

# NEON

*Scintillating Sixth Issue!*



# Rev It Up!

## Arnie Katz

What a day for a fanzine!

Not only are we having a barbeque at this Vegrants meeting, with the inimitable JoHn Hardin as Grillmasher, but we are also celebrating my 65th birthday!

The emails and Facebook posts are arriving faster than I can read them. It certainly made me feel very good to be remembered by so many old friends. I have some nostalgia for the days when Bill Rotsler, rich brown and I combined our birthdays into one, marathon celebration, but I'm not in a mood to wallow in wistful memories. The outpouring of congratulatory messages is a compelling reminder that these are pretty damn good days, too.

If this is where you might be expecting me to pass a comment about not expecting to live past 30, I must disappoint. I had every intention of reaching this milestone. And while tomorrow is never guaranteed, I'm pretty hopeful of seeing some more milestones, too.

What I didn't expect was that I would still be actively writing and publishing for Fandom. When I was a neofan, a junior in high school, comparatively few fans remained highly active past the age of 30. Excluding shining exceptions such as Willis, Rotsler and Tucker, the 40-, 50- and 60-year-old fans I encountered at the Midwestcon and such events didn't do much creative fanac. The "generation gap" was working overtime in the late 1960's and it was hard to imagine myself becoming as stodgy and Mundane as many of those fans. All I could really do was focus on the exceptions, the life-long fans, and hope that I could follow their path.

When I returned to Fandom in 1989, I saw that the shifting demographics of our subculture had opened the way for many fans to remain at least somewhat active for decades.

I must confess that the two weeks since the last Vegrants meeting have not been my healthiest. It started when I imprudently raised my head exactly where a cabinet door had swung open. I've battled this cabinet door before in the ceaseless war between clumsy humans and inanimate objects.

I thought the war might be over, because I haven't had my bell rung like that since being hit in the head with a bowling ball. I didn't pass out or have double vision, so it wasn't a full blown concussion, but it took



**Neon #6** November 28, 2011, is another spontaneous effusion from the Vegrants.

### Editorial Culprits

Arnie Katz, James Taylor, Joyce Katz, Tee Cochran, Jacq Monahan, Don Miller, JoHn Hardin, Brenda Dupont and Steve Green.

We can be contacted through Arnie Katz ([crossfire4@cox.net](mailto:crossfire4@cox.net))

Member fwa

Supporter AFAL

All photos this issue are by Don Miller

Cover graphic by Steve Green

about 10 days for the headaches to stop.

This last week was made miserable by a combination of a sinus infection and medication that had me sleeping more than I was awake. I was still reasonably confident about surviving until July 2nd, but I began to wonder if it was my *own* hundred-and-sixty-fifth birthday.

On Friday, a change in medicine and a couple of doses of Tylenol had me back to my normal self by the time the Vegrants Clock on my office wall showed that my birthday had actually begun. Now, clear-headed (relatively) and pain free for the first time in two weeks, I feel like I'm just turning *twenty-five*.

Yesterday, I published the 17th issue of *Glitter* in as many weeks and today I got *Neon #6* to Joyce for proofreading. I'm working on an anthology, *Faned's Choice:2011*. I've got two huge pieces almost ready for publication and I am fairly confident that I'll still be partying when that scalding Vegas sun rises over the mountains on Sunday morning.

Not too shabby for an oldphart.

### Joyce Katz

Ahhh, quit bragging! You're still a brash young whippersnapper!

Actually, I'll modify that accusation of brashness. You certainly were an aggressive college-aged fan, when I first heard of you. I believe the first time I noticed your name was in a report of Midwest-con, when you stood up strong for Pongs. The effort failed but there was a great deal of acrimony about it; I suspect there's still a variety of opinions about what the fan awards should be called. I liked the idea of naming them for Tucker ("Hoy Ping Pong".) Nowadays that subject is securely decided, and there seems little chance fans will ever give up their desire for a Hugo ("just like the pros get.")

The first time I met you, in the art room at NYCon 3, you walked into the room and immediately started ragging with someone near the door. And as you went across the room, similar gibes flew in every direction. You were one brash fan, and I just knew I wouldn't like you because of that. I was surprised when you came up and spoke to me with friendship and kindness. And of course, that's how I have known you for the last 40-45 years.

### James Taylor

The Charring of Food Products has begun! John is already waving a very large knife/chopper/bottle opener around as he throws hamburger patties and various tubular processed food products on the grill. The dining room table has been set up with all the auxiliary and decorative items that go with hamburgers and tubular food products.

In fact the first wave have left the grill so I will leave the keyboard, for a while at least.



### Jacq Monahan

The Great Arnie Katz is 65! Let's eat! The cake says Kingfish, the grill has not yet reached the temperature of the Las Vegas night (and it's already cremated a few things by now). We have the lovely Fareys with us tonight. There's talk of druids in the kitchen and the parlor is the scene of a bur-

**Rev It Up! — The Vegrants Ignite — page 2**  
**The Chicago SFL — Arnie Katz — page 7**  
**Formania — The Vegrants Reunite — page 9**  
**After Hours — The Vegrants at Night — page 14**  
**Tailgate Party — The Vegrants Come Right — page 23**

ger nosh. Poor JoHn the grillmaster is soaked and beleaguered, keeping us all fed. There are even hot-dogs in the catfood dish outside. He's just gone back to Hades on a special request for Nic. We have things made of turkey, pork and beef –and grill marks on them all. Happy Birthday, Chief!

**Brenda Dupont**

Hail to the Chief! Happy 65th Birthday, Arnie. Glad that you survived illness and are up to partying for this momentous event. I've made the trek from Boulder City, a good 30 miles from here, where I'm pet sitting. Pampered poochies and caged birds that don't sing wouldn't keep me from attending. Great to see Nic & BB here along with the regulars. In the middle of an in depth discussion of vampires in books, plays and films through the ages with Ross and Joyce, I hear Tee laughing and clapping her hands in the back room. Time to migrate to see what's percolating.

**Ross Chamberlain**

It has been a hectic-eclectic evening full of wrestling analysis, rock (and other nostalgic music like sounds), celebratory foodstuffs (tubular and otherwise), literary discussion involving famous fantasy icons and some mysterious ones (Agatha Christie, Nero Wolfe, Lord Peter Wimsey, et al), and other absorbing issues, not overlooking Arnie's having successfully achieved that iconic milestone which for many was once the signpost pointing to retirement. Arnie hardly ever was the retiring type in any sense, as near as I can tell, but in this case it's a bit like the smokers who explain they never have trouble quitting -- they've done it any number of times... Well, I happen to know that Arnie's neglected FaceBook wall has been plastered with many Good Wishes for the Occasion. Remarkably little ragging involved, all things considered.



Teresa and James contemplate the table of treats before the party starts in the Katz living room

**Arnie**

Even in the midst of a night of high spirits and intoxicating experiences, let us pause if only for a moment to mark the passing of the Red Apple Grill. The Vegrants' West Side hang-out is no more, a

casualty of the hard economic times and the Vegas law that prevented bars that serve food from permitting smoking. The law was just rescinded, but the change didn't come soon enough to help the Red Apple maximize traffic from Boodles, the gambling bar now separated by a wall from the kitchen and the booths for diners.

Big John, who truly is a man-mountain, presided over the Red Apple. He loved to play host, kidding the customers and giving favored customers little freebies and price breaks. John's open manner allowed him to triumph over the fact that he's a Tea Party Republican. It didn't hurt so much after we convinced Big John, a sports lover, that ESPN would be a better choice for the restaurant's TV than Fox News.

The waitresses and cooks included Jackie Cooper, who has attended a couple of Vegrants events, until tough economic necessity eventually forced her to seek employment elsewhere.

Joyce and I ate at the restaurant that preceded the Red Apple, so it seemed natural to try the new eatery as soon as it opened. We liked the pulled pork sandwiches, half-pound beef franks, ribs and other Red Apple specialties (and the very low prices) enough to become regulars.

Big John immediately identified us as Local Color, two aging beatnik writers who could be counted upon to take his jokes in good humor and get off some pretty wild quips themselves. We began bringing other Vegrants in for meals – another dash of Local Color. Many of the Vegrants ate there so regularly that they become known in their own right. We made a few Final Visits with various friends and now it's gone.



Joyce Katz contemplates the Infinite and perhaps wonders what happened to the boy she married.

## John Hardin

When last I fled the grill, I dragged my delicious-smelling-charcoal-smoke wracked body into the house, where it took me a full hour and a half plus three or four beers to recover from my labors. I do still have a lovely charcoal-grilled aroma about me, so I'd best stay away from the cats.



Arnie raises his voice in joyous song at his birthday party at the 7/2 Vegrants meeting.

Speaking of cats, Happy Birthday to the Kingfish. The Mexican Mafia knows him only as *el jefe*; underworld associates with incriminating accents call him *il capo de tutti capi*. To us, he's Arnie Katz. To him, he's also Arnie Katz. That makes two of him, which makes today his 130<sup>th</sup> birthday. You don't look half your age, Chief. Cheers!

Damn the luck, I was just ready to write a brief story about the Red Apple when I found out they were closing. I know whatever small dose of publicity it might have garnered wouldn't be enough to put off the inevitable, but it would have been fun to write about them. At least we know Big John will probably continue to thrive in his catering business.

## Don Miller

Here we are, to celebrate Arnie's birthday. It's the 4th of July weekend and it's hot as a fire-cracker. John deserves combat pay for battling the elements with the BBQ outside. Mass quantities of charred animal flesh have been consumed and the cake has been properly masticated. We're on our second pot of coffee and Nic just woke up from his nap. He asks that I say "something appropriate" on his behalf. There, my obligation is complete. But seriously folks, it's been a great party and the naked dancing girls were a nice touch. For those who left early...you missed out.



Lucky James Taylor takes a breather from lining up the fans to take a turn at the keyboard to write this article.

## Joyce Katz

Naked dancing girls? Gee, I missed them.... But there are a quartet of naked kitties outside, dancing around the (now cooled) barbeque pit and searching for glamorous tidbits. No doubt the scent is driving them a little nuts.

The coffee has been drank. The cake was dutifully sang over, and pronounced successful and tasty. Now if a dozen more people would just show up and eat the rest of the food...

Why is it that food and fans never come out even? There's always too much of one or not enough of the other. Surely that could be corrected.

I hate it that the Red Apple is gone. It was such a great thing to have a good barbecue house right in our neighborhood. But I'm not really surprised that the restaurant failed: their prices were too low to pay the overhead. Even if JoHn had got his article about the place published a month or two ago, no amount of traffic could make Red Apple profitable. Sad.

## James Taylor

I'm enjoying my Niaspan flush and a very comfortable gathering. The Kennedys are off into the night but everyone else has dug it and seems determined to hold out till dawn.

Heck, I might even make a third pot of coffee.

Arnie! Arnie! seems to taking the loss of the Red Apple well. It's announced replacement claims to serve Chicago-style Hot Dogs, Sausages and Italian Beef. Also and most importantly, Hamburgers! He's already planning a special visit the day after they open. I hope they're ready.

### Jacq for TAFF!

As you may well have deduced from this issue's cover, we're very much in favor of "Jacq 4 TAFF!" The Vegrants' own Jacq Monahan is standing in the current TAFF election, which will send a deserving fan to the 2012 British National Convention next April.

The charming Ms. Monahan has shown her fannish mettle as a fanzine writer and publisher, co-OE of the electronic apa SNAPS and a prominent member of the Vegrants. Fans selected her as the best new fan of 2008 in the Fan Activity Achievement Award voting.

Jacq Monahan will be a gracious representative of North American Fandom and will write an entertaining and informative TAFF Trip Report when she returns to us.

So we say again:

**Vote for Jacq Monahan for TAFF!**



## Fanhistory by Arnie Katz

The Chicago Science Fiction League, one of Fandom's oldest clubs, has founded renewed life after a few years of quiet hibernation. That's completely in character for the organization, which has survived even longer periods of apparent idleness.

The iconic Hugo Gernsback launched the Science Fiction League as a national fan organization as a promotion for his *Wonder Stories*. When Standard Magazines bought the prozine, they changed the title to *Thrilling Wonder*, but kept the Science Fiction League.

The SFL was an association of clubs, not individual fans. Three fans could apply for an SFL charter and, after awhile, see reports on their club in the prozine. Fandom's oldest local clubs, LASFS and PSFS, both began as SFL chapters.

The Chicago Science Fiction League expanded rapidly after its formation and soon became well known enough in Fandom to bid for the 1940 world science fiction convention, the ChiCon.

The convention turned out successfully, but the

stresses and strains proved too much for the sponsors. The Chicago Science Fiction went dormant.

So it was for more than a half-century.

And so it might have remained had fate not stirred the ashes of that once-mighty organization. The revival began when a know-nothing bunch of semi-fans from Chicago started to bid for a world convention – in Las Vegas. Since most of the bidding group had never attended a science fiction convention, their publicity contained a lot of outlandish ideas, like separate fees for each panel and speech.

Worse, the bid started dropping Joyce and my names into their spiel, just as if they had had some kind of contact with us. Vegas' leading fans felt the need to speak up. The result was an ad that spelled out the facts that we were not affiliated in any way with the bid and, in fact, supported the opposition.

We also agreed that if Chicago people could bid for a convention in Las Vegas, we ought to reach



every world and regional con held in Chicago since ChiCon I.

We have not, will not, waver from this objective and we have eaten a whole lot of hot dogs along the way.

Despicably deadbeat Chicago con-runners may have thought they got a reprieve when Chicago Hotdog closed and the Chicago SFL suspended meetings for a time.

Now the club has once more sprung to vibrant fannish life, energized by the Grand Opening of its new headquarters, Windy City Beefs and Dogs.

Our enthusiasm is high and our purpose is strong. We will not rest until we receive just reparations as the Second City's oldest and most active fan club.

And so we raise our voices as one to shout the magic phrase that embodies our crusade and testifies to our determination to obtain justice:

Pay or Gafiate!

— Arnie Katz

out to Chicago. After consulting the Chicago SFL's surviving officer, Secretary-Treasurer Mr. Arthur Wilson Tucker of Bloomington, IL. Bob gave his permission and we began holding meetings of the Chicago Science Fiction League at the Chicago Hotdog restaurant, located near Toner Hall on Vegas' west side.

Do not imagine that the Chicago Science Fiction League was a purposeless expression of fannish high spirits.

No, indeed. As was revealed in a series of highly productive, and tasty, meetings, the Chicago SFL has a Righteous Cause.

Many groups have staged conventions in Chicago since 1940. Club records revealed, shockingly, that not one single other Chicago convention had shared their revenues with the Chicago Science Fiction League!

Perhaps they thought that the bill would never come due and that they could poach on our territory and not give the club its share of the receipts. Incredible, but true.

The goal of the Chicago Science Fiction League is to redress this gross violation of fannish etiquette. We have demanded reparations from



The entrance to Windy City, the Vegrant's new hang-out.

# Formania!

## Ken & Aileen Come to Visit

### Arnie Katz

In these days of the 55% divorce rate and pronouncements that seven years is a successful marriage, it's a wonderful thing to see a couple celebrating 25 (mostly) happy years together. Tonight at the Launch Pad, we're saluting Ken and Aileen Forman on their Silver Wedding Anniversary

They spent most of last week driving here from their home in bucolic Flippin, Arkansas, to share this special moment with their Vegas fan friends.

The health and longevity of their relationship is particularly noteworthy, because it is probably harder for two "inner-directed" people like Ken and Aileen than it might be for an "other-directed" twosome who do as society tells them.

Aileen the shrewd pessimist and Ken the amiable optimist are, like most Trufans, very special and unique people. Yet despite each one's accumulation of crotchets, idiosyncrasies and obsessions, they've shown a remarkable ability to bridge the gap between their viewpoints and make their differences into greater strengths for

them as a couple. Their relationship should be an inspiration for new, hopeful couples that aspire to a comparably long and fulfilling relationship.

The Formans have contributed greatly to our happiness while enjoying their own. We loved Las Vegas when we moved here in October, 1989. Yet as we renewed activity in Fandom, we increasingly yearned for fannish friends with whom we could

Ken Forman casts an expert eye over the backyard grill. JoHn Hardin, the Vegrants' current Grill-master, had the situation well in hand.



share our interest and join in fanac.

I've often told about my first telephone call with the Formans, so I won't trample old ground. I mention it, because that conversation told me so much about Ken that the ensuing two decades has confirmed.

Ken rose out of a sound sleep to talk to a weird stranger. Bombarded by startling information, Ken maintained an easy-going, receptive attitude. It probably seemed like a thunderbolt, but his innate trufaanish spirit made him listen attentively and respond intelligently.

Once I said my piece, I left the future course of Las Vegas Fandom in Ken's hands. I said I could either fade away and leave them alone, or I would teach them about the Fandom I knew and loved.

Ken chose uncertainty and change, with a promise of fresh energy and new activities, over the chance to stay a big fish in the small pond of an isolated, local Fandom. He won my respect with that difficult decision and he has never lost it.

Aileen was more analytical and cautious. She didn't give her heart, and her trust, so quickly. Yet give it she did, when she perceived that Fandom was an opportunity, not a threat. Aileen has racked up a fine list of achievements in Fandom and there is no doubt that the blood of a Trufan courses through her veins.

They've been good friends to Joyce and me for most of the last 20 years. Before I start to get really misty-eyed, I'll turn the keyboard over to



Aileen peers into the screen, reading the comments of her fellow Vegrants.

my Brothers and Sisters in Fanac who will undoubtedly have more to say about the Formans and about the party blazing all around us tonight.

### Joyce Katz

The Formans are an easy couple to love. They're both social people; they accumulate clusters of friends every place they go. No one that knows them would question why we found them so congenial. But it might have surprised some that the Katz/Forman friendship grew strong; it didn't really come easy.

Frankly, it started rather badly. Arnie and Ken got along famously, in that oft-reported initial phone conversation. We couldn't help but admire Ken's easy-going manner, even when just awakened from a sound sleep. After our first SNAFFU meeting, we made a date with them to visit us for dinner the following Friday evening. We set the time to a mutually convenient hour – they were to arrive at 7:30.

We were tremendously excited. At that point, our contact with local fandom was still minimal, and it would be our first dinner with fans in many years. In the intervening years of our gafia, there had been many dinners, with friends and also with business acquaintances. But renewing the contact with fandom was important to us, and we looked forward to

Fans relax in the backyard at the Launch Pad.



the Forman's visit with great anticipation.

Seven-thirty came, and went. Eight o'clock, and we felt sure they must have had a car accident. Eight-thirty, and the spaghetti sauce was getting thick; the mushrooms were mushy, and the salad was wilted. After some urging by me, Arnie finally phoned them.

Ken was all friendship and good cheer when Arnie reached him. "We're going to drop by to visit you tonight," said Ken, as if it hadn't occurred to him before.

Arnie reminded Ken that they weren't just dropping by, and that we were waiting dinner for them. Ken replied brightly, "Oh, we don't like to make plans; we never set definite times."

This made them as about as opposite to us as possible. One of the many ways Arnie and I get along is that we both make plans, and we always arrive on time, or a few minutes early. I don't think I was ever late for an appointment in all my working life. And, I've never quite figured out why Ken and Aileen were so *liaise-faire* about time; they both had responsible jobs that required punctuality. I suppose their lack of planning was in reaction to their work.

Of course, they eventually did arrive. I watered down the spaghetti sauce, and fluffed up the salad. And we had a wonderful evening with this very pleasant company. Arnie expressed his desire that future meetings be scheduled more definitely, and Ken understood. I can't say he instantly became a clock watcher, but they never hung us up that way again.

It took a while to make them comfortable about fanzine fandom. Ken started enjoying the paper world almost at once. Aileen was disturbed and distrustful of fandom's clannishness. But she couldn't resist forever, and eventually she began to like us.

### **James Taylor**

I was, I think, lucky to join SNAFFU while Ken and Aileen were taking turns running it. They made it look so easy, everything happened smoothly and it was so easy to belong. As I found out later as SNAFFU president this was an illusion, or magic, because I floundered the Wasa. Of course I still have fond memories of stumping them at my first SNAFFU meeting about where



James Taylor (*left*) catches up on the latest news from Flip-pin, AR., courtesy of Ken.

they had seen me before.

### **Brenda Dupont**

I joined SNAFFU in post K and A times, April, 2008. However, I did meet Ken at Corflu Silver the same month. I overheard him say to Alan White, "Yes, I'm still in Arkan-flipping-saw." Since I used to say the same thing about Colorado flipping Springs, I was quite amused. I missed meeting Aileen that night, but heard much about the great SNAFFU functions and events they both hosted and how much they were missed. I wrote and read a few SNAPS, and learned about Babycakes fried pies. Confirmation that Aileen and I had only few degrees of separation and here was proof. I love fried pies. I even made them with my grandmother. Although I've never had a Babycakes fried pie, I'd love to try one. Now, I'm Facebook friends with them both, and it's great to personally join the celebration of their silver anniversary. Here's to another 25, Ken & Aileen! Now get your asses back to Las Flipping Vegas!

### **Jacq Monahan**

Ken and Aileen are back and the Launchpad is rockin' with friends, fun and fire! Ken's at the grill, and JoHn has just reported to me that there are no less than six different kinds of meat involved. It's a carnivore's heaven and the table is filled with salads, desserts, and diet-wrecking comestibles of every hue and type. I must resist the

urge to paw through the meat with my bare hands. Remember Mia Farrow in *Rosemary's Baby*? She caught a glimpse of herself gnawing on a nearly raw steak. The devil made her do it. That's the excuse I'M going to use.

Happy Anniversary Ken and Aileen! So happy we're together at this "meating."

### **Ross Chamberlain**

I'd forgotten that scene in *Rosemary's Baby*, but I've tried to put a lot of that film out of my mind in the years since. No, I didn't hate it. I'm glad to have seen it. Once.

I've been enjoying the food this evening, some of it prepared by at least one of our honorees this evening, some of fierier nature than I'm normally prepared for. It was *not* Nic's chili, which I fortunately had adequate warning about. Well ahead of time, which allows me to retain the word "well" in association with this evening. Ken was extolling its virtues at length a little earlier, when I sat down to play, and I was almost wishing I could appreciate it.

Other than that hallucination, it's been really good to see Ken and Aileen here again, looking great.

### **Jacq Monahan**

Have finally stopped eating (for now) long enough to snap some digital pix of the guests. There'll be sparklers lit before long and Lori's already had an upside down Margarita mixed in her mouth, courtesy of Aileen. Nic's a-playin' the keyboard and a-wailin' a song. JoHn wishes he could find his harmonicas but they are AWOL. Joyce and I sport Indian-style tunics, Brenda is svelte and Bobbie looks like a teen. Vee are all za bee-yoo-tee-ful people, you know. Perhaps the Formans hold the secret to the Fountain of Youth. Or at least the Fountain of Fun.

### **JoHn Hardin**

A quick catalog of tonight's comestibles, in no particular order: steak, bratwurst, hot dogs, grilled chicken, stewed chicken, two different kinds of cornbread, lethally hot chili, assorted cheeses, cold meats, three or four salads, a variety of desserts, an ice chest full of beer, absinthe, champagne, and

Long Island Iced Tea in bottle. Oh, and a good port. Have I missed anything? I'm sure I have but that can be blamed on the beer or the absinthe.

Why am I taking an inventory of the food? Because words fail me when it comes to talking about the important stuff, like how great it is that we're all here celebrating the Forman's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and how much they both mean to me, so talk of food and booze will have to suffice. Happy anniversary, guys.

### **Arnie**

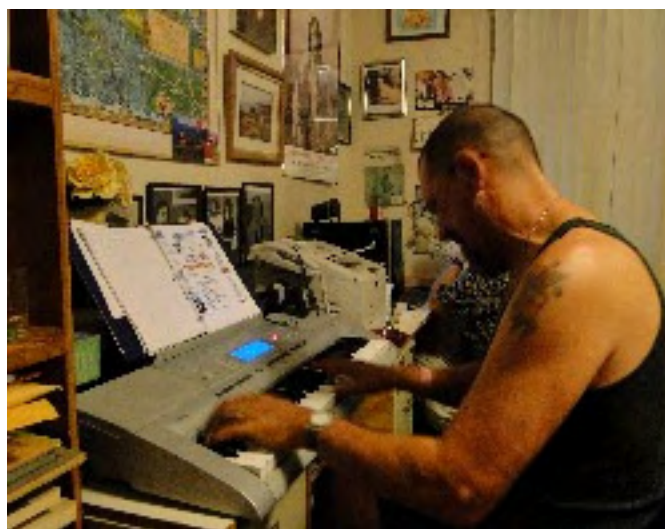
"Sit down at the damn keyboard" they said tome with genuine menace in their voices, "and don't you get out of that chair until you've done your share to besmirch, impugn Ken and Aileen's reputations."

"Joyce has already revealed their past planning deficiency," I protested. "Why are we subjecting them to such calumny?"

"Because they're our friends," the voices retorted. "We would do this for an enemy; how can we do less for two such wonderful friends?"

Despite this compelling logic, I resolved not to listen to their commands. Admittedly, it's a bit easier to ignore those voices, because they are in my head. It might've been much tougher if I wasn't agnostic

Instead, let me write of Ken Forman, Fan, Myth and Legend. (Aileen, whom I adore, is a Legend, too, but space limitations force me to



Nic Farey made a rare appearance at the Vegrants and serenaded everyone on the keyboard.

postpone extolling her many virtues. Perhaps later....)

I have followed the spread of Ken's Legend for nearly two decades with keen interest. I feel a special connection, perhaps, because I gave it an initial nudge.

Not that I invented the Legend that is Ken Forman. To say that would be gross hubris. Rather, I think of Ken as someone with innate Legend Potential. All I did was help draw it out and reveal it to Fandom.

After that, the Legend took on a life of its own and needed no further assistance from me.

The first essential step was to give Ken a nickname. I dubbed him "The Mainspring," because he put so much energy into local Fandom and often took a leading role in local fan activities.

Las Vegas fans immediately started calling him The Mainspring. I briefly feared that Ken might top out at Local Fan Hero, barely known outside Vegas for more than the Talking Stick, the Byzantine SNAFFU membership questionnaire and the infamous Gay Pirate Shirt.

I needn't have worried.

Even as the apprehension formed in my mind, Fandom had begun to add to the Ken Forman Legend.

The most striking aspect of this phenomenon was that fans started remembering knowing Ken and recalling his exploits in the past. I knew things had reached an apotheosis when fans started discussing Ken's adventures at the Solacon in 1958. That's five years before I entered Fandom.

The Ken Forman Legend is now stamped on fanhistory. I shall gracefully retire to the wings, my role in establishing it done. Perhaps I will some day be remembered as Ned Buntline to his Buffalo Bill.

### **Don Miller**

Great party so far. Tons of food yet to be eaten, loads of beer to be drunk...and at this early hour of 10:45, the first pot of coffee is brewing. It must be a sign of age. Speaking of age, Nic's 9-alarm-chili is for the young and the brave. A few bites and I was ready to drown in my own sweat! Then Aileen treated me to an upside-down margarita... everything's been fuzzy since then.

It's awfully good of Ken to BBQ at his own

party and the food was excellent. It's great to see everyone together again. Nic is doing a nice rendition of "House of the Rising Sun", one of my favorites. I'm going back to the party while I still can.

### **Ken Forman**

I'll freely admit that I don't remember that first fateful dinner party at Joyce and Arnie's. How rude were we? I am chagrined. I don't deny the story, I just don't remember it.

I do think, however, that enough of the ensuing years shone favorably on my fannish, and friendshipish reputation.

I so enjoy cooking, grilling, preparing food that it was an honor for me to (as Don so aptly put it) BBQ at my own party. Nic's chili was delicious and spicy enough, not too spicy as many others seem to think.

So many parties, so many good meals, so many shared stories; Vegas fandom and the Formans have many intersecting parts. I'm so happy to see that the group continues in a joyful and convivial manner.

Twenty-five years ago Aileen and I were married. Last night I asked her if she was ready for another 25. She gave me a typical answer. She told me she wasn't sure she was up for that kind of commitment; that she wasn't sure.

### **Aileen Forman**

As it's now after midnight, it is indeed our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and I have to say that it feels like we've only been married about 7 years. I guess the secret to a happy marriage is a bad memory. Speaking of which, we've all reminisced and I'm really not remembering about 25% of the incidents I supposedly instigated.

But now it's late and my headache is back, so I'm going to make this short. I'm glad we're here and I'm even more glad that my friends are here and that they still welcome us back into their lives. I love you guys.

### **A Sad Noye**

Ken and Aileen had to cut short their Vegas stay due to a family emergency. We hope they will return soon.

# After Hours

## The Vegrants' 'Other' Interests

The Vegrants, the happy band that brings you this and other fanzines, is one of the most active current local clubs. Besides the twice-monthly meetings, the upcoming Corflu Glitter and the aforementioned fanzines, there is a lot of visiting among the members between nights at the Launch Pad.

Reading *Neon*, *Glitter*, *Piffle* and the SNAPS eMailings might give the impression that we are all hell bent for crifanac when we aren't sleeping, eating and sexing. Vegas may look a little like an endless convention when viewed from a distance.

That's an inaccurate picture. One thing that makes the individual Vegrants so interesting to each other is that all of us have a collection of interests that go well beyond Fandom.

This article surveys our extra-Fandom interests. We'd like to hear about yours, too. Who knows? You may find a kindred spirit for one of *your* interests.

### Arnie Katz

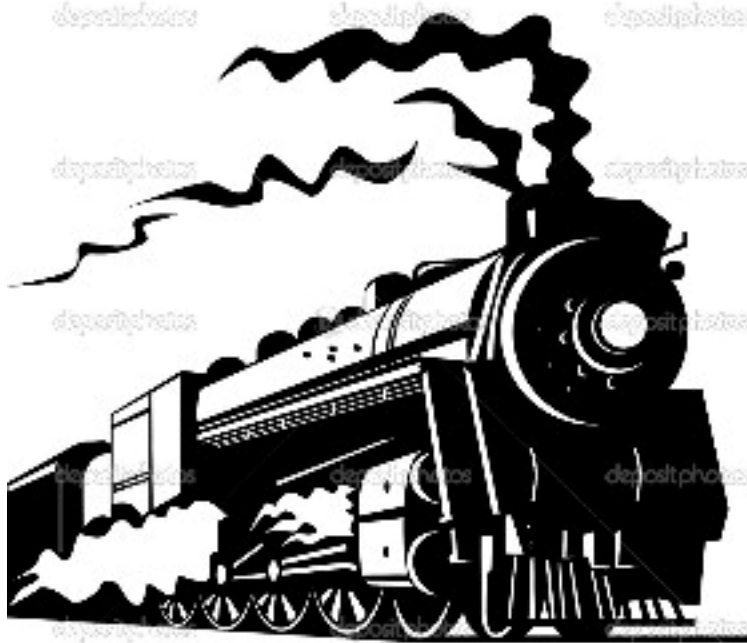
"Anything that two fans do together is fanac," rich brown used to remark. By that measure, I'd have to pass on this topic, because Joyce and I spend most of our time together and she is most definitely a fan.

I tried a lot of hobbies before finding Fandom. Lenny Bailes and I grew up on the same street and, together, we rambled through an imposing list of hobbies and

leisure-time activities. We became model railroaders, collected comic books, coins and baseball cards, and spent many hours playing board games. Lenny and I dabbled in hypnotism, stage magic and code breaking. We even tried our hand at amateur sleuthing. I'm sure Lenny and I left more than one New Hyde Park, NY resident wondering why they kept catching fleeting glances of a teenage Mutt and Jeff.

Some of my youthful hobbies and interests developed and grew more sophisticated as I matured. My interest in writing, which predated Fandom by many years, developed into a professional writing and editing career. My love of games led me into designing them. My collecting interest widened to include autographed baseballs and photos and pop culture memorabilia. I eventually became editor-in-chief of CollectingChannel.com, one of the





Internet's largest sites until the "dotcom depression" struck. My grammar school appreciation of little girls became an ardor for adult ones.

Fandom and fans fill a lot of my time, but I still have several active interests that aren't centered on Fandom. I've written about professional wrestling and old time radio extensively in *Piffle*, so I don't want to write about them in this article.

That leaves my interest in music. Some of my earliest memories, stretching back to my toddler years in Canarsie, Brooklyn, include the sound of popular music. I also recall standing in front of the little gray schoolhouse and the thrill of hearing "Rock Around the Clock" for the first time.

I began hunting for rock music at 10, just about the time Alan Freed brought his nightly radio show to New York's WINS. By the time our last turntable broke down, Joyce and I owned roughly 10,000 alums.

Sentimentality caused us to hold onto them too long, but we eventually sold all the albums at ridiculous, distressed prices. We immediately started to build up our CD music library.

We only have a few hundred CD's, but the Internet has come to our rescue in the form of YouTube. Joyce and I have fairly eclectic tastes – hers a little more so than mine – that includes classic rock 'n' roll, alternative rock, folk, reggae, Cajun, older Country and most especially the blues. Our YouTube explorations, several hours a day,

have introduced us to many fine artists, including RL Burnside, Lucille Bogan, Little Village, Guitar Slim and many, many more. We've discovered that Mungo Jerry has a lot more to offer than just "In the Summertime", and we developed hometown pride in The Killers.

I want to stress that my love of music is untainted by any knowledge or ability of singing or playing an instrument. I'll admit to writing some fannish song parodies, but that's the extent of my ability – and I'm a little dubious about that, too.

Actually, Fandom intersects our YouTube activity even more directly. Playing DJ has become the pastime of other Vegrants, too. Don Miller, Nic Farey and JoHn Hardin have brought

many songs to my attention. I've played them a few, too, mostly drawn from my knowledge of pre-Beatles rock and the music of the counter-culture 1960's. Of course, I mix in newer stuff, too, as well as lots of blues, skiffle and jug band music.

And then, sometimes, I play "Rock Follies," Van Dyke Parks, the Holy Modal Rounders and Zachary Richard. Wouldn't want them to think I'm too predictable.

### **James Taylor**

Normally it's books that eat up my spare time like a zombie at the Lou Ruvo Brain Center, but in the last month it's been Anime. Netflix and internet streaming are the delivery system and anime is what it delivers.

Since the late seventies I've liked Anime but the sometimes decade-long breaks led to some surprises when I've finally been able to find some to watch. Even more importantly, I never got to see any series all the way through or in order. Netflix has changed that; now I can see entire series in order, limited only by my bladder and the need to go the mall to walk with Tee and Brenda at 8:00am on weekdays.

Gradually you learn to separate the good from the so-so and identify the sub-genres that make up Anime. Some of the better series that come to

mind include Hell Girl, a modernized Japanese-style ghost story. Birdy the Mighty is a fun body-sharing story and a rare example of a show where the second series is better than the first. And Spice and Wolf is an animated lesson in medieval economics and business practices combined with a minor harvest deity who's lost it's job.

As far as music goes my only current obsession is Mireille Mathieu singing the La Marseillaise in grainy black and white on YouTube.

### **Teresa Cochran**

Speaking of music, I very much enjoy listening to eclectic playlists with the other Veggrants. Music is a huge part of my life, whether I'm playing or listening. I've had huge CD collections at various times, now replaced by a 1-terabyte external drive. I also enjoy collecting musical instruments, and they are gradually taking over our house, along with James' many books. I love a houseful of books and musical instruments. I currently have a mountain dulcimer, a small folk harp, a fiddle, a mandolin, two guitars, a collection of folk flutes, a strudhi box from India, pan pipes, various shakers and rattles, and a bowed psaltery. I've learned to play each one at least enough to demonstrate their use, and I enjoy picking them up and picking up a song or two. Right now at the Blind Center of Nevada, we have a music therapist



who is also a fantastic drummer, and he's going to start an intermediate drumming class. This probably means the inevitable bongo or conga drums to add to the collection at some point.

### **Jacq Monahan**

I love horror/paranormal stories, both book and cinema. Documentaries are another favorite with True Crime as the leading topic of interest. The material world lures me with thrift store "finds" especially glass items. Vases, colored glass (not milky, clear) dangling earrings, vintage cigarette cases and powder compacts, and unusual dinner plates catch my eye.

Then there's cooking shows where I try to glean shortcuts for labor-intensive dishes like paella and tamales. I do shy away from egg whites as an ingredient. Making gifts for others is also something I have a mini-passion for; I've made chocolate truffles, lip gloss and bath salts for that purpose, and the latter two can be customized by flavor, color and fragrance. I am about to begin a new project revitalizing old poems of mine that I will start sending out for publication again. JoHn has given me some great ideas for finding topics in ridiculous menu errors.

I am also ALL about ridiculous menu errors.



## Ross Chamberlain

Oh, my, I thought I had eclectic interests until this point, but I'm not sure I can really match the variety expounded here. Yeas, I enjoy music, with a preference for late classical (post Baroque, pre atonal), skipping most solo vocal, but ranging well into the popular standards from the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century up to the present.

I begin to yield to vocal material via operettas a la Gilbert & Sullivan and into stage musicals from Rogers & Hart through Gershwin to Sondheim, and the amalgams that have come out of Hollywood since sound came in. Jazz: I start to get picky about it around the introduction of bebop; country and western I enjoy from early practitioners of the genre and dig some areas of the cross-overs with folk; and there's some world music styles I can get into... And, yeah, it looks like there's some rock I dig as well, but largely where it's closest to these other areas I've mentioned, not so much into the heavier metal stuff, say. Forget

about rap/hip hop, or concrete/minimalist "serious" music.

I'm sure I've overlooked something or other, but the fact is, in most all of these areas I can't talk about them knowledgeably, comparing names and specifics. I have favorites, but I couldn't tell you backgrounds and histories and influences.

And that's just music, but in some ways I have similar eclectic interests in art, in literature, in most artistic pursuits, really. And I think that could include, um... some "intellectual" areas of philosophy and science, perhaps. General interests, but not pursuits in depth.

I may need to come back to this, but my thinking cap is feeling a bit tight at the moment. Later...

## John Hardin

Like Teresa, music was always important to me. My teenage ambition to have a copy-on-tape of every song I ever liked has been obviated by the future. Over the years since Napster, I have collected 30 gigs or so of digital music, some of it licitly but I don't expect that number to go much higher.

Now that I can more or less instantly hear whatever I want on YouTube and Pandora and Last.fm and Spotify, what's the point of downloading it to my computer? Every now and then I'll spend 99 cents at Amazon to download something I *really* like, but for the most part, all the music I ever wanted to hear is available at the touch of a button. It's not a hot dog stand on the moon but, as futures go, that's pretty cool.

Anyway, that's my music hobby, which involves me sitting around listening to music so we'll talk about my other interests (which, upon review, also happen to involve sitting around. I need to get out more). Beneath my warm fannish exterior beats the bent heart of a gamer. I don't play computer games much any more, for a variety of reasons, but I still dabble in tabletop roleplaying games.

A colleague from the game company where I used to work has started up a game of Pathfinder (essentially D&D) and we're getting together every couple of weeks to pretend to be clerics and monks and whatnot in a fantasy world. Fortunately my friend Scott is an exceedingly clever, twisted,





house to fill and some of my collectables are reaching a point of maximum capacity. Among the things I collect, are movie posters, stills, lobby-cards and maps. There's only so much wall space, which I've filled to a point of satisfaction. Vintage posters can be expensive, so many of my posters are re-prints. I do have some classic original theatrical posters. Among them are "First Men in the Moon", "The Monolith Monsters", "The Andromeda Strain", "Flesh Gordon", "Young Frankenstein", "Day The Earth Caught Fire" and "Five Million Years to Earth". My poster reprints are mostly from comedy and science fiction movies.

Many of the maps I have collected are 3-D topographical maps. I've always been fascinated with them. Trips to southern California would be incomplete, without a stop into the McDonalds in Barstow where several large 3-D maps are on display. I now have my own collection on display in my house, where I can admire and study them at my leisure. John Hardin is quite taken with a large world map of the ocean floor that hangs prominently in my den. I've spent many hours myself, studying this particular map. I also have maps of

talented writer and he runs a fun, unconventional game.

So I've been doing that. I've quit World of Warcraft for the time being, because in five years of playing I figured I've seen as much of the game as I ever would. I'll probably be back when they announce WoW 2.0.

I also read. A lot. Too much: Political commentary, pop culture, science reporting, knife collecting, steel FAQs and that's just on the internet, a tar pit full of the preserved corpses of compulsive readers who have become trapped within it.

I also have a small collection of knives, mostly of the useful pocket variety, because I doubt and sincerely hope that I will never have any need for a razor-sharp combat knife, no matter how badass it looks in the catalog. I also like to install Linux for fun because I am a masochist.

### **Don Miller**

Where do I start With non-fannish hobbies? Many of my interests are fannish, so I'll only spend a little time describing them. I've had a



the Earth's moon, The Milky Way Galaxy and the global surface of Mars.

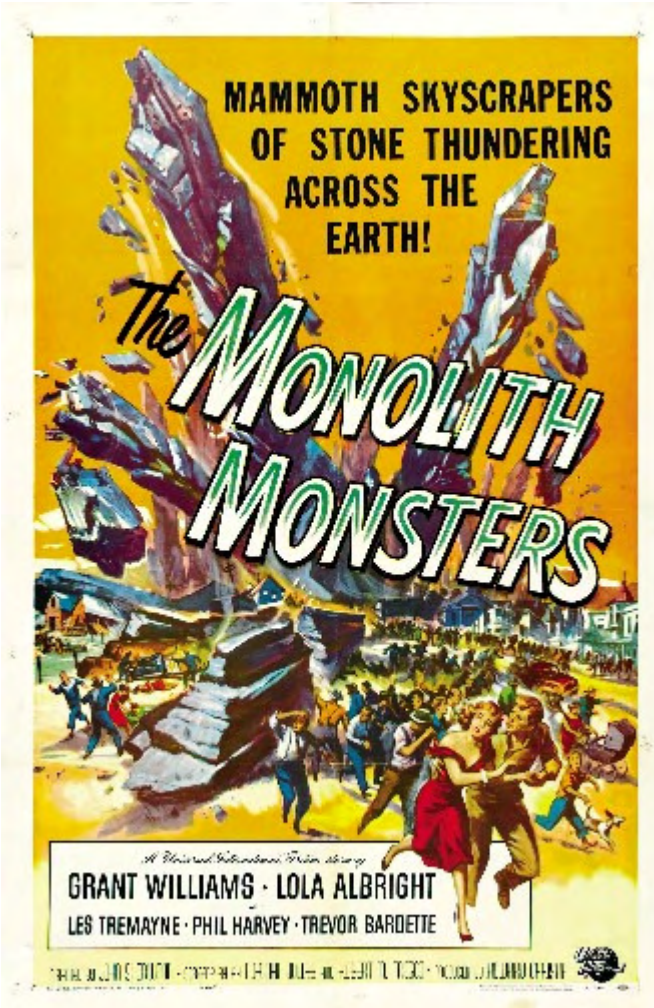
A visitor to my house will unavoidably notice it's filled with Halloween decorations. It happens to be my favorite holiday and every year I go out shopping, in search of unique specimens. As a result, I have so many items that storing them after the holiday has become a problem. Rather than stashing them in a closet, they end up on permanent display. One particular category is the jack-o-lantern. I have a couple dozen specimens that are each unique. I've collected them gradually, usually just one or two a year so that I'm able to find one-of-a-kind items. Quite often these unique designs are not mass-produced from year to year, but rather are limited to one year of sales and distribution. The result is, that my collection is complex, with quite a variety of styles and shapes. The type I collect, are made of compressed Styrofoam and have a texture, density and appearance that resembles the real thing. The material can also be carved to make them even more unique. I use a variety of



small saws and exacto-knives, to carve them and have altered some to make custom designs of my own. This style of jack-o-lantern is becoming rare, as manufacturers are turning to hard plastic instead of the more flammable Styrofoam. Every year for Halloween, I fill my front windows with them and I sit on my porch and give out candy.

Another of my hobbies is collecting home video. I've reached a point where my collection has exceeded my capacity to store and display them properly. One of my future projects will be to build shelves in a spare bedroom to display them permanently. The majority of my videos are of movies made prior to 1970. I've finally reached a point of satisfaction, where I have most of the movies I've ever wanted. I also have an affinity for television series from the 1960' and 70's, which is my favorite TV era. I've purchased many of them on sale or used, and have a back-log of material to watch. For instance, I bought the first 5 seasons of Saturday Night Live, which I am still catching-up on. Today as I write this, I'm watching a marathon of M\*A\*S\*H\* which I have yet to finish watching.

I also have a collection of DVD-R recordings, made while I was working for DirecTV. For 3 years, I had their top package free and made several thousand recordings that will take me years to



watch. This makes up for the fact that I don't have cable and don't watch broadcast television because I loathe commercials.

My latest hobbies include downloading music videos from YouTube. My favorite videos are from the 1980's M-TV era and live concert recordings. Making these DVD compilations is very time-consuming and labor intensive. The file formats have to be converted and burning them to DVD takes a great deal of time. Another related hobby involves collections of videos that I have already downloaded from the internet. For instance I finally have a complete collection of "Mystery Science Theatre 3000". I am in the process of converting these to DVDs that can be watched on television. I've just recently finished converting the first 5 seasons with Joel Robinson.

Another hobby I have, involves staying current with space exploration. From the Hubble Space Telescope to the International Space Station, I try to remain knowledgeable about the latest discoveries. One of the most fascinating current NASA missions is called "The Dawn Probe", a satellite which just began orbiting the asteroid Ceres. This is just the beginning of an investigation of our solar system's asteroid belt for the very first time.

The rest of my hobbies are of the domestic variety, such as caring for my 2 cats which I adore. Trying to maintain a house by myself is sometimes more than I can handle, but I do my best.

### **Brenda Dupont**

My non fannish hobbies and interests wax and wane over the years, but never completely disappear. Books and reading are the first I can remember. As an early riser in a household of late sleepers, books became my entertainment. There was no such thing as 24 hours of TV. I would awake as early as 4:30 or 5 a.m. on a Saturday morning to turn on the tube and find that Indian chief's profile in the middle of the crosshairs and quite an audible beep. Nothing on yet. My sisters rebuked my efforts at waking them, threatening to wake the parental units if I didn't leave them alone. I remembered I'd brought home Henry Higgins from the school library. I climbed back to the top bunk and found a friend, lots of friends. Although, I don't read fiction the way I did in years past, books are



my first love. Libraries are a close second, after all, they hold all the books! In fifth grade, we moved from Hawthorne, California, to Lawndale. I was in fifth grade and now had to make new friends. Not an easy task when battling the tight cliques of girls in the school.

I was shocked that the elementary school had no lending library as the Hawthorne school district had. But all was not lost. We moved within walking distance to the Lawndale Public Library. Not only was it within walking distance, I passed it on my way home from school.

I would get permission to stop by on my way home from school, walk there on a Saturday, or go back after school. It was my sanctuary. I would find a fiction or two to bring home, and then peruse the fiction section and check a few things out – all from the children's department. One day I wandered past the children's department into the adult section. No one stopped me. I pulled big picture books from the shelves. Books about mammals and trains and antiques. Cook books, fashion and design books. Books on the history of the automobile. Books on travel and how to draw. I was in heaven. To this day I believe that this library saved my life. I also learned not to bring home everything from the library. I once brought home a book that my mother felt was too adult for me. The librarian promptly informed her that libraries don't practice censorship, and I could

check out anything in the collection. I learned to read those items at the library, rather than take them home. Books and libraries lead to my other interest: research. I feel like the Enquirer – I’ve got to know!

Like Jacquie and Joyce, I love glass. I’m still amazed that millions and millions of grains of sand, once melted and shaped, become such beautiful works of art, like functional diamonds sparkling in the sunlight. My special glass interest these days is Murano art glass, specifically ashtrays. I have about 10 of them now. The glass is tempered to withstand the heat of cigarettes and cigars, so they make wonderful candle holders.

At a renaissance faire at Golden Gate College in Santa Ana I bought a 1950’s Renoir copper belt and bracelet. The dealer agreed to sell it to me for \$35 if I could get the belt clasped. It was in my thinner days. That started a whole new obsession. I researched all I could, checking out costume jewelry design books. Later, I discovered the belt normally sells for around \$150! I now have two belts, three copper cuff bracelets, a few copper Matisse chokers, and Matisse copper and white enamel earrings.

Last but not least is bling! Rhinestones,

sparklies. I have quite a collection of glittery hair clips, blinged-out shirts, and at least seven bottles of sparkly nail polish.

### **Jacq Monahan**

Dresses, not shoes; lipstick, not eye shadow; tiny figurines of female goddesses/princesses/heroines/villains, not action heroes. These are a few of my favorite things. In fact, if I scroll through the lyrics of that Julie Andrews song from *The Sound of Music*, my favorite thing would be the “brown paper packages tied up with string.”

Like Brenda, sparkly items grab my eye. I have been known to pass a glittery store window only to march backward three big steps to peruse the source of the “bling.”

Another one of my favorite things. Gerunds, however, are not.

### **Joyce Katz**

I admire writers who can cut gerunds out of their reviews. In gaming descriptions, there’s altogether too much jumping, shooting, dodging, running, and otherwise making the page ring with the ‘ings.

There’s a lot of similarity between Vegrants when it comes to hobbies. Obviously, most fans read a lot. We all (well, almost all) write, whether it’s only a little or a lot. And clearly, making, listening to and collecting music is a prime activity for many of us. I’ve been a life-long music hound. I used to keep a list of all the songs I liked, back when I couldn’t afford recordings. Thanks to You-Tube and the other web sources, I now have most of them, so I agree with Arnie and JoHn in their praise of the Internet.

I think I’d have to categorize myself as an omnivorous collector. Although I am no longer expanding most of my collections, neither am I getting rid of them. Moving from a larger house into a smaller one forced many collectibles to stay in their boxes; for ex-



ample, I no longer display or accumulate more State mugs from all the places I've been. I also gave up on Small Things when my eyesight started to fail: no more toy soldiers or D&D miniatures-painting. No more doll house and hand-made furnishings. I gave up collecting commemorative stamps for the same reason – now I hope someone will show up who'd like to have them. (Did you know it's practically impossible to sell stamp collections any more? The dealers say that the market has shriveled to nothing.)

It's not just small things. During the time we were doing Collecting Channel, I acquired the country's biggest collection of soup tureens. I've given a few away, but there are still a lot of them on my shelves. Since Arnie won't eat soup, they are rarely if ever used, but they provide a very homey look

Arnie and I have collected art for forty years plus. We enjoyed going to art shows, and our walls are covered with watercolors, only some of which are fannish. (I run toward landscapes myself. And if there's a few cows in the meadows, that's all the better.) I also have a lot of knick-knacks, including many winged creatures. While I sought out swans, I also accumulated a lot of other birds – Aileen started it by giving me a lot of rubber ducks, and the collection just kept growing. I also appreciate winged horses and angels, and especially like my figurals of angels riding horses.

I still have a pretty good collection of pottery and glass. I started with Depression Glass, and along with my complete service of pink ware, I have smaller sets of other colors and styles, including Currier & Ives Christmas dishes. I also have a lot of crystal, which mostly came to me as gifts. And I have a small collection of rare lavender crystal.

My Christmas decoration kit is enormous; I can no longer display more than a fraction of it. In addition to the expectable dangling ornaments I put on the tree, I also exhibit my keychain collection there. The dolls and bears and other plush toys seldom get out of their boxes anymore. And the same is true of my vehicle collection, which runs from tiny gold horse and cart to dogsleds to covered wagons, to a huge number of cars, trucks, tanks, trains and planes, to scientific vehicles

like transformers, UFOs and missile-launchers.

Like I said, changes in taste, failing eyesight and lack of display space caused me to give up expanding my collections. But I haven't completely stopped. I started a new collection just last year, of elephants – I have them in glass, wood, metal and pottery, and also on decorative pillows. I've grown to love elephants, due to some nature shows that explored their habits and character. (In fact, when I become President, I intend to import herds of endangered African elephants to the USA. I plan to move all the people out of Mississippi, and give that state to the elephants.)

My newest collection is rings. I have always loved rings, from childhood to now. I have quite a few nice ones, thanks to Arnie's generosity through our forty years together. But in the last six months or so, I've started buying one-dollar rings from Hong Kong. They're flashy, sometimes very clever (like my green elephant ring) and there are constant new creations, such as dandelion-blossoms, Tibetan carvings reproduced in crystal and gold, and the new beaded rings that are appearing this month.

Ornamental boxes, pill boxes, hand-painted ceramics, snow globes, Classic Comics, sheet music, American history books, shawls and scarves, and woven baskets are a few more. And that's just scratching the surface. That's saying nothing about Famous Fantastic Mysteries, Weird Tales, and the other pulp magazines in the field.

What I Really need to collect is a bunch more display shelves, and two or three more rooms in the house. But I know, even if I had them, I'd fill 'em up in no time at all. I guess what I should wish for is better self-discipline. But to tell the truth, that's the one thing I don't want.

**Jacqueline Monahan**  
For  
**TAFF**

# Tailgate Party

## Arnie Katz

July 16th, which also happens to be the day on which the Vegrants are meeting (and writing this piece together), is a momentous day in Las Vegas Fandom history.

We started this issue, in part, with a lament for the demise of the Red Apple Grill. Yet the Spirit of Trufandom gives even when she takes. We have lost one Vegrants hangout, but gained a new one.

Nothing will bring back the Red Apple Grill, alas, but its space is now occupied by our *new* hang-out, Windy City Beefs and Dogs.

As a bonus, it also gives the Chicago Science Fiction League a home for the first time in several years. We had the first meeting of the recusitated Chicago SFL just before tonight's Vegrants meeting.

I don't think Joyce and I will eat at Windy City quite as often as we did at Red Apple, but we've enjoyed everything they've served us and also found them very hospitable.

Don will be supplying some pictures of the place and my cohorts will probably have something to say about it, too.

## John Hardin

Tonight's meeting of the revived Chicago Science Fiction League did see one order of official business: a motion was made to recognize that the CSFL still exists. The motion was passed by voice vote, with an amendment to note the rather existential nature of the motion. Having satisfied the duties of office, the committee adjourned to eat a great deal of fries, sausages and beef.

It's the first week of operation for Windy City

at this location; they're still on their shakedown cruise, and a few things could be better, but their food seems reliably fresh and tasty. Their Chicago dogs are perfect, and I really dig the Italian beef sandwich, dipped in *au jus*. The whole sandwich is quickly submerged in the 'gravy' and it's a delicious, savory mess, if you like that sort of thing. Dang, now I'm hungry again.

To get my mind off food, I'll make a startling conversational gambit about the weather instead, to wit; it's not so hot. It's supposed to be hotter than Hell right now, and it didn't even hit a hundred yesterday. It was almost *cool* last night; we came home at midnight and threw open the doors and windows and it was glorious.

Well, enough rhapsodizing. It's just the weather, and next week the sun will probably return to kill us all.

## Jacq Monahan

I am probably the only person in the new CSFL that is actually from Chicago. You will not hear me extol the virtues of Chicago food, however. That, you either get or you don't. Some things you just have to grow up with to appreciate. No amount of hyperbole will coerce someone to savor a regional delicacy if their palate is resistant.

Living in Las Vegas for the last five years has persuaded me to call this place home, so my arms are planted firmly around her mountains and palm trees. Or maybe my palm trees are planted firmly around her mountains. That sounds rather risqué, doesn't it? Chicago will always be my hometown, but Las Vegas is like a dangerous girlfriend, underdressed and oversexed. I get to live vicariously through her exploits.

*She* was the one that introduced me to the Ve-

grants, you know, and life has never been the same. It is my duty to tell you however that the Windy City nickname comes from Chicago's long-winded politicians, NOT its weather.

To those who already knew that, I salute you with a Maxwell Street polish. To those who would disagree, I say, "Yuh-Huh!"

### **Brenda Dupont**

I didn't know that! Well, maybe I just don't remember. Age has nothing to do with it. I didn't get here in time to enjoy sampling the new eatery. As I drove up, I could see the meeting adjourned and everyone was ready to roll to the next meeting: The Vegrants! As usual, the feasting was as expected and I didn't go hungry. I come to this meeting in a jovial mood: I got a job at a local antique store. I had to be half past the antique mark myself just to get it!

### **James Taylor**

I've enjoyed our visits to Windy City Beefs and Dogs but it's already clear that it has its limits and we may join Arnie and Joyce in visiting and trying other places as time goes on. The menu resembles parts of Red Apple's offerings so we'll go though the new or different items rather quickly. Frankly I'd like to find someplace close by that does breakfast things all day. Tee and I visit an IHOP almost every week for a dinner meeting and more often than not we get breakfast items.

The CSFL, having dodged another bullet in the form of a lengthy hiatus, seems in good form and with a real living Chicagian now a member the sky is the limit. Look out LASFS.

### **Don Miller**

There's no comparing Red Apple Grill's fabulous BBQ, to the latest incarnation as Windy City Beef and Dogs. The new menu is very limited, but everything so far is very good. I proclaim the chili to be edible and very similar to Der Weinerschnitzel's chili. James has the best idea for a meeting dinner. IHOP !!! I love breakfast food and can eat it anytime!

With no segway whatsoever, how about this weather? Middle of July and we've got below average temperatures forecast for the next ten days.

The thunderstorm we had last week, produced a lot of damage in my neighborhood. Numerous trees were downed and we still have lots of debris in the streets. Monsoon season is just around the corner, so we'll have to wait to see what's in store for us. For the time being, it feels like September, which is great because I loathe Vegas summers.

### **Ross Chamberlain**

My one experience with Chicago (after a scary arrival at O'Hare, and a long long ride into town to get over it) was primarily underground, it seemed, with the direct access to the underground from the hotel---I think this was on a company interview for Quick Frozen Foods, but I no longer recollect who---which, to my New York Subways accustomed mind, was---it just came to me---my first real experience with a Mall! New York was only just, reluctantly, allowing Shopping Malls to step their corporate toes from the suburbs to the residential areas about that time, I think. I could compare it with the long underground passages in midtown New York, only some of which were populated with shops... I think airport malls were still a thing of the future. Sadly, I was not yet familiar with the glories of Chicago Deep Dish Pizza at the time, so declined to partake of more after the first try. It may have been a bad example.

I had a great time sightseeing downtown for a while, above for the flavor (you know, Sears Tower and all that), and below ground, which was marvelous, but I really don't remember much. I overtipped the guys in a shoe repair & shine parlor (it needed repair, but I also disremember now what the problem was). I came away with a good impression.

I do recall some of the older conclaves of the CSFL with great pleasure. I trust that the returned participators will in the long run approve of the new spot.

### **Joyce Katz**

I've been in Chicago a number of times; most of the trips were in connection with the Summer Consumer Electronic Shows. Mostly I enjoyed the city. McCormick Convention Center is huge and well-appointed, and off-site meetings were generally in glamorous Miracle Mile hotels. The Summer CES was over Memorial Day Weekend, at the

end of May and beginning of June, so the weather was usually fine. But when the wind changes, June can be very blustery; I remember running between the exhibit halls in unseasonable freezing rains.

Arnie and I are sad about losing Red Apple and the wonderful barbecue. Windy City Beefs 'n Dogs really doesn't take its place. But, it's better than an empty store, and since it's the closest place to our house that serves burgers and other fast foods, we're happy to have it.

Now. When will we get our share of the loot from the Chicago conventions? It seems clear that they should Pay Up Now. We'll be watching our mail, and expect it Real Soon Now.

#### **Arnie Katz**

The rest of the crew has gone home, perchance to sleep and dream of munificent financial wind-falls from repentant Chicago con-runners, At least

we have a congenial restaurant, Windy City, where we can dine well at reasonable prices until those fat checks arrive.

The Vegrants have been fairly prolific at the keyboard at recent meetings, so almost all the material for *Neon #7* is already tucked into the appropriate folder on my hard drive. You can expect it around the beginning of December, if all goes as planned.

... And speaking of anticipated arrivals, the folks who bring you *Neon* (Arnie, Joyce, Tee, James, Don, Jacq, JoHn, Brenda and our jovial European Editor Steve) would sure like to hear from you.

We love letters of comment.

— Arnie  
(for the Vegrants)

### **The NEON News**

**Woody Bernardi** made a triumphal return to Las Vegas and the Vegrants in early November.

**Marc Cram**, known to friends and well-wishers as Mr. Pallindrome, is back in Vegas and attended his first Vegrants meeting in a long time. Marc was one of *Wild Heirs'* best fanwriting discoveries and we hope he'll resume writing for fanzines.

**Raven**, whom many will remember from previous Vegas Corflus, suffered a stroke while struggling against chronic back and leg problems. She is reportedly recovering from the stroke and we're all rooting for a return to full health in time for Corflu Glitter,

**Arnie Katz** has written a fan novel called "The Fractured Circle. The (roughly) 44,000-wrd opus should be available in the next two weeks. Fans who prefer Arnie in a more fannish and light-hearted vein will also want to watch for his forthcoming "The Gospel of Fandom."

**JoHn Hardin** won a third place award and collaborated on a second-place winner in the annual Las Vegas journalism awards. This was his first full year of eligibility.

**Don Miller** has added many items to the logo merchandise available at [www.CafePress/Corflu Glitter](http://www.CafePress/CorfluGlitter). Besides Corflu Glitter items, the online store has shirts, mugs, buttons and other pieces decorated with the art of Ross Chamberlain and Bill Kunkel.

**Jacq Monahan** ([Jaxn8r@msn.com](mailto:Jaxn8r@msn.com)) encourages fans to consider joining SNAPS, the monthly electronic apa now coming up on its 63rd eMailing. There are no dues, the activity requirement is minuscule and the members are friendly and entertaining. Ask her for a sample eMailing to check out this lively group.

