

The Gist
of the
MAGIcon

Written
By
Arnie Katz

Illustrations
By
Bill Rotsler

KatzenJammer

Magicon was my first Worldcon since 1973. In many ways, it was the most enjoyable one I've ever attended. **The Gist of the MAGIcon** is my attempt to capture at least some of the sweet memories while they are still reasonably clear in my mind. Please foregive me if I have misquoted you, put you somewhere when you were somewhere else, or committed some other journalistic faux pas at your expense. All errors are entirely inadvertent -- and sincerely regretted.

Next month: The Second Annish: Foolish II

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***The Magic Convention
is the one with
the Trufan at the Gavel***

The Gist of the MAGIcon, also known as Folly #18, is edited and published by Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107) on a frequent schedule for the diversion of the Folly mailing list. Proofreading by Joyce Katz.

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

Chapter One

Night of the Living Dead

Is there any fan more worthy of emulation than Walter Willis? He combines talent, achievement, and strength of character in a way that is rare in or out of the hobby. Yet he has never adopted the olympian attitude toward the rest of fandom that can be observed in others with far less claim to superiority. He's always been warm-hearted and generous to me since we struck up our sporadic correspondence over 25 years ago.

Normally, I'm pleased to follow in Himself's footsteps, but not the way I did so over the weekend before Magicon. Joyce and I were cuddled on the couch, watching T.V., Saturday night about 8:30 when the phone rang. My hand might have moved more slowly if I'd know this call would have such grave consequences tomb me.

"Hello?" I said.

"Arnie? Arnie?" There was panic in the voice at the other end of the line. I recognized the terror-struck voice of one of my oldest fan friends. "You're alive!"

I checked. It was true. With great relief, I assured my friend that I was preparing for the Magicon, not attending the Enchanted Convention.

"I thought you were dead," said my friend.

I again assured him that I was feeling well and doing fine. "What made you think I was dead?"

"Read.... fanzine... dead." Intense emotion made it almost impossible for him to articulate the words.

"Fanzine?"

"Fanzine... read... dead."

"What fanzine was it?"

"Pong... read...back page... thought you were dead."

The Katz Death Hoax! Someone had cared enough to say I was dead.

Pong?

Pong??

My knowledge of 80s fandom is still a little sketchy, but I thought I remembered that Ted White and Dan Steffan had folded Pong after 40 glorious issues around the middle of the decade.

"Pong?" I pressed. "You're sure it was Pong?"

"Pong... said you were dead," he repeated.

We talked for quite awhile. I questioned him gently, speaking slowly in a calm voice so as not to add to his agitation. Extracting hard facts proved difficult, but subsequent question disclosed a few tidbits, the most important of which was that there was a new Pong which contained something that the fan had misconstrued as a poetic eulogy.

I was teary-eyed by the time the conversation ended. I'd never imagined that my passing, however sudden and shocking, could affect someone so strongly. It made me feel very good to know that I have such a friend, though I'd have preferred to learn it in a way less upsetting to that individual.

Despite the hour, I decided to call Ted White. I got Lynda at 11:30 Falls Church time. Ted was bedridden with a severe flu, but Lynda kindly went through what turned out to be a one-issue, 10th anniversary revival and confirmed that the back page had something about me. Ted had written a little article to accompany a filk song.

"Filk song?" I inquired.

"Yes," she said.

"It's called 'Arnie Katz was a Trufan', isn't it?" I said, the Truth becoming all too clear.

"Yes, that's what it says." I apologized for disrupting her evening and made friendly noises about our impending first meeting at MagiCon.

Don't fret about my apparent manifestation of psychic power. I had already encountered this song in **Situation Normal**, the SNAFFU (Southern Nevada Area Fantasy Fiction Union) clubzine edited by Aileen Forman. They handed me a copy during the August Social at our place. The filk song circle attached to the club had decided to collaborate on a filk song, and "Arnie Katz was a Trufan", to the tune of Jeremiah Was a Bullfrog" was the result.

The song inspired mixed feelings. It was like having your pet cat drop an eviscerated mouse at your feet. I appreciated the gesture, and said so at some length, but the gift itself left something to be desired. Perhaps the mouse would have been preferable.

I pointed out a few little problems, apart from poor scansion and inexact rhyme. For one thing, it referred to me in the past tense ("Arnie Katz was a trufan". "Someone could read that and jump to the conclusion that I'm no longer among the living," I ventured at the time. I also didn't think much of the line about how I'd ban all the insurgents. "Might cause a few ruffled feathers," I opined.



I followed up with a brief fanhistory lesson, mentioning my great respect for the Insurgents and their productions and that Joyce and I hosted the Brooklyn Insurgents club for about five years. (I also indicated that I would not be in favor of banning anything or anyone from fandom, and that I would be unlikely to start with all my Insurgent friends.)

It reminded me of the Second Willis Death Hoax, an utterly unintentional comedy of errors. Linda Bushyager had read a passing reference to Walter which mentioned his fan activity in the past tense. She'd drawn the erroneous conclusion and published the dreadful news in *Karass*.

I wanted to know more about Pong's back page, so the next morning I called Geri Sullivan and Jeff Schalles. Geri didn't sound surprised to hear from me, which buttressed my misinterpretation theory.

"Would you like a fax of it?" She asked.

Indeed I would.

The sheet rolled out of my machine within minutes. A quick reading confirmed my surmise. The song was a reprint of "Arnie Katz was a Trufan", and Ted had written a light article as a framing device. It said nothing overt about my death.

Ted rang as I finished reading the page. He'd recovered sufficiently to call the distraught fan and wanted to give me an update.

Ted's piece mentioned that he'd gotten the filksong from Bill Kunkel. Bill had copied it, circled the line about banning the Insurgents, and sent it to Ted.

I told Ted I didn't mind him going from badinage to verse and readily admitted that I would've probably run it if our positions had been reversed. No one could doubt that the confusion lay in the mind of the reader rather than with the song or text. Still, we both felt very bad about our mutual friend.

"Well, Arnie," Ted said as we wrapped up the phonecall. "You know what this means?"

"What?"

"It means Magicon has begun."+

Chapter Two Three Days of the Con-Goer

Ted's pronouncement, however apt for him, was a little premature for us. Before Joyce and I could jet to Florida, we had to satisfy some major work deadlines. During those last frantic days, we finished the second **Electronic Games**, produced the first revival issue of our monthly newsletter **megagaming**, and launched the "900" phone line.

Incidentally, those who have a buck to squander may want to call this service. Aside from news, reviews, and previews of video and computer games, there's an editorial by me. My first effort might best be described as "energetic". The folks at ACI told me to "really pump it" before the first run-through, and then encouraged me to up the average on the re-take.

Ever the obliging fellow, I delivered my spiel in a relentlessly hearty tone halfway between Vince McMahon and a carnival barker. Since I'll be

changing that message every couple of weeks, you've only got a limited time to hear me make a fool of myself before sheer repetition overcomes ineptitude.

We (Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc.) developed ideas for several '900' operations about 18 months ago, but put it all on the back shelf when the deal fell apart. Now that we've got one line, I've been pondering ways to expand this precarious perch on the gravy train. One idea I've reluctantly abandoned is the Egoboo Line. Since The Egoboo Line won't make a nickel, I hope you'll forgive my attempt to get a little mileage out of this stillborn notion in Folly.

Consider this. That's you in the corner, losing your self-image. Barnaby Rappaport has told you, in the nicest possible way of course, that Greenpiece has declared you Over-consumption Enemy Number One, because your fanzine is such a flagrant waste of paper. Mike Glicksohn has announced that yours is the first fanzine he *won't* be losing. They want you to be fan GoH at Coppercon. Things can't get any worse.

But for a mere \$4.95 for the first minute and \$4 for each additional minute -- everyone knows the worthlessness of cheap praise -- you can call The Egoboo Line. You dial with trembling fingers, miserable tears fogging your vision. And you hear...

"Greetings, Trufen! You've reached The Egoboo Line. Dial '1' if you want egoboo for putting on a regional convention; dial '2' for favorable reviews of your fanzine; dial '3' for appreciation of your fine fannish cartoons; dial '4' for general praise for your character and intelligence; and dial '5' for the Special 'Willis for a Day' fantasy roleplaying module."

Our only break from work was the SNAFFU meeting on Sunday afternoon at the Asylum. It looks like the club will need to relocate soon, since some residents of this slan shack have forsaken fanac for the joys of self-published comic books. Inmates John Hardin and Karl Kreder continue as pillars of the club, but their numberless roommates have other plans for the house on alternate Sunday afternoons.

Formal clubs aren't my favorite fanac, but Joyce and I attend at least one meeting a month to see people who don't make it to the Socials. I even discuss science fiction, though it takes a little finesse to avoid revealing how few S.F. books I've read since 1970.

It turned out to be another one of the slightly rocky meetings SNAFFU has staged in recent

months. The Asylum is preparing to go the way of all slanshacks, and the strained atmosphere hardly enhances the club meetings. The group has now voted a location change, and perhaps this will give the get-togethers a more relaxed, friendly ambience.

The coalition between gamers and S.F. fans that formed the group is breaking down now that there are enough of both to sustain separate organizations. The two segments of the membership have such divergent desires that it's sometimes like two people trying to drive the same car.

The rivalry between the game-oriented Vegascon and SNAFFU's Silvercon turned a little nasty recently, when the Vegascon program book printed a heavy handed lampoon of the Silvercon II flyer. While I was in a side room, telling the authors of the filksong about the Arnie Katz Death Hoax, the rest of the club voted me onto a committee to extend the olive branch. I think peace is possible, though there are hotheads in both camps who may wish otherwise. It seems silly that two groups with such divergent and non-conflicting agendas can't coexist.

Since Magicon, two different cabals of gamers have formed their own organizations. One has coalesced around Shaun White and plans to concentrate on moneymaking opportunities in the gamintg and comic book world. The other, which has adopted the name Jag, has cordial relations with SNAFFU and represents those RPGers who want social interaction as well as gaming.

Chapter Three For the Love of God, Compressor

Tuesday turned out to be a marathon. I started about 5 a.m. at the computer. Just when I was congratulating myself on polishing off all pending EG work, I noticed the sound of silence in the livingroom where the throb of the air conditioner used to be. (I'd failed to notice this earlier, because my office is on a separate system which remained functional.)

Being without air conditioning in Las Vegas is like being without a condom at Hugh Heffner's

mansion. It had little immediate impact on us, but we didn't want to sentence our nonpareil house-sitter Miri Straw to a week of sleepless sweltering.

Joyce's distress call brought Steve the fannish air conditioning man to our door within an hour. He's a science fiction reader we met during a previous cooling crisis. Seeing his smiling face reassured us that All Would Be Well -- until he told us we'd blown a thousand-buck compressor. With our flight only hours away, Joyce arranged for a next-day repair while I broke the news to Miri Straw.

I scrunched into my airplane seat at about 1:30 a.m. Wednesday. I may've threatened Bill Kunkel's record by falling asleep before the TWA plane taxied from the gate.

"Suffer the Curse of Amon Ra!" The voice jolted me to consciousness. "Turkey cheats white death!" My fears that this con report had taken a serious detour evaporated when I came fully awake to find the stewardess leaning over me, repeating her question: "Sir, a choice of ham on rye or turkey and cheese on white bread." I was so relieved I ate one of those inevitably disappointing ham sandwiches.

I passed the remainder of the first leg of the trip reading John LeCarre's "The Secret Pilgrim". It seemed a good omen when a minor character named Willis appeared in the first chapter.

After changing planes at St. Louis, we zoomed into Ft. Myers, FL, without incident. Joyce's sister Lilimae met us at the gate at noon on Wednesday, and after a stop for lunch, took us to her home.

Joyce is by far the youngest in her family, but Lilimae is an energetic woman in her mid-60s. Her late husband's investments have left her financially secure, but she devotes much time to the Cape Coral Hospital, where she's about to ascend to the presidency of the auxiliary.

She shares her spacious home with a pair of white poodles and a trio of cats. At least I think there were three; they hid the entire time we were there. The dogs showed no such shyness, scampering over us as we sat talking on the sofa and inspecting a stack of family photo albums.

Joyce described the collection as "kids, dogs, and fish." Lilimae's clan are ardent anglers. In fact, her son David has just opened a fishing gear and bait shop along one of the broad canals that

crisscross Cape Coral.

Despite our fatigue, it was a very pleasant visit, highlighted by a nice visit with nephew David, his wife Donna, and their two children. I was pleased to learn that all four are video gamers, though we never got around to firing up the Nintendo.

Chapter Four Up in theAir

Rain threatened as our United Airlines flight rose from Ft. Myers for the half-hour hop to Orlando. Turbulence rocked the flight almost as soon as we were airborne. One of the stewardesses, a blonde with a distant look in her eye, tumbled over a row of seats.,

Perhaps this explains her rather tentative attitude during the rest of the flight. As the aircraft rolled and bounced enough to confine even the crew to their seats, her messages to the passengers grew increasingly fatalistic.

The storm was raging over Orlando by the time our plane started its landing approach. Unfortunately, we just kept circling our destination as lightning crackled around our craft.

Before too long, the blonde stew told us that we would have to divert to Tampa, where she said we'd "probably land safely". The plane was nearly out of fuel, and the unscheduled stop in Tampa would, she added, "likely let the plane take off again."

The blonde's home base was Washington, D.C., which may have contributed to her downbeat outlook. Maybe if she was from Las Vegas, she could've defused the tension with a cheery, "Bèt ya two to one we don't crash." She didn't, and I thought I heard some mumbled prayers from the other passengers. Fortunately, no one started whistling the theme from "The High and the Mighty".

I looked around the cabin, suddenly much more interested in the exits, oxygen masks, and other lifesaving devices. It was impossible not to think about my friend's premonition about the song in Pong. I hoped he was wrong, rather than premature. "What would Chuch Harris do in a spot like this?" I mused silently. I eyed a

particularly well endowed stewardess whom I thought would make a dandy flotation device, picked up my book, and was lecarried away by the intricate machinations of its cold warriors.

All went well, and we finally landed uneventfully in Orlando after only three hours of our 30-minute flight. Ground transportation proved considerable more efficient, thankfully. The cab whisked us to the con site, where we were soon freshening up in our lovely room at the Peabody.

Chapter Five

My First Impressions

My heart sank when I saw the vastness of the convention hall, which was conveniently adjacent to the Peabody. I imagined it full of swarming confans, the majority roleplaying costumed characters. I shuddered at the thought of five days in such company.

All fears proved groundless. Joe Siclari and his army of con-runners discharged their duties in exemplary fashion. Magicon was three times the size of any con I'd previously attended, but I never felt like I was adrift in an endless, milling crowd. Occasionally, I saw thousands of people gathered for a special attraction like the masquerade, but even the art show and huckster room always had a reasonable traffic flow and a supply of breathable air when I visited them.

We went directly to the Fanzine Lounge, a beautiful set-up near the Enchanted Duplicator Miniature Golf Course and the fanhistory exhibits. I haven't the experience to compare the lounge with similar facilities of the past, but this oasis of fanzine-dom sure felt like home to me. There were groupings of couches and chairs, tables for fanzines, circular tables for up to eight, and a cash bar in the middle of an area as big as the interior of our house in Las Vegas..

Andy Hooper was the first fan I met. He'd arrived on Monday, and Seattle Fandom's newest treasure was already into the mellow spirit which held sway among the paper pushers.

We talked about projects fannish and otherwise. Andy mentioned attending Clarion West this past summer, so I told him about a recent morning spent with Harlan Ellison.

Spent Brass and Folly may spearhead a revived fan poll in some form. Awards and honors aren't a big thing to me, but I like the idea of expressing appreciation for all the entertaining articles, cartoons, and fanzines that flow through the mailbox. Maybe we could announce the winners at Corflu.

Time and poor eyesight combine to make it difficult for me to recognize old fan friends. I never had much opportunity to develop much of a visual memory when my vision was a myoptic 20/200, and everything looks so different than I remember it now that I am farsighjted.

Despite this, I instantly identified rich brown. His hair is grayer, and he's huskier, but the familiar face jumped right out of the past at me.

Even though I didn't write a fan novel about it, seeing rich again after so long was high on my list of anticipated Magicon delights. And he more than satisfied my advance expectations.

We'd had a falling out in the early 1970s, but our friendship has been reborn since my return to activity. I wasn't surprised to find that he was still the same amusing and intelligent guy who imparted so much fannish lore when I was a young fan.

Rich made recognition easier by dropping 80 lbs. He's always had a strong will, so I wouldn't bet against his resolve to stick to his weight loss and exercise program. On the other hand, perhaps we should Fear for someone who was recently quoted (and in a presitigious fanzine like **Pong 41**, no less) as saying that "Fandom is a Doughnut."

A smiling greybeard in a rumpled hat stepped up to re-introduce himself as Mike Glicksohn. Fortunately, that's who it was, or this con report would be even more confused than usual. The hair may be a lighter shade of pale, but his friendly demeanor and merry eyes are unchanged. He introduced me to the considerably prettier Susan Manchester. The pair have set a July 3rd wedding date, and this was Susan's first chance to meet "the in-laws".

Mike is the godfather of today's hyperactive Las Vegas Fandom. His letter alerting us to Vegascon I led to the first contact between SNAFFU and (dis)organized fandom. Mike thanked me for a recent letter full of big brotherly advice and indicated that his announced retrenchment probably won't be as severe as originally contemplated. Since he's a letterhack second only to Harry Warner, this is certainly great news for comment-hungry faneds.

Mike surprised me by referring to a feud we'd

had in 1972.

"Feud?" I asked innocently. "We had a feud?" All the time I was away, I always thought of Mike as a friend.

Had a grievance festered in his otherwise innocent heart? Had his secret hatred of me slowly corrupted this fine human being. Most importantly, was he about to turn on me, and could I use Susan as a shield?

"Yes, you were mad at me for not trading **Energumen** with Chris Couch," he elaborated.

"That was just a tiny disagreement between friends," I protested. I was relieved. Fanzine trade policy was not likely to lead to plonkers at first light. "I've always thought of you as one of my best fannish friends. I know I teased you about it being named **Ummanagumma**, but I contributed to it several times," I said, a bit embarrassed.

"You were a BNF..." his voice trailed off. I knew I was blushing. "Oh, you were right," he added, "and we patched it up quickly." I was glad he'd mentioned that speedy reconciliation, because I didn't want the enchanting Susan to get the wrong impression.

The happy couple continued their progress around the Fanzine Lounge, and I soon found myself surrounded by Fred Lerner, Brian Burley, and Mark Blackman.

All have played important roles in my fan career. Fred and I were neos together in 1963-64. We rode the bus together to and from the monthly ESFA (Eastern Science Fiction Association) meetings in Newark, NJ. We got pretty silly on the trips back to Manhattan. A particularly uproarious incident was the founding of Jew Fandom, a totally fictitious group for fans of Hebraic ancestry. "Jew Fandom is Trufandom!" was the battle cry.

Brian Burley, the first man to imagine he was a SMOF, may seem like an odd friend for a couple of fannish fanzine fans. Joyce and I spent many evenings discussing social questions with Brian, and we grew to respect his undebatable ability to speak on issues ranging from politics to sexual freedom.

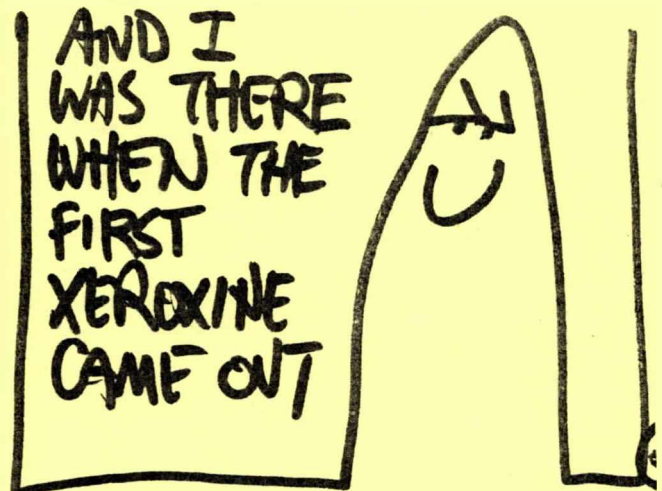
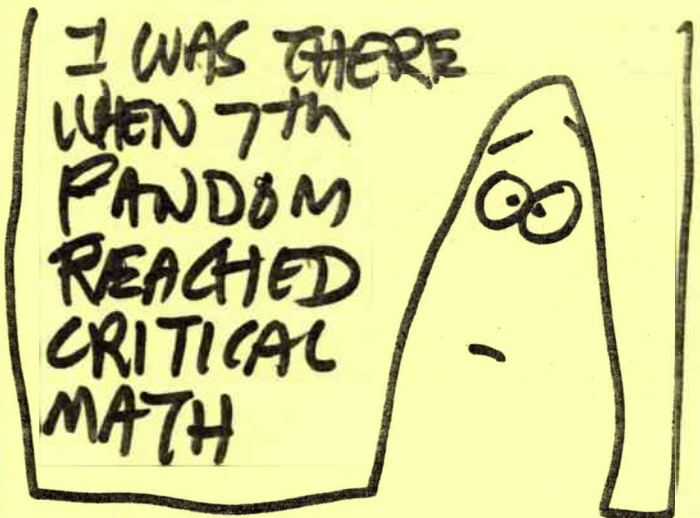
This was my first in-person meeting with Mark Blackman, but in a way he played the most pivotal role of all. Mark wrote to me back in 1989 to say that The Terrean Amateur Press Society (TAPS), founded by Lenny Bailes and I, was about to celebrate its 300 month monthly mailing. He encouraged me to send a contribution for this landmark issue, and I ended up hanging around TAPS for the next half-year or so. It was my first

overt step back into fandom, and I honestly don't know if it would've happened without Mark as a catalyst.

The convention still seemed to be sorting itself out, searching for the rhythm that would carry us through the next four days. Woody Bernardi's unceremonious punk out on his volunteer stints in the fanzine lounge caused it to close quite early on Thursday. Fans returning from dinner found it hard to hook up with each other.

Rich brown, Joyce, and I set off to find fans when the lounge closed. We ran into one of fanzine fandom's most engaging young couples, Richard Brandt and Michelle Lyons. Richard suggested that fanzine fans come equipped with homing devices so that we could roam the convention with signal locators and track each other down.

Michelle's badge carried the additional inscription "with Brandt". It made her sound like a sidedish. (This is where I wiggle my eyebrows, wag my nonexistent cigar and say, in my best



Groucho Marx imitation, "And I'll say she's quite a dish.")

Our search for fans took us back to the Convention Center. We met Dick and Nicki Lynch, who gave rich brown his autographed copy of "A Wealth of Fable". The Lynches have worked three-and-a-half years on the "All Our Yesterdays" sequel, which is highly similar in format to Warner's earlier chronicle.

No fanhistory has had more thorough fact-checking. Historians will always dispute details, but the overall work is monumental. "A Wealth of Fable" belongs on every fan's shelf. At \$25 a throw, it shouldn't take long to sell out the first printing.

Such books are certainly needed. Dick lamented the sad state of fanhistorical knowledge by relating at incident from Boskone. In a conversation with the Con Francisco contingent, he mentioned Les and Es Cole (who were not twin brothers) and drew zero recognition. When informed that this husband-and-wife team chaired the first San Francisco worldcon, the answer was: "What year was that?" Evidently, people who forget history *are*, indeed, doomed to repeat it.

Rich, Joyce, and I found Nancy Atherton putting up a display of fanzines of the 1940s and 1950s. She said this was only a small exhibit compared to mammoth ones of the past, but I wasn't around for those. The selection, presentation, and arrangement of this one were unimpeachable. The three of us probably delayed Nancy by buzzing around her, peering at each new item as it went up on the board. Maybe our burbles of delight partially repaid any inconvenience we might've caused.

Among the treasures was a Chuch Harris zine (**Infinity?**) with amazingly sharp hektography, and a fanzine from an entirely different Charles Harris. By coincidence, this inferior doppelganger hailed from Great Neck, NY, which is the rich section of the area in which I grew up.

I have a theory that Ghu made Irish Fandom and its associates to inspire fanzine fans, but gave them crosses to bear as a warning against hubris.

Ghu looked down upon them and granted wit, intelligence, and generosity of spirit. He gave them Ghoddminton for the exciting days of their fannish youth, and Geri Sullivan as a balm in their golden fannish years.

And so that fanzine fans would not succumb to the sin of self-importance, Ghu looked down at the so-far idyllic world of Irish Fandom. He winked and Irish Fandom knew the humanizing hand of

adversity. To counter-balance Geri Sullivan, he visited me upon them to constantly whine for contributions for **Folly**. And as a restraint upon their fannish fame, Ghu gave other fans the same names.

It is remarkable that there have been at least two Walt Willises, Bob Shaws, James Whites, Chuch Harris, and John Berrys. Sometimes I wonder if these namesakes ever get together for a secret game of Fhairminton.

Art Widner (who says he is younger than Jack Speer) was also exploring the convention center, and we took the opportunity to discuss an article I sent to **Yhos** about the three most far-reaching fanhistorical events of the 1960s. He'd sent many excellent suggestions for revisions, but **Electronic Games** shunted the piece to the back burner. After assuring him that his editing hasn't offended me, I promised to get to work on the changes right after the worldcon. Of course, I didn't mention that would be after finishing this con report.

Art, rich, Joyce, and I continued the fannish conversation over ice cream at the Peabody's Beeline Diner. This place wasn't cheap, but the food was invariable good and the service overwhelmingly friendly.

Woody Bernardi had also left Art in the lurch. They were supposed to share a room at Magicon, and Woody wouldn't be there, after all. I was pleased to tell him that the rest of Vegas Fandom had elevated him to ghodlike status after his visit to last year's Silvercon. "Any time an argument springs up," I explained, "the pivotal questions is always: 'What would Art Widner say about this?'"

Of course, Art is not the Final Authority in Las Vegas. That's Jack Speer. The ultimate squelch in local fandom is: "Jack Speer wouldn't like that."

Refreshed, we renewed our quest for fanlife. After checking several huge parties without finding familiar faces, we discovered quite a few of them at the Minneapolis in '73 suite. Geri Sullivan and Jeff Schalles generously offered their room, next to the suite, for fans who wanted a quieter ambience, and that's where we found Ted White, Steve Stiles, and many other old friends.

The pot of gold at the end of this rainbow was a stack of wonderful fanzine art which Jeff Schalles, Reed Waller, and Ken Fletcher prepared before the con. Too bad Jeff had some notion of fairness which required him to give some of these wonderful drawings to each active fanzine editor rather than just handing the whole batch over to **Folly** as seemed Right and Proper to me. Regardless, the Fanzine Recovery Organization is

a wonderfully charitable and much appreciated effort.

I'd say that the scarcity of fannish illustrations is the most obvious shortage in today's fandom. **Focal Point** and **Swoon** enjoyed the luxury of having Stiles, Kinney, Chamberlain, and Sonntag right at hand. Rotsler, ATom, Ken Fletcher, Harry Bell, Joe Staton, Tim Kirk, Grant Canfield, and James Shull were all fairly prolific. A slightly newer group, including Dan Steffan, Bill Kunkel, Stu Shiffman and Tom Foster were the up-and-comers of that period (the early 1970s).

I've been lucky to be able to draw upon some of the vastly reduced output of those fanart greats, but have been able to add few names to my "art credits" in the last two years. It is particularly hard to find someone to do cartoon-style illustrations for articles, though I am hopeful that Ross Chamberlain will have a fannish renaissance now that he's part of Las Vegas Fandom.

If you want to be beloved in fandom, and also advance to the select circle of well known fans, learn to draw fannish cartoons. Even Joyce is trying her hand at it.

I don't know what can be done, other than encourage any neo fanartists who show up, but dire circumstances may require drastic measures. One possible idea: Let's give every fan graphics software or a John Nagy "You Can Learn to Draw" kit. Unearthing even a couple of Hidden Talents would relieve the illo drought.

Frank Lunney saw me making notes. "You're writing a con report," he accused.

I hung my head. Guilty as charged.

"I hate con reports that say what they ate and who they talked to," he continued.

I was crushed. "I'm crushed, Frank. That's all I write about." It's true. This is as good a place as any to admit that I am usually content to experience official convention functions from a safe distance, usually out of my sight, earshot, and memory. "The Gist of the MAGICon" is not the best place to look for the important stuff like the Hugos and descriptions of serious science fiction panels

"No, no," he corrected. "I mean stuff like, 'We went out to dinner and had a fine meal. Then we talked a long time.'"

"I couldn't agree more," I seconded. "What's really interesting in *what* you talked about, not *that* you spoke."

"And you're going to do that, aren't you?" he asked.

"Absolutely." I didn't feel it was a good time for

me to mention a slight tendency to forget to take notes when I'm having an especially good time, like during meals.

"You always do that," Frank said. "I notice that all of your con reports mention everyone. Everyone gets a little section, like a hook. I'll bet you do that on purpose."

Isn't that Frank Lunney? We're together less than 10 minutes, and he penetrates the core of my con report philosophy!

I knew he had me pinned. "I've tried to apply what I consider a cardinal rule of professional writing, 'aim for the audience', to fanzines," I told him. "The most important people to mention are **Folly** readers, followed by those known to most of the mailing list. What's the fun of being one of the 150 or so fans who get **Folly** if you can't see your name in print now and then?"

This section, for example, is dedicated to the irrepressible Mr. Frank Lunney of Pennsylvania. I believe you now owe me a letter of comment, sir.

Chapter Six

It's Friday, I'm in Love

The dawn of our first full day at Magicon confronted me with a dilemma. I've often mentioned my desire to finally, at long last, meet Walter A. Willis. I wrote a fan novel, "Willis Plays Vegas", on that theme, and his GoHship was a major reason for coming all the way to Orlando.

By late Friday morning, I had still not met him. My choice: aggressively seek out the legendary fan, or provide this con report with mounting dramatic tension by studiously avoiding contact. I fantasized fans biting their nails to the quick, wondering if Magicon would end before the epochal meeting between Willis and Katz, the Funniest Man in Fandom and Katz, could take place.

If I played it right, I could work up to a tearjerking climactic scene... My cab is ready to leave the Peabody for the airport. The bags are jammed into the trunk, Joyce waits in the back seat, and the driver guns the motor to show his readiness to leave for the airport.

Meanwhile, loyal friends are rushing the still-unmet Willis to the hotel's front entrance. Just as the frail trufan steps onto the curb, the cab starts to pull away. I roll down the window and extend

my hand. For one fleeting instant, fingers touch. A radiance surrounds these fans of two hemispheres. A choir of folksingers keen in the background. The End.

Despite this glittering prospect, my greediness to spend time with Walter won out over my devotion to the art of faan fiction. I met Walter and Madeleine, as well as James White, in the Fan Lounge on Friday. Having done so, I wouldn't trade the experience for the rights to a dozen faan fiction stories.

Madeleine, a petite ball of fire herself, seemed flummoxed by my imposing stature. "I met Moshe Feder," she said to me. "I thought you would be about this high," she held her hand out at about the same height as my knee.

"Don't worry," I assured her, "I'm really two Jews piled on top of each other." I told her that back in Las Vegas Fandom, I am only considered of average height. Ken Forman, Karl Kreder, Shaun White, and several others are as much as four

inches taller. Las Vegas may still be rinkydink when it comes to fan humor, but we're ready for any other club on the basketball court.

My first meeting with Chuch Harris followed moments later. I had come fortified with a special pad for sending him messages, so I handed him my first one almost as soon as we'd shaken hands for the very first time. It asked the question: "Is communication with a blind man who has bad handwriting possible?"

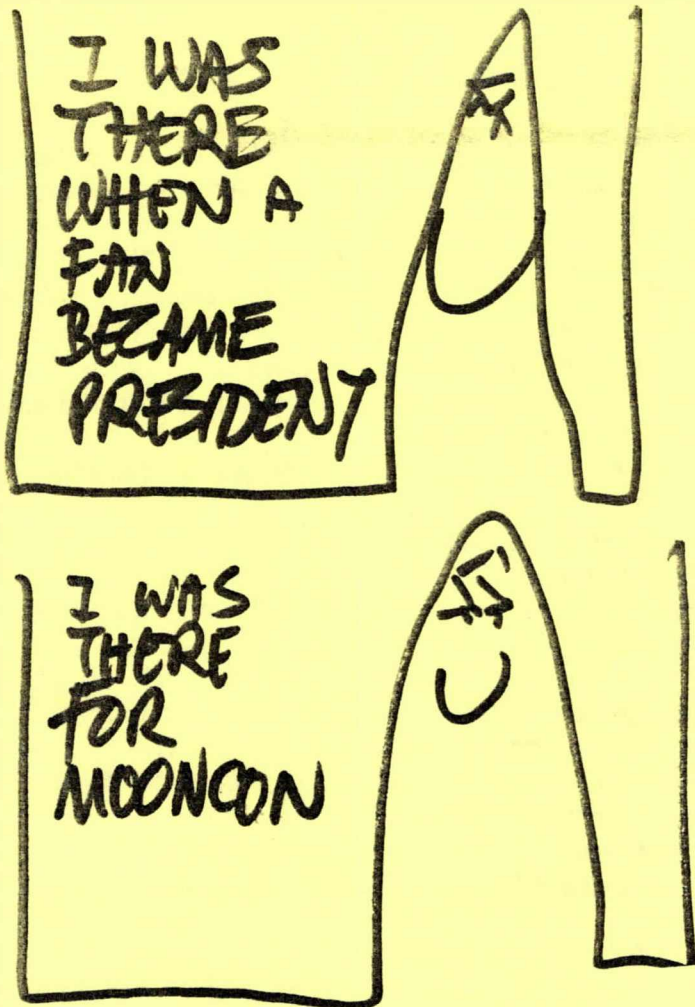
It must be, because I depleted the pad during the balance of the con. (Chuch had a customized pad on which to send his messages. I didn't know how to tell him the type was too small for me to read.) I'd tell you some of what I said to my spiritual Guru, but I believe he has filed copyright on all written messages circulated at the con.

Brian Burley decided to accompany Joyce and I on our tour of the huckster room. He brought us up to date on his life and times, which included the shocking death of his dear friend Adrian in the wake a simple operation to insert pins in a broken joint. Brian seemed a good deal less ebullient when discussing her, and we were pleased to hear he has recently met someone who was becoming similarly special to him. Perhaps Maggie will make her fan debut at a near-future con.

Seeing those rows of hardback and softcover books was reassuring after the Westercolt 45 marketplace. The latter made it seem as though the sword had proven mightier than the pen, but literature was definitely in the ascendant at Magicon. A few discreet price inquiries convinced us we'd been wise to hold on to all those books and prozines; our shelves are crowded with titles going for \$50 or more a pop.

One dealer guessed that my original hard cover edition of "The Eighth Stage of Fandom" might be worth as much as \$800. I know it has already given me more than that value in laughter, so I think I'll keep it on my special fanshelf a few more decades... We searched for Bloch's new reminiscences, but none of the dealers had copies yet.

Joyce needed to sit for awhile after walking the huckster room. We found Michelle Lyons in one of the con's many rest areas and sat with her at one of the round umbrella tables. Michelle confessed that she has written her first fanzine article, but that she hasn't had the courage to show it to anyone. Joyce encouraged her to send it to her for Glitz, our FAPazine. I hope she'll do it. We're anxious to see if the vivacious Texan's



writing will show the same charming wit as her conversation.

The Time Capsule Exhibit contained many fascinating items, including a facsimile ball signed by captain Sam Moskowitz of the Queens Cometeers, winners of the softball game at the 1939 worldcon. A horn from Hugo Gernsback's bicycle and the chair that Dave Kyle said you couldn't sit in were also major components of the display. The most interesting item, I thought, was a tin of laxatives. Even in those early days, some insurgent knew fans were full of shit.

Readers of my previous con reports may have begun to wonder if Joyce and I ever attend the program. We went to more panels at Magicon than at any previous worldcon, because Andy Hopper did such a great job in lining up his array of fanzine and fanhistory presentations. They were invariably interesting, and they also provided a good way to find friends who'd wandered beyond the Fanzine Lounge during the day.

"The Well-Read Fan" at 2:00 started with a discussion of the mythic quality of good fanwriting. Ted White and Moshe Feder advanced the idea that this penchant for spinning larger-than-life tales often characterizes the most fascinating fanzines.

"The British fanzines combine little bits of truth with lots of embroidery," Moshe declared. Ted agreed, citing the works of Ratfandom, which he called "as powerful as Burbee-Laney".

Moshe identified interactivity among fanzines is the key ingredient in legend-making. "It takes a lot of fanzines," he suggested, "a web of connectivity."

Ted added the proviso that some of these fanzines must be frequent. Otherwise, necessary "momentum will be lost." This call for greater cohesion among fans fell on fertile ground; it solidified Joyce's decision to start a fannish newszine. (This mention is intended to shame her into carrying through during the current fan era.)

Then the subject turned to electronic fanzines. Moshe staked out a position similar to mine, that computer networks are a better medium for quick communication than deep writing. As a participant since the mid-1980s, I've observed that well-written essays are the exception. The ephemeral nature of real-time modem chatter reduces it to the triviality of a CB radio, and even the message boards seem limited compared to freewheeling fanzines.

Ted likened both apas and computer networks to room parties. The difference, he asserted, is

that our memories filter out the drivel, the aimless chitchat, that fills the spaces between the meaningful comments. Apas and networks indiscriminately preserve everything.

My only demur is my hope that skim-reading sieves an apa bundle the way memory does a room party. I speed through some items in every FAPA mailing and linger over others. In other words, I agree that independently distributed fanzines carry the bulk of the best fanwriting, but I wouldn't want to miss the appearances by Boggs, Silverberg, Warner, Searles, and other FAPA stalwarts, either.

Talk of great fanzines irked a feisty woman a couple of rows behind me. Her response to a call for questions was a fiery statement that this talk about "our" fanzines had gone on long enough, and that there were other fanzines that had an equal or greater right to the spotlight.

"I'm here to fight you," she shouted. I briefly wondered if this was another, if bizarre, entertainment arranged for us by Joe Siclari, but it turned out she wanted to extol the virtues of "storyzines", fanzines devoted to otherwise unpublishable amateur science fiction stories.

"They've been going for 40 years, and you haven't mentioned them," she accused. Ted's polite inquiry about which storyzines have been around since the early 1950s drew the expectable answer that she didn't know, because she had only been active since the 1980s herself.

I feared the tempestuous fanfic fanatic might go on to charge Ted with destroying science fiction. Fortunately, the woman obviously felt that the severity of her allegation precluded the need for others.

Ted delighted the rest of the crowd with his well reasoned, low-key rebuttal. He referred to his examination of a 10 year run of *Yandro* during the period in which the Coulsons printed one amateur story an issue. He'd found only one writer who'd progressed to the professional fiction ranks. And as he also pointed out, Rog Ebert has produced little fiction in fandom or out of it.

As the woman left at the end of the panel, she muttered darkly that "we need to hold our own convention." Don't expect to read about it in *Folly*.

The main reason Joyce had circled the 4:00 panel was because it offered a surefire way of finally getting together with Shelby and Suzanne Vick. She'd never met them, but 20 years of my singing their praises had put them high on her list. Me? I love 'em. I'd stayed with the Vicks in

Panama City, FL, for part of summer vacation while a college student, and those days remain one of my golden recollections.

Our early arrival for the panel rewarded us with almost an hour with Suzanne Vick and Walter Willis. Lee Hoffman, absent due to family obligations, figured prominently in the conversation. All of us yearned for the brilliant economy of her wit and the warmth of her inimitable personality. (When Shelby discovered that Magicon was Hoffman-bereft, he'd offered to rent a car and corral her, but a phone call convinced him that Lee's really *couldn't* be with us.)

We probably would've been missing Vin Clarke, too, but Geri Sullivan had already informed us that Vincent was at the convention. She'd ordered a special teeshirt with his photo plastered around the front. She then invited the rest of the fans to write messages on it, recalling the fine times we'd shared with the absent BNF at Magicon.

Since it takes more bravery than mere fans can muster to contradict Geri, Vin came as close to attending Magicon as anyone who didn't leave his home that weekend. My contribution chided him for standing me up for a lunch date, but really, it was wonderful to finally meet a fan whom I have admired and respected for so long.

Ted White, James White, and Shelby Vick took their places at the panelists' table, prepared to delve into the mysteries of **Slant** and **Hyphen**. The computer which was to facilitate Chuch Harris' participation never materialized, so Teresa Nielsen-Hayden was promoted from stenographer to participant.

I envied her. Being in the audience for the next hour proved a feast of fannishness; actual participation must've been immensely satisfying. Teresa was a great fill-in, especially considering that she had no chance to prepare. Her observations and questions helped maintain the pace while keeping the focus on the glory days, as was appropriate.

"Is the microphone going?" said James White in that beautiful Irish brogue.

"Ted examined it uncertainly. 'It's vaguely working,' he allowed.

"Then I'll speak vaguely into it," promised James. He didn't, though. He spoke with crystalline clarity. His steady stream of sidesplitting anecdotes highlighted this excellent trip down memory lane.

Asked about the use of linoleum cuts in **Slant**,

James was ready with a remarkably practical answer. "We had to have lino cuts, because there was only enough type to set half-a-page." The genesis of his characteristic art style was equally down-to-earth: "Straight lines were all I could do."

James' recounting of the pin-in-the dictionary origin of the name "**Slant**" led naturally into Shelby's recollection of his personal discovery of **Slant**. He was so impressed by the Wheels of IF, Shelby remembers, that he had "the brilliant idea of bringing Walt Willis to Nolacon", the 1951 worldcon. It hadn't mattered to Shelby that he got their notion in July 1951. The Willis Fund had no chance to complete its work in time for Nolacon, but Shelby did spearhead the effort that eventually brought WAW together with The Crew in 1952. As Shelby explained, this not only paved the way for TAFF, but also did fandom the service of forcing Willis to start **Hyphen**. (Walt didn't have the time to do the typeset **Slant** and still contribute to all the Willis issues in his honor, so he delayed **Slant** and put some of that energy into the new mimeographed fanzine.

Mention of the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund drew an idealistic if somewhat unexpected, response from Theresa, who said that TAFF "is one of those good ideas that continues to be a good idea."

Part of Walter's job as editor, according to James White, was to referee disagreements between **Slant** staffers. One such controversy: "Bob wanted to draw naked women," while James preferred space ships.

"Bob asked me, 'Don't you know the difference between a spaceship and a woman?'," James quoted. "'Yes,' I told him, 'I am a paid up member of the British Interplanetary Society!'"

Ted's question about rivalry in Irish fandom shed light on the attitude beneath the jokes and teases. "'If John Berry produced a piece, we were glad because it meant we didn't have to do one,'" he confessed. "Walter was so good we never submitted less than our best."

Talk of competition moved James to speak of his lifelong battle with Chuch Harris. "My first reason for hating Chuch Harris was that he tried to break up Peggy and me." James described a letter written by Chuch and presented to Peggy during her first visit to Oblique House as the opening shot of the Don of Daventry's campaign to prolong White's bachelorhood.

As James warmed to his subject, the crowd began to hiss and stamp their feet at every mention of the nefarious Harris. "Chuch wanted to go on our honeymoon," he wailed, the pain still

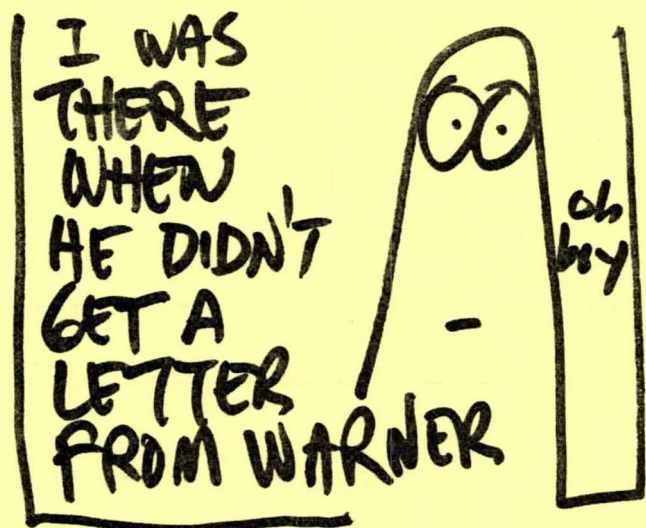
a tender spot in memory. He acknowledged that Chuch secured tickets to the smash hit theatrical "Kismet" for the just-married couple, "but he wanted to sit between us."

James did get some revenge for this Chuch Harassment. While honeymooning with Peggy in Paris, *sans* Chuch, James filled his water pistol from a spot near the Pont Neuf. Returning to London, he thoroughly doused his tormentor. Said the triumphant trufan, "I always wanted to see Chuch wringing in the Seine!"

Someone brought up Ghoodminton and, well, my notes get sketchy after that....

"Ghoodminton!" James roared. Perhaps the excitement of all those memories flooding back had overwhelmed James. The self-proclaimed "vile pro" had forgotten the standards of decorum expected of a man who writes science fiction for money. (Actually, I had some inkling that he had already forgotten them, when he failed to pinch Joyce's bottom.)

"Sides!" he shrieked from his new perch atop



the speakers' table. Suddenly, Ted and Shelby revealed their concealed bats. Teresa just smiled grimly and tapped his heavy walking stick against the edge of the table.

I don't know who brought the net. Yet there it was, a majestic sweep of white between the speakers and the audience. And what had once been a panel had transformed into a fearsome four-fan Ghoodminton squad.

James flipped the shuttlecock into the air. A flick of his bat arced toward Shelby Vick. A superb behind-the-back shunt directed it to Ted White on his extreme right, who hit a lazy looper to the waiting Teresa Nielsen-Hayden. Her eyes flashed. The whoosh of her stick in sudden motion was the only sound in the room.

I am one of those who feel that Moshe Feder would have returned this volley if he hadn't been saddled with a makeshift bat. The Military Book Club flyer simply didn't have the heft to stand up to Nielsen-Hayden's line drive.

"Point, our side!" cried James. Then he corkscrewed himself into the table, winding up for his definitive killer serve. Madeleine Willis screamed a warning, but the audience was as frozen as painted backdrop.

The lights in the meeting room flickered. They dimmed almost to darkness and then blazed anew, brighter than ever before.

An unearthly scream, an undulating wail, froze James in the classic Ghoodminton position for an instant. The delay was a matter of nanoseconds, but it was enough. Throughout the meeting room, hands flew to pockets, to briefcases, and even into back packs. No one even had time for embarrassment. Like kids taking their mitts to the ballpark in the hopes of catching one off the bat of McGwire or Bonds, each of us had brought a treasured Ghoodminton bat to Magicon.

Every fan in his or her own way had nurtured the same dream. Oh, maybe not to win. Against the practiced might of James White and his pupils, visions of victory seemed remote phantasms. But to finish, to play honorably in defeat. That was the thing!

James wound up again, doubly determined to smash the shuttlecock through any barrier.

The room door banged open.

The shuttlecock was in the air.

James swung his bat.

From nowhere came salvation.

Charles Randolph Harris to the rescue! He rose from a crouch as the shuttlecock bounded from James' bat with the unmistakable *twock!* of

the well-hit shot.

He was athletic. He was determined. Chuch was grace incarnate as his powerful spring lifted him high in the air, right into the path of the speeding shuttlecock.

Their eyes locked. James White and Chuch Harris.

"Face! Point for our side!" Chuch croaked as he slipped to the floor again, the shuttlecock still imbedded in the center of his forehead.

Madeleine Willis, Suzanne Vick, and Joyce Katz showed trufannishly unpartisan spirit by tending to the fallen Harris, who hovered between coherence and coma as the Panel set themselves to receive the Crowd's service.

I had my trusty Ghoodminton paddle in my hand. The plastic coated picture of Elvira gleamed in the room's ceiling lights. Two Irish Fandom traditions honored in a single artifact! The shape of a Ghoodminton bat, the essence of the Marilyn Monroe calendar.

"Service! March point!" I barked. I knew we didn't have time for a regulation game. The Panel "Why Is Fandom Like a Doughnut" was due to start at the top of the next hour." Maybe I should have grunted like Monica Selich. Well, maybe not.

I tossed the shuttlecock in the air, mentally timing my swing. It wouldn't do to commit a complete miss. "He can't handle his bat any more," they would say, shaking their heads. "Too slow, too old."

I thought of my unique paddle. I recalled the hours of practice in sleazy all-night Ghoodminton parlors. I brought my arm around in a vicious, sidearm slice that sent the shuttlecock rocketing, mean and low, at Ted White.

The audience gasped. The natural desire to win succumbed to admiration for Ted White's admirable return shot. Only Andy Hooper's selfless dive to the floor prevented the tally.

The best he could manage, and this was a tribute to his skill under the circumstances, was a mild vertical pop. Jeff Schalles set himself for what surely would have been the winner, but as he swung, up from his prone position came Harris!

"Face! Face!" he bellowed, unaware that a volley was already in progress, so that the special rule would not apply. He bobbed up directly beneath the descending shuttlecock! *Wok!* And then the shuttlecock was bouncing high in the air again!

This time, Schalles would not be denied. He swung bat as the shuttlecock dropped. The collision produced an authoritative *thwap!* sure

to dishearten even such a staunch aggregation as the Slant/Hyphen panel.

A powerful blow, to be sure, but straight at James. A nonchalant wave of his paddle deflected it to Shelby. He hardly paused his description of the ViColor process to tap it over to Theresa. With a Ghoodminton style as economical as her prose, her compact swing connected solidly!

It was heading toward Walter A. Willis. Earlier, he had seemed a little... subdued, perhaps even frail. Now, as he stood waiting to repel the shot, the strength of Trufandom seemed to invigorate him beyond normal human level.

"No! No! No!" James protested as he saw his old Ghoodminton nemesis set himself as he had so many times in the Fanattic. The slender arm sliced through the air. Willis' slight twist of the wrist at the last instant was barely noticeable.

Bat met shuttlecock with a *boing! Boing?* It was a sound never before heard in the sacred precincts of the Ghoodminton court. Working in secret, Walter had perfected an entirely new Ghoodminton maneuver, the Wondrous Wobbler!

The shuttlecock seemed to move in slow motion, curving this way and that in an erratic, unpredictable manner. James swung... and missed! He lost his balance and tumbled into Ted. This was unfortunate, since the Falls Church fan had drawn an accurate bead on the elusive missile and was preparing to blast it into the seats. But James threw him off-stride, and his stroke fired the ball toward Shelby instead of the crowd. He ducked them but it clipped the top of his head and once again changed trajectory.

Now it seemed to hover tantalizingly over Theresa. Still gyrating crazily, it reached its apogee and started toward the floor. She wound up, drawing her stick all the way back. This was it, the killshot to end the Magicon Ghoodminton Classic.

She brought the stick around, shouting in triumph as the heavy shaft scythed toward the slowly falling shuttlecock. This was the moment of truth...

Just as Theresa's walking stick approached the shuttlecock, though, it took one last unexpected dart and bounced on the floor with an audible *thunk!*

"Point our aside! And Match!" Walter said as he resumed his seat. The rest of the audience stood and cheered. The panelists bowed their heads in homage to this demonstration of ultimate Ghoodminton prowess..

Beaten by Himself. If they had not won, they had at least lost to the best.

Then the mob for the next program item poured into the room, and the Magicon Ghoddminton showdown passed into fanhistory.

That's the way it happened. Unless, maybe, I misread my notes a little..

Chapter Seven Friday Night Us All R-i-i-ight

Chapter Seven: Friday Night is All Right

If this chapter is briefer than the previous one, blame (or credit) Shelby and Suzanne Vick. I enjoyed their companionship at dinner so much that I never opened my notebook. Who knows what Vickish Witticism are now lost in a haze of fannish camaraderie and well-grilled hamburger?

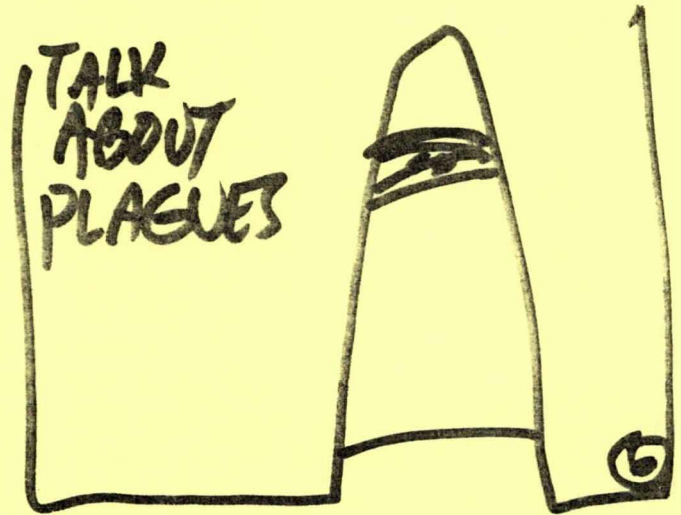
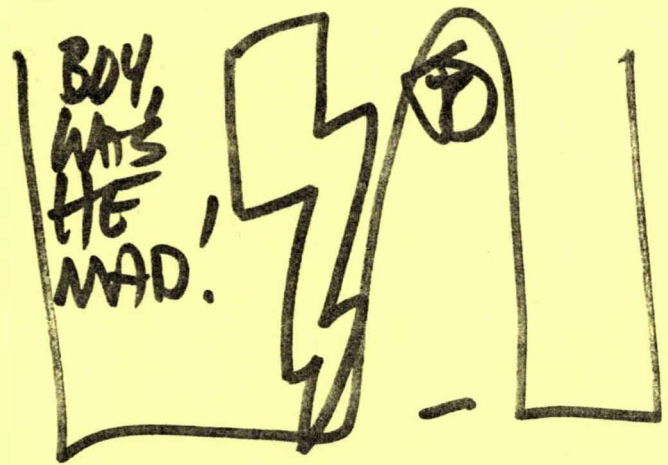
Back in the Fan Lounge again, it was our turn to host. We had arranged to give the Magicon FAPA party and, thanks to a timely assist from Richard Brandt, had gotten the appropriate notice in the con's daily newszine.

Fred Lerner and I had a chance to compare lives and times at greater length. The wild conservative boy has grown into a solid citizen of rural Vermont, but he's still *meshuggah* after all those years since we were neofans together.

I've written that I don't feel the same resonance to "Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator to the Enchanted Convention" that I do to "The Enchanted Duplicator". The reality beneath the allegory just doesn't hit home quite the same way. So it's only fair to recount a discussion Fred and I had that sounds like it could've inspired one aspect of the Willis and White collaboration.

When Fred moved to the Green Mountain State, he found Vermont Jewry in a woeful condition. Disorganized and thinly scattered, the area's Jews had little chance to partake of the same community lifestyle the urban co-religionists enjoy.

Fred described his use of the same techniques which once helped him organize SF clubs to revivifying the congregation in his immediate area. When he wanted to tell the state's other Jewish strongholds what his group had done, he applied his knowledge of fanzines to the task. Now every Jewish congregation in Vermont



either publishes a fanzine or is in process of starting one. I imagine that the spot cartoons in these publications bear an eerie resemblance to the ones we print in fandom, minus the propellers on the beanies, of course.

Lloyd Penney has found a way to dissuade any would-be wits from saying that he "turned up like a Bad Penney". To the contrary, he's developed a strategy guaranteed to get him known as Fandom's Good Luck Penney.

The Canadian came to Magicon armed with a stack of neatly enveloped letters of comment. Each time he met a fanned, he'd haul out the appropriate LoC and hand it over along with a firm handshake.

This was my first meeting with Lloyd, and I'm looking forward to a renewal at the earliest possible opportunity. He's every bit as affable and intelligent in person as in his letters, and I've come to think of him as one of the pillars of the Folly letter column.

He mentioned plans to publish a new fanzine, and I expressed my enthusiasm for this project by immediately offering an article. How I wished I'd thought of his idea, It would have been great to hand him the finished article on the spot the way he'd given me his LoC.

Lloyd brought something even more precious than one of his fine letters with him to the Fanzine Lounge, an enthusiastic new fanzine fan named Dennis Caswell. I promised to send the Burlington, Ontario, resident this issue of **Folly**. Maybe he'll be as dedicated about responding to fanzines as his countryman.

About 9 p.m., Joyce and I strolled over to the Peabody's room 2529, where the familiar faces were assembling. Shortly after our arrival, someone came over from the Minneapolis suite next door to encourage us to add our messages to a giant wall hanging they were preparing for the absent Jim Young. One of the co-founders of the "Minneapolis in '73" bid, business had taken Jim to Moscow instead of Orlando for Labor Day. (Although I've known Jim since we both entered fandom around the same time, we haven't kept in close contact, so I don't know too much about his actual occupation. Maybe it has something to do with the garment trade, since I thought I heard someone mention "peace work.")

Ignoring this plea was unthinkable. Not only had Jim and I shared many fine fannish times back in the 1960s, but the idea he'd helped launch had poured forth a fountain of good cheer and hospitality in the ensuing two decades. I decided to slip next door and add my few words before creeping serconism made it too difficult to move.

I found John Douglas standing next to the poster, a large tray of colored markers in hand. I'd have had my own pen at hand, if I'd known he was preparing to uncork my favorite line of the night.

"So, did you come of your own accord," He greeted me, "or did Ted White send you?"

"I'm here of my own free will," I said as I selected a garish felt tip. "Besides, Ted White can't send me places."

"Oh yes he can," John contradicted. "He's entitled to do that as a Living Legend."

I signed and returned to 2529. I recounted this exchange to a fan renowned for his perception and analytical acumen. "I believe John was plotzed," was his verdict.

The party had grown appreciably while I'd

been busy, but I grabbed a vacant piece of carpet next to Ted White's seat on the edge of the bed. Theresa Nielsen-Hayden and her Tor Books assistant Maggie sat down next to me on the floor, filling the space between the foot of the bed and the chest of drawers.

Ted beamed down at the three of us benignly, a beatific smile on his face. "I'm Tucker," he blurted. A look of consternation replaced the smile as he pondered possible misinterpretations of his comment. He went on to explain that he wasn't comparing himself to the Grandfather of Us All in any sense other than one. "Twenty years ago," he explained, "Tucker sat on the bed, and I was one of the fans clustered around his feet. Now I am sitting here and other fans are learning their fannishness from me."

Ted needn't have worried about misinterpretation. I found this evidence of the continuity of fandom greatly comforting. And Ted was right. The student had become the teacher with pupils of his own.

I repeated a similar comment Ken Forman made at a recent Fanzine Appreciation Society gathering. "Twenty years from now," he said after looking around our living room, "I may be sitting in a place like this with a lot of young fans around me. And I'll be telling them how I used to sit by Arnie and Joyce Katz as they told me stories from fanhistory."

Then Theresa spoke up. "You taught me almost everything I know about doing a periodical," she said, as much for Maggie's information as to honor Ted.

"I did?" he asked, genuinely surprised by the compliment.

"I guess that makes two of us," I added.

"Two?" he said. "You mean you?"

"Well, who else, Ted?" I countered.

Many fans have helped and influenced me, but Ted's contributions to my professional and fannish development are incalculable. I've always taken pride in the fact that my two main mentors are Ted White and Sam Moskowitz, fine fellows who do not exchange birthday cards with each other. SaM helped polish my writing to professional slickness, and Ted taught me the editorial game.

I'll never forget the many hours Ted and I spent discussing editors of the present and past, as well as the nuts and bolts of putting together a magazine. I've gotten a lot of mileage out of being a supposed editorial whiz, but many of the things I've done are based on insights gleaned from Ted

White. Someday, I'd like to see what he could do on a professional magazine that gave him a free hand and a decent budget.

Chapter Eight The Cream of the Gist

The problem of whether to take photographs or star in them was decided for me. Our generally dependable camera took one shot and then refused to open its automatic lens protector again for the balance of the weekend. Joyce tried to get one of those disposable camera at the hotel gift shop, but they didn't carry them.

She spent at least twice the energy required to take our own pictures ingratiating herself with Moshe Feder, who came equipped with photographic equipment. Teasing aside, I sympathized with her yearning to have a tangible record of what had become a glorious weekend.



A Letter Found Leafed In an Abandoned Program Book

(Author's note: I found this letter stuck into a program book after the woman described in the main body of my con report left the meeting room following the "Well-Read Fan" panel. I hope it doesn't lose too much of its flavor in the transition from the flowery handwriting on "Star Trek Forever!" stationery to the textface of this article.)

Dear Gail,

Well, here I am at the Magicon worldcon in Orlando, Florida! It is very exciting here, but a little strange.

The first thing I noticed was all this hoopla about Walter A. Willis, the foreigner they made the Fan Guest of Honor. He's s some sort of punctuation expert where he comes from, specializing in slants and hyphens.

I don't know what this has to do with science fiction. If Mr. Willis writes fanfic, I don't remember seeing any of his stories. Maybe he wrote it in the old days, back in the 1970s. I don't know, because I wasn't even a fan then.

That wasn't the only thing. I stumbled on a whole nest of Mr. Willis' friends in a place called the Fan Lounge or some such. They were lounging around, all right. This big guy in his 40s with a receding hairline seemed to be nailed to one of the sofas they had in there. He talked a mile a minute about fanzines, and I never did recognize one of them, and I know all the good storyzines.

I met James White! He is a very big professional author, even if he isn't too choosy about the company he keeps. He looked at me through his magnifying glass and said that he hoped I wouldn't be short with him. He was a nice man in general, but I don't think it was fair to say that, because some people can't help being short.

I didn't see any storyzines anywhere, but then I read in the program that there was a panel called "The Well-Read Fan". I thought with sudden inspiration "that's for me" so I went.

I didn't know anyone there, not even by their nametags. A distinguished looking man named Ted White seemed to be in charge of the panel. He's an author and an editor, but he sure didn't act like it!

Instead of talking about the science fiction and fantasy stories that fanzines are publishing right now in today's world of fandom, he went on about stories about fans. Those aren't science fiction!

I tried to remind him about the main storyzines, but he wanted to talk about one called YOU KNOW or something like that that only had one story in each issue! I never heard of it, so I wasn't surprised when he admitted that this YOU KNOW didn't have almost any fiction by future pro authors.

I've taken about all of the foolishness I can stand. So I am going to put aside this letter and stab Mr. White through the heart with my ball point pen.

Wish me luck.

Your friend,

Though I had no firm rooting interest in the site of the 1995 worldcon, Glasgow's bid was impressive. The big green Loch Ness Monster that paraded through the public areas drew appreciative comments wherever it roamed. The same can't be said for the hall Ninjas. The scarcity of hall costumes made the con more pleasant for me than Westercon 45.

I mentioned my neutrality to Chuch Harris. "If Glasgow wins, you and Joyce will come and stay with us," he replied. I began rooting silently for Glasgow at that instant.

I have nothing against fancy dress. Such finery adds color and drama, and I've enjoyed the masquerades I've attended. Too many hall costume wearers seem to geld the lily by roleplaying the character appropriate to the costume round-the-clock, however. I don't derive much pleasure from the conversation of a roomful of Klingons and werewolves. I have enough trouble relating to Earth People.

I always enjoy talking to Linda Bushyager, though she horrified me by saying the last few issue of **Folly** hadn't arrived. I assured Linda that after all the help she'd given when I was first coming back, she's on my permanent mailing list.

The Fanzine Lounge was the crossroads of the fan universe. Several times I found a comfortable seat, sat back, and let the fanworld parade past my station with excellent results.

That's how I met DUFF winner Roger Weedall for the first time. Roger seemed a fine representative of his fandom, and I made sure Joyce gave him a sample **Folly** and added his name to the mailing list. I'd have liked to chat a bit longer, but he was on a Mission and could not be diverted from his quest.

"I'm hunting for Sheryl Birkhead," he said.

"Well, as long as you eat what you catch," I responded.

Joyce led a skinny fellow up to me. "Guess who I am?" he said as he covered his nametag with superfluous coyness. (I can't read badges under the best circumstances, and the minuscule lettering on Magicon tags removed even the faint possibility that I could read anyone's name.)

It was Hank Luttrell, another of those who'd entered fandom shortly after Bailes and I did. Hank was also friends with Joyce when both lived in St. Louis.

Our happiness was dimmed only by his evident lack of interest in fandom. When Joyce

said we'd see him in his current hometown of Madison for Corflu next spring, he said we'd have to visit his bookstore, because he wasn't going. I think Hank stuck pretty close to his huckster table during Magicon, so I don't know if Magicon's magic worked on him sufficiently to change his plan. I hope so; **Starling** was always a dependably readable fanzine, and Hank always added a lot to social occasions, too.

I was anxious for Joyce and the Vicks to get along well, but reality surpassed my hopes. Many have commented on the phenomenon of Instant Friendship; Joyce and Suzanne are a textbook case. They'd met for the first time on Friday, and by noon the next day, they were virtually inseparable.

I said as much to Shelby as we loped along behind them enroute to the Peabody to collect some fanzines Joyce wanted to distribute at the con. Shelby's happiness matched my own. Both women are capable of forming instant, extreme dislikes, and their whirlwind friendship was infinitely preferable to the catfight that might otherwise have ensued.

They must have heard us, because Suzanne looked back over her shoulder and said, "We've comparing notes about you, Arnie," she said, pointing a finger at me. "And *you* are in trouble."

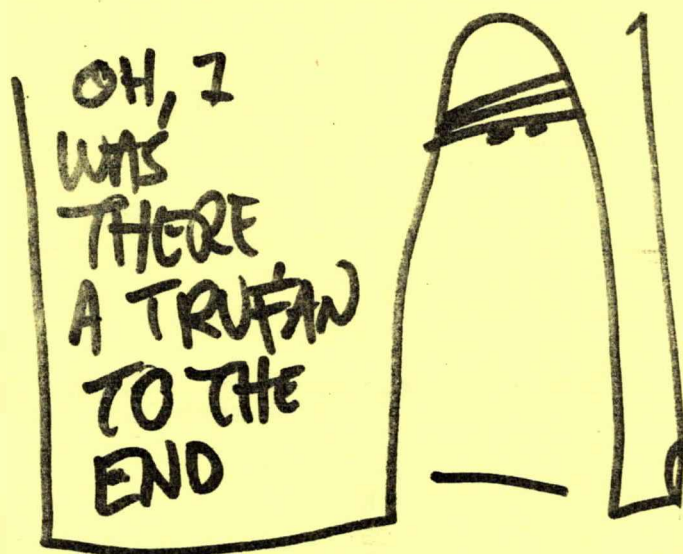
I laughed. They had nothing on me. At least nothing I could remember. You never know about women, especially those like Suzanne and Joyce, who have a wild little streak of roguishness. Well, since no one started yelling at me, I guess they reached a favorable consensus.

The fanzine in question was **Wind**, a poetry collection I'd helped her assemble for FAPA. After we retrieved the copies, I noticed Joyce was suddenly shy about giving one to Suzanne. "Some people don't like poetry," she said, hugging the issues of **Wind** to herself.

"You don't have anything to worry about," I soothed, "as long as **Wind** doesn't increase that number."

We returned to the Convention Center and saw Magicon chairman Joe Siclari for the first time. I was one of many who showered praise on him for the magnificent job he had done.

"I said that this would be last my worldcon," I told him after we'd swept up all the loose adjectives, "but I'll keep going to them if you'll agree to stay on as chairman." A white-faced, shaken Joe Siclari staggered off to make someone else happy. Or perhaps it was only to avoid the



Surely there are capable con-runners who'd like to swap their present occupations for the chance to work professionally on science fiction cons.

When I broached my brainstorm to Joyce, she was aghast.

"You've gone over the top," she admonished. "I haven't said this often in our 22 years together, but you've gone too far this time."

I was about to protest that I had kept my hands to myself during the entire con, when I realized she was still talking about my convention idea. This was a stern rebuke, particularly from someone who has proposed excommunicating fantasy fans from conventions and making them meet in a dingy hotel on the bad side of town.

"You're talking about running conventions," she scolded. "Running conventions." She made "running conventions" sound like a disease. "You are a fanzine fan. It is not for you to speak of such matters."

I hung my head in shame.

"Trust in Bruce Pelz," she told me in the same tone in which Gandalf spoke to young Frodo. "He will take care of us."

Joe gracefully accepted a little teasing about the phenomenal Luck of Siclari. He's the man who found copies of *Slant* in a New Orleans bookshop and a Hannes Bok sketchbook in Seattle. More recently, his successful attempt to rescue unsold copies of *Warhoon 28* netted him the Bergeron fanzine collection at a bargain price. It's a testament to Joe's popularity that most fans expressed their envy jocularly.

Even the risk of somehow resuscitating the Great War of the 80s couldn't prevent fans from quizzing Joe about Richard Bergeron's current doings. I got the impression that Richard is still a bit wistful about fandom, but that he doesn't see much of a place for himself in the microcosm these days.

Joe passed on one news bit sure to please both Bergeron supporters and detractors. His friends will be glad to know he's achieving successes in the field of fine gallery art, while his enemies may rejoice at the news that Bergeron has been publicly hung.

The "Fandom in the 60s" panel, starring Ted White, Andy Porter, and Bjo Trimble mixed nostalgia and sociology in an entertaining manner. The session started a little slowly, but found its direction when Ted began reminiscing about Bjo's pivotal role in Los Angeles fandom of that era. No woman minds being referred to as "stunning", no

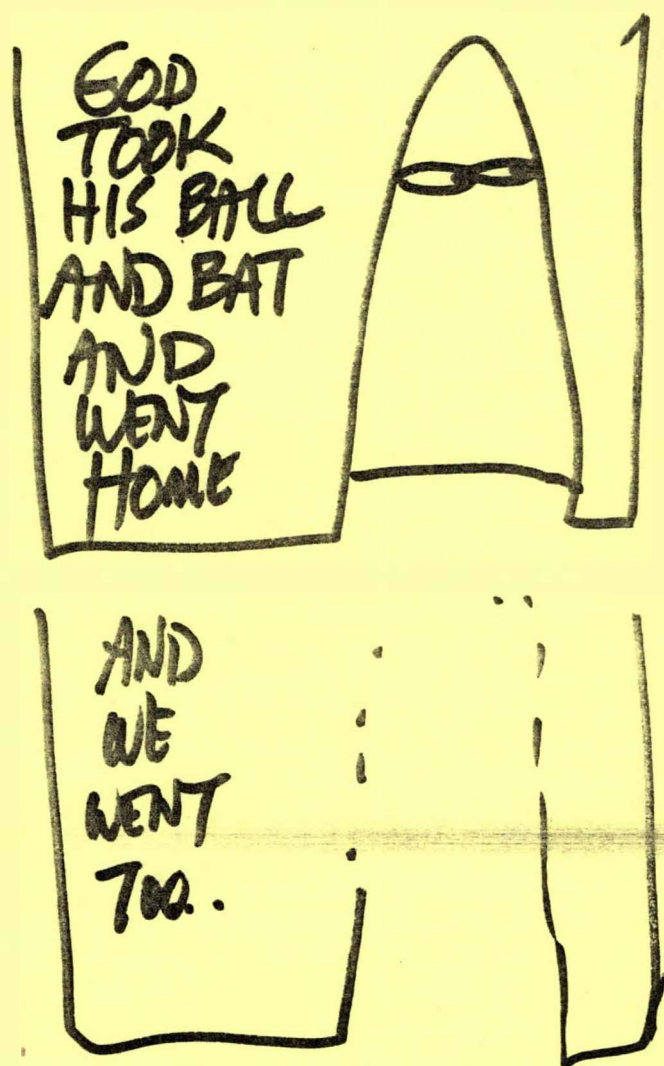
"Draft Siclari" movement a-borning in the Fan Lounge.

Seriously, maybe it's time for fandom to consider a permanent convention staff instead of the present all-volunteer army? The Magicon crew did an exemplary job, but I've begun to wonder if we aren't asking too much of our fan friends.

Staging a five-day event for 7,000 fans is an awesome undertaking. Those in key committee positions may seriously hurt their personal and professional lives in process of making us all happy.

It would be hard to imagine a worldcon without the help, ideas, and participation of the fandom in the city in which it is held. That's what gives the worldcon such individuality and character.

Yet with worldcons now handling over a million dollars each, there might be room to create some permanent, salaried positions.



matter how many times she's heard it before, and Bjo rewarded the audience with many personal recollections of what it was like to be a fan back then.

Ted balanced praise for Bjo's physical allure by reminding the audience that she had founded Project Art Show at the dawn of that decade. "Everyone said that no one would pay more than \$10 for a piece of fan art," he reminded. Bjo's work on behalf of PAS poked a big hole in that assumption, as anyone who tours a contemporary worldcon art show room quickly realizes.

Andy Porter, I believe, paid homage to a tedious activity now virtually banished from the fanzine scene: justification of text. The mere mention of the odious job of retyping the same material twice brought groans from all three panelists. (Some radicals advocate the

elimination of justification of content by eliminating second thoughts, but that is a subject for another time.)

Someone recalled that Harlan Ellison took a shortcut when getting that even righthand margin for his fanzines by estimating by eye. Unfortunately, Harlan sometimes found himself approaching the end of a line with a few extra spaces to burn. This created the characteristic channels of white found in his early fanzines.

The panel commented on the many changes which swept fandom in the 1960s. Ted and Andy felt that the ferment in fandom reflected the radical upheavals in society as a whole.

Bjo mentioned one trend that was peculiar to fandom: "Girls!" The ratio may've been as high as 30 to 1 in 1960, but it had fallen to six- or seven-to-one by the end of the decade. As someone who married one of those femmefans who began activity in the 1960s, this proved to be one of my Favorite Trends.

Joyce and I had postponed lunch to make sure we'd be in time to catch the panel. Our virtue received its reward. We got to spend mealtime with Shelby and Suzanne Vick, Walt and Madeleine Willis, and Chuch Harris.

At one point, I looked down to scribble something in my notebook toward writing this report. When I looked up, five of the six fans at the table were also scribbling.

This raised the spectre of literary overkill. Imagine every incident covered by a half-dozen of these folks. I could see it now....

"So I said to Madeleine"

"So Arnie said to me..."

"So Arnie and Madeleine were talking and..."

"It was a fine hamburger, if only they could lettuce be without the greenery..."

As FAPA's putative first lady, assuming I didn't lose to a write-in candidate, Joyce devoted some of her con-going time to proselytizing for new members. I'd been proud of the gang I'd recruited over the previous six months, including Ken Forman, Peggy Burke, and Marci McDowell, but I must admit that Joyce seemed to be doing pretty well on her own.

I was quite shocked at lunch when it developed that Shelby, Walter, and Chuch all expressed their intention to join the group in the near future. I don't know if they'll carry through these resolutions made in the heat of fanac, but it would certainly be a wonderful thing to see all three publishing FAPazines. If they all do join, I expect Joyce to

mount a powerful campaign against me for President next year.

We went back to the Fan Lounge to keep Chuch Harris company during his stint as host. I saw him about to write something on the Vince Clarke teeshirt, which gave me an idea. "Why don't you spill your bheer on it," I wrote. "Then you can chastise him for his sloppy drinking."

Shelby and Suzanne had volunteered for host duty after Chuch, so we stayed on to keep them company. Though it was Hugo night, the Fan Lounge got a steady flow of visitors, and we passed the evening enjoyable, talking of the fan things we had done and would like to do.

After helping close the Lounge, we crossed over to the Peabody, where 2525 was already going strong. Rich brown regaled his audience with horror stories about his repeated efforts to exorcise demon nicotine.

Anyone who saw rich chain smoking in the 1960s and 1970s might guess he wouldn't have an easy time, but his horror stories were suitably... horrible.

One incident he described was waking up from a dream and wondering whether he had really smoked a cigarette or only imagined he'd backslid. He went back to sleep, still perplexed. "My girlfriend came to me in a dream," he said, "and told me that, of course, I had smoked the cigarette."

A good journalist would be reporting the Hugo Awards presentation rather than a minor incident in the life of richard wayne brown right about here, but I went to a party. I got this account of the Hugo ceremony the old fashioned way, eavesdropping on conversations.

Alas for reportorial accuracy, I don't care much about awards and honors in fandom, so I didn't make a tidy list of all the winners. On the other hand, I did hear quite a bit from attendees about the mis-presentation of the fanzine rocketship.

The big screen behind the dais flashed "**Mimosa**", but the envelope from which Spider Robinson read the winner's name said "**Lans Lantern**". The miscue came to light shortly after George Laskowski accepted his prize, which he then had to surrender. Everyone to whom I spoke was impressed with George's generous gesture of personally presenting the statuette to Dick and Nicki Lynch.

Maybe fandom *is* growing up. Something like this might have gotten out of hand in the 70s, but now a few apologies are apparently sufficient to

restore tranquility. Brad Foster and Dave Langford, two fine **Folly** contributors, copped the other fan Hugos.

Parties got rolling a little later than on previous nights, because the Hugo awards ran long. By 10:00 pm, both the Minneapolis suite and 2529 were cranked up full blast.

Ted White, Barnaby Rappoport, and I discussed fanzine reviews for some time. Besides lobbying for more issues of **Let's Fanac**, Ted and I expressed our admiration for Barnaby's talent for reviews that tell the unvarnished truth without giving offense.

"They'd kill me if I went back to writing those straight-from-the-shoulder reviews," I confessed, for I wrote KTF -- I try to learn a new fannish word every day -- reviews for several fanzines in the 1960s. It was a crazy time; I was young and stupid. My most brazen act: under coercion from the editor, I critiqued a fanzine in its own pages! I gave it mixed, generally favorable notices.

As Ted expressed his admiration for Barnaby's reviewing technique, I contemplated my sins of long ago. For an instant, I imagined myself back at an IA (Insurgents Anonymous) meeting. I felt like jumping up and proclaiming, "I am Arnie Katz, and I am a recovering Insurgent."

I hope others continue the KTF tradition, but I've made a conscious decision not to write scathing fanzine critiques. I don't mind scuttling a worthless video game in **Electronic Games**, but I can't do that with fanzines. My experience is that fanzine editors seldom learn much from a public tongue lashing. Most zines are free, so it costs nothing to skim, or even skip, bad ones. After all, it is a hobby...

Possibly, I'd feel differently if I had Barnaby's elegant touch. I hope our exhortation to publish more frequently encourage him enough to engender a more frequent **Let's Fanac**.

As a freewheeling discussion of Salvatore Dali and existential philosophy raged on one side of the room, the rest of us chatted about comic books. I was anxious to get Ted's field report on the comics industry, because my publisher is contemplating a few projects in that area. I reciprocated by telling Ted about my experiences with a company, mostly known for its board games, which was negotiating with Ted for some comics work.

The fanzine Hugo mix-up was still fresh in everyone's thoughts. It prompted someone to mention "Zombies of the Gene Pool", a new fanzine-oriented mystery from the same author as

"Bimbos of the Death Sun."

This was the first I'd heard of "Zombies". It drew considerable fire from the denizens of 2529 for its alleged lack of understanding of fanzines. I was told that the writer considers fanzines a waste of time and can't understand why a professional would spend effort on them.

I could've explained it to her. When I write professionally, I try to entertain (and inform) a mass audience. A mass *anonymous* audience. I'm on the stage, and they're in the paid seats.

My fanwriting addresses a small, known group of friends and acquaintances. I'm sitting in the livingroom, not squinting into the spotlights. It's a more intimate, personal experience, and the coin in which it handsomely repays my effort is response. There's every chance that what I write will inspire an array of responses that inform and entertain *me*.

I think all the traveling caught up to me Saturday night. Quite a few fans were still going strong at 3:00 a.m., but I wasn't one of them. With a good-bye wave, Joyce and I called it a night and returned to our room.

Chapter Nine

The Adventures of Young Noah

The first news I got when we reached the con on Sunday was that Glasgow had won the bid for the 1995 worldcon. I felt a pang for old acquaintances Frank and Anne Dietz, who were working with the Atlanta in '95 bid, but the Scottish victory was a popular one. They really are an impressive group, though someone may need to have a talk with a few of the bid people who revealed plans to run a minor Glasgow con-worker for TAFF "as a reward". This may have been momentary exuberance, though, since the Glasgow contingent conducted themselves impeccably throughout Magicon.

The Walt Willis Interview, skillfully conducted by Ted White, drew a full house. More than any specific comments, what came through was Walter's overall attitude toward fandom. What Ted termed "a level of idealism that expresses the way fandom should be."

No fan has given more generously of his time and talent to our hobby than Walter. I doubt I was the only fan who felt warm inside when he

asserted without hesitation that "it was all worthwhile".

Moshe Feder asked Walter whom *he* admires in fandom. "Burbee," said fandom's leading expert and critic. The crowd clapped and cheered. "He is the complete fanwriter." He also lauded Bob Tucker, whom he called "the inventor of fannishness."

Walter was less adulatory about Francis Towner Laney, whom he called "The Anti-Burbee".. He admitted that, in the early 1950s, he felt Laney was a pernicious influence who should've been "taken out and disposed of." The depth of Willis' distaste for Laney's extreme negativism may be gauged from the admission that he tried to maneuver FTL into starting a feud.

One thrust involved Laney's habit of sending Certificates of Fuggheadedness to fans whose behavior outraged his sensibilities. Willis turned the tables by sending him a certificate after Laney revealed that he had forsaken fandom for stamp collecting.

Discussion of "Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator" prompted Ted to voice a question that many others have pondered: Why don't conventions take place in Trufandom? Willis surprised me when he replied that they had set it up that way to suggest that "fandom is far too Mundane" these days.

This led Fred Lerner to inquire what could be done to improve fandom. "The basics of fannishness are there," Walter answered. "They just need to be reawakened." Perhaps fanhistory will someday mention the Magicon as a major step in that revivification.

The interview wasn't all philosophy. With the aid of a few prompting notes from Madeleine and others, Walter told stories, both familiar and new, about his early days in fandom.

Walt explained that finding a U.S. edition prozine propelled him toward fandom. When he saw that these magazines had stories that the British version omitted, he began to track down as many of them as possible.

Walter recalled the fateful day when he and Madeleine sought shelter from a sudden rainstorm in a bookstore. Both reached for the magazine at the same time. Madeleine has always said that she knew Walter's intentions toward her were serious when he let her look through it first.

Rich brown, who was sitting with us in the audience, said that he'd have been surprised if Walter A. Willis had done anything else. "After all, no gentleman would beat a lady to a pulp."

The quest for U.S. science fiction mags involved him with Operation Fantast, a notable source of such goodies. Indirectly through that connection came the receipt of his first fanzine, **Alembic**. "We thought we could do better," Willis admitted, "so we did." Who says crudzines have no value?

The focus moved on to the pivotal change from **Slant** to **Hyphen**. Or, as Ted put it, "from something that looked like a prozine to an unmistakable fanzine." Walter explained the switch as a consequence of Irish Fandom's move away from being methodical prozine-hunters. "We decided to concentrate on fandom," he summarized.

Lunch was a particularly gala occasion. WAW, Chuch and Sue Harris, Frank Lunney, Ted White, Richard Brandt, and Michelle Lyons joined Joyce and I over at the Beeline.

The conversational appetizer consisted of Frank, with a little prompting from Ted, describing his antics as a driver. Thanks to my eye operation, I can now qualify for a license for the first time in my life. I decided to do my bit for highway safety by remaining strictly a passenger. Lack of depth perception seems a significant detriment to safe driving, however officialdom may look at it.

I've felt very good about my sacrifice, but hearing of Frank's automotive exploits has given me pause to consider. True, I have been neutralized as a potential road hazard, but there are still many people who must drive the same highways as Freewheelin' Frank.

Now that Glasgow had won the 1995 worldcon, I asked Chuch if he wanted to reconsider the invitation. He stuck by his offer, so I guess the Harrises will be stuck with the Katzes if we can arrange to get over to Britain three years from now. The prospect of spending some more time with those two delightful people, Chuch and Sue, has certainly pushed Glasgow 'way up on our list of priorities.

The Fan Lounge on Sunday afternoon proved a good place to meet people I'd somehow missed during the first four days. Roger "Teddy Bear" Sims, a Detroit fan of 40 years' standing who had recently returned to fanpublishing, strolled into the room. After someone identified me to him, Roger got an incredibly pleased look on his face. He ran across the room and threw his arms around me with a glad cry of, "You're back! You're back!"

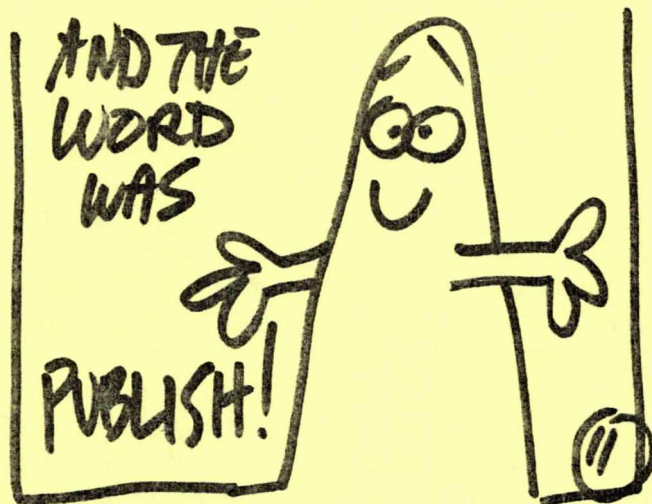
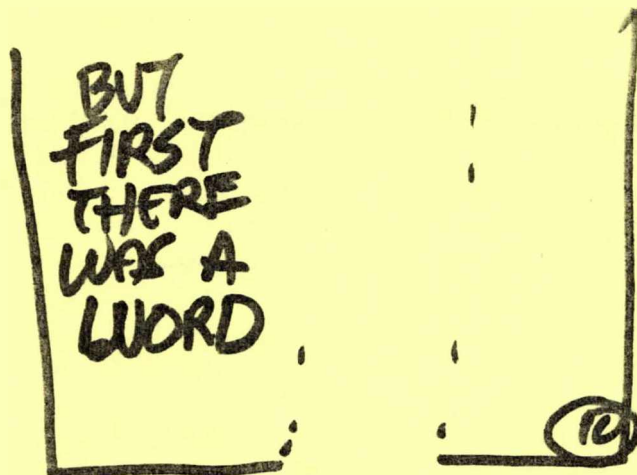
"You're back! You're back!" I keened. Then we congratulated each other on our de-gafiations.

There wasn't a dry eye in the Fan Lounge. I don't think I've ever seen a more heart-tugging reunion between two people who'd never met.

Roger and I discussed SAPS. He's a member again, and I've been number one on the waitlist for five mailings. I told him I was looking forward to getting to know him better through the group, if I ever advance to the roster.

He commiserated with my lonely, endless vigil. I've remained poised on the brink of membership so long that SAPS has become a little unreal to me, even more so than can be explained by having read its slightly wacky mailings. I even got a letter from Official Editor Burnett Toskey prior to Magicon virtually apologising for the 15-month of near-membership.

Tom Feller introduced me to a pair of his friends as "President of FAPA". This obliged me to Act Presidential, so I cautioned him on jumping the gun. Just because I was running unopposed doesn't mean that I'll win. "You can beat no one,"



Tom assured me. It was good to know I was his candidate.

I couldn't restrain my curiosity about New Orleans area fandom as described in Tom's excellent FAPazines. Each mailing, he regales us with horror stories of merciless fanpolitical shenanigans suitable for frightening small fan children who don't eat their crottled greens.

Tom confirmed that the New Orleans is a hotbed of publishing, even though none of the fanzines travels far from the delta. Tom seemed a little envious of that fact, possibly because these feudzines are generally as vitriolic as they are anonymous. It's strange to hear about a fandom that is mired in ceaseless fighting during this era in which good feeling predominates in general fandom.

I'd heard that John D. Berry was in the hall, but Joyce and I had no luck locating him. People have flattered me with comments about how much I still look like my younger self, but the compliment more justly belongs to John. When we finally did see John, I recognized him without any trouble, because he hardly looked different from the gangly teenager whom I invited to a FISTFA meeting so long ago.

While Joyce and Suzanne hatched Ghu-knows-what plots at our expense, Shelby and I talked about wrestling. I consider it quite a testament to Mr. Vick's Fine Mind that he has figured out the entire mat scam in fairly minute detail without help from inside knowledge. He'd sent me a fragment of a novel-in-progress that contained a wrestling scene, so that I could authenticate for him. The required work was negligible, because Shelby had fathomed the intricate world of athletic theatricality as unerringly as the canniest "smartfan" reader of Dave Meltzer's **The Wrestling Observer**.

Joyce and I felt the need to freshen up for the last night of our convention. Vowing to rendezvous with the Vicks back at the Fan Lounge for the Corflu Party, we went back to our room to freshen up for our Last Night at Magicon. Not just the last night, however, but our swansong at the con. Joyce said our plane departed at 10 a.m. Monday. By her calculation, we had to be ready to check out well before most of our friends re-enter society. So this would also be the occasion of a lot of "good bye"s.

When we got to the Fan Lounge for the Corflu Party, we found the door blockaded. A Puffin, which I confiscated the next day for **Folly**, informed us that the venue had shifted to the

"Minneapolis in '73" suite.

Since Puffins are generally trustworthy critters, that's exactly what we did. Am I the only fan who thinks Ghu's Frozen People have a knack for throwing these humongous parties? I don't like crowds, so I seldom stay long at big open parties, but I found 2525 very enjoyable each night.

I've always liked the "Minneapolis in '73" conceit. Las Vegas is impregably protected from the temptation to host either a Westercon or Worldcon. It would be impossible to get hotel space in Las Vegas over either the Fourth of July or Labor Day weekends.

Ken Forman, who chaired Silvercon I, has come to take comfort in this fact. As a leader of the local fan group, Ken would be the most likely candidate to chair either con. Then I explained the concept of "Minneapolis in '73", that they're bidding for the worldcon that never comes.

I referred to the barriers against a big con as "impregnable". I don't think Ken wants to take any chances, because his eyes lit up. "I think we should bid for '73" against them," he said. Watch out Minneapolis, Vegas in '73 is on the march. Remember you read it here first. Then forget it.

I came upon Shelby Vick challenging Jack Speer (who says he is younger than Art Widner) with the question: Why are there so many lawyers and so few doctors in fandom. Everyone took a whack at it, without anyone propounding a Definitive Theory. My own proposal is that lawyers are naturally more inclined to writing and reading, prerequisites for fanzine fandom, than are medicos. (Not that there haven't been doctors in fandom, such as C.L. Barrett and Alan Nourse, but the lawyer-to-doctor ratio is fairly lopsided.)

Rich brown sat down with us, and the subject shifted to fanhistory in general, and numbered fandoms and focal point fanzines, in particular. Rich and I have expressed puzzlement about Silverberg's nomination of a prozine letter column as the focal point of fandom in the mid-1940s. It seems to violate the spirit of the whole Numbered Fandoms scheme to have something outside fandom serve as the focal point. I'll grant that this wasn't a quantitative highpoint in fanpublishing, but might not a fanzine like Joe Kennedy's **Vampire** have some claim to that role?

Juffus could shed no light on this. Silverberg formulated that part of the theory in an article that built on Speer's original outline in "Up to Now" and **Fancyclopedia I**. The fates declined to deliver Agberg into our midst at this propitious moment, so this question must continue to

perplex.

Rich and I kicked around the question of whether the focal point concept has any utility in today's fandom. If I took rich's meaning correctly, he believe that the focal point fanzine could be made relevant to fanhistory redefining the term. Restricting the universe to fanzine fandom as represented by Corflu and Ditto, it might be possible for a fanzine to serve as a central focus of fan activity in the manner of **Quandry** and **Spacewarp**.

Neither of us cared to nominate a current focal point fanzine, even in this restricted sense. Perhaps this designation is best applied five years or so after the fact. A little perspective draws some of the heat out of this discussion. Considering its inflammatory nature, that probably promotes a more objective interpretation of the data.

Steve and Elaine Stiles seemed glad to see us when he ducked into 2629. Steve also appeared unusually pleased with his location in the room, which was both comfortable and central to the best talkers. "And besides," he chortled as he reached into the bowl at his elbow, "I'm near the nuts".

"Steve, when you're a fan," I reminded him, "you're never far from the nuts."

Those nuts may've been nearer than I suspected at the moment, because next door in the Minneapolis suite, an army of fans was constructing a Bheercan Tower to the Moon. They reached nine levels before the Tower began shedding tiers faster than even these zealots could replace them with new rows.

Susan Manchester and I made eye contact. I noticed that hers were a little misty. The cause was the approaching end of her first exposure to fans. She had enjoyed fans even more than she'd expected from fiance Mike's glowing description. Susan extolled the friendliness and hospitality of everyone she'd met. "They invited me places, they introduced me, they talked to me," she said with evident joy.

One thing that bowled her over, she said, was "how much everyone loves Mike". It was then my turn to be surprised, since I've always thought of Mike Glicksohn as one of the most beloved fans. "He never told me about that," she said. "He just said he was pretty well known."

Susan had such a good time at Magicon that she held out the hope that she and Mike might find a way to stretch the funds to cover Corflu 10 in Madison next spring. Let's hope circumstances

permit, because they'd certainly add to the good vibes everyone expects in Wisconsin.

While fans revelled all around her, Joyce fought a solitary battle against Creeping Serconism. Earlier in the day, the committee had passed out a multitude of ribbons honoring achievements from running a con to copping a Hugo nomination. This simple honor enthralled fans, including Joyce, who got one for co-chairing St. Louisicon. When I saw Bruce Pelz, the considerable expanse of his front was entirely covered with row upon row of these gaudy emblems. If fandom were an army, we'd have to acclaim Bruce our Commanding General.

Putting on this badge of honor seemed to work insideously upon Joyce's normally resolute insurgentism. "A strange feeling came over me that I should go down to the Glasgow suite and congratulate the newly elected con committee," she admitted after the crisis had passed. "I suddenly felt it was the Proper Fan Political Thing to Do. I think it was this ribbon." But she continued to wear it through the rest of the con, and for about a week after we got home.

Chapter Ten

A New Lease on Fanlife

Going to bed at 3 am didn't stop us from waking up early enough to be ready to checkout at 8 am. That's when a recheck of our plane reservations disclosed that the flight was 4:00 instead of 10:00 a.m.

"We get to stay for that big panel and see almost everybody again," I said.

"And say good bye to everyone again," Joyce said sadly. Her hopes for Magicon hadn't been high, but the wonderful reality had her floating several inches above the carpet.

When I asked Joyce for the magnifying glass she was holding for me in her purse, a horrorstruck look of sudden realization sent her rummaging through the capacious satchel.

It wasn't there. Haltingly she reconstructed loaning it to someone at the Fan Lounge – and failing to get it back. "Maybe it's still sitting on the reception table in the lounge," Joyce suggested. It was a good idea, but when she checked, the table was an unbroken plane.

I actually had to fight down panic at the thought of an endless airplane trip without reading. Me with a still-shrinkwrapped copy of "A Wealth of Fable" and now no way to do more than squint at the pictures!

By the time I reached the Convention Hall, Joyce had organized search parties to find this precious instrument. A Mr. Walter A. Willis of Belfast located the glass, and won the dubious honor of getting to sit with me and James White (also of Belfast) while we discussed the fascinating world of personal optics.

James and I have only become acquainted within the last year, and this proved an unparalleled opportunity for some easy-going conversation. I had theorized to Walter that James and I might encounter difficulties with each other. We both use a magnifying glass to compensate for bad near vision, and I feared that the optics might not be right for communication. Fortunately, this turned out not to be the case, and we had a fine time comparing spyglasses. "The magic magnifying glass is the one with the blind trufan at the handle," I told him.

James and Walter agreed that the combination of temperature and humidity in southern Florida was quite a change from their homeland. I sympathized. The thermometer climbs above 100 almost every day from June through September in Las Vegas, but extremely low humidity makes it more bearable. The convention center and hotels were air conditioned, but going outside was like stepping into a steambath. "Florida is hotter than Ireland," James said.

"Florida is hotter than Hades," I assured him.

Joyce noted James, Walter, and I sitting together and decided this was the time to settle of one fandom's enduring mysteries: the culprits in the sundering of Mr. Courtney's boat.

"Someone must have sawed it," said James.

"You mean 'seen', James," Joyce, ever the editor, corrected with mock sternness.

"And you call yourself a vile pro," I said disapprovingly.

"Yes," James replied. "You owe me six cents a word."

All too soon, it was time to follow the fans to "The Uses of Fanhistory" panel. Panelists Ted White, Shelby Vick, Dick Lynch, and Bjo Trimble found it tough to speak about fanhistory in terms of benefits. All enjoy the parade of incidents and personalities that constitutes fanhistory for its own sake. Shelby may have expressed it the most succinctly when he said, "What would civilization

be with out history?"

Ted cautioned against taking an overly academic approach. "This is a family," he declared, "and every family has its stories." He enlarged on his theme, adding that when he started learning fanhistory "I didn't want dry dates; I wanted the stories."

"Fanhistory needn't be dry and dull," Bjo seconded. "Anecdotes are better." Perhaps the preference for historical incidents partially explains why it's usually the fannish fanwriters who become professionals. Writing those anecdotes provides practice in setting a scene, handling dialog, creating a characterization, and just about everything else necessary to the professional fiction writers.

Ted touched on sources of fanhistory by recalling how he'd read *Fancylopedia*. It brought a pang of nostalgia for those all-night sessions of my neohood, when I'd stay at rich brown and Mike McInerney's East Side apartment until dawn reading fanzines. Rich's copy of *Fancy II* illuminated many aspects of fandom for me.

Moshe Feder's comment that "fanzines are the primary repository of fanhistory" tied together several conversations on the sense of history I'd had during Magicon. It is observable that most fanzine fans are interested in fandom's mythology, literature, and traditions.

Ted advanced the idea that fanzines have a duty to recount fanhistory. "If fanzines don't tell them, they will never know," he said. That's the way I've always felt, too. So much of what it means to me to be a fan is sharing that common tapestry of rich legends and outlandish myths that I want to share it with other "family" members.

I'm constantly confronted by the fact that many non fanzine fans have no more interest in the chronicle of fandom than they do in any other form of historical information. "That happened before I was born," by which the speaker means to add "so I don't have to know anything about it" has become a conversational cliché in this country.

I'm sure there are many fine fans that have no interest in fanhistory, but few of my acquaintance avoid even a cursory interest in some facets of fandom's past. It seems to me an inescapable consequence of the long-term emotional investment that fanzine fans make. The search for one's roots is not confined to African Americans.

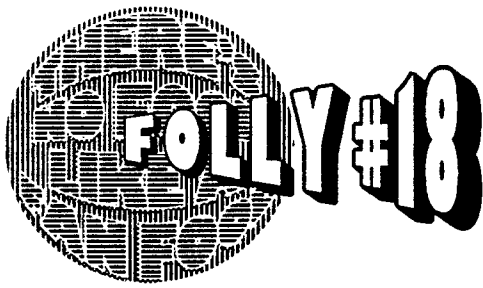
The human connection also figured in Dick Lynch's fascination with fanhistory. "I've met people who have been dead 20 years," he

quipped. It's sometimes hard for me to realize that I've never met Laney or Keasler or Bob Leman and know them only through the fanzines they published before I entered the hobby.

Moshe then proposed the best project idea I've heard in a long time: a biographical dictionary of who's who in fandom. Personally, I'd draw the line at fanzine fans and those long-time non-fanzine fans familiar to most of us, but that's obviously up to Moshe. I hope he carries through on the idea, and I'd be pleased to help in any way possible. It's the natural companion to the **Fancy III** which Pelz and Cantor have reaffirmed their intention to publish.

This panel was a fitting way to end our Magicon. This had been a weekend to celebrate the continuity of fandom, the human connections that bind so many of us together.

So after parting from a few friends, we reclaimed our luggage at the Peabody bell desk, grabbed a cab to the airport, and then boarded the plane for the first leg of our flight home. It was a long flight, with a stopover along the way, but my fannish spirit was soaring higher than any plane. And in the next seat, Joyce plotted the first issue of her new fanzine.



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of the
MAGIcon

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