

VEGAS FANDOM WEEKLY

Vegas Fan Events This Week

**Dinner with SNAFFU
Friday (2/24) 7:00 PM**

*Check out the Calendar
and preview stories*

Vegrants Combine on Second Oneshot!

Although the 2/18 Vegrants meeting was one of the liveliest and fastest-paced in memory, the Vegrants also managed to produce a new oneshot. It'll go out this weekend through the same distribution network *VFW* uses, so everyone reading this will either receive a copy or know where to find it.

Knowing that some fans write best when they are Under the Gun, let me offer one last opportunity to write a piece (500-word minimum required at this stage...) about the theme of love, sex, romance and suchlike. If you've got something written or illustrative, send it to me (crossfire4 @cox.net) by midnight, Saturday and it'll be included.

Ayesha Ashley Performs at E-String!

For the second time within the last month, Ayesha Ashley took her folks and blues stylings to the little stage of the E-String, a fairly new music venue in Henderson. She did a set on Sunday (2/19)

James Taylor, Teresa Cochran and Merric & Lubov Anderson, who were in the audience, all had good things to say about both the E-String and Ayesha's singing and guitar accompaniment. There were several other acts that ranged in quality, but the overall effect was good.

The E-String serves food. The verdict: not too bad or too expensive.

Ayesha will play again on Sunday, March 5 from 6:00 PM to 6:45 PM. A group of fans is planning to be there. It is slated to include Joyce and me; hope it includes you, too.

SNAPS #10 Coming This Weekend!

"The new distribution will be out this weekend," promises Joyce Katz, official editor of SNAPS, Las Vegas' own local monthly electronic apa. She may have mentioned something about a

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Inside Story Material Boy

For anyone who might've wondered, while reading last issue's letter column, Earl Kemp, Victor Gonzalez and (by inference) David Burton aren't the only ones who want contributions for their fanzines.

No sirree.

I faunch as hard, and welcome contributions every bit as enthusiastically, as my three esteemed fan friends. I maintain the degree of decorum appropriate to a fanzine editor — more than a burglar, less than a carnival cooch dancer — but my appetite for fresh content rivals theirs.

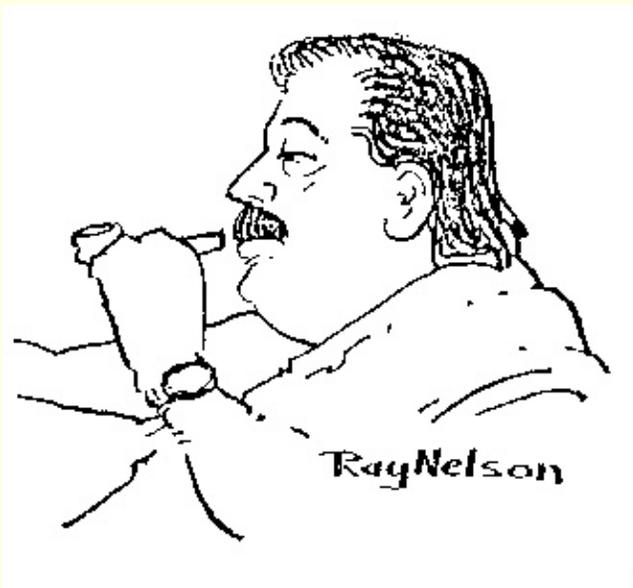
Yet I have never crouched outside the window of someone's fan den to photograph a just-written piece on the computer screen. I have never hired a loud-speaker truck to circle the block of a prospective contributor until they relent and provide the requested material. It is not I who have seduced the wives and lovers of leading fanwriters so that they would coo requests on my behalf for material during pillow talk. And most definitely, I have not employed a medium to contact deceased fans to take my search for fanzine content Beyond the Pale.

Now, it's true that Earl, Victor and David haven't done these things, either, but I base my moral superiority over them on the fact that, though I thought of these methods, I have not yet employed them. I think I deserve a reward for this kind of fortitude in resisting temptation. Hey, how about you celebrating my achievement by sending along an article or letter of comment?

Hell, why stop at half-measures? Send *both* and tonight sleep the sleep of the innocent.

The truth of the matter is that Earl and Victor deserve credit for their rapid adaptation to the increased pace of Fandom I described in the last couple of issues. By the time I sniff the spoor of a potential contribution on one of the listservs, one of them has made a request and taken custody.

So, strike a blow for tradition (or anything else you like) and write something for *VFW*. — Arnie



Vegas Fandom Weekly #66, Volume 2 Number 13, February 25, 2005, is written and produced by Arnie Katz (909 Eugene Cernan St., Las Vegas, NV 89145; Email: crossfire4@cox.net; phone: 702-648-5677).

Special Thanks to Roxanne Gibbs (many things), Bill Burns (posting), David Gordon (Futurists liaison), Alan White (arty fella) and Joyce Katz (proofreading and So Much More).

Reporters this issue: Roxanne Gibbs, Michael Bernstein, Merric Anderson, Linda Bushyager, Rebecca Hardin and Joyce Katz

Art/Photo Credits: Steve Stiles/Bill Rotsler (1), Mark Plummer (3), Ray Nelson (2), Ross Chamberlain (12) all else by Bill Rotsler.

Columnists This Issue: Joyce Katz, Mark Plummer

VFW is free by request — and you may get it anyway. It can be downloaded at the SNAFFU site and at efanzines.com. No gallant faneds

were harmed during the production of this fanzine.

Can't Get Off the Island

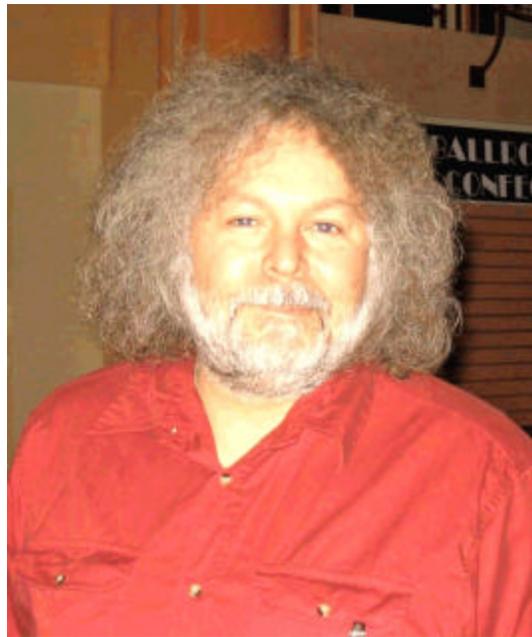
Katzenjammer

Can't Get Off the Island, A Greg Pickersgill Collection for Interaction the 2005 Worldcon, edited by Mark Plummer & Claire Brialey. Copies are available from the editors at 59 Shirley Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES. Cost (including postage) is \$11 (US), £4 (UK). Any profit will be donated to the Science Fiction Foundation per Greg's request.

I'm always glad to see an email from Mark Plummer in the in-box. I was doubly pleased by this one, when I discovered that it offered me something for free I would've otherwise needed to buy. Mark wrote that he would send me a copy — give me a copy — of *Can't Get Off the Island*, the 68-page anthology Mark and Claire published to honor Greg Pickersgill.

I read the letter several times and came to the conclusion that it was a good deal, a damn good deal. "I don't even have to like the anthology," I told myself. "Just write a review and I've earned my free copy."

Now I sit here wondering if I've made a wise decision. I'm terribly conscious of the weeks that have passed, weeks that flitted into history without even a justified rebuke from Mark Plummer. I sit here with the yellow cover of *Can't Get Off the Island* glaring



Greg Pickersgill, photographed by Pete Weston, is the author of *Can't Get Off the Island*.

at me accusingly and I suddenly wonder if I can do this.

Am I worthy? Do I have what it takes to discharge this obligation in a way that will please and satisfy my benefactors from beyond the sea?

Briefly, I considered blowing off the whole idea. "Review of the Pickersgill anthology?" I would say, eyes wide with mingled surprise and innocence.

"Heavens to Roscoe, I never *imagined* you'd expect me to compose such an essay.!"

Then I considered what, if any, recourse, Mark and Claire might have if I simply defaulted on this ill-

Continued on next page

Can't Get Off the Island

A
Greg
Pickersgill
Collection

for Interaction, the 2005 Worldcon

considered project. What could they really do to me, thousands of miles away from Glitter City as they are?

It might be within their power to blacken my name in British Fandom. They could go to Eastercon or some such gathered and, stopping one of three in the manner of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, tell the mournful tale of their generosity and my dereliction.

"I can handle that," I assured myself with what I knew in my heart was false bravado. I could not handle it, however much I wanted to convince myself of the opposite conclusion.

I had horrid visions of being enticed to Eastercon (or some such gathering) by a vainglorious stratagem like making me Fan Guest of Honor and then being forced to face my punishment at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning in some out-of-the-way consuite where not even the BSFA could hear my piteous pleas for mercy.

These lurid images of enraged British fans forced me to consult Joyce on another ramification of this dilemma that had suddenly caught me on its horns. "What if I write the review and fail to sufficiently evoke the brilliance of Greg Pickersgill?" I blubbered. "Those British fans will be mean to me."

She told me the truth, unwelcome though it was to



Greg & Catherine Pickersgill take a moment out at a con. (Photo by Peter Weston.)



Greg Pickersgill, Fran Dowd and Claire Brialey (co-editor of the anthology) talk about "The Future of Fandom" on a panel at the 2004 Eastercon.

hear that I must go through with this arrangement and give Mr. Plummer (and by indirection, Mr. Pickersgill) the promised review. Since there is no way out, I might as well counterfeit an air of gracious resignation.

That's sort of the way Greg might put it. He'd write it better, of course, because he's the real and actual Greg Pickersgill.

I hope he will forgive me easing into my rhapsodic reaction to *Can't Get Off the Island*. Writing a review of Greg's fanwriting, intelligently culled from such fine fanzines as *Fouler* and *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* and the Memoryhole and Wegenheim listservs, is a tough task for me.

You see, I have always felt that Greg and I are a lot alike, allowing for the fact that he fans in London and I live in Las Vegas. We've easily distinguished physically — I'm reasonably tall — but we're similar in a lot of other ways. The opinions and tastes expressed in these entertaining and perceptive essays overlap mine to a significant extent, reinforcing feelings of kinship. For instance, our music collections may well be largely interchangeable.

More relevantly, Greg and I share a lot of views about Fandom, fanzines and fanac. We could still work up some good debates, because we both enjoy such discussions, but Greg is someone who'd likely fit in very well at a Vegrants meeting

We are such a matched set that I almost feel funny about praising him. I mean, if we're so much alike, he could be praising *me* instead of the other way 'round. Only the excellence of his material in this anthology makes it possible for me to overcome my innate humility and praise Greg (and, by extension, fans like him (such as me)).

The essays in *Can't Get Off the Island* are divided into five sections: Autobiography, Reviews, Conventions, Editorial and A Way of Life. The strength of this structure is that it gives fans who may not know Greg and his fan career as well as they should some background to aid their appreciation of the ensuing four sections.

“Self-Explanatory” shows that Greg can bring depth and insight even to one of those “getting to know you” questionnaires that some folks want to substitute for learning about their friends and acquaintances through conversational interaction. He did such a great job, in fact, that I may lift the idea for a future installment of “Katzenjammer.”

“The Best Fanzines,” in the book’s second section, is equally revelatory about Greg’s feelings about fanzines. I’m biased in favor of this piece, though, since in it I discovered Greg’s high opinion of *Quip* and *Four Star Extra*

Not that Greg shrinks from negative comments when he feels they are appropriate. Like Laney of old, Pickersgill believes in the sanctity of truth and won’t sugar coat it even for a friend. His dissection of Rob Hansen’s British fanhistory *Then* (with which I don’t agree) is unflinching — the verdict of one accomplished fan historian on the work of another.

The section of con reports is slightly less interesting to me than the others, though reading them is not without rewards. “Nice Time Come Back Again,” a Novacon report, does an especially good job of evoking pre-con jitters and the slapstick preparations that accompany almost any journey that includes more than two fans.

Greg Pickersgill is one of the most skilled writers in Fandom. He is sometimes downbeat and affects a pessimism about himself that can jangle the nerves of an optimist like me at times, but reading this much of his output is anything but a trivial experience.

Like many polemicists in and out of Fandom, Greg is often at his most interesting and vibrant when he has a fat target in his sights. Here, by way of example, is a short excerpt from *Brand New Attitude*, which Greg produced for Frank’sApa in 1983:

“Wow, you know, this is really dramaatic, man! Here I am just about to do my first ever fanzine (on photocopy, anyway) and the whole, like, plasticity of the medium is just crying out to be exploited (or do I mean abused?).

No more that good old safe quarto; we’re onto new, modern, dynamic things here now. Just think, at any time the print could go in all kinds of different directions, be overlaid to the point of illegibility with

pic-



tures cut out of magazines, or just fade gently away into oblivion because I’ve run out of toner for the machine.

“Actually I’m far too old and farty for that sort of stuff. Give me straight lines of print that don’t take too much following and I’m OK. It’s trouble enough working out what people are on about under the best possible circumstances, never mind when there’s a sort of graphic guerrilla war going on at the same time. I do feel some slight compulsion towards the pictorial, though, and I even went so far as to search out the old sheets of Letraset I bought back in 1969 for my never-to-be-released super-fanzine *New Pembrokeshire Review*, which as Robert Hansen has kindly pointed out no longer needs any consideration as John Owen is doing it all OK with *Crystal Ship*. The trouble is that my creative visual imagination extends about as far as having small fantasies — and even they are about people I actually know-and whilst I think I know what makes for good art and graphic design I can’t actually do it myself.”

The design of the anthology is neat and utilitarian, a high-class take on the usual text-centered presentation of British fanzines. It’s neatly done, easy to read and well-produced. It’s also a terrific value for \$11 and belongs in that special “keeper collection” of fanzines that even non-collectors generally wedge onto a bookshelf otherwise earmarked for a run of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. —

— Arnie

You can find out what Greg is doing today by visiting his extensive web site (<http://www.gostak.demon.co.uk/>).

There’s lots of good reading on a variety of subjects, including fanzines and Fandom.

Blue Jazant

How I Found FANDOM

Part 1

I've been a science fiction fan since the summer of 1956. After a whirlwind courtship, I married a home town boy that July. We'd returned from the honeymoon and were sitting in his parents' home, when he asked (with a rather strange intensity) "Do you like Science Fiction?" Ray Fisher didn't appear to have antennae, horns, green skin, or any other peculiar distinguishing marks that might have alerted me to my approaching destiny. Therefore, it was with total lack of guile that I replied, "No, what's Science Fiction?"

His gasp of disbelief was almost audible. Then he took me by the hand and let me up the stairs to the Fisher attic, a dark and dusty, Missouri-hot room under the eaves. Past the discarded furniture, the old toys, outgrown clothes, he brought me into a tiny nest shielded from casual sight. An old beat-up sofa, a couple of lamps, and shelf after shelf of books showed me that this was his real inner sanctum.

Then he started passing me books, and I spent the afternoon reading fabulous short stories. I read "The

Roads Must Roll", and "Killdozer". I read "Adam with No Eve" and "Nightfall". Before the afternoon was over, I'd read a couple of chapters of "More Than Human", and the first section of "Childhood's End." And before the afternoon was over, I knew that this was very special stuff.

Later there were other lessons and discussions, about travel to other worlds, about other intelligent life, about time and space and science, and mankind's future in the universe.

And, before much time had passed, he told me about science fiction fandom, how the pulp magazine readers wrote letters to the editors about the stories they'd read, and then how one particular person, Forrest J. Ackerman, had written a letter directly to another reader, Jack Darrow, to discuss some more. Then Jack Williamson joined the Round Robin. Ray explained that the letter writers eventually started publishing little papers (like this one) that they sent to each other. And, eventually, one of the writers who was publishing a little paper decided it was a bit dry,

so started cracking jokes about it, about and with the other amateur publishers. Bob Tucker thus founded that branch of science fiction fandom that relished humor and entertainment above the serious and constructive discussions of science fiction themes.

That was my introduction to fandom. Later I'll tell you far more than you want to know about how I eventually found contacts with other fans, attended (and hosted) conventions and clubs, and published a great many fanzines not too dissimilar from this one.

Part 2

We Were Talking about how long I've been in fandom. Actually, it was a long hard hunt after Ray Fisher told me there was a fandom, until I found the way in. It's one of my biggest regrets that I wasn't quicker on the uptake.

I was a friend of Ray's sister Carol, and in the Fall of 1952, while visiting the Fisher home, Ray showed me his



Bob Bloch and Bob Tucker went to Niagara Falls together.

fanzine Odd. He explained a little bit about fandom, and invited me to submit something. I was intrigued; I'd heard of societies of the literati, and wanted to participate. But I was 14 and the introduction just didn't take. It wasn't until 1956, after we were married that July, that I actually started to learn about it.

After that day in the attic (see part 1) when he'd introduced me to science fiction as a genre of literature, he started telling me more about fandom. Four years earlier he had been hot and heavy into fanzine publishing, along with three or four other local fans involved in the hobby. Like Ray, they'd all drifted out of fandom when they graduated from high school. And, like Ray, they all spoke of fandom with an air of wistfulness. They'd obviously loved it, and had great memories, but they'd moved on.

Ray and his good friend Max Keasler showed me stacks of fanzines they'd collected while they were active, and I poured over them like the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was like opening a window, like finding the ruins of Pompey - I could see the people, hear echoes of their voices, almost reach out and touch them.

The fanzines were so varied, from cruddy carbon-paper copies (Ray described to me how the carbon paper fans would type 8 or 9 copies, and how they'd played a joke on one guy, sending in a flurry of requests, 'til they had him typing 24-7 to fill his orders) to beautifully letter-set hand-printed masterpieces. Most of them were filled with discussions of science fiction, science, and fairly serious material. Some of them (like a crappy little zine by some guy named Silverberg) had fiction, though it wasn't very good. Most published a little bit of poetry - that's what I wrote back then.

As I went through them, I noticed a repetition of names, how there'd be a letter in this one, or an article in that one, by the same person. I noticed that the fan who published Constructive Discussion in one zine, might have a funny article in another. And, I particularly hunted for the ones who wrote light and fluffy banter. I noted the fabulous *Quandry* by a charming girl named Lee Hoffman; and letters there from the humorous Bob Tucker and Bob Bloch. Then I discovered these same people sent letters and material to Max Keasler's zines, and found all kinds of references and stories by and about these funny people in other zines. I began to feel acquainted with them, even though they were coming to me out of the past.

I urged Ray to go back into fandom, and he always said, "Well, someday, maybe." I even got him to write to one or two people he'd known in the past, but the letters came back.

Later, I spent time in Los Angeles, and haunted the science fiction shelves of numerous bookstores



Walt Willis, Lee Hoffman and Max Keasler were among Joyce's earliest fannish influences.

along Hollywood Boulevard. One day, a store owner said, "I've got a bunch of other customers who are into that stuff; would you like to meet them?" I was ecstatic; I was eager. Turned out to be a group of would-be psychics, into past life readings and other metaphysical subjects. Once again, fandom eluded me.

Years later, after Ray and I moved to St Louis, we were browsing a bookstore down on Olive, and I noticed a dapper middle-aged guy intently studying the SF titles. "I'm going to ask if he knows how to find fandom," I said to Ray. So I walked up to Jim Hall, and I said, "This may sound silly to you, but I wonder: do you happen to know where to find Science Fiction Fandom?"

And Jim Hall said, "No, but my son does - he's a science fiction fan."

Stars tumbled, the sun went nova, the earth shook, and angels sang "Hosanna!" (There isn't actually any law against exaggeration, is there?)

That very evening the teenaged Dave Hall telephoned to invite us to his house the next Saturday. When we got there, he'd managed to round up a handful of other science fiction aficionados and a couple of other actual fanzine-publishing fans, and we formed the Ozark Science Fiction Association (OSFA) right on the spot.

— Joyce Katz

If You Enjoy *Joyce's memoirs*, you'll also enjoy her fanzine *Hard Science Stories*. You'll find it at efanzines.com.

Pipeline My Milestone

I bet you thought I'd forgotten about that article I've been promising you for *VFW*. Well, it occurred to me -- as I was on the bus yesterday evening heading for the Melton Mowbray -- that maybe I could make something of the fact that I had reached something of a personal milestone: last night was the twenty-first anniversary of the first time I went to a London 'First Thursday' meeting.

That February 1985 meeting was at The One Tun -- many people still call the meeting 'The Tun', despite the fact that we left the pub of that name in 1987 -- and in the intervening years we've been through half-a-dozen other venues before lighting on our present home, the Melton Mowbray, last November. We're now just around the corner from the site of The White Horse, the pub where these meetings were first held back in 1946.

And talking of ancient fan history, the first person I see when I arrive at 5:30 is The Eminent Peter Weston, down on a day-trip from Birmingham. There are, of course, many regulars at this meeting, but it's always good to see out-of-towners. In fact, Arnie, maybe you should give yourself a few hours off from producing *VFW* and pop along yourself. Next month perhaps?

Pete and I chat about the usual kind of fan stuff -- the new *Chunga*, how to recognise Niall Harrison (tallest man in science fiction, under 30s category) and whether Greg Pickersgill is still alive -- and after a while are joined by a chap called Richard. I've no idea how or indeed when I first met Richard, but he's a First Thursday regular who's usually an early arrival like me so we usually end up talking for a bit.

And Richard buys drinks for me and Peter so that means he's definitely OK.

At about 6:00 we go downstairs to the function room that's reserved for the meeting. Pat McMurray and Roger Robinson are already there, and are joined shortly afterwards by Paul Treadaway. Not sure if you'll know of these guys. Pat's a conrunner type mostly, and maintains an enormous collection of convention memorabilia; he also won GUFF (the Europe-Australasia fan fund) in 2004 and is the fund's current administrator. Roger is, amongst other things, a small press publisher; his Becon Publications has produced non-fiction books by people like John Clute and Gary K Wolfe, as well as bibliographic material and a few fannish publications such as a collection of Bob

Shaw's serious scientific talks. And Paul was the deputy chair of last year's Worldcon and has recently taken on the dangerous role of being responsible grown-up who is the closest thing we have to somebody who's actually organising these meetings. First Thursday meetings are not big on structure and organisation. You'd like them. Really, you should come along one month.

More people are coming in: first *Plokta* co-editor Alison Scott and husband Steven Cain, and then another *Plokta* co-editor, Mike Scott, accompanied by Flick who is Not Part Of The *Plokta* Cabal At All, Oh No. The Ploktettes gather around a table which I immediately expect to sprout all manner of high tech gizmos. No sign, though; *Plokta* tech is now so modern and miniaturised that it's become invisible. Alison's a senior civil servant in the department that, until recently, also employed 70s fan Leroy Kettle. Peter advises Alison to stick with the job and she'll probably get an OBE, like Leroy.

By 6:30 there are over 20 fans in the downstairs bar. Alison Freebairn -- the love of your life, Arnie -- has arrived. John Birchby too, saving Peter and Roger from having to work out which of them has the honour of being Oldest Fan in the Bar,

John's in his seventies, and is our one link back to the old White Horse days. He is also, incidentally, the only person ever to give me a tie-of-comment on one of our fanzines.

John joins Peter, Roger and me, and we're also soon joined by Colin from Toronto. I should perhaps stress that Colin hasn't actually come all the way from Toronto to join us for the evening, but by the same token I don't want to discourage you from jetting over from Las Vegas should the mood take you.

It's about this time that Paul Treadaway notices I'm making notes (in my quaintly old fashioned way -- with a pencil and a notebook). We also notice that Pete appears to have a notebook out too.

I should warn you, Arnie, I think Pete may be writing this meeting up for Victor Gonzalez's *trufen.net* website. I make a note that Peter is making notes. I wonder if he's doing the same about me. I wonder if this is all becoming excessively recursive. Onwards.

It's about 7:00 now and there are about 30 or 40 fans present. Tony Keen is here: London fandom's resident expert on ancient Rome as well as a regular

fanzine editor and contributor. And Erik Arthur, co-owner of The Fantasy Centre bookshop in north London. It's the best second-hand sf bookshop in the country and Erik's a nice guy too. See www.fantasycentre.demon.co.uk for details of the shop: if you're coming along next month, Arnie, you may want to visit the shop too. There's also an influx of young people, students I think from Imperial College. They're holding their annual one-day convention, Picon, in a couple of weeks and are distributing flyers which -- for reasons I'm not too clear on -- are designed like dollar bills.

Claire arrives at about 7:30, having been in another pub for a work-related social do, and is immediately taken to one side by Peter for serious discussion so I check out who else has arrived. Alan Sullivan is here, handing out copies of his single-sheet fanzine -- currently titled *The Chronicles of Ridicule* -- just as he's been doing every month since... well, god knows. I first met Alan at my first convention, twenty years ago this month. In fact, technically I met him a bit before that as we both lived in the same building; it was just that neither of us knew the other was a fan. There's Noel Collyer too, who I may have met at my first 'First Thursday' meeting twenty-one years ago. Nowadays, Noel's a stalwart working on British Eastercons, as well as being a major content provider for our fanzines by simply being himself. Alison Scott once complained that she felt seriously short-changed after, at a convention, she spent fifteen minutes talking to Noel and he didn't do anything anecdote-worthy.

And now Jim de Liscard and Meike breeze past, Jim dispensing copies of -- good lord -- his fanzine *Gerald*, making its first appearance in several years and confidently promising another issue in 2013. Actually, I could probably check the date of the previous issue of *Gerald* as I have a complete file of them in my bag at the moment. James Bacon wants to borrow them for some obscure reason; he's lent his file to Geneva Melzack who's currently in Australia. I'm not sure what James wants to do with them, but I take consolation in the fact that at least this is one of James's schemes which doesn't involve surplus Warsaw Pact weaponry. Probably.

8:15 and I make another note which I can't now read. I think it might say 'writing getting blurry'. Oh, and the squiggle next to it says 'Rob H': Rob Hansen, VFW contributor, TAFF winner (1984), fanhistorian and -- in a link back to Jim de Liscard -- possessor of a shocking bad hat. Jim's rather taken with the expression 'What a shocking bad hat!' which apparently enjoyed a certain vogue in London in the seventeenth century. I recently gave Jim a copy of Charles Mackey's classic

1841 book *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, which I suspect I may come to regret as it has given him ideas. Actually, to be fair to Rob, it's not that his hat is bad but rather that it suggests that his head is a very odd shape.

More people. Shall I try to count them? No. But I shall note that Avedon Carol has arrived too, another TAFF winner and an American in London. See, see, it's perfectly OK for Americans to come along to First Thursday meetings. Granted, Avedon does live over here -- and has done so for about twenty years -- but this just shows that we are welcoming to American fans, oh yes. Next month, Arnie?

And then it's 9:15 and a small tornado blows through the bar. The small tornado -- James Bacon as he's otherwise known -- flits from table to table, making deals, sorting things out: TAFF, Eastercon, god knows what. Where does he get his energy, we all think, feeling slightly drained just watching him. I hand over our file of *Gerald's* and James rubs his hands in a slightly disturbing fashion before going off to talk to Arthur (½r) Cruttenden, one of the candidates in this year's TAFF race, about some upcoming TAFF promotions. A quick bit of mental arithmetic -- really quite impressive given how long I've been here -- tells me that we have four previous TAFF winners in the bar at the moment, and six previous Eastercon fan guests (arguably eight, as Peter and Avedon have both been invited twice). Only two past presidents of FWA, though: if you'd been here, Arnie, it would have been three...

People, people. I speak briefly with Erik and Peter about old magazines; with Tony Keen about this year's Eastercon; with Jim about whether *Gerald* is available for the fannish usual (Jim's unspoken response conveys a broad sense of no, I feel); with James who is having seventeen different conversations at once; and somewhere along the line I actually got a chance to say hello to Claire before we headed off for a Croydon-bound train at about 10:00.

So, next month perhaps, Arnie? You'll be there, right? When I arrive, shall I get a drink in for you...?

— Mark Plummer

If you enjoyed Mark's article, sending for the genzine he co-edits with [Claire Brialey](#), *Banana Wings*, is highly recommended.

At this point, Britain's best fanzine is only available in hard copy, so write to Mark (59 Shirley Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES. UK), I'm not sure of the price, but you can't go wroprng by sending him Nine Billion Dollars — or maybe three bucks and a nice note

VSFA Views Sunday Social

The VSFA Sunday Social took place as usual on the third Sunday of the month, which fell on February 19th this month. Eight of us gathered at the Blue Ox Tavern for good food, good company and good conversation.

Linda and Ron Bushyager were the first to arrive and they went ahead and set up the tables so when everyone else got there, all we had to do was sit down and decide what we wanted to eat. Conversation ranged from *Wars* to classic Science Fiction novels.

Linda had some opposition when she criticized the *Star Wars* movies and George Lucas' talents. Those of us who refer to the creator of that series as Master George (that would be me) took exception to her disparaging remarks and quickly disagreed with her assessment. It was a friendly *Star* debate that led to discussions of other media genre.

Linda and I also compared notes on several Las Vegas shows that we both had seen and lamented the fact that you can't go to a concert without standing the whole time because the people in front of you are standing (inconsiderate bastards).

James and Mindy had a prior engagement and had to leave, but the rest of us stayed until well after 4:00. February's social was suppose to mark the start of quarterly topics, but we were having such a good time with our socializing that we never got around to the subject of "Sex, Love and Romance in Science Fiction and Fantasy." Maybe next time..... or not.

Attending: Ace (a newcomer-didn't get his last name), Linda Bushyager, Ron Bushyager, Bettye Hardin, Rebecca Hardin, Mindy Hutchings, Carol Kern and James Willey.

-- Rebecca Hardin

Continued from p 2

lazy husband whose bad back has slowed down things, but I didn't make a note of it.

It shapes up as a fairly sizable distribution, headlined by the largest issue of *Hard Science Stories* to date from the OE herself.

SNAFFU Comrades Anticipate This Friday's Dinner Meeting!

Linda Bushyager reports that the second Dinner with SNAFFU looks like the second straight success for this new meeting series, which replaced the "fourth Friday" discussions meetings. In fact, RSVPs indicate that this will be one of this month's best-attended Las Vegas fan gatherings.

Feb. 24, 2006 -- Artem (Russian) (formerly called Eliseevsky -- Chef is Artem Eliseevsky) 4825 W. Flamingo (Flamingo & Decatur) Phone: 247-8766

Recommended by: Lubov and Merric Anderson

They have a non-smoking section, but could be somewhat smoky even in non-smoking section.

Cost \$\$-- Moderate to Moderately Expensive
No private area

18% tip for large parties

Free sample of vodka

Comments: The Andersons report the food was great as was the experience.

Menu:<http://www.usmenuguide.com/eliseevskymenu.htm>

Website:<http://russianrest.russianvegas.org/home.asp>

Heard Around Fandom...

Bob Tucker has become vice president of First Fandom. If he can show this bunch how to do a club fanzine, he may rate as the organization's savior...

Garth Spencer has posted a new issue of *Swiss Navy Gazette #14* at efanzines.com...

Heard Around Vegas Fandom...

Ayesha Ashley has experienced terrible Internet problems in the last week or so. A Cox Cable outage apparent sent mail bouncing back to senders, some with notices about a complaint from the intended recipient. Ayesha asks for patience and understanding while she tries to unravel the snarl.

Sandra Bean, who has been pretty much silent since New Years, surfaced this week with a

listserv post that heralded her return. Prior to the hiatus, she'd seemed like a good candidate to become a fan, so maybe she'll be able to explore a little deeper this time...

Chatback: The VFW Letter Column

Things are a little quiet on the news front this week, but I'm pleased to say that the letter column is as lively as ever. Let's get to it without delay, shall we?

Fandom's newest Publishing Giant isn't too busy to write a terrific LoC, so let's lead off with it...

Chris Garcia

I won! I won! I'm loved by a good group of people in the city of Dreams and Lamé! Alongside Bruce the Great and Mr. Lichtman, I feel like I'm in a good company of guys!

My vote for Outstanding Vegas Fan would have been for Joyce, because ever though she was going through medical hell, she still managed to keep a high level of fanac. Amazing gumption shown there! Good on you Joyce.

Much like ShelVy, I have a weird way of writing. I almost always have a DVD on my TV which I turn to-

wards the computer and never really look at unless I hear something awesome (or Katherine Heigl's Anatomy is on screen). I usually have a bottle of water balanced on a book by my left hand. There's a printer that's unusable because I've stacked my reference papers on top of it in case I need them (which I never do). In the end, my writing, which is almost exactly written as I would speak it (with extra parentheses... parenthesisae?... — half-circles).

No Puffins. I'm down.

I must play that penny Star Wars slot. Sadly, if I were to walk into any casino with Evelyn and she were to see that, she'd run right to it and ask to play. I'd have to explain why she can't gamble until she's 21 (or in college and needs to work like I did to make rent/food money in private games) and she'd get mad. She's Star Wars crazy, even more so than I was at her age. Hell, she's wearing a Yoda shirt right now.

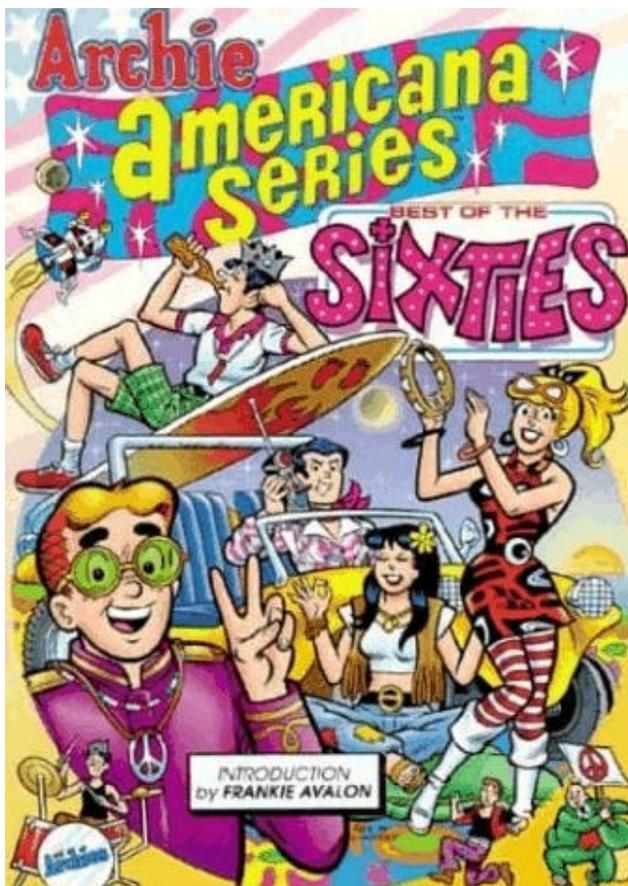
I'm watching Cinema Insomnia's version of Prince of Space. It's awful, but the host, Mr. Lobo, is absolutely hilarious.

Churchill wrote a single SF, or actually Alternate History story about a group of historians debating what would have happened if the Union had won The Civil War. I've never managed to find an original printing, but I've read it. It's really good stuff. He could have been Harry Turtledove before Harry was even born. Someone should do a comedy zine that Churchill would have written had he been a fan during the Blitz putting out a fanzine. That would be funny.

On all the LoC comments pertaining to e-pubbing, first I must remind you Arnie that we are, in fact, weird. The only reason I pub weekly is that I have all that time at work to create various zines. If I had a regular job, I doubt I'd be able to get one out a month. Well, I'd probably manage a couple of zines a month, but weekly would be rough.

Folks do make a good point that there are a limited number of fan writers. If you take away my cadre of friends, none of whom could properly be called Fans, you have an occasional article from Frank Wu, a few from BASFA folks when I do theme issues, and that's about it. I'm lucky that I have the M/Jay/SaBean/Judith/Mike thing going on or I'd have to put together all my material myself! I sometimes wonder how I could get more writers from Fandom. I've asked a lot of folks for articles, and they seldom come through, though folks were very kind when I sent out my call for Worldcon articles. Science Fiction/San Francisco has a larger group of writers, but often they need more prodding than my writers.

The fact is most folks just don't seem to have the time/energy to write as frequently as we do. We're just



BT: His Window Road Story

'Round or about fifty years ago I had the pleasure of driving Lee Hoffman home from Chicago to Georgia, and scattered along the way were highway signs reading "seeded shoulders" and "keep off the berm."

They captivated her, and later appeared as linos in her fanzines. Along Midwest highways "shoulders" and "berm" mean the same.

— Bob Tucker



weird. I'm hoping that we're going to be catching and others will come up to our frequency, but I don't think it's likely to happen soon.

You see, the issue is that for what I'd like to see, we'd need a New Generation of Fans. I'm certainly not the new generation, I'm doing nothing groundbreaking. If you're looking at new-ish fans, you've got a few like me, Geneva Melzack and Niall Harrison. We all knew how much I write, but I'm weird. Geneva does print zines (one GenZine, one PerZine) at the rate of about 2 a year and LoCs some and does LiveJournal a fair bit. Niall has articles in a lot of Brit zines (Banana Wings, Zoo Nation) and an active LiveJournal. They also edit Vector together. Though they are new, they aren't at the frequency that you'd expect for fans coming up in this age of eZines.

I think we'll see a New Generation who will look for a faster rate of FANAC. It won't be soon, it will take a large upswing in visibility of eFanzines or some other site where a lot of zines are posted within a larger swatch of fandom. eFanzines doesn't get hits like a site like EmCit.com does, but if it did, we'd see a lot more interest, a lot more writers, a lot more eZines coming at a greater frequency. The only thing keeping that from happening is that fandom has moved away from the written word in large numbers. The line representing the number of cons is almost exactly opposite of the line representing the number of fanzines. Yeah, there are newsgroups and listservs, but really, the main thrust of fandom is now the Con instead of the Fanzine.

There is a bi-monthly print APA that I'm a member of (The Everlasting Club) and I'm sure there's one print monthly print APA. I really think electronic APAs are a great thing, I'm in eAPA and I'd like to join another. I don't think they'll go away, nor do I think they should. There are people who will never get into reading a zine on screen instead of off paper. I don't think we'll ever be getting Milt Stevens to LoC us e-sters, as an example.

The strange thing is maybe I actually am a New-ish kind of fan. I don't believe in egoboo (and oh how I hate that word!). I make zines for the sake of making zines. If I got no LoCs, I'd still do it. To me, it's about the creation of the zines, the writing, the laying out and so on. I love getting LoCs, mostly as a way of communicating with good people like Peter Sullivan, Lloyd Penney and Eric Mayer, but it's not what keeps me doing it. That attitude fits well with eFanzinery, but few traditional fanzinistas fall into that category.

VFW gets a lot of LoCs, which most of the eZines don't get (And may have something to do with direct emailing of PDFs to folks). I think there are good reasons why most eZines don't get many LoCs: it's the difference between a magazine and a TV show. If *Newsweek* or your newspaper says something that you think is great/wrong, you write them. Have you ever written a television station after seeing a news segment? It's ingrained that if it's on a screen, we're only supposed to look at it and enjoy it, not interact.

Really, the best things about eZines is that they are cheap as free, in most cases, and they allow for greater frequency if you'd like to do that and with greater numbers of features. I don't think I'll ever go to all-print, though I'll always do a print zine every now and again. FAPA will be alive for its 100-year anniversary, I'll see to that, and I'm betting it'll be in print form. Who knows how many will fold over the coming years, probably a bunch, and maybe a couple will go electronic. The Cult concept would work brilliantly e-style.

Arnie: You didn't win! You didn't win! Now, you may well win when I tabulate and announce the results, but all I presented was my ballot in the poll. The actual results should be out in about a week in a special publication.

It's always good to see a Vegas fan in the letter column, particularly when its one of the New Generation...

Kent Hastings

I read Archie growing up (yeah, that worked) and was interested when I saw the Sixties collection in a comics shop several years ago, which I bought and have subsequently misplaced through several moves. As you can see on the cover from Amazon, there are some anti-war protest references in the form of peace symbols worn and on picket signs. There may have been a black character hinting at civil rights, or not.

So Riverdale was not firmly anchored in the fifties, but as you say, it was fairly tranquil instead of violently angry. What I remember most about the Archie sixties collection is the face and body painting on the girls.

Arnie: It was pretty damn brave of them to come out in favor of peace (especially without defining the conditions under which it might be contained). This was right in line with the Archie Comics courageous pro-apple pie manifesto.

The next writer, also a Las Vegas fan, isn't exactly a member of the New Generation, but he's always a welcome visitor to VFW and ChatBack...

Bill Kunkel

Had a couple of thoughts. One, they actually published a very famous issue of Archie where the "boys" get drafted to go fight in Vietnam. Of course, their ball sacs shriveled and at the end it was all announced as -- not quite a dream story, but kind of a cross between agit-prop and a cautionary tale. They basically said that IF those non-existent Riverdale kids were ever needed to crawl through VC tunnels with a flashlight and a .45, they... were... THERE!

Alas, they don't draft those slacker comic book characters though I'm sure a group of lunatics in the Pentagon are constructing drones and Virtual Soldiers as we speak. And Goldwater (owner of the Archie group and the man behind the conspiracy to put EC out of business) obviously felt that, having broached the subject, that was it and they could go back to the comfort and familiarity of their Riverdale fantasyland. Like Mayberry -- the only city in the Southeast without a black citizen.

But the central point in the Betty and Veronica sexiness debate was settled in the last panel of "Starchie" the brilliant (was it drawn by Will Elder?) MAD satire (when it was still a comic book). By the end of the story, Starchie is a total JD, sitting in jail for murder as I recall, staring at pictures of Betty and Veronica on his cell wall, battering his head into the photos having finally realized that they are both the exact same girl except one's a blond and one's brunette. But he just brushed Betty off to go gaga for her Elvira-

like doppelganger. "And she THREW herself at me!" he bemoans of Betty.

By the end of the story, the cross-hatching on the side of his head has actually gone grey, if I remember correctly.

I was a Veronica guy myself; if I want a blond, she can afford a wig like Kathleen Turner in *Crimes of Passion*, but you gotta go with the money.

You know the old joke? What's a smart man's "10"? A "7" with \$3 million.

Arnie: I'd probably stopped reading Archie by the time they did that draft story, but thanks for pointing it out for the record.

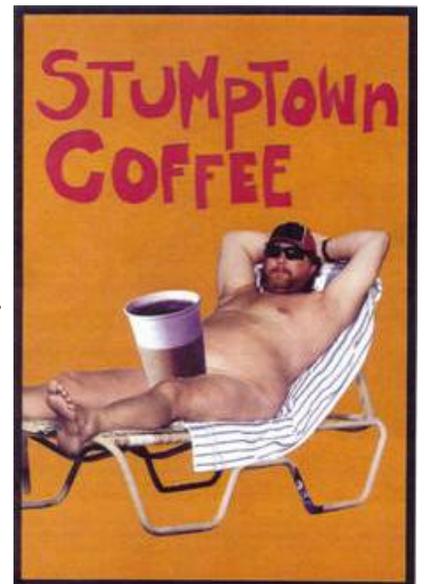
Back from extended computer trouble comes a fabulous fan from the Antipodes (as T O'Connor Sloane might put it)...

Bill Wright

On torquing your back in bed. Be comforted by the distinction it implies. (Australians call it

Shagger's Back). A propos of which, I have been infected by the current wave of gross images that offend the sensibilities of vast segments of humanity today. In reaction thereto, I repaired immediately to the Tapas bar next door presided over by a fully qualified barista called Trent. His prescription (a veritable cure-all based on the Pattern of Amber) was easy on the eye and even more pleasing to the palate.

My mood was abruptly shattered by a poster on the wall of the café advertising Stumptown coffee. The image is so over the top, so to speak, that my reaction was to ameliorate the shock by sharing it. I am sorry if it



offends the sensibilities of Las Vegas fans, but there is a Principle at stake. Publish and the damned.

Arnie: If I'd injured my back in the service of l'amour, I wouldn't brush it off so cavalierly. There'd be a whole article, probably two pages. Maybe even photos.

Is he looking to hitch a ride on the Letterpress Railway? Not exactly, but VFW's favorite new British fan has some reasonable observations on fanzines and other topics...

Peter Sullivan

Your comment that, "It looks like Joyce and I are starting a couple of somewhat ambitious professional projects. If they work out as planned, the overall impact on our fanac should be extremely positive" is obviously meant to be a bit of a teaser, but I'm sure more details will follow in the fullness of time

Interesting thoughts from Shelby about the writing process. I guess what he's really talking about is writer's block. The positive for a fannish writer, as opposed to a feelthy old pro, is that writer's block doesn't have any financial consequences. As Shelby says, you can just put it on the back burner and come back to it later. If you're being paid to write to a deadline, that's not an option. As per the stories of *Hitchhiker's Guide* author Douglas Adams being locked into hotel rooms

by his desperate agent and being told he would only be allowed out when he delivered a finished manuscript. This is the man, after all, who said "I love deadlines. I especially love the whooshing sound they make as they rush past."

I don't know about dreams, but I do seem to get quite a few writing ideas whilst either falling off to sleep or just waking up. I suppose it's the combination of relaxed but active mind that does it. Of course, I then have to make sure I remember the idea once I'm actually in a position to do anything about it. If I were a pro writer, then A. would just have to live with the light going on as I reached for the bedside notepad, but I don't feel it's really fair to inflict this on her for fan-nish stuff.

Kent Hastings' article simply convinced me that it's not even worth trying to understand modern slot machines. I'm afraid I never really got beyond the level of counting the number of cherries. Even "Hold" and "Nudge" is a bit too complicated for me.

Interesting, isn't it, to note the difference in reaction (both for yourself and Greater Vegas Fandom) to the Greyhound Books couple as opposed to the arrogant self-publisher who shall not be named. I guess that what it comes down to is that people who see themselves and present themselves as fans first will always find that people like to do business with their fan friends. (After all, isn't the very phrase "feelthy huckster" a mark of affection? It certainly seems to have been for the likes of Howard DeVore.) But do it the other way around and you come across like an Amway salesdroid.

Jack Calvert might like to note that most of the really cheap versions of Word available on eBay are usually illegal copies - I gather that eBay are much better than they used to be in closing down sales like this, but presumably even they can't catch them all. If he wants a word processor that's as functionally close to Word as you can get, he might like to look at *OpenOffice*. Which is available for a free download - if he doesn't have broadband, you can even get a free copy on CD. The menus and so on are not quite identical to Word's, but most people report very little trouble switching. And, from the point of view of an e-fanzine publisher, Open Office has one killer feature that Microsoft Word isn't due to get until the next edition - the ability to produce PDF output from within the application without having to use any separate PDF-generating software.

I don't see that having Chris as the only remaining member of FAPA come 2056 necessarily prevents him from doing mailing comments. Just like the idea of doing fake letters of comment in one's first issue,



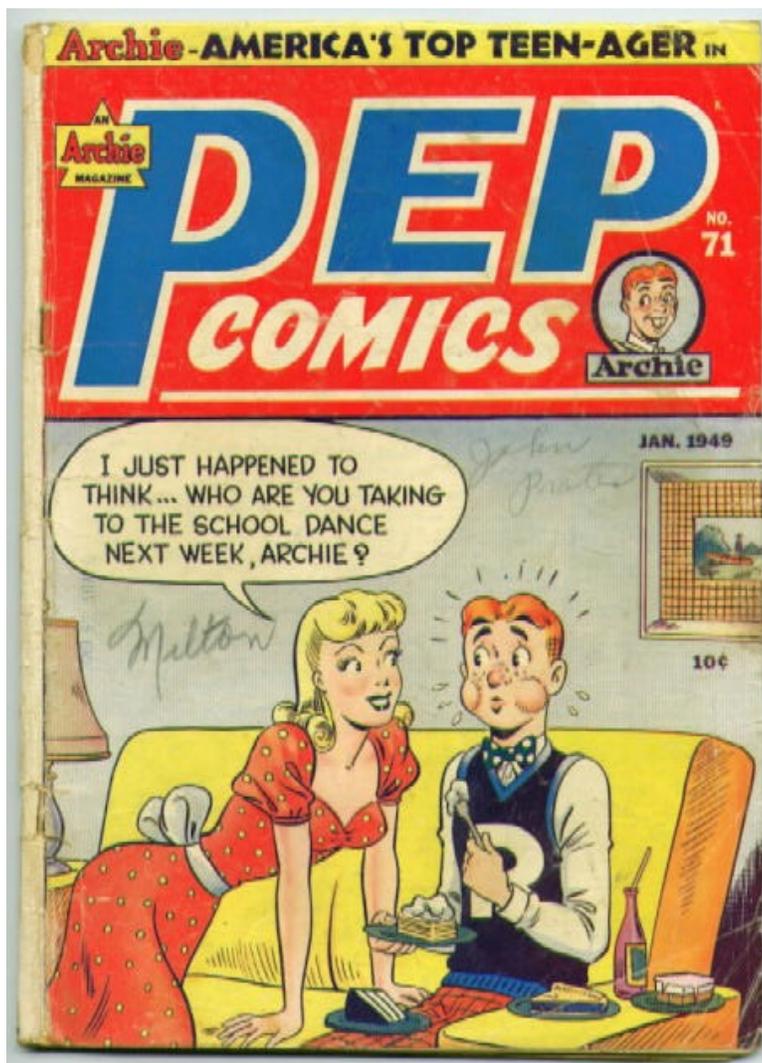
he can do mailing comments for fake FAPA zines. Either that, or the vast resources of the Chris Garcia Conspiracy can be diverted to create a few more hoax fans for "Chris" to interact with.

Can I echo your comments on *In A Prior Lifetime*? Especially on the memoriam for Lee Pelton. As you say, John's ability to write about Lee makes you feel sorry that you never knew him. I feel somewhat similar about the recent coverage of Howard DeVore's death too. Sadly, obitfandom is becoming an increasingly common form of fan-ish writing, but as long as it can all be done as well as John's, or the many memories of Howard I've seen, then at least it will be *good* obitfandom.

The distinction between collectors of artifacts as opposed to collectors of content is an interesting one. Really this has always existed in books, as per Robert Lichtman's remarks about wanting some authors in first edition, but others just in a complete collection. But I guess that technology has made this sort of artifact/content divide possible in other areas as well. I know that you've previously noted that fans of old radio comedies have evolved more into an artifact/content divide now that trading digital copies of old programmes is much easier.

Even within fanzine fandom, it's now possible to distinguish between faunching for, say, an original copy of Warhoon 28 (much eye-tracked, but with the original staples) and faunching for the ability to read the content on-line. I've actually been one of several people helping Dave Langford to get electronic versions online of Peter Robert's *Checkpoint* (the leading British newszine of the 1970's, and a predecessor to *Ansible* - see <http://checkpoint.ansible.co.uk> for our current progress.) In typing up various issues, I've never even seen an original - Dave sent me photocopies of the first one I did, until we worked out that it was easier at both ends to just e-mail me scans to re-key from. Does this make me a content collector? If so, why I have just e-mailed Robert to go on the circulation list for his latest fanzine auction? I guess that most people can be both a content collector and an artifact collector as the mood takes them.

I'm not sure that it's as simple as saying that the choice is between digital fanzines and no fanzines. I seem to remember reading that the last letterpress fanzine only stopped being distributed via FAPA this year? And letterpress has no advantages that I can think



of over more modern reproduction methods, such as mimeo (never mind photocopying). So the "old" formats prove to be much more tenacious than you might think. And although digital fanzines have considerable advantages over paper ones, there are still some things that paper fanzines are better at than digital ones, as per your comments about dragging the laptop into the bathroom. Yes, digital fanzines have democratized fanzine production - no longer do you need access to a mimeograph or copier, plus a reasonable chunk of disposable income for the postage. But our paper and postal tradition is part of what got fandom to where it is today, and it would be a shame for it to die out completely.

Arnie: Sometimes, writing for Fandom can be harder than producing a professional piece. The flip side of knowing the fan audience so intimately is that I am all too aware of their critical acumen. Sometimes, I can almost hear the comments of specific fans and this can be a little daunting. It doesn't stop me, or VFW would be "the sorta yearly fanzine, but it occasionally causes a flurry of rewriting.

No one has a surefire cure for writer's block, but the best advice I can give is to write more. Lack of sufficient writing experience holds back many writers. Prolific writers slide past obstacles that often derail authors who constantly encounter new situations and unfamiliar problems.

I'm not sure that the letter press analogy works, but it did cause me to have a New Thought. I'll celebrate this all-too-rare event next issue, in Katzenjammer. Meanwhile, let me say that I think the gulf between letter press and the copy shop is not as great as the one that separates print from digital publishing.

Letterpress waned as a fanzine production method, because fans preferred to put their effort into writing (or sleeping) rather grappling with the complexities of running a letter press or the cost of hiring a professional to do it.

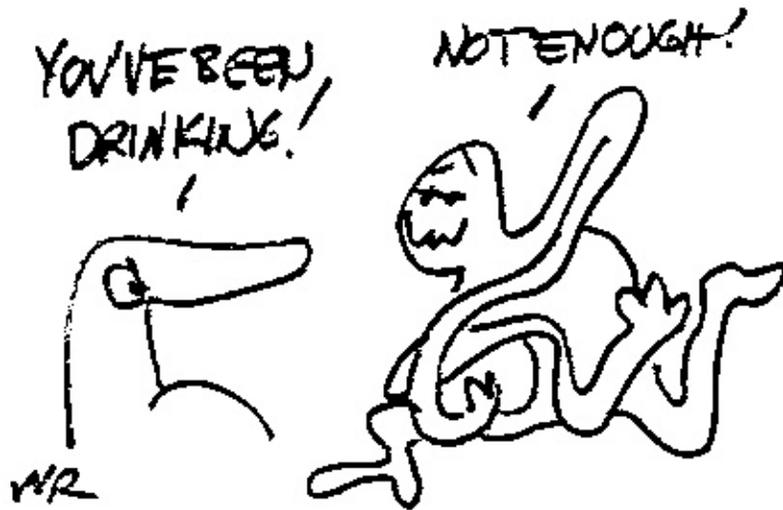
Digital fanzine publishing is not only easier and cheaper, but the mimeo and ditto alternatives have become harder to implement. Any of us could luck into a cheap letter press, learn how to use it and produce fanzines for the same (or less) money as those who use a copy shop. The financial conditions for hard copy fanzines are much less favorable and growing worse all the time.

An old friend puts aside the trivia of life to focus on one of life's truly awesome questions...

Hal Hughes

What hath Dick (Lupoff) wrought? I certainly would never have anticipated an ongoing VFW discussion of Betty and Veronica, much less to be participating in it! I enjoyed seeing the early art - by the time I came across Archie Comics as a kid, it was already much more stylized and similar to today's Archies. I can't say I was a big fan then - my early comic loves were Barks' Duck stories mixed with westerns and adventure stories and such - *Tomahawk!* *Lash Larue!* *Brothers of the Spear!* *Daredevil* and the *Little Wise Guys!* They haven't made 'em like that for many decades.

I was very surprised when my son (now 23) was given a big box of Archie Digests at age seven or eight, that on his own he preferred reading those to most other comics of the '80s. I think their appeal is to younger kids, a way for them to get a taste of what it



might be like to be a teenager. In that light, it doesn't really matter that Riverside is stuck in the '50s - it's all fantasy anyway. You say you doubt that teenagers would relate to Archie any more, but I wonder when they last did - it must have been pre-sixties at least.

I also think one of the keys to their ongoing success is that many of their readers, my son and I included, are really fans of Jughead, who's always been by far the most interesting character, and the only one who manages to be more than a stereotype. Sometime in the mid-eighties Archie Comics went through one of those periodic convulsions that strike comics publishers, and made an effort not just to bring things more up to date but, in their Jughead title, to introduce actual art. The short-lived result - less than a year - was pretty interesting and entertaining, if doomed. Clearly originality is not what sells Archie.

In Oakland, I work right upstairs from the amazing DeLauer's Newsstand. For those who don't know of it, it's by far the biggest periodical store I've ever seen, with thousands of titles - hundreds of auto mags, dozens of fishing mags, crossword and puzzle mags to the ceiling, and on and on. Not only that, it's open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and next year will celebrate its 100th year in business. I'd be most surprised if there's another store like it anywhere. There are plenty of things they don't carry - small press poetry mags, for instance - but they do have the largest selection of comics I've seen outside a specialty shop. There's a long freestanding display with superhero stuff on one side and "kid comics" on the other. That's where I can keep an eye on Archie and such.

One addendum to my comments on DeLauer's Newsstand - they do carry whatever SF mags are in current publication, and have a sizable selection of SF books as well, all books at a ten-percent discount.

The one element we've avoided so far is choosing

Betty or Veronica, which is about the first thing any Archie reader does. That's probably for the best, so I'll leave it untouched.

Arnie: Betty or Veronica, that is the question.

Whether it is noble to zero in on the pulchritudinous nice middle class Betty or play the treacherous game of pursuing the haughty, rich and possibly kinky Veronica. I've always had faith in my persuasive ability, so I think I would pick Betty, secure in the knowledge that prolonged exposure to me and my friends would wear away that "nicey-nice" attitude.

From deep in the heart of Texas comes this cogent commentary on a wide range of intriguing subjects...

John Purcell

I decided to take a break from my Behavioral Statistics assignment dealing with multivariate regression to write a loc. If my mind seems to be a bit disjointed, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it. For example, it just dawned on me that you and Joyce live on a street named after an astronaut. Being stfnal people, was this a deliberate choice when you were house-hunting, or merely a stroke of serendipity? Merely curious, that's all.

So if I read this correctly, you've been running a genzine entitled *Implications*? Hm. Cool deal. Sorry to hear you've got to back-burner the thing, but it could work out in the long run. I may have an old Arkie lying around to contribute to the cause. Lemme check and get back to you on that one.

Your poll results are interesting, especially since it appears that Vegas Fandom is enjoying an upsurge in interest, participation, and activities. It sounds like a great place to be a fan right now. Since I'm in the education field as a working professional, conferences are one of the things I am likely to be found at various times of the year. Vegas, as you are so keenly aware, is a prime convention/conference location. If by chance I have a conference in your environs, I'll let you know in advance. Chris Garcia dropped in, so did Art Widner and many others apparently. Hmm... must check this out some day.

I really like that one title: Outstanding Retread. James Taylor seems to be a perfect choice, too. Let's hear it for the Dauntless Degafiate. Which means he's a Double D. Interesting implications there. (You guys don't have a pun tax, do you?)

My writing habits are rather slipshod at best. Unlike ShelVy, I don't play games at first. Most of the time I do one of those brainstorming things I teach my students, such as free-writing (most common technique), clustering, outlining, idea-jots (one-line or sen-

tence fragments that contain snippets to be used), or some other deal that simply gets the gist of the matter down on paper. I will research what I need to know - sometimes not enough, I'm afraid - in order to write convincingly, but fan writing sometimes doesn't get the full research treatment. Thankfully, I am now a firm believer in the rewrite process, and that applies to fan writing, too, not just my academic work. Speaking of which, I am now a published professional in the education field. One article is in the current issue of the *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics* (as a co-writer and proof-reader), and the other is a chapter that I wrote for an e-book, *Restructuring the American High School*. So how cool is that, eh?

Hey, good contribution from Kent Hastings. Having never played such a game, besides being a total non-gambler in any way, shape, or form, I thought this was well-written and gave me a good feel for what it's like playing such a dealio. A most entertaining and enlightening read. So he's going to be a regular contributor? If so, a welcome addition to the staff.

Good bit about Winston Churchill, too. I have long been a history buff - my minor at Iowa State University was Russian Studies, which meant reading a lot of history, literature, and taking two years of the language - and this sort of thing really tickles my interest. Besides, Churchill's sense of humor would have made him a great fan writer. He really had a sharp, caustic wit. He is one of favorite 20th Century history figures.

Many thanks for the kind words about my zine. But please make the correction that it's called *In a Prior Lifetime*. And by the way, what is a "[re]semtation"? Aged fanwriting fingers slipping again, Arnie? Try some of that fingertip goo that makes it easier to count sheaves of paper. The problem is when the keys start getting sticky and need cleaning on a daily basis. On second thought, strike that idea. In any event, my personal feeling is that *laPL* is a much better zine than *This House*, *Ennui*, or *Bangweulu* ever were.

Now, on to the electronic zine discussion herein. Many, many cogent comments herein. My feeling is that "ensmalled zines" have always been around fanzine fandom as an option just to get one's name out there so that people can know that you are alive and well, plus contributing to the fannish dialogue. In my mind, that is the bottom line about fanzine fandom. Like you say, Arnie, fanzine fandom is a network; we are always corresponding back and forth, debating moot points, and generally having a great time in the process. To me it is all an on-going conversation that we've been having since the 1930's. We enjoy it. This is What We Are, and thus shall it be.

On the other hand, the frequency issue all falls

down to what a particular fan might want to do in this light. Take my own e-zine as a prime example. When I started *In a Prior Lifetime* in the summer of 2003, I had no idea how often I was going to do it; mostly it came out when I had the urge to slap it out. And it never really took that long to produce (another advantage of e-zines, listservs, webzines, and such). Since last October, however, I have pubbed four issues in five months, and the 9th ish is already under construction (as opposed to deconstruction). Like David Burton, it seems to have slipped into a monthly schedule quite innocently and unobtrusively, in the process not being a huge burden on time and finances. And I keep experimenting with the danged thing, too. Producing an electronic fanzine is a lot of fun, whether it's as a word document (like mine currently are) or a website. It is obvious that the bottom line all comes down to the individual; what do you want to do? How do you want to do it, and how often? For that matter, ask yourself the question "What do you want to get out of it?" Right now I'm having a blast with *IaPL*. And that is ultimately what is important. So there.

David Burton's comment that there aren't that many of us producing zines is kinda true, but I think there are some more coming along. I think what we can do here to make it look like a whole bunch of new fans are writing and pubbing is to slap different names on some of Chris Garcia's zines. That oughta do it.

Wow. What a great issue -- and I haven't even read all of it yet! Thank you, Arnie, and I will hopefully see you and your'n at some point in the near future.

Arnie: All the streets in this part of town are named after astronauts, including at least two I've actually met. For a time before he departed for Boston, Woody Bernardi lived on Cosmo Court.

We have no pun tax in Las Vegas, but being Vegas, we do have a sin tax.

Come visit.

Bring up the music, hit the floodlights, switch on the smoke machine... it's time for the Sage of Fandom to have his say...

Robert Lichtman

Sorry to read about your back injuries on the final page of the latest *VFW*, although Joyce had already told me about them and I wrote back to her expressing the view that possibly you're spending too much time hunched over the keyboard faithfully cranking out these weekly fanzines and should getup and smell the corflu now and then as a paean to Core Fandom's past.

When I'm feeling that way, my big decision is

whether to open the bottle of Terry Carr's Sure-Rite corflu, Harry Warner Jr.'s Speed-O-Print corflu, or a bottle of Gestetner corflu of unknown provenance. Each smells slightly different and each takes me back to 1963 and 1964, when I had my own bottle of corflu for use in preparing issues of *Frap*.

I'm also sorry to read the *Implications* has bitten the dust, although I look forward to the letters issue coming next month. Now that John Hardin is living in Kingman, Arizona, however, perhaps he can become a coeditor of Earl Kemp's *eI*.

It was interesting to read your choices in the 2006 Vegas Fan Awards polling, but even more I'll be looking forward to the final results of everyone's votes. Will those be quickly forthcoming? Thanks for the egoboo in your comments about choosing me for No. 3 Outstanding Las Vegas Fan. I hope someday to be able to satisfy the New Generation's desire to meet me, but unfortunately it isn't going to happen this year.

Shelby writes, "Robert Lichtman, I still love Word-Perfect, but I wish they'd stop trying to improve it!" I'll confess that I didn't know the programmers at Corel had *improved* the Thesaurus feature because I've never used it. I don't use the spell or grammar checkers, either, although I do have the former turned on to catch my typos. When I was in grammar school back in another time and place, there used to be "trial" and "final" spelling tests. If you got 100% on the trial test you didn't have to take the final test. I *never* took the final test!

Kent Hastings' "Star Wars Wealth-Building System" was an amazing read. I didn't even feel let down when John DeChancie applied what Kent had learned and failed. Clearly the machines are set with a brokenness counter that takes into consideration the player's desperate financial straits and adjusts its payouts accordingly. John simply wasn't broke enough.

Peter Sullivan is correct that it was you, Arnie, who somewhere referred to Dave Barry as "a good example of a professional writer who writes in a fannish style." Another would be Jon Carroll, who does a column for the *San Francisco CHRONICLE* (available at sfgate.com). I enjoyed Peter's take on Churchill as a fan, but the real news in his article is that *Factsheet Five* is making yet another comeback. I mainly remember it from the Mike Gunderloy days when Mike put a few issues of it through SAPS mailings when he was still a member. I followed it at newsstands on and off after that, but found its coverage of SF fanzines inadequate and wasn't interested in the interminable listings for other zines.

Once Mike wanted to feature *Trap Door* in an issue and I begged off, not wanting to deal with the possible



onslaught of people cadging for free issues or for trades.

Jack Calvert correctly observes that "there's no law against having two word processors" in considering my suggestion that he pick up a cheap copy of WordPerfect 12 via an eBay "buy it now" offering, as I did. Indeed there's not, Jack, and in fact I have a version of Word on my computer in addition to WordPerfect -- and I occasionally (actually, rarely) find it handy to have around. In his later letter Jack observes how he's let three FAPA deadlines pass without producing anything.

As the Secretary-Treasurer *and* concerned about the continuing loss of membership -- we're now down to 38 due to Howard Devore's death and Marty Cantor's resignation -- I'm pleased to read that he actually intends to produce a zine. And it's good to note that Chris Garcia, FAPA's latest new member, says in his letter that he's "around for the long run." (This might be a good place to note that if there's anyone reading *VFW* who can relate, perhaps as a refreshing change of pace, to participating in a *quarterly* *paper* apa, FAPA currently has 27 open membership slots. Minimum activity is only eight pages a year, and dues are currently \$12 a year [although they will have to go up in 2007 due to the postal rate increases]. Write to me at robertlichtman@yahoo.com if interested.)

I hope Teresa Cochran is enjoying the issues of *TRAP DOOR* I sent her, and remind her again that it's not too late to write a letter of comment on the last is-

sue with the possibility of it appearing in the issue I plan to get out sometime this spring.

Arnie, in your comments to Dick Lupoff you wrote, "While serving as Fan Guest of Honor at a Westercon in El Paso, it seemed appropriate for me to visit the large, open parties which I generally avoid." I did the same thing several evenings when I was FGoH at the 2002 Westercon in Los Angeles, and found myself in rooms full of people who I didn't recognize and who didn't recognize me.

No conversation ensued, and thereafter I stuck to hanging out in Milt Stevens's wonderful fanzine lounge with *My People*. That was about the time Milt had published his useful directories of fans who'd been members of FAPA during its first 65 years of existence, and we played a game of who could recognize and tell something about some of the obscure and/or forgotten fans who were on that list. I found myself scoring as well in that game as Sandra Bond did in the fan history quiz at the last Vegas Corflu, which was gratifying.

I see Dave Burton echoes me in wondering where all the material to fill frequently published electronic fanzines will come from. You note in your comments to me that there's "quite an influx of folks who've cut their writing teeth on blogs and listservs and I think that trend will intensify in the future." But much of Dave's *Catchpenny Gazette* is made up of reprints from old fanzines and from blogs.

Where's the new material? You have a pool of locals to help with contributions to *VFW*, and you've had columns and articles from mostly old-time fans over the year or so of *VFW*'s existence (but fewer of those now, only Shelby in this issue). And response is an issue, too, with electronic fanzines getting less of it. Dave notes that he's "averaging about a 10% 'return,'" and I would say that if that's all I was getting from an issue of *Trap Door*, I'd find something better to do with my time.

You write, "How many monthly hardcopy fanzines -- aside from *Ansible* and some Apa L titles, do you get? -- I don't get any." By the latter I assume you probably mean John Hertz's monthly bundles of *Vana-monde*, which I also receive (and I get the paper *Ansible*, too, considering Dave's A4 version the real Thing). But I also get a monthly *Opuntia* from Dale Speirs and a monthly *De Profundis* from the LASFS. If you expand out to paper bimonthly fanzines, I get *Alexiad* from Joseph Major and *The Knarley News* from Henry Welch.

You further write, "Leaving aside local apas, how many hard copy apas are monthly?" Marty Cantor is the Official Editor of LASFAPA, which is not strictly

speaking a local apa and appears monthly. But even more clear-cut would be two private apas, Lilapa and APAssembly -- I'm active in both of hem. The mailings aren't large, but they're resolutely monthly and have been for decades.

Mark Plummer's description of the Byzantine "pricing in proportion" rules being promulgated by the UK postal service leads me to wonder if all, or most, UK fanzines will convert to A5 size in order to avoid paying a premium for mailing. And I would assume that individual issues might be cast in a certain page count to correspond to the 100 gram weight limit and the 5 millimeter thickness limit. I do this with *Trap Door*, doing each issue in a size that goes for the 3-ounce rate -- no more, no less. Thus when *Trap Door* used to be half-legal size, it maxed out at 48 pages the issue, and now it's half-letter size it's 60 pages. It's too bad, as Mark notes, that the "pricing in proportion" isn't being applied to overseas mailings since the UK's overseas rates are just as bad as the US ones.

Ever since the casual "printed matter" rate was abolished in 2001, it's been necessary to send all overseas copies of *Trap Door* by airmail (a speed at which they used to travel, more often than not, back before 2001 even though paid for as printed matter). The rate for sending *Trap Door* from the US to the UK just went up from \$2.40 (under the old printed matter rate it had last been \$1.30) to \$2.55 -- and from the US to Australia from \$2.60 to \$2.75. And still I want to continue it as a paper fanzine.

Arnie: My back problems, though distracting, have

not yet kept me

from doing either pro-

fessional work or fanning. I'm not being able to do quite as much of either, but I anticipate a full recovery reasonably soon.

Ever have a bottle of green corflu? It's really primo, Meyer.

I can wholeheartedly recommend FAPA (and SAPS and SFPA) for those who have the money and don't mind the relatively slow progress of conversations.

You never know where the next good time is coming from and the extremely pleasant run through the all-time FAPA membership roster was certainly one of those. I recall writing about it in my con report at the time, since it was one of that Westercon's most pleasant memories.

*I'm sure we both see a difference in quality and influence between the frequent fanzines you named and the ones like *Spaceways*, *Spacewarp* and *Quandry* we call major monthly fanzines of the past. There are a lot of little electronic fanzines that are much like *De Profundis* and some of the others. Remember that e-fanzines is not the universe.*

Here with a quick comment is our Man in Southern Fandom...

Rich Dengrove

This is in response to Shelby Vick. I agree 100% about *Wordperfect*. It's not broke so they've set about breaking it. The best thing I had was that you saw everything as it would be printed. Now, with 12, you can't see labels that way, or footnotes.

Did Corel break *Paintshop*, too? I could place text on pictures years ago, but now the function doesn't work.

Arnie: Have you heard that they've detected the first virus designed to attack the Macintosh? Although I am an implacable foe of viruses and have great sympathy with victims, I confess that one small, unworthy part of me smirked when I heard the news. For years, PC users have had to listen to the mocking indifference of Mac Users when we bemoaned our battles with worms and Trojan horses. We're in the same boat now.

Time to welcome one of the fans who started the ChatBack phenomenon nearly a year ago...

Eric Mayer

I certainly owe you a LoC. So I'll ramble a little about some of the subjects recently under discussion in *VFW*. I have to say, though, to what Robert Lichtman and Dave Burton said about frequent zines needing content -- that goes for LoCs as well. Weekly zines are bound to average less LoCs per issue, I'd think, simply



because readers don't have time, energy, or inspiration to LoC once a week. Even if they have the time, energy and inspiration to read!

There was a time when Donn Brazier's monthly *Title* seemed incredibly frequent. Plenty of readers seemed to write to Donn every issue. In that case, frequency attracted response. (*Title*, with all its departments to which Donn allocated his mail was a bit like a discussion board) Where's the sweet spot?

Are there more fanzine fans (or whatever) or zines coming out now than thirty years ago? Is fandom that healthy? Well, I can't keep up, but I think some of it is an illusion. Remember both you and Chris Garcia put out more zines last year than every fan in the UK.

A couple days ago I glanced down the list of recent zines on Bill Burns' eFanzines. Of the editors whose ages I'm pretty sure about, 3 are over 70. Two or three between 60 and 70. Six or seven between 50 and 60. Only two are in their thirties, and only Chris Garcia is in his early thirties. I think a lot of the faanish *e-boom* is due to retirement, as I think you've remarked. And, of course, the fact that retired people, and various others who aren't rich, can afford to publish an ezine whereas, if they had to buy paper and postage and pay for printing they would flat out not be able to publish. What this might mean for Fandom thirty years down the road is hard to say unless we all live to be 100 and Chris continues on to issue 2,000 of *The Drink Tank*.

One thing I have to say, though. I don't much care for the term "Core Fandom." The term doesn't have a good sound to me. Not that I can claim any expertise at coining names for Fandom! And it seems to be gaining currency from what I can gather in my limited reading.

Also, you have to take into consideration that as soon as people start debating who's a fan and what the definition of fandom is and all that...well, I don't reach for my gun but I find myself fading away. It's simply my nature to recede from the center. My definition of myself excludes me from anybody else's definition of a club or core group. So it probably wouldn't matter what name anyone came up with. I still wouldn't like it.

I generally avoid discussions about how to define "Fandom." I think all of us naturally fall in with those whose attitudes and work we enjoy and invariably our definitions of truefandom just happen to include all our friends and exclude our... well... our "not" friends.

If I were forced to suggest a definition for Fandom, I would say it includes anybody who has something to do with fanzines and chooses to define themselves that way. My understanding is that Fandom came into being when fans who were writing to prozines decided to

communicate via their own fanzines and everything else followed. So if you publish a zine, or write or draw for one, or read them, you're a fan. It makes fandom easy to explain. It's about fanzines. It doesn't depend on a subjective evaluation of anyone's motives or abilities or personal connections.

You can see that this definition indeed includes everyone whose work I've enjoyed over the years, most of whom have fanned out on the fringes.

It also, however, is inclusive. No one reading it might feel that they don't "measure up" or don't have the right attitude. They might hate Rotsler cartoons and consider that every writer you or I might set forth as an example of brilliance is a boring old phart, but if they participate in the activity, in reading or producing fanzines, they are a full member of the club (not just a member, mind you...or a neo...or at some low rung on a perceived ladder...but an absolutely full, paid up member) and really, that benefits fans who've been around longer. It makes fandom a lot more interesting hobby.

I've been involved in quite a few different special interest groups and the friendliest ones were those which defined membership strictly by participation, without regard to subjective concerns like "merit."

If, for example, you go out and run 5K in a race, you're a runner, no matter how slow you are. It's not that runners don't recognize there are fast and slow runners, but the difference is not perceived as qualitative. You aren't less a "runner" because you're slow. The same is true of orienteers who welcome anyone willing to try to find their way around a course with a map.

We shouldn't ask would-be fans to share, as a prerequisite to them having a full membership, our personal tastes, to agree with us on what a *good* fanzine is and what *good* fanwriting is. I've generally never agreed with the rankings and ratings and aesthetics proposed by fans who are inclined to propose such things. When you come down to it, isn't it amazing how all of us -- myself included-- seem to hit it off on a personal basis with those who are also, by strange chance, the very best writers and artists?

Don't see much benefit to fandom in dwelling on such matters but I do see a big chance of driving away those who, like myself, simply don't agree with most of the artistic (or attitude related) value judgments that are made.

At any rate, this LoC probably covers several months' worth of VFWs and I have probably said much more than enough.

Arnie: I love it when contributors get on a run and send something for every issue, but I don't expect everyone to do it all the time. For instance, you have done plenty for VFW and, though I'm always delighted to get

your LoCs, I don't beam curses at you when you don't write for an issue or three.

My experience is that greater frequency prompts more letters – if fans are interested in the content. (Nothing can help a bad fanzine no matter how often it appears. In fact, greater the interval between issues, the less annoying a bad genzine is likely to be.)

I'd love to get more LoCs, but the response is already very good compared to digital fanzines of two years ago. I think it's likely that the trend will continue.

Let's not judge the impact of electronic publishing and the Internet on Fandom until the microcosm has felt it more fully. It will take a couple of years before we can tell in whether more publishers will step forward from among the folks coming to Core Fandom from other segments of All Known Fandom (and Mega Fandom).

He brings a Dire Warning, but he is enthusiastically welcomed to Chatback all the same.

Ted White

Well, here I am at work again with nothing to do. I've read the last four issues of *VFW* and wothell, why not write you that long-awaited LoC?

Well, I'll tell you why not. This LoC will probably cause the immediate death of *VFW*.

And why would I say that?

Let's review: In the mid-'90s I wrote a LoC to *Wild Heirs*. It was one of the best LoCs I've ever written. It

was all about Steve Stiles, who was then working in the warehouse of the same company I worked for, Logotel. I wrote it in my best Laneyesque tone.

It was a work of art.

Was it published? No. *Wild Heirs* folded instead.

More recently -- mere months ago -- I wrote you a LoC on *Implications* #2. It wasn't a masterpiece, but it *was* the first LoC I'd written to you since my ill-fated LoC to *Wild Heirs*. I'd finally gotten over the Crushing Pain of seeing that LoC disappear unpublished.

And here you are announcing that *Implications* has been folded. Oh, sure, the LoCs are planned for publication -- but so were the LoCs to *Wild Heirs*, as I recall. We'll see if this actually occurs this time around.

But here I am writing that long-requested LoC on *VFW*, so look out! Keep an eye peeled (or a grape, if eyes are in short supply) for a new Katztrophe on the horizon. I have no idea what it will be, but I fear for the worst. *Something* will halt the publication of *VFW* before this LoC is published!

I suggest keeping a close watch on all local members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In #63 John DeChancie mentions the TV show with two brothers named "Darryl" but can't recall which one it was. I'm surprised none of your LoC regulars have mentioned that it was the second *NEWHART* show -- the one set in Vermont.

In that same issue Dick Lupoff thinks Freas did the

Contact! Las Vegas Club Directory

Las Vegrants

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Las Vegas Fan Events Calendar

First Friday Video Group March 3 6:00

James Willey hosts this monthly get-together. They are currently doing *Farscape*. More info from Mindy Hutchings (204-4332).

Las Vegrants Meeting March 4 7:30 PM

The informal invitational Core Fandom club meets on the first and third Saturdays of every month.

Second Sunday Movie Screening March 12 6:00

James Willey hosts this monthly get-together. They watch genre movies. More info from Mindy Hutchings (204-4332).

Las Vegrants Meeting March 18 7:30 PM

The informal invitational Core Fandom club meets on the first and third Saturdays of every month.

Sunday Social March 19 2 PM

One of Vegas' most convivial groups gets together at the Blue Ox for food and chatter.

SNAPS Deadline Sunday, March 19

Las Vegas Fandom's own electronic amateur press association has its deadline for contributions to the February distribution. Send your file to Joyce Katz (Joyceworley1@cox.net).

SNAFFU Dinner March 24 7:00 PM

The SNAFFU Dinner Meeting will take place at Cool Cuba (2055 E. Tropicana (Burnham near Eastern). RSVP (this time only) to Joyce (joyceworley1@cox.net).

Planet Stories cover you ran with Shelby's column in #62. I think he's right. *Planet* did not credit that cover, and Freas' distinctive signature is not to be found, but I believe this was his third cover in a row for *Planet*. That was the November, 1953 issue.

While I'm on Lupoff, I'm amused to read that the 1957 Midwestcon was his first convention. It was my first Midwestcon, too, but not my first convention. What *I* found notable about that Midwestcon was the presence of three Seattle fans -- Gertrude Carr, and F.M. and Elinor Busby -- and Toronto's Derelicts, Boyd Raeburn, Ger Steward, and Ron Kidder. The latter arrived driving sports cars and one of my abiding memories of that convention was Gertrude Carr being taken for a ride in his sports car (top down) by Boyd.

But I remember meeting Dick at that convention. He was part of a group identified as "Indiana fans," along with Lee Anne Tremper. The men in that group all wore Bermuda shorts, to the amusement of the rest of us. Nonetheless, my introduction to Dick at that con would serve me well a couple of years later when we

both found ourselves living in New York City.

My mind was gently blown by seeing a letter from *Hal Hughes* in #64. It's great to see his name in a fanzine after all these years. I think the last time I saw Hal face to face was in 1979, when I was in San Francisco for Jerry Jacks' Westercon, and I visited Hal in the apartment he shared with a member of the Rova Saxophone Quartet. (My abiding memory of that visit is of having my first opportunity to play a soprano sax, thanks to Hal's roommate, who was as nice a guy as Hal -- no real surprise.)

And in #65, Robert Lichtman remarks on the days when he collected auto magazines. I was unaware of this, despite my years of friendship with Robert. I too was a big auto-mag fan in the '50s, and I too had a copy of *Motor Trend* #1 (circa 1950). Others of that era included *Speed Age*, but of interest to fandom was *Auto Age*, which was edited by Larry Shaw, and was a particular favorite of mine. Larry continued to edit car magazines throughout the '50s; A. J. Budrys frequently wrote for those magazines and every once in a while,

after I moved to NYC in 1959, I'd drive a test car out to Ajay's New Jersey house for Larry (I took a bus back). Ah, those were the days!

Well, Arnie, here it is: the message portending VFW's doom and destruction. Can you handle it? Can VFW?

I fear the worst. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Arnie: I've been suffering with a bad back for about a week. I thought it was better, but as I read your letter, Ted, excruciating pain stole over me, paralyzing my limbs in a spasm of pain...

Must finish final comment...

Must finish fanzine...

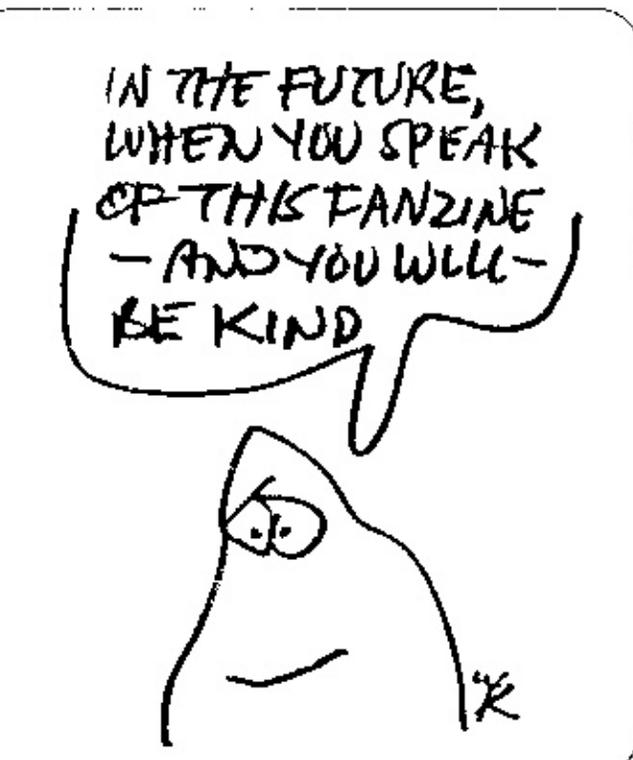
Must do WAHFs...

We Also Heard From: Dick Lupoff, John Purcell, Steve Stiles, Joelle Barnes.

Backache Blues

Ted's understandable fears aside, it appears that this issue of *Vegas Fandom Weekly* — and a pretty cool issue it is, too, or so I think — will actually go out despite the effect of receiving a letter of comment from Ted. (Now that I've demonstrated my ability to resist TEW-spawned calamity, I hope Ted will contribute again soon.)

My sore lower back still isn't fully healed, though, which somewhat limits the amount of time I'm willing to spend at the computer. And work gets first call on



the available hours.

Only news, articles, cartoons and LoCs can take away the pain. See you next week.

— Arnie Katz

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... *and a ton of news.*