

BEDFAST

THE RECUMBENT PANZINE

Published in the tradition made famous by the Barb/Towner one-shot **ON HIS BACK** as a morale-booster for the sick and halt, in this case the pneumonia-stricken Chas. Edw. Burbee II. This is solely written and published by E. Towner Laney for the exclusive benefit of Charles Edward Burbee (who by now being stone-blind with ecstasy at having seen his name in print twice in succession will not realize that **BEDFAST** is also for incidental distribution to TAPA). 1. March 4, 1948

AL ASHLEY: MOTHER-LODE

It is peculiarly appropriate in this, the centennial year of California, that this great state of ours should be the site of a mother lode which makes the bonanza of the gold rush look like something out of *Footprints*. I am referring of course to Al Ashley, a veritable treasure-trove of inspiration for the neophyte writer. The hundreds of people who eye him casually as they go on about their affairs little realize that here is a person who might well be likened to the pot at the end of the rainbow, a great thunderous pot filled with teeming story ideas swirling about waiting only for a Burbee or a Laney to seize them and turn them into great unyielding jewels of literate self-expression.

No, if they look at Al Ashley at all, they see only the tremulous exterior of a frightened little man putting on a brave front towards a hostile world. They mark his vacuous expression without realising that behind it there throbs a mighty mental dynamo with an output of 194. They note the glassy orbs behind the fly-specked spectacles without realising that here is a true Bright-Eyes. His disarming little smile disarms them, and they are mercifully unaware that here is a rugged individualist who will ruthlessly trample them, trample them and rend them and cast them aside like broken tools when they have served his purpose (even as he was once so discarded).

It takes someone with the soul of a poet and the mind of a scientist to stand face to face with the real Al Ashley. It takes a Laney, or at the very least a Burbee.

And even the mighty fortitude of such titans as these is often strained to the very breaking point as they delve into the hidden recesses of Al Ashley and dredge forth wondrous things to make Coslet look forward to his next mailing. Others have confronted the true, inner Ashley and where are they today?

Jack Niedenbeck saw. He has spent the rest of his life modelling dinosaurs out of green clay.

Walt Liebscher had his stark moment of revelation. He got off at Pershing Square.

Abby Lu so far forgot herself as to put her arms around a live tiger as the lesser of two dangers.

And that venerable Adventurer into Thinking, E. Everett Evans, shaken to the very depths of his being, thought at first he had weathered the storm but when he looked in his mirror the next morning he had a grey moustache.

No, it is not all peaches and cream to stand face to face with the soul of Al Ashley. But what writer could imagine a character such as he? What titan of the literary world could create out of whole cloth such dialog as is the daily conversation of Al Ashley? What Korzybski could invent and employ such other-worldly logic? Al we have to do is to write down what Al Ashley says and it makes a reputation for all three of us.

But it is going to have to stop.

Ashleyism is the new occupational disease of FAPA. Ashleyism is a menace besides which premonitions of disaster and the prostitution of science-fiction and the failure of American Fandom are mere bagatelles. For mark you, we have dipped once too often into this fount of undying inspiration. We cannot write about anything except Al Ashley. We are getting so we even cannot act other than Al Ashley would act. We are slaves, toys, chattels--we are at the mercy of this fabulous little man.

Burbee used to be quite a boy. (No double meanings, please.) But Al Ashley set him right on a couple of points and instead of publishing fanzines he spends all his time messing around with electronic circuits.

I used to write serious articles about the literary aspects of this and that. But recently I was doing an appreciation of ICHOR for the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE and I found myself quite involuntarily setting down some things Al Ashley had told me about the thermodynamics of hypnotism.

This has got to stop.

I want to be able to write what I want to again. It is frightening to sit down to a typewriter and see that familiar Al AshleyAlAshleyAlAshley pour out of the machine without my even touching the keys, to jam my hands over my ears to drown out the Underwood's sardonic cackle only to hear that faint far-off gurgle of coffee as that infamous little man gives way to his fiendsih glee.

I have mined in the mother-lode of Al Ashley all I want to. You won't be jumping my claim, friends, if you muscle in on me. No, no, I will give you a full deed to my mine, and you can have the ore and the dross and the tailings ---all for your very own.

As an extra special inducement, I will even give you the original thinking cap worn by Al Ashley when he made all his public pronouncements in FAPA. (It really is a thinking cap too, even if some of the uninitiated do point out its remarkable resemblance to an artificial, iron-grey moustache.)

Any takers?

?? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TODAY TO MAKE FANDOM A BETTER WAY OF LIFE ????

Al Ashley wishes to deny the allegation that the hurly-burly of 20th century existence is so much too much for him that he is striving to devolve into the foetal state.

"What in heck," he demanded, "ever gave you the crazy notion that We Ashleys are vitiparous?"