

Middle MINDS

Second Issue



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THE CORE**

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All fan photos by Alan White, except page 8 (JoHn Hardin) and the Bacover (Roxanne Mills).

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Idle Minds #2 is the combined effort of Las Vegrants, Las Vegas' informal, invitational Core Fandom Fanclub. This issue was mostly done at two meetings at the Launch Pad (909 Eugene Cernan St., Las Vegas, NV 89145; Email: crossfire4@cox.net; phone: 702-648-5677). Published: 1/24/09.

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Arnie Katz

Welcome to the editorial of the second *Idle Minds*, the latest in the line of fanzines produced by Las Vegrants. Having navigated through the “Summer Fun” issue, we’re here to stretch our luck with the “Gala Holiday Special.”

And here I am, again, doing my best to turn a blank screen into enough words to embolden my cohorts to contribute their bit to this literary minstrel show. I have to admit to considerably less worry on that score than I had when I began the group editorial for *Idle Minds #1*. I was a little skeptical about present-day Vegrants’ willingness to follow Joyce into the (for them) uncharted waters. This time, almost everyone has had the experience of writing for fanzines and not died from it, so I live in hope.

Hope is, after all, one of the primary emotions of the holiday season. We hope that the Halloween costumes are good and that we bought enough candy. We hope the Thanksgiving turkey is tender and that the New Year’s Eve buffet has enough food for everyone to eat and drink their fill. We hope for the presents of our heart’s desire. And, of course, we look forward to a New Year and hope that it will be better than the one just completed.

As someone of Jewish heritage, I lived in a home that didn’t celebrate Christmas. Yet we have a Christmas tree most years and don’t light the Menorah. The reason is simple: I have no deep feeling for Chanukah. I liked it well enough and I certainly wouldn’t have turned down the presents my parents bought so that my brother and I would-

HOBO
QUIRE
EDITORIAL



Arnie prepares to pontificate on *The Wasted Hour*, the Internet TV show he writes and hosts and Bill Mills produces and directs.

sexy story of how Queen Esther screwed her husband the King of Babylon into countermanding the order to kill all the Jews leads to a holiday of hedonism and excess. Traditionally, Jews take a rather sober-sided attitude toward most of their holidays, but Purim is more like a conglomeration of some of the best features of popular Christian Holidays with a few extras. It has fancy foods and sweet treats, a parade and costume pageant, carnivals, noisemakers and fireworks. Add an organ, a generous amount of contemporary smoking mixture and a wrestling pay per view, and that's a holiday I could truly learn to love.

Something, or rather someone, whom I associate with quite a few of my favorite holiday memories happens to be next in line to add his thoughts on holidays. Take it away, Ross Chamberlain...

Ross Chamberlain

I'm not as big on the holidays as I used to be. It's partly the commercialization of most of them, though that's hardly new, but mostly it just seems like none of them are as much fun as they used to be, and some ways I have to blame that on myself.

I'm writing this on Halloween, which doubles as Nevada Day here, this being the date in 1864 that Nevada became the 36th state of the union.

Just think, folks, it's a dozen dozen years, now, since the Silver State joined the United States, though it was called "Snowy" for the snow-clad mountains (*Sierra Nevada*) that largely divide it from California. Nevadans won't let the state name *sound* like the Spanish word, however—one of the first things one learns when one moves here is to give its first *a* the short flat sound like the *a* in "bat," not the long, broad *a* of "father." Decedents of northern European immigrants will borrow words of southern European ancestry galore, but by damn they won't be contaminated with their pronunciations.

Joy-Lynd and I don't participate in Halloween any more. We don't decorate or carve pumpkins or leave our lights on for the children. When I was growing up we had a "Billy Bones" jointed cardboard skeleton for the door or window, and carved pumpkins. I even had fun dressing up a little bit

n't feel inferior to the *goyim*. I don't *hate* Chanukah; it just doesn't have a lot of special significance.

As I realized when I studied the holidays in Hebrew School, Chanukah is kind of a fake holiday. Non-Jews often assume that it is somehow similar in important to Christmas, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is barely celebrated everywhere in the world except here in North America.

The story of Chanukah is more like the saga of the American Revolution than the birth of a Messiah. Chanukah commemorates an attempt to rebel against Roman rule of the area that more or less corresponds to present-day Israel. There's a miracle that sounds more like a lesson in fuel conservation and... that's about it.

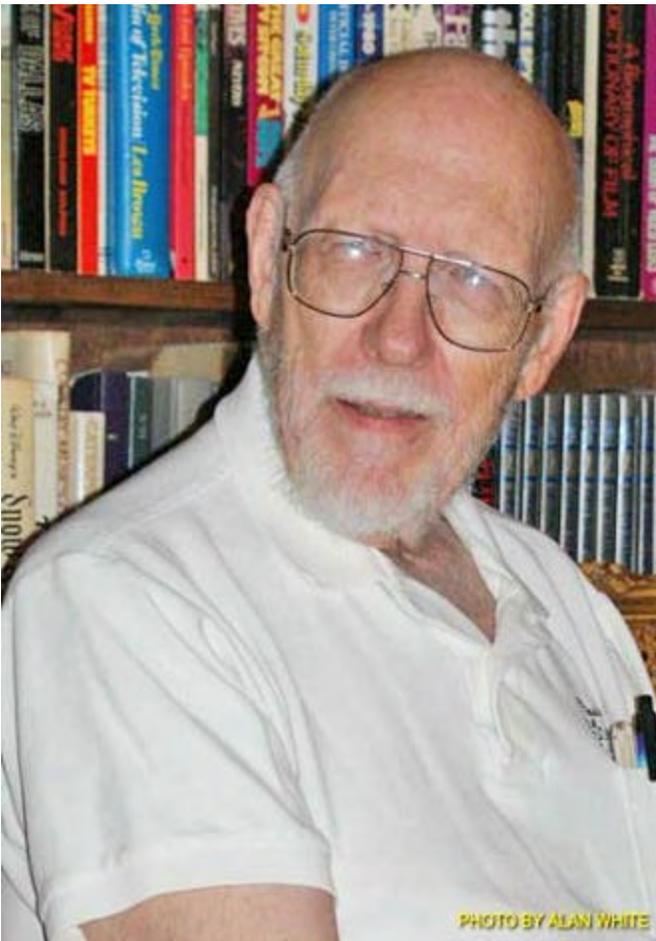
Purim....Now *there's* an exciting holiday. The

for trick-or-treating, though even then I rather detested the prickly stiffened-cloth masks that were the standard fare those days. I used to prefer to don makeup, actually, and you may make of that what you will—but some of the best Halloweens of my own past have involved not just compiling a costume but using the theatrical makeup kit I had from my brief encounter with theater school in Boston very close to 50 years ago.

This year, my work schedule gave me this day off, so I did not get to participate in Fry's costume contest as I did last year, when I won a prize for my "Disco Guy" ensemble (which did include a wig, but no makeup). It's a bit of a relief; I didn't have to try to match or beat last year's effort. Still, I have mixed feelings about it, after wisely having had to drop my plans to sing at Fry's awards ceremonies a week earlier...

The next big holiday, of course, is Thanksgiving, which, when Joy-Lynd and I can celebrate it together, whether she prepares something special

Ross smiles for the camera.



or we go out, remains a positive experience.

We've had some special dinner occasions at her church for a few recent Thanksgivings, and I enjoy these pretty much because I know she does. However, I have then to turn in early to bed for an early rise on Black Friday, the Big Kickoff for the Christmas Shopping Season. And then a month of carols and relentlessly cheerful tunes, occasionally interspersed with the solemn and inspirational piece for those who still need or care to be reminded that this was, once, a religious holiday. And it still is, though it's hard to remember that or, frankly, to feel as good about it as once upon a time I did.

Perhaps my favorite of the holidays, now, is the last one, though even that is interfered with by Fry's being open on New Year's Day. It has been a great opportunity to share some pre-sendoff time and cheer with those of you who gather with Arnie and Joyce that evening, but generally I go home to watch the actual arrival of the New Year with Joy-Lynd. It's not the same as it was when watching the ball drop over Times Square wasn't on time delay for the West Coast, and often enough we somehow miss it entirely, catching instead the fireworks in downtown Las Vegas, and a little of the televised parties afterward.

Well, Arnie said not to write about the holidays themselves, but about a memorable or private or interesting incident or association with the time of year, and I've promptly disobeyed. I dunno that I have any one or two particular occasions to write about. The ones I remember most details about are the more depressing ones, such as a Christmases I spent alone with only a container of store-bought egg nog and a carrot for Christmas dinner. I listened to holiday music on my radio but that was about it. Or there were the times I actually tried sharing the Times Square experience for New Year's and discovering that it was more distressing than edifying or enjoyable.

These days, yes, the Holidays are more an exercise in nostalgia. And I think that's a lot of what many people find most enjoyable about it even now; looking back on the good times, especially sharing the enjoyment of whatever traditions they've participated in. In New York, I used to like watching the Macy's parade on TV (and once or twice live on Broadway) and then sitting through

the original *King Kong*, *Son of Kong* (cut to an hour; for all I know that was its original length) and sometimes *Mighty Joe Young*, I think. I used to like watching *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Miracle on 34th Street* and the Alistair Sim version of *A Christmas Carol*. Even, the first few times, the Jean Shepherd *A Christmas Story*... But, sorry, I haven't been able to sit through any of those for a few years now.

And returning to Halloween, no, I find I have trouble watching even the classic (pre-Hammer) horror films any more, much less any of the slasher or torture films that constitute horror fare now. I'm sorry, I've even watched some of Disney's silly features (*Halloweentown*, *Twitches*) in preference, not including *The Haunted Mansion*. Okay, I'm looking forward to seeing what they've done with *Twilight*, but that's another story for another time...

Teresa Cochran

I'm a big kid at heart. I welcome the opportunity to celebrate, no matter the holiday. I like scary Halloween stories, Santa Claus, opening and giving gifts on Christmas. All the commercialism is silly, so I just ignore it.

I think the Vegrants should have a Purim celebration, fannish style. I think it would be a blast.

I have trouble taking the lead in planning holiday activities, such as Halloween costumes, so mostly I don't do it unless I can get a victim to make my face up or something.

When I was young, my mother had some fun with my Halloween costumes. One of them was a ghost, and because I was blind, she didn't bother to put eye-holes in it. I was strolling along, until I met a very distressed woman who asked me if I could see. I cheerfully answered, "Nope!" She almost went apoplectic, and I went into a state of confusion until my sister explained the situation to me. I had to get used to letting people know I was blind.

When I was a bit older, my sister made an impromptu headless-horsemen costume for me. She



Teresa tunes up on the fiddle. She and Bill often initiate music-making. The rest of us mostly listen — and sometimes join in a little, too.

found one of my stepdad's old coats, and pulled the collar all the way up over my head. Again, I didn't need vision, so it worked out perfectly. It really scared people, too. I think I had a horsy



In Australia, James "Lucky Jim" Taylor is known as the "luckiest man in the world" We're trying to get him to accept this new nickname, sweetening the deal by promising that no one will again ask him to sing.

broomstick sort of thing, too, but not sure.

I can't wait for my birthday, then Christmas, then whatever else to come along. I might listen to the song "Green Christmas" or "Christmas at Ground Zero" for a good laugh, but basically, I'll enjoy it. And there are opportunities for more fan-nish get-togethers.

James Taylor

I really don't remember what costumes I wore when I was small and would go out trick or treating. In fact the only costume I remember is the last one I wore a couple of years ago to a Fan Halloween party when Teresa and I were dating. I wore dark glasses and used her cane while she guided me by the elbow and wore a pair of the glasses with spring loaded eye balls. It was a last minute improvisation and I think it either went over well or left people a little stunned.

I have vague memories of going out when I was younger and going through my bag later on the living room floor. But my strongest memory is of going out before we moved from Richmond, Indiana to California in 1959. We lived in a split level tract house and the road made a loop up a hill so we were allowed to visit houses along the road. In those days giving out apples was not uncommon and I remember clearly being invited along with my sister into a house to have hot chocolate. Within a few years packaged candy had replaced home made cookies and apples and fear had taken the place of invitations to hot chocolate. I noted the change but did not realize the implications 'till much later.

DeDee White

I'm so much like a child in many ways and holidays are some of life's pleasures. I love the presents of Christmas. Thinking of what I will buy for my children, grandchildren, Alan and friends. Feeling the anticipation of looking in the newspaper for toys, games and different new gadgets or electronic innovations. I Love all the decorations and wonderful smells of goodies and cider and making lists of different wonderful dishes to have



The effervescent DeDee White is thinking a Happy Thought.

for Thanksgiving to kick off the season, even though the reason for the Christmas season has pretty much been shoved under the rug. I choose not to think too negatively about the commercial over kill and just revel in the fun of it all. I still like sending and getting Christmas Cards or Holliday Greetings which has now become the political correctness I suppose. I look forward to receiving greetings from friends afar that I rarely hear from all year long but at the season we reconnect even for a brief few minutes and it reminds me of how many wonderful friends I have.

I remember really believing in Santa Claus and looking out the window Christmas Eve trying to imagine Santa and the reindeer flying across the sky. I think with that lovely memory somewhere



(Left to Right): Bill Mills, Alan White and Arnie Katz reminisce about the late Forest J Ackerman on a segment of *The Wasted Hour*, episode 9.

deep down in my heart I look forward to the holiday season.

I hope all of you have loads of goodies to eat and to bake and that you have dear friends and family to share it with. Good friends, good food and friendship are especially appreciated.

Therefore get ready to go shopping for the big turkey day and then put on your roller skates for the big shopping list. By the way, give a little smile to strangers as you all wait in long lines at the department stores. And be a little extra patient with all the sales clerks as they try to do their best to serve you; they are under a lot of pressure for speed so give them a little extra kindness also. Have a healthy, happy and loving season.

Brenda Dupont

As a December child, I connect Thanksgiving and Christmas with the turn of another year. I would get so excited at Thanksgiving, counting the

days until I would be older and perhaps wiser, and of course got extra presents around the tree.

As the years passed, I began to realize that I was often getting shorted on the gifting side. Many times, I'd get the one-fer gift. One gift for both occasions. Usually, with the comment that, "Well I couldn't really afford this gift for just your birthday or just Christmas, so I combined it into one."

It didn't take long for me to realize that I never opened quite as many birthday gifts as my March and April sisters. With the busy hubbub of the holidays, family visits and friends going out of town, big birthday parties just didn't happen. I think the one that I did have only had about three friends show from school.

As the years went by, I found that since my birthday is on the 20th, trying to get together with friends to go out clubbing, becomes confused with Christmas parties. Even when I had a combined



Brenda Dupont is the newest Vegrant and has taken quickly to our quaint fannish ways.

birthday party with my friend Mike, who shared his birthday with mine, we found that it quickly turned into more of a Christmas celebration – after all there was a tree in the living room and White Christmas was on the radio. Many people had to leave early or arrived very late because they were trying to make the company party and ours, too. While living in Colorado, I discovered I could work that to my advantage. When my birthday fell on party Saturday, I had friends taking me out for birthday drinks every day the following week .

Jolie LaChance

Speaking of conventions: It was at Loscon that I discovered the importance of drinking for Purim. There were a couple of guys in yarmulkes celebrating assiduously. Apparently you are supposed to drink until you can't say "god be praised" or "be damned to Haman (did I spell that right Ar-

nie?) without them sounding the same.

My goyish side loves, loves, loves the carols. In our house the carols started the day after Thanksgiving and stayed on until Christmas. I have Christmas CD's that stay in my car year around waiting on the day. Recently I've tossed in a couple of Hanukah CD's. I understand that this is holiday for a victory but, hey, the music swings. Besides which, the Romans had it coming.

Joyce Katz

My mother was a great Holiday Person all of her life, so in love with the Joys of the Season that she infected everyone around her with good will. I've gone through lots of life changes since then, sometimes ignoring them, often inadequately prepared. Ross spoke of the quart of eggnog and a carrot – I recall being in Hollywood for Thanksgiving (1961), with two donuts and a can of soda. Yet I've never lost that thrill in my soul, when the calendar signals the Holidays are near.

I guess for me, the Season starts with Halloween. I had a lot of fun as a child, and I enjoy paying it back by trying to make fun for the neighborhood kids. Then it's just a hop and a jump to Thanksgiving. In many ways, it's my favorite. I loved the big family dinners, when I was close enough to celebrate with them. But as an adult, I've seldom been with family for the day. For years we had Thanksgiving with Bill & Laurie Kunkel, and they had Christmas dinner with us, but their move to Michigan ended that tradition.

Holidays are for lavish meals, tasty tidbits, and decadent desserts. Yet the Holiday I recall most often was the first one Arnie and I celebrated together. We had planned to have dinner with the Brown's, but something interfered. I had virtually nothing in the kitchen, so we started combing Brooklyn Heights, trying to find some place open. We ended up buying two frozen dinners from a corner store on the other side of the Heights.

The Holiday Season provides lots of opportunity for fannish gatherings. And, I like the music – Carols are often such happy songs. I love the sparkle and gleam, the decorations and good cheer. I don't even care that there's so much commercialism – that's just part of life, and it doesn't detract from the main event, at least not to me.

On to the articles!

Taral Wayne

Nothing to do but clear up the wrappings and remnants of turkey, and take it out to the trash.

With morning came Boxing Day. I've no money and no desire to be up at dawn to participate in the traditional Boxing Day feeding frenzy. A significant number of other people must feel the same way this year. Though spending was way up before Christmas, according to the day's news the spending after Christmas is 15 or 20% down from last year.

Instead, I slept late and now I'm catching up with the quotidian details of housekeeping and the internet.

For no reason especially, I never felt in the holiday spirit this year. December first came and went without putting up the tree and decorations. I never did get around to it. I had all the gift shopping done two months earlier, so that all that remained was to wrap them. For the second year in a row, there was no Christmas Party to go to. Nor did I think I knew more than three people from one circle I could invite to a party of my own. I rarely had the TV on except to listen to the news or weather, so missed the usual barrage of Christmas movies and music. It did snow though. Boy did it snow! Nearly three feet in the first three weeks of December. But most of it had melted by Christmas, and it wasn't enough to deliver much of a boost to my Christmas spirit.

Still, it wasn't a bad Christmas by any means. There may have been no party, but the weekend before the Big Day I had a couple of friends over for the evening. Tom was a pal from Toronto who had gone west to seek his fortune after graduating with some sort of degree in library sciences. Unfortunately, the only job he was able to find was in Winnipeg. But Tom's folks are still here, and he comes back to Toronto every year for a Christmas visit.

The other guest I had was Steven. Steve is one of the sweetest guys you could ever know, and not



BOXING
DAY
BLUES

even four years on the night shift doing tech support on the phone has entirely destroyed his good nature. He has developed a capacity for sarcasm nearly as extensive as my own though. By good fortune he has an Italian family and takes to the vino to lighten the burden of life. He brought a thirty-year-old Port and a bottle of modestly priced champagne to the festivities.

The port was incredible. The champagne sharp and fizzy, and went surprisingly well with pepperoni and bacon pizza while we watched *The Venture Brothers* from my DVD's. When we were mellowed out enough, our conversation became amazingly witty and sophisticated, as is often the case when alcohol is available.

It was a good Christmas in other ways. Since I shop all year round, sooner or later I find exactly the right present for everyone, and usually at a bargain price. This year my shopping was more brilliant than usual. Among other largesse I threw around as the generous patron I wish to seem to be, there was:

- A silver 1984 dollar commemorating the 150th. anniversary of the city of Toronto.
- A couple of wall clocks in the shape of car wheels complete with brake calipers, for my nephews.
- A tree ornament in the shape of a motorcycle chopper, another in the shape of a jeep.
- A multi-disk collection of popular songs by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby, and Sammy Davis Jr.
- A book on the history of the game of hockey, plus a 1/6 scale figure of a famous player whose name I couldn't remember to save my life.
- A die-cast model of a 1934 Chrysler Airflow. (A very progressive automobile that was naturally a flop with the public for just that reason.)
- A big book on animation that covered all sorts of obscure productions from Eastern Europe, Russia, and Asia.
- A replica gas pump from the 30's.
- A 1/18 scale die-cast model of the futuristic 1966 Studebaker Avanti.
- The complete Austin Powers trilogy.



That's not quite the entire list, but it's the more colourful items on it. On the other side of the balance sheet, I was given a large bottle of Bailey's Cream, a battlefield atlas for the Canadian Armed Forces, a couple of Teflon frying pans, a fabulous Dremel tool set, and all four sets of DVD's of the 90's animated Batman series. Guess which of all those was the one I actually wrote to Santa for. He got it right.

It wasn't just Santa who's been good to me. 2007 has smiled on many of my efforts this year. True, Scrooge only tightened the drawstrings on my finances, but I've been able to draw many more things that I'm happy with, and fewer cookie cutter pin-ups. Among the more interesting tasks I set myself were a six page comic, my own Ten Commandments, the Energumen CD, a lot of fine Photoshop work, answered a lengthy interview, composed a peculiar little picture book for an old friend, and finally acquired my first Roman gold coins.

I've been "rediscovered" by science fiction fandom, suddenly finding myself hot property as a writer and artist. This has led to starting a regular column in one fanzine, and several feature articles published in others. The big surprise was the invitation by the 2009 Worldcon to be Fan Guest of Honour. Now if only I could have successfully run an internet scam and made a cool quick million, 2008 would have been perfect.

So what will it be, 2009?

— Taral Wayne

Bryan Follins

Dec 31, 1967—A Bad Cold.

That was a Sunday. I was sick with a bad cold. But, the real bad cold was what I saw on my television set. On that TV screen people were sitting in a bad cold watching men work in a bad cold.

People have worked in worse colds. People have watched people work in worst colds. On this day, however, this bad cold had a historic ring to it. The men working in this bad cold were wearing uniforms.

The colors of the uniforms were green and yellow, and white, silver and blue. The boss of the men wearing the green and yellow was a guy with a toothy smile wearing eyeglasses.

As I recall, his name was Lombardi. His men outworked the guys in the other uniforms. It made my bad cold easier to live with, and my holiday season a lot more enjoyable.

— Bryan Follins



A BAD COLD

Arnie Katz

What does the future hold for Fandom? There are many possible answers. Would-be seers can take refuge in the knowledge that no one can prove them wrong. I know a few prognosticators who make the most of that by only predicting things that are scheduled to happen after they die.

For instance, I here prophesy that the universe will end in about a zillion years. It'll happen on a Sunday just as WSFS finally gains total control over Fandom and squashes it like an annoying bug.

Yet, if you're actually attempting to extrapolate the future, it's not exactly a bed of roses. Just because people can't *prove* a prediction wrong doesn't mean they have to like it. Cassandra, in *The Iliad*, suffered the curse of people always disbelieving her predictions.

Though I routinely make predictions in my daily pro wrestling column, "The Katz Files," I have only succumbed to the temptation to forecast Fandom's future three times. I grade the attempts as artistic successes and public relations failures.

I made my first foray into Fannish Futurism around 1970, when I suggested that the worldcon and other large cons would largely fall into the sphere of those whose primary fanac was staging conventions.

I based this on a simple empirical observation. Fanzine fans generally work on convention, because they desire the end result. They do what has to be done to have the opportunity to spend time with their friends and so forth. Con-runners put on conventions, because they enjoy putting on such events. I also took into account the fact that, even by 1970, Fanzine Fandom represents a shrinking segment of the total fan population.

It's a good thing that I don't hold a grudge (and that my memory is spotty) or I would laugh in the faces of those fans – or maybe poke them with one of those Hugos from the 2007 World



FANNISH PREDICTIONS



Science Fiction Convention with the refuge from the Blue Man Group next to the rocket.

Are there Core Fandomites involved in running conventions? Of course! The current Reno bid has quite a few of them associated with it. But if you look at who has put on Worldcons, Westercons and other “big tent” conventions in the 21st Century, it’s pretty obvious that Core Fandomites have largely turned over the con-running and associated fan politics to the folks whose activity revolves around the winning and staging of cons.

I offered my second major prediction in the early 1990’s. I foresaw a not-too-far-off day when most regular fanzines would be done and delivered electronically.

I’ve trumpeted the cost and work advantages of electronic publishing often enough that I hardly need to reiterate them here. Suffice to say that more than half of the current top fanzines, as voted in the FAAn Achievement Awards, are all-electronic and almost all the rest have digital editions.

Yet when I wrote that, the way some fans responded, you’d have thought I had poured glue into the enchanted duplicator or bugged the Spirit of Trufandom.

Some of the misguided accused me of hating fanzines, a strange charge to level at someone who has published so many of them. I didn’t make the prediction because I hate fanzines; I love fanzines.

I had to put that love aside to evaluate the situation objectively. I just reported what I saw.

I’m not rooting for the end of hard copy fanzine. I would make them live forever, if the cost wasn’t prohibitive. I based my prediction on the fact that I’d realized that electronic publishing was the only way I could afford to do a sizable regular genzine. I assumed that others were in the same boat or soon would reach that point. As things turned out, it looks like my prediction hit pretty close to the mark.

My third prognostication, made early in this decade, is still hanging fire. It hasn’t come to fruition yet, but then, I didn’t claim it would happen for some years to come.

Not that there aren’t Signs and Portents that it may well come true within the allotted span. I predicted that the paper apas will shrink and die. Some groups have already stopped and many other have large numbers of empty roster spots.

It was a straightforward extrapolation of my prediction about electronic fanzine publishing, with an extra factor. A powerful new competitor to apas has arisen and I felt that a lot of fans would choose the rapid-fire immediacy of the online





listservs, because the pace of conversation is 50%-90% of all but the local weekly apas like Apa L.

I didn't especially like making those predictions. Two of the three were decidedly against my preference, but that's the way I analyzed key fan-ish trends. A lot of fans didn't like hearing those predictions, because they didn't want to see them come true. That's understandable, but I think I will risk such ire again.

Jumping off from this scintillating record, and ignoring the shrieking voice inside my skull that keeps saying, "Quit while you're ahead," I thought I'd offer a possible future for Fandom.

A lot of you won't like this any better than the other three. Look at it this way: If you don't want it to happen, you've got plenty of time to help steer things in a direction you find preferable.

My fourth prediction – remember where you were when you read it -- is that, by 2020, some sub-Fandoms will become autonomous. I believe that Core Fandom, Filkdom and perhaps others will operate mostly as separate entities with only pro forma connection to the "big tent" conventions and other manifestations of Fandom Prime.

Core Fandom, to maintain its culture in an increasingly mundane Fandom Prime, will increasingly define itself as a distinct entity rather than as a component of the larger hobby of Fandom.

There's no reason for Core Fandom to completely split from Fandom Prime. (Fandom Prime, a term coined by Moshe Feder, is the universe of all who do anything that connects to Fandom, about 250,000 people.) Core Fandomites tend to have wide-ranging interests, not to mention a lot of nostalgia for the Good Old Days of Fandom, so there'll always be a link to Fandom Prime. But by 2020, Core Fandom will largely steer its own course, like today's *Star Trek* Fandom.

I envision more change in attitude than practice. Core Fandomites will still participate in Fandom Prime activities that interest them, but "home base" will be Core Fandom.

I'd like to explain the thinking that went into my prediction. Maybe the detailed rationale will convince you that there's something in it. If I can't convince you, at least you'll have an idea of how I went so far off the beam.

Fans sowed the seeds of this change right from the hobby's infancy. It began with the best intentions, though the results have ultimately disappointed many of us. We didn't know it, but Fandom had a ticking time bomb so deeply embedded in the fannish ethos that we didn't even realize it was there until it was too late.

Much too late.

The earliest fans set the timer before the first fanzine, perhaps even before Ackerman wrote to alias Jack Darrow.

The bomb wasn't dynamite, C4 or some futuristic Engine of Destruction. It was a simple, even noble, belief that fans shared as an article of faith. It was an idea with the destructive power of an H-Bomb and the allure of the sirens who beckoned Odysseus to the rocks.

It was the idealistic hope that Fandom could promote acceptance of, and respect for, the Literature of Science Fiction. It sounded like a good idea, a way to "give back" to the writers, artists and editors who had created the genre that gave birth to Fandom.

There was also an element of self-interest. Alienated from society as they were, fans still didn't like the hoots of derision that greeted every mention of their favorite reading material. For that matter, they probably weren't crazy about the abuse heaped on *anyone* who read "too much."



Fandom was definitely not about numbers for its first three decades or so. The size of fanzine circulation and the attendance figures for conventions suggest that Science Fiction Fandom was less popular than necrophilia. Fandom as a whole was smaller than Core Fandom is today – and Core Fandom is 0.5% of Fandom Prime.

Fandom’s small size made those pioneer fans feel vulnerable to outside assaults. The police, the post office and their mothers all had the power to throttle Fandom without expending a lot of effort to do so. Acceptance, or even just tolerance, for SF would lessen the danger of outside heat for Fandom.

In addition, they hoped that popularity for Science Fiction might translate into a few more participants for Fandom. Perhaps some of those First Fandomites even dared to dream that some of them might be women.

The first so-called “Barbarian Invasion” occurred during the years just prior to US entry into World War II. The Science Fiction League pulled in a lot of newcomers. Some SFL recruits made the jump to participation in general Fandom. The SFL helped Fandom expand from population centers like New York and Los Angeles to smaller cities and towns across North America.

The only problem with the Science Fiction League was that *Thrilling Wonder Stories* replaced *Wonder Stories* as sponsor. It was more than the

mere addition of an adjective to the magazine’s logo; the editorial policies were completely different. Hugo Gernsback started *Wonder* when he lost *Amazing* and it continued the stiff, science-oriented editorial policy that Papa Hugo developed beginning with *Electrical Experimenter*.

Thrilling Wonder, on the other hand, featured action-oriented pulp stories. *TWS* had a livelier, if less intellectual feel. Its readers were younger and more enthusiastic – and not too interested in the amateur science found in Gernsback’s publications.

In the long run, that early-1940’s “Barbarian Invasion” turned out pretty well for Fandom. Many SFL chapters simply dissolved when *Thrilling Wonder* folded, removing the casual SF enthusiasts before they could affect things much. Those who stayed helped turn the tide in favor of fiction over amateur science in Fandom. They were literate and “grew up” rapidly due to their participation. Fandom got younger and less sophisticated for a short period of time, but the Barbarian Invasion EVENTUALLY HELPED Fandom a lot more than the initial shock hurt it.

Fandom’s culture continued to develop through the 1940’s, 1950’s and early 1960’s. Fandom’s size increased, but not all that much. The hobby stayed small, relative homogenous and cohesive. When there were only 50-100 active fans, it wasn’t hard to get to know all of them. People

who didn't get along with those actifans could spend all their time in personal quarrels or find another hobby.

The first Barbarian Invasion involved a few dozen people. The wave of newcomers in the 1960's and 1970's, brought in by the Burroughs Boom, the Tolkien Craze. *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* involved *thousands* of people making their first contact with Fandom.

The long-felt desire to see SF popular, accepted and respected encouraged fans to welcome the population explosion. It was a sign that the dream was coming true. A lot of the strangers didn't seem to have much in common with veteran fans, apart from a liking for SF. Some may've thought it would shake out like the first Barbarian Invasion; a few would stick and the rest would find new interests and new places to express them.

That's not what happened.

Ironically, two of the most fannish groups threw open the gates and put the welcome mat on the doorstep. The Fanoclasts and The Saturday People put on, respectively, NYCon 3 (1967) and St. Louiscon (1969). Both world SF cons provided as many fun activities as possible to address the "special interests" of all the new fans. Although subsequent world SF conventions expanded on the idea, NYCon 3 and St. Louiscon were, in philosophy, the first "big tent" conventions.

The reality proved less alluring than the dream, but that didn't stop fans from pursuing the goal of fostering popularity and acceptance for Specula Fiction. A few of the newcomers crossed over to our Fandom, which kindled hope, but they turned out to be exceptions.

As a group, the newcomers differed from the people who had come to Fandom before the mid-1960's. They liked Science Fiction or, more often, Fantasy; that was what all fans shared. Increasingly, as TV and the movies embraced SF, they weren't readers (and, therefore, weren't interested in writing and publishing.)

Better adjusted to mainstream society than the traditional fans, the folks who entered in the 1965-1985 period didn't *need* the alternative subculture of Fandom the way Fandom's trailblazers did. Perhaps fans of the period thought this growth spurt would end up like the first Barbarian Invasion; most would drift away, leaving behind a few tru-

fans.

Whatever fans imagined, events didn't unfold that way.

Many of the newbies left shortly after making contact, but a lot didn't. Instead, they found common cause with one or more of the "special interest: groups within Fandom Prime. While traditional fans were generalists who at least dabbled in the full spectrum of fan activities, most of the newcomers focused on one activity with correspondingly little interest in most of the rest.

Over the last 30 years, "special interest" groups have grown into sub-Fandoms, each with its own unique subculture. Sub-Fandoms often recruit for themselves rather than for Fandom Prime as a whole. This brought in additional waves of people whose *only* interest was in the sub-Fandom they joined.

Fandom Prime is changing from a subculture to an Interest Group. It functions very well as a pavilion under which all SF-related activity have a home. Maybe that's the most appropriate organizational structure for the needs of the diverse 250,000 or so participants in Fandom Prime.

All fans have a connection to Fandom Prime through their interest in SF, but more and more, the sub-Fandoms are developing their own communities, their special subculture.

My prediction doesn't mean that Fandom Prime will dissolve. To the contrary, there will always be things that bring all the sub-Fandom participants together as lovers of imaginative literature, film, theater, radio and music.

Core Fandom is one of the sub-Fandoms now traveling this road. Other sub-Fandom may have moved farther along toward autonomy, but Core Fandom has gone in that direction at a measured, but steady pace. Corflu has assumed the status of the Core Fandom worldcon and the Corflu Fifty is an institution that really relates only to Core Fandom. We have efanazines.com, the Virtual Fan Lounge and surely more such things to come.

My prediction is that this trend will continue until Core Fandom is a subculture with links to Interest Group Fandom, but with its own culture intact.

Scoff now – and then let's talk in 2020 and see where we are.

— Arnie Katz

John DeChancie



WHAT
WINTER
MEANS
TO ME

Winter means a number of things to me. First, it means putting off getting the air conditioning fixed, which is load off my mind. I was wondering where the money was going to come from. Second, it means I can spend that money on a winter vacation instead. If I had any money, that is. But I don't, and that's another thing I don't have to worry about, viz., where to go on vacation. I would choose Mexico, if I were going on a winter vacation. It is warm in Mexico.

Strangely enough, many people who live in that country end up here, where it is not so warm. I have often wondered about that. Third...or thirdly...thirdful?...the earth is in a different position along its path around the sun, different, that is, from where it was when it was summer, last summer. I don't know exactly what good that is, but I've always felt that a change of scenery is conducive to mental health.

Another thing I like about winter is that if you walk outdoors, very few bugs fly up and hit you in the face. I hate when that happens, in the warmer months. I no sooner take two steps into a verdant pasture or meadow when wham, I get one upside the head from an obviously near-sighted insect. There are also few picnics in the winter. I hate picnics. I always worry about food poisoning, and I hate ants, another insect. Nobody sweats in the winter. Therefore, less body odor is about, generally speaking. Shoveling snow is not fun, but I would rather shovel snow than dig the garden in spring, when insects are coming out of hibernation, or the Ramada, or wherever they stay in the winter. Did I mention that I hated insects? Also, trees without leaves are also not a lot of laughs, but if you live in Las Vegas, for instance, this need not concern you in the slightest, as all trees are green all year in Las Vegas. How they arrange that, I have no idea, but winter is even more fun there. All these things say "winter" to me. They say it a lot, more and more every day. And as the song says, when the dog bites, when the bee stings, it's probably summer because bees don't come out in winter and if a dog bit you, you'd have thick clothing on, instead of silly looking shorts so the nasty little cur can sink his teeth directly into your flesh. So when the days grow short and the sun lowers in the southern sky, we can all utter a prayer of thanks that we are tilted away from the sun, which is a good thing, considering that global warming has spoiled the entire solar bit for all of us. — John DeChancie

Joyce Katz

On the Monday before Thanksgiving, many of the locals were preparing for their trip to Los Angeles, and the rest were getting ready for the big holiday. Arnie and I were in the second group, anticipating celebrating turkey day with Bryan Follins and his wife.

Since we were being hosted, I planned to go shopping on Tuesday to avoid the weekend crush at the supermarket, but only for odds and ends — we needed a few treats for the weekend. But I felt no pressure about it, since I didn't have to worry about the big dinner.

Monday late afternoon, I was moving a load of laundry from my top-loading washer into my front-loading dryer. With all the bobbing up and down, all of a sudden something went terribly wrong. I called for Arnie and he helped me get in from the garage. The next few hours were spent in varying depths of agony, as I learned how badly my back was hurt. Arnie eventually got Bryan on the phone to cancel, and to explain why we wouldn't be coming. Then we hunkered down for a holiday weekend with Trouble.

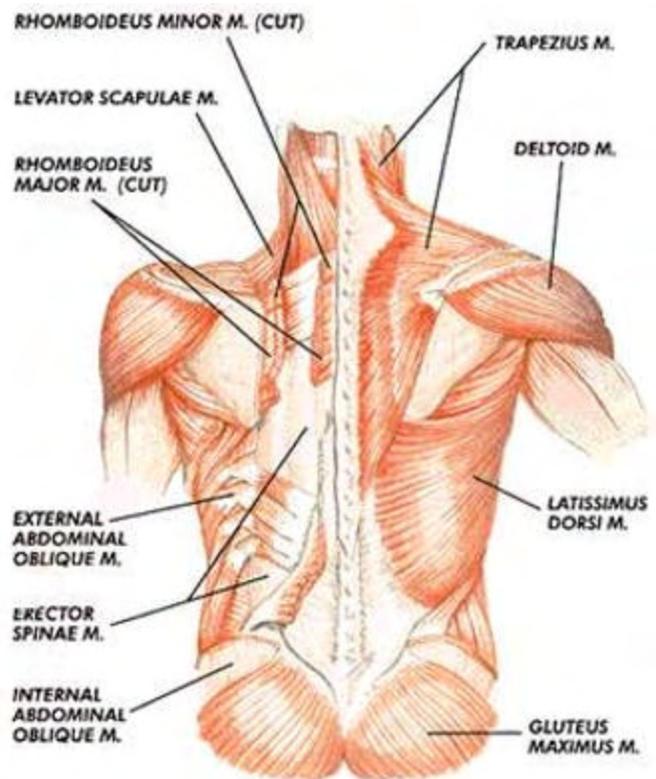
The first couple days weren't too bad -- I had sandwich stuff and snacks in the house. Not much in the line of real, heavy-duty food, since cooking was out of question for me, and Arnie doesn't cook; but we had enough cash for ordering carry-in as much as necessary.

Thanksgiving Day was rough -- none of the delivery places were open. By that time I was able to stand and attempt to cook a couple of burgers. Unfortunately, not able enough to cook them well; they were very dismal. We were feeling a bit blue (and a little underfed.) That evening I realized I was nearly out of Doan's back pills, out of the cat's favorite foods (he cried piteously everytime I gave him something he didn't want to eat) and we really needed to do something about food for ourselves.

Like I said, quite a few of the local fans were at Los-Con, or at least on their way. But we did have one ace-in-the-hole — the Mills live in the same neighborhood as we do, just a few blocks away. So I called Bill & Roc that evening, and left a message on their machine, telling them we were in trouble and to call us back after they finished celebrating the day. Actually, they called back promptly and promised to help. When they got here on Friday, they came with a case of cat



A FUNNY
THING
HAPPENED



food for Foggie and another for the outside cats. They brought us two packages of Doan's pills, and a big grocery bag of food....ham, and slices of wonderful turkey, and stuffing, sweet potatoes, corn, greenbeans -- even pumpkin pie! They not only shared their food with us, but they also cleaned up the debris on the floor around the cat's bowl (why do cats make such a mess when they eat?) and cleaned the cat litter box, since I was unable to lean over to do it myself. They really came through for us, and we were very grateful.

Little by little I recovered. By the weekend, I was able to drive to Wendy's to pick up some burgers. A day or two later, I was able to go in a grocery store for at least some supplies. The good thing is that I got a lot of extra sleep during the week (Doan's pills do that to me) so I am more rested than usual. And, in another week, the pain started receding rapidly.

I never knew a bad back was such a bad problem. It was strange: one moment I was well and my house was in order. And the next moment I was terribly old and frail, and unable to do anything at all, and my kitchen floor was covered with crumbs and spots that I couldn't lean over and clean. In one moment, I went from being in control of my self and my surroundings, to being pathetic, living in squallor, and hungry!

Of course, we all live one moment away from disaster, every moment of our lives. So — why worry?

— Joyce Katz



Us Lovable Vegramts

David Bratman asks...

Even though it wasn't really necessary to do so, thanks for reminding me, in all your various ways of doing so, that Vegas is hot during the summer. I'm sorry that personal schedule prevented me from attending your most recent Corflu, but I did enjoy coming to the previous one in February - I even drove all the way through the desert to get there. Vegas in February, now that's the time for me!

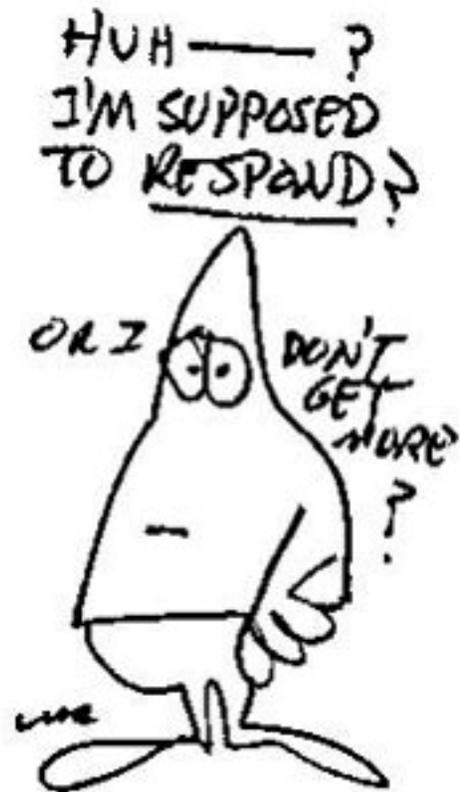
I think that Ted White has a good point that writing for even a potentially unlimited audience is different from writing for a known one, and that makes blog writing different from fanzine writing as we know it. I do find myself writing differently online where I know I can be seen by non-fans, though I'm just as affected by my known actual readership, most of whom are fans.

But Arnie, where did you get the idea that "each blog is essentially its own universe, unconnected to and unaffected by other blogs"? Especially on LiveJournal, where the so-called "Friends List" feature provides an aggregate of mutually-read LJs, blogs are fundamentally interactive. Blogs link to and quote from other blogs all the time. That's how I found most of the blogs I read. And comments ... most blogs enable comments. They're just like mailing comments in apas, they really are.

For some reason Archie comics are displayed, the only comics to be so featured, on grocery store newsstands around here, right next to National Enquirer and People Magazine. They're a comforting visual presence, though I've never seen anybody buy one, and if the publishers change the look I'll be crushed. I see the "New Waif" Betty and Veronica in that illustration you provide, and I wonder what they will do about Jughead's trademark, but very 1930s style, hat.

What's that Roxanne is holding in the picture on page 10, a ferret?

Roxanne: Yes, that is indeed a ferret - Miss Candy Matson Mills, goodwill ambassador of the ferret kingdom. Actually, to be perfectly correct, she isn't really a ferret - she's a European Polecat and not native to this continent at all. The North American Black-Footed ferret is the only ferret species native to North America; they have extremely long necks and



DIGIBOO!

THE LETTERCOL

their main coat is golden brown with dark brown highlights on the feet and face (hence the name); while the European polecat comes in a wide variety of color combinations and patterns. The BFF is also smaller than the European polecat – though not smaller than Candy Matson who is a very diminutive example of the species. Additionally, the BFF is an endangered species; while they once numbered in the hundreds of thousands and ranged from southern Canada to northern Mexico, as recently as the 1980s it was thought that the BFF was extinct. A small colony was discovered in Wyoming in 1981 and 18 adult Black-Footed Ferrets were "rescued" and taken to a recovery facility. Efforts to re-establish the population and re-introduce them to the wild have been going on ever since. The domesticated animal commonly called a ferret is thought to be a hybrid of the European and Steppe polecats (the Steppes look more like BFFs), though no one is completely certain as ferrets are thought to have been domesticated for thousands of years. As far as classification goes, all ferrets belong to the *Mustelidae* family and most are in the genus *Mustela* with different species and sub-species categories to set them apart.

Arnie: Heat always looms large in the Vegas Fandom scheme of things. One reason is that it has such an effect on fanac, an effect that is exactly counter to the state of affairs in most other part of the country. Those cold, indoor days of winter are considered prime fanning weather, but the summer is more productive here in Vegas. When the temperature climbs into the solid three digits, an afternoon in an air conditioned room with a computer looks mighty appetizing.

Michael Dobson remembers:

A childhood friend told me that his greatest life disappointment was finding out that high school was nothing like Archie Comics, and I agree. Of course, I would probably have been cast as Jughead.

The Tom Lehrer line is actually from a song titled simply "Smut," not "The Old Smut Peddler," and should read "When correctly viewed/ Everything is lewd!" (I could tell you some things about Peter Pan/ Or the Wizard of Oz—there's a dirty old man!) The other song is "The Old Dope Peddler," ("It's the old dope peddler/Spreading joy wherever he goes.")

If it's difficult to find a name to replace fandom ("fanzine fandom," "trufandom," "core fandom"), I understand the Mafia no longer uses "la cosa nostra." And "our thing" describes what we do as well as any other phrase that comes to mind. Besides, "fandom" has never been particularly descriptive, except to the extent we're fans of one another.

Arnie: My ability to perceive the erotic content in just about anything has often served me well, but I think there's a lot there to find in Archie Comics. Oh, not so much now, but the ones in the 1940's and 1950's.

I'm afraid that some other segments of Fandom Prime are 'way too interested in what we call our little sliver of a subculture. "Core Fandom" does the job for now, but it'll probably be called something different in another five or 10 years.

Lloyd Penney ruminates:

Thank you for putting *Idle Minds* 1 together. I guess this is your post-Corflu report, letting us all know if you were busy or goofed off all summer. Let's make this zine as busy as Wild Heirs or *Folly*.

The cover...why does everyone draw in anime-style these days? I suppose I should be happy there's no kids in the illo with green or lavender hair.

Blogging is like keeping an electronic diary, and I suppose blogging would have a fannish bent to it if you could commit fanac every day, and then write about it. But, as much as you might like to, I don't know if there's any one who can do it day in, day out. Fanac, that is.

Man, that Bill Mills loves that LV. Seeing how many of you are originally from my side of the continent, right now, in Toronto, as I type, the temperature is about 56 degrees Fahrenheit, it's raining, and the trees are turning their beautiful colours. I'd miss it if I wasn't here. Any of you missing this?

And then we go to heatstroke. That was something I was a little worried about this past spring when we all went to Red Rock for a long walk. Sunscreen, bottle of water, towel, cap...many of us came prepared for mid-desert conditions. Proably didn't need any of it, seeing how little time we actually spent at Red Rock, and seeing how little moisture was in the air. At the Plaza Hotel, we checked out The Weather Channel to see what was going on, and when we were there, Las Vegas set records for dryness, measuring as little as 8% humidity for a couple of days.

FanZen...there's a philosophy that needs fleshing out. What is the sound of one fan locking? Tikkatik-katikkatikkatikka...

The Archie comics pulp collections are sold up here, and while I don't buy them, they are usually found by the cash registers in the variety stores. The characters have basically looked the same for decades, and recently I saw the character redesign...

Did one new artist get the chance to change things that much?

I wouldn't have thought a newcomer (to the comic,

anyway) would be able to change the franchise characters so much.

Let's quit fandom, Joyce? Well, I must assume you mean what's passing itself off as fandom these days. I think Worldcon should be the centre of the fan's year, and for me, it usually is. I felt a little left out when we couldn't go to Japan and Denver, and I will definitely feel a part of things next year in Montréal. I have had a variety of fanac over my years, so I have felt that I was up-to-date in some areas, and forgotten in others. While I do feel a little old, and feel that in many ways, I've been left behind in fandom, I have tried to observe what is happening, especially in my group, and their current interests. For example, I still keep in touch with the convention committee we were a part of for 25 years, and the Torcon committee, the local clubs we got to know, the newer and older fans alike here. We've got to adjust with the changing times and changing faces, even in fanzine fandom, IMHO. I am still busy in local fandom, and I have my local friends, and I do need them.

There's a weary bunch on the back cover. So Photoshop got both Alan and Bill in the shot? I suppose you could Photoshop any one into the shot, as long as you have the right angles.

I know this is still a relatively new zine, but I am responding to it now because I am in a similar situation to Chris Garcia...I am in an office where I work and am ready to work, and I get far more of the latter than the former. That means I have lots of free time while I wait for work to arrive. So, I have worked ahead with dozens of locs, and lots of short essays I've titled Tales from the Convention. When I get to my evening job tonight, I hope Bill Mills will have some more zines on eFanzines.com for me to loc and fill my time.

Work on this Thursday evening, send it out Saturday morning. Such are my 50- to 55-hour weeks right now until I get through my probation period. Cross your fingers for me, and see you next issue. I hope there will be one.

Arnie: I didn't think there was any doubt that Vegas Fandom has done quite a bit of post-Corflu fanac. Besides the 10 issues or so of *VFW*, we've all been active in SNAPS, the monthly electronic apa, listservs and sites like TheVoicesofFandom.com and LasVegrants.com. There've also been nine episode of "The Wasted Hour."

I don't hate anime, but I'm not really a fan, either. The anime influence in Archie Comics' latest redesign definitely is not to my taste. One the other hand, I kind of like long purple hair. Joyce has stopped dying her hair these days, but she has had some vibrant colors in the past.

Arnie: Just about everyone in Las Vegas is from somewhere else, which is a big part of the reason there's been such a turnover in Vegas Fandom over the years.

Idle Minds is definitely not a rerun of *Wild Heirs* or even *Crazy from the Heat*. We've got enough long-time fans to keep some continuity, but most of the Vegrants who are working on this fanzine are fairly new to the fan publishing scene and are in learning mode.

Eric Mayer discusses

Last night our furnace went on for the first time this autumn. (We live in northeast Pennsylvania.) So I guess it's a good time to at least be able to read about summer.

Idle Minds is terrific but I hope you'll excuse me if I begin with a couple cranky paragraphs. You see, I do think that blogs and LiveJournals are part of a community. The whole LJ concept is based on community. LJ people link to and quote and natter back and forth between journals so fast I can't keep up. My own non-LJ blog is part of a smallish group who read each others *JournalScape* journals and comment to each other and often refer to each other in our entries.

I can also say that the vast majority of publications listed in Factsheet Five were no more commercially oriented than sf fanzines. Mini-comics for example, which were reviewed in FF) for example, were not aspiring to be professional comic books. I know. I did dozens and read hundreds. I also read quite a few "zines" many of which were exactly like fanzines but without the faanish content. I remember Randy Russell who talked about music, and what he was up to and bemoaned lousy jobs he'd had. And Sean Hill talked about his family and featured articles on diners. All stuff which would have been perfectly at home in a genzine, but this was a different group of people who all wrote letters to one another and traded zines and contributed to each other's zines and sometimes visited one another.

It's not that LiveJournal/blog and zines and mini-comics people don't form communities or even that the communities they form are not very similar in some ways to sf fandom. They just aren't sf fandom is all. So if you "advertise" sf fandom simply for having a sense of community you aren't offering potential fans anything they can't get elsewhere.

By the way, I'm on dial-up and can't deal with web media stuff at home but some time ago when I was visiting my brother who has DSL, I had a chance to watch one of your Wasted Hours and although I was sadly disappointed that you didn't appear to be wasted, it was otherwise very enjoyable. You have a nice delivery. I

think you came off second best in your "debate" with Janice, though. Might not seem so to read the transcript but her expressions pretty much carried the argument. Bill Mills did a great job on his musical number too. Man do I envy people with musical ability!

I am like Joyce in that I still, irrationally, dislike September. I always get a little frisson, as if maybe I'll have to return to school, after all these years. I've seldom gone camping. The last time I did I cleverly pitched my tent in a spot where I ended up sleeping -- or rather trying to sleep -- on a root. I recall the root digging into my back, hip, side, stomach -- no escape. I can't remember anything pleasurable about spending the night in the tent. I suspect I won't be camping again.

JoHn Hardin's fireworks caper was a terrific tale. Reminded me a bit of *The Red Badge of Courage*. I never had any run-ins with fireworks. About all you could buy in Pennsylvania, when I was a kid, were sparklers and snakes -- the latter being pellets that you put on the ground and lit which then puffed up into long trails of ash resembling snakes. Those snakes moved slow. It would've been pretty hard to suffer an accident with one.

Like Ross Chamberlain my nearest brush with fireworks disaster was someone else's injured hand. My childhood doctor was missing three fingers thanks to a firecracker.

Jolie LaChance is not kidding when she writes about heat stroke and how it hits without warning. Years ago when I was still in shape to run I was racing around at a local orienteering meet and got ambushed by it.

It was a warm day but I was feeling really good and so I was doing more running than usual, meaning I was getting lost and failing to find the control locations that much faster. And all of a sudden my legs pretty much stopped working. Luckily it wasn't a very wild park and I was near a road. I staggered very slowly out to the road, sat down and waited until another competitor came along and rescued me by going back to the finish and sending someone in a car to pick me up.

The finish was only about 3/4 of a mile but there was no way I could have walked another step. Once back, I lay down on the grass and drank until I could stand up, which is pretty weird since usually you drink until you fall down.

I have no experience remotely similar to Roxanne Mills' Ripley's worthy tale of Vegas frostbite. But I must comment on the caption to her photo that she is one of the sweetest natured Vegrants but all is relative...relative to that weasel --uh farret -- she's holding? (Sorry...Laney made me say it...)

Now that's a fascinating way to do an editorial but

I'd better stop commenting on every single piece or I'll run out of energy to say anything about the articles!

The article about Archie was fascinating. I have to admit I never read those comics. During the fifties and early sixties I stuck mostly to Batman and Superman with a few other superheroes like the Flash occasionally thrown in. Then I kind of drifted away from comics until Spiderman came along and, for a couple years, I was reading mostly Marvels. I was such a loner/weirdo/outcast that that the whole dating/socializing thing was beyond my comprehension. Gotham City and Krypton and the Fortress of Solitude made more sense to me than high school, even as depicted in Archie. I didn't realize the villain was named Reggie Mantle...in the 1940s! Any other prognostications about the future New York Yankees buried in there? If there were Strat-o-Matic comics I probably would've read them.

I enjoyed Teresa Cochran's account of summer camping, probably more than I would have enjoyed the actual experience. Oh, I have camped out a few times. Enough to know that despite what Teresa says when you're in the woods you're never a quarter mile from the bathroom. Well, she and her friends seem to have figured that out too.

Brenda Dupont conjurs up an evocative picture. There's something strange and wonderful about those hot summer nights. Alas I have never had access to a hot summer night beach but it sounds neat. Heck, I'm practically to the age where I'd need a sweater.

Nice survey of summer varieties by Bryan Follins. He focuses on the most important aspects - heat, humidity and insects. The only good thing about winter in the northeast is the lack of insects. Our summers aren't bad. We do have heat, but only into the nineties a few times a year (except around three years ago it hit 90 degrees on thirty days) and there is humidity, though I'm guessing it isn't as mucky as the deep south, and our insects are smaller. I think I'd also like San Francisco summers best but as Bryan says, it is an expensive place. Is the weather suitable for living under a bridge? Does it rain too much to inhabit a cardboard box?

I'm with Joyce. I see no reason to continue the fan Hugos. Or perhaps, no reason for fanzine fans (or whatever you call them) to pay any attention. Clearly the fan Hugos don't have much to do with the smaller segment of fandom to which most folks reading this zine feel an affinity. They probably reflect something of the tastes of the larger fandom represented by Worldcon attendees. And while it is kind of silly that Scalzi got a fan writer Hugo does anybody truly believe that in more than twenty years no one except Dave Langford de-

served that award? No, Joyce is right; the fan Hugos no longer make any sense.

Teresa: I'd forgotten about roots digging into me while sleeping at a campsite. That was definitely an annoyance, though a minor one. You commented on other zine communities. I once volunteered to distribute art zines around San Francisco and Berkeley, and it was like Christmas every time we opened someone's box of art zines. There were collages and cassettes, poems and cartoons; just about any medium you could send through the mail. It was and is a definite close-knit community. But I like the fannish community a lot, too. It's hard for me to compare them, because they each have something different to offer. I like being a part of each of them, and I do thrive on subcultural participation--poetry, folk music, and core fandom.

Robert Lichtman comments (sagely)...

It's been three months since I downloaded, printed and read *Idle Minds* No. 1, during which time it's consistently slipped to the bottom of my pile of fanzines to be LoC'd. Now that a new year has dawned, I don't want to simply file it away and move on. It was a good first issue and deserves some egoboo.

I liked Arnie's history of the Vegrants group fanzines over the years. Of the lot, *Wild Heirs* was not only the longest-lived but the most successful. This is not to say that *Crazy From The Heat*, *Implications* and *The Glitter City Gazette* didn't have their high points—just as this first *Idle Minds* does—but it stands out for sustained effort.

Joyce writes of her childhood, "We were a camping family." That's the exact opposite of my parents, who not only didn't camp themselves but thankfully never sent me or my brother off to a summer camp. My limited camping experience has convinced me that modern man is not meant to sleep on rough rocky ground, even if somewhat mitigated by air or foam pads. I own an oversized sleeping bag that has accommodated my long frame over the years, but I've used it almost entirely at various people's houses. And I own a one-man tent that I bought in the '80s for something like \$10 when a sporting good store in Sonoma held a going-out-of-business sale. I've never set it up myself, but all of my four sons have happily borrowed it from time to time.

Arnie's article on the Archie comics family was instructive. I had no idea that, "At first, Archie was just a skinny, redheaded teenager in a crowd of super-powered crime-busters and Nazi fighters." By the time I discovered the Archie crowd, they had long since moved beyond their appearances in *Pep* to their own books. They were a sort of guilty pleasure in my pre-teen years, during which time I remember my prepu-

bescent self being seriously undecided who was sexier: Betty or Veronica. Their obvious sexuality was all rather academic, anyway, since as Arnie notes, "As a sixth-grader, I wasn't getting very far beyond that limit, either," meaning beyond "first base" with girls.

Returning to camping, Teresa's article depicts a world I never knew, nor wanted to know. I appreciated her vivid descriptions of a camping trip. "I woke up shivering harder than I would have thought possible" evoked a definite memory of why I don't like camping.

Like Brenda Dupont, I grew up living on the coastal shelf of the Los Angeles basin—in my case in the far reaches of the city of Los Angeles, near Culver City, beyond which were the beach communities of Venice and Marina del Rey, all very similar to her childhood in Torrance. Comparing Torrance and Vegas she writes, "I was sure that anything over 90 would cause me to melt completely. Now 90 feels like a cool night." The difference, of course, is that as she didn't mention but would probably recall it's much more humid in Torrance than it ever is in Las Vegas. And that makes all the difference between "melt completely" and "cool night."

And here's Bryan Follins writing about the weather, too, but comparing Las Vegas being "right next door" to the Mojave Desert to coastal Louisiana's relentless humidity. He's spot on with his observation that the best summer weather is here in the San Francisco Bay Area. But then he writes, "I would be willing to bet that air conditioning salespeople do not do too well in San Francisco and the Mid-Peninsula." In general that's probably true, but there are micro-climates galore in both places and I imagine that some residents *do* spring for air conditioning—whether a central system to cool the whole house or apartment, or a window unit to provide an oasis on those warmer days. Where we live in the Oakland hills is one of the warmer parts of the East Bay, and I'm grateful we have central air during the warmer months.

I definitely agree with Joyce concerning the "Worldcon Horrors" and the further bastardization of the Hugo for best fanwriting represented by John Scalzi's win. I agree with Ted White, who she quotes at length, that blogs are not the same as fanzines and that they're not cozily interactive in the way we in Core Fandom (or whatever you want to call it) prefer. But rather than go all out here in discussing the subject (something I did at length when it roiled the fannish lists after the Denver worldcon), let me simply agree with the sentiments in the penultimate paragraph of Joyce's article and let it go at that.

In closing, let me note my enjoyment of all the photos in this maiden issue.

Teresa: I'd love to go camping again, and maybe I'd better do it before I decide my body can't take it anymore. My nieces are in their early thirties and love to camp, so I may get a chance to go with them.

When I lived in Berkeley, I noticed maybe three restaurants that had air conditioning. Everyone and their siblings would flock to those when we had a heat wave. It truly was unbearable when the temperature got over 80 degrees, because of the humidity and lack of air conditioning. But if I just went over the hills to the East, there was a completely different microclimate in Concord and its surroundings, and most people there had air conditioning units. I do like the warm summer nights in Vegas, though. I am happy not to have the fog and breeze come in like clockwork at around five PM

every summer day. I do remember going to a fourth-of-July fireworks display at the Berkeley Marina and having to wear my parka because of the 50-degree wind-chill. Brrrrr!

We Also Heard From: Ross Chamberlain (who critiqued his own art), Bill Wright (who was catching a plane for Camberra), Dick Lupoff (who was busily packing, but promised to LoC #2). Tommy Ferguson (who spoke expansively about the Fullness of Time and a possible letter of comment),

Send us your LoC: crossfire#@cox.net.

Bill Mills (*left*) celebrates Halloween with Arnie Katz,

