

flicker

August, 2003

First Issue

SONGS IN THE NIGHT...

Oh, No, Not the Bore Worms!

I'm known for a shocking lack of sentimentality for fanzine titles, but this definitely pushes the envelope. I published exactly one issue of *Splotch* and then fell silent. Many fans undoubtedly had the reasonable expectation that they could look forward to ignoring second and following issues of *Splotch* with the same joyous inattention they lavished on the lone *Splotch* I actually distributed.

The truth is that *Splotch* was cursed from its first issue. That's quite ironic, since the first fanzine I ever produced, co-edited with Lenny Bailes, was called *Cursed* and was, indeed, plotchy in the manner of all

poorly done spirit duplicated fanzines.

Splotch hadn't been out two days before I learned that I had unwittingly reused a title once published by Ted White. I wrote apologetically to Ted and immediately started the search for a new name.

After a laborious search, handicapped by a neurotic devotion to that little graphic I used on *Splotch #1*, I settled on "*Blotch*." I immediately went to work on *Blotch #2*. I finished it before the end of February.

I didn't send it, because I didn't like it. I didn't like it, because it wasn't very good. I went on for thousands of words,

Flicker #1, August 2003, is the latest effusion from Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur Blvd., PMB 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). It is as available as an aging streetwalker at the end of a cold, "no sale" night. Letters (email: crossfire4@cox.net) are very much desired as are fanzines in trade. Member: fwa. Supporter: AFAL.

Corflu Blackjack in '04!

Don't sing it... bring it. If you don't like me... bite me. — Rick Steiner

precious few of them funny, about the whole name thing. Then I wrote a mess of stuff that simulated a fannish elation I just didn't feel. I was a sad clown, laughing only on the outside. Write an opera about it, it'll do ya good.

I looked at the issue several times on-screen and tried to figure out my mistake. *Blotch #2* featured some of my stiffest and most arch writing in decades. I sounded like an archivist instead of someone writing from personal conviction.

I considered my options, which included fandom's equivalent of Suicide by Police, Gafiation by TEW. I figured changing the name to *Gambit from the Stellar Void* would be sufficient to induce Ted to send a lightning bolt hurtling westward.

I could visualize myself waiting bravely, if fatalistically, on the front lawn of Toner Hall for the Ted's response to arrive. And when it smashed into my chest, obliterating my fannish career in one awesome burst of light, I could slink away to pursue some other hobby. Maybe stamp collecting.

Then an unsettling thought crept into my mind. Ted White, who has taught me more about fandom than anyone with the exception of rich brown, had shown signs of mellowing. His edge, though not entirely gone, might no longer be equal to the task of dispatching me quickly and cleanly. What if, came the sobering thought he only blasted me soundly enough to insure *semi-gafia*.

Having my fan career ended in a blaze of White-ous Wrath was one thing. Continuing to eke out a marginal fannish existence, propped up by memories of former glory like Frank Lunney or John D. Berry, seemed a far worse fate.

With a shrug, I dismissed the idea of taking the easy way out. Mired in despair as I was, I knew that I would have to face up to the failure that was *Blotch #2*.

So I didn't send it out and then I didn't

send it out some more. I don't hate *Blotch #2*, exactly, but I feel no urge to share it with you.

Ultimately, I went with my instinct. I scrapped the issue and took a breather from personal journalism.

OK, maybe not a complete rest. *Crazy from the Heat #1*, unconnected with (and thus untainted by) *Splotch*, appeared as planned. I indefinitely postponed the solo Katz publication.

I've spent a small portion of the "down time" trying to figure out where I went wrong with *Splotch/Blotch/Crotch/Grotch*. I think I was like the fighter who goes down like a shot from a left hook and pops right back up again — and stands there like a zombie. The whole *Splotch* thing upset me quite a bit and soured my vision for that fanzine. I should've walked away from it clean and, in six months or so, come back with a new title and a new vision.

When I rushed right into *Blotch #2* with none of my original enthusiasm for the project, I guess it showed. Now I've taken a bit of a rest from the whole idea and, perhaps, am ready to tilt at fannish windmills.

My vision still isn't very clear, but here I am, anyway. I've called this fanzine *Flicker*, because it represents a flicker of interest in fanzine fandom. Whether it's a phoenix-like rebirth or the last flare of a dying ember rests with you, my friends in fandom at least as much as it does with me.

If you think this is a Reasonably Swell fanzine that you would like to see me continue, I'm sure you know how to make your feelings known. If you want to get rid of me, you don't have to lift a finger. I'll go quietly. Regretfully, but then again, I've never been one to go where I'm not wanted.

The Fannish Blues

I'm acutely aware that I've now been an active fanzine fan for about as long, 13 years, as my tenure at the time of my Great Gafiation in the mid-1970s. As I sit here, gripped by something less than the white-hot peak of enthusiasm, that's an unsettling thought.

This fanzine is part of my effort to keep my personal history from repeating. Truly, the siren song that wafts from the Glades of Gafia has seldom sounded sweeter. I'd much rather stay, but I need to know that you feel the same way.

It's not so much that I want to quit fandom as that I sometimes feel like fandom has decided to quit me. Even allowing for old age hardening my attitudes, I think it is fair to say that both fandom as a whole as well as fanzine fandom are far different than the subculture that captivated me as a neofan.

Not that I expect fanzine fandom to remain static as the eons pass. I don't see some future fanzine fan racing the impending solar nova with his (or her) Sears Tower mimeograph. (They'll at least have a Gestetner in the fabulous world of the future apocalypse, I am sure.)

I feel like fandom has largely abandoned the values that made it so attractive — and so special. Instead, it eagerly embraces the banal mainstream aesthetic that I longed to escape when I gave my heart to fanzine fandom all those long years ago.

Fans of the classic (pre-1964) period came to the hobby determined to make it a congenial environment for introverted, dreamy intellectuals like themselves. Alienated from so-called "Mundane" society, they joined fandom to create a sub-society based on their shared outlook. Fandom esteemed the literate and the witty, the sort of people the wide world largely disdained.

Now, many fans share the desire to "fit in," to appear "normal," to conform to the

larger society that surrounds fanzine fandom.

Fanzine Fandom increasingly becomes less an alternative to the macro-society than a simplified version of it that makes fewer annoying demands on participants as they compete for its parody of real-world success.,

I don't deny that these people identify with fandom and feel themselves a part of its subculture. They love fandom, too, and put a lot of energy into the hobby. Yet the subculture they are creating is much like the environment that many older fans like myself find so inhospitable in the larger society.

We've gone from reveling in the things that make fandom special and separate to searching for ways to expunge those difference.

That's the sensible, well-adjusted approach. I can understand the impulse that results in so many of today's fanzines being so very bland and for want of a better word, mundane.

What I see in today's fandom is the dominance of pretty much the same world-view that I find stifling in the Mundane World.

Those early fans, and I tend to include myself at the very tail end of this category, were many things, but "well-adjusted" wasn't one of them.

Whether you subscribe to Jack Speer's Handicap Theory of Fandom or Francis Towner Laney's assertion that fans are "neurotic messes," it's clear that the smarter and more perceptive fans *realized* what they were: pariahs, misfits, square pegs, outsiders...

Fandom's saving grace is that they were pariahs with brains, imagination and a ceaseless thirst to reach out to others of their kind in fanzines and in person.

Today's fans are much more connected to the mainstream culture and seem to feel much more a part of it. That is probably a

good thing for those people as individuals, because it promises tranquil and happy lives of quiet non-reflection.

You don't have to be an alienated, introverted geek to do a good fanzine, but it certainly helps. The artist should be at odds with the commonplace, not a long-term subscriber to it.

Current fans love fandom. The classic fans *needed* it.

Read *The Immortal Storm*. Our founding fathers (and mothers) blew every minor fannish skirmish and peccadillo into life and death crises. Read *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* Francis Towner Laney is the epitome of an Insurgent and trumpets his alleged status as an "ex fan," yet he bleeds on every page of that memoir.

Fandom used to be a band of renegades. Now it's mostly a band of self-appointed bureaucrats who'd rather count pennies and argue Procedure than write, draw or publish anything creative.

That's what it was about when they started back in the day. It was about alienated, if colorful misfits calling out in their isolation to connect with similar people who loved the written word and the ideas that sprang from the pages of the science fiction magazines.

I don't expect fanzine fandom to turn back the clock on my account, even though I believe many would come to enjoy aspects of classic fanzine fandom if they gave it a try. You can't go back to those thrilling days of yesteryear, because they *are* "yesteryear."

And even if Superman whirls counterclockwise around the Earth and puts the pages back on the calendar, it wouldn't work. Today's fans are, mostly, not the same kind of folks. They have different needs and wants, different interest and skills.

The only thing sadder than fanzine fandom abandoning its long-held ideals would be a lot of folks who don't feel it going

through the motions in a sick parody of Sixth Fandom.

What I'm trying to say is that sometimes I feel almost as alienated from fanzine fandom as I do from the world outside this enclave.

I don't expect fandom to change, but I hope there may still be a place for my kind of fan, a little erratic but still entertaining, until the last of the breed dies out and fandom is free to fulfill its destiny unencumbered by such quaint ideas..

Farewell to Toner Hall

Joyce and I threw a Fourth of July Barbeque this year. The first party we gave at Toner Hall was a Fourth of July barbeque, so it's fitting that the last big Toner Hall event should be such a similar occasion.

The month and day are not yet appointed, but Toner Hall is, indeed, getting ready to pass into Las Vegas Fandom history. It certainly has earned a place in that modest chronicle, because it has been a center of local fanac since Joyce and I opened its front door to the then-fledgling SNAFFU club.

Sitting here, amid the debris of another Toner Hall bash, my thoughts go back to the early days of Toner Hall.

Because of my eye operation that year, we didn't find them soon enough to become charter members of the group. They'd already had a dozen or so meetings when I called Ken and Aileen Forman on the phone and extended greetings from Fandom.

In truth, Joyce and I might never have discovered Vegas Fandom had it not been for the estimates of our fannish connection, which we were then in the process of trying to revive.

Long-time friend and be-hatted Canadian BNF Mike Glicksohn saw a mention of a "VegasCon" in a listing in *Chronicle*, the newsletter published by former roommate and fellow Fanoclast Andy Porter.

Having heard of our return, Mike assumed that we had something to do with VegasCon and that Andy had gotten news of it from us.

Neither assumption was correct, so hearing from Mike about VegasCon galvanized us into action. I used the contact number in the VegasCon listing to contact con-chairman Sean White. Although he deserves the majority of the credit for the con, the often-temperamental White really represents the interests of an informal group of gamers.

Shawn White received my phone call with somewhat less than total enthusiasm. It wasn't that he was hostile, but I was clearly interested in science fiction fandom and he professed to know little or nothing about that aspect of VegasCon.

Shawn recommended that I call Ken and Aileen Forman, whom he said knew all about that kind of thing. He gave me their number and I called them around noon the very next day.

Which woke them out of a sound sleep. They both worked nights, a bit of information Shawn either didn't know or neglected to share with me.

My eye condition, a cataract and its aftermath, prevented Joyce and I from finding the club much earlier. Ken Gregg, the Ken-Not-Ken who played what might be called a dubious role in SNAFFU's early going, wrote to me shortly after the club's second meeting and invited us to get on-board.

Alas, it arrived just about the time they layered the cataract out of my skull. As a result, I did not yet have the eyewear needed to read the letter. My assistant Becky, not understanding the letter's significance, merely filed it. By the time I could see to read, the letter had settled to the bottom of a very very large backlog pile. I found it a year or so later, well after Vegas Fandom had shifted into high gear, and showed it to amazed members of Las

Vegrants.

At this point, however, I didn't know about that letter, even though it was in my possession. What had was a sleepy couple that did not like to be awakened. Seldom has the fate of All Known Fandom — well, at least of a tiny sliver of it in the Nevada Desert — hung by such a slender thread.

Once I penetrated Ken's mental fog — it was the middle of his "night" — he showed a lot more enthusiasm than Sean White had.

I liked Ken (and Aileen) right off, but the news they gave discouraged us no end: The club had decided not to meet during the summer. The only scheduled get-together was one of the group's gaming sessions.

So eager were we to meet fans where we had as yet encountered none that we went to the game meeting even though neither of us had any intention of playing. I was so stoked up that I produced an entire fanzine, *Glitter*, that contained material I hoped would be fannish and accessible at the same time. Most of it was about our search for Vegas Fandom and the people we had met along the way.

Although some of Las Vegas' biggest name fans such as Tom Springer and Ben Wilson and JoHn Hardin had yet to appear on the scene, the club already included, besides the Formans, Laurie Yates [Kunke], Peggy Burke [Kurilla] and Anthony J. Bernardi (now known to all of us as "Woody.")

These and a few others sufficiently overcame their fear and talked to us. We did our Bright Repartee and attempts to be at our most fannishly engaging. The group ran to repeated stories heard on television, so our attempts to ad lib humorous comments caught them by surprised.

It was hard to gauge the reception to us and, especially, to that issue of *Glitz* I distributed. Everyone seemed friendly at our

debut meeting, but I'd also sensed a little apprehension from some of the less gregarious members. Frankly, some of them saw personal advantage to keeping Las Vegas Fandom ignorant of, and isolated from, the rest of fandom. .

Two people who didn't like it were the owners of a local bookstore with a fantasy name that specialized in fantasy and science fiction. They hadn't attended the SNAFFU meeting or met us, but Anthony Bernardi had rushed to their store to show them the article in *Glitter* which described Joyce and my search for Vegas Fandom in somewhat humorous fashion.

Apparently, they didn't enjoy my description of what happened when I asked one of the store's clerks if there was a science fiction and fantasy club in town. This pompous pair called me up to tell me so during the weekend after that first meeting we attended.

They didn't claim what I said was untrue, only repeated over and over that they didn't want me to say it. (They'd fired the clerk in question some time earlier for similar transgressions, they assured me repeatedly.)

Anyone has the right to dislike something I've written — or everything, for that matter. Unfortunately, they had a totally different, and much more sinister, agenda.

They didn't just want to grumble about that article. After a half-hearted try at forcing me into printing a retraction — you can imagine how far they got with *that* — they progressed to what they probably considered some kind of Weapon of Fan Destruction.

What this foolish couple really wanted was to scare us out of town! They screeched at me over two extensions for twice the verbal firepower, stumbling over each other in their eagerness to weigh in with threats and insults. They considered themselves Overlords of Las Vegas Fandom — much good it had done anyone —

and had no problem making some fairly sweeping pronouncements about the importance of driving Joyce and I into the outer darkness. I think this is the spiritual descendant of the kind of welcoming committee the Allies met when they landed at Normandy Beach on D-Day.

Among many things, they branded us as "a bad influence" and muttered darkly of consequences too horrible to be spoken aloud. They bragged about their immense power and influence and made it sound as if this call was merely notification of a fanish death sentence already decreed and beyond all appeal.

They really poured it on, too. They made it sound as if outraged members of Las Vegas Fandom would soon descend upon the habitation I had already begun to think of as Toner Hall with flaming torches in hand.

I don't know whom they thought I was, but they had apparently never dealt with the product of prolonged exposure to fanish fanzine fandom. They expected me to fold up like an issue of *Ansible* crammed into your pocket on the way to the bathroom. I honestly believe they were hoping for tears and repentance.

Since I was resolutely on my best behavior, I tried to be charming and urbane. I can be damn charming and urbane when the situation demands. I told them what I thought of their threats in a polite, but extremely firm way. Well, maybe not entirely polite, because I laughed at them quite a bit.

I also let them know that a bullying phone call like this made them look far worse than anything I could have written about a quirky clerk. I promised to write it up in detail and share it with the rest of Las Vegas Fandom. For some reason, this made them go completely, incoherently crazy. I laughed some more.

I told them several things, none of them terribly complimentary. I had the

steel of a gnarled survivor of New York Fandom, a man who argued with Ted White about The Rolling Stones and lived, I didn't say the things that burned on the tip of my tongue, ready to blaze a firestorm of verbal destruction, because I didn't know where these would-be censors stood in the shaky pantheon of Vegas Fandom.

I shook when I hung up the phone, partly from rage and partly from fear. Had I already worn out my welcome in Las Vegas Fandom? I might have to ask rich brown if that would be an OF (Old Fano-clast) record for alienating a fan group.).

Fear arose from the fact that the local fans I knew well enough to call had gone to a drunken frat party disguised as a convention called Coppercon. I'd have to wait through the entire weekend before I could learn the true gravity of the situation.

I didn't know if this loony couple had flipped out all by themselves or if they spoke for All Vegas Fandom. Had Joyce and I somehow offended them with our trufannish ways? That strange gleam in the eye and that sensitive fannish look can be disconcerting if you're not prepared for it.

Then I recalled the fanzine I'd distributed. They'd seemed more or less flattered, but they hadn't yet had a chance to read it. Had they read *Glitter*, perceived its implications for Vegas Fandom and recoiled in horror? The same imagination that serves me so well as a writer can be very troublesome when it starts dreaming up possible scenarios.

I'm a fairly self-confident person, but I sweated through that weekend. I could hardly wait until Monday, when I could call Ken and Aileen and ask them, point blank, about the bookstore couple and their blustering phone assault. I mentally prepared graceful exits should my call to the Formans confirm the seemingly absurd telephone conversation.

When I finally got hold of the Ken and Aileen, they assured me that the couple in question could be safely ignored. (I don't think they have shown their faces at a Vegas Fandom event in the ensuing 13 years, so I guess they weren't exactly red-hot fans.)

Ken told me, repeatedly, that everyone at SNAFFU wanted Joyce and I to return. Only one problem: the sf/fantasy meetings, as opposed to the game-oriented ones, weren't scheduled to resume until sometime after Labor Day. Who'd want to fan in the summer, Ken asked me rhetorically. His voice brimmed with confidence born of total faith in the truth of his statement. It made me think back to the veritable orgies of fanning I'd done during New York summers home from college in the 1960s and as the mimeo operator to more than half of New York fandom in the 1970s.

Yet I said nothing about all of that. Ken and, especially, Aileen had the skittishness of frightened deer, ready to bolt at the first hint of Something Strange. I could tell that these desert flowers were not quite ready for full-tilt fannish fanzine fanac. Without mentioning those bygone days, I talked in terms of wanting to see fans sooner than September.

Despite Ken's certitude, this was a state of affairs that Joyce and I simply refused to accept. Having found a local fandom in our new hometown, we had no intention of spending an entire summer without in-person fanac.

The Formans indicated some interest in getting together for dinner or something, but I had the bit between my teeth and would accept nothing less than a thriving fandom in the sizzle of a Las Vegas summer.

That led to my suggestion that we host a Fourth of July barbeque and pool party. We called it the Non-Con, because it would be taking place simultaneously with

Westercon.

And so without a second thought, we blithely announced what was, in actuality, the largest fan event ever held in the city up to that time and, with a slight bow to a mid-1950s “non-con” that consisted of about five people sitting in someone’s bedroom, the first fan convention in the history of Glitter City.

We invited all the fans Ken and Aileen knew, plus some people we’d met who might fit in with the fans. We went to one of the SNAFFU gaming meetings and passed out flyers and generally got the word around to any fans who seemed likely to come.

We plied them with food, drink (soft and hard) and other brain-softening agents and the proverbial Good Time was Had By All.

As part of Joyce and my campaign to add Las Vegas to the Fandom Map, we also introduced these unsuspecting folks to the delights of fanzine writing and publishing by setting up a oneshot fanzine. Laurie Yates Kunkel earned a niche in Vegas fanhistory as the first of the locals to sit down at the computer and write something for the oneshot, but others soon followed her example.

That first oneshot wasn’t exactly a world-beater, but it did show promising flashes of talent and enthusiasm that would ultimately flower into Vegas Fandom’s First Golden Age (approximately 1991-1996).

In one day, Toner Hall established its reputation as a fannish residence of note in Vegas Fandom. Yet the Non-Con turned out to be only the beginning.

We planned the Non-Con as a one-time-only event, but it went so well that we decided to use it as the launch pad for the series of monthly Saturday night parties known as the Socials.

And for the next 60 months, we held a Social every month. We threw them open

to everyone in Las Vegas Fandom and saw attendance rise steadily to a peak of nearly 100 per Social.

This was good and bad. Some remarkable things happened at the Socials, not the least of which was Stan the Inferno’s fire magic act. Not only did he wow the fans and not burn down Toner Hall, but Stan has become a fan and a valued member of Las Vegrants.

The down side was that the Socials attracted folks who had little interest in socializing or doing anything else much with the fans. They saw it as a free meal and a place to set up game boards,

Nothing against gamers, but we wanted our fanzine fandom. It did rankle, though, that some one those who attended not only didn’t know who we were but didn’t even care.

That’s why we started a second club, Las Vegrants which met on a different Saturday night, usually two weeks before the Social.

Las Vegrants is an invitational club for fanzine fans. Patterned after the Fano-clasts and the Brooklyn Insurgents, it has no rules, officers or other needless formalities. It is basically for fanzine fans, though we’ve always been open to interest people like Stan the Inferno and Laurie Forbes, whether or not they are red hot for fanzines.

The group coalesced around four highly active fan couples — Ken and Aileen For-man, Tom and Tammy Springer, Den and Cathi Wilson and us. Drawn to that nucleus were Ray and Marci Waldie, Bill and Laurie Kunkel, Ron and Raven Pehr, Woody Bernardi, Marcy McDowell, Su Williams, Peggy Burke (now Kurilla), Karl Kreder and Dandi Ashton.

My old friend, and frequent collaborator, Ross Chamberlain moved here from Cleveland, John Hardin came back to Vegas from Texas and, a little later, Alan and Dee Dee White relocated from Los Ange-

les.

We decided to use the pre-Silvercon 2 party — Toner Hall hosted pre-con parties for all of the Silvercons, Corflu Vegas and Toner — to launch Las Vegas' first major fanzine, *Wild Heirs*.

Las Vegrants gave the gang that produced *Wild Heirs* (and *Heirlooms*) a chance to learn about each other and about fandom through discussions, reading aloud and meeting the out-of-town BNFs who often paid visits to Toner Hall.

The title, *Wild Heirs*, told a lot about the group/s motivation. It was a play on *Wild Hair*, a famous series of oneshot fanzines the LA Insurgents produced in the 1940s.

Since Vegas lacked a coterie of illustrious Big Name Fans, the city's fandom had reached out to fans of stature to fill that void. The first and second Silvercon brought Jack Speer, Art Widner, Robert Lichtman, Bill Rotsler and, finally, Charles Burbee into close contact with local fandom..

Burbee (arguably the greatest fan-writer of all time) and Rotsler (with an even stronger claim to be fandom's finest cartoonist) had been major figures in the LA Insurgents, so we intended the name *Wild Heirs* to suggest that we followed in their footsteps.

We decided to produce the first *Wild Heirs* in a manner similar to how Burbee, Laney and Rotsler did *Wild Hair*. Some of us wrote roughs of contributions and we pulled it all together in one publishing session.

We did one more issue like that, took a break for a few months and then began the run of relatively ornate issues with superb Chamberlain covers and columns and other contributions by just about every Las Vegas fanzine fan.

Everything runs its course eventually, and so did the Socials. The expense and the prep work took their toll, so we ended

the party series after five years and 60 parties. Las Vegrants took the vacant Saturday as a second monthly meeting.

That wasn't the end of mass fanac at Toner Hall, though. Besides the pre-con bashes, we held several large barbecues, a couple of Labor Day Non-Cons, and the SNAFFU Christmas Parties in 2001 and 2002.

There have been other well-known residences in Las Vegas Fandom, including the Formans' place on Northern Lights Avenue and the Asylum slan shack. There will be many more such Mecca's, gathering places for the still-growing fan population here in the desert, but Toner Hall will always have a special, pivotal place in Las Vegas fanhistory.

And I, it's former co-owner, will never forget the fans and fanac that made it so lively and so much fun.

The Day the Music Died

I'll always remember September 29, 2002. That's the day I opened the cabinets that hold my collection of 3,500 or so lps and watched a man go through them and then pay me a half buck each for the hundreds of vintage records he wanted.

It was kind of like date rape. I felt like I'd been dosed with rufies. My mind shrieked, "No!" but my body just laid there, inert, and took the cash. I even helped him carry them out to his mini-van, which left here laden with rock and roll treasures.

As he went through the records one by one, he asked me about some of the more obscure artists. I dutifully supplied capsule descriptions and even anecdotes. It was a last chance to have fun with a collection that started nearly 45 years ago when I bought my first record, a .45 of *Sweet Little 16* by Chuck Berry.

Most of the earliest items in my collection-that-was were 45s. My allowance didn't stretch to the lofty price of a long play-

ing record and, frankly, few tempted me.

Pop music was about singles in the 1950s and pre-Beatles '60s; albums were despised stepchildren. Most of the releases seemed to be by people who had long since dropped off the "top 40" list, buried by the excitement and energy of rock.

When someone I liked did make an album, it was almost inevitably a disappointment. The Beatles, Stones and Beach Boys really revolutionized the whole approach to albums, something that becomes all too obvious when you look back.

A typical lp by a "hit maker" generally had the big-selling single as the first cut on side one. The flip side of the single usually went into the same position on side two of the album. It made it easier for the dj to cue the only songs anyone was likely to request.

The "B" sides of rock 45s were a mixed bag. There were amazing treasures to be found on the flip side — *Secret Police* by Them (heard on *The Sopranos*) and *You Win Again* by Jerry Lee Lewis are on my list of favorite "killer B's." The other side of the platter could also be a dispirited instrumental version of the "A" side, a re-recording of an inappropriate pre-rock standard or, in rare cases, a tune by a completely different artist.

I sold the collection for a pittance for several reasons:

1. I no longer have a working turntable
2. We could use the extra space
3. We need the space

I couldn't refute the logic for ridding ourselves of this huge and bulky collection. Hell, I'd come up with most of it myself. Yet the emotional tie to that great mass of essentially useless material represented a purely emotional collection.

Even when I couldn't play them — the lack of a turn table has persisted for several years — I felt pop cultural strength through the mere possession of so much rock music. It's the same way with a li-

brary. Quite apart from the experience of leading, the looming presence of shelf after shelf of neatly arranged and nicely bound volumes creates an aura of learning even if one hasn't read all of them cover to cover. Just their presence is a profound statement.

Even though the sizable remnant of the lp collection, is still in the cabinets, I don't even think of it as here any more. It is soon to be dispatched to other vinyl vultures for chump change as soon as we can locate someone who cares to take the time to slam us for it.

So now my collection is my 25=3- mix tapes that I have recorded periodically since the early 1980s and the CD collection (about 250 CDs). It doesn't seem quite as majestic, but I am learning to love it.

I Must Be Going...

Although it has been fun, I must admit that doing this first issue of **Flicker** has taken a lot longer to finish than I expected. I've changed the date in the colophon a couple of times and that is never a positive sign.

So reluctantly, because I'm still full of things to say, I bid you adieu until the next issue. It is likely to be the first fanzine produced in our new home, which should make it a nifty collector's item that you will eventually be able to sell on eBay for thousands, even dozens, of pennies.

Arnie Katz
August, 2003