

BROWNOUT

The Magazine Fans Believe in

This magazine is being put out on the occasion of an unexpected visit from Len Moffatt and Stan Woolston, who dropped in on me for reasons of their own. I regaled them with idle chit-chat and coffee (also idle) and soon after their arrival had them happily at work on this fanzine. This, I might add, is the ultimate fate of any fan or near-fan who braves the wilds of South Normandie to visit me in my cosmic workshop. You drop in on me, godarmit, and you put out a one-shot fanzine. This serves as a notice to you people who may in the future don the mantle of a visiting fireman and wind up at my spacious living-room. I might add that this is being put out for the Miniature Mailing and will be distributed through the well set-up FAPA channels, as is the case with everything published by, at, or for

Charles Burbee

ASHLEY UNMASKED (again)

LEN MOFFATT

We started out to visit Rick Sneary, the Sage of South Gate and ended up here in the august presence of Charles Burbee, the Sultan of S. Normandie... Rick wasn't home. That was the whole trouble. He wasn't home and as we stood on the sidewalk outside of his home with the wind and the rain in our hair, we thought. We thought together. This wasn't as it should be. We had planned to behold the inspiring face of a fellow-fan this day. We gazed at each other's visages. No. That wasn't enough. Our deep desire to join in rapturous communion with a third fan must be satisfied. So we caught the next trolley out of S. Gate and rode merrily along, thinking. The car rolled on and on and on. Presently we found ourselves in the downtown section of LA. We got off the car. And all the while we were thinking, thinking, thinking... Now we had been to Bixel Street. But we had never made the pilgrimage to S. Normandie and paid homage to that biographer of the Elder Slan, Ali ben Ashli... Dare we make the trip? Could we possibly fight our way thru the storm, blast our way thru the vortexes of this dread City of the Angels and gain access to the Citadel that housed Burb the Omnipotent Producer of One Shot Fanzines?? We did. The details of our journey hence are

too horrendous to relate. Suffice to say we made it and found the great being awaiting us--eagerly. Too eagerly. We paused at the threshold. Should we enter? We dared to enter! Oh it was all very well at first. We exchanged friendly chatter. We spoke of crifanac and movie serials. But at last Burb could contain himself no longer. Stepping out of his mortal coil, he pointed a ghostly finger at me and growled: "Use more ink on that fapanag, hear me! Use more ink!" I groveled. I promised to use a pound of ink on each separate pad. Then. Then it happened! "We are going to produce a one shot mag," he said, "Now?" "Now?" we asked, our voices small, our eyes bulging with horror, "Now?" "Now!" said the voice that thundered. From nowhere tentacles snaked out, grasped us, set us before these typers and now they hold us here. Burb sits smiling in his chair, controlling us with his ghostly alter ego which moves about the room, checking the mimeo, digging out stencils. Controlling us with part of its vast brain... But wait. Something is wrong. Something just doesn't add up. I first noticed it when he started plying us with coffee. I said nothing then, thought little of it, momentarily forgot it. But it comes back to my mind as I begin to notice other things...things that should not be... I just looked at Burb's chair. It's him alright. But his body isn't quite limp enough. And he is breathing slowly, deeply...as one in a deep sleep...Then his ego isn't in his body! What then is this semi-visible wraith casting about among us? Look!..

Now it hovers over Stan's shoulder as he hammers madly at the typer. Now it drifts this way, pauses to inhale the exhilarating vapor rising from my cup of coffee... Coffee! That's it! Now the truth smashes its way into my feeble brain! Now I know! It isn't Burb who produces in boundless quantity these sordid little sheets, quaintly termed One Shots. Burb's body, yes... but not his ego! For his ego isn't free; its bound in deep hypnotic sleep. Sleep produced by the coffee-loving wraith. The wraith that has complete control of Burb and Laney and Condra and other fen too! For this wraith is the ego of Al Ashley and its purpose is to make immortal that name, to drum that name into the ears of all fen, eventually into the ears of all mankind!! That's why Burb & Laney write of him, publish his name at every opportunity...they are controlled! Ashley is more than a viron, more than a dero...He plans to conquer the world thru sheer mental power. His mortal body will not have to move one inch from its reclining position. His ego, darting here, there and everywhere, will gain control of the great minds of the world. Chaos is upon us. And after the chaos--Ashley! Ashley the Brain! And to think I feared poor, insignificant Burb. Poor old Burb who is merely a slave, a robot under Ashley's insidious power. Weep with me for Burb and for Laney too. Weep for Stan and me for soon we too may be under the monster's power-completely. The wraith is hovering near me, even now...probing my brain...I must put up a shield...he must know that I suspect...somehow I must escape...I won't be able to keep out his mental probes much longer...there was something in the coffee, I think.... Burb sleeps in his chair. His wife, poor woman, moves about the apartment. Can't she see the wraith? She too is hypnotized! Stan hammers at his typer. Burb sleeps in his chair. The wraith is closing in...my mind is giving away...Burb! Burbeeeeeeeeeee...wake up, man! Wake Up! I-can't-go-on...Ashley, the... Ashley the-the-the-the...

ASHLEY THE GREAT AND GOOD!
 DISREGARD THE ABOVE MOUTHINGS...ONLY ONE THING IS VITAL...ONLY ONE THING MATTERS! ASHLEY IS THE ONLY TRUE LIVING GENIUS! REMEMBER THIS AND THIS ALONE! AHSLEYASHLEYASHLEYASHLEYYYYYYYYYYY

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PROLOG TO TOMORROW

Stan WOOLSTON

Time had completed a full circle. Life had returned to the Simple Things, the unhurried existence of early Twentieth Century life. It had been a sudden development, and I am probably the only one still alive who knows the complete story of how it occurred.

Our Culture had grown successively more complicated as time went on, as historians will tell you. Science and the technological developments it incurred was to blame. That, any backward-looking citizen will tell you.

At the middle of the century change was the rule of the day. In five years two wars began, feminine styles changed three times, and such radical words as "crifanac" and "Rathboren" became bandied about. Atomic energy was perfected, and the colonies on Mars began shipping back over flow population by 1975. And, as Earth was then so thickly covered with the natives, the result was inevitable.

It was war, but a short one. The force had been building up for some time. When it came, everyone turned and with one mind to the task at hand. And they won.

In 24 hours all the inmates of institutions were released. They were given the reins of government to grasp. A short civil war appeared in the middle of the group, and out of it came the Leader of the Leaders.

I came.

So the world is ruled by fandom.

THE WORLD OF NULL-F

Fandom is dead. Though I weep, its demise was inevitable. The final blow was the departure of Burbee, as reported.

No one could miss him more than I, for I have never really known him. Through the medii of words others have become impressed on my consciousness (sic) in all their true glory, but not Burbee.

S.