized we'd miscalculated. About a dozen fans showed up, but none lacked fanzine experience. We junked the panel, and set the chairs in a circle as Robert suggested. "So, Peggy," I said once everyone quieted down, "why don't you kick things off by explaining FAPA to Jack Speer."

There was a lot of interest in the Las Vegas Fandom phenomena -- a dozen new fanzine fans in one city. I explained the techniques Joyce and I used to expose locals to fanzines and make it easy and inviting for them to try their hand at writing, drawing, and editing fanzines, and challenged others to do the same in their cities. Everyone had ideas about the best way to recruit fans, and I think we ended up agreeing that anything done properly would net a few energetic young publishers.

"We should do what was done to create fans during the 1930s," Woody said.

"You mean persecute teenagers?" I offered. It turned out what he had in mind was less drastic, a fanzine for not-yet-fanziners somewhat along the lines of *Fandom Access*, which Linda Blanchard proposed last year. I still think an intro fanzine makes sense.

The fanzine panel sated my appetite for program, so Robert and I took a slow tour of the convention. Attendance was lighter than expected. Gamers were particularly notable for their absence, but we found a dozen immersed in a round of Claydoughnia. This simple game allows each participant to sculpt a playdough monster and guide it in free-for-all combat. As we entered, the room erupted in shouts of joy and howls of agony. I

was afraid this was some horrible permutation of the Fanoclast tradition of clapping upon the arrival of Steve Stiles (or the bar denizens shouting "Norm!" on "Cheers"). The truth was that we'd arrived during a high spot: Karl Kreder's monster picked up Boe Powell's Thing and threw it at Greg Dee's creature!

Karl ran Claydoughnia again the next day with similar success. It's the sort of quick-playing, not-too-serious contest casual gamers might enjoy at a convention. I think Ken Forman can supply copies of the one-page rules.

Shortly after the game's rousing conclusion, Karl was basking in his well-earned egoboo. "Is this my 20 minutes in the sun?"

"Yes," I assured him. "Just like Warhol promised."

"Except," Art Widner added, "he didn't mention the sunburn."

One unexpected offshoot of the Rodney King unrest was that Silvercon unexpectedly ended up sharing accommodations with an unusual group -- the Portland Trailblazers and Los Angeles Lakers basketball teams. The league transferred their playoff game to Las Vegas' Thomas & Mack arena. The Plaza Suites hotel was near both airport and roundball court, so I guess it was a logical choice.

The Lakers mostly hid between their arrival Friday evening and the Saturday game, but the Blazers proved quite friendly to fans. A few even stepped into the hospitality suite, where femmefans plied them with doughnuts and coffee.

The pool area, site of the Saturday afternoon banquet, was also a mecca for amazingly well-toned women in microscopic bikinis. Robert and I volunteered to watch through the window so the banquet wouldn't start without us. Any sacrifice for fandom, I always say, as long as it's painless and cheap.

The \$15-banquet was a bargain. (The committee subsidized part of the cost to achieve this low price, a touching act of generosity.) The buffet also caught the notice of the Trailblazers. One by one, they lined up in front of a second-floor picture window that looked down on the pool. Eventually about five of them were standing shoulder to mammoth shoulder, noses pressed against the glass. I think they wanted to join the fans, at least for the eats.

As it turned out, Silvercon could've invited the hoopsters and given each a basket snack for haftime. The low overall con attendance caused several empty tables at the banquet. The absent missed excellent food, a brief speech by Lichtman and an equally short ditty by Leslie Fish.

Joyce and I sat with Robert. From our end of the dais, we heard Leslie's dry cough down at the other end and noted her frequent resort to throat-lubricating liquid. As a waiter scurried toward Leslie to replenish her glass, Robert nodded in her direction. "Out here in the desert," he said, "she's definitely a fish out of water."

Leslie Fish threw her concert, originally planned to help defray her recent medical expenses, open to the public. Two hours of filk music was more than I wanted, so I withdrew to air conditioned comfort during the break following toastmaster Ken Forman's introduction of con workers.

Robert Lichtman was in a reminiscing mood and told us



about his early days in fandom -- and another kid who'd asked him what he was reading inside his notebook named Calvin Demmon. I told him about my long affinity for Calvin's fanwriting and about our first meeting back in the 1960s. It reminded me how much I miss hearing from Mr. Demmon, and how much more poignant our occasional contact in computer makes his estrangement from fandom seem to me.

We returned to watch the short costumed skit that was masquerading fandom's contribution to the entertainment. "The abduction" featured a heroic catman (Boe Powell) trying to save two women (Peggy and Aileen) from a sinister slaver (Paul Gilbert). Just when I imagined that Jeanne Gomoll or Avedon Carol was going to appear in a pillar of fire and damn everyone to Feminist Hell, the cast worked a swerve in which the maidens overpowered the slaver and rescued the cat-man.

A small circle gathered around Robert and Art outside the consuite a little after the playlet ended. Art told us about two of his students who had published a fanzine as a term paper while in his science fiction class at Diablo Junior College and also mentioned that Ackerman had heard from Phil Bronson, a name out of the annals of Minnesota Fandom and the pages of "Ah, Sweet Idiocy!"

Mention of that fine 1940s fan helped Widner dredge up memories of one of the less-remembered events in fandom, the 1941 Denvention. He told the fanstory of Lew Martin, who put on the small worldcon (about the size of a Corflu) along with Olin F. Wiggins. It seemed Martin was the original 15-year-old wunderkind. He zoomed to the upper echelons of fandom on the eve of U.S. involvement in WWII and shared the con work with the then-BNF Wiggins. The baptism of fire burned out Lew Martin's interest in fandom, forcing him to live the balance of a mostly normal life out of the microcosm.

Another topic that evening was the curious curse that has settled over the Wheels of IF. It appears to be the fate of these fine fans to have similarly named doppplegangers float through fandom. Of course, I knew about the Two

John Berrys (both of whom I consider friends), but Art and Robert informed me of the existence of a second Bob Shaw (in England). The most stunning revelation of all, however is that a fan appeared in the Barea in recent years sporting the moniker "Walt Willis"!

Leaving aside the potential trauma to Himself if another fan of identical name had risen to any sort of prominence, it is hard to conceive the ego-shock of entering fandom only to find that Someone Else not only sports the same appellation but has stamped it indelibly on the hobby's consciousness.

My closest brush with name confusion was mild by comparison. When I was a fairly young fan, an ever younger and more bumptious fellow named David Katz enjoyed a brief notoriety in fandom. To this day, Roy Tackett still sometimes calls me "Arnold D. (no relation to David) Katz". Roy may be the last person on Earth... except for the folks who get my quarterly tax return, who still call me "Arnold".

Sunday, That's My Funday...

Joyce and I were up and dressed by 8 am, which left her plenty of time to zip home and back to the hotel in time to meet Ron and Raven at breakfast about 90 minutes later. I 'n' R continued their streak of introducing us to fascinating people by bringing along Dolores Jefferson. This 30 something ample redhead was sampling her first fan festival, and she threw herself into it with commendable enthusiasm. With any luck, she'll have had a good enough time at Silvercon to motivate her to explore the local fan scene in more depth.

My next note reads: "Peggy Burke gave it up without a fight." Before anyone jumps to crass conclusions, I should add that it refers to the Interactive Fiction game run by Boe Powell (and helpers) at the convention. Peggy's work schedule went erratic at exactly the wrong time, and she had to choose between sleep and gaming. Her defection from the IF meant that she spent a little more time with the rest of the con.

Speaking of Peggy, I am always astonished at how diametrically opposite to the Vegas Girl cliché is our native Las Vegas BYT (Bright Young Thing). Many of the women I meet might be described as forward, hard, and materialistic to a rather extreme degree, whereas Peggy is one of the sweetest, least mercenary people one could imagine. So much for stereotypes.

I finally got to enter my profile in the compatibility test database. Those who wanted to give the survey more weight than Steve or anyone else intended derided the preponderance of questions about television viewing and music listening habits. All I know is that the woman who was most compatible with me was... Joyce! And that when Joyce ran a final compatibility search, the name that emerged as her "most compatible" fellow fan was mine.

Twenty-one years of happy marriage (and a conscious decision to share a single television set) can produce wondrous results. We even shared a deep and abiding belief that the proper way to arrange a roll of toilet paper is with

the free end of the paper coming over the top of the roll instead of trailing from the underside.

Jack Speer expressed a wish to see the Crimea River, as mentioned in my articles in *Folly* and FAPA. It turned into a two-car pilgrimage to the rivulet that trickles along the border of our home, the Subway Station.

I think our guests were a little surprised at the lushness of the greenery which surrounds the ranch-style home on Bridgeglenn Drive. They capered around the yard, took pictures of the flora and each other, and generally enjoyable this quasi-bucholic respite from the high-tech con hotel.

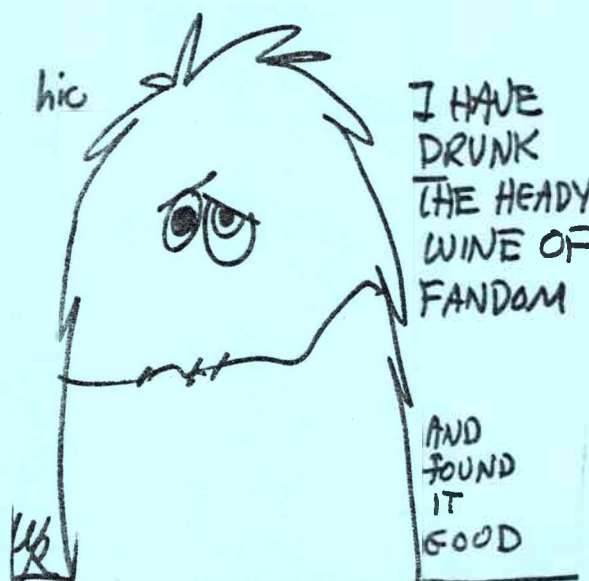
Depression reigned among the con committee, and a bit of precipitation was seen falling from more than one eye. Though everyone present was having a good time, the financial shortfall desolated them. Several of the out-of-towners made discreet contributions – one a \$100 bill – to the "Silver for Silvercon" canister set up in the consuite. Others paid bills that would've fallen on the con. An unknown benefactor bailed out the remaining debt with a check for over two grand.

I thought this was a heartening expression of fandom's growing affection for the Las Vegas group. It was also a soul-lifting reminder of the way sf fans hang together during adversity.

The con's wind-down found the sofa outside the consuite occupied by the six Old Pharts at the con: Art, Juffus, Don Fitch, Robert, Joyce, and myself. "Why, this must be 500 years of fandom," Speer exclaimed at he looked around at the rest of us.

That was an exaggeration, of course, but Joyce was the most neo of the six with "only" 27 years before the masthead. I came next at 29 years, Don and Robert were 30+ men, and the remaining two had logged associations with fandom stretching back more than half a century each.

Robert took the occasion to announce the formation of a



new apa: RAPS. The Revenants Amateur Press Society is open to any fan who has gafiated for at least five years and then returned to activity. He did not disclose whether it will be mandatory for each member to explain to the others what he or she did during the unaccounted-for time.

Soon it was time to leave Silvercon and take Robert to the airport. Silvercon had a lot of problems, to be sure. Neofen make mistakes; first time con-givers make mistakes. Vegas Fandom will surely handle the next convention more slickly. But I enjoyed myself thoroughly and, when you come down to it, what else matters?

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