

Hard Science Tales

Hard Science Tales #1 is created by Joyce Worley Katz, PMB 152, 330 South Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107, on December 10, 2004, specifically for distribution to SNAFFU members and other Vegas fan friends. Thanks to Arnie Katz for the production help. The picture is, of course, Stolen from some Internet Pundit. If you like this, write to me at JoyceWorley1@cox.net

Howdy! One of the very best things about starting a new fanzine is that it provides a good excuse for introducing ones self. I suspect most of us are equally fond of talking about *our favorite person* (namely *me*) since it gives us a chance to polish out some of our imperfections, and put a gloss over some of the flaws. Not that I have any of those, of course....

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 any antenna, 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.



Katz In Space The miserable lime-helmeted space-kitty to the left is probably pondering some weighty science, such as whether this head-gear will withstand the impact of a moon-landing or even the turbulence of a comet fly-by.

I myself do not ponder such notions, because it seems clear to me that cats already have explored time and space, even without the benefit of this high-tech brain-shield. I understand they first went to the moon believing it was green cheese, and expecting to find green moon-mice to play with. Since this failed, they've been understandably cynical about space travel, and refuse to divulge whatever secrets they may have discovered there.

Snatched From Time Have you ever noticed how many people look like each other? I observe there are only a finite number of facial types, and I feel certain this is because we all come from cloned embryos planted here in the before-the-before. There are probably some very Serious Scientifical Facts to support or debunk this theory, but only a curmudgeon would suggest I let real information interfere with my fancies.

Silicone Magic I imagine that Las Vegas must have the highest concentration of overheated silicone of any spot in the world. What with all the desert sand, the neon lights, (and saying nothing about all the siliconed cuties in town) there's always a danger that some electric spark may ignite a new intelligent plateau in Las Vegas. Add to this regular mixture the number of silicon Christmas Tree lights that inhabit the city in December, and you can see that we are approaching critical silicone mass. What effect will this have on our fair city? Well, I suppose that the Luxor will launch itself into space, the Stratosphere Tower will explode upward like a rocket, and all intelligent lifeforms in the area will suddenly grow giant brain-stuffed heads. We'll be so smart we'll be able to understand all the secrets of time and space, and that will put us in such high demand that we can Name Our Own Ticket in the courts and congresses of the world.

Or maybe we'll just blow up real good.

Nonetheless, if you stare into a Christmas Tree with flashing lights, it does seem that messages start to appear in the patterns formed by the flickering. I have no idea what this means, but we ought to be able to put it to use in someway, perhaps to launch a march on the other fan cities of the southwest. We can steal Phoenix' libraries. We can take Salt Lake City's rocket experimenters. We can walk off with LASFS' club house. Today the Mojave, tomorrow—the World!

I'll Admit It's Nonsense OK. So maybe I haven't been completely serious nor exhibited any great knowledge about hard science. But maybe a bit of whimsy will sell my philosophy that science fiction fandom is, first and last, about having fun.

And so is publishing fanzines fun. Though those dusty books, in that dusty attic way back in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, in 1956, opened a new universe to me, it was really the discovery of science fiction fandom that made the biggest mark on me. And, not being too much into Heavy Science (I skip those parts in the books) it's the humorous side of fandom, that holds my attention. And that's what I'm doing here today. (end.)