

# Implosion

**Implosion #32** is the local monthly fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is produced for the 32nd Distribution of Apa V, the Las Vegas apa, which has as this month's theme "Vehicles, Locomotion and Going Places," which I have blithely ignored. Today is June 1, 1996.

**Implosion:** The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine.  
Member, fwa.

Deadly Metaphors  
By Arnie Katz

Charles Burbee wrote an article about Al Ashley's supposedly impending career as a big-time science fiction writer. It was one of the pieces BArea fans included in "The Incomplete Burbee," which Las Vegants reprinted a couple of years ago.

Fans less conversant with antediluvian fanhistory may need further explanation. At the time Burb wrote the article, in the post-WWII 1940s, some people still read science fiction and occasionally even yearned to write the stuff. I attribute this longing to the absence of fast-food jobs during this era.

Burb blasted barbs through Ashley's ego, admittedly a substantial target. The essay turned on the fact that though AA had written a lot of stories -- but they were all written only in his head. (Burbee and Laney professed to believe that this was big enough to store an entire library of unwritten novels.)

I've always loved that article, laughed aloud at it in several places. Although Ashley is the specific target, Burbee's satire pins a type of person encountered all too frequently on the fringes of fandom.

I hate conversations like that. They always include glib phrases like "I'd write a novel if I had the time." It is surprising how many people confuse the physical act of putting words on paper with the creative process of writing.

So that Burbee article has always stood, for me, as the perfect squelch of the non-writer by someone who does more than talk about it. I think of it when I meet people with vast mental storehouses of unwritten

best-sellers, and it quells that urge to disembowel them and feed their entrails to our cat Slugger.

Recently, I've had second thought about writing that stays on the purely mental plane. I've begun to believe that, in some cases, it's the best place for it. Terry Carr, who after all was "The Burbee of the Sixties," counseled me along those lines 25 years ago. The gist of his advice: you don't have to write (and print) every kernel of human churned out by your fine fannish mind.

In my fannish youth, I was a carefree insurgent. I skewered fuggheads with abandon, secure in the knowledge that I was upholding the cherished standards of fandom (just a goddamn hobby, I continually reminded myself during round-the-clock crifanac sessions).

Give me a good cause, and I was a firebrand. Show me a fugghead, and I'd do a three-page article for your next issue. I wrote a lot of articles in the mid-to-late 1960s.

There were many wrongs that needed writing back then, you betcha. The barbarian invasion, the Boondoggle, the Columbus worldcon bid, the Pong debate, the drug controversy -- all of them called insurgents to the battlements in the 1960s.

And the fuggheads! The 1960s had some real giants of stupidity. I flayed the Dannie Plachtas and Steve Patricks

Las Vegas Fandom is composed, in the main, of fine folks who occasionally do silly things. When a fugghead shambles into view, as described in my "The Las Vegas Garden Of Fuggheads," they shamble right out again before their legend can blossom.

Once again, fandom has proven its ability to civilize social pariahs. I developed a Conscience. I learned, about ten years later than the average person, that the truth is often insufficient excuse for trial-by-fanzine..

Since that day -- it was in late 1970 as I recall -- I have wrestled with the dilemma of the fan

humorist. The Dilemma of the Fan Humorist (deserving of capital letters, even if I bestow them myself) is that fans are not public personages.

The Great and Famous must expect humorists to have fun with their foibles, but ordinary citizens don't expect someone to jeer at their weaknesses in fanzine articles. However well

Terry said that self-censorship would not only save the feelings of many potential victims, but also increase my popularity. It is a sad fact that people love satirists only as long as they are not the target. (Victims generally class humorists on a par with mimes.)

Selective targeting keeps me in fandom's good graces. By some articles to the mental plane, I avoid alienating someone every time an unsaid thrust punctures a thin skin.

The humanitarian reason advanced by Terry Car are all well and good, important in their way to be sure. Yet there are some other advantages to keeping even the most innocuous writings written only in my head.

For one thing, it's a lot less work. When enflamed to the proper pitch of fannishness, I can sit there and write enough mental articles, columns and faan fiction than I can publish or foist on other fanzine editors.

If I wrote all those stories, I wouldn't have time to do anything else except eat and sleep -- and I might have to give up lunch. Of course, the bill I'd generate for paper, toner and postage would preclude frivolities like food anyway.

You might think holding all this fabulous fannishness would frustrate me. Not at all. Mental crifanac has always been a pleasurable activity, untainted with the need to do anything that raises a sweat.

For one thing, I generally have this rush of fannish creativity -- or psychotic episode, if you will -- when I am not in a position to dash to the keyboard and pour all these ideas into my Macintosh.

These spells possess me unawares. I'm as likely to be writing an earnest article about video game controllers as trying to produce something for **Wild Heirs** or **Apa V**.

My mind churns out cunningly humorous flourishes, richly embellished with all the

puns, word play and outrageous imagery for which I am widely tolerated.

Once I get rolling, the sky's the limit. I invent whole new fanzines, pen searing novels of fanzine fans and concoct imaginative jokes and hoaxes.

Do you know how much effort it takes to pull off a hoax? And the more successful it is, the more you have to do. If you get the bogus fan over initially, it's possible to end up doing twice the regular amount of fanac to keep both you and the hoax from slipping into fannish oblivion.

My Keen Mind sees the entire hoax, from first contact to the denouement, in all its grandeur. "Ah, fandom would have loved that one," I congratulate myself, even as my busy consciousness leaps to another topic.

The real secret to my enjoyment of mental writing is my memory. No matter what I write in my head, no matter when I write it, I can forget it the instant it stands complete in my consciousness.

It's there...

...and then it's gone.

Untroubled by memories of these unpublished jewels, I am not troubled by them. They wash out of my mind like the hair at my temples during a shower. I experience the joy of creation, invent my own egoboo and forget the whole thing before I have to roll up my sleeves and write it down.

Yes, there is a risk. The masturbatory thrill of mental writing is so alluring that a practitioner hazards closing in on themselves. Hypothetically, at least, a fan could grow so enamored of mental writing that he becomes a literary dark star: not a single syllable reaches paper. I believe JoHn Hardin may have started that way.

Hey, I'll take that chance. I'm no stranger to life on the edge. I've seen several Quentin Tarantino movies all the way through. I mostly don't remember them, either, but I've seen them. Except I don't have the ticket stubs to prove it. You'll have to take my word.

I've got a lot more to say about mental writing, all of it hilarious and insightful. I'd put it right here, but the deadline beckons.

It's all written in my head, you know.