



Just a Bunch of Stuff We Did Since Last Issue

Stories About Going Places, Eating Things and Sleeping When We Can!

A year has come and gone since our last issue. In the interim, we've done some good things and some not so good things. Expect us to go on and on about the good things and leave the not-so-good things to themselves. As we ramble on about this and that, we offer no guarantee you will find any of it the least bit enjoyable, interesting or grammatically correct, so proceed at your own risk.

2003 was a peculiar year for Las Vegas. They talk about global warming, but you'd never know it from our weather. I came to Las Vegas to be hot and miserable, not cold and miserable. Imagine waking to find the neighborhood turned to a Currier and Ives litho. Montana perhaps, but not in Sin City.

Insert Obscure Reference Here:

"I'm up for a game of Quintet, how about you?"

And rain? Don't ask. Hell, even our lawn is turning green... Oh, the embarrassment! It rained before Corflu and by the grace of Ghu turned out the sun for our special visitors; then back to the waterworks!

There's something about the cold that absolutely turns me to beef jerky. I become immobile, hostile, uncooperative, lazy and utterly contemptible. Granted, there is something comforting about scurrying under the electric blanket with a good fanzine, but in general, overdressing for *any* occasion is against my nature. Creating a biological disaster within the confines of several pair of thermal underwear just isn't for me. Now don't get me wrong; those who find comfort in diminished genitals is welcome to any condition that provides it. Hell, I've been to Trafalgar Square on New Years Eve. I've witnessed the madness that is man. After that, nothing surprises me.



Home Sweet Igloo

Conventions like Corflu however, have the ability of warming the spirit (not to mention **Joyce Katz** chanting "Pub your Ish! Pub your ish!"). Granted my pens have been in the cleaning solution for three weeks and I still haven't installed my "Special" software after reformatting my hard drive, but real-soon-now there will be... well, at least some dabbling. Ah yes, the time honored art of dabbling. Now there's a subject I know something about. As I recall, it lays somewhere between procrastination and diltantery.

So... while this issue of "Black Cat" may have taken a year to see the light of day, we're hoping for great things during 2004. This is the year my birthday falls on 04/04/04. That must be good luck for somebody.



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From Alan & DeDee White
Vegas
vegasite@ispwest.com
www.fansite1.com
Black Cat #0 is available [HERE!](#)

A Lark, A Binge and a Toot!



The year started with a bang - literally. We did New Years from [Catalina Island](#).

Growing up in Long Beach, California, much of my life was spent seeing the rugged silhouette of Catalina Island bobbing on the horizon definitely out of touch. PBY Catalina sea planes took off from Long Beach International Airport in the '60s, headed for a landing in the harbor at Catalina; it seemed picturesque and romantic. For those in no hurry there was "The Big White Steamship" that offered "Get Drunk Before You Get There!" and dance to local rock bands till you fell down.

Alas, over the years, the BWS proved too expensive, the planes fell into the sea and you were left with the original Vomit Comet, a barely floatable craft, probably a fishing trawler in the days of the Argonauts.

The amenities consisted of plastic (read washable) benches and big trash barrels with signs reading: "In here, stupid!" Yup, for two hours you felt every wave and ripple on the high seas and that was on a mild day. There was a fellow with a mop, fast on his feet that ran from one calamity to another cleaning up after bilious land-lubbers. Ahhhh, those were the days. I saw it as Neptune cleansing you for your arrival on the island and on the return trip, purging you of your sins. But those who chose to hurl over the side got a spectacular view of dolphins leaping alongside as well as the [flying fish](#) that fling themselves from the water, spreading their wings as they glide across the waves. Those daring to look up would be delighted at the flurry of sea gulls nipping French Fries from your fingers and fingers from your hands.

Now there are sleek, comfortable and speedy high powered catamarans that whisk you from the mainland to the island in no time at all with nary a burp; arriving hearty and ready for adventure. On my last trip in the '80s, I stayed at the [Zane Gray Pueblo Hotel](#) (*Riders of the Purple Sage Room*) once owned by the master himself where all the rooms are named after his western tales. This time we opted for another hotel with a tale that began at the turn of the last century where a sea captain loved his ship, but wanted a home on the hills overlooking the harbor. He solved the problem by hauling his ship up the hillside, adding on some rooms and there you have it: hotel. And thus from here we launched our various adventures which are relatively inexpensive and purchased from a tour office on the main drag. We opted for several excursions:

"Up The Hill To The Horse Ranch by Tram Tour" [A marvelous overview of the island](#), stopping at several photo areas, the mini-airport perilously atop the island also boasting a small museum of island history, then over to a horse ranch that has been there for 100 years. You disembarked for a small horsemanship demonstration and a walk through-museum of antique carriages. Along the way you are introduced to the wild buffalo and boar that roam freely and much of the foliage, some of which grow only on Catalina.

"Two Harbors Isthmus Flying Fish Tour" Donning rain slicks in a speedy boat we wooshed and splashed to the far end of the island called Two Harbors for the island thins out, making a short walk from one side of the island to the other. Here was a great place for basking and eating, plus a land tour showing an original Army headquarters left over from the Civil War (Must have been the lost party patrol). I was surprised to see this part of the island has been in many movies from silent days to the present. The area is also becoming quite the spot for the wealthy summer home owner. On the trip back, at dusk, a bright spotlight was turned on the water where you can see literally thousands of flying fish leaping from the water, shooting an amazing distance through the air and even hopping into the boat!



“Ecology Snorkeling” Around the hillside from the main drag is an officially sanctioned ecological area where fishing is verboten. You can, however, sign up for a guided snorkeling tour of the wildlife. You get your snorkel and mask, plus wet suits are provided and needed as the water is quite chilly. The wet suits make it impossible to sink and thus our group of 20 bobbed about as our leader chummed the water bringing thousands of fish for our inspection and describing the habits of each. After the tour, you are allowed to spend the rest of the day using their equipment if you desire.

There is also the submarine ride which covers plenty of territory and keeps you dry and cozy, plus the glass bottomed boat and the exceptionally cool submarine bubble piloted by a scuba diver that takes you on an underwater tour with a clear, 360° view of your surroundings.

By the way, there was a New Years Eve dinner in the wonderfully Deco Casino where they repeatedly remind you the word “Casino” means “A place where people meet”. This was followed by musical entertainment and that too was followed by the fireworks show. All in all, a wonderful diversion.

Catalina is a great place to spend 2 or 3 days. Small enough to do and see everything for those in a hurry, yet laid back and full of enough surprises to entertain a longer visit. Prices are moderate, there is plenty of night time bar-hopping available, Victorian B&Bs for romantic getaways, hiking, horseback riding and water activity.



When I traded in my Amstrad for a Mac in 1986 I became an instant disciple steered away from a life of beige, viruses and an operating system not even it's most ardent supporters like. Sure, I have a PC I keep for laughs and I'll never understand how something as primitive as Windows became the standard.

Living the MacLife has been good and fitting of an annual convention known as [MacWorld](#), held at the Moscone Convention Center which I've attended since it's inception in 1986. Here you can see and play with all the new goodies, software, hardware and sniff the motherboards! Seminars give you in-depth, hands-on practice with your favorite software and Ghu knows there are plenty

of freebies. I manage to leave the convention stooped, loaded with flyers, demo discs, newly purchased software and maybe a new book or two.

We stayed at the [Pickwick Hotel](#), oft mentioned in the Sam Spade novels and though refurbished, still maintains much of its noirish charm. Being only a block from the Moscone, the price was quite reasonable.



A convention highlight is the keynote presentation by Steve Jobs. This year he presented “Garageband” a music creation software with the help of rock star [John Mayer](#), creating music on stage using a simple “Drag and Drop” technology. Plus, the Mini-iPod, an even smaller version of the digital music player.

I was lucky enough to have a Media Pass which let me go anywhere and sit in on the best panels. As usual most of the convention centers around [Adobe Software](#), creators of Photoshop, Acrobat, InDesign, Atmosphere, Illustrator and Premier. The good news is, they've seen the light and canned PageMaker, a disappointing layout software in favor of InDesign which seems to be an amalgam of Quark Xpress and Illustrator that has garnered good reviews from literally all the magazines I've seen.

Within walking distance is the Metreon, a stunning entertainment complex complete with movie theatre, comicbook shop, high tech electronics and a boodle of video games. Around the corner is the [Comic Art Museum](#) which is always a treat to visit. 🍏



VEGAS BLOOD BATH

Director Greg Parker returns to the screen with another blood curdling hit movie!

(or: every man his own Cash Flagg!)

Earning rave reviews in [Fangoria](#) and other genre mags for his first feature "[Lord of the Dead](#)", Parker leaves a trail of freshly hewn corpses scattered here and there about Las Vegas in his latest thriller "[Blade of Death](#)". Filmed entirely in Las Vegas with a local cast and crew.

An ancient Samurai warrior is brought back to life sustaining his unholy existence by how you ask? By plying his supernatural powers and hacking people to bits of course! As in "[Lord of the Dead](#)", Parker deftly melds humor and horror in this latest gore-fest sure to having you laughing, screaming and blowing buttered popcorn out your nose!

Both DeDee and I grace the screen once again, I as the crazed Psycho Detective and DeDee as the kind and caring Social Worker.

Still in post production, but slicing up your local retailer soon - Beware!



The major players were well represented plus one thing Comic-Cons are known for: **Hot B a b e s !**

Las Vegas Comic-Con or Deja Vu all over again!

Vegas is the absolute mecca for a convention of any kind. The Las Vegas Comic-Con, not affiliated with the San Diego bunch came to town with guns drawn. They put on one hell of a convention, loaded with celebs and a terrific dealers room, rock bands, costume extravaganza and movie premieres.

There has always been an odd problem with Comic Cons as we saw several years ago at another promising comic event: they never actually tell anyone they are coming and thus you have an absolute overkill of cool things and virtually nobody there to enjoy them. Thus pissing everyone off and ensuring there won't be another one. I found out about it by accident via Google while looking for something else.





It's been 10 years since I've been to a convention. and I thought I'd die without once again tasting the bittersweet fruit of unbridled conventioning; rejoicing in the time-honored ceremony of unabashed gut-stuffing or participating in the early morning ritual I call "The Zombie Walk". That of staggering down one hallway after another in a drunken stupor, looking for any signs of fannish activity, mainly because you've forgotten where your room was. It turns out, all I had to do was wait long enough and eventually, everything comes to Las Vegas.

March 19-21 [Corflu](http://www.plazahotelcasino.com) would be coming to the venerable Plaza Hotel at the apex of The Fremont Street Experience. Here was a chance, not only to go on vacation, but still be close enough to home to feed the cat! Ahhh. . . the Plaza Hotel; a cozy if not threadbare leftover from the days when the name Bugsy made strong men quake. Hell, the Plaza was, at one time, the sole train station for Las Vegas. You could hop from your Pullman and be pouring quarters into a slot machine in a matter of minutes and later, completely shitfaced and broke, stagger back to the platform and chug-chug your way home. Could life be more simple? We've hauled many a visitor to and from the Plaza platform and now that train service is no longer available, I just had to see what remained of the waiting area. To my surprise, the "History of Train Travel" mural was still on the wall in the hallway leading to the platform, but now, the area bears a sign reading "Plaza Employee Smoking Area" and indeed there were people, presumably employees smoking therein. It also served as a storage area for dozens of chairs which thankfully, were not smoking. The hotel is one of those rare, unpretentious establishments that much like fandom, has seen better days, and is held up with lots of duct-tape. No one cares if you gamble in a bathrobe and bunny slippers and merely by sitting at a slot machine you are presented with an unending parade of free beer. Jackie Gaughan, who owns the Plaza and several downtown casinos has, since Corflu sold the Plaza to a gaming conglomerate and will now, retire. Their new flash enabled website is "www.plazahotelcasino.com".

But here was a chance to dip my toes in the sea of fandom once more. I did some art for the program cover also used on the T-shirt and at the last minute, honed a ballot box from some foam board while DeDee produced several trays of brownies, cookies and things. The membership goodie bag contained new issues of "Crazy from the Heat", "Smokin' Rockets" and "How Green Was My Vagrant", a collection of writings from the hallowed pages of Vegas Fandom's "Wild Heirs". Also riding fitfully along with these masterful tomes was "Nine Lines Each", the official postcard zine and daily update which was handed out surreptitiously at various points during the con. But wait, there's more: a restaurant guide and 2004 DUFF and TAFF Ballots.



Ken gets a scritch from April Reckling



Ears got nibbled. . .



Shirts got sold!



Joyce & DeDee



Yummmmmm!



Lenny Bailes



Cathi Wilson



Joyce & the Box



R-Lauraine Tutihasi



Lori Forbes



Richard Brandt

Thursday, March 18th / Hug Suite Hug

We acquired our room keys and made our way, through the mildewed halls where no doubt, if they could speak, they would be screaming. We found our room on the 16th floor - the one with the word "HUG" scratched into the door. The room was comfortable, clean and served us well. The Hug Suite overlooked the swimming pool and the train tracks, where at any given moment, a train so long you could not see either end would be rolling by, plus the digital clock tower across the street that would faithfully give us the temp and time. The action would really start the 18th thanks to Joyce and Arnie's welcoming party setting the tone for the rest of the con - **fun, fun, fun!** DeDee came early with Joyce to help set up the room and make sure all the chocolate was well tasted!

I finally got there about 6:30 ready to meet all the folks I've seen in print over the years! As early fans wandered in - some tired from hours of travel, they perked up seeing a lavish spread of goodies and assorted drinkables (I know I did and I only came from the other side of town!). Cathi Wilson made an official Corflu cake and Ken Forman showed up with a box full of Corflu T-shirts that sold like proverbial hot cakes! And thus the evening went; chatting, trading zines and best of all: eating. Oh, we're lightweights alright and the fact I had to show up for work on Friday, sent us scampering off to dreamland earlier than we would have liked.

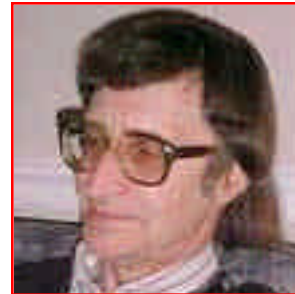
Friday, March 19th / Coots and Craps

DeDee had a chance to enjoy the first event of Corflu - that being Ken Forman's nature walk to and around our very own wetlands. Who would have thought the desert wasteland would be an oasis for a variety of birds and scores of flora and fauna. It was another gorgeous day, here in paradise as three fanvans whisked the intrepid explorers off to parts unknown. It turned out to be a pleasant walk while Ken Forman, master of the great outdoors pointed and explained (sometimes both at once) at this and that along the way. Where the water came from, where it was going and what would happen when it got there. Coots, mallards, jackrabbits, icky stuff and other critters that call it home all came under the scrutiny of Ken's watchful eyeball.

I finally got there about 6 to Arnie saying "Alan, you missed all the egoboo at the opening ceremonies! Everyone was talking about your art and the ballot box!" Oh Poo, I missed the



Arnie



Bill Burns



Art Widner



Steve Stiles

egobus! Oh well, a couple of beers will make everything right! But here we were, the cocktail party fully underway in (and spilling out of) the Program Room doubling as a dealers room and trip down memory lane. Here were boxes and boxes of zines, displayed, drooled over, purchased and eventually taken home by one lucky fan or another.

When things began cooling down, Ted White gave a reading from an old Walt Willis tale and thus concluding, sent all scurrying to the consuite (or smoking suite for those inclined) to resume our positions where Linda Bushyager offered a "Gambling Crawl" excursion to the gaming floor for the monetarily daring. Offering tips on turning \$20 into... well, perhaps a good time. We went off on our own at one point to get acquainted with the assortment of new machines which turned out to be friendly ones, drink a few beers then head back to the consuite for some snacks, then off to the Hug Suite.

Saturday, March 20th / The Fear of Beer Morning came with the rare pleasure of waking without a cat upon one's head and someone else to make the bed. The problem with living so close to a convention finds the call of mundania beckoning one home and thus we spent most of the day, missing the trivia contest that I would have stunk at anyway, and as I understand it, Sandra Bond shellacked the local boys!

Also missed was the Crock-Pot Luncheon which scuttlebutt claimed was top drawer all around. Oh, the zine auction also fell before the evil sword of Mundane obligations, dash it all! We finally made our appearance at the Program Room about 4:00 in time for "What Fans Need to Know About Fanhistory" which was immediately cancelled for some reason I was unable to discern, then suddenly revived by public demand.

Arnie, Joyce, Lenny, Dedee and I escaped to the diner for grub while Arnie chimed "Alan, you missed all the egoboo at the fanzine auction! Everyone was talking about your old fanzines and paid big bucks!" Well double Poo; another crushing blow to my fragile ego; it would take even *more* beer to salve my weak and shallow self. Having satisfied our respective tape worms, it was time for Andy Hooper's triumph of light and shade: "Fanorama 3004 A.D." a rollicking spoof of Matt Groening's "Futurama" starring the cream of fannish thespians: Aileen Forman, Jerry Kaufman, Steven Stiles, Carrie Root, Robert Lichtman, Moshe Feder, Ross Chamberlain and Lenny Bailes with Andy adding special effects from behind.

Each actor held a representational sign signifying their character as they read their lines. A few mastered the ability to hold their sign with the front to the audience, a few did not. Everyone had a great time, and finishing, Andy and his jolly troupe received a much deserved standing "O".

Of course, the end of the play signified time to PARTY! Tonight was extra special, you see; it was the Microbrew Fiesta! HooYah! I'm hardly a connoisseur of anything, much less beer,



Fanhistories by Arnie, Andy and Marty



Moshe Feder's Auction Winnin's



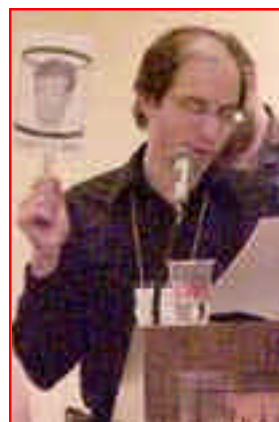
Marty "Gandalf" Cantor



Ross Chamberlain



Aileen Forman



Moshe Feder



Jerry Kaufman



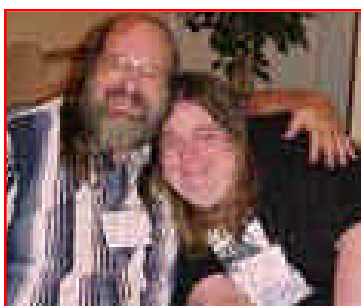
Line'em Up Drink'em Down
Pour'em Out!



The Horror, The Horror
What have I done?



Brunch Buffet



Dwain Kaiser
and Sandra Bond

but I know what I like and was hoping to at least, discover a new taste treat, or at best, get thoroughly pissed from the bejugged elixers before us. Not letting the fact the beer was actually sold by the jug put the fear of camel piss in my heart (or mouth for that matter) I held my cup forth with great anticipation. Hosted by the devilish Karl Kreder and delightful Aileen Forman, we broached the first bottle and joyously filled cups all around. Aileen gave a tremulous sigh and committed herself, much as Newman and Redford committed themselves before jumping off the cliff in "Butch Cassidy". Down the hatch she and all of us! Then, looking to Aileen for the official declaration of tastiness, she appeared overcome by the horror of having swallowed paint thinner. I'm sure there were more members of Jonestown asking for seconds than there were here. Alas, so it went through the assortment of jugs; clearly, if nothing else, we learned why this was indeed a MICRO brewery and likely to remain so.

Sure, there was the occasional smart ass who said "ummm delicious", but this was a diversionary tactic to throw us off balance (or they were just cheap drunks). Believe me, nobody asked where they could buy a drop of it nor were there collective shouts of "Huzzah!", "Eureka!" or "Hey, this one didn't come back up!" Being troupers, we willingly sampled from each and every jug and the results were remarkably similar. What started as a joyous celebration soon became a test of endurance not unlike an episode of "Fear Factor". At the conclusion of the beer tasting, I had hoped to have quite a buzz going, yet I was consumed with finding an abrasive substance to get the taste off my tongue - oh, and look for a good beer. Sounds like a good excuse to go downstairs and sit at a slot machine.

Sunday the 21th / Alarming Awards

It comes down to this. The buffet, preliminary to the Award Ceremony began promptly at 11 a.m. and as brunches go, this was very good. A wide assortment of breakfasty things and tasty to boot. Eventually, things got around to the actual award ceremony for the Fan Achievement Awards for 2004.

Presentation of the Past Presidents of FWA for 2003 went to:

Arnie and Joyce Katz

Best New Fan

Pete Young

Best Fanzine

Trap Door

Best Fan Artist

Steve Stiles

Best Fan Humorist

Andy Hooper

Best Fan Writer

Gordon Ecklund

Number One Fan Face

Andy Hooper

A Special Achievement Award to:

Bill Burns for efanzines.com

Selection of Corflu for 2005

San Francisco

Oddly, during the awards, the hotel fire alarms went off piercing the solemnity of this august occasion while one of those female, robotic voices bid everyone to be calm and wait for further instructions, we debated running screaming into the street

or hitting the buffet one more time. We opted for the buffet. By and by, the all-clear sign was sounded and it was back to award shenanigans. Once again, Ken proved to be the take charge guy whether on the outback or behind a podium. And here, dear reader, partially through the award ceremony is where we must bid adieu, as once again, the real world beckoned and we were forced to leave, ne'er to return and thus leaving the wrapping up to others. A few more snapshots...



Eric Lindsey, R-Lorraine
Tutihasi & DeDee



Ron & Linda Bushyager



FAAN Fans



Marty Cantor & Earl Kemp



Jack Calvert



If we're not burning up, let's eat!



Karl & Ken bust a gut!



Jack Speer & R-Lorraine Tutihasi



Steve pick up Best Artist Award



Eric Lindsey
Remembers Home



David Bratman



Milt Stevens



Andy Hooper



Tom Becker

