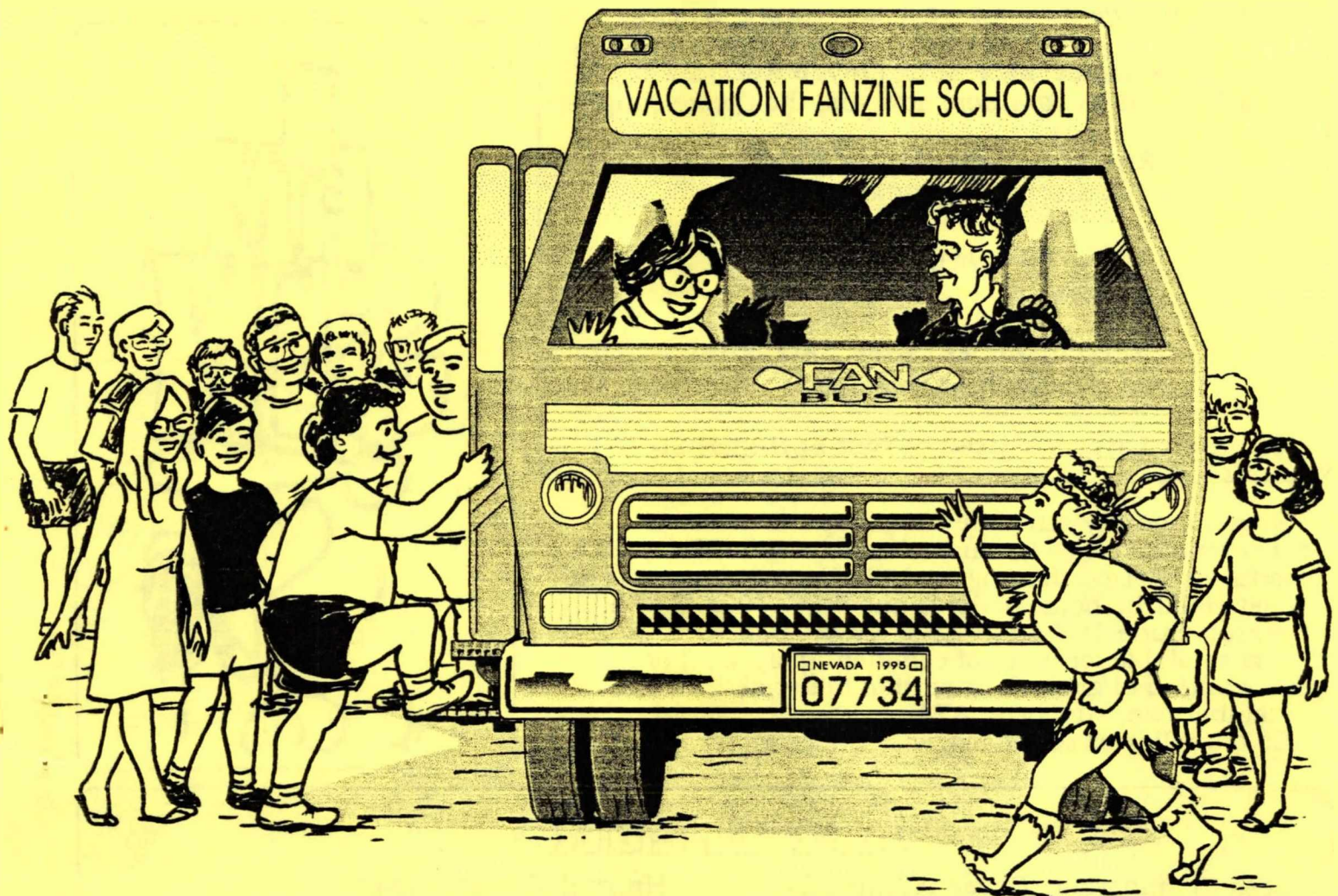


Wild Heirs

Number Eight



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Even a monthly schedule can't stop the most dangerous 39 pages in fanzine fandom. **Wild Heirs #8** is produced around the August 1995 Vegrants meeting at Toner Hall, the home of Arnie and Joyce Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107).

It is available for letter of comment (please....) or contribution of artwork or written material.

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Arnie Katz

Despite my best efforts to share whatever glory lies in starting "Vague Rants" with the other co-editors, here I am leading off the editorial jam for **Wild Heirs #8**. It isn't that my pedestrian mind is best-suited to writing the necessary boilerplate that must be incorporated into the first entry. Or at least, it isn't only that. Today is my birthday, so everyone is being unusually nice to me.

They're going to let me have double desserts, too.

The calendar says that July 1, yesterday, is supposed to be the monthly Vegrants meeting. The group pushed it back a day to coincide with my birthday. We're set for a day of fun in the sun, collating (**WH #7 and #7.5**), extra fancy snacks and extra frequent sidebars.

I'm approaching the computer with a bit of trepidation and a certain amount of fear. Even as I led the effort, ably assisted by such worthies as Joyce, Marcy and JoHn, to finish the first **Fusion** (our new interactive electronic entertainment magazine), technology is in rebellion.

The first thing that happened was that Vegas Copier, the outfit that keeps the mighty Gestetner running, suddenly vanished. The phone rang without answer, and Marcy Waldie's visit to the Vegas Copier premises discovered an empty store.

It turned out that the head of the service operation had taken advantage of the owner's absence to loot the company and head in the general direction of foreign places that don't subscribe to international extradition treaties. It is reported, though not confirmed, that he took this unscheduled trip about two steps ahead of the Metro Police, who wanted to discuss what they deemed an unhealthy devotion to young children.

Vegas Copier won't recover from this blow, but the owner has vowed to do right by customers. We've made contact with another copier center, and the flow of toner, lifeblood of trufandom, has resumed.

The other techno-glitch was one born of my own stupidity. Somehow, at the end of a 17-hour workday, I did something that caused a file containing a 3,200-word feature to disappear when I turned on the Macintosh the next morning to retrieve the file and send it to Sendai-Decker headquarters in Lombard, IL.

After I finished crying and generally bemoaning my fate, I succumbed to the inevitable. I rewrote the whole schmeer from scratch.

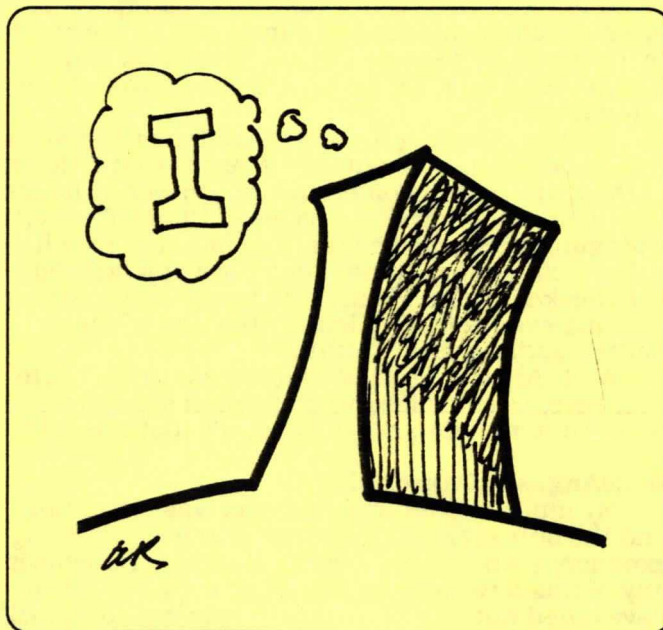
So I come to you, an erstwhile Techno-King, newly chastened. I guess that every now and then, the machines have to remind us puny bio-entities who *really* runs the show. And now they tell me that the pump on the newly refurbished swimming pool and jacuzzi will not be operating this afternoon...

Tom Springer

I'm taking a break from collating **7.5** and other editorial duties to wander the rough editorial for **#8**. We're bringing more prewritten pieces for the editorial, but one must invariably provide a segue and introduction so the blocks of rants that are now forming in the "editorial" aren't so heavy and cragged. Yet I've never really liked any of my impromptu editorials I've previously written, and am really warming to the prewritten pieces, allowing me more drafts while having the time to dabble with new ideas and other conversation.

Now that I have a moment to ponder our situation, after considering my small stack of **Wild Heirs** (I almost have eight of them now), and checking the Vegrant Barometer for unexpected drops in pressure (a new fringe fan, netted by our local SF club SNAFFU, Eric Hill, a dislikable fellow, *could* portend such a drop), I can only come to one conclusion (even if I take into account a

Vague Rants





surprise visit by Vegas' Lost Fan; you can't say she forgot her fanfather, though), we have some kind of fanzine here.

It's a faanish fanzine that's now almost expected to come out once a month, with a variable 30-40 page count (not including point fives and special celebratory issues), with a veritable plethora of fanac, and a faantastic cover by Ross. At times I don't think we do his covers justice, but he's a kind soul and rarely ever whines about the quality of everyone's work. Whereas it seems like Belle is quick to criticize any who operate the stapler. She really enjoys pointing out flaws in technique and loves to commemorate every imprecision executed to all who would stand witness, merciless and hypercritical, but, for all that, a good lass to have around.

I've been reading Arnie's collection of **Hyphens** that he lent me, and dammit, it seems that little bits of them are rubbing off on me. Not to worry though, I've just read the first few pages of Chuck Conner's **Thingummybob**, checked for little bits that may have rubbed off...and nothing, I don't see any little bits. I've checked my hands and the front of my shirt, my lap, and even got up to look at the seat of my pants...nothing. See? Nothing.

Wait. Ah, what's that? There's something here. Yes, here, it looks like I've stepped in something. Sniff. Hmmm... Oh, never mind, it's just **File 770**.

BelleAugusta Churchill

My dip in the refurbished pool was refreshing and the sun soaking under my skin was a melting experience which I enjoyed. Still, I don't remember any of this flaw-pointing. Tom. Of course, I might have oozed out any unpleasant memories of myself nit-picking while I was turning to mush in the hot tub. Wasn't I stapling? No, that must have been

another time. I do remember having a pleasant conversation with you and looked up into silence. You were gone! I think my memory must be slipping.

Tom

Ah, hah! Gotchya! Ooh, boyo, boyo, boy! I gotcha good!

And it was a pleasant conversation, indeed! And also provided me a quick short bit to practice that thing we call Insurgentism, which **Wild Heirs** is representative of. So, when I saw how I could really bend it all out of shape, I decided to do just that, oh lovely one. Those **Hyphens** really are rubbing off on me, and I'm just trying to get a handle on it. What keeps getting in the way for me is that my concern for my friends' feelings slows me enough to instantly stop any momentum that might have built up during the initial inspiration process.

But by running to the computer while ignoring everyone and repeating to myself (this is an example of my mutated mnemonics), "Belle, that horrible staple woman with the pleasant tongue."

Whatever hidden meanings anyone may gleam for this temporary mantra while I ran through the Katz's house to this computer is up for speculation. It is all in fun, and you should know that I'm liking you more and more now that I'm seeing you more often, which allows more conversations between the two of

us. And I enjoy those conversations very much.

So stop with the nitpicking. You go on and on, "Tom did this!" "Tom did that!" Harping, harping, all the time, just going on and on about every little thing. You never shut up! You better be careful, you might get some sort of reputation or something. You know, there's people around here that write that sort of thing, and aren't morally concerned at all.

Arnie

I've been telecommunicating for more than a decade, but it wasn't until this morning that I ventured, with premeditation and armed with exhaustive instructions, into the prime expression of on-line fannish community "Rec.arts.sf.fandom" on the Internet. Patrick Nielsen-Hayden is talking about putting up a World Wide Web Page just for us crazies, but until that happy day, this clutch of message boards remains the hub of electronic fanzine fandom (as well as several other species of science fiction fans).

First impressions can be dangerously inaccurate, but a skim-read of many threads left me with the feeling that the position of hard copy fanzines in the fan universe is safe for the foreseeable future. There were interesting entries, some of which were actually well-written, but the hodgepodge of material that is rec.arts.sf.fandom comes across as pretty pale stuff compared to **Trap Door** or **Blat!**.

And the writing quality on the Internet may best be described as "serviceable." Knowing how ephemeral the material is, even in a message board, few good fanwriters will take a 10th as much time with contributions to rec.arts.sf.fandom as they do with an article in an ink-and-paper zine. The result is that there are people who write interestingly, but few who write compellingly or brilliantly. (I realize that this is a shaky argument to present in any oneshot entry, let alone in **Wild Heirs**. All I can say to that is that oneshots have their place, but

aren't you glad all fanzines aren't done on-the-fly like this?)

I think the Internet does have a very substantial role to play in fandom right now, today. It's a wonderful substitute for snail mail correspondence. As one of the most erratic letter-writers in fandom, I can speak with authority, not to mention rueful memory, about the inability of many fans to answer mail in a timely fashion. Or more often than not, in any fashion at all.

The digiverse changes everything ("Digiverse" is copyright Barry Friedman, who filed the paperwork to protect this name when he learned that "threepeat" was already taken). Now I exchange several letters a week with fan friends like Rob Hansen, Avedon Carol and rich brown.

Suddenly, I am a timely correspondent.

Joyce Katz

I echo your concern about the writing on the Internet. But several people do make real attempts at quality and content, such as rich brown in his recent on-line discussion of the historical relationship between conventions and fan fund guests. It was not only enjoyable, but contained a lot of good information and, even more important, analysis of the topic. So—what I was left with, after reading it on line, was a desire that he should put it into Real print, where it wouldn't vanish as quickly as a puff of air.

I think that the Internet is just great for staying in touch, for rapid correspondence, for transfer of information. But for real, lasting, time-binding fanac, give me print. I hold to my motto: if it isn't in print, it never really happened.

BelleAugusta

I'm jumping on this theory. I love writing letters on the Net, they actually make it to my friends instead of languishing in a drawer waiting for stamps, an envelope and someone to take it to the mail. Now I push a button and it is on the way. I do end up holding really great letters just to read them a few more times before I can bring myself to dump them in the trash.

I do get true psychological relief from holding books and am not ready to have it all digitized. I still enjoy going through my books and organizing them again. Just touching them and reading the covers is talking to old friends. I like stumbling across old letters from friends and even some I never sent. Sure it may come, but for a while I will still hold out for tactile pleasures.

Ross Chamberlain

My written fanac has begun to increase a bit, due to the option of e-mail, though I haven't quite yet worked out how to insert text written on an off-line editor, so I find myself using lots of on-line time to compose things like these entries. I'll get the hang of it one of these days, I'm sure. It probably would help to actually ask someone who does it on a regular basis -- a DOS/Windows user, since I dare guess the technique is easier on the Mac.

I do save some received e-mail in a "Download" directory -- longer pieces and those I want to hold for a while -- and even print some out for lingering perusal with intent to comment. Whether it's subliminal flicker or some other psycho- or physiological influence, I tend to lose attention and even nod off into dreamland if I attempt to concentrate on anything on screen for longer than a few minutes at a time. That is, anything

that requires interpretation or substantial mentation--it's not so bad for layout, design or drawing. Even text composition isn't too much trouble, on the whole, but editing someone else's work, or commenting on it, requires absorbing and interpreting the concepts, and somehow this sets up this... defense mechanism? Short circuit? I dunno.

As to books -- I yearn to get my whole collection back both accessible and into shape. They were organized to some extent when I had them available, on single-track shelves -- the greater portion alphabetized by author.

I've forgotten how many I had, now -- a few thousand paperbacks and a few hundred hardcover, I think, but I do recall that my guesstimates at the time proved to be exaggerated. Most are SF and fantasy, and were acquired when I was buying five or six books at a time and reading them on the subway (New York) on my way to and from work. I miss that -- but that aspect only! I'm lucky if I finish a book in one or two months, now.

Ken Forman

There's been much talk about this "New Golden Age of Fandom" we're in. I'm not so sure I buy it. Oh sure, Ted White declared it so at the last SilverCon, (if there's anyone qualified to make such a declaration, it's Ted, or maybe Robert Lichtman, or Arnie), but to label something does not make it so.

One of the earmarks of a Golden Age is participation. This seems like a self-fulfilling prophecy. All fanzine fans (at least the ones I like) want to participate in a Golden Age. Who wouldn't want to say 'I was there in the early nineties. I pubbed my ish?'

Another aspect of a Golden Age is quality. Experienced faneds -- like Ted, Robert, and Arnie -- know how to produce top-notch zines. Neos -- JoHn Hardin or Tom Springer, for example -- see these zines as a challenge. "If they can produce such high quality, why can't I?" goes the thinking. Consequently the new zines are carefully looked over and redone until an acceptable quality is reached. An excellent example of such devotion is **Brodie III**. Tom's dedication to quality was well documented in **Wild Heirs** #7. I also find myself reluctant to pub something without a proper amount of turtle wax (for that fine, hard shine on all polished publications).

One thing is obvious. Fannish (and faanish) activity is at a new level, not seen since the sixties. It pleases me to think that Las Vegas had a hand in this resurgence of fanac. Flooding the mail with new zines from new editors, and Arnie's own hyperactivity primed the gears, but fandom itself is doing the work by responding.

I'm not sure we should ~~blame~~ credit Arnie for bringing fandom into the desert. SNAFFU got started without his help (although it was only an unfortunate eye problem that prevented him from being one of the 'First Nine'). VegasCon 1-- Vegas' first fan-run convention -- wasn't very fannish. SilverCon 1, a few months later, took up that slack. It's kind of surprising that the slack was felt, not only here in our fair city, but all across the United States. Even Robert Lichtman, our first guest of honor, once said that SilverCon and Corflu were the only conventions he would ever attend. Considering his choices (he lives in central California), that's quite a statement.

Future generations will judge the accuracy of Ted's statement. I hope he's right, and I'm going to work hard to influence others to do the same.

Tom Springer

I can't argue whether Ted White's declaration of a "New Golden Age of Fandom" was/is accurate, but I think Robert Lichtman has the right idea, and better timing, when he says in **Trapdoor #15** (May 1995), "I leave it to hindsight whether or not this actually is a Golden Age, but I know that most of the time it feels pretty good to me." Now that's good timing! Imagine how I feel, spending my first two years in fandom during a time when the likes of Lichtman and White are talking about a "New Golden Age".

I think, perhaps, that Las Vegas Fandom has contributed to the possibility of a "New Golden Age of Fandom," but I don't think that participation was felt by fandom until many months after Silvercon 3 (SC3). SC3 was a propeller in the beanies of the Vegrants, of

Lichtman refer to as a "New Golden Age of Fandom."

This exodus from gasla, following an increase in neos and active fan clubs, more fanac, some successful conventions, all added to the growing mix of fan activity occurring in all the crooked corners of fandom, was poured into Corflu Vegas and will be restirred in Glasgow at the Worldcon. Indeed, another sign of a New Golden Age in Fandom.

SNAFFU stands for Southern Nevada Area Fantasy and Fiction Union. (I don't see any Science Fiction in there.) Whereas everyone who went to Corflu Vegas knows it for the more familiar acronym, which at times seems more fitting. Despite what SNAFFU stands for, it is a club. What all its members refer to as a Science Fiction Club. It's not a fanzine club (like the Vegrants) and never will be. It's a sf club.

The only remaining original SNAFFU members Ken euphemistically refers to as the 'First Nine' are his wife Aileen, and himself. And Frank Harwood, who I haven't seen since he unloaded a bunch of ice cream sandwich chocolate cookie crusts on Arnie and Joyce one sunny afternoon. As for Arnie being responsible for bringing fandom into the desert there can be no doubt.

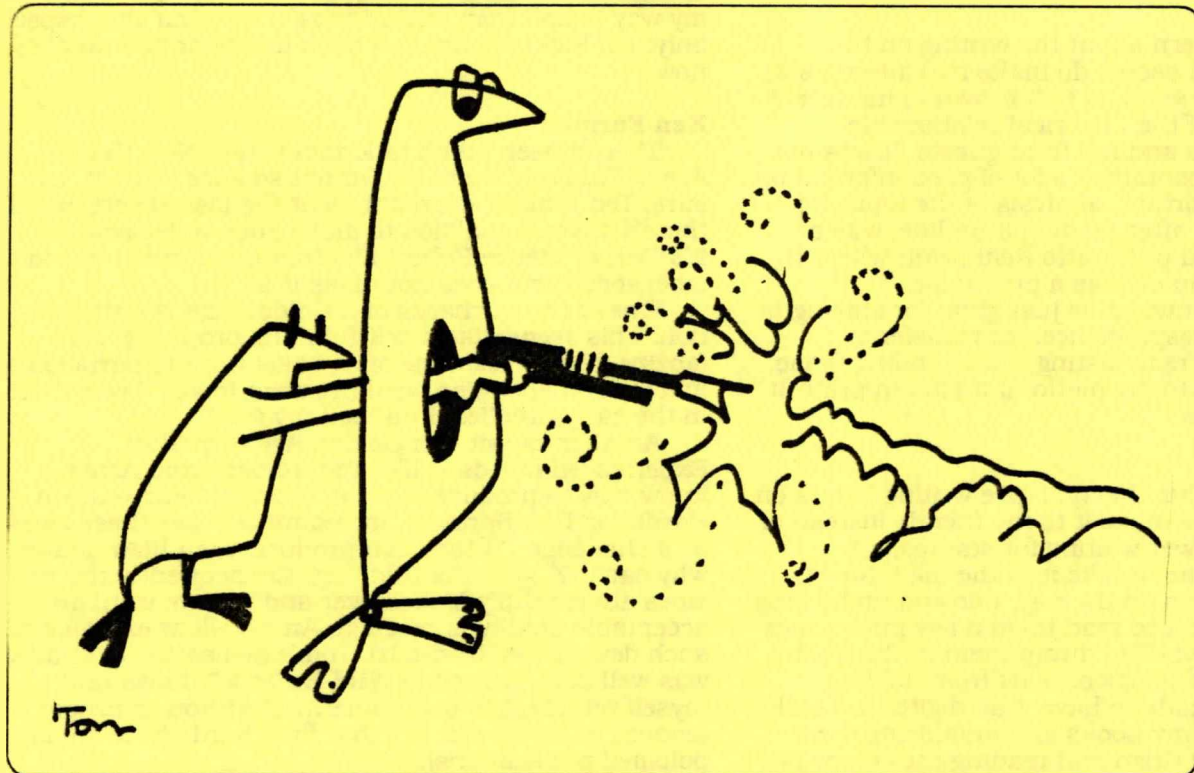
Before Arnie (BA), SNAFFU was not involved in the fandom that it is today. Before Arnie, SNAFFU had nothing at all

to do with fandom. Nor were they even aware of each other. BA, SNAFFU was nothing but a small local sf club that had yet to produce a fanzine. (Remember Joyce's motto, "If it isn't in print, it never really happened.")

To give an idea of what SNAFFU was like BA, in March of 1991 they started a monthly newsletter called **Situation Normal??** (now pubbed by the lovely Joyce Katz.) It was initially edited by a Ken Gregg (now long gone), but the astonishing thing was that it took them two meetings to decide the name, and they voted on whether they should have one, two, or three question marks in the title. What kind of fandom Ken thinks SNAFFU brought into the desert I don't know.

Alex Borders (one of the 'First Nine') introduced them to filking, so he most likely had experienced some contact with "fandom." Ken Gregg had belonged to LASFS (good lord!), but the vast majority of the club had little-to-no contact with fandom other than their recently formed club and a convention or two. They had never seen a fanzine, nor, most likely, knew what one was. Until Arnie came along.

Though Ken says that VegasCon 1 (Vegas' first 'fan'-run convention) wasn't very fannish (and I



that there is no doubt, and established itself as a fannish convention for fanzine fans, and again, I quote Robert in **Trapdoor #14** (July 1994), "Most of the core group that makes up the heart of any Corflu was in attendance, and the committee seemed more responsive to the needs of the attendees." High praise indeed! But we're by no means the only contributors to this 'high' in fandom; San Francisco, Seattle, Great Britain, Falls Church, New York, Minneapolis and Madison are the first cities that come to mind, while there's literally dozens of names that I can't list here but merely mentioning said list hopefully triggers faces in your brains.

I discovered fandom at SC3, put out my first and second fanzines, then ran smack into Corflu Vegas and my third ish. Now we're leaving Corflu behind and moving on to Silvercon 4. I believe Corflu Vegas really showed everyone that something incredible is happening to fandom. So many unexpected people! Mike McInerney, Ray Nelson, Lucy Huntzinger, Grant Canfield, Jay Kinney, the Busbys just to name a few. These people and others who haven't been seen very often of late are another surge in a chain of surges that have been lifting fandom to what Ted White and Robert

couldn't say because my first convention ever was SC3), I do know that it wouldn't have been fannish at all if Arnie didn't get Bruce Pelz as their Fan GoH. Another Katzian attempt to introduce fandom to Las Vegas. Who else would have so many fanzines available for the ignorant hungry neos lurking in the creosote of Las Vegas? As for Silvercon 1, who got them Robert Lichtman as GoH? Arnie did.

Arnie and Joyce Katz are the two fans who brought fandom to the desert of Las Vegas. They are the ones who started the monthly socials, the one-shots (just like Ken said in WH#5 in the editorial), then the local Apa, "for something different." Thus was born Apa-V, and after a year of soaking in local egoboo, Arnie moved everyone to help produce **Wild Heirs**. So Ken, how can you say that Arnie and Joyce shouldn't be credited with bringing fandom to Las Vegas when you yourself have already revealed "Arnie's Master Plan?" Eh?

Peggy Kurilla

The biggest drawback to electronic fandom, as I see it, is that it is so damn fast. Fast in the sense of information overload. Fast in the sense of, "How can I possibly make an intelligent response to this, when it's already been on the net 24 hours and 240 other people have already said something?"

I prefer the apa I'm currently in -- a bimonthly. I have time to read, reread, and contemplate what others say and can respond with everyone else, not behind them. Old-fashioned? Well, maybe -- but so what? What's wrong with that? Just because something's new doesn't mean it is automatically better. (Then again, not everything old is automatically better, either. Witness the Brady Bunch movie if you don't believe me. [No, I have not seen it and don't intend to waste any of my precious memory cells on it.])

Off any possible preceding subject, I think one one-shot was enough to use the full name -- everyone knows I married by now, don't they?

Ross

Yes, Peggy, the sighs continue to echo...

So far, I haven't ventured into cyberspace to any phone-bill-expanding length. I joined Delphi a while before I left New York, for the primary purpose of uploading game reviews for the electronic games magazine Arnie & Joyce were editing before Electronic Games TNG. It happened that at the time I was the proud owner of a Tandy 1000SX, as well as a Tandy Color Computer, or CoCo, and there were a Tandy computers SIG and a CoCo SIG on Delphi, so I joined that a bit, and also looked into a science fiction SIG there. I left e-mail occasionally, and puttered around in a couple of topic strings, but never (what never? no never) got into any forums or chat groups or whatever. So in many ways I don't feel I've really had the Cyberspace Experience. And, frankly, have remained a tad hesitant about testing those particular waters. I already recognize that I may have to, soon, in order to know what my friends (and employers) are talking about. I thought I had trouble integrating into fandom...

Your closing delight about suddenly becoming a timely correspondent, Arnie, gave me some positive thoughts about joining in. I, too, have trouble staying in touch by mail. Peggy's point then gave me pause. I have lots of trouble getting timely words in edgewise in on-going conversations. Here, in this sort of one-shot,

I do better (granting I can find the opportunity to sit at the Mac).

And now I have done so, I'm going to go for the golden beanie by offering a different subject. However, it's possible I might forfeit it by my topic. It has to do with *Star Trek*... Has anybody noticed that the ST series' musical signature themes have gradually moved from memorable to ... uh ...

Everybody recognizes the theme of the original series, practically from that first, high-pitched extended note. The first movie theme, which was extended to TNG, is a rousing and also recognizable theme, but a bit more ordinary, in the same class as that of *Battlestar Galactica* and others that took their cue from John Williams. The theme from DS9 is a soporific mood-music kinda thing, hardly a grabber, but there is a tune to it that I think, now, I'd recognize out of context. But—*Voyager*? I'm not sure I even recognize that there is a melody working there, much less anything to associate with the show. Nah, I like the show! That's kinda what I mean.

We now return control of this Macintosh to you.... Next!

Laurie Yates

I keep telling people who want me to stay in touch to get an e-mail address. However, since I switched over to laptop and I can now take my computer downstairs, I actually started and finished a letter to my grandmother. Now I just have to print it out and mail it.

Sidenote: Has anyone else ever found it difficult to write to people about things that you're doing? Explaining, for example, to my relatives about my writing career is met with, "That's nice, dear. But when are you going to go out and find a job?" Even people in the Generation 13 group can be as bad. A friend of mine went into the bookstore and picked up a copy of *Electronic Games*, and called me. She was so excited; she thought that she had found another Laurie Yates. When I explained to her that the piece in question was indeed written by me, she was astonished. But then again, my kid brother read about 14 issues before he discovered (read that: my father told him) that yes, he did know the writers, and no, they weren't just people with the same names.

Ross

I once thought it would be neat to live on a houseboat. There was a series of books (*Swallows and Amazons* was, I think, the first in the series) by an English chap named Arthur Ransome, about a bunch of kids living by a lake, playing fantasy games (pirates and the like) and slightly harassing a fellow who lived on a houseboat on the lake. They played he was a pirate, you see, and... Well, anybody whose seen a British kids' show knows that English kids tend to carry such flights of imagination to extremes. I learned later that this house-mariner was a thinly disguised Arthur Ransome.

Anyway, they all got to be friends, and even, eventually, collaborated on a book of their own, called *Peter Duck*, about ... well, I forget, exactly, but it wasn't any relative of Donald's. It was basically a carrying on of their fantasies about real-world people getting into odd adventures as might be imagined by kids. And it was actually published under that title...

So, it seemed like neat idea. And then there've been at least a couple of TV series about people living on houseboats in California waters... one a sitcom (with

Miyoshi Umeki as a housekeeper? Something like that), another an adventure series (brothers, I think, one of whom was played by Joe Penny—they owned a pink flying boat). I don't remember the name of either series. (It wasn't a houseboat but just a boat that Don Johnson lived on, with an alligator, in *Miami Vice*, right? At least in the first episode...)

Joyce

I, too once entertained the notion of living on a houseboat; they used to line the banks of Black River in Poplar Bluff. But one day I saw a river rat....

In fact, strange things that live in water always kinda spook me. It usta didn't startle me to see a water moccasin swimming across the lake. Then I thought about it... Now I only go in swimming pools, and not even those without looking first.

Since we have a fresh water pool, I always expect someday to see Wild Life swimming around: a few serpents, a duck or two, some water dogs... I've read in pioneer stories about how water holes were clogged with such creatures. But in fact, the only wild life I've seen there is the fannish kind.

With Spring coming on, and the advent of the Heated Pool, I expect to see more fannish wild life: last Summer, Ken gifted me with a half dozen or so beach balls, which I'll toss into the fray once the games begin. Of course, we non-ball players are afraid to venture near: the sport gets too rough.

One of the fatalities of such rough sport is the already water-drenched flower bed at the end of the pool: it's so damp that we can't grow much of anything there. Now, this is something I don't understand, since a swamp is full of plants, how is it that nothing survives that area? Full sun and lots of water ought to equal flowers.

Raven

A houseboat or something isolated in a tropical climate. I have just returned from eight days in Long Beach. I stayed at the Sheraton with a view of the ocean and a panoramic view of the city. I was there studying needle art, however, when one has time alone, one reflects. I missed Ron and the desert. (Cal in June is cold and without sun until eleven or two.) A needle, thread, Ron, some sandy soil, sunshine, fruits and veggies: These are the necessities of life for me.

As I finished Joyce's last lines my eyes wandered outside to the pool. It is all new and pretty. I knew somehow Joyce would find the one willing and able to do the job without having the pool flying across Vegas becoming yet another unidentified flying object in the desert skies of Nevada. I am somewhat disappointed. For several weeks my eyes have been on the sky. Hope upon hope that I might catch a glimpse of my very first sighting. Oh well, some day my time will come.

By the way, Joyce, one asks much too much of roots, and sun when asking that they overcome the circumstances.

Laurie

Spring and Summer seem to have been the time for people to take a good long look at their surroundings and decide: "This sucks! Let's change it!"

Bill and I decided that our place was in dire need of a face lift. After all, the house was built in 1980, and when Bill moved into it in 1989, making the house a home wasn't high up on his priorities. In fact, when he invited me to move in -- in December 1991 -- when I put some towels under the bathroom counter, there

was a jar of spackling under there. I pulled it out and went looking for Bill.

"Honey, why is this under the bathroom sink?"

"What is it?"

"Spackling." At his blank look, I explained for what it was used.

"Well, it was there when I moved in. So if you want to take responsibility for it..."

I've loved a lot of the aspects of our house, but there's been a LOT that I've hated. The most offensive items have now been changed. All the upper cabinets in the kitchen have been removed, so the room is much more open and comfortable. The whole house has been painted a nice crisp white, and a number of beautiful murals now grace the walls and doors. The living room, hallway, stairs, and half-bathroom sport new carpeting, and the half-bath now has a new sink, lighting, and accessories.

Choosing the carpeting was an interesting pursuit. We had gray. This gray showed EVERYTHING. When I asked Bill for input on the carpet, his response was "cat puke."

"Excuse me?" I was sure I hadn't heard him correctly.

"I want the carpet to be the color of cat puke so that the stains won't show."

Right. Surprisingly, Color Tile had a nice reddish terra cotta called Indian Summer. Both Bill and I agreed it was almost the color of cat puke, so that's what we had installed. Overall, the process was fairly easy: Color Tile came to us. The downfall was that the layers were idiots and they did a wonderful job of marking up the walls. Fortunately, it was written into our painting contract that there would be touch-ups for a six month period. By the way, the choice was solid: cat puke does NOT show.

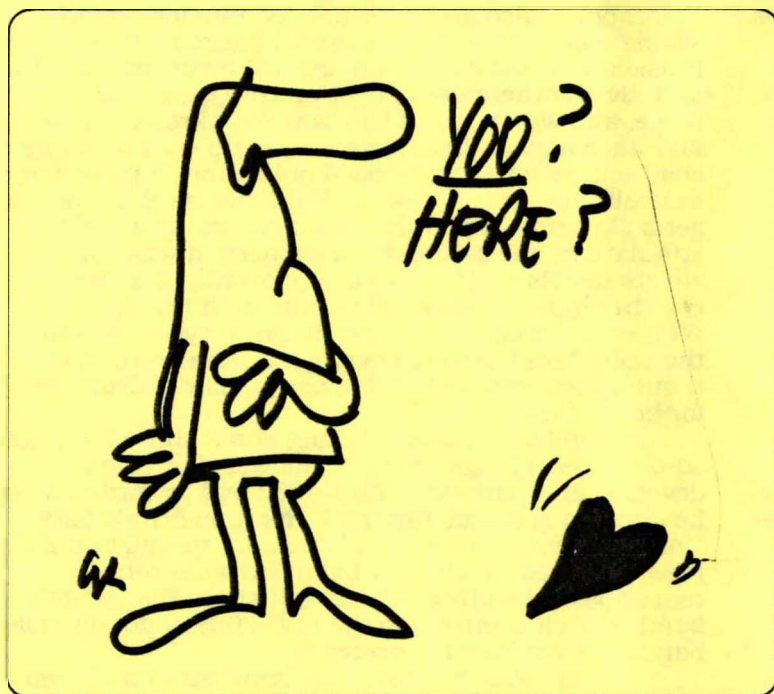
The new furniture was even easier. I left Bill at home, picked it out, and arranged for delivery. I then went home and told him he was getting his recliner, and it was free with the purchase of the couch. When he heard that, he didn't care what it looked like: he was getting his recliner.

I guess the dining room is next. Although getting more carpeting in the bedrooms would be cool. However, now I have to stick to the small stuff until after the wedding. But at least now I have a carpenter in town...

Tammy Funk

Come to think of it, Joyce, I'm not nuts about being in the same pond with water creatures either. With me, however, the ones in my mind are far worse than the actual beings. In my childhood, a steady diet of '70s horror and disaster movies had me picturing not only great white sharks in the ocean, but other less-probable beings around the house. While I relished bubble baths, I couldn't help but wonder what be-fanged creature lurked beneath the foam, eying its next meal. One especially inspiring attack-of-the-killer-snakes movie had me gingerly looking deep in to the toilet every night for years before I could bring myself to sit on it.

These disaster movies failed to prepare me for the real vermin in everyday living -- cockroaches. My first apartment was infested with them. Cleverly, they discovered a useful carpet like yours, Laurie: cockroach camouflage, a favorite of landlords everywhere. It was a confused looking carpet, both hi-and-lo pile, with blobs of tan, rust, taupe, and chocolate sprinkled throughout. I would stare for long



moments at the chocolate spots, waiting for them to move (don't laugh -- sometimes they *did*). Perhaps, JoHn, we could design our own realistic series of carpeting including not only Cat Puke and Cockroach Camouflage, but also Wino Red, Dog Pee, Cat Litter Gray, and Sidebar Shake for starters.

Other ideas?

Laurie, perhaps you should be grateful that Bill doesn't know the meaning of the word "spackle." When Tom and I moved recently, I made the mistake of introducing him to contact paper; they did not become friends. I had already completed the kitchen shelves, and sent him off to do the two bathroom cabinets while I made dinner. In a short period of time, I began to hear obscure noises.

"What the f---? Slam! ... won't stick... grrrrrr... stomp, thud, thwak..." and then most ominous of all, silence. Just as I got up the nerve to go and check on the damage -- I mean progress -- I was faced with Tom in an altered form.

"I will *never*," he gasped, sweat beads dripping down his nose, "do this *ever* again. Don't even think about asking me to touch this shit, because I'm not doing it!"

His blissful mood of just twenty minutes ago had been torn apart mercilessly by the dreaded paper. In high dudgeon, cheeks aflame, he groused into the living room to brood.

Believe me, I'll never let him do it again. Don't let this happen to you.

Marcy Waldie

We would be naive to believe that the rapidly expanding electronic age is for everyone. New is not necessarily better for all, especially when it comes to e-mail on a personal level.

I happen to be one of millions of individuals who is a cumulative thinker. No quick wit, no snappy comebacks, no words for the sake of words. We must digest what is communicated and respond in our own time. Not by choice, but by nature. Our off-the-top responses are often like first impressions -- inaccurate.

Impressions, however, can be changed without

communicating by word.

I have former students who are now in their 40's and in the professional business world who refuse to electronically transmit -- or even type - personal letters. They consider those forms to be impersonal and uncaring. I try to accommodate their wishes whenever I can, but circumstances do dictate. A word processing print-out is better than nuthin'. And I always hand sign my name.

JoHn Hardin

Gosh, Laurie; you'd think they would just name the carpet honestly and sell it to all pet owners. Of course, advertising would be tricky: "Cover your floors with Cat Puke."

As Homer would put it, "Mmmmm, Houseboats." I always wanted Travis Magee's houseboat. A creation of author John D. MacDonald, Travis Magee was a tough, freelance problem-solver who was as manly as could be and lived on a plushly appointed houseboat called the *Busted Flush*. Naturally, he won it in a card game. While the books make puttering around the Florida Keys sound unbearably cool, MacDonald also clearly outlines the work in maintaining any kind of boat. I think it was from one of his books that I got the line,

"A boat is a hole in the water that you pour money into."

Ross

Well, I knew houseboating would not be as simple as living in an apartment, but I don't believe I had given any thought to the day-to-day realities of houseboat maintenance at all in my musing. Or, as so often is the case in such daydreams, all that stuff would be... taken care of. I'd have won the lottery or something, and there would be People to Do That Kind of Thing.

From the perspective of one who has just moved into a house after having lived the working-for-a-living portion of his life in rooms and apartments, and who has just begun to hear conversational references to yard work and other such foreign occupations from his beloved spouse, the houseboat concept has suddenly receded to somewhere beyond the horizon.

I'm not unacquainted with the lawnmower and have in fact handled a rake and hoe from time to time (albeit decades ago). As a lad I had my weekly yard chores, bitterly resented at the time.

But... the yard here is what this part of the country calls "desert landscaping." Which is to say, the front yard is covered with large pebbles, with large aloe plants poking up in the middle and other desert-type plants (not, oddly, cacti) dotted about. It is essentially a decorative yard, not, really, one to walk about in one's bare feet and curl one's toes in -- especially as insects and arachnids proliferate there. We have seen and killed our first black widow spiders, and have heard stories of the dreaded brown recluse spider, also indigenous to this area. Not to mention scorpions.

The back yard is hard dirt with some extremely hardy (perhaps foolhardy is the better term) grass poking its spiky brown strands above the surface, plus some trees along the back fence. Neither front nor back are maintenance free, either. Unwanted growth occurs. Leaves must be collected and bagged for disposal.

I do not look forward to working in either one. I could be using the time much better drawing, or buried in a book...

I don't know what spackle is, either...

BelleAugusta

All this houseboat talk reminds me of sleeping in a van at the marina outside of Berkeley. Houseboats weren't new to me, but ones with stained glass windows were. Actually, they reminded me of some of the best hippie buses of the early 70's. Stylized doors and entryways, overflowing with potted plants and the compulsory wind chimes/baubles depicting rainbows, suns, stars and moons. I was drawn to them like a moth to light.

Alas, it was not to be. My desires pulled me even stronger toward returning to the Big Island. Later, from my friend Blue, I learned that you can rent and live on a houseboat in India for as long as you can afford it. Sadly, I have never made that journey. I am still young with years ahead and may get the chance yet.

JoHn Hardin

Back about a year and a half/two years ago; back when Tom Springer was puppy-dogging Nancy Thomas (local fringe fan, radical feminist and friend-screwed (though not in the sexual sense, more's the pity for Tom)), and I was living in the Pit of Despair (I wasn't depressed; "The Pit of Despair" was my apartment), I wanted to start a noise band.

I've always been a pop music fan, and I have been a (volunteer) DJ for five years here in Las Vegas. I think that all DJ's are frustrated musicians: I know I am. Since I have only minimal musical talent, I'm a big believer in the punk ethos and the romance of the whole DIY (Do It Yourself) ideal that says anybody can be a musician. I was inspired by the drum circles at Grateful Dead shows; by the forceful rhythms of guitar and percussion fiends Course of Empire; by Taicho drums and by San Diego tribal/ritual/noise meisters Crash Worship (minimal talent, lots of spirited flailing). I would listen and all I could think was "It would be so fun to do this!" and then "We could do this!"

Erica Grong, local fan and integral figure in two

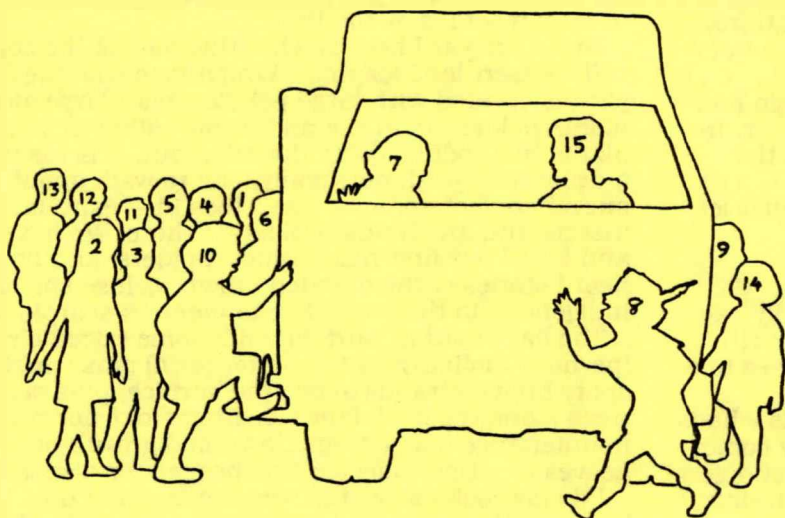
Vegas fan life-threatening trips on the treacherous Colorado, is also an accomplished musician who wields a pretty mean keyboard. I figured with one real musician (Erica) as a steadying influence, me and Tom and divers others could beat on things and make noise, and we would all just wheeze, skronk and shout and have a good time. I even came up with a couple of good names for the proposed noise unit (a good name in itself, but already taken), but Erica said we had to get a gig before we could have a name. As a further stipulation, she said that all we needed was some effects pedals to get started. Apparently, fantasy couldn't handle this gentle bump with reality. Whatever the case, my little dream stayed just that: the noise band project never got off the ground, even though Tom went out and bought a pair of drum sticks for both of us.

Not long ago, I was thinking about those bad, not-so-old days. Things are better now: All of Tom's devotion and patience with Nancy was rewarded when he gave up and met Tammy Funk (an entirely better class of woman, person and friend). I moved out of the Pit and moved in with my beautiful wife-to-be. I remembered wanting to be in a just-for-the-fun-of-it band when it occurred to me that I finally got my noise band, but not how I expected it.

Once or twice a month, my bandmates and I get together, and we have a sort of impromptu jam. We have a name now (The Vegrants), and a regular gig (**Wild Heirs**). We wheeze, skronk and shout and just generally make noise and have a good time. With a few real musicians to carry the melody, the rest of us get by on minimal talent and lots of spirited flailing. While it may not always sound sweet (or even coherent), anybody who really listens can tell that we're having a good time, which is all we ever wanted in the first place.

Write to us. Please.

Key to the Highway



Sketch artist Chamberlain was initially reluctant to identify the youthful individuals clustered around the Vacation Fanzine School bus. A combination of bribery and threats loosed the following list of possible suspects:

1. Woody Bernardi
2. Belle Churchill
3. Eric Davis
4. Aileen Forman
5. Ken Forman
6. JoHn Hardin
7. Arnie Katz
8. Joyce Katz
9. Bill Kunkell
10. Tom Springer
11. Unknown (could be RC with hair)
12. Marcy Waldie
13. Ray Waldie
14. Laurie Yates
15. Walt Willis

Fans Upon the Colorado

— Herein lies the tale of six intrepid adventurers. Tom Springer, Tammy Funk, Don Miller, Glade XXXX, Erica Grong and I set out one Friday morning seeking high adventure and excitement. Five of us were veterans of at least one other canoe trip down part of the mighty Colorado River. This trip we planned to travel a stretch of river that crosses the Grand Canyon National Park and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Twelve miles of easy camping and moderate canoeing.

The Launch

"Yep, it's a flat tire," Erica confirmed.

"So what now?" Tom asked.

"Don't change it," she advised, "the last thing a car thief wants to do is change a tire. Leave it."

With that sage advice, we launched our canoes into the still, warm waters of the bay. With beautiful weather, only a slight breeze, and half a day's paddling before us, we knew things were looking up. Erica and I started with light, easy strokes to limber up our shoulders.

Fifteen minutes later I stopped to take a look around.

"Hey, why'd you stop?" my paddle partner wanted to know.

"Sidebar!"

"What do you mean 'sidebar'? We just got started."

"I know," I answered, "but I want to take a look at the map and wait for the rest of our group."

It's amazing how quickly Ms Grong responded to the break. I hadn't finished my sentence before she stowed her paddle, grabbed her "Carbo-pump," and started fishing for a lighter. I appreciate a canoeing partner who is as quick to slack-off as I am. Besides, had I turned around to check the party's progress, I would have stopped anyway. Don and Glade hadn't launched yet. I sat there and selected stuff to sip. And as I sat there, sipping stuff, the morning's events went through my mind.

The Flashback

Tammy Funk and Tom Springer showed up on my doorstep at just after 9am. Since Tammy looked so fresh eyed and pleasant, and since Tom carried a box of donuts under his arm, I invited them in. Good Mornings went around and Tammy promptly reclined on my futon; her eyes closing even before her head fully rested on the bolster.

I offered Tom a Coke and Tammy some coffee. Tom said "Sure," Tammy just mumbled "Ungh." I took both to be affirmative.

"Hello, Huh-huh," Erica's husky voice called through my front screen door.

"Come in and have some breakfast."

"Am I late?" she asked.



A True Life Adventure by Ken Forman

"It's only nine-fifteen or so. It's early," someone who wasn't Tammy said.

"Is Don here, yet?" Erica asked.

"No, not yet. I told him to be here at eight. I figured he'd be about an hour late, so he's actually only about fifteen minutes late."

I'm usually late to events. The phrase KST (Ken Standard Time) got coined to describe my penchant for showing up twenty minutes late. On the other hand, Don Miller is often hours late. He's a great guy and I love having him around, but the only way to keep from strangling him is to plan on his tardiness.

Sure enough, he showed up at 9:23, right on KST.

We packed Tom's Rodeo and my pick-up, loaded up with ice and were on the road by ten o'clock.

The launch point beckoned us from over one hundred miles away, and the mighty Colorado River was just beyond that. Three hours later found us at Pierce Ferry, unloading the canoes and equipment. (Pierce Ferry is, by the way, the spot where all the Grand Canyon river runners and rafters pull out.)

We left my truck a few miles away at South Cove. A few miles away by car, but twelve miles by canoe. It'd wait there patiently while we took three days to travel those twelve miles. Three days of Nature -- warm water and wildlife -- and partying -- beer, wine, food, and sidebars.

When Tom, Tammy, Erica and I left to deposit my truck, we figured Don and Glade would have plenty of time to unload the canoes from the trailer, pack their canoe and be ready to launch by the time we'd returned. Our plan was partly successful. The canoes were on the ground.

We weren't in a hurry though, so I took it all in stride. Erica and I loaded our vessel, and started lashing the equipment down. Tom and Tammy's boat needed only a few added bungee cords to complete its preparation. Don and Glade should be only minutes away.

The Scouts

Tom and Tammy's canoe glided up to our's.

"Why the delay?"

"Take a look at the shore. They haven't left yet."

"Not yet?" Tammy wanted to know. "What's taking that boy so long?"

"Well, you know, he's Don."

We consulted the map to decide which way to go. My optimistic memory just knew that we'd know how to get where we wanted to get to. The bay, and the marsh, had other ideas.

I think we've all seen too many movies where the heroes forge across a swamp, hacking aside the flora with a machete and fending off various poisonous fauna.

"Maybe there's a way through the marsh." I suggested optimistically.

"Is that how we get out of this bay?" Tammy asked.

"The main exit is to the north, that way," I said, pointing to the left.

By this time, Don and Glade's boat was in the water and slowly approaching us, so we were all finally under way.

"Which way do we go after we get out of the cove?" someone wanted to know.

"After we get out of the cove, we head upriver -- providing the current's not too strong -- until we get to a good campsite," I said, indicating our route on the map in front of us. "We're twelve miles from South Cove, where my truck is; we should be able to do that in three days, easy. The first canoe trip, we went thirty-four miles in three days, so this'll be a snap. If we stay near the banks of the Colorado, we might be able to paddle against the current and make it a couple of miles upriver. There's a waterfall, and a bat cave (please, no Batman jokes) that I'd like to see, and besides, the Grand Canyon is only a couple of miles away. If we make it there, we'll all be able to say that we canoed the Grand Canyon."

About this time, the third canoe joined our flotilla, and Tom quickly recapped our discussion. (I seem to recall that Tom actually grunted something guttural and gestured with a clawed hand in the direction of the marsh. He also succeeded in handing Don a pair of hemostats while the canoes bobbed on a small swell. Tom may be an ape, but he's a communicating, tool using ape.) After some discussion, Don and Glade volunteered to scout a way through the marsh and report back, while the four of us started moving north along the marsh's border.

We paddled for a little while, keeping an eye on the scouts. Periodically they would disappear behind a particularly dense clump of vegetation. The further we got, the more certain we were that our scouting party would return with news of an impassable sand bar.

Eventually we got to the end of the spit; the mighty Colorado River flowing by us, from right to left, as quickly as any respectably sized river might flow. My hopes of canoeing upriver drifted away on the current, but optimism and determination can overcome any obstacle. Or so the theory goes. The other canoe in the party glided up to ours for a confab.

"Now what?" asked Tom.

"Well, we want to head upstream, and if Don and Glade made it through the marsh, they'll be waiting for us. If they're behind us, they'll catch up," I logged.

Erica put paddle to water and we moved into the current. All went surprisingly well; Erica is reasonably fit, and I can do my share. We paddled strongly and in sync for a solid five minutes. I thought, "We'll be in

Grand Canyon in just a little while." Then I noticed the shore.

Something along the bank caught my eye, so I turned and watched it. Ten strokes later, we hadn't moved. Twenty strokes later, we were still even with the same spot. I started paddling a little harder to make some headway.

I watched that spot on the shore for nearly fifteen minutes before I'd let myself believe that we weren't going anywhere. Looking around, I noticed that Tom and Tammy had moved further into the current and were now struggling to move to the opposite shore. That seemed like the best idea, so I turned us into the current and aimed for the spot Tom was aiming for: a nice little sand beach, just big enough for our three canoes when Don and Glade catch up.

Tom's experience with a canoe is matched only by my own, which is to say, this trip marked our third trip together, and our third trip ever. Tom landed smack on the mark and I reached the shore a little way upriver. By the time Erica and I tied-off next to their canoe, Tom stepped out onto the sand bar. Suddenly the quiet of the outdoors was filled with Tom's loud laughter. We all looked toward him to see what was so funny (we all like a good joke.) Lo and behold, Tom stood thigh deep in the deceptively solid looking bank. You know what I'm talking about, that hollow sounding, wet sucking, found only along the banks of rivers mud/sand that looks firm but isn't? I've always considered it semi-quicksand. Needless to say, we sat in the canoes, Tom stuck his foot in the mud to anchor us, had a sidebar, and waited for the scouts.

About two hours later, one of us spotted a red canoe with two people in it about a half mile upriver. Thinking quickly, I got out my handy-dandy-super-duper-authentic-WWI-emergency signal mirror, handed down from my grandfather, to my uncle to me. Taking careful aim, I flashed the spot of sunlight at our lost companions. Don later said, "Damn, that mirror's fucking bright."

With the party reunited, we tied all the boats together into a raft, broke out a six-pack and relaxed. Honestly, these canoe trips are fabulous and the getting back to nature is fun. The camping and swimming are great, too, but the best parts are when the current's swift enough to get us where we want to go, and we can just float. We talk, listen and generally have a great time. These are the best parts.

While we relaxed, Don and Glade told their story.

The Marsh

I'm sure Don was thinking, "The thickets of willow don't seem too bad. A little effort here could save us a lot of time." Such a noble thought.

The further they got into the marsh, the thicker it became.

As the glimpses of the main party got fewer and further between, Glade started to become a little worried.

"Is this going to work?" he asked nervously.

"I don't see why not," Don replied.

"I'm not so sure we can find a route through this marsh."

"Sure, sure. We can do this, look here, on the map," Don reassured.

"Here, let me look at that thing," Glade said, reaching back.

"Catch..."

Don tossed the map past Glade's outreaching hand, straight into his chest.

The map, taking its cue from Laurel and Hardy, bounced off of Glade's chest and into the water.

Fortunately Don had the foresight to purchase a map made from plastic rather than paper. They just fished it from the lake, shook it off and continued navigating.

"See, we're here and we want to get here," Don said, pointing to the map.

"Okay," said Glade, rather un-reassured.

They continued moving through the ever-thickening marsh, fending off low hanging branches and paddling their canoe. The water grew shallower as they moved on and they soon grounded their canoe. The mud scraped and sucked at them, impeding their progress, and it seemed that poling themselves along would be their only option.

Glade, seeing how difficult their passage was getting, started looking for ways out of the marsh and back onto the river.

"Maybe if we went that way," Glade pointed to his left.

"Keep going," Don chided. "Do you want the others to think we're not able to..."

Don's chiding was suddenly brought up short when the canoe slammed into one of the submerged trees; shaking debris into their boat.

"Yawh!" Don cried when he realized that the debris was alive: hundreds of small, gray spiders had fallen onto their heads and into their canoe.

The spiders scuttled and scurried. Of course, they weren't planning on leaving their little tree domain quite so abruptly.

"Maybe we ought to get out and push," Glade offered.

"Sure, you do that and I'll push from inside the boat," said Don.

Don has a very reassuring 'sure.'

While Don steadied the boat, Glade stepped out into the mud, mud the very same consistency that Tom experienced almost a mile away. But that didn't deter our intrepid scouts. They were determined to find their own Northwest Passage.

Two hours of slogging through mud, avoiding muck covered trees and fending off hordes of small spiders, gnats, and bugs found them several hundred feet closer to the river and covered with brown mud from mid-thigh down.

"Look," a tired and muddy Glade called, "the river."

Sure enough, the trees parted to reveal the Colorado.

With a Herculean effort, the two grunted and pushed the canoe, now brown instead of red, through the last stand of trees and into the river.

"Aahh!" exclaimed the two unexpected falsettos.

The river was much colder than the marsh had been.

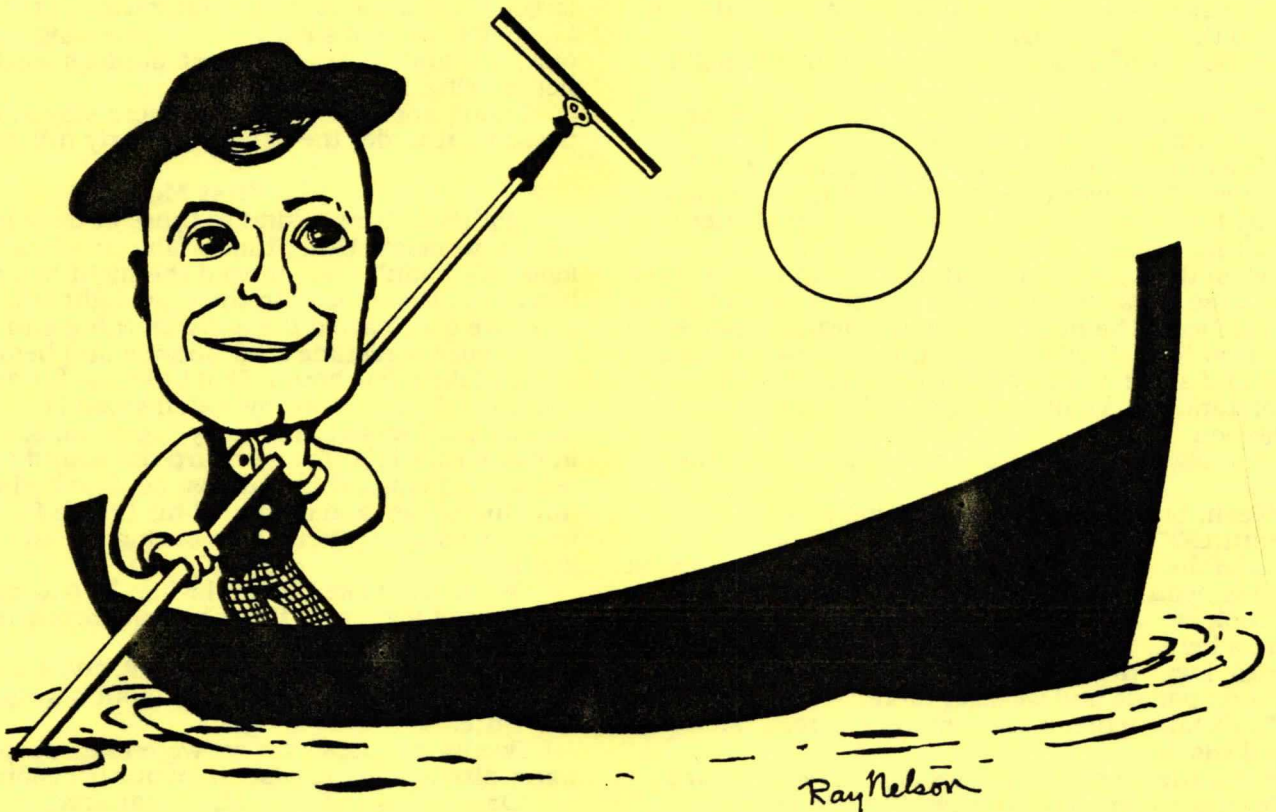
"What now?" Glade asked.

"Why don't we stay here and clean some of this gunk off while we wait for the others to catch up?"

Finally, after some time and much water splashing, they decided to start down river, planning to meet up with the rest of the party. The swift current made short work of the mile they had saved by going through the marsh. Finally, rounding a bend in the river, a flash of light caught Don's eye. Moments later, the party was reunited.

The Campsite

"See that over there? That's called 'God's Pocket.'



best fishing on the lake. And look, there's a Great Blue Heron."

"There goes Ken, again," Tammy laughed, "we brought him along just to point things out."

I nodded toward the redhead, smiled my thanks, and continued my impromptu tour. "See that cliff face over there, the one to the north? That's the north rim of Grand Canyon, the Shivwitz Plateau is on top..."

Three red canoes, lashed together, floated down the Colorado. The six of us talked, drank and ate lunch. The lunch part proved to be an exercise in cooperation.

The menu called for a light lunch of salami, hard sausage, two or three cheeses, apples and sourdough bread. Each adventurer took up a knife and an ingredient. With deft moves and true style, we commenced carving on our respective food stuffs.

"Here."

"Take this."

"Can I have a slice of cheese?"

"Who's got the bread? Thanks."

"How's that salami?"

"Mmmmfggll"

You can imagine the rest.

Tom Springer, bless his heart, brought a bota bag filled with Tropical Rum and a cooler of Capri Sun's Tropical Citrus Twists. We'd take long pulls from the rum bag and chase it with fruit drink. The afternoon passed in a kind of haze, pleasantly pierced by calls from songbirds or splashes from fish.

Eventually we reached a part in the river where the banks started to widen out and the current slows. The red mud and silt that flows with the water, starts to settle down and the water takes on a beautiful blue-green. It warms up, too. This area is also popular with skiers who use this part of Lake Mead. The last thing we wanted to do was get swamped by some inconsiderate skier's wake, so we untied the raft and went back to the paddling part.

An hour's effort saw us nearly to our first night's campsite.

"So, where're we camping tonight?" Erica asked for the third time in fifteen minutes.

"See that big black rock? That's Lava Point," I explained. "The river goes to the left of it, we're going to the right. I remember a cove on the left, just after the point, that's nice."

When the water's flat, and the canyon walls stretch off into the distance, there's no reference so it's hard to tell distances. The near end and the farthest may seem right next to each other, when they're viewed from an angle and some distance. Consequently, I could understand Erica's mounting disbelief in my navigation.

"You always say 'just one more cove over,'" she whined.

"Yeah, but don't I take you on interesting adventures?" I countered.

"Like the last one, where we nearly got stranded in a wild canyon with almost no food or water?"

"Look, we got out of that one alive, didn't we? And you're a better person for having experienced that trip. Besides, I was there, too. I don't feel like repeating that trip. Just paddle and we'll get there."

"Let's take a break and wait for the rest," she offered wisely.

Soon, the other two canoes floated next to our's.

"Ken sez 'one more cove over,'" Erica teased.

"We have to go around that," Don said, pointing at a bluff in the distance. "That's Lava Point."

"What're you talking about?" I said. "Lava Point's behind us and we're just outside of Cormorant Cove."

Don didn't agree with me, even though we were looking at a map, using a compass and reading the Indian smoke signals in the distance. We looked toward Tom for resolution.

"Don went through the marsh," Tom chuckled. "I'm following Ken."

"Come on Don, let's take a look and if it's not a suitable site, we'll continue on," I reasoned.

We rounded a couple of protrusions and found a little inlet that served our purposes: a small beach just big enough for three canoes, flat campsites for more than the six of us, and plenty of firewood. We didn't waste any time discussing it, we all knew *this was the site*. We unloaded the canoes (with appropriate breaks for sidebars) and took a look around.

Basalt cliffs, 200-300 feet tall, surrounded our little inlet on three sides. Tall, columnar basalt -- similar to Lassen National Park, or the Devil's Tower (as seen in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*) -- majestically thrusting into the sky. Talus slopes, from broken columns, flanked the base of the cliffs. And firewood, except the wood was forty feet or so up the steep talus slopes. Glade and I volunteered to collect some.

We set up camp, built fires and started dinner preparations. A vulture lazily glided into the cove and bounced off the updrafts caused by the cliffs. I'm not sure if he was eyeing us for future reference or just looking for scraps. Either way, we watched him glide without flapping for about fifteen minutes, just using the local wind currents. It's no wonder early man wanted to fly; birds make it look so effortless.

The menu called for me to be the cook so I set up the kitchen and started dinner. The odor of chicken stir-fry soon joined with the smells of a campfire and the smoke from the pipe. Unfortunately someone (me) forgot to pack the rice, so dinner was a little short. Lucky for us, Don's habit of over-packing worked in our favor and he broke out the hotdogs we'd told him not to bring. Thanks Don.

I don't know how late the others stayed up, but I passed out under the light of a nearly full moon.

The First Morning

Mother Nature is kind to those of us who appreciate her wonders, either that or she cuts lots of slack for fools. We hadn't even noticed the night before, but the basalt bluffs extended to the east, right where the sun rose. We got to avoid the early morning sun and heat.

I awoke sometime after sunrise and before noon, give or take a few hours. Don't ask me for more accuracy, I don't wear my watch when I'm camping. I awoke, but I wasn't in a hurry to get up, so I just lazed in bed for a while. Then I heard the sound of Tom releasing a long exhale, almost as if he had inhaled a lung-full of gas, and then held his breath for a spell. He was obviously enjoying the morning air, so I decided to join him.

"Wake and bake," he said when he saw me poke my head out of my tent. I think he was forecasting what the day would be like.

"Don't mind if I do," I answered. "When we're done enjoying this morning air, how about a swim?"

"Sure."

Twenty minutes later we were knee deep in the water discussing the wisdom of our decision.

"Damn, this is c-c-c-old," I chattered.

"I don't know, Ken, my feet don't feel cold any more," he replied.

"It's called frostbite."

Nevertheless, we knew we needed to wash the previous day's sweat off.

I held my breath, and did a Nestea Plunge backwards into the water. I've been in colder water before, but not on purpose. The shock caused me to exhale, but wouldn't let me take in a full breath.

"How's the water?" Tom queried.

I wasn't about to let him know how cold it was, but all I could manage was "wwwho, wwwho, wwwho, it's, wwwho, f-f-f-fine."

Being a good swimmer and always trusting me are two of Tom's finer traits. He jumped right in.

After his heart restarted, we swam around enough to loosen our muscles.

Tom's face kept contorting into...I don't know, but he seemed to be doing more than just swimming.

"I can't do it," he cried with anguish.

"Can't do what?" I asked, merely for the purpose of this article. I was having similar problems so I knew what he was grimacing about.

"I have to pee so bad my teeth are yellow, but I can't get anything to come out."

It should be noted here that the waters of Lake Mead are very alkaline. So much so that urine is instantly neutralized in the water. The park service posts notices around the lake advising people to urinate in the water rather than on the shore. It should also be noted (for the women) that when a man's genitals are subjected to cold, they shrivel up and try to recede into the abdomen. Right then, our balls were above our kidneys and heading north.

Eventually everything came out okay and we came out of the water.

"I need a sidebar before I start breakfast," Tom stated matter-of-factly, so we sat and contemplated life while the others started to wake up.

"I think a swim is just the thing I need to wake up," said Glade, yawning.

Tom and I looked at each other, smiled and encouraged him to jump on in. At least we were kind enough to throw him a towel when he got out.

Tom's breakfast burritos -- scrambled eggs and sausage rolled in a tortilla -- were as filling as they were tasty. Everyone ate their fill and even a little more.

Day Two

After eating and breaking camp, Erica was more than ready for a day canoeing. Tom and Tammy launched their canoe, and we were moments behind. We assumed Don and Glade would follow shortly. We paddled slowly for a while, looking at the wildlife and the geology. Looking ahead, we saw T²'s boat, and we were sure D&G would be right behind.

By the time we reached Lava Point, just before the river proper, we were ready for a break. T² slowed to a stop so we joined them and had a sidebar. There was no sign of the third canoe.

"Shall we wait for them?" Tom asked.

"Sure, let's float here for a while and see how long it takes."

We waited, and talked, and waited. If we drifted too far from Lava Point, we'd slowly paddle back, and wait some more. After the third time of paddling back, we decided to go a little further, just around the corner.

"What if they can't find us," Erica wanted to know.

"There's only one way for them to go," Tammy reminded her.

As we rounded the point, I started "pointing things

out" to the others.

"Lava Point is a lava extrusion. When the lava flow got to this point, some of it was squeezed out of a crevasse or hole -- just like toothpaste. That's what the point is." Perched on rocks sticking out of the water near shore, a large group of cormorants watched our leisurely progress.

Tammy chuckled, knowing that I was doing what I like to do.

Once around the corner, we found a little beach to wait for our lost third. Twenty minutes had passed when someone suggested we go look for them.

"I don't think I want to paddle back the way we came just to find Don and Glade. After all, it is Don, you know," Tom chided. We made the decision to continue down river.

About a half mile later we found a very nice sand beach, a great place to have lunch. We landed and prepared to eat. Tammy and Erica both looked royally pissed off about our wayward friends. Tom and I, being the stalwart fellows, and strong paddlers that we are, volunteered to take a canoe back to Lava Point to look for D&G.

It took only a few minutes of serious effort for us to reach our destination. We boated past a small rock sticking out of the water. Cormorants and grebes perched on the rock felt we were a little too close for comfort so they unfurled their wings and took flight. If only we could do the same.

As we rounded the point, Tom spotted a red speck in the distance. I got out the binoculars and verified that the speck was indeed the rest of our crew. Once again I flashed my mirror in their direction figuring that if I blinded them, at least they'd have an excuse for being so late.

While we waited for them, Tom turned around to face me, called for a sidebar and said, "Okay, let me get this straight...We got to the launch site in the early afternoon, unloaded and packed the canoes, launched, and then waited for Don to launch."

"Yes..." I prompted, hoping he'd make get to the point.

"When Don and Glade *finally* caught up with us," he continued, "they decided to venture off into the marsh."

"What're you getting at?" I asked, a little impatiently.

"I'm just trying to get the story straight, you know, so that when we tell it to our friends, it'll be accurate. Anyway, *they* went through the marsh and *we* went around. We waited for them for...how long?"

"Two hours," I reminded him.

"That's right, two hours. When they finally showed up, they're covered in mud and spiders. Then, after that, when we found that perfect campsite, Don wanted to go somewhere else..."

"...but we didn't listen to him," I said, finishing the sentence for him.

"That's because he went through the marsh, instead of going around," Tom answered.

"Okay, so you launched this morning," I prompted. "we caught up and got to Lava Point where..."

"...we waited for them, again!" Tom stated. "What's the deal with him?" he wanted to know.

"I'll let you know when I figure it out, but I think that Don's so proud that he can't admit when he's made a mistake and he is so scatter-brained that he makes lots of them."

"Let's make sure we don't follow his lead ever again."

"I agree," I agreed.

"So we went further down river without Don and Glad, hoping they'll catch up," he added.

"I think you've got the right of it so far."

"The ladies got pissed off, we stopped, had a bite to eat, and then you and I," he said indicating me, "decided to rescue them in case they'd capsized or drowned or something."

"That sounds like it too me."

By this time, D&G's boat was nearing ours and we could see the weary grimaces on their faces as they paddled.

"Where've you been?" Tom wanted to know.

"Oh, we decided to see what was at the north end of Grand Wash," Don said.

"Bullshit!" Glade erupted. "This Bozo didn't know where he was going and turned left instead of right. We've been looking for the river since we left. It took me forever to convince Don that we were going in the wrong direction."

"Well, have a drink and a sidebar with us," I said, handing them the necessary equipment to do so. "After you've rested a bit, we'll catch up with the ladies."

The Second Night

We paddled the rest of the day, past Driftwood Island, past Driftwood Cove and into Iceberg Canyon. It seems funny to name a desert canyon "Iceberg" especially since the air temperature must've been hovering near a hundred, nevertheless, the rock formations did look just a teensy bit like icebergs so I can't fault the name.

Wild burros grazed near the waterline and cormorants and grebes dived for fish. Above our heads, a turkey vulture glided lazily overhead. We canoed easily but steadily past the weird geology that is so prominent in the Southwest.

Erica asked me where tonight's campsite would be.

"A wonderfully pleasant place called Devil's Cove. If we can't find anything there, just beyond it is Hell's Kitchen. Either one would be fine."

"Oh joy, sounds charming."

"Actually they're very nice, with sand beaches and warm coves."

"Beaches? Sand Beaches?"

"Yea, sand beaches with nice, hot sand."

I don't think she believed me, but I knew she'd come around. "Hey," I reminded her, "wasn't I right about the last campsite?"

She paddled on in silence.

An hour or so later, we entered the mouth of Devil's Cove. It is quite large, being half a mile or more across, so it took us another thirty minutes to actually get into the cove proper.

Devil's Cove splits into two smaller (I say smaller only because they are only a quarter of a mile across) bays, much like a forked tongue. We (all six of us, we were careful not to let Don and Glade get too far away from the rest of the party) took our time before we settled on a landing site. We slipped into the middle of the main bay, looking for possible campsites. It didn't take us too long to determine that all of the best campsites were already claimed.

"Where to?"

I indicated the point between the two main bays, "How 'bout there?"

I don't think the rest of the group was convinced, but they followed my lead and we landed on a beautiful sand and gravel beach.

Of course, it took Don and Glade another fifteen

minutes to get from where they were to the shore. By then, the other four had started unloading our boats.

"Is this it?" Don demanded. "We're not going to stop here! It's the first place we've stopped. Surely there're better places than this. C'mon, let's check somewhere else."

"Look, Don," I said tiredly, "we paddled most of today, the sun will go down in a few hours, this beach is nice, what with the sand and water. What's wrong with here?"

"It's the first place we've looked," he explained again.

At that, I turned around and continued unloading my canoe.

As it turned out, Don later apologized for whining and admitted that the site was indeed a "very nice place to camp."

Just inland from the beach, the sand formed a tall dune, over one hundred feet tall. The view from atop the dune is simply spectacular. At the top of the dune there is a memorial dedicated to two friends. The sign under the pictures tells a story of four fishing buddies who've "fished these waters since the thirties." The first of the four died in 1990, the second just a year later. Surprisingly enough, the sign, the pictures and the whole monument is untouched by weather or vandals. I can only imagine that the remaining two friends must visit the hill regularly to maintain the landmark.

Once camp was set up, Tom and I decided to do some cliff diving. Oh, did I mention the cliff? Well, Tom and I took turns jumping off a cliff into some deep water. I know some people wouldn't have what it takes to dive from a precipice into a lake, but Mr. Springer and myself couldn't resist the temptation. I suppose the fact that the cliff was only nine inches above the surface of the lake helped us overcome any apprehension we may have felt.

For dinner, we planned on chicken fajitas and beer. We ended up packing more food than any of us could possibly eat, but we kept cooking and eating until we all felt full enough to imitate bloated, beached whales.

The Last Day

When the heat from the morning sun made sleeping impractical, the camp started stirring. Tom's breakfast burritos once again got us started with carbohydrates and protein. Sandy Point, just north of our final destination, could be seen across the river and a mile or so downstream. The day's endeavor was shaping up to be just a couple of hour's labor and we'd be done. It almost seemed too soon, but by then, we all looked forward to hot showers and cold air conditioning. After an after-breakfast swim, we loaded up and started on the final leg of the journey.

Fortunately for us, the third day proved to be the least traumatic (and consequently the least interesting). Suffice to say, we made it across the river and downstream without incident.

Pulling into South Cove felt like an anticlimax, but I think we were all ready to finish the trip. Jet skis and fishing boats cruised back and forth in the cove; their wakes making the last three hundred feet some of the most difficult. Perseverance and perspiration won out over these final obstacles.

Once out of the water, Tom and I hopped into my truck and drove back to his. Sure enough, it was still waiting there, flat tire and all. Oh how nice it was to return to civilization. -- Ken Forman

A literal report of the virtual Canoe Trip by Aileen Forman

My life with Ken Forman is very different from the life I led before I met him. Prior to becoming Mrs. Ken Forman, my outdoor escapades were limited to two weekend camping trips where we lived in a full-size camper and had all the facilities, and a week at the John Birch Society Junior Summer Camp (obviously material for another fanzine).

I like the outdoors well enough. After all, you couldn't ride horses indoors all the time. My life style was such, though, that my idea of roughing it was staying at the Motel 6 instead of the Hilton. I worked in the travel industry, so all my vacations were either at resorts or cruise ships.

Then I met Ken. Father Nature. Through the 10 years we've been together, I've gone on many weekend outdoor trips, but I've never been on one I've enjoyed as much as the one we took May 5th-7th. We'd planned on this trip for many months. I'd finally be off on a weekend, having had a hysterectomy April 17th. There were three couples going, Belle Augusta and Eric Davis, Ben and Cathi Wilson, Ken and I. We'd reserved canoes, bought food and packed. Then the weather report came in. Cold. Nasty. Wet. Windy. Hail. Armageddon.

What to do? Well, go ahead with plans of course. After all, what's a little rain when you've planned this for months? We all gathered that Friday morning at our house and...

We found the nicest cave. It came complete with two hot springs and tons of space. Coincidentally, it had a cold area perfect for perishables and a terrific place for a fire. It even had built-in toilets. We settled in for the weekend.

After spreading out the sleeping bags and putting some music on, we sat around doing what we liked best to do -- relaxing and talking, enjoying being with friends and speculating on whether John and Karla's baby was going to be late or early, whether Peggy and Tom would have children, whether Arnie and Joyce were getting tired of having a Social every month and generally gossiping about everyone that wasn't there. I asked Cathi if she and Ben were planning on having a

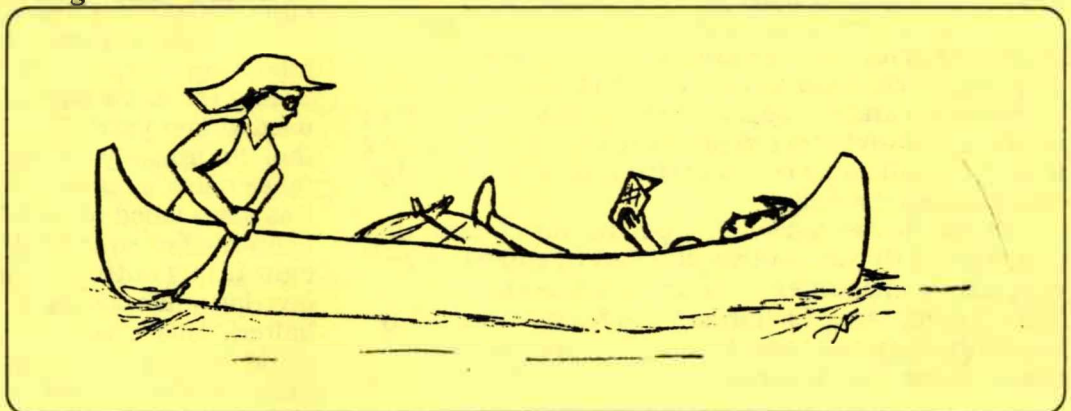
baby and she said she wasn't sure if they were ready to try yet, having just gotten married. I asked her what kind of contraceptive she was using and when she said that they weren't using anything, I said she was already trying. That proved to be prophetic.

And so the day went on, sometimes stepping outside to watch the

planes and black helicopters go by and identify the wildlife (house finch, neighbor's cat, dalmatian, schipperke). The weather was just as bad as predicted, though, so we mostly sat inside and relaxed. As night fell, we realized that our friend Erica's Pythonfest movie night was that night, so we got in our canoes and paddled over to her house to enjoy some Monty Python and good beer. The tiny size of Erica's apartment soon forced us out into the stream and back to our cave, though. That night we sat around making s'mores and listening to the tape "Why Do Clocks Run Clockwise" and playing along with it.

The next day started with Ben making pancakes for everyone smothered with real maple syrup. I highly recommend this as a terrific start of a lazy day. Since the Vagrants meeting was that day, a vote was taken and we decided to give up the peace and quiet of the cave for the civilization that is the Katz's. We made it back home in time for steaks cooked to perfection by Ken. That night we sat around the fire and played a virtual sex computer game (virtual because none of us actually did what the computer said to do. It may have sparked a few fantasies, however). We also talked about our childhood, comparing the differences. Sunday morning started with perfect omelets by Ken. We spent a lazy morning trying to guess the profession of the woman sitting in the car parked by our campsite. Eventually we decided she was with the FBI. By Sunday afternoon, we were ready to head home. After a lunch of burgers and chips we packed up and...

Our house was a lovely sight. We all sat around and talked about what a great time we'd had and discussed plans for future canoe trips. I said that as long as they were just like this one, that would be fine with me.



Depravity at DISCLAVE

A frank conrepor9rt by
Rob Hansen

The venue for the 1995 DISCLAVE, the Washington DC Renaissance, was a huge hotel, so huge in fact that we scientifictionalists weren't the only ones using it over Memorial Day weekend. No, we also shared it with Southern Baptists, some sort of high school prom and, on Friday evening, Pledge Keepers. For those of you 'til now happily unaware of their existence, Pledge Keepers is a Christian men's movement pledged to 'traditional' values and to 'taking back' their role as head of the family. Needless to say, they're also homophobic. Since DISCLAVE's most visible group of young fans, the Goths, have a casual attitude towards sexual ambiguity, what happened next was inevitable.

The Goths suddenly started sporting T-shirts and jackets that they'd either brought with them or rushed home to get (most are DC locals) bearing slogans such as 'Sodomize the Dead' and 'Smoke Crack and Worship Satan.' A particular favorite was one which read 'Have you forgotten Jesus?' on the front and 'Isn't it time you did?' on the back, though 'Corpse Fucker' had a nicely in-your-face quality to it.

Shortly before DISCLAVE, in the electronic forum of rec.arts.sf.fandom, a number of people made disparaging remarks about the Goths, accusing them of vandalism and the like, but I never saw any evidence of this and found them much more visually interesting than the predictable run of costume fans you usually find roaming the halls.

Thanks to Avedon's father paying our air fare, this was our fourth consecutive DISCLAVE, and we were delighted to encounter such familiar faces as those of Vijay Bowen, Mark Richards, Vicki Rosenzweig, Andy Hicknott, Dan and Lynn Steffan, Nevanah Smith, Moshe Feder, Lise Eisenberg, Alina Chu, drop-ins Ted

and Lynda White, and fellow Brits John and Eve Harvey. Friday evening was the usual round of parties, but Saturday morning found me sitting in the bar talking politics with Mark Richards....

A source of continuing amazement to Avedon, me, and anyone else who actually remembers Watergate, is the miraculous transformation of Richard Nixon from scumbag to elder statesman, culminating in a national day of mourning on his death. All through his life, just when you thought you'd finally seen the end of Richard Nixon, someone would pull the stake out and he'd rise again, as slimily malevolent as ever. "You can't lick our Dick!" is a line Avedon had quoted more than once... only now you can. In an even more amazing development, the US Post Office has just issued a 32 cent Nixon postage stamp. On the Internet, just before we set out for the US, someone posted a message to the effect that his 60 year-old grandmother had refused vehemently to have anything to do with the stamp, declaring: "No power on earth can make me lick Richard Nixon's backside!"

Having plumbed the depths, Mark and I then scaled the political heights, trying to find a modern world leader equal in stature to those of the past. The only one we both felt fit the bill was Nelson Mandela -- but then, spending 28 years in prison for your beliefs gives you a *lot* of stature. In making this judgement we may have been a tad harsh, however, because we were forgetting someone else who'd been a truly remarkable leader. I refer, of course, to George Bush. Who among us doesn't go all misty-eyed and get a lump in their throats when they recall how, with no support from America's allies and heedless of the possible consequences, Bush took such a firm and fearless stand against broccoli? Here was a man who took an unusual, nay inspirational, approach to diplomatic niceties and political norms, a man with a highly individual style of leadership characterised by relentless innovation. First hinted at by his refreshingly cavalier treatment of English syntax, it found full expression in the radically unconventional manner in which he expressed to the Japanese Prime Minister just what American businessmen thought of his country:

Mr Prime Minister...bleurrgghh!!"

Truly, only the hard-hearted could deny George Bush that fifth spot on Mt Rushmore.

It was that same evening that I checked out the a.s.b party with Mark and Vijay. For those who don't know, a.s.b stands for 'alt.sex.bondage' and is named after the Internet news group.

Sensibly, the organisers required everyone attending to sign a release before allowing them in. Seeing the same manacles, frames, and whips as were used at last year's DISCLAVE gave me a warm glow, though probably not as warm a glow as on the asses of those being spanked. Returning briefly to our room, I was astonished to find Avedon, Nevanah Smith, and Lynn Steffan squeezing themselves into kinky and tight-fitting outfits designed to emphasise cleavage (Avedon was wearing a front-loading PVC zip-up halter). All are big-breasted women and any of them could have burst free at any moment, concussing those nearby. Earlier, in the bar, another woman had

told them they looked like Valkyrie and taught them a song, sung to Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyrie' that they gave vent to loudly and lustily for the rest of the con at the slightest provocation, and frequently at none at all:

We fly through the night skies
Flashing our white thighs
Picking up dead guys
Until the dawn

Don't pick up that one
He isn't quite gone
Wait for the next one
Then we'll be done.

"Look out DISCLAVE!" announced Nevenah, "There's a mass of seething female hormones coming your way!" This certainly seemed to work for Nevenah, who was attracting, and revelling in, the attentions of young guys all weekend. (After DISCLAVE, I came across a book by Esther Friesner called *Chicks In Chairmail* and immediately decided there ought to be a Wagnerian companion volume called *Babes In Brass Bras*.) Later, I bumped into Ted White and John Harvey and decided to show them the a.s.b party. It seemed only fair.

Sunday afternoon I went for a walk around the

neighbourhood with Vijay, who was desperate for chocolate-covered apricots (don't ask). The neighbourhood around the hotel was, um, eclectic. The Renaissance itself was slick and modern, as was the Convention Center and other nearby buildings, but they'd been built in an area that had obviously been heading downhill fast. Behind the hotel was a somewhat seedy Chinatown, and in front a rather down-at-heel, mostly black area, where, ever the tourist, I admired the scenic bricks supporting a tastefully windowless car, and the colourful syringes in the sidewalk grating. We ambled around the area, hand-in-hand, and got rained on. When I mentioned this to Avedon later,

she was appalled.

"You must be crazy," she said. "That's not the sort of area where it's safe for a white man and a black woman to walk holding hands."

Since DC is her home town I assume she knows what she's talking about, but if true it's a sad comment on our species.

Fast forward to the evening and a bunch of us are sitting around in the bar with Dan, as ever, having tales to tell of the porn he'd seen in Amsterdam.

"The German stuff was the most amazing. There was this one picture that really brought tears to your eyes. It showed a guy with not one, not two, but *three* fists up his ass!"

"God," I said, as we contemplated the enormity of this, "we've all described someone as having their head up their ass, but here's someone who actually could! Well...someone else's head, anyway."

"Yeah," said Dan, "and I bet he never makes a noise when he farts, either."

"Y'know, you could do an EC-style comic about the guy and call it *THREE- FISTED TAILS*."

"If we did," laughed Dan, "they'd put us in jail for A Very Long Time."

We were distracted around then by the sight of one of the Goths in full drag -- not that males in drag are an unusual sight at cons these days -- and another

guy, who may or may not have been a Goth, parading around in an expensive-looking and perfectly-fitted wedding dress, the effect of which was somewhat spoiled by his moustache. While we watched, he got onto the escalator and one of his friends, seeing the danger, quickly lifted the train of his dress before it got caught. As he descended thus, his friend holding the train, they were passed on the up escalator by some Southern Baptists who stared at them, goggle-eyed. (I was greatly amused, though not at all surprised, to later learn that hotel security had no complaints with our group but thought the Christians were "sheer hell" to deal with, one piece of

AH, THE INNOCENT
DAYS OF FIRST
FANDOM!



FEUDS!
FEAR!
DISSENT!
INTERCENE
WARFARE!

great
stuff!

vandalism they were assumed to be responsible for being the mysterious disappearance of the number from the door of room 666....).

It was while we were sitting in the bar on the final morning that Andy, for reasons that are best known to himself and doubtless deeply sick and disturbed, presented me with a white rubber mouse. I was extremely grateful for it.

"Thanks, Andy," I said, "I'll treasure it always and never throw it away because, as every guy knows, you should never throw away anything that you might need one day."

"When the hell are you ever going to need a white rubber mouse?" demanded Avedon.

"I have no idea. In fact, I can't even imagine any circumstances in which I could possibly need a white rubber mouse. But why take a chance?"

Andy and Mark nodded in agreement with the good sense of this while Avedon, Vijay, and Vicki looked at us as if we were crazy. Women never understand this sort of impeccable logic. Andy then produced another white rubber mouse for Mark, who carefully tucked it away in his breast pocket against the day when he too might need one because you can never be too careful about these things. This raised a serious philosophical problem, however.

"That's two white rubber mice you've now given away, Andy," I said, "but how do you know that you won't need them one day?"

"No problem," he replied, airily, "I've got plenty more."

"Maybe," I persisted, "but what if you one day find yourself in a situation where you need multiple white rubber mice and you're two short?"

"God," he said, paling visibly, "you're right!"

Mark nodded in agreement, and the women burst into laughter.

"It's a guy-thing," I told them, haughtily, "you wouldn't understand."

And y'know, they probably never will.

After Andy and Vicki had set off back to New York, Avedon and I drove Mark and Vijay over to Dan and Lynn Steffan's place where they were linking up with Nevenah for their own lift back to the Big Apple. Concerned as always with the important issues of the day, there was a question I had no choice but to put to my companions:

"Have you ever wondered, I mean *really* wondered," I asked them, "just why it's spinach and not, say, zucchini that gives Popeye his strength?"

"Umm, because spinach contains iron?" suggested Vijay.

"That's too sensible to be plausible," I said, smiling and shaking my head indulgently. "No, it was because of the power of the spinach lobby. Yep, knowing the effect the cartoon series was likely to have on the eating habits of the youth of America, a shadowy cartel of international spinach barons used their huge financial clout to get congress to lean on the producers of Popeye to change to spinach from their original choice, rutabaga."

Strangely, they didn't believe me. In fact -- and you may find this hard to credit -- they actually had the nerve to *laugh* at my story!

"If you want proof," I said, stung by their laughter, "I'll give it to you. So sensitive does the US government still find this affair to this very day that all records of it have been expunged. "So," I added, triumphantly, "try to use the Freedom of Information Act to get details and you'll see that I'm right."

Unable to deal with such logic -- they appeared stunned by it -- my companions said little more until we reached Dan and Lynn's Arlington home. No sooner had we arrived, however, than it was decided we were going out to eat.

"I want a steak!" shouted Nevenah, "Take me to the nearest 'Slab'o'Cow'."

"Seafood!" wailed Avedon, "I need more seafood!"

"Taco Bell," I cried, "let's all eat at Taco Bell!"

As I fell back from the rain of insults and sharp objects that greeted my suggestion, Dan took charge. Moved by Nevenah's increasingly plaintive wails of "'Slab'o'cow', 'slab'o'cow'..." he announced that Avedon could get seafood at most of the local steakhouses and that that was where we were going. There was conspicuous lack of mention as to the availability of jalapeno-packed bean burritos in hot taco sauce and hold the onions, however. Poot.

The 'slab'o'cow' we found was a pseudo-Australian restaurant called 'The Outback Steakhouse,' where Nevenah was keen to have her steak done extremely rare.

"I want them to crack its horns off, wipe its ass, and serve it up!" she told us. My own requirements were somewhat different.

"And how would you like your steak, sir?" asked the waitress.

"Incinerated," I replied.

As we were waiting for our meals to arrive, I said something that I can only blame on lingering jet-lag or an incipient brain tumour.

"I'm working on a book," I told my companions, "a collection of mantras you can chant while cooking. I'm calling it *Omm On The Range!*"

Their groans were terrible to behold.

"Actually," chuckled Dan, "I *do* chant a mantra when I'm cooking. It goes: 'oh shit, oh shit, oh shit!'"

When Nevenah's steak finally arrived she sent it back because, unbelievably, someone had clearly had the temerity to wave it in the general direction of an actual flame.

And so the day wound down amid excellent company, good food, and fine conversation and, for us, DISCLAVE finally ended. We returned to Dan and Lynn's place for more scientificifical crifanac (Avedon wondered why SF writers so seldom created futures with genuinely life-enhancing advances -- such as the antigravity bra), to bid farewell to the departing New Yorkers and, at last, to Dan and Lynn themselves.

It was 28th May 1995. On May 29th 1985, Avedon had moved to Britain to begin our life together. Over the past few days we'd spent our time with good friends and enjoyed ourselves immensely. I doubt we could've found a better way to celebrate our tenth anniversary together.

I SING THE FANAC ELECTRIC

The Cyberverses calls to
Rich Brown

I've been doing something I once said I wouldn't. Early on, Ted White warned me that I was playing with fire and might get "sucked in" to Net fanac. If that happened, I might let participation in fanzine fandom fall by the wayside.

"Rich, you're playing with fire and might get sucked in to Net fanac. If that happens, you might let participation in fanzine fandom fall by the wayside," is about the way he put it to me.

"Not I," I said. If you had heard me say that with my mouth, Arnie, I'm certain you would have characterized it as two words uttered with firm conviction. Rather as if I had said "Yes, a Gestetner is a fine mimeograph," or "Yes, I believe I will continue trying to breathe," instead.

Even back at that early point, I had to admit that I found the Net fascinating. I couldn't claim I was impervious to its charms. "I have to admit I find the Net fascinating, so I can't claim I'm impervious to its charms," I said to him.

As one of the reasons I would continue to participate in fanzines, I may have cited the fact that material on the Net is ephemeral. No one, as far as I know, is saving it so that future generations can chortle over our brilliant insights and flashing wits. Whereas in fanzine fandom, an artifact called a "fanzine" gets produced and distributed and kept in fans' valued collections. (In boxes, mostly, in dank cellars, infested with bugs and spiders, where the fans who own them Hardly Ever bother to look at them or reread them except when they're sorting them out every 10 or 15 years or so. But, you know, there, a physical presence, nonetheless.)

It's my view -- subject to later revision, of course, if the situation should change -- that where fanzines



offer a kind of immortality, the Net offers a kind of instant gratification. And I really thought, when I made my early declaration, that the desire for immortality would win the tug-of-war more often than it has.

I also had an ace of sorts up my sleeve, a little "back up" assurance that I could beat the challenge. Starting in the 1980's, I got a job that required me to use a word processor. At around the same time, the large Remington electric typewriter which Dave Van Arnam had either given or sold me in the '60s began developing problems; the device that held the paper ribbon on the side got lost and so it was impossible to type more than a few sentences before a sharp return knocked it off and you'd have to stop and replace it on the spindle. You had to grab it quick, because if you let it roll, it would unravel in small chunks and you'd spend 15 minutes tediously rewinding the paper ribbon back onto the spool.

Then too, certain "central" keys began to stick. I went to a typewriter repair shop about it and was told a couple of things, one of which I didn't understand, the other of which I understood very well.

What I didn't understand was what they meant when they said it needed an "oil bath" (?) to get the keys working properly; what I understood far too clearly was the phrase, "a hundred and ten dollars." More than I had or could reasonably hope to come by quickly, for all that my fanac was piling up. In the hopes that it might suffice, I bought some 3-in-1 oil and applied it, very lightly, to the base of the keys, and it actually worked.

Once.

The next time I tried to use the typer, *all* the keys stuck. Two more applications -- one light, one heavy -- of the 3-in-1 oil failed to improve the situation. The base of each of the keys was begrimed with what appeared to be congealed grease. I tried wiping off the grease with a paper towel, but all I seemed to be doing was pushing the grease further down between the keys.

I could literally gouge little chunks of grime out from between the keys with a paperclip. It took me the better part of an hour to do the whole keyboard. The keys finally responded to keystrokes, but feebly, rising an inch or sometimes two before falling back, exhausted, beside its bretheren. I tried another application of 3-in-1, but the situation did not improve.

So what it boiled down to is that I ruined, and then never replaced, that typewriter.

I'm digressing all over the place, as is my usual will or wont. The point of this all lies back a few paragraphs where I said this all happened when "I got a job that required me to use a word processor." It eventually led to an editorial postion, but I started out as a backup word processor and multilithographer. Which is to say, they had a couple of other word processors and one other multilithographer; I was on hand because I could fill in for either. I was sitting on the sidelines, for the most part, waiting for the coach to send me in to replace a fallen teammate.

Sometimes, in the course of a day, I'd run off one measly little mailing list. And that, I noticed, only took up one of my two drives. So, with the full knowledge of the people I was working for, I began bringing in fanzines to write my LoCs in my spare time.

My subsequent employer has never minded, either. As long as I make certain there is nothing I can do to help anyone else out and am willing to drop "my" work for "their" work when it was there to be done, it was all right for me to write my own stuff on the premises. I could work lunch hours. I could get in early and stay late.

So I didn't need to replace my typer; I conducted all my fanac (and proac, for that matter) at work. You can almost chart the course of the business I was working for by the pace of my proac and fanac; during a few really busy periods, I had to resign from a couple of

apas, and when things were slack I sold 'my' novel (in collaboration with Dave Bischoff and Linda Richardson) and came in second (after Harry Warner) in a poll that measured "best letterhack".

Well. It has taken me long enough to get here, but, I assure you, I've been aimed in this direction since I started this: When I finally got myself a home computer, I stated with assurance that I would not get "hooked" on the Net at the expense of my paper fanac, since I conduct my paper fanac at work and my on-line fanac at home (where I don't even have a printer). My word processor at work is set up with **Word Perfect 5.1 (DOS)** and **Word Perfect for Windows 6.0**, whereas my home computer has **Word for Windows 6.0**.

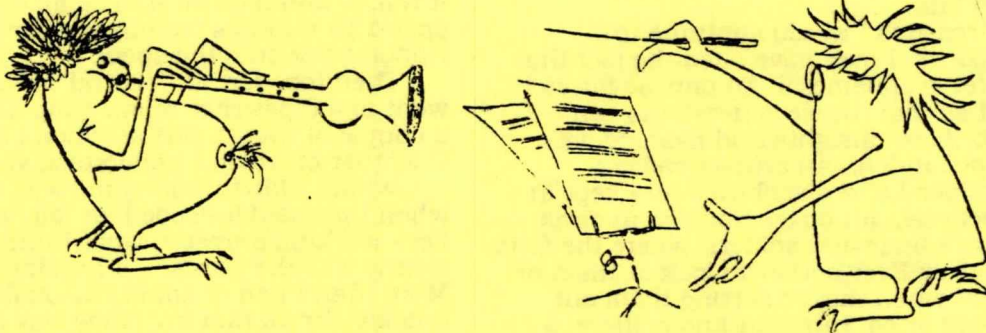
Then I made a discovery. Sometimes, writing either email or bits for posting to a fannish bulletin board, I would be my usual long-winded self and get tired of writing before I finished up. I found I could save it to disk. What is more, I found that if I bring the disks in to work, **Word Perfect 5.1** will pick it up as if it actually *were* in **Word Perfect 5.1**. I know because, when I bring the disks back and try to open the files while doing off-line mail, all the screen shows is half a dozen weird symbols. I have to go in to **Word for Windows**, which *will* translate **Word Perfect**, then I can "cut & paste" it for email or other on-line use.

Further, doing stuff in **Word Perfect 5.1** allows me to use a maximum 80 character line (using a typewriter typeface that is not proportional). When you just do stuff directly using America on Line, you're using a proportional typeface which you can't change that can cause you to type lines that have 81 or 82 or 83 characters. The Net takes this in and puts it back out (either in email or on news group postings) as something that looks like a picket fence turned sideways, as far as the right-hand margin is concerned.

So I've been doing some of my on-line/email fanac at work too...

It is depressing. Really. Contrary to my previously firm belief, my on-paper fanac, my shot at immortality, is falling off as I fall into the ephemeral clutches of the Net. And I haven't even gotten into making my own "Web" page yet!

-- rich brown



A Momentary Lapse

**A Totally True article by
Tom Springer**

"Go out and sell, sell, SELL!" Peggy Burke, SNAFFU president encouraged, waving the peach toned lid to a model PS-12Q (pressure sealable 12 quart), ignoring my look of disgust while urging on those loyal lambs who readily agreed to her plan. Her plan to bring SNAFFU's books out of the red and back into the black.

At the meeting that fateful day I sat in dumb amazement as the topic came up, and was subsequently voted upon. I just couldn't believe it. Who would have thought Peggy would go off the deep end like that? By Ghod, Agnes, and Roscoe too, before any of us fanzine fans could say a word, it was settled. We would sell Tupperware to raise money for SNAFFU, our local sf club. Tupperware! Could any N3F meeting be worse?

I was so afraid Burbee might find out I sat paralyzed in my chair, speechless, as the canvas bags (Official Tupperware Sales Bags) full of plastic products were passed out. April, her face aglow with capitalistic glee (she'll go far in any PTA), clunked them before each of us as she made a circuit of the room. Tupperware! I couldn't get over it. So I sat there, unable to flee, as Peggy talked about how good it would be for the club, being out in the community, selling it door to door, and, best of all, Tupperware Parties! O'boy.

I looked over at Ken for help, but he was oblivious, typing something on his Powerbook. He didn't even know what happened. JoHn sat listening to his Walkman, unaware of what had just occurred. I turned to where Joyce was sitting (the reason I came to the meeting that day, to keep her company amidst the mundania and pretension all SNAFFU functions assume), only to find her chair empty and the fanzines that lay before her gone. Somehow, she'd escaped!

Perhaps there was hope! Maybe she'd gone for reinforcements and would soon return, a large number of fanzine fans backing her, and in true SNAFFU fashion, demand another vote -- wake me from this plastic nightmare and put this whole thing in the past. So I sat. Waiting. But she never returned. And we ended up selling Tupperware for SNAFFU.

The worst of it was the mandatory Tupperware Seminar. We were drilled on product names, sizes, temperature compatibility, color-coding, and sealing exercises. The dreaded sealing exercises, where we were expected to close hundreds of different kinds of

plastic lids over container ridges, fumbling with the damn things while telling potential customers how easy and convenient they are. I still have flashbacks whenever someone belches in a certain and peculiar way. When they do, it sounds just like a Tupperware burp.

"A Tupperware burp?" you ask.

"Yes, a Tupperware burp."

You see, they had one particular lesson on how to properly burp your Tupperware when sealing it before placing it in the refridgerator or microwave. It makes me queasy just thinking about it. We each took our turn burping a Tupperware product. April and Peggy delighted in the burpings and took to them like, well, there's no describing it, but their enthusiasm allowed me a trip to the bathroom. The noises they made!

But April's sister, Lori, was the best. She made her Tupperware burp louder than anyone's. I'm sure, with practice, she'd probably be able to burp the alphabet. She'd need one of the Deluxe 45Q-PSTP models for that though.

Like I said, we all took turns burping Tupperware. I really wasn't up to it, but when my turn came around I gamely stood up, took the container in hand, and as instructed, tried to burp it. I don't know what went wrong. It all felt pretty good. I mean, I don't know how it was supposed to feel, but I thought I was doing okay. When I creeped my fingers beneath the lid preparatory to the burping, I must have creeped a little too much because it lifted the lid just enough to let a lowwing base-like fart escape. Not a burp, but a fart. It felt hood though.

I received smiles from Ken and JoHn, but disapproving silence from the rest of the room. I was excluded from the remainder of the burping lesson after that. Peggy wouldn't look at me the rest of the seminar, and though the instructor said that sort of thing occasionally happens, she didn't let me try again. Not that I wanted too. Burp-envy wasn't a problem for me.

But this whole Tupperware thing was.

The first Tupperware party was to be held at Peggy's, just a week later. We were expected to report our sales and earnings to her, renew our inventory, and listen to her pep talk. The entire week leading up to her party, she'd call everyone every day. "Checking in on us," she'd say, then proceed to demand more effort, more spirit, preaching that the survival of

SNAFFU was at stake. A more stern yet buggy taskmaster I can't imagine.

It was during one such pep talk that I realized I'd made a horrible mistake. I actually dropped the phone and doubled over in pain as it all came to me. Shortly after recovering I said goodbye to Peggy and hung up, relieved and still a little scared.

I'd come close, real close. The whole reason I avoid SNAFFU meetings is because I'm aware of the potential obligations every such visit implies. By just sitting there, listening to them open the meeting, go over the minutes of the last meeting, open old business, table it, then open new business -- why, just being there implies I'm a member. But I'm not! I'm not a member of SNAFFU!

No! I'm a Vagrant! I'm a fanzine fan! I'm not a clubfan, or a confan, or a media fan, or a gaming fan, or a filker. I'm none of those things. With that painful realization, my identity, once again, became clear. I am a fanzine fan.

Now, when I look back on that ugly day I can only surmise that Peggy has connections with certain evil entities, like Amway or the IBSG, borrowed certain brain altering powers from that organization, and zapped me when I wasn't looking. That's the only logical conclusion I can come to for me unwittingly assuming a SNAFFU membership and allowing my cheerful goodlooks, gentle humor, and my penchant for leftovers to be taken advantage of.

I didn't have to sell Tupperware to help the club. I didn't have to debase myself any further with the plastic-formed charade I'd been living since the concept's inception. Besides being a ridiculous idea, the whole time I suspected that Peggy decided on the Tupperware angle solely out of greed for the special Hostess Gift (a color matched set of stackable capvented PS-8Qs). By being the first to host a Tupperware Party out of our group, she assured herself the most sales, because after that first lame party, there'd be no more. And I was right.

Later that night I drove by Peggy's house and threw my Official Tupperware Sales Bag out the window, scattering plastic containers and lids all over her front lawn. I could have sworn one of them burped.



*You've read the article...
now sing the Fight Song!*

The Tupperware Song by Joyce Worley Katz (to the tune of "The Minstrel Boy")

We were proud of our fancub
Both sercon and true.
We fanned and we slanned
and we gathered and grew.
But then lust for gold
was introduced to fans there
And now at our parties they sell
Tupperware.

SNAFFU was a fine
science fictional club
Its members had pride
and a lot of good grub.
But Fair Peggy said
our debts we must pare
And fans would be forced to sell
Tupperware.

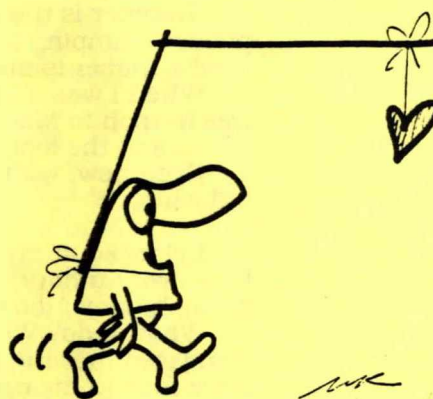
It's said we owe dollars
to some anonymous soul.
For this we must grovel
and try to raise gold,
To pay our expenses
and to end up square
They're forcing the trufans to sell
Tupperware.

Like any good Vagrant
I know what to do;
I hope you'll all hear me
when I tell it to you:
No projects, no causes
that's what we swear
It's not part of fandom to sell
Tupperware.

Forget the loaned money
that no one need pay
The fans who once lent it
would want it that way
Start acting like real fans
Leave the club unimpaired
so fans won't be forced to be
Tupperware!

A Rite of Passage

A summertime memory by
Marcy Waldie



Ah, Independence Day. Everyday during the summer of my elementary/ junior high school years saw me flaunting my independence. The fourth of the hottest month was always special with the parades and fireworks, but it was more so in 1958. I had made a decision. The effects would ripple throughout my entire life.

Growing up on the shores of Lake Michigan, I really didn't suffer from the heat. Most kids don't. The July temps made swimming all the more enjoyable especially since the water seldom got up to 70 degrees.

The favorite daytime hangout during the summers after my sixth and seventh grades was Southport Beach. The polio outbreak had had a couple of years to subside since the Salk vaccine had been distributed. So hoardes of us from elementary school age to high schoolers flocked to the "in" spot. There were rarely any problems, as crowded as the bath house, beach, water and piers were. Mom even let me go *alone* sometimes. One of those times was the summer after seventh grade. It was extremely important. I was on a mission.

There was an unwritten, unspoken code regarding a rite of passage among kids in our southside neighborhood. How we all assimilated this knowledge was a mystery. We just knew all about the contest, the timing, the rules. We also knew that each who tried had to be successful or suffer everlasting humiliation.

The summer before a kid started eighth grade, he/she was expected to swim the channel between the breakwaters at Southport Beach. When he made it, he **belonged**.

The channel swim was rumored to be very dangerous. The choppiest water in the swimming area was in the channel. There were stories of undertows pulling kids miles off shore and their bodies being found days later several miles south of the state line into Illinois. But I couldn't dwell on that. I was a good diver and swimmer. The day had come. I was ready. July 5, 1958 -- one day before my twelfth birthday.

As I approached the beach on my bike, I was relieved to see that the water was calm and sparkling under the cloudless sky. I set my bike in a rack (no lock needed) and gazed out over the lake.

The swimming area was almost entirely enclosed by breakwater. Huge boulders were stacked next to and atop of each other until they rose out of the water. At the spot farthest from shore was a large gap in the breakwater. The channel. As I stared at it in an attempt to psych myself up, it mockingly seemed to double in size. Could I swim the length of a football field?

Several girls who were going into the ninth grade (we

had three year junior high schools) strolled past me and whispered among themselves. I watched as they pranced up onto the boulders at the shore and skipped along the rocks to the end of the breakwater. One by one, they dived in, swam effortlessly across the channel and climbed onto the opposite breakwater. From atop the highest boulder, one of them called, "Your turn, Marcy." That was keen. Bobbie actually talked to me.

I slowly removed my tennies, as we called them, and climbed the boulders. Although I had walked on the breakwater hundreds of times, I did so more deliberately that day, hoping to exude confidence and determination. Physically I was staunch; emotionally I was a mess. What if I couldn't make it? And the lifeguard had to rescue me? Utter humiliation would prevent me from attending public school ever again.

At the edge of the channel I stopped and peered down. Giant swells rose and fell as if to dare anyone to disrupt their motion. I was nearly mesmerized when Bobbie's good luck call reached my ears. It was at that instant that realization gave me a cold slap in the face.

I had been accepted by the kids already! It wasn't about what I was on the verge of doing. It was about who I already was. Everyone I ever saw try the channel swim made it across. If it wasn't safe, the lifeguard wouldn't have been smiling at me. The whole business was just a formality.

I drew myself up to my full 5'6", inhaled until my lungs hurt and dived in with all of the force that my 90 pounds could muster. After one strong underwater stroke, I took the glide time to look around. Scores of plants waved at me from the channel bottom. Plants didn't grow in undertow areas. I was saved!

I surfaced halfway across the channel, and a few easy strokes took me to the breakwater. Bobbie gave me a hand to the top of the rocks. There we all chatted and even talked to some **boys**. One part of me felt pumped up while another part felt let down. Generally, I was relieved.

That night I went into my sister's room to tell her about my episode. She was going to be a high school senior and had just recently started to accept me as a relative.

"In a way it's stupid, Penne. It's stupid, but it's neat."

"I know," she said with a grin.

Most kids think that a way to become independent is to become one of their crowd. Acceptance and all that. But from then on, I wasn't too eager to play the same societal games that my peers deemed necessary to **belong**. I knew what was important. Perhaps that was the most useful birthday gift I ever received.

Summer is the time for doing all your favorite things. Vacations, picnics, camping trips, canoe floats...these are all the stuff of which a good summer is made.

When I was a kid, I had my own secret summer places: a certain tree branch in Miss Irene's yard, a grassy knoll under a big oak, a bed of moss at the foot of the hill just made for hiding out in comfort.

Even now, with childhood far behind, I still have my secret hideouts....

I glanced at my watch: my canceled appointment left me with a little over an hour to kill before I had to meet Diane. Too little time to go back home; too much to just arrive early and wait for her.

What to do? Well...there's always grocery shopping. I quickly dismissed that unpopular chore with the excuse, "It's much too hot to leave food in the car while Diane and I have breakfast."

Holiday Sales at the mall held some interest for me, and I started driving toward Meadows Lane. But my heart wasn't in it. "Just not in the mood for trying on things," I mumbled. I mumble to myself quite a lot as I drive. If I'm not mumbling, I usually sing. This produces looks of consternation from other cars, as I speed along smiling and screeching out the blues.

I've always figured I was really meant to be a blues singer. My voice is no great shakes, but it's always seemed to me that I might manage some gravelly voiced blues if everyone was pretty drunk when they heard me.

Course, what I'd really like to do is yodel. I can't, but I periodically make the attempt since I'm certain that one of these tries, it will happen.

So I was mumbling and singing and occasionally yo-de-la-de-ing as I drove along, not altogether happy with my schedule. And then I thought of what to do.

We all have our little secret vices, don't we? The things we don't rush to tell our buddies. The jeans pulled out of the clothes basket one time too many; the secret cache of chocolate cremes; the envelope of photos that really should have been thrown away. We have our secret places we like to go; the rendezvous with the postcard seller; the afternoon drink at the single's bar; the lace and leather stores.

With a guilty glance over my shoulder I made a quick turn and lost myself on the parking lot, then tripped into the hardware home center.

I've always found vicarious thrills in hardware stores. I'm happy from the moment I walk through the sliding doors and smell that special scent. It's an indescribably mixture of metal and dust and machine oil and lumber; I can almost list a hardware store's specialties by its smell.

A friend once asked me if I went there to meet men. "Don't be silly," I explained. "All the men in hardware stores are married." True. If you want to meet single men, go to the sporting goods stores.

A whole hour! A found treasure! I seldom get a chance to wander at will, rooting in the corners and bins. Arnie doesn't particularly share my love of hardware stores, and quickly gets tired of my leisurely amble through their aisles.

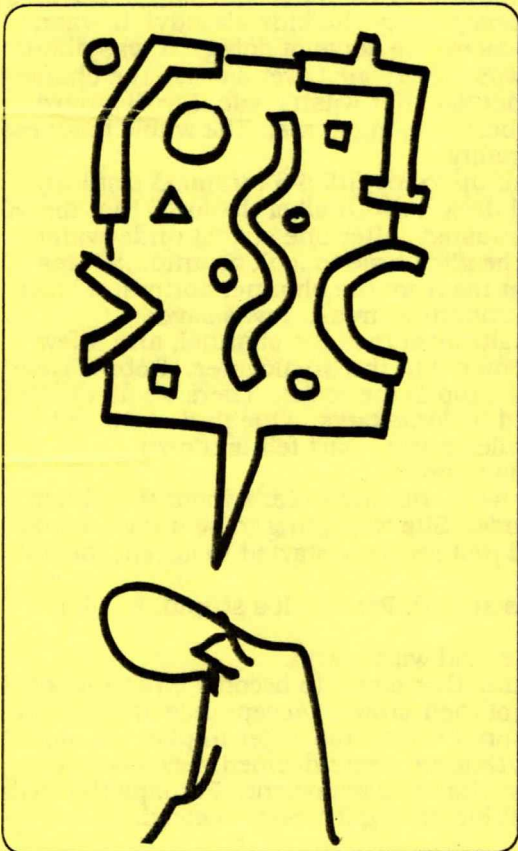
Today I'd see it all!

I turned right and started with the yard furniture. Now, this is a category I am really well-versed on. Before we moved to Nevada, dreaming of the day we'd have a yard, I bought a Sunset Patio Book, to study up on the basics of Good Patio Living.

You may think it's a simple matter. Pick your square of yard and put a chair in it. Sit. Sip lemonade. Well, that just show that you haven't read the Sunset Patio Book. I quickly learned that the furniture decision has to be weighed against the climate. For example, no ornamental metal benches in the desert southwest. With temperatures hitting 120 in mid-summer, flesh curls at the thought. Similarly, vinyl is a bad bet. The book wisely advised that it might last a season or two, but the heat and dust storms would do it in before I go my money's worth. Glass-topped tables, those fashionably correct and airy styles, are dangerous since the wind might sail them away, and the sandstorms scratch them. Wood is ok. But it takes a lot of layers of protective varnish to keep it safe from the torrential rains. The only real choice is resin; that cheap glistening material is practically indestructible, ideal for the desert.

Carrying On

A passionate column by
Joyce Katz



I admired the style of this year's resin collection. The designs constantly grow more ornate; this year's best offering is a white resin reproduction of a Victorian styled wicker.

I hung around the resin for a few minutes, then ambled on into electronics. "Oh, well, let's look at the chandeliers," I thought to myself.

It's strange how chandeliers are displayed, all hanging pristinely from the ceiling like a flock of bats. "Why, here's the very one my mother had," I muttered under one five-stalked branch. "I never did like the way it lit our room." Then my eye hit on its big brother: no fewer than ten branches twisted in stylish confusion, proudly balancing their loads of promise. It looked dusty with the bulbs dark.

A formal work, with golden arms and chrystal droplets glistened even in the gloom...a little overdone unless you're opening a casino.

Having resisted the calls of the chandeliers, I moved on to plumbing, and eyed the graceful, swan-necked golden faucets. "One of these days," I promised, "I'll figure out how to change a gasket." The thought of changing a faucet didn't cross my mind.

My talents in the building field are somewhat limited. I can hammer a nail, and though I've inflicted many holes in many walls, I've never actually knocked one down. I can use an electric screw driver to tighten things; in fact, if I may say so, I'm very good at that and can master both straight and Philip's head fasteners.

There you have it. I saw not, neither do I sand. I don't caulk, I don't plumb.

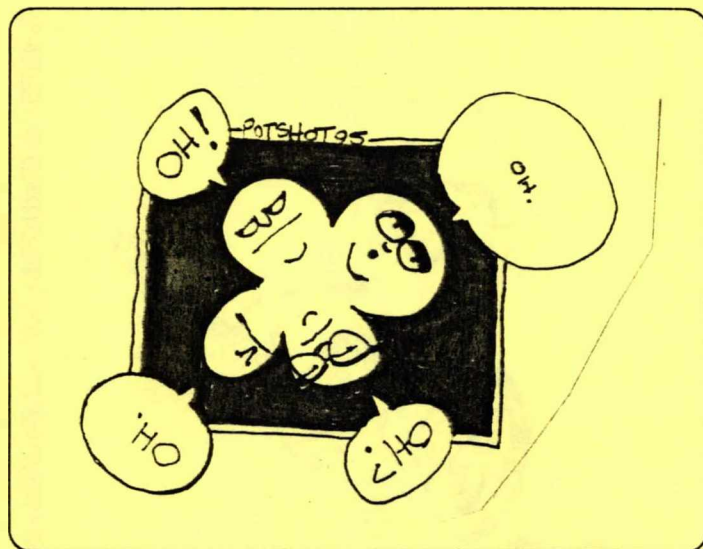
I'd tantalized myself long enough with the easy stuff; now it was time for the heady walk through the precut lumber. "Oooh," I cooed, and "oooh indeed," at the roccoco faux trims, the beautiful sanded dowels, the unfinished doors with lead glass insets.

This was a dangerous area of the store; such things could tempt one to actually Do It Yourself. Anyone who hangs around the ready-to-install cabinet tops could easily slide into accomplishment. I walked swiftly away.

I speeded past the rack of electric saws; they lack glamour. But the handhelds were more uplifting, each with a hidden song. My Uncle John was the first person I ever saw play a saw like a poor man's violin, and that's how I learned that each one's tone is different. I paused to admire a new one on me: a tabletopper that held the blade steady to have things run over it to cut. I toyed with the idea of using it for slicing French fries. The notion amused me...sort of the Crazy Guys From Czechoslovakia syndrome: like their vacuum, this was considerably oversized when compared to a Slice-O-Matic.

Somehow I wandered into the work glove area...a wall of cotton and canvas and leather beckoned me with curled fingers, cupped palms, and limp wrists. There's something very satisfying about work gloves; they look so... handy.

Another thing I like real well are those gorgeous storage boxes with the little bitty drawers to put nails and washers in. They seem so efficient. I yearned some for one tidy box with clear see-through drawers. I've never actually owned enough nails and washers to need such a device. Perhaps it would work well for needles and buttons and paperclips and rubber bands and those extra packets of ketchup and salt that accumulate in strange profusion. But all my needles and buttons and paperclips and rubber bands are already in perfectly adequate containers, and I throw away the extra ketchup and salt.



Big plastic wheelbarrows were the next to lure me. When I was a kid, wheelbarrows were rusted steel things, heavy and caked with dirt or concrete or metal shavings. These nifty lightweight gardener's tools are the cat's pajamas. I only wish I needed one.

About that time one of the clerks came up. He'd been watching me rambling leisurely about, and presumed I was hunting something. I had my answer ready for him. "Oh, thank you," I gushed. "I'm hunting those doohickeys used in a bookshelf to hold the shelves."

"Ohhh," he smiled smugly, "you mean shelf holders."

I fluttered my eyes at him in fake gratitude, then trotted along after him to the hardware counter. I gathered up enough for my shelf.

I tried to look around some more, but the spell was broken. I eyed the putty knives lustfully; "how nice... maybe I could use one to serve pie." But I knew I was fooling myself, and left it behind.

I browsed the endcaps at the cashier's station. Such interesting concoctions. Goo-off and Plant Feeders and Pocket Lights... I read the label of one compound that promised to remove the oil from my garage floor. But it hinted delicately that some scrubbing might be required...I put it down.

After I'd paid my bill, even the outside of the store held charms. There were huge moving dollies, and giant refuse containers. One section was devoted to aluminum siding in a rainbow of colors.

Then a prebuilt treehouse: just assemble and hoist it to the branch. And giant jungle gym set, with its swings and teeters.

I didn't have a jungle gym when I was a kid, but I did have a rope swing in a big oak tree atop a high terrace. When I swang I went out into open space, high above the garden 20 feet below.

I wish I had a see-saw, not really to teeter-totter, but for its Real Purpose. I think the most successful negotiators must be those who practiced for hours, experimenting with balance on the teeter.

As I drove from the store, I realized I was happy. Humming a tune with a smile on my face. Enlightened. Full of do-it yourself virtue. And all without lifting a hand.

Then I realized I'd forgotten to check out the price of pre-made fencing. I grinned wider. A good excuse to come back another day.



In the Summertime...

Rock n Roll history is full of paeans to warm weather, tiny swimsuits and sweaty sex in parked convertibles. Sam Cooke sang about "Working on the Chain Gang" and the Rolling Stones traveled "2000 Light Years from Home," but the radio -- this was in prehistoric, non-MTV days -- mostly took us "Under the Boardwalk" or to the "Summer in the City."

From Eddie Cochran's epic "Summertime Blues" to "Summertime, Summertime, Sum-Sum-Summertime" by the uncompromisingly insipid Janey's, a string of songs stretches from the earliest days of Chuck Berry to the latest alternative rock ("Summer of Drugs.")

The summer song that means the most to me is a little skiffle-esque ditty called "In the Summertime" by the otherwise-forgotten Mungo Jerry. Joyce and I have Our Song, "Wild Horses," but even it pales beside "In the Summertime" in my memory.

This tune is so important to me, not to mention this article, that I went the limit. Departing from my usual practice, I actually did some research. I combed through my record collection, untouched since 1990. I had to look through approximately 7500 albums before I finally tracked down "In the Summertime" on an album called "Top Hits" produced by now-defunct New York rock station WWDJ.

I'm listening to it now, repeatedly, as I write, and it still has me in its thrall. Several times, I found myself truckin' along the parquet floor, singing those familiar lyrics, effortlessly transported to the summer of 1970. Finally, I had to turn off the damn thing, or I'd never finish this by the, as always, imminent deadline.

Let me make it clear that "In the Summertime" is not my nominee for "Greatest Rock Song of All Time" or anything like that. It isn't the 100th best, and it's not one of my personal "top 25" favorites, either. Considering "In the Summer Time" with as much detachment as possible under the circumstances, it's a B/B+ title -- irresistibly roguish and comfortably bizarre, but never destined to sell enough copies to become #1 or the artistic credentials to cop a Grammy.

It's not the catchy tune, quirky instrumentation

Accum reborn **Katzenjammer** by Annib Katz

and unusual lead vocal that earn it that special place in my heart. No, it's the associations that surround it.

Ah, memories! Technicolor visions of golden days! *Aulde Lang Syne!*

When I hear "In the Summertime," my dick gets hard.

This is not the only stimulus capable of producing this effect. A musician shaped my views on this matter. Knowing my listening tastes, you might think it would be Dylan or Jagger, but wisdom came from a less expected source.

I always admired Tom Lehrer, a more talented Mark Russell of the 1950s and 1960s. When he sang, in "Smut," "Properly viewed, *everything* is lewd!" I took it to heart. I don't want to go on and on about this, but the power of positive prurience shouldn't be underestimated. (Even deviance has its limits; it couldn't save the Edsel.)

The first 20 times I heard "In the Summertime" I was rolling around the foldout couch in rich brown's Brooklyn living room, doing my best to welcome Joyce Worley to New York. Twenty-five years have passed since she stepped off the St. Louis plane into the sweltering mid-July heat of New York City, but hearing "In the Summertime" instantly conjures those fiery times.

The philosophical foundation of "In the Summer-time" is best summed up by the first stanza's punchline: "When the weather's fine, you got wimmin, you got wimmin on your mind." That's where *my* mind was, with a little time out to coedit **Focal Point** and co-chair The Bob Shaw Fund with rich brown.

Ever since Joyce had announced she was moving to New York to start anew after her marital breakup, I knew that the rapid-fire correspondence and multi-hour phonecalls had not been in vain. I was about to get my heart's desire. Though she couldn't draw cartoons, an attribute much desired in a female companion, she did publish fanzines, had co-chaired a worldcon and had evidenced a budding faanishness that complemented my own.

She also had a killer bod.

"In the Summertime," despite its surface jollity, offered a lot of enlightening advice. Unfortunately, some of it might raise establishment hackles, like the admonition to "Have a drink, have a drive... go out and see what you can find."

Purists might also quibble with Mungo Jerry's succinct advice on dating. "If her daddy's rich, take her out for a meal./If her daddy's poor, you can do what you feel." (I wasn't entirely sure about Joyce's heritage at that time, so to play it safe, I did both.)

Don't think that the lyrics of "In the Summertime" are all cut from the same tacky cloth. One line would make a fine slogan for Las Vegrants, because it perfectly expresses our group's lighthearted, friendly but irreverent attitude: "We're not downbeat, we're not dirty we're not mean./we love everybody, but we do what we please."

And who could forget, "Da da da da de de de de/ da da da da da... now we're hap-hap-py?"

"In the Summertime" came to Joyce and me, as we rolled and tumbled on the sometimes creaky bed-springs, on the now-forgotten but seminal "The Now Explosion." This briefly syndicated TV show presented the stoneage equivalent of rock videos more than a decade before the first MTV vj simpered through a record intro.

They weren't rock videos, because they weren't shot on video tape. "The Now Explosion" consisted of wall-to-wall film clips, each associated with a particular popular song.

Broadcast in two two-hour blocks every evening on New York's WOR, the show had a very short playlist. Record companies didn't make clips, so "The Now Explosion" had to create a visual for every song they aired.

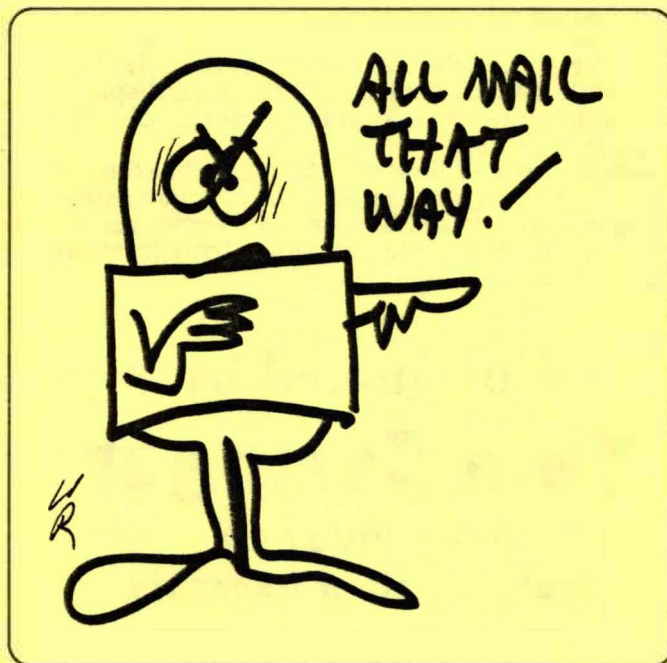
The visuals ran the gamut from performances to several minutes of go-go dancers enthusiastically grinding to the beat. Often, the clip told a story that had no relation to the song, though videos and music were always paired. One particularly enigmatic selection showed an appealing young woman cleaning her apartment, while another treated the audience to a first-person drive in the country.

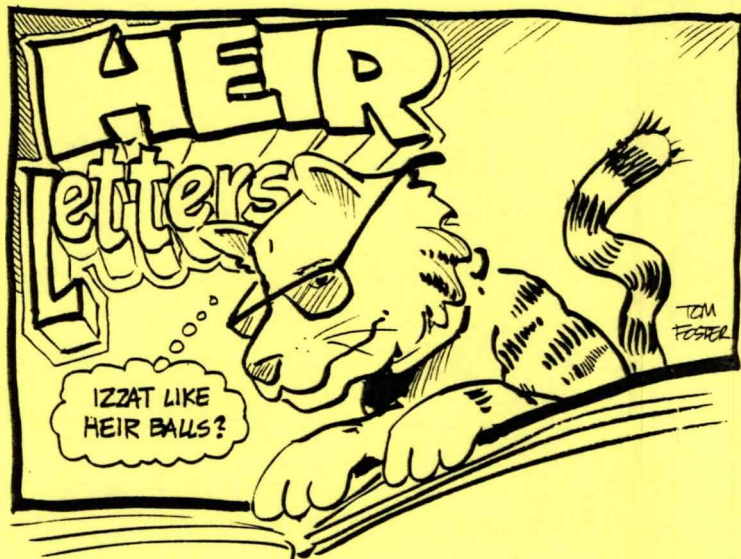
"The Now Explosion" offered viewers little explanation. Joyce and I frequently passed rest intervals speculating on its origins. We'd watch the show intently, when we weren't otherwise occupied, and hunted for clues to the story behind this unprecedented program.

Over that summer, we painstakingly pieced together meager evidence about "The Now Explosion." I can't speak for the veracity of our conclusion, but we ultimately decided that "The Now Explosion" was a university film class assignment turned to profitable purpose. We based this hypothesis on a relatively unobtrusive credit given to a Florida filmmaking class that ran at the end of every installment. Our solution may've been erroneous, but it satisfied at least one love-besotted couple with other things to divert their attention.

"The Now Explosion" was ideal for a partying pair camped in someone else's apartment. It had the challenge of its unknown raison-d'être, a helpfully repetitive beat and enough noise to cover most of the screams and groans.

So I guess I will always have a... warm... spot for "In the Summertime" and will never forget the sage guidance Mungo Jerry offered when they burbled: "When the sun goes down, you can make it real good and really fine!"





Shelby Vick

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WH #4 received, read, and appreciated. But a complaint before I spread the compliments around: I wasn't amused by the "crack" crack. Ross' rendering of it was terrific, but it's sacrilegious! Poking fun at Jophan is like...well, like making fun of Mom, apple pie, or saying Hulk Hogan is a 98-pound weakling.... Or saying Quandry was just a flash-in-the-pan.

[[Ross: Picture me as duly chastened, but with a slightly stubborn set to my chin as I dig my toe into the ground, and possibly a bit of a twinkle in my eye...]].

In short, the cover was funny -- but really!

Suzanne got eyetracks all over it immediately, and said to be sure to let you know she enjoyed it very much. She also plugged holes in it for me. That is, every now and then she would giggle about something and I'd ask what it was, and she would read me an excerpt. If anything, it added to my enjoyment when I later read it myself, kinda like re-reading a joke I'd enjoyed before.

Liked the way WH #4 gave us a look at several different Vegrants (also liked the editorial title, "Vague Rants" while on that subject). All the gang displayed their talents quite nicely -- plus, of course, Chuch. No one can replace him.

Overall, this emphasizes the point that fandom is made up of many things other than sf -- kite flying, convenience store work, bumming in Vegas, yet it comes together very nicely, making a truly interesting and individualized zine.

Conducted by
Tom Springer
with a little help
from the other Vegrants

You give the impression, however, that you're still feeling your way. Personally, I think the final ingredient needed is a lettercol, but then I'm a great lettercol fan. Locs are usually what I read first.

[[Tom: We're working on it Shelby! No one expected us to pub monthly though, so some people are still sending locs in on WH#4, 5, & 6, so it's going to take a little more time for everyone to get up to speed. But with great letters like yours, and all our other lettercol contributors, it shouldn't take much longer.]]

Frustrating! I write a loc on Wild Heirs #4 -- and before I can get it off, here comes #5.

Now, the cover on #5 was a different matter; hilarious. Liked all the different cartoon characters scattered around and enjoyed the cover even more when I read the line and found it to be inspired from inside.

Ross, in his column, talking about trash and sleaze and how he saw changes in standards as he grew brought to mind my own experiences. I remember how pleased I was when Clark Gable said "...I don't give a damn," on the big screen. Then I read a novel by Philip Wylie in which a man closed the bathroom door behind him and "pissed a strong and pounding stream," we heard. Someone was finally eluding to the fact that people had bodily needs. And there was a Saturday Evening Post cover showing an apartment building, with views of people behind the window. One was a bathroom window, and there was a man quite obviously taking a leak.

Real Life was being accepted!

Then there was "shit" and "fart" and "fuck," and all of the other forbidden words sprinkled about. Then the sprinkle became a downpour, and finally, a deluge.

And I was beginning to drown.

I appreciate freedom of speech, lack of censorship, and all that -- but too much is too much. Whereas I reveled in the first few Real Life movies, I finally turned away on the basis that I could see the same by peeping into a neighbor's window, and there would be a certain amount of suspense involved with that; I might get caught. Those Slice of Life movies were nothing but more than what went on around me every day; why pay to see it?

Why read short stories -- and books -- where every third word was profanity or vulgarity? To me, this shows a lack of vocabulary. A few such words can be effective for the shock, for revealing a character's personality; when they are liberally peppered throughout what you read, they lose their power; it's like kids scrawling things on public bathroom walls.

No, I don't want profanity and vulgarity done away with; I'd just like to see writers try to stretch their brains a bit to find more powerful and original things to say, rather than depending on the crutch of trash and sleaze.

[[Marcy: In the whole scheme of things, this is extremely minor, but we are talking about words. Why is it called "taking" a leak? Isn't it just the opposite? And why is the expulsion of excrement referred to in the same way? Enlighten me, please.]]

[[Ross: I saw Gone With the Wind early enough (mid-50s) for the shock of Clark Gable's most famous quote to register; now it only has the familiar ring of the oft-quoted, with a slight, sadly diluted frisson of the shock that once was.

I don't remember that SEP cover -- I keep seeing in my mind's eye the (probably) 1945 Norman Rockwell cover in which Private Willy returns to his Irish inner city

neighborhood from The War and all the neighbors are hanging out of their windows to welcome him home. (I don't really have that long a memory; I just have a couple of collections of Rockwell's Post covers. They are in storage, however, or I'd be able to find and allude to Willy's last name...)

I met Norman Rockwell once, as part of a small school group (5 or 6) who went to visit him at his studio in Stockbridge, Mass. (This was in 1953 or '54; I was 16 or 17.) In a small hallway outside his studio there was a lobster trap; he had just recently done his Post cover of a fisherman walking along insouciantly carrying on his back the lobster trap with a mermaid inside. Although one couldn't really see anything "naughty," she obviously had no bra or halter on, and, as with all of his work, he had fairly clearly painted her from a real model. He told us the Post actually had subscriptions canceled over that! I wonder how many more subscribers they lost over the cover you mention. Or was it really not all that obvious?}}

((Arnie: I don't divide the language into good and bad words. When I report or fabricate conversation, I want it to ring true. Catching the nuances and cadences of someone's speech includes the way they use words. Most people I know use the words you define as profanity and vulgarity to some extent.))

((Tom: I'm sure I'm the main culprit here. Sorry about the drowning and all. Sometimes I like to write under the influence (of 750mls of Jack Daniels) and go off at the mouth. And boy, I just went off. Upon rereading the next day (the day of the deadline), I wasn't at all happy with my concept (and consequently my contribution), but really liked the piece I did on JoHn. I was chortling, laughing while I was writing and having a grand time. Digging for some of the most heinous things that could happen to you, real trashy and sleazy and filthy and foul things. Of course Jack provided the proper enthusiasm, but I chuckled so with fondness during that rereading, I went ahead with the concept. Upon reflection, mostly, I don't seem to consider sensibilities when I write. Sorry about that.))

((Ken: I've always viewed profane words as just another set of grammar modifiers, or at worst colorful metaphors. For example, if I were to run over a pothole with my car and then try to explain to you that I'd just run over a "big pothole" you'd get a mental picture of the scene. If I said I'd just run over a damn big pothole, the listener would understand that not only had I potentially damaged my car, but that I was angry or concerned about it. It conveys so much more meaning. The people who overuse profanity are as bad as those who overuse adverbs (i.e., I just ran over a very, very, very big hole).))

A good example of the proper use of words is something that happened some years back. An elderly man was coming out of a store and was bumped into by a punk. The punk, of course, blamed the man for the encounter and started cursing him, using mostly profanity and vulgarity.

The older man took it quite calmly, holding a small sack of purchases. When the punk paused for breath, the man said, quite calmly, "Sir, when you get home, I prophesy that your mother will run out from under the porch, barking, and bite your ankle."

The punk's jaw dropped, a blank look on his face. The man got in his car, smiling, and drove away; he left behind a puzzled punk who had trouble interpreting the insult. Now, that was a civilized way to call someone a son-of-a-bitch.

However, this did not prevent him and some highly literate friend or friends of his, all in their mid teens, from being challenged by the sometimes referred to concept of a "string of profanity that went on for five minutes without repetition," and making an effort to develop and memorize such a sequence. He quoted me a part of the results once, less than a minute's worth,

but acknowledged at the time (a decade or so later) that he'd forgotten most of it. It was quite impressive.

((Ross: I feel sad when I hear small children casually swearing up a storm these days. My older brother once explained the use of expletives to me this way: If you use them all the time, so that they just become an ordinary part of the language, what have you left to say when you hit your thumb with a hammer?}}

((Joyce: ShelVy, I heard that story 40 years ago from Duggie Fisher. What I want to know is, did you tell it to him, did he tell it to you, or did you both get it from the same source?}}

I have had a revelation; I have Seen a Vision... or at least, something which has long bothered me has cleared up.

Over the years, there has been much conflict between FIAWOL and FLJAGH. It has now occurred to me that the proper expression is FIAWOLTJAGH: Fandom Is A Way Of Life That's Just A Goddam Hobby.

AARRRRGH! I barely finish a loc on #4, when #5 shows up. I'm in the middle of a loc on #5, and #6 shows up! Have you no mercy on we procrastinators who are used to quarterlies or annuals or irregulars and all that? How dare you reinstitute the hallowed (but ancient) practice of not only regular publication, but regular monthly publication??

((Joyce: You lazy duffers will have to get cracking (no, ShelVy, that's Not what I meant) to keep up with us.))

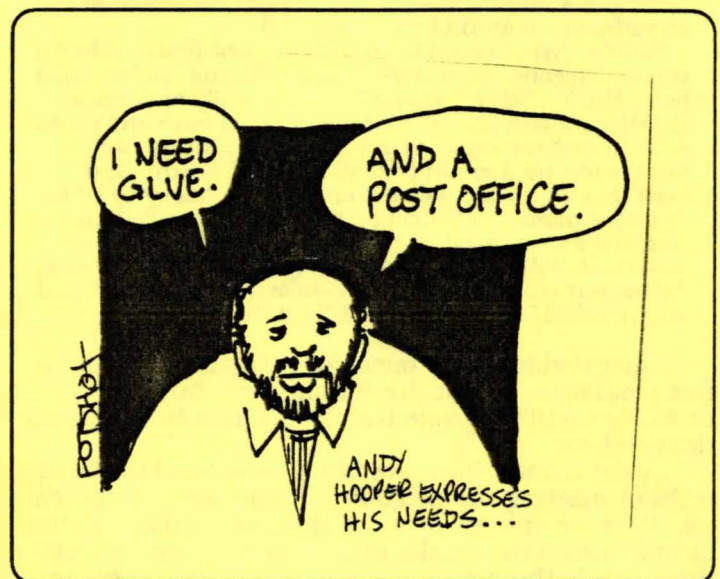
In either #4 or #5 (I'm too lazy to look it up) Potshot revealed my Great Discovery before I got around to it. I put both feet into my pants at the same time. Sometimes I even pull both feet out at the same time. Should we form a Secret Guild?

Read something in the current National Geographic about the brain that caught my attention, partly because of the information it gave, and partly because it seemed something fannish should come out of it. It said, "Emotions are neuropeptides attaching to receptors and stimulating an electrical charge on neurons."

Lessee, now.... "Fanzines are concepts sent out by mail and stimulating an emotional response by readers."

Or: "Letters of comment are sheets of paper sent to fanzines and stimulated by ideas read in the zine."

No, neither captures the same effect of reducing



something strongly felt to cold scientific terminology, robbing us of the emotional impact of feeling. Maybe "Letters of comment are ink on paper stimulated by ink on many sheets of paper stapled together."

They even go on to say that love is neuropeptides at work. Thus (my conclusion), poets are only people with active neuropeptides.

But I ramble. I ramble so much that it is now near the end of June. If I can't get this off soon, #7 will slam into my box and I'll never get this off. (I can see it now; eventually we have a loc that is 100 pages long, a never-ending loc because before I can finish one ish, the next comes along. It grows and grows. "The Loc That Crushed The World!" ...And it will be your fault, you understand.)

Buck Coulson

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Well, I wasn't included in the chain book scheme, but I probably wouldn't have responded if I had been. I knew the odds of chains lasting until I could reap the benefits from the time I was a small child. (I was a cynical small child, and I've stayed that way.)

If Marcy hasn't been getting ads in her e-mail yet; just hold on. She will.

What's more insurgent than holding a con in someone else's city? You're all being stuffy. Anyway, the Chicago fans I know are bidding for Chicago in 2000, and drafted Juanita and I onto the committee. (They said we wouldn't have to do anything and we'd get benefits if they won.) I dunno about the benefits, but so far we haven't done anything.

Not every station raises gas prices on the weekends anymore; competition is too stiff, presumably. On our way back from Wiscon we passed lots of stations with gas prices at around \$1.23 per gallon, and stopped at one which was having a Grand Opening and selling it for somewhere around \$1.00. Mostly, though, the gas in Hartford City is 10¢ less per gallon than it is in most of Indiana. Presumably because nobody around here has much money to spend.

{{**Chuch** I'm almost tempted to find a calculator and work out comparable gas prices between the UK and the US....but not tonight. The Brit gallon is larger, (by one fifth) than the US gallon, but the Brit gallon costs about 3 times as much....and is, I understand, one of if not the cheapest prices in Europe. I think petrol costs are the biggest factor in the trend towards small cars here. --you never see anything like the "Stretched" Cadillac that chauffeured me around Minneapolis.}}

{{**JoHn**: "What could be more insurgent than holding a con in someone else's city? You're all being stuffy." Good point Buck. Today, I would like to formally announce "HartfordCon in 2001." Since none of us have any plans to be in or near Hartford any time this century, we'll need someone there to field questions. I'm sure that, even though no one asked you, you'll be happy to let us use your name in connection with this big convention, and, if it's a disaster, it will be okay that the failure is associated with any or all fans in Hartford, won't it? Hey, it's not our reputation that's at stake if we fuck it up, and what could be more insurgent than that?}}

I met Roddenberry once, and Juanita and I got a free meal from him at the commissary, but the drinking wasn't in evidence. Might have been a spare time activity.

Juanita and I have lived in a lot of neighborhoods without meeting the neighbors. Can't say it bothered us. Here we speak - or wave, if we're driving -- to the farmers down the road a piece, but don't party with them. Only thing we have in common with them is

that the woman's aunt runs a bookstore that we patronize now and then. A lot of the socializing around here centers on the church. (We've been invited and politely declined.)

Sorry; never cared much for either fan fiction or faan fiction.

{{**Joyce**: I believe that the Church is also a point of social entry in Las Vegas, but not one that appeals to me.}}

{{**Tom**: My dad drank with Roddenberry at La Costa in the early/mid 1970s. During that time La Costa was discovered by the Hollywood elite as a great little get-away just down the coast. "Forget Palm Springs, La Costa's only an hour and a half away!" My dad checked with a fellow salesman, Bill Scarboro, on Roddenberry's preferred drink, which turned out to be a whiskey sour.

La Costa was a much different party than any convention. It's where Hollywood fucked. I've heard stories from people who were there: Roddenberry drank like a drunk (and a good one too), Lucille Ball had young male teenagers snuck up to her room, Raymond Burr temporarily fellated a drunk and sleeping salesman (and a good friend of my family) who crashed in his condo one night. It's a different behavior, and perhaps not one he was comfortable practicing among fans at conventions.}}

Ben Indick

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Trees fall, forests drop to the relentless saws of lumberjacks, as tons of paper irrefragably wend their way to the Fanzine Factories of Las Vegas and the incredible renaissance of fannish activity there! Already the *New York Times* is reporting a paper fall; *The Washington Post* has been forced to an alternate day schedule, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* has ceased publishing altogether. Highways to Vegas are bumper to bumper with paper delivery trucks, and even slot revenue is being curtailed as customers cannot get into the casinos between the bales of paper being deposited onto the sidewalks. Pres. Clinton has declared a state of emergency and has personally begged the frenetic fan-publishers to cease, or at least restore the now-daily and even twice-daily publishing of fanzines to return to the sane schedule of weekly.

{{**Joyce**: Ah, but could the deforestation of the great western wilderness happen for any better reason? Surely the home of the Great Spotted Owl is of less significance than the report of the last Vegants Meeting. Bambi's displacement is of no great import, when weighed against a punny story or a fabricated conversation between FTL and The Spirit of Fandom. What's the Spotted Owl ever done for me, anyhow?}}

{{**Ken**: Just as long as Ben doesn't start to blame us for the destruction of the South American rain forest. If he does, I'm going to personally make a hole in the ozone layer, directly above his head.}}

I noted you yourselves have been forced to exclaim at the designation "monthly" for WH. I can only surmise that you have collectively discovered the secret of beating the odds at the strip and are quietly but consistently lowering the profit margin of the casinos, and thus can afford the expense of this publishing. Of course, if you insist on reprinting stories then you may have to break the bank altogether.

And Las Vegas obviously hardly needs a "wordcon" in 1999 -- it already has one! So go on and blow it up!

{{**Ross**: I puzzled over your apparent typo of "Wordcon"—until Arnie pointed out to me where it came from. Oops! As my blush cools, with mutters of "It was rush job, you know..." and other lame excuses, I can

only say, "Take my word for it—we don't want the Worldcon, either!")

I note the rapid passage of time between my reading of Rant and **WH 7**, since, unless I overlooked mention of same, Karla Hardin had not yet had the daughter mentioned fearfully but proudly by JoHn on pg. 3. (I had been away and when I came home, all issues were in the mailbox, although perhaps his had been sent earlier. Well, a hearty Mazel Tov all around!

7.5 has that dread word "Fanfic" appended, although it is tongue-in-cheek. Still, it was enough to halt me in my tracks and put the issue aside for cozier and more reader-friendly weather. Today it feels positively Vegan here, and in the shade, mind you!

[[**Arnie**: "Fan fic," amateur science fiction, does not appear anywhere in **WH #7.5**. It contains "faan fiction," stories about fans. The main differences: "faan fiction" is not merely science fiction that can't meet professional standard; it's intrinsically not professional due to the content. Sometimes, it mentions your name.]]

Jeanne Mealy

766 Laurel Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104

Wild Heirs #6 is the last zine from you folks that I have to LoC. I think I'm safe for a little while here. (I just remembered a bunch of zines that got dumped into a box and moved last fall. Heaven only knows who is feeling stifled. Arghhh.) (Of course, this could be a phantom memory. Arghhh.)

I was amused by the Rotslerized badges from Corflu printed throughout the zine. Thanks for sharing these, and JoHn Hardin's run-down of the Vegrant mythology.

What's this about Andy Hooper being a shrimp? Oh, Crustacean Kingpin. That's different, isn't it?

[[**Ken**: The badges weren't all "Rotslerized," some were "Chamberlinized" while others were "Kinneyized" or "Kunkelized" or "Steffenized."]]

[[**Joyce**: The Transcontinental Shrimp Brothers Conspiracy continues even to the latest issue of Apparatchik, issue #38, in which Andy salutes those "who live only to serve the Dark King of Creel"... There's certainly something fishy going on; we just can't be sure what it is.]]

I confess to being disappointed in Laurie and Bill's blow-out article—understandably, I think, expecting a BLOW-OUT. Instead, there was some confusion about what to call the darn things, a number of amusing illos, then an Official Answer. OK. But where's the entire roomful of Vegrants celebrating their new-found knowledge with the tuneful sound of blow-outs? (Almost as good as kazoos, I'd imagine.) Or constructing the world's biggest blow-out? Or... well, you get the idea. Let your imaginations go wild next time!

Eric Davis nicely sums up one of the aspects of a good con with this sentence: "Everyone was just having fun catching up with old friends and new friends." I'm glad to hear that Corflu came across thusly to one new to its ranks.

Rob Hansen

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I was a little surprised to see my piece subtitled, with presumably ironic intent, 'A Totally True Report'. In fact, it was. The events happened more or less as I described them, and the conversation was reconstructed by me later as accurately as my memory

would allow. None of this was wit 'after the fact'. The only place where I took liberties was in that bit about the crisps (potato chips). I mean, what sort of flavor for crisps is chicken tikka, eh?

I was greatly puzzled by Tom Springer's contribution to 'Vague Rants' since he refers to comments in Lloyd Penney's letter in the loccol that just aren't there. Just how often do y'all 'get sercon' in Vegas, anyway?

[[**Joyce**: We're very sercon science fiction fans. Uncle Hugo would be proud. Maybe.]]

[[**Arnie**: How often do we get sercon? That's a very interesting question. If I could remember the details of last night's conversation, I am sure it would bear on this matter. That's when I asked a bunch of the Vegrants about it just last night. We were eating French fries and onion ring from Kilroys while enjoying a sidebar. Walt Willis will want to know that Kilroys is the home of the one-pound hamburger. A group of us plan to go in on it together, a sort of group investment. It's fun to do things as a group, don't you think?]]

[[**JoHn**: "Just how often do y'all 'get sercon' in Vegas, anyway?" Ummm, Rob? We don't 'get sercon' in Las Vegas. We have found that it is more convenient to just stay that way on a 24/7 basis. If Tom responds to the occasional hallucinatory LOC, well, that's the price we pay.]]

Seeing those pieces of fanfiction in 7.5 reminds me that I really must finish my own Chanderlesque parody, 'Flawol, My Lovely', which has been on disk and semi-complete for months. Oh well, maybe after all the Americans over for Worldcon finally depart and we have the Hotel Degler to ourselves again.

[[**Tom**: Ah-hah! Found it! (•celebratory sidebar•) To answer your question, we here in Vegas, who take our serious constructivism seriously (and we do), 'get sercon' on a regular basis. How else do you think we manage a monthly quarterly as per the Burb?

As to my exclamatory prelude, I found the letter by Lloyd I talked about in **WH#7**, and which you mention above. After foolishly volunteering to edit the WH Loccol (•self-indulgent sidebar•), and while running my own loccol in Brodie, and fishing through the dozens of locs for Nine Lines Each (a pocsard we (JoHn, Ken, Ben and I) send to our faanish-minutemen here in the states), I've seemed to have misplaced Lloyd's letter. (•cursory sidebar•)

Let me check the other issues though. Hmm... This is interesting. My copy of **WH#6** has the edited version of Lloyd's letter, but only the first paragraph at the end of pg. 35. But as my eyes scan over to the next page to continue the letter, they bump over and into Rotsler's incomplete letter crouched beneath a large-framed Kunkeltoon, on pg. 37. Pg. 36 can be found after 34 and preceding 35, an obvious DTP page layout flip-flop error. Or maybe your copy of **WH#6** is miscollated (like Lloyd's **WH#7** was, which he mentions near the end of this loccol), a realistic possibility. (•celebratory sidebar•) In case you did receive a bad ish, here's what I was referring to in Lloyd's letter, printed below.

Lloyd Penney: "What is the coolness between US and UK fandoms, anyway? Is there some anger over the Glasgow Worldcon, or has someone here dissed someone there? Did Abi Frost make even more of an impression (ahem) than I suspected? I wrote to Chuck Connor for an issue of Thingumybob, and he mentioned in a note that hordes of Canadians have suddenly asked for his precious zine. As usual, the Canfen are caught in the middle between the US and the UK."]]

John Hertz

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If you had come to Westercon 48 you could have

drunk Dick Pilz's home-brewed mead, or his non-alcoholic ginger ale, neither of which had hops. The ginger ale was a work of art. You probably know that mead is fermented honey. "Chaucer's Mead," by Bargetto is a honey-flavored grape wine. Dick also brought a rich brown barley wine he called Old Propeller Head.

I agree with Springer that Guinness is at the very top, with Anchor Steam (how can Samuel Adams call itself the best beer in America when there's Anchor Steam Beer?), Samuel Smith (Oatmeal Stout, rah!) and Pilsner Urquell. Among brews of this quality it's like trying to decide whether Mozart is better than Beethoven. But I've drifted into hopland, sorry Joyce. What about sake? Kodansha Press has just put in paperback Hiroshi Kondo's Sake (English ed. 1984) reporting there are three thousand sake breweries in Japan, which he regrets to say is down from eight thousand! And it's great with shellfish.

[[Joyce: The City of St. Louis is atop a bunch of underground caves. These cool natural storage bins, and the availability of water were what caused the great breweries to locate there. As a Missourian, I feel the Budweiser Eagle is the Actual State Bird, whether it's official or not.]]

For years Gestetner had a large office near me. Adorning the walls was color mimeo in breathtaking registration. I particularly remember a peacock and a bouquet of flowers. When stencil-through-ribbon came out the stencils were hard to find in stationery shops, so I went to the Gestetner office for them. Finally I could no longer maintain a well-mannered silence. "Great Ghu protect us all," I hissed, "Did you run those off here?" They had, and thought nothing of it, or pretended to.

Arnie is right. We L.A. fans may not be translucent, but we sure are transparent.

Guy H. Lillian III

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In going through the pile of fanzines I've received since beginning my own genzine, the sheer number of Wild Heirs issues forces me to write an admiring LOC. Las Vegas fandom is producing a remarkable overload of superb material in an astonishing ensemble effort. This isn't hyperbole; spread this fine material widely enough and I predict awards for you guys.

What do I find best about these zines of yours? Two qualities, I think. First, there's what I mentioned above, the fact that they're group efforts. It bespeaks dedication and patience and an almost daunting spirit that you have coalesced so well and stayed solid for so long. Secondly, there's the look of the Vegas pubs: the large type and expansive art lend a sense of light and space to the zines my eye finds entertaining in and of itself.

[[Joyce: Do you think it could be because we're so close to Area 51, and all the space visitors reported to be there?]]

[[JoHn: Gosh, Guy, you're embarrassing us. Of course, none of us in Vegas have done this with an eye towards getting any sort of accolade, unless you count Total Domination of The Galaxy as more than it's own reward. "Light and space" not only describes the look of our fanzines, it's also a pretty good analogy of what our skulls are filled with. Especially Ken's.]]

The enthusiasm of your contributors is enervating, too. Reading the many pages you've devoted to the

Vegas Conflu, I found myself enthralled by the event. The description by one of your writers of the various pipes firing up in the con suite of the Silvercon hotel is as congenial and happy an image as I've encountered in fandom in many years. "Your fandom," as you describe it, is obviously a contented fandom.

[[Ross: "The enthusiasm of your contributors is enervating, too." Hm, our eager writers just suck the energy right out of you, eh? We'd prefer to think we had an invigorating, even stimulating effect on our readers...]]

[[Arnie: The minute I read Ben's comment about "wordcon," I knew that Wild Heirs' mildest mannered co-editor would make someone pay.]]

But here's a question and it's a serious one. You've conveyed a sense of a marvelous closeness and spirit in your fandom. But is it an open closeness? Is it a generous spirit? Almost every paragraph in the many accounts of the convention is heavy with adulation for a man who has -- without meeting me -- declared himself my enemy. In your lettercol you champion his guardianship of whatever makes your fandom your fandom. The clear import of that attitude is to exclude whoever he excludes. Is that the way it is?

I can tell you, as someone hated and excoriated by Ted White, that there is nothing in his attitude to encourage or educate new faneds, nothing to convince them of the value of your fandom's perspective, nothing to guide them to your fandom's definition of trufannishness, nothing but invective and loathing and paranoid condescension towards those he -- for whatever reason -- chooses to hate. Does your fandom close itself off according to White's whims? Or can one enjoy the obvious warmth and humor of your fandom -- make it our fandom -- despite what he says?

To put it another way: before White keyed off on me, I was a guest in your home. Would I be welcomed back?

[[Joyce: I remember with pleasure your visit to our house. And I look forward to a repeat. Come West, young Guy, and meet the Vegrants -- they're every bit as friendly as they sound.]]

[[Arnie: OK, a serious answer. The Vegrants' admiration for Ted White is obvious, as you say. Ted has contributed more to fandom than any other fan of his generation, and he has of times upheld the standards of our brand of fandom, even against harsh and personal attacks.

On the other hand, Ted is not the Pope. His comments are the comments of one fan. An incisive, intelligent fan, but one man. He is entitled to hate your guts, and you have full dispensation to return the sentiment. That's between you and Ted.

He has never suggested to me, nor would he presume to suggest, whom to like, whom to invite into my home. Ted is my fannish mentor, and I can never repay my debt to him. What he taught me, among many things, is that the essence of "our" fandom is the right to express opinions. When fandom ceases to have room for divergent ideas and differing personalities, I'll take up stamp collecting.

But don't take my word for it, Guy. Come to Silvercon 4 and see for yourself.]]

[[JoHn: Look, we like Ted. Since he was Arnie's fan mentor (as Arnie has been to us), it is only natural that Ted is a fannish deity to us. I mean, Arnie knows everything about fandom, and Ted taught him, so, logically, Ted must know more about fandom than Arnie. Since this is not humanly possible, Ted must be some sort of supernatural entity. Angelic or Diabolic, it does not matter so long as we feed him lots of blood and keep the Thaumaturgic circle intact.

Seriously, whatever Ted thinks of you is his opinion. We're not in some sort of lockstep with everything that our 'fannish deities' think. You be nice to us, we be nice to you. Positively civilized, ain't it?))

((Ben: Vegas fandom is, for the most part, comprised of adults and so is fanzine fandom worldwide. The Vegrants think for themselves (I hope all of fandom does) and in thinking for ourselves, we make our own conclusions on the fanzines and their editors. Just because Ted White ripped through your zine with such fury doesn't mean he might not like you in person. Here in Vegas, thanks to Corflu, we were able to meet a plethora of BNFs and little ones as well. For example, I've read some of Frank Lunney's stuff and liked it, enjoyed it in fact. Yet when I met the man, who is talked about so much here, I found him extremely unpleasant.

I know that I'm not the only one that has found a difference in the persons and the material they write.

So come to Silvercon IV (or any other con that has a large faned population) and try the waters a little more thoroughly. Just because you thought it was chilly when you stuck your toes in doesn't mean you'll get the cold shoulder.))

Enough on such topics. I join with you genuine Vegasites in supporting Australia for the 1999 worldcon, but with different motives. In 1999 I will turn *urk* 50. I want to mark that grisly occasion by fulfilling a lifelong dream. Climbing Hanging Rock will do that.

Please: sustain the energy and esprit that has marked Wild Heirs and its progeny. It is a light in fandom.

Shelby Vick

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I'm gonna try again, gang --

Try, that is, to respond to one issue before the next one comes out. (You can't fool me; you're not monthly, you're weekly -- or is my response just done weakly?)

Have a possible solution for Chuch's needs.

Suzanne pointed out that our youngest daughter is/has-been/can be blonde. She is also a hard worker, and computer literate. Further, she would love a

chance to go overseas and get away from convenience-store managing. Of course, Chuch would have to provide child-care for two girls, ages five and eight. On the plus side, the girls are quite bright and obvious future fans. They are not, however, blonde. And our daughter does have a way of reversing employee-employer relationships....

Tom Springer: Tch-tch. You remembered meeting me at the party but forgot it was I you took back to the hotel for medicine (my glaucoma eyedrops). Guess I really wasn't a very brilliant conversationalist on our trip. Where you forgot me was on the return trip. But don't worry; I met rich brown at the hotel, and we managed to return...but I forget how.... So who should chide who for forgetfulness?

((Tom: Talk about confusing... When I went to pick up Ted and Linda I was told someone needed a ride to the Plaza, for a medicine fix. Before I left, Ross and I debated the merits of talking to Ted and establishing a meeting place, which we talked ourselves into doing. After getting off the phone with Ted, a meeting place firmly in mind, I left for the Plaza, leaving some fan behind without his/her medicine.

When I was giving you and Suzanne a ride back (obviously my memory is faulty here, since you remembered that I was giving you a ride back to pick up your medicine (I guess we were going to drop Suzanne off and return together to Arnie's because I seem to recall she was pretty much done in (again I could be wrong))) I was under the impression that I was dropping the two of you off for the night. I have no memory of anyone, including you, informing me that we were going to pick up your eye medicine.

This worries me. If I forgot something as important as that, what else am I missing? And who was I supposed to bring with me to the Plaza on my errand to pick up Ted and family? Or did I unknowingly stumble into some time distorted parallel dimension? Which would explain a lot, except who the heck that other fan was who needed their medicine. Or did you just wait three hours for another ride to the Plaza to materialize?))

((Joyce: That means Tom's carseat is even more valuable than we assumed since you, too, have pressed your buttocks into his upholstery. That should increase the future auction price of that artifact (his carseat, not your buttocks) at least ten-fold.))

((Ben: *Heavy Sigh* Tom does have a forgetful streak at times. He's not all at fault. Tom had just received a call from the hotel (the call he was waiting for), so he was off transporting Ted White and family back to the Katzes' when you needed that ride. So, volunteering, it was I who faced rush hour traffic with you.))

Rob Hansen: Got many a chortle out of that write-up, including "back to base-six", the gay's comment about Vijay, and the joke about the mold. In fact, I loved the cheese mold joke so much ("no signs of intelligence, but they've formed their own Republican party") that I'm redoing it and -- being a died-in-the-wool Republican -- substituting "Democrat" for "Republican," since it's well known that Democrats use



emotion instead of intelligence.

Okay! okay; I'll admit it: If Diogenes was searching for an intelligent man rather than an honest one, he'd have a hard time finding one in either political party....

((Joyce: Does that mean you think he could find an honest one there? I doubt it.))

Liked Marcy's piece. It was well done, and so clearly captured the awe of a new fan (not neo; new to fandom she might be, but Marcy is not a neo) on meeting a BNF. In fact, part of the success of WH is the effective way it takes us back to our own introduction and indoctrination into fandom.

Belle did the same theme, and did it quite well.

Okay, Joyce; okay. You caught me. I got your letter, carefully chose my six victims prospects, selected a book of Russian SF to send... and then it all got caught up in the maelstrom that constantly whirls around my room, sucking up locs, brilliant prose, a stray sock or so., and that was the end of it.

Great locs, with many a hook, but I'm deftly sidestepping them in the interests of finally getting a loc off before the next issue!

Enjoyed it all.

Harry Warner

423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740

You have contributed to the discrimination from which Gomorrah has suffered with respect to its twin city, Sodom. It has never had its name turned into a word depicting a certain activity, and now you misspell it in this issue as if it didn't deserve the care with spelling you applied to Sodom. However, I plan to rectify the situation as much as possible, because I'm going to entitle my new fan history book about subfandoms All Our Gomorrah's.

((Tom: You heard it first here folks!))

You really should make the resurrected Chicago Science Fiction League chapter official by asking Charlie Horrig for a new charter or a renewal of the old one. It must be quite a while since the last time he handled this sort of SFL activity, after he did so much of the paper work for it during the early 1930s as editor of Wonder Stories. Incidentally, I think I will soon become the elated owner of a top rarity, a sheet of unused Science Fiction League stationary. I know someone in fandom who has a supply of these treasures and I've asked him very nicely if I might have one. He is probably checking out my fannish credentials, to make sure I'm not a fakefan or neofan, before bestowing such a valuable gift upon me.

Some of the literature Ross Chamberlain writes about wasn't as hard to obtain in the middle of this century as he seems to think. There was a paperback collection of most of the famous Pierre Louys fiction and poetry available for .25 cents or thereabouts, from Avon, I believe, and some of his poetry could be found on the backs of lp record sleeves to accompany recordings of the Debussy settings of some of his poetry. The Thorne Smith books were readily available in both paperback and cheap hardcover reprints. Bob Tucker was their principal propagandist in fandom.

((Ross: Hm, perhaps I did give the impression that I remembered the Thorne Smith stuff as rare; I didn't mean to. I did have the impression that the Pierre Louys items were uncommon, though I hadn't heard about the Debussy settings of his poetry at all. Were they anything special beyond that? (His music varies so.)))

Bill Kunkel seems not to realize he has stumbled across a truth that covers more territory than just the Heimlich Maneuver. A state policeman one told me this basic fact: Nothing makes a person angrier than to have his life saved. The fellow who was peeved because Bill's friend prevented him from choking to death was just one example of it. Widespread examples of this basic trait of human nature can be found in the resistance resulting every time smoking is prohibited in a place of employment or a public building.

((Ross: I don't really wish to get into the on-going smoking/anti-smoking battle (Joy-Lynd is a formidable antagonist to the anti contingent, but she's not commenting just now), but I must remind you that smokers do not perceive themselves as being "rescued" by such prohibition or legislation supporting it. Anger may well result from the shock and fear induced by an actual physical rescue along the line of the Heimlich Maneuver or deliverance by some policeman (or fireman, or other authority figure, as a lifeguard) from immediate or impending danger. If the danger is either unperceived or unacknowledged, however, then the act becomes (or is seen as) one of unjustified interference, and the emotion is enraged resentment.

This syndrome is, in fact, at the root of many of today's societal ills, and the solution (perhaps now too idealistic to achieve) is to return to a respect for authority. "Agghhhh!" I hear from somewhere over my shoulder. But the operative word there is "respect"—not fear, not blind obedience, but honest, intelligent, informed, respect. And therein lies the difficulty, any more... (Now to sit back and see where the sparks fly.))

Robert Lichtman

PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442

Ghod, Wild Heirs No. 7 and No. 7.5! Two issues in a month! I'm just not accustomed anymore to the pace of a large, monthly fannish fanzine. For Crysakes, as it were, the pace is almost overwhelming. Another good sign of Golden Age-ness

Right off, I'm struck with the sheer fannishness of John & Karla naming their first-born Colette. It's so close to the word "collate" as to provide a brightly-lit verbal signpost to one of her future activities. (I'm reminded of Charles Burbee's oldest son Ed writing about attending FAPA collating sessions as a 6-year-old in his remembrance of Elmer Perdue for Trap Door some years back. The perspective was fascinating.) I can see it now; this child will learn to read out of curiosity over the contents of all the fanzines lying around the house. She'll probably be doing her own contribution to the mailings not long after that.

((Ken: I can see it all now, Las Vegas' new crop of kids (Ben and Cathi are expecting, can Peggy and Tom Kurilla or Tom Springer and Tammy Funk be far behind?) will all have appropriate names, let's see now...there's the twins Labella and Stampina, little Edittta, and look at what a fine boy Stapleton has become.))

Arnie, Lucy Huntzinger will be pretty surprised to learn that she's recently deflated. She's published four issues of Southern Gothic since December 1993. Before that she had a several-year non-publishing period, but was quite active before that. During the lull she definitely kept in touch.

Joyce, regarding those specialty brews that come only in bottles, just wait. Rich brown's bheercan tower will eventually come to pass. Recent articles have discussed how some of the former "micro" breweries are being bought up by the larger companies, most notably Redhook of Seattle by, I think, Anheuser-Busch. With moves like this, it's only a matter of time

before the "boutique" brews are put out in cans to capture that "niche market." Then rich (and those who volunteer to assist him in his towering passion) can drink some beer of quality — all, as you say, in the line of duty.

Enjoyed Tom's Corflu report, and particularly liked the part about offering y'all rides even though you already have your own car because he considers it historically important to note which fannish butts have sat in which seat in his car. I can see it now: little golden plaques on each seat, removable ones so that new names can be etched on with ease. When the car itself finally wears out, the seats will be removed and placed in a prominent location in Tom's domicile. New plaques will be installed, of course, in his replacement vehicle. Years from now, these seats will be auctioned off to eager young neofans at a future Silvercon or Corflu. Yeah, go for it, Tom!

((**Tom:** Actually, I see a virtual fan ride, where one gets to sit behind the virtual controls of my Isuzu Rodeo while Ted White, Shelby Vick, Arnie Katz, and rich brown talk fannish as you cruise the streets of your desired city. Donuts will be provided to add a touch of reality to the virtualness of it all. A selection of BNFs, WKF's, fans, neos, and fuggheads will be available but the above selection will be the default. This ride, of course, would be located exclusively at the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame and Museum. A big draw for the SFFFHF, no doubt.))

I wonder if Marcy Waldie misunderstood my "Oh, you're Marcy Waldie" upon being introduced to her? Y'see, I knew her name but hadn't before then figured out which Vegas fan she was. There are so many of y'all, after all, and I tend to know best the ones who do or write for fanzines. Also, I seem to recall that I might have been sidebarred at the time. It was at Bill and Laurie's after all. Anyway, why does she say she's "not worthy" because I "actually" spoke to her? Perhaps she thinks I was dismissing her. Not the case. As I just noted, I tend to know the Vegas fans who write for fanzines better than the others. I'm glad to see Marcy writing for Wild Heirs. Eventually this will help me feel more connected.

((**Marcy:** It appears now that we misunderstood each other upon our introduction. You are a cool, BNF, good all 'round guy, and it was an honor to meet you. I was pleasantly surprised that you recognized my name. I was not dissed in the least because we all know that there can be a few distractions at the Kunkel and Yates residence.))

((**Ben:** "Not worthy" means just that. No, I don't think Marcy thought you were dismissing her, but felt like I did the first time I talked with or received my first loc from you. AWED. I thought, "Robert Lichtman talked to me. The fanned of **Trap Door** talked to me!" It's like a step down the path of fandom.))

Enjoyed Belle's and Rob's contributions but no additional comments on either.

Joyce, I don't remember receiving the book chain letter you write about here, but you say you sent it to me. Blame the postal service, I guess. But it looks like, from who you did get books from, that perhaps only Geri Sullivan kept the chain moving. However, the enclosed is by way of lagniappe. (I hope it's new to you.)

Moving on to 7.5, I liked it all. Tom is right, I believe, that Ted White named John Berry, Andy Hooper and Dan Steffan the Shrimp Boys. It was me who immediately redubbed them the Shrimp Brothers

in homage to the fabled Chicken Brothers of mid-80's British fandom. Tom reveals a story-telling knack I'd previously not suspected here. Well, perhaps I'd partially suspected it after his true stories in Brodie, but I didn't know he could do it fictionally as well.

I wish you'd had room to reprint the wonderful multi-page ATom heading for BoSh's story. As it happens, the only issue of **Retribution** in my fanzine collection is No. 7, so I cast fresh eyetracks on that great piece of Artwork before rereading this fine GDA yarn.

Arnie's story is so cleverly crafted that it made me wonder if there really was an old Rotsler drawing tucked into that copy of the Insurgent Masque I donated to the auction....?

SKEL (Paul Skelton)

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What is obvious from **Wild Heirs** is that you have lots of people who can write but who would be better served with a firmer editorial hand. It's difficult. On the one hand you are publishing, and pumping up the volume, but on the other hand what you are publishing could stand a little improvement. Not a lot, but most of it does fall just that critical bit short. Take the cover of the latest issue for instance. Calvin and Hobbes were OK, but the 'Peanuts character needed redrawing, particularly Snoopy.

((**Ben:** The philosophy of editing Wild Heirs is simply "a loser hand." Vegas fandom is full of touchy egos, including mine. Let's face it, editing bruises egos, and a bruised ego puts out less. So a little less editing results in more writing. The more we newer fans write, the more it improves.))

I wonder about your comments about Sodom and Gomorrah. Whilst we all know what they liked to do in Sodom (hence presumably the term 'Sodomy') the practices in Gomorrah were so unspeakable that even the very term 'Gomorrah' is lost to our ken. Nor do you attempt to redefine it - yet you claim this as a 'Trash & Sleaze' issue. Pardon me whilst I roast my marshmallows.

((**Marcy:** There is evidence that S & G never existed, depending on one's interpretation of history. Of course places and occurrences of historical impact have been more heavily challenged in recent years. In this case it has something to do with the actual translation of historical documents and the men who translated them into popular script.))

((**Arnie:** Great news, Skell! Through diligent research, Vegas Fandom has unlocked the Secret of the Ages. We have rediscovered Gomorrrhping (the correct term, incidentally). We hope you're planning to vista Glitter City soon, because we have quite a few locals are are ready, eager even, to introduce you to the practice.))

You would of course have expected a much more positive response to Chuch Harris's column. Well, you would have gotten it from me too, had it not been reprinted from one of his own missives. In my case this would not normally have been a problem as I'm not usually on Chuch's mailing list. Every so often though I suspect his copier spews out an extra dozen or so copies and in a misguided attempt to stir me from my fannish slumbers he mails one of these in my direction. So, of course, as luck would have it I'd read the very best bits before, and when even the erstwhile redoubtable Bill Kunkel compounds the problem by starting his column with the words "My hair stylist..."

then I know that whatever it's got that's new, your latest zine is not on my wavelength (even though that particular section was a minor gem.)

((**Arnie:** The problem clearly originates with you. From now on, when you see something with Chuch's return address, we expect you to do the honorable thing and throw it away, unread. Then when **Wild Heirs** arrives with Chuch's column, you will be able to summon the proper fever pitch of enthusiasm. We hope this Constructive Advice will help you become a more responsible fanzine reader in the future.)))

Ross seemed to have put the effort in but too many of the writers were just winging it whilst I can't (and wouldn't want to) fault the enthusiasm that you're all bringing to bear it seems a shame that Las Vegrants are giving the impression of bubbling under rather over. Maybe I'm being too harsh. It ain't half bad, but you guys are definitely underachieving.

((**Ken:** I can see it all now, Las Vegas' new crop of kids (Ben and Cathi are expecting, can Peggy and Tom Kurilla or Tom Springer and Tammy Funk be far behind?) will all have appropriate names, let's see now...there's the twins Labella and Stampina, little Editta, and look at what a fine boy Stapleton has become!))

((**Ross:** Well, of course you're right about the (non-**Locus**) Charlie Brown and Snoopy; they were sloppily drawn (from memory; I didn't have an original Peanuts strip available to study at the time I was drawing it, whereas I did have a paper with Calvin & Hobbes). Mea culpa. Did I perhaps make up for it by being the only one to "put in the effort" on my writing? Maybe Not...that being sort of a fluke, that issue. *sigh*))

Lloyd Penney

((Mail Returned -- where are you, Lloyd?))

I shall get to a Corflu one fine day...but not today. The closest fanzine convention to me was the Ditto in Ann Arbor, but I couldn't make it there, either. All this discussion of minor fannish deities calls for a zine on fannish mythology, Arnie. It could be a classic on the lines of *TED*. Take a shot at it, and the rest could be the Vegrants' contribution to faanish legends of the future.

The littlest cons are the best cons, and relaxicons have to be the best. Yvonne and I ran a couple some years ago with Mike Wallis, and they stuck in people's memories so much, a couple of friends ran one with our cons in mind. I'm considering reviving the relaxicon here, and work with that couple.

Bill Rotsler discovered that pasteboard plates and bowls are best for drawing? Hell, we knew that years ago, and so did one demented artist up this way, Larry Stewart, he of the toastmastering in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Los Angeles. I've got two paper plate masterpieces on my wall, one a caricature of myself in a patented tacky tropical shirt.

Yvonne has given me the idea to actually turn my attention back to convention running (after announcing my retirement after 14 years of hard work), and bid to bring Ditto back to its birthplace, Toronto. Please, someone tell her she's nuts for suggesting it, and I'm nuts for considering it. Please! SOMEONE SAY IT!! (hmm...anyone out there want to help?)

Glicksohn's gafiation will never be complete (or believed, for that matter). He's living in the outermost glade, telescope fixed firmly on the fanscene happening just outside his doorstep.

I got a miscollated issue! Who do I complain to? End of zine, end of paper...hmm, this means something! Many thanks, take care, see you nextish.

Shelby Vick

627 Barton Ave., Panama City, FL 32404

Issue #8 was great, gang --

Naturally; what else would one expect? Amusing fannish cartoons by Kunkel and Rotsler, more great stuff on the net from Chuch, another level-headed but entertaining piece by Joyce, plus all the humorous chit-chat in Vague Rants (one problem with your title: There's nothing Vague about your Rants), plus all those other contributions by the Vegrants. All winding up with locs from brilliant folks all over.

As I said, a great issue!

(In a ps, Shelby writes...) THERE! That's one way to get a loc in on time! And I feel very secure in the belief that all of the above statements are accurate. So what if I haven't seen #8 yet?

((**Ben:** Now that's a timely loc!))

((**Ross:** Aww, I'm disappointed that you didn't think my cover was worthy of comment this time. And I was so proud of it, too.))

We Also Heard From: Luke McGuff: "Still like hearing about Corflu, and liked Tom Springer's tale, especially gripping. Hellyas! Your reaction to an LV Worldcon bid reminds me of Joking with St. Paul's Viper Club in the late '80s about the same. I'm glad we didn't succumb to the temptation. Well, the St. Paul Viper Club was only capable of group sniping and insults. Oh well. **Michael Gorra, George Flynn:** "Somebody on your vast editorial staff doesn't know the meaning of 'NFP'..." **Teddy Harvia:** Says he visited Dale Speirs, editor of the fanzine *Opuntia* in Calgary. Was fascinated by the city's concrete dinosaurs, nothing about **Wild Heirs** though, but we're not going to hold it against him.

