

fanstuff

DB Williams

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Is Chris Garcia The Fan of Tomorrow?

Few fans have reaped a greater bounty of egoboo and honors in a shorter time than Chris Garcia. His prolific fanac, youthful enthusiasm and general likeability made Chris the most welcome neofan in a long time.

Continued on page 2_

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A Couple of Ideas Help Build Up Fannish Blogs?

I wanted to return to a topic I mentioned briefly quite a few issues ago: fannish blogs.

The question of how to enhance blogs came back to me as I was checking out Chris Garcia's blog, the source of his photo elsewhere on this page.

The weaknesses of blogs, as I see them, are that each one is an island, readership is low and communication primarily flows from the Blogger with little feedback from the readers.

I've got a couple of tentative ideas that might help in all three areas. One is an "ideal" solution. My other, equally tentative, idea wouldn't have many frills, but it would do the job and take less effort.

The fancy concept is for someone with sufficient programming skill to set up a fannish blog site. It would be somewhat along the lines of current non-fan blog sites, hopefully using off-the-shelf software.

My other approach could well provide Fandom with a swift solution that requires much less programming skill and maintenance. Since it would be a one-page site, it could probably get free hosting.

The site would be a one-pager with links to as many of the fannish blogs as want to participate. I think most would want to link to this site, because of its advantages.

The links website would make the fannish blog field more coherent by providing a simple way to locate and connect to blogs.

Concentrating access to fannish blogs in one spot is likely to build readership across the board. It might even inspire cross-talk between bloggers and more response from fans who read them.

Fans wanted to reward him for a quick and successful start and encourage him to stick around and continue to contribute. On balance, it looks like it was the right strategy, because Chris is still emitting fanac at a prodigious rate.

There aren't many fans more popular than Chris Garcia. There aren't many homes in Fandom that wouldn't welcome him as a guest.

That overwhelming popularity notwithstanding, I've heard worries about Chris' "lack of commitment" and expressions of disappointment about his cavalier attitude towards fanzine publishing.

In fairness, I admit that I have uttered such comments myself. I hope Chris will accept my public apology (and this Cover Essay) as atonement for failure to understand him and as evidence that I can still learn.

After years during which Chris may well have gotten more than his just desserts, I believe Trufandom may have come to *under-value* Chris.

If we Trufans have come to underrate Chris, it's definitely no deficiency of his. We have simply perceived him unfairly. If his understanding doesn't always coincide with ours, Chris understands the reason better than we do. That's probably why he is more tolerant of the full spectrum of Fandom than any of us.



Chris' outgoing personality and natural ebullience makes him quite a presence with a microphone in his hand.

What is today's Fandom? Mass Fandom is a group of Special Fandoms uneasily sharing the same umbrella. Fandom has become a mega-hobby of specialists, fans who conduct only one primary type of fan activity

So many fans -- in **fanstuff**, at Corflu and elsewhere -- wish for Classic Fandom. But Mass Fandom can't turn back the clock 50 years. What we might be able to do, going forward, is make Mass Fandom less Balkanized. The Special Fandoms would benefit from more interaction and cooperation.

E Corflu Vitus

The way to accomplish that desirable goal is to encourage fans who are generalists. Nothing could knit the Special Fandoms together better than an increase in the number of fans who are active in two, three, four or more Special Fandoms.

Chris Garcia shouldn't be viewed as a lukewarm Trufan, but rather as the first Big Name Fan of a new and valuable breed.

He is, quite simply, a fan for all seasons. No newcomer in recent years has a better record of participation in the widest possible variety of fan activities. His demographic profile makes it easy for both the younger costuming and convention fans and more mature fanziners to relate to him.

We whine about how newer American fans are Specialists who don't know or care much about Fandom beyond their narrow field of interest.

Chris Garcia is an omni-fan who enjoys many types of fanac, including writing and publishing fanzines. What's more, he has done pretty well at everything from pubbing a weekly fanzine to serving as president of the N3F.

It is not surprising — and should not upset Trufans — that Chris doesn't always champion pure Classic Fandom ideals. We need to recognize, and respect, that Chris has a somewhat different perspective on Fandom than we who are basically members of the Trufandom subculture.

If Trufandom is like a country with pride in its history, literature and culture, then Chris Garcia is like the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Our greatest fannish concerns relate to our Special Fandom, while Chris Garcia is more involved with the Big Picture, with Fandom as an overall entity. He and fans like him may be the human bridges that draw all fans a little closer together.

So let's be less jealous when, on occasion, Chris chooses an activity in preference to the ones we love best. He may well be the future, the harbinger of better days for Mass Fandom and, therefore, for Trufandom as well.

-- Arnie

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How I Spent My Labor Day Weekend By Arnie Katz

When I was a fan the first time around, 1963 to 1977, Labor Day meant only one thing: Worldcon. Either I was at the world science fiction convention or else I was home, wishing I was at the world science fiction convention.

Fandom changed, I changed and I shied away from large conventions (and most small ones). I'm glad they exist for the thousands who like them, but they don't tempt me much. It's a combination of factors. I don't like big crowds, few of my friends attend such conventions, my vision limitation makes a large con a bit of an ordeal, and I have other priorities for my meager funds.

We've hosted a couple of noncoms since moving to Las Vegas. This year, we contented ourselves with the scheduled Vegrants meeting on Saturday night and a Monday evening visit from Harry Simon.

I can usually combat the "wish I was there" syndrome, because I don't really want or plan to go to a world science fiction convention, except in the highly unlikely event that they make me fan guest of honor. Though Steven Silver seemed like a good chairman and I supposed thousands of people were having a riotous time in Chicago, I didn't long to be one of them. I faunch more for Windy City Beefs & Dogs, the recently closed Vegrants' hang-out, than for ChiCon 7.

I woke up on Labor Day morning with Fandom on my mind. A little fannish contact is what I needed, I decided, so I signed online and checked my email inbox. There were no new locs and the subject lines of all the listserv posts read either "Feel like crap" or "circumcision." Neither topic appealed to me. Any discussion of circumcision lost any personal relevance it might once have had many, many years ago. And, somehow, reading a bunch of posts about feeling like crap did not sound conducive to maintaining my holiday cheer.

The rest of the email queue didn't yield anything more interesting than a list of the Hugo winners. It offered fresh evidence that a second fanzine field is coalescing within Fandom; I didn't recognize the names of any of the Fan Hugo winners. I'd like to put them on the mailing list, so I'd be grateful to anyone who sends me emails for any of the three.

Yet Fandom was much in my mind all weekend. Two incidents with a connection to Fandom and the Labor Day weekend, transcend both.

They're milestone moments in my life, but they couldn't be more opposite. One is the best thing that ever happened tome and the other was a very sorrowful occasion.

The sad memory is that last year, during the Labor Day weekend, Bill Kunkel died in a slip-and-fall accident in his bathroom. Bill was my closest friend for over 30 years, my business partner through a succession of creative projects and a fannish co-conspirator.

Bill and his wife Laurie had relocated to northern Michigan a few years earlier. It started well enough, but a Laurie's severe illness, the isolation of the area and the end of some professional gigs added up to a protracted depression.

Ironically, things had begun to turn around for Bill when we talked on the Thursday before his death. Laurie was starting to show some improvement, a gaming industry website was picking up steam and a tele-

conference that coming Sunday would start a project Bill had wanted to do for a decade.

Bill had also recovered a lot of his enthusiasm for Fandom, largely thanks to the warm reception he got from Andy Hooper, Randy Byers and Carl Juarez when he sent them some cartoons for *Chunga*

Bill was also excited about coming to visit us for two weeks in September and already planned to return to Vegas for Corflu Glitter in April. He was enthusiastic about my request for some art and intended to bring a folder of drawings with him so we could go over them together.

I got a call on Sunday morning. Bill was dead, short of his 62nd birthday.

I sat in my office and cried.

I'm working on a sort of biographical memoir of Bill. I've already finished several chapters, but I don't want to serialize it in **fanstuff** until I've got it all done.

It's possible that Joyce will do a Bill Kunkel anthology. She would include writing and cartoons. She hasn't decided whether she's actually going to do it, but I'm encouraging her.

The other pertinent memory fills me with sublime joy every time it pops up in my mind. It was Labor Day weekend of 1967 and I'd arrived at the Statler Hilton Hotel somewhat early to see if I could help Ted White and the other Fanoclasts.

I ran into Harlan Ellison and we strolled around the facilities as we caught up on each other. Harlan wanted to take a peek at the Art Show. When we entered the room, it was still in the early stages of set-up.

Harlan survey the room full of industrious fans. "Look at the legs on that one," he said. We approached her as she sprawled on the carpet, working on one of the hangings.

When we got close enough to speak to her, Harlan realized that he knew her, because he'd been guest of honor at a regional con she'd chaired.

And when he introduced her to me, I discovered that I knew her, too, though this was our first in-person meeting. She was on the *Quip* mailing list and we'd exchanged a few letters during the summer.

Like a true friend and gentleman, Harlan excused himself after a few minutes.

She moved to New York in July 1970, we moved in together on October 1, 1970 and have been married since April 25, 1971.

And that's how I met Joyce Worley.

Among the many fannish advantages of cohabiting with Joyce Katz, High Priestess of Fandom, is that there's always a knowledgeable and skilled BNF at hand to inject some fabulous fannishness into an otherwise quiet Labor Day. So I took her by the hand and headed for the bedroom.

After all, anything two fans do together is fanac, right? — Arnie

Pick Your Corflu

All-Time Guest List

If you could wave one of the Spirit of Trufandom's magic wands to summon great fans of the past to a Corflu, whom would you choose?

Each of us can submit a guest list of up to 20 fans we'd like to have at Corflu. Your hypothetical invitees must have Passed On to the Enchanted Convention. (They're dead.)

List your choices in any order, though alphabetical by last name is appreciated. You can pick up to the 20-fan maximum.

Individual Guest Lists will not be revealed unless you include them within your loc (as Robert Lichtman did in **fanstuff** #17). It's ok to send your Guest List in the same email as your loc, just put it after the end of the letter of comment.

Appearing on a Guest Lit is worth once point when I total them. This will filter out idiosyncratic selections and give us a consensus Guest List for Corflu Imagine.

Here's my list: Bob Bloch, rich brown, Burbee, FM Busby, TCarr, Norm Clarke, Vincent Clarke, Calvin Demmon, Ron Ellik, Jack Gaughan, Chuch Harris, Lee Hoffman, Francis Towner Laney, Thom Perry, Boyd Raeburn, Bill Rotsler, Bob Shaw, Bob Tucker, Dave Van Arnam, Walt Willis.



Just What Fandom Is This, Anyway? Part One

By
David B.
Williams

I am reluctant to disrupt the air of tranquil repose here at Fanstuff by raising an issue of proven controversy, but I want to discuss numbered fandoms.

Recently, I have been dipping into Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* and Jack Speer's *Up To Now*. As a one-time history major and a History Book Club member for almost 40 years, I naturally take a more-than-passing interest in fan history. In "The World's Only Normal Fan" (*Fosfax* 212, 2005), I described one of my fannish regrets:

"Fannishly, I was born in 1960 on the cusp between the Fifties and the Sixties. There were pros and cons to entering fandom in 1960. On the one hand, it meant that I missed the fandom of the 1950s, apparently a Golden Age. On the other hand, it meant that I did not miss the fandom of the 1960s, when All Hell broke loose.

"It also meant that I missed belonging to a numbered fandom. The established system of numeration collapsed with the self-designated Seventh Fandom in the mid-fifties, so I was just half a decade or so too late to belong to something I could print on a T-shirt. I assuage the lingering ache with an associate membership in First Fandom. Still, it's not the same as belonging to one of my own."

The concept of numbered fandoms was introduced by Speer in *Up To Now* (1939) and extended in *Fancylopedia* (1944). Robert Silverberg then advanced the count in *Quandry* (1952). Here's a bare listing based on a summation in *Fancylopedia II*:

Eofandom 1930-33
First Fandom, 1933-36
First Transition, 1936-37
Second Fandom, 1937-38
Second Transition, 1938-40
Third Fandom, 1940-44
Third Transition, 1944-46
Fourth Fandom, 1946-47
Fifth Fandom, 1947-50
Fifth Transition, 1950-51
Sixth Fandom, 1951-53
Sixth Transition, 1953-54
Seventh Fandom, 1954-?

For some reason, there was no Fourth Transition. I guess Fourth Fandom just jerked to a halt and Fifth Fandom burst onto the scene in full raiment. For a detailed exposition of each numerical fandom and its defining aspects, see the entry in [Fancylopedia 3](#).

Several prominent fans have discussed, disputed, extended, and amended the choices of Speer and Silverberg over the past half century. Even our dauntless editor has swum in these turbulent waters.

When I first read about numerical fandoms in *Fancylopedia II* in 1960, I thought it was all very clever and amusing, but I was immediately skeptical about the historical utility of these many divisions of fan history and have remained so.

As a student of history, I find it difficult to accept the proposition that a whole historical era in fandom can span a mere 12 months. I find it absurd to define so many distinct fandoms and intervening transitions during just two decades from 1933-1954. It seems to me that Speer was overly assiduous in ferreting out major changes in fandom. Surely, a significant fanhistorical period ought to span at least several years, even a decade or more.

When you are seeking to perceive sweeping historical trends, you need to step back and take an expansive view. Speer was probably too close to events. For him, recent developments, personalities, and disputes loomed too large in his rear-view mirror.

After all, when Speer began numbering fandoms, the whole history of fandom only spanned six years according to his own estimation. For Speer, fandom's growing pains and evolutionary lurches in those few years seemed dramatic and important.

We, on the other hand, enjoy the superior vision of hindsight and can take a less fevered view of fan history. So, I propose that the readers of Fanstuff undertake to outline a new scheme, taking advantage of our extended perspectives on fan history. The goal will be to see how few, not how many, fandoms we can identify.

Let me first propose that we dispense with Transitions. They are inherently difficult to define and can be just as easily viewed as spanning the end of the preceding era and the beginning of the next. It's simply a matter of stepping up and drawing a line at some reasonable point. It's understood that some era-defining aspects and trends may linger past, or arise before, this point in time.

To avoid some predictable confusion in nomenclature, I also suggest that we not number fandoms in the new scheme in the same way that Speer did. Instead, I propose dividing fan history into fannish Ages. In this way, the First Age of Fandom won't be confused with Speer's First Fandom or the association of elderly gentlefen also known as First Fandom.

To forestall those who cannot resist the temptation to slice fan history into shorter and shorter segments, let me point out that the concept of broad fannish Ages allows us to further define a shorter period within an Age as an Era.

If, like Speer and Silverberg, you think that a focal-point fanzine can define an important period, we can accommodate this belief by speaking of the *Quandry* Era without splitting up the overarching Age in which *Quandry* was so (briefly) influential.

So, let us consider how we might divide fan history into suitable Ages. I don't see any compelling reason to separate the earliest period, Speer's Eofandom, from the rest of fandom's gestation period. I think the First Age of Fandom should extend from the earliest stirrings of fan consciousness up to the first Worldcon.

This was all one period of linear development. There were readers and avid collectors of fantastic literature before Hugo Gernsback began publishing the first all-SF magazine in 1926. But the pre-Gernsback collectors and readers showed no signs of pulling together and becoming the kind of fandom that emerged during the 1930s. I think we have to set the dawn of fandom's First Age in 1926. Let's just call Speer's Eofandom the Eofan Era of this First Age.

I concede, fandom didn't spring into existence on the instant in March 1926 when the first issue of *Amazing* went on sale. But consider that a precocious tyke named Forry Ackerman was among the readers who were dazzled by that first issue. In 1929, he began contributing to the letter columns of *Amazing* and its companion magazines, and the rest, as they say, is fanhistory.

During this First Age, fandom was creating itself, debating its purpose, inventing fanzines, experimenting with intercity and regional meetings grandiosely called "conventions," and faunching for recognition by the prozines.

The organizers of the First Fandom association got it right – the First Age of Fandom spanned all the years from the first appearance of primitive fanac to the late 1930s. I don't know why the First Fandomites chose December 31, 1937, as the terminal date for their membership. That date has no historical significance; but then, they weren't writing history.

I nominate the first Worldcon in 1939 as a suitably prominent historical landmark for the termination of fandom's First Age. Fandom didn't change in any significant way between January 1938 and July 1939.

The first Worldcon is an appropriate dividing point because it was the culmination of a progressive trend in fannish meetings, which grew from small local gatherings in fans' basements to intercity visits, regional meetings, and the first "national" convention in Newark.

At the same time, fanzines evolved from simple newsletters and imitation prozines into something like the form we know today. By 1939, fanzines had stitched fandom together and provided fans with a shared identity.

It's no accident that Speer decided to write the first history of fandom in 1939. The story of fandom's beginnings could be told then, because the story had reached its conclusion. Indeed, Speer's history could be used as the delimiting historical marker.

Thanks to our more elevated historical vantage point, we can see that the events and trends that loomed so large for Speer and inspired him to define five distinct Fandoms and Transitions between 1930 and 1940 were merely subheadings in the First Chapter of fandom's glorious history.

Next issue: The Interregnum and the Following Ages of Fandom

Hey, Fans!

Numbered

Fandoms

The Fannish Thrill Ride Lives Again!

The Loccer Room House Rules

Here, in brief, is a list of the rules under which I conduct the letter column.

The “loccer room” is an “equal opportunity” forum. I print all substantial locs; the fans in “WAHF” have sent simple acknowledgements or communications not intended for publication.

Locs appear in approximately the same order as received. It would be unusual for any loc to be printed out of order, though the possibility exists.

Letters are never interrupted by editorial comments. My comments are off to the side, in the narrow columns.

When a writer addresses a topic the full text is always printed. It’s like posting to an e-list, except it’s easier to read and won’t bury your contributions at the end of a seemingly endless thread.

No ambushes. No one will “respond” to your loc in the same issue, except me.

Apologies for disagreeing with me are unnecessary. I don’t care *what* you write as long as you write intelligently. Fact is, I don’t even *have* a firm opinion on many subjects raised in **fanstuff**.

To Robert Lichtman

That Classical Fannish Year, 1962

It’s obvious from your loc that I need to write more on several subjects.

David B. Williams used 1962 to represent Classic Fandom and I followed suit. Proponents of the Numbered Fandoms Theory usually end Seventh Fandom at Chicon III.

The changes David and I have examined stand outside Numbered Fandoms and don’t depend on that theory.

More to Robert Lichtman The Neofan Distortion

A neophyte collector, whether of SF, fanzines, comics or the like, almost always feels that things were better in the recent past.

During your first year in Fandom, you read many fanzines from the two or three most recent years. Once you’d read them, you started getting fanzines as they were published.

This often creates the impression that good fanzines have grown rarer.

loccer room

Robert Lichtman

The passage of time does wonders for mellowing our memories of what it used to be like, and when. And in your case I wonder if you were in fandom in 1962. The earliest fanzines of yours that I have are all dated 1963. I know that when I got into fandom in ’58 it seemed to me, after I learned my way around, that the really great fanzines had peaked just before I got involved. I was wrong, of course, but I find there is that tendency. Perhaps it afflicted you, too.

For instance, in your lead article you wrote, “In 1962, Fandom was at the high point of one of its greatest eras. Outstanding genzines included: *Fanac*, *Innuendo*, *Void*, *Skyrack*, *Hyphen*, *Oopsla!*, *Grue*, *Xero*, *Triode*, *Retribution*, *Apporheta*, *Cry* and *Warhoon*.” Both *Fanac* and *Skyrack* were newszines, and by 1962 the former was being done by Walter Breen and although it had seven issues in 1962 it was entering into its long decline in frequency, timeliness and respect. At the end of the year, exasperated at what had become of his (and Terry Carr’s) zine, Ron Ellik began *Starspinkle*, which continued for near two years. Another newszine that saw fourteen issues in 1962 (twice as many as *Fanac*) was Larry and Noreen Shaw’s *Axe*, which was as you’ll recall the official organ of the successful fund to bring the Willises to Chicon 3.

I investigated further.

The last issue of *Innuendo* came out in December 1960. Although there were five issues of *Void* in 1961, it wound down with just one issue early in 1962. And *Hyphen* also only had a single 1962 issue. Calkins’s *Oopsla!* saw its 30th and final issue in September 1961, and that after nearly two years had passed since the previous one. *Grue*’s last genzine issue was dated April 1958, and was one of the first three fanzines I sent away for based on Bloch’s recommendations in the final *Imagination* when I discovered fandom. Bentcliffe’s and Jeeves’ *Triode* discontinued publication in 1960, resuming in 1974 (and truth be told, I never thought of it as “excellent,” merely “good”). *Retribution*’s last issue was dated July 1961. *Apporheta* wound down in 1960.

But you’re right about *Xero* (two issues in 1962), *Warhoon* (four issues) and *Cry of the Nameless* (ten in ‘62).

There were some other hot fanzines in 1962 that you overlooked. Redd Boggs’s *Discord* wound down in 1962 with its final two issues. Terry Carr’s and Pete Graham’s *Lighthouse* had three issues that year—and perhaps it’s what you were thinking of when you listed *Innuendo*. There were two issues of Norm and Gina Clarke’s wonderful *Descant*. Gary Deindorfer begat his amusing and eccentric fanzine *Lyddite* (three issues), while Calvin Demmon wound down with the final issue of his amusing and eccentric **Skoan**, Les Nirenberg with five issues of *The Panic Button* and John Koning ditto with a couple issues of *Microtome*. The LASFS published three issues of its highly regarded clubzine, *Shangri-L’Affaires*.

And of course the Coulson’s *Yandro* rode through the year with five issues, though no one would accuse them of being “outstanding.” Also, don’t forget a bunch of issues of Ted Pauls’s *Kipple*, which at that point hadn’t yet

morphed into the mostly-politics thing it became later on and saw ten issues that year.

But I digress....

I think the real answer to your question, “Who Killed ‘Classic’ Fandom?” is...we did. As you write, “Right from the beginning, fans agreed that Fandom should do as much as possible to promote the popularity of science fiction.” And then you outline the things that happened—and fandom’s response to them—that have led us to where we are today.

You ask, “How do you feel about all the changes?” I accept them as the inevitable result of everything that happened along the way. As you know, I’ve never been a big convention goer. I’ve been to five worldcons, about twice that many Westercons (though many of them I just dropped in for an evening), and a handful of other conventions (most notably the 1989 Eastercon that was my TAFF destination). But I’ve been to a dozen Corflus, and that’s my go-to convention going forward. Other than that, as I’ve said before, I’m strictly fanzine- and other print-oriented, and don’t socialize within the various fan clubs that exist locally. And I’m okay with that.

“Which ones do you like best—and least?” The migration of much fanac to the internet is perhaps the single most significant change from my point of view, one that’s led to the reentry into active fanac of one sort or another by many, many fans who otherwise might not have found us in the absence of prozines with fan columns. The dual phenomenon of electronic fanzines and a central place for them (efanzines) and what you call the listservs has knitted together many fans who had been active all along with returnees. Gotta be a good thing! What I like least is the atomization of fandom into clusters of special interest groups with minimal overlap.

“What do you think is in store for Fandom in the next decades?” Beats the hell out of me, but I’d guess that the trends we see now will continue—that fandom will continue to grow and become even more atomized, but that small clusters of what you (this year) call Trufen will congregate around the edges, still producing fanzines (though increasingly electronic as postage and printing costs inevitably escalate) and gathering on the internet and at small, focused conventions. Corflu 100 will happen in 2084, returning to the Hotel Claremont where it first convened.

David Williams’ article didn’t tell me anything new since, like him, I’m well-read in the history of science fiction publications and the origins of fandom. In one place he writes, “If the first fanzines weren’t inspired by the publications produced in the basement print shops of the amateur journalism movement, they should have been. H. P. Lovecraft, for one, was deeply involved in the ajay movement well before the birth of SF fandom.” Yes, but are you commenting on the look and feel of the early fanzines, making a criticism about the ones that weren’t letterpress printed (which would include Siegel and Shuster’s mimeographed *Science Fiction*, in which the Superman character had his origins), or what? “Don Wollheim and John Michel merely re-invented the wheel when they founded the Fantasy Amateur Press Association in 1937, because collective mailings were already a common practice in the ajay world.” On one level this is true, but on a more important one the creation of the FAPA changed the fanzine world forever. Because fandom was a much smaller entity at that point than the world of amateur journalists, it was beneficial as a central place where fan writers/publishers of lesser means could circulate their work. As Wollheim wrote in the first FAPA mailing, “There are many fans desiring to put out a voice who dare not, for fear of being obliged to keep it up, and for the worry and time taken by subscriptions and advertising. It is for

Still More to Robert Lichtman When First Unto Fandom A Stranger I Came

I entered Fandom, with Lenny Bailes, in March 1963 when we co-edited *Cursed #1*. I spent a little over a year exploring possibilities, most of which proved to be dead ends, like the N3F and ESFA.

I joined the Fanoclats in April, 1964. My fannish education picked up momentum from that point, even though I spent most of the next four years at the University of Buffalo.

Yet More to Robert Lichtman Memoirs, Chronicles and Histories

Some explanations benefit from definitions. Here are three pertinent ones:

Memoir. A personal, subjective account of events by someone who experienced them.

Chronicle. An objective account of people, places, things and events of an interval of time.

History. An interpretation of an interval in time based on analyses of the facts.

It’s theoretically possible to produce a definitive chronicle, though that’s unlikely on a practical level. No history is definitive or indisputable, because they are theories.

Each history offers a different, subjective analysis. Therefore, two fanhistorians can draw differing conclusions from the same facts.

There are many ways to look at fanhistory. For example, I’ve written “The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory” and “The Numbered Fandom’s Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory.”

A Guide to the Narrow Columns

I write everything in the narrow columns unless otherwise credited.

In the letter column, my responses to each letter of comment are grouped by color and separated into these rounded-corner boxes. The name of the fan whose loc sparked the comment is always in bold on the top line.



To Terry Kemp

Reflections on Corflu Glitter

I sometimes feel a strange sort of ambivalence after I return home from a Corflu. I'm elated and fannishly energized from spending those days with so many friends — and I'm a little depressed because I won't see most of them again for a year or more.

I don't think there's a cure for this, unless we concoct a Brilliant Plan to get you all to move here. I'll concede it's unlikely, but who can say what is beyond the powers of the Inner Cabal?

Meanwhile, consider coming for a visit, preferably coinciding with a Ve-grants meeting.

More to Terry Kemp In the Mood to Feud

What you call an intellectual feud is what I'd call a spirited discussion. If it degenerates into personal attacks, it becomes a personal feud.

What I really hate is the person who attempts to substitute physical threats or even outright violence for discussion. Fandom has had few such individuals, but the fewer the better.

them and for the fan who admits it is his hobby and not his business that we formed the FAPA." He envisioned all fanzine activity folding into FAPA and all fanzine writers and publishers congregating there. As we know, it didn't work out that way; instead, a whole new strain of fanzine came into being, focused on FAPA itself, aided and abetted by Jack Speer's and Dan McPhail's co-invention of the "mailing comment."

I agree with Chris Garcia about the wonderfulness of Sid Coleman's reviews in *F&SF*. For those who want to track down the back issues, they appear in June 1970, August and November 1973, and August 1974.

I join with you, Arnie, in welcoming Peter Sullivan back to the fold and also hope this means an end to—or at least a respite from—his health problems. Regarding letter column styles, I've never been a fan of breaking up readers' letters into categories. I find it disruptive and hard to get an overall sense of a letter writer's style and pacing. In doing the lettercol for my own fanzine, I tend to lead with a favorite "general" letter—one that touches on all (or as many as possible) material in the previous issue—and intersperse these throughout the column. In between I use shorter letters (or portions of letters) addressing individual items in the issue under review *in the order they appear in the issue* so that a flow is created.

As for breaking into letters, I do a minimum of that—preferring them to stand on their own as much as possible—and when I do it's at the end of the letter or, at least, at the end of the paragraph on which I'm interjecting my comments. I've seen some editors butt in midway through a paragraph, and that I find annoying, even rude.

Thanks, Terry, for mentioning that the Rog Phillips article in *Peon* was a reprint from the incredible *Spacewarp* #42. Now that's a fanzine that deserves to be scanned and posted on Bill Burns's Website! It's the single best issue of the title, and one of the best fanzines of that period.

About a "contact point" for "Trufandom's 'Alumni Group,'" I certainly agree with you about Oldfen and First Fandom. You write, "I'll be interested to see what you, and others, have to say about doing something like that." I think perhaps a Yahoogroup might be formed, strictly moderated as to membership, and have only a name to suggest: Oldpharts. But in the same breath I wonder if "we" really need another distraction from simply participating in fanac when- and wherever we individually choose.

Terry Kemp

Hope all is well with both of you. I'm starting to have misty flashes of all the fun at Corflu Glitter which has already entered into my sentimental nostalgic reflections. It's either misty or smoky, depends on your perspective; either way I'm missing you all.

This has all been reinforced today as Nic Farey is in town and we plan on dinner later. Wow, I never thought that Kingman might become a mecca of fannish activity. I've often thought that it might become the mecca for those that favor wearing brown shirts, but not for fandom.

First thoughts on feuds. It takes two to tango (sorry for the cliché). I suspect that there are essentially two kinds of feuds. The more obvious one happens in all walks of life. Two (or more) people clash for whatever real reasons, bump heads, forget to use their words, or their words fail, and heated argument crosses the line into demands, unreasonable behavior, and even violence. In law enforcement it is called domestic violence whenever this happens. This is the intolerable case.

The second type of feud strikes me as that rarer breed. The intellectual

feud. The fun one. The one where all involved use their words, remembering that we are all having fun, and just that. Those wonderful feuds of the past, such as whether to use brads or staples. Only people who know how to use their words, in a reasonable (or unreasonable) way, avoiding all notions of escalating these things past the point of fun into the world of physical violence, are capable of having this type of fun feud.

It is a rare breed of humanity, nowadays even rarer, who can use their words, have fun bitching and moaning, and at end of day, remain friends and buddies with all involved. Pals forever!

This, of course, leads into my thoughts on a fanzine review column.

The notion is intriguing, Arnie, you've laid out the obvious parameters, whether to be brief or go on at length, whether to boost no matter what nonsense you are reading, or to pan if it fails the acid test. So, how to make a wise decision?

On this I have to side with Ed Wood when he blasted Rog Phillips' fanzine review column, *The Club House*, for being too nice. Rog argued well and correctly that it was his necessary position to boost, no matter what, but he was working for a national prozine, boosting was the game in order to increase circulation. Not your problem.

Being too harsh is also too much, as you aptly pointed out. So it is in the hands of the reviewers as to how far to go. At some point, you have to accept the burden, and just move forward. As a counterpoint let me point out that this is the path and burden of the critic, and yet the critic has his welcome fans. Take Damon Knight. There is no question that he was the best critic of his day. At times this required stepping on toes, but he was always impersonal (as far as that can be when criticizing someone's paycheck). More, he was always pretty much spot on. He managed to do this by being systematic, reviewing everything in the same manner, using the same methodology. It was by creating and applying his analytic tools in a consistent way that Knight managed to succeed. On the other hand, James Blish as a critic was much too centrist, always trying to ameliorate any potential damaging effect of his critiques, and drifting into lyrical maxims about Art and Literature to such a degree that his criticism were severely diminished.

To conclude before my opinion reaches a polemic, do it Arnie, please. I'd love to read a well-done fanzine review column, in-depth, impersonal, with the same analytic tools applied to all consistently. Perspective is important, this is the only way.

Taral Wayne: No, you're not the only one. Likewise, or maybe this only applies to me, but in person, using my words, the social part of my mind intrudes. He is a real idiot. Words fail him at all times. But, even worse, the idiot has no memory at all. Can't remember a thing, not one fact, it can be embarrassing. Only when I sit down to write, and only then, do the words come. Of course, backspace, delete, and proofreading help.

However, I disagree. I don't think this is as great a source of lasting divide as you suggest. For instance, I don't think I'm witty in public, or one of those social types you describe, but endurance and persistence count for more. I always perceive these witty social types as mayflies, fluttering around, buzzing with talk, but no depth, and no staying power.

There will always be a place for those hermits among us who are socially inept, yet from time to time can find their words. The written word lasts longer.

Jonathan McCalmont: Wow! Do you really believe all this stuff? How sad! If I didn't know any better I'd say we've been reading different fanzines. Your interpretation is so far off base that it is truly wonderful. I look forward to

Still More to Terry Kemp I Was a Rog Phillips

When I was doing *Electronic Games*, I decided to play Hugo Gernsback and start Electronic Gaming Fandom. First I wrote about the joys of such a Fandom and explained what a fanzine is and how to do one.

After a couple of months of that, the fanzines began arriving. A quick costume change, from Hugo to Rog Phillips, and I was ready to do Electronic Gaming Fandom's equivalent to "The Club House."

Since it was something brand new, and the writers and editors were mostly 15-22, I accented the positive.

I gave the better fanzines most of the attention in the column and purposely didn't review the inevitable crudzines. Since my objective was to get readers to try one or more of the fanzines, I didn't want them to take the hard step and send for a fanzine only to receive a worthless crudzine.

Each review fully described the contents and praised the fanzine's strong points. In the name of fairness, I always mentioned one (and generally only one) area that could be improved.

I was a booster, not a knocker.

And even so, one or two of the faneds objected to the slightest indication that their fanzine was anything less than perfect. I imagine that Rog Phillips got a few letters like that, too.

My favorite whining letter came from an electronic gaming fan. He wrote to tell me that I just didn't know how hard it was to do a fanzine.

Yet Still More to Terry Kemp Impersonal Fanzine Reviews?

I'm not saying that I won't be writing in-depth fanzine reviews for **fanstuff**, but it's not a strong possibility. I'm flattered that you put such a high value on the idea, but the way some fans react to even the mildest, most constructive criticism makes things pretty hard for anyone who writes such material.

I also have to raise the question of subjectivity. How could I write an "impersonal" review of a fanzine produced by someone who is likely to be a friend of mine?

**More to Terry Kemp
Fandom's Paper Tigers**

I'd welcome another loc from Jonathan McCalmont. Either it would be as amusing as his first or it could contain evidence that he is processing information and refining his perceptions. Sounds something like win-win to me.

I'm willing to be proven wrong, but I don't think Jonathan is going to "step up." It's hard to Step Up with your pants tangled around your ankles.

**To Bill Wright
Come in, Ditmar
America Is Calling**

I've heard many fans sing the praises of Dick (Ditmar) Jensen as an artist and Master of fanzine graphics. What I've seen by Ditmar doesn't disprove those claims.

The only thing is, he's never shown any interest in receiving my fanzines nor in contributing.

I'd be glad to add him to the mailing list if you'd put in a good word for me.

**More to Bill Wright
Not Going to Pull the Plugs**

As you see, I printed all of your plugs. Not only do I think a lot of fans will be interested, but you have a large store of credit with me, Bill.

I hope you'll return to "locker room" soon, because I'd like to read your views on some of **fanstuff's** serious, and frivolous, topics.

**To Eric Mayer
There's a Madness to My Method**

I agree that it wouldn't be advisable for me to program **fanstuff** for one fan, even an old friend like you. I do think of my fan friends as I write and edit **fanstuff**, but my goal is to interest and entertain as many of you as much as possible.

I introduce a range of possible topics in every issue to give readers a lot of scope for comments.

I'm only publishing material related to Fandom in **fanstuff**, but I'm striving for variety.

reading more loc's from you inside these pages. Welcome to the fray. Now what're you gonna do to improve things?

Time to step up.

Tut, tut, Arnie, Jonathan wasn't being intentionally funny, all laughing aside. Now stop giggling for a few seconds, we need people like Jonathan.

Well, I think I'll close here, with a smile on my lips, and some lightness in my heart. Thanks again Arnie for pubbing a great zine.

Bill Wright

As a computer graphics wizard, fanartist Ditmar (Dick Jensen, Melbourne, Australia) is without peer. If you don't believe me, visit a gallery of his finest work on eFanzines at Ditmar Portfolio Supplement to Earl Kemp's e117: <http://efanzines.com/EK/e117/ditmar.htm>.

So may I alert fanstuff readers to the fact that Ditmar's magnum opus 'The Planet of the Eggs' (first published in 1997-98) has now been posted on eFanzines. The twitter feed is: <http://twitter.com/efanzines/statuses/240988766179844096>, This is a seminal celebration of fractal geometry in art and story that doesn't require any mathematical ability on the part of the reader, although it helps.

Your readers should read and review this zine. Whatever their mathematical ability or cultural reach, it is bound to give them fresh insights into the linked beauties of mathematics, art and nature.

Let's hear it for Ditmar. What talent! What a mind!

Eric Mayer

You wouldn't want to limit Fanstuff to discussions I can contribute to. My participation in fandom is narrow and you'd soon bore most of your readers.

Also, at some point in a discussion I'm likely to figure I've said too much or am in danger of repeating myself (without realizing it) and I try to exercise enough discipline to shut up before I become boring.

I enjoy trying to define fandom. Some of the best questions are ones that are unanswerable -- free will vs determinism, the nature of consciousness -- philosophical chewing gum that never loses its flavor. And just because you don't come up with a definitive, complete answer doesn't mean you can't gain some useful insights in the process.

My understanding is that the sf fans who started trading fanzines also started the Worldcon so in some sense everything the Worldcon encompasses is fandom as it has evolved. So maybe we should think of fanzine fandom/ Trufandom as an separate evolutionary branch, just as humans, or naked mole rats, are evolutionary branches of mammals.

Speaking of reviews....I agree with you 100% about KTF reviews. I thought they were reprehensible at the time and still do -- easy and adolescent. Absolutely contrary to the spirit of fandom. I wonder how many potential fans they drove away?

I hate writing reviews. Sometimes I highlight interesting fan publications briefly to alert others to them, but I have no desire to critique. Our response to art is subjective and especially so in a fannish context. Much of the way we react to fanac depends on our relationship to and knowledge of the fan involved. I am more vitally interested in my mom's memories of our family than I am in, say, the memories of Marcel Proust although, no doubt, Proust is a far better writer than my mom. Fanzines are a bit like letters from people we know. They benefit from the fact that we already have an interest in the fanned and what he or she has to say whether it is said well or not.

So I find it useless to apply professional style criticism to fanzines. And, in fact, I almost always find something to like in a fanzine. Why not concentrate on that? How is that less valid than concentrating on what you don't like?

David B. Williams

Fanzines reviews can be useful and interesting, provided they are good reviews. Mean-spirited reviews don't qualify as good. The KTF form may be entertaining for the writer and selected readers, but it's not designed to illuminate, only inflame.

"When someone takes up a hobby, they don't expect their activity to be the subject of a widely circulated critique." Then enjoy your hobby without publishing a fanzine, which is a public performance subject to review and comment.

Nothing prevents a reviewer from exposing his biases: "I find fanhistory painfully tedious, and Williams' piece in *Fanstuff* 17 is a perfect example." OK, so this imaginary reviewer doesn't like fanhistory. When that is acknowledged, the reader can decide whether that bias has affected the review.

Maybe what's needed are reviews of reviews. When scholars publish critical tomes, they expect them to be reviewed in the scholarly press. Why should fanzine reviewers escape critical evaluation? It might make them less careless about what they write.

But your essay left me disappointed. After the headline, "Fanzine Reviews: Panacea or Pointless?" I was expecting at least one of those zines to be reviewed. *Panacea* always has a good mix of interesting content, but *Pointless* often seems to exemplify its title.

Taral Wayne doubts that Classic Fandom ended in 1962. First, let me point out, as you did, that I only mentioned that date as a point of comparison to some other date, and Arnie picked up on it. It was not intended to be an official date for the Final Blackout.

But of course Classic Fandom didn't end then, or at any other time. Trends and developments that begin in any period of fanhistory almost never end; they continue into subsequent periods. But we no longer recognize them as A Sign of the Times because new trends and developments have replaced them. Classic Fandom endures, but now submerged under layers of sediment deposited by later waves of historical developments.

Arnie, how could you let Terry Kemp's little Green Lantern story appear as a segment of a loc instead of pulling it out and using it as a feature? It's a perfectly crafted fanzine piece deserving of greater prominence.

I began Jonathan McCalmont's letter with hope. Aha, here's a bright young fellow who sees clearly and is going to set us all straight. But he quickly revealed himself as an observer who can only perceive black and white.

"Spitting venom at younger fans?" That must have happened when I was gafiated in the later '80s, because I don't recall anything like that. If anything, Classic Fandom was too welcoming and inclusive. Media fans? Come on in! Gamers? We've got plenty of room! Comics fans? Hey, it was two SF fans who created Superman! Rare representatives of minorities and the handicapped were cherished and celebrated.

"Obsessed with events at conventions so buried in the distant past that they might as well be bemoaning the French revolution." First, let me assert that history is important. When asked about the impact of the French Revolution on modern times, I believe it was Premier Zhou Enlai of Red China who responded, "It's too soon to tell."

All societies and institutions grow out of the soil of their history. Without

More to Eric Mayer

There's a Seeker Born Every Minute

That's a beautiful statement about the search for fannish truth. I spend time examining questions that don't have definitive answers. The quest is often enlightening and entertaining.

I leaven the discussion topics with humor, faan fiction and other, more frivolous expressions of fannishness.

To Eric Mayer

About Fandom's Beginnings And Trufandom's Lineage

Fanzines preceded the World SF Convention by almost a decade. The first fanzine appeared in 1930 (*Cosmology*, edited by Ray Palmer) and NUCon I took place over the July 4th weekend in 1939.

That's factually correct, but irrelevant. The desire to stage conventions was a direct outgrowth of contacts made through fanzines and correspondence. Sure, fans wanted to meet the professional writers, editors and artists, but the desire to meet their fan friends was also extremely important.

Fandom was more homogenous, composed of generalists, not specialists. The same fans who wrote, drew and published fanzines were essentially the same fans that hosted, and attended, the World SF Convention. The three NYcon I chairmen were all fanzine fans.

To David B. Williams Good Reviews and KTF

When I was an editor in the electronic gaming field, my credo was that I never promised any software publisher a good review, but I always guaranteed a fair review. I mention that, not as linguistic acrobatics, but because my goal is a fair review. That is, a review that is fair to the readers and to the fanzine.

If I write in-depth fanzine reviews, they'd have to be truthful and forthright. Otherwise, it wouldn't be fair.

Professionally, I faced it squarely. I had friendly acquaintances, but avoided close friendships. That way, I could review a bad game without worrying about the effect on a friendship.

Well, I've got lots of friends in Fandom. I don't want to kill a friendship.

**More to David B. Williams
Public and Private**

You raise an intriguing question that has caused me a great deal of worry over the years with your comment about a fanzine being a “public performance.” The thing is, I’m not sure it really is a public performance.

The main reason this concerns me is not reviews, but rather humor. Having outlived all of Fandom’s great humorists, I am often called upon to be humorous, witty or amusing in print.

In Mundania, the dividing line between public and private personalities is usually pretty clear. When that line is disputed, the courts decide. A mainstream comedian or humorist has the legal write to satirize, parody or joke about a public personality.

You’re certainly not alone in considering Fandom and fans public.

I agree that well-known fans and big name fans are, by definition, well known *within our subculture*.

Does that mean they are public personalities? I think that would be a tough case to prove in court. (Like many of us, I qualify as a public personality, because of my career.)

When I was a fan in graduate school, I had a short fascination with the comedic *spritz*. With the encouragement and enthusiasm of my fan friends, I got good at it. It was the first time I felt that I really impressed them.

It reached the end for me on New Year’s Eve at a fan party. Fans egged me on until I blasted out 20 minutes of fast improv themed to the fannish year 1968.

Everybody laughed out loud many times during my jet-propelled monolog, but I also caught flashes of Hurt Looks.

I thought about that on the subway ride from rich brown’s apartment to the one I shared with Andy Porter.

My conclusion was that I didn’t want to do anything to hurt any of my friends. If you go check out my humor pieces, the butt of the jokes is most often me. If I involve anyone else, even Joyce, I attempt to be funny without hurting feelings.

That’s an individual choice, but I’d like to get some viewpoints on the question of whether Fandom and fans are public (fair game) or private (protected).

history we have no roots to anchor us. We become like amnesiacs, and each dawn really is a new day.

I also want to say a word in favor of cultural resistance to change. Cultural push-back to new trends is important; I would say obligatory. Without resistance, change occurs too rapidly and without proving its value.

After much contention, the Equal Rights Amendment failed, and that’s probably a good thing because a formal Constitutional provision would have led to all kinds of hideous legal consequences. But the real issue, Equal Rights, prevailed, because the arguments of the pro side were more convincing than the objections, and everyone had time to recognize that there really were inequalities and that change was needed.

Same-sex marriage? OK, but instantly? It’s much better for same-sex marriage to triumph after delay and adversity. Advocates are forced to secure allies, to come up with better arguments to trump opposing views, to refine exactly what it is they want. Society has time to think about such a change and adjust to the idea. In the end, when it happens, it will be more generally accepted.

President Obama is another example. Years ago the U.S., in compensation for past injustices, might have adopted an affirmative-action provision to the Constitution, requiring the election of an African-American candidate after every nine Caucasian presidents. This would have produced all kinds of uproar in American society and undermined the legitimacy of any black president.

It was much better for this innovation to occur as the result of a fair fight. The guy who won his party’s nomination, the guy who got the most electoral votes, is president, and his executive authority is unchallenged.

So I say, if new faneds have odd ideas about what makes a good fanzine, let the battle be joined! Sometimes, the old ways really are better, and criticism may lead to improvements. But let the new style prevail after delay and adver-



sity. Let the new idea fight for acceptance in the marketplace. If it survives, it will be stronger and more successful as a result.

Eric Mayer makes an acute observation when he says, "at some point people began to define fandom more by conventions rather than fanzines." This was a critical step in fandom's evolution. First there was Fanzine Fandom, then Convention Fandom.

I also can't argue with his summation: "Classic Fandom was not overrun by the 'barbarians.' Only conventions were overrun by the barbarians. The reason Classic Fandom is dead is because many fans abandoned it in favor of conventions...."

Convention Fandom has won, and those of us who find little to appreciate in conventions are left to wander the windblown wastes of Classic Fandom, seeking out other post-apocalyptic survivors and huddling around the campfires of our fanzines.

Long may *Fanstuff* cast a warm glow upon our sensitive fannish faces and serve as a welcoming beacon in this dark night!

John Hardin

I hope this gets into *Fanstuff* #19, otherwise it might be too stale to include. Ah well, file under "Good Intentions."

I thought Joyce killed fandom. Or did she only ruin it? I can't keep my villains straight.

It's interesting to hear Chris Garcia's take on growing up sfnal. One's experience of fandom is obviously generational; I fall in between the two of you, but growing up in Texas in the 70s and early 80s was probably much like growing up anywhere else in the 50s. It was much more a proud and lonely thing than a shared experience. During my public school tenure, I was often the only avid science fiction reader I knew of. Nobody was passing around dog-eared copies of any science fiction paperbacks, that's for sure.

As to how and when it all changed, I'd say the space program/moon landing probably helped a lot. All of a sudden, that Buck Rogers stuff was no longer so goofy. Also, if Star Trek was the gestation of media fandom, Star Wars was its birth. Hollywood saw that science fiction movies could make huuuge money, and it's no coincidence that *Alien* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* came out a mere two years later. Of course that latter movie was a wretched rehash of a plot from the TV series but it did well enough to finance a sequel, which was actually pretty good, and so the franchise was (re)born. That success helped spawn the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* TV show and then the circle of life was complete.

I also think the impact of VHS and widespread cable TV can't be overstated on the growth of media fandom. Suddenly, you didn't have to be in front of your TV on Friday night at 8pm to catch whatever panned, scanned and bowdlerized movie was on NBC. With the VHS, fans could obsessively watch their favorite movies/tv shows repeatedly, making it easier to deconstruct, remember the funny quotes and copy the costumes. The same goes with the early cable services; HBO showed *Aliens* over and over and over after it came out; today the channels leaven their offerings with more variety but, in the early 80s, they were essentially movie rerun services, as I'm sure you know.

There's a lot to unpack in Jonathan McCalmont's letter in *Fanstuff* #18 but, first, let me come to his defense. I don't think he's being ageist, at least not explicitly. He states that he does not include himself in the cohort of the "young" so I don't think it's a case of "don't trust anyone over n years of age." More a case of fannish inexperience, I would guess. Though, if he doesn't count him-

Still More to David B. Williams Kemp Adds Life

I didn't move Terry's flight of fancy out of the letter column, because I thought the letter column was a little downbeat and that Terry's mini-piece would make everyone a bit happier.

I might well, at some future date, turn all or part of a letter of comment into an article, but I also like to have such unexpected items in "loccer room."

Yet Again More to David B. Williams I'm a Lover, Not a Fighter

I don't want to fight anyone over anything, let alone something in Fandom. It may not seem like it when I am racing to finish an issue, but I do this because I love it. I'm in Fandom for fun, so I don't go looking for trouble. (My attitude is subject to radical alteration if trouble finds me.)

You mention same-sex marriage. I have no personal interest in it, but I also have no interest in keeping others who are interested from enjoying its benefits.

In the same way, I don't think the Fan Hugos have much relevance to our subculture, but a second fanzine field is emerging centered around them.

I wouldn't spent five minutes lusting for a Fan Hugo. It's meaningless to me. If someone sees it differently, it doesn't hurt me if they get excited when they win one.

I still think it's awfully *gauche* to whore after any award, but that's a different issue.

A Bit More to David B. Williams To the Victors Go the Spoiled

I wasn't happy with my prediction when I made it almost 40 years ago, but I could see that Convention Fandom would eventually control conventions.

It seemed obvious.

All things being equal, people who want to put on conventions will win over people who put on conventions as an adjunct to word-centered fanac and as a duty. (Convention-centered fans are no better at the kind of fanac we love and they don't, like writing, drawing and publishing fanzines.)

**To JoHn Hardin
Is a Little Oppression
Good for Fandom?**

Oppression is certainly a Bad Thing for individual human beings, but the government clampdown could have a bright side for our brand of Fandom.

When mainstream society becomes smotheringly conformist and anti-intellectual, it may encourage of few artistic people not unlike ourselves to seek Fandom as a refuge.

**More to JoHn Hardin
The Neofan Experience**

It's the nature of neofans to say and do dumb things that they will, at some later time, wish to expunge from fannish memory. That's why we flag newcomers; it's an implied request for fans to be more patient while they learn.

In your case, you heard about Fanzine Fandom second-hand from people who didn't know much about it themselves and may have had some of their own fears to conquer.

You developed fairly quickly into a fine fan — and that's what counts.

**To Robert Lichtman
Does Size Matter
For Digital Fanzines?**

I won't pretend that putting together an issue of **fanstuff** is a cakewalk. Not working to a set page-count lightens the load and reduces needless stress from struggling with a self-imposed mandatory number of pages. I let each issue come together at what seems like its best size.

I'd like to keep **fanstuff** between 10 and 20 pages. Within that range, any even number is ok with me.

Falling below 10 pages wouldn't be the end of the world, but I'd feel bad if **fanstuff** got so few locs. I set 20 pages as the upper limit (except maybe an an-nish), because I feel that the majority of readers of digital fanzines prefer a more compact fanzine. It seems to me that a smaller fanzine gets more attention — and I do *so* like to get letters of comment.

self "young," I think it weakens his case that he knows what the darn kids these days want. Also, not to be unkind, but I've seen pictures of Nalini Haynes. I don't think she's the target market for people looking to reach new fans under 30.

To be fair, I understand where Jonathan is coming from. I had the same reaction to fanzine fandom when I first encountered it. I don't have to tell you that the first thing I ever had published in a fanzine was a screed against fanzine fans and their closed culture where they only talked about people I didn't know and events I had never heard of. I remember saying that, if established fans didn't change, then neofen like me would turn our backs and lose interest in fandom, etc. Not much has changed in the 20 years since I wrote that, except me. I understand that the strain of fandom I'm most familiar with, fanzine fandom; "Trufandom," is a subculture that goes back to the very beginnings of science fiction itself, and it birthed the larger subculture which is mainstream "sci-fi fandom" today. That subculture's traditions and folkways should be valuable to anybody who thinks of themselves as a fan.

I admire Mr. McCalmont's hyperbole when he accuses "your generation" of "driving fannish institutions into the ground." As the kids used to say, lolwhut? Since "your generation" presided over science fiction fandom becoming triumphant in pop culture, I'd say your fannish ancestors would disagree with his assessment.

Finally, to the best of my knowledge, there has never been a slew of science fiction fanzines "spitting venom" at younger fans. The fact that he thinks the very mild discussion of Nalini Haynes is venomous only reflects his admission that he is on the fannish fringe.

Robert Lichtman

Fanstuff #18 appears to be a thinner issue both in page count and, for me, in comment hooks, but those that I found were choice.

I essentially agree with what you've written about fanzine reviews, and like you I wrote fanzine reviews "when I was young and foolish" as a safe, reliable and easy contribution to various fanzines. They were all short reviews, which I adopted based on my seeing what people like Buck Coulson did in that format. I don't recall doing any lengthy ones back then, and after a while I gave them up as a bad job. And I left the fanzine review form in the dust until 2002 when, at the request of its editors, I did write a column reviewing a couple fanzines in the second issue of *Chunga*. Rather than comment on a single issue, though, I chose to write about a handful of issues of an electronic fanzine (John Foyster's wonderful *eFNAC*) and a print one (Ray Nelson's too short-lived *Uncle Smiley's Bookcase*). These were both fanzines that I liked immensely, so my reviews are positive. If you want to see for yourself, check out...

<http://efanzines.com/Chunga/pdfs/chunga-02-lores.pdf>

But it was hard going getting my reviews together; they drew little or no response; and I once again left the form in the dust.

Short reviews aren't necessarily unhelpful. From 2001 through 2003 Ted White wrote a fanzine review column in which individual reviews seldom exceeded a page. These are collected and available for reading at...

<http://efanzines.com/Fanzines/index.htm>

As Ted subsequently wrote, these are generally positive or at least neutral reviews because he was aiming at an audience of people unfamiliar with fanzines at all—or at least a wide range of them—and didn't want to discourage follow-up on the part of his readers.

Another good source of short but informative fanzine reviews would be the “Fanzine Countdown” columns that Andy Hooper wrote for *Apparatchik*. Not all the issues are available online, but the final fifteen can be viewed at...

<http://efanzines.com/Apparatchik/index.html>

As for KTF fanzine reviews, especially as practiced in the ‘70s and early ‘80s by fans such as Joseph Nicholas, they can be instructive but, as you say, the object of one of them has to have a very thick skin to appreciate what they’re attempting to say. It’s harder to find examples of the genre in electronic form, but with some searching I located this example by master-of-the-craft D. West in a 1980 issue of Dave Bridges’ *One-Off*...

<http://www.cartiledgeworld.co.uk/arrogance.html>

And then there are fanzine reviews written in an effort to be helpful and objective but which are taken the wrong way by the subject(s) of the reviews. I can’t find it available online, but Ted White’s lengthy survey of Australian fanzines that appeared in the August 1983 issue of Irwin Hirsh’s *Sikander* is a prime example of that.

It’s interesting to see where your list of fantasy Corflu GoHs varies from my own, all reflecting our individual passages through fandom over the decades and who stood out for us. We have a fifty percent overlap, interestingly, and there are a number of your list who I would have added to mine if not constricted by the 20-name rule. I’m looking forward to seeing the lists of others.

After reading your comment that Jonathan McCalmont is “a self-identified British fringe fan” and never having heard of him myself, I got curious about how he happened to show up in your letter column, especially since he made accusatory noises about “the sort of self-aggrandizing myths that you regularly spit in the face of people like Nalini Haynes,” which sent up a little red flag. His reference to her led me to do a little research, and I found that McCalmont has a Website/blog (<http://ruthlessculture.com/>), writes reviews for *Locus*, *SF Signal* and a bunch of other sites, and is a presence on Twitter, where he describes himself as “a shambollic failure of a man who occasionally writes about films, games and books.” His posts are being followed by Nalini, and I imagine vice-versa—and, as such, he would probably have seen her blog post of August 23rd...

http://www.darkmatterfanzine.com/blog_dmf/?p=1051

...in which she makes an effort to reinvent faan fiction. This replaces a pretty salacious post of a few days earlier, since removed, in which she truly trashes by name you, me and Joyce, and about which the less said the better. I suspect McCalmont may have read that one, too. But even if not, armed with second-hand righteous indignation (that you refer to as “virulent age-ism”) of the sort that has shown up now and then in fandom’s long history—our equivalent of a “generation gap”—he’s chosen to join the chorus of people who look in on what you recently called “Classic Fandom,” find it to whatever degree incomprehensible, and rather than following the readily available leads for information (to places like *Fancylopedia* online, www.fanac.org and the like) choose to attack and condemn. His loss—but perhaps also ours, because if he had made an effort to join in without attacking he might have proven to be a valuable new face on the scene and would have been welcome here. It’s clear from his extensive activity elsewhere that he’s got plenty of energy for what does interest him.

All that aside, he’s just wrong when he writes that we “old, straight, white, middle class people who bleat about education when they should be thinking about inclusivity and multiculturalism...have allowed their institutions to decline at a time when enthusiasm for science fiction, fantasy and horror have

More to Robert Lichtman Sizing Up Fanzine Reviews

I didn’t mean to infer that short fanzine reviews have no value. To the contrary, they can be very helpful as pointers that guide less experienced fans to good fanzines and away from bad ones.

For a variety of reasons, I don’t want to do short reviews now. There are already fans doing that pretty well and I don’t think it’s the best way to use my fanwriting time.

And if I committed to writing in-depth fanzine reviews, nothing less than forthright truthfulness would satisfy me.

And *that* again brings up the problems that I discussed last issue.

I love the idea of a review based on a run of issues. Any chance you might be willing to revive the concept for **fan-stuff**?

Still More to Robert Lichtman The All-Time Corflu Guest List

I find the differences and similarities among the guest lists fascinating, so I hope more readers take the 10 minutes to write and send one.

The overlap among lists is more relevant to the consensus guest list. I expect every list to have some fans who are of great personal relevance to the fan submitting the list. The fans on that consensus guest list will be those who overlap the most entries.

My interest in the individual lists centers on the idiosyncratic selections. The fan in my “top 20” likely to get the fewest mentions is probably Dave Van Arnam.

DVA had some solid fannish achievements, including his seminal weekly fanzine *First Draft*, but he wasn’t well-known throughout Fanzine Fandom. (*First Draft* inspired Apa F, the first weekly apa, which begat Apa L.) He was also a good friend of mine, one I miss very much.

I miss rich brown even more, which is why he’s on my list. The case for him as an all-time BNF is probably stronger, though. Rich co-edited *Focal Point* and *Beardmutterings*, and co-edited *The Incomplete Terry Carr*

**Is Chris Garcia
The Fan of
Tomorrow**
Arnie/1

**Fen Den
Ideas to Build
Up Blogs**
Arnie/2

**How I Spent
My Labor Day**
Arnie/4

**Four-Dimensional
Mental Crifanac:
Pick Your
All-Time
Guest List**
Arnie/4

loccer room
YOU & me/5

come to dominate the mainstream cultural landscape.” The diverse programming at the worldcon and the larger regional conventions puts the lie to that, and if *Fanstuff* is the only one of “our” fanzines he’s checked out he’s missing a lot of discussion about those things he thinks we “should be thinking about.”

The last paragraph of your comments in the sidebar titled “If you can’t be accurate at least be emphatic” are spot on—reading the last two paragraphs of his letter I find it hard to stop laughing at his off-the-wall take on us.

I enjoyed Terry Kemp’s anecdotes about the ‘62 Chicon, especially the Harlan story.

I greeted the news of SNAPS’ revival with mixed feelings. As you write, it was a reasonably entertaining group until, as you note, “a couple of over-enthusiastic members...over-burdened the eMailings with mammoth contributions.” That adjective doesn’t do the situation justice. One member contributed 283 pages of a 365-page mailing, with the runner-up having 44 pages. I’m not sure I’m going to continue, but I was pleased to see some internal discussion about a maximum size for a contribution to any given mailing.

**Yet More to Robert Lichtman
It Came from Beyond The Fannish Fringe**

Since I’d never heard of Jonathan McCalmont, I paralleled your search the Internet to see what I could learn about this sudden tornado in our midst. I’m gla I did it before I answered his letter of comment and finished **fanstuff #19**.

Jonathan’s letter of comment made me laugh. I would’ve found it funnier, I guess, if it wasn’t such a weak effort. I might’ve been harsher if I hadn’t checked on him. I don’t kick stray dogs, either.

There’s nothing more feeble, or more ridiculous, than an attack piece written by someone who doesn’t know the target.

I’m shocked by your report on Nalini’s weird postings. Joyce looked at the stuff today — I haven’t bothered — an told me about its excesses. Did she really have something even more detrimental to her reputation up earlier? That she took it down wasn’t surprising. That’s the kind of thing cowards like to do.

If Nalini Haynes was interested in having an adult conversation rather than randomly spewing hate in every direction, she would respond directly instead of posting that nonsense somewhere her targets are unlikely to see it.

No Fanews Is Not Good News

Nonetheless, that’s the situation.

See you next week. In the meantime, keep fanning — Arnie

fanstuff #19, September 7, 2012, is a frequent fanzine from Arnie Katz (crossfire4@cox.net). It’s available at efanzines.com, thanks to kindly Mr. Burns. **9/9/12**

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