

MLC 28

Inspiration

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NUMBER ONE

A collection of odds and ends of junk and stuff, which is being passed on to a hapless FAPA by one T/Sgt Lynn Bridges, 833rd Chemical Co., Dale Mabry Field, Tallahassee, Florida. As usual, am depending upon some soft-hearted soul for the difficult task of mimeographing INSP. In this case, Al Ashley can be thanked (or blamed, depending on how you look at it).

This is actually being written at MacDill Field, some 250 miles south of Tallahassee -- but just where I'll be at the time of the mailing is unknown, and closest approximation is somewhere in the U.S. Since Dale Mabry is headquarters, any mail sent there will be promptly forwarded.

Missed last mailing, thru a collection of unavoidable reasons, mostly work. First time it happened in quite a while, but it means that volume 3 of INSP must start with the summer issue, rather than the spring as in previous years. Right now am in quite an advantageous spot for this sort of stuff, as both time and typewriter are available. Main detriment to work at night is the MacDill mosquito, about which I wrote in the INSP of 2 years ago. Quite a coincidence, being back at the same field where I went thru basic training, considering all the stops I've made since then. Have moved no less than 5 times since last I wrote for FAPA, for instance.

Am abandoning the rambling type of individuazine to the extent of inserting subject titles, at the suggestion of critic Speer. Slightly appropriate titles will henceforth accompany said subjects, tho I'm still writing as I go along with no definite knowledge as I start of just what will be written. For a start I'll try

NEW NOMENCLATURE

Of all the suggestions regarding a new set of words for fans and fandom made last mailing, I prefer Widner's "Imagunist", and said method of nomenclature will appear henceforth in INSP. For short, Art's im for fan and ims for the plural will do nicely. However, I prefer imzine to imag and imagidom to imagi-nation -- the first because of superior phonetic value and because -zine is more proper as an ending; and the second because there are ims outside of the U.S., imagidom is shorter and not hyphenated, and Forry already has something of a copyright on imagi-nation.

Not that other suggestions had no merit. For a while I was sold on the Speer idea of "stefnist", but decided against it for 3 reasons. It would be unintelligible to outsiders and newcomers, which is not so serious. It would also refer only to the science-fiction addicts, not to the fantasy and weird group. Most important, it is derived from the coined "scientifiction" against which I have a prejudice, probably because the word is unnecessarily complicated.

Much the same objections are to be found against Stanley's "stefan", plus the fact that it is still most apt to be contracted to "fan" which is what we are trying to escape. The chief idea of the new nomenclature is to distinguish us from other groups of fans. It is possible to be a fan of anything.

Incidentally in regard to the stf vs. s-f controversy, the latter is much superior. Phonetically it isn't much more difficult to say es-ef than to say

stuff, and even the most fanatic addict is liable to wonder whether stiff, staff, or stuff is meant when confronted with stuff in conversation.

Imaginist suffers from none of these defects, perhaps its only fault being that it is a bit too long -- and the abbreviated form takes care of that. Imagination is the one common denominator of all ims, whether they be addicts of s-f, fantasy, weird, or horror. As a word, imaginist conveys just what we want, either to ourselves or to outsiders; and it is certainly more reasonable than something such as "fantasy fiction fan" which is about the best we've had before.

Now that we have some new definitions and words, I'll proceed to use them in a brief discussion of

THE IM AND IMAGIDOM

in which I'll try to cover an assorted mess of stuff suggested by DRT, Laney, Spencer, and just about everyone else in FAPA.

In his "Fandom as a Way of Life" Thompson rightly concludes, as does Laney, that the im needs interests outside of imagidom. The rightful place of imagidom is as a subsidiary interest or hobby, not as the all-important principle of life. All too many ims are prone to overestimate the importance of imagidom in their lives, even to extents as ridiculous as those of the Cosmic Circle.

Paul Spencer's story in NUCLEUS is amusing, and almost too painfully accurate. Ims as a whole are unable to cope with life, and seek some sort of a refuge in what should be no more than a hobby. Many have grandiose ideas about a future designed along science-fictional ideas and perhaps led by ims, but few ims have enough mechanical ability to understand so complicated a machine as a lawn mower.

At the same time, I think Laney is a bit too harsh in some of his criticisms, or else the LA group of ims is a bit worse than imagidom as a whole. It's true that ims are inclined to be a bit unstable, emotionally and otherwise, but not so far from the median as FTL would have us believe. However, I'm convinced now that, far from being superior to the average, ims are actually inferiors to the racial average both physically and emotionally! Mentally, I'm not so sure, but possibly they are above the average in this one respect. However, is there any definite way to measure intelligence which does not depend to a great extent upon education and practice? Have never come across such a test myself, not even the so-called army "IQ" tests. Those army tests, incidentally, aren't meant to measure intelligence, but rather to measure mental alertness and speed of decision.

Few ims will deny that they, as a whole, are below the general physical standards of the non-ims in their age groups. That is proved sufficiently by the large number of 4-F's in our midst, a number quite a bit above the national average. As for the emotional inferiority of ims, Laney gives quite a vivid, tho possibly overdone, picture of them. Emotional stability is measured by adaptability to life as a whole, and few ims are really adaptable to conditions as they are. It is for that reason, mainly, that they resort to imagidom. The few ims that are stable emotionally, are invariably the ones who treat imagidom simply as a hobby and spare time endeavor.

I know myself that I fit into the world none too well, but think that I have more adaptability than the average im. I can get along with just about any type of group, and have a lot of fun doing any number of things. On the

average, I spend less than one evening a week on such stuff as this. The rest of the time I'm apt to be out with any female who is foolish enough to trust herself in such a position, drinking beer and discussing life in general with some of the boys, or perhaps bowling, swimming, or any of a dozen more or less active pursuits. All of which no doubt makes me much less active as an im than I could be, but leads to a much saner all-around life.

(My army career, incidentally, provides something of a lesson in adaptability. First promotion to corporal came as a clerk, sergeant was gained as an instructor, staff sergeant as platoon leader, and present rank for all around work.)

All of which can be summed up by saying that, on the whole, ims are as psychologically maladjusted bunch of jerks as can be found, leaving me free to turn to the next subject for discussion, and the next subject seems to be some

REMARKS ON ROCKETS

in which no doubt I'll show my own abysmal ignorance upon the subject.

This is prompted, of course, by Dr. Gardner's article in BLITHERINGS. While there are no doubt good reasons for his belief that practical rockets would create a deafening roar while taking off, I'd like to know just how his figures were compiled. Seems to me that there would be no reason for such a belief, as the new jet propulsion plane is supposed to be almost noiseless compared to standard combustion engine types, and it isn't difficult to become accustomed to the sound of planes. (I sleep about 200 yards from a runway used by Flying Fortresses all night long.)

Admittedly, a rocket is not a jet propulsion plane, but the principle of exhaust gases for propelling power is the same, and I'm convinced that the "rocket" plane or ship will in reality be a combination of rocket and jet. In an atmosphere, takeoff would necessarily be slow, both because of the pressure of the air on the ship and because too rapid a start would be tough on the passengers. At the takeoff of a modern warplane, the passenger finds himself pushed backwards with quite a bit of force.

Wings would undoubtedly be used, even on a spaceship, as they would provide maneuverability in atmosphere at a considerable saving in fuel. As for jet propulsion, it would be silly from a standpoint of fuel conservation not to utilize the atmosphere for fuel so long as the ship was in it anyhow. In any fuel mixture, the oxygen is the main part of the weight. In the customary gasoline-oxygen mixture, 3.5 parts of oxygen are used to 1 of gasoline, and in the "ideal" hydrogen-oxygen fuel, the ratio is 8 to 1. With most of the fuel needed to run a ship lying in the air about it free for the taking, it would be foolish not to utilize it.

It's my guess that the spaceship of the future will take off and fly thru the atmosphere on wings propelled by jets similar to those in the new Bell plane, and once the upper limits of the atmosphere are reached, the liquid oxygen tanks will be turned on for use in free space. As for the noise at the takeoff, I doubt if it will be too bad. The area directly behind the plane will be dangerous, and a large concrete block a short distance behind the ship would of course be of help, but aside from that, nothing special would be necessary. The "continuous blast" of the rocket would travel with the rocket, and would soon be beyond danger point. And with wings to add lift on takeoff, the blast would not have to be as large as tho it had to both

both support and move the ship.

And having left myself wide open, no doubt, I'll leave the scientific for a moment and go on to

THE FEMALE IM

just long enough to agree with Trudy that the female of the species should take her place on the basis of her ability along regular im lines, rather than be considered a freak because of her sex. It is true that the female im is the exception and that imagidom is predominately male -- but it is true that Trudy, at least, has often demonstrated her ability to equal or surpass the average male im in quantity and quality of activity.

Trouble is, Trudy, that all too many female ims are interested only because some man in whom they are interested is an im, and then put too much emphasis on the fact that they are a female, rather than just another im like the rest of us. Much of the reason for the unconscious segregation of the female of the species as a group apart is the fault of some of the so-called "female fans" themselves.

And doesn't Trudy herself do this to a certain extent in such matters as excusing the appearance of NUCLEUS on her "feminine hands"? With which remark I'd better stop and get back to the subject of science as involved in the matter of

THE BASEBALL AND THE CURVE

and try to answer a couple of questions of HMR's. The reason a baseball will sometimes wait until it has almost reached the plate before curving, Harry, is because it is thrown faster than the average curve ball. Simple enough, isn't it? At higher speeds, the air hasn't a chance to affect the motion of the ball until it has been slowed down. The effect can be seen much more easily in bowling (not the excuse for bowling using small balls seen in some parts of the country, but bowling as it is done with the large, 16 lb. ball) where many good bowlers roll a ball that travels perfectly straight until the last 10 or 15 feet, when it seems to almost jump at an angle. Until it has reached that point, the ball is travelling too fast for the spin to take effect, but when the ball is slowed sufficiently, the spin causes it to curve. A ball released in the same manner but more slowly will start to curve immediately and will curve much farther. It works much the same way in air.

As for "hop" on a ball to cause it to jump up just before reaching the plate, that is also done by speed in much the same manner as the fast, late-breaking curve. Instead of spinning or rotating to the side, however, the ball is thrown straight overhand with the thumb underneath and the fingers on top. By releasing the ball with the thumb first, the fingers give it a spin back towards the pitcher, and as the ball nears the plate it slows down, the pressure of the air on the rotating ball causes it to jump upwards, and the batter either misses the ball completely or else hits a weak pop fly.

As for the knuckle ball, that explanation about air currents, believe it or not, is correct. A non-rotating object is affected to a great extent by air currents, which is why footballs are thrown to rotate along their axis, and why rifle barrels are rifled in a spiral so that the bullet will be rotating when they are fired. Now that I've covered the sports world for this time,

I'll get back to s-f with

THOSE '34 WONDERS

about which a couple of the ims have been raving.

The 1934 WONDER STORIES was good, for its time. But it will take a lot of convincing to convince me that it was superior to the current ASTOUNDING. I'm not even too sure that it was the top prozine of 1934, as AST had quite a few good "thought-variants" at that time.

Main reasons for the popularity of W.S. in '34 were the Wienbaum stories, almost the only contribution of WONDERS to the coming style of s-f, and a number of good stories written in the older, no longer popular style. Most of the pioneering of the era was done by AST, under the leadership of Tremaine and backed, for the first time, by Street and Smith. Chief trouble with ASTOUNDING was its crudity. On the whole the stories in WONDERS were better written. But even the W.S. tales lacked the writing polish which is evident in nearly every story in AST today.

In retrospect, the older mags are apt to seem better than they actually were, because of the memories associated with certain stories of those days, and because of the time lapse element. Stories which actually appeared over a period of months or even years, are remembered as being simultaneous, and naturally no single issue of a prozine even today can match such an accumulation. In general, ASTOUNDING of today is almost as far ahead of the average mag of 10 years ago, as that mag is over the average fan fiction.

As for "Exile of the Skies", as fantasy it might not be too bad, but as an s-f story it contained far too many scientific absurdities to be rated as anything at all.

Since I'm stepping into so many arguments, I may as well get into another one that's going strong,

LABOR UNIONS,

and proceed to make a few enemies by saying that on the whole, in a labor dispute, I'm inclined to favor management.

Right now, of course, the average soldier is quite apt to foam at the mouth at the mention of a labor union, and practically everyone in uniform is of the opinion that the best way to settle a strike is to put the strikers in a front line foxhole. I admit that I generally share those sentiments, but my own opinions on unions date back quite a bit longer than that.

No, Mr. Laney, I'm not a proletariat. Unlike most ims, I was brought up in a world of sweat and grease, and put in 3 years on one of the toughest auto assembly lines in existence, plus some time in a steel mill. And from that observation, I've found little in favor of the large unions. I am in favor of small, independent unions, whose interests lie with the workers in one specific factory and whose fortunes are tied up with that factory.

From what I've seen, any worker who failed to advance in any plant in which I've worked, did so because he either did not have the brains or the initiative. Whether doing factory work or any other kind, no man can expect to get anywhere without those qualities. Also, even without unions, factory labor is on the whole better paid for the same amount of work, than non-factory workers.

Management realizes, on the whole, that the better a worker is treated and the more he is made to feel that he is a part of the organization, the more satisfied he will be and the better the work that he does. Labor, working with management, is far more apt to get a better deal than by working with some union which is bucking the employer at every turn. The large unions are hardly to be blamed for looking out primarily for their own interests, and having no stake in the factories with which they deal, consequently care little whether that factory progresses or not. All the union cares for is to get apparent advantages for the workers, so they have some basis for expecting the worker to toss his buck a month, plus special assessments, into the kitty.

Economically, the union is quite apt to be hurting the laborer in getting him a slight wage increase. To make up for the increase in wages, the management has to charge more for the product; with an increase in price, the sales are apt to fall off; and without the demand for the product, the worker won't be called on to produce so much, and will usually lose far more thru lost time than he gained by the wage increase.

On the other hand, the small, independent union, by co-operating with the management of the one plant which it serves, can see to it that the members get every advantage which it is possible to give them, and see that the management in return gets its share of work from its employees. Too many laborers see their relations with their employer as a constant battle to see which can get the most from the other. In reality, employer-laborer relations should be based on mutual co-operation for the common good. Both are actually working for the same thing -- to provide the best goods possible at the lowest possible price, thus gaining customer good will and more profits to be divided mutually. Management realizes this better than does labor.

If you're interested, FTL, I quit the auto assembly job when a union, using methods which would have shamed both a prohibition racketeer and a politician, finally gained control in that factory. I'd always gotten a square deal from the company. From observation of the union I wasn't so sure that I could expect the same from them. And that course of quitting is always open to any worker who isn't satisfied with his job (except in time of war). If a man isn't valuable enough to make the management feel that he's worth whatever he asks, what right has he to ask it?

Expecting quite a few brickbats from some of the FAPA progressives, I'll turn to the more FAPAic topic of

FAPA DUES

to say that I favor the new amendment to raise the dues to a buck. Stands to reason that heavier mailings are going to cost more, but will be worth the extra two-bits. Where, for 25¢, can you get a better bargain than a FAPA mailing?

Incidentally, in a personal letter the other day a correspondent made mention of the fact that FAPA was now getting so large that it was impossible to keep up with everything that was going on in it. But who wants to keep up with everything that is going on in FAPA?

I have absolutely no interest in many FAPA facets, such as book reviews (my reading time is very limited, have no place to store books, and prefer current s-f to anything else), fantasy (especially the weird and horror type), local club news, etc. But I am interested in s-f, in the discussions of what LRC calls the "brain trust", and enough other stuff to make FAPA one of the most fascinating hobbies I've yet encountered. And now back to arguments,

this time on the topic of

THE COLOR LINE

about which I'd intended to say nothing because I devoted quite a bit of space to it last time and because Lowndes has expressed my own opinions quite a bit more clearly than I could hope to do.

But Speer makes a remark that I can't help jumping when he says that the "fiction of (racial) equality" would encourage feelings of loathing and hatred. Hell, Juffus, how do you think the average southern negro feels towards the white man after years of suffering under the fiction of racial inequality? Have had quite a bit of opportunity to observe the deep south negro in the last couple of years, and have found him no different from other negroes. On the whole, I think I prefer the average southern negro to the "white trash" southerner who is almost as much a cause for national shame as the south's handling of the negro problem.

The part of the south I mean, LRC, is the really deep south, not the area around Virginia and Maryland where things are much more civilized. Down here the negro is treated as being really low. No doubt you've also had experience in the deep south as well, and I'm glad to see at least one southerner taking the part of the negro.

Recently, the question of equal rights for negroes in the south has had quite a prominent place, due to the supreme court decision allowing negroes to vote in the primaries. The southern negro is at last realizing that he has a right to expect equality, and is prepared to fight for it. Speer thinks that there will be trouble if the south relaxes its tight restrictions on negroes. I'm convinced that there will be trouble if the south doesn't wake up and give negroes their rightful place alongside the whites.

Hope that Ashley prints those articles he has on the problem. Now to the topic of

THE ARMY IM

in which I disagree with some remarks by Trudy and LRC. (Quite disagreeable this time, ain't I?)

Trudy seems to think that FAPA will be hurt by having the army (and the lesser branches of service) take so many ims. As I said earlier, imagidom isn't even furnishing its share to the armed forces, so we can hardly begrudge the army taking the few it does. Besides, being in uniform doesn't prevent anyone from being an im. Spencer, Rothman, and myself, among others, are contributing our share towards FAPA, for instance.

Not only that, but army experience, and new outlooks on life and imagidom in general, is quite apt to make an im even more interesting and valuable. And that brings up LRC and his fear that exposure to the army will "harden" Connor, thus making him less valuable as an im. This business about the army "hardening" people, except perhaps physically, is so much nonsense. True, we're subjected to quite a bit of "kill or be killed" philosophy, but it is quite easy to separate that from extra-military activities.

I've been subjected to as much, if not more, "hardening" influence in the corner poolrooms, etc., as in the army -- and I'm in a combat unit! Connor is going to college. My own experience with the army college system indicates that the language, habits, etc., of the students differs little from those in civilian colleges.

Next subject I'll title

EMOTIONAL SCIENCES

alho that title is none too accurate. Actually, it's an attempt to combine a lot of remarks on stuff suggested by just about everyone in the last mailing, on things which are, in many cases, only slightly related.

First, an explanation of what I mean by an "emotional" science. An emotional science is one such as psychology and sociology, based on human behavior, either singly or in mass. As a rule, emotional sciences are not exact sciences.

For the benefit of Bill Evans, a bit of comment on what is meant by an exact science. An exact science is one where, under given conditions, results can be accurately determined by computation of the effects involved, using current methods of measurement. Under those rules, chemistry, physics, and most forms of mathematics qualify as exact, even tho we may not know much about many parts of them. They can be considered exact since we do know enough about them to know that they are based on natural laws, and we have some understanding of those natural laws.

Not so with psychology and similar sciences. They, too, may be based on certain natural laws, but as yet we don't know enough about them to have more than an inkling of what those laws are. I have a suspicion that the whole field of psychology can be translated into a few simple rules, and that it just takes someone to formulate a series of causes in a manner similar to the discovery of the periodic table of chemical elements to make of it an exact science.

Chan Davis is quite likely right in reasoning that mass or mob psychology is more apt to be able to be controlled than individual psychology. Similar results were obtainable in alchemy, when it could be quite certain what the chemical reactions between large particles of matter would be, but it would not be so easy to guess what would happen with smaller bits of what was apparently the same substance. Reason of course being that in the large mass of substance, the impurities would cancel out or not be noticeable, but the smaller bit would possibly be largely impurities, or other chemicals, and would react differently.

Still, for an accurate knowledge of either chemistry or psychology, the working of the individual atom or person must be known to be understood.

In NUCLEUS, TK brings up another emotional science, that of propaganda. Like the others, propaganda is not yet an exact science, alho it's understood slightly, and has often been used, tho not so often successfully. Trudy seems to think that propaganda is wrong, alho its benevolent uses are as many as its more noted ones. Propaganda is used, for instance, to gain support for various charities and other worthwhile endeavors.

But Trudy objects to propaganda being used to cause us to hate the Jap, on the grounds that it is unfair to the Japanese people as a whole. Being in the army, I probably come in contact with quite a bit more anti-Jap prppaganda than the average civilian, and on the whole with more skilful propaganda. So far I haven't noticed that it was directed against the people of Japan, but rather against the Jap militarists and system of life.

I know damn well that if I came across a Jap soldier in the jungle, I'd shoot first and try to convert him later. It's very easy to say that a race isn't bad, it's just the way they're brought up, but a national policy which

has been in effect for generations is hard to change. I wouldn't approve of it, but a system of extermination of the Japanese race might be easier than the long, slow, process of rehabilitation which is going to be necessary before the Jap can take his place as a rightful member of society.

I told you the above remarks would be only slightly related, and have proved it by lumping everything from chemistry to extermination of Japs under one heading.

One further thought in regards to emotional sciences. What would be the results of a race having a good, working knowledge of what we consider abstract sciences, such as psychology and propaganda, but no knowledge whatsoever of any of the more mechanical sciences? Might make a good plot for some writer. With which idea I turn to the

TRAVEL DEPARTMENT

to show that what others can

do, I can attempt to do.

So many ims have given accounts of historic trips to meet other ims, that I feel it's time I, too, gave an account of such a journey. So here goes the tale of the only visit I've had with an im during the last 6 months.

It was hard work, trudging thru those north Florida swamps. I began to wonder if the boys back in camp could have been kidding me when they told me that roller skates were the best way to cross swamplands. Still I struggled onward, braving every danger, eager to meet another im. At one point I met a large alligator not 6 feet away! I started to run until I remembered that I was looking thru some binoculars and found the alligator was actually a small tree lizard.

Later, I met a hostile Indian, and there was no escape. I went my way with the blanket that cost me \$3.98, plus tax. So it continued, danger after danger I met and conquered. I was accosted by a bathing beauty, and almost failed to escape, but despite this and other natural obstacles of the Florida landscape I kept going.

The roller skates got heavier. I tried to catch a ride on a passing flamingo, but it seemed that he was going to Miami. So onward I went my weary way, ever onward, until at last I reached Live Oak, and there I came upon the Raym.

At sight of me Raym cried "I don't believe it!" and threw away the bottle he had been holding. He started to slam the door.

"No, no," I shrieked. "I'm a fan!" (This was before I decided it should be im, not fan.)

At the magic word fan, Raym stopped short, then drew himself up proudly. "This suh," he said, "is the south. Heah we have suth'n hospitality, not exclusion acts. A fan is welcome, even you all!"

So I went in and sponged two meals off the Washington household. I'd have stayed even longer if I hadn't had just a Sunday pass. And that's the story of how I met the Raym.

More seriously, it was quite an enjoyable afternoon -- spent largely in looking at imzines, discussing such things as im normalcy, the negro problem, and the 4th dimension, and sending out a bunch of cards announcing the formation of The Super Spiral League, for "fans with dizzy minds."

Main impression of Raym was of his complete seriousness. Here is one im who believes implicitly in imagidom, and that imagidom has a purpose and mis-

For officers, I would suggest about the same as we have in FAPA, with approximately the same functions. Instead of an editor, tho, there would be an editor-in-chief, chosen by election, and with the power to delegate others as assistant editors. To facillitate matters, it would be advisable to have the secretary-treasurer come from the same local area as the editor, so possibly a political combination of editor and secretary-treasurer being combined on the ballot would be helpful. In that way, time would not be lost thru the secretary passing on to the editor information and vice versa.

These remarks are passed on merely as a suggestion and idea for discussion, as I do not at present have the facilities for extending them further. I've already mentioned the idea to one or two others, who seemed to think the plan has possibilities. At any rate, I'd like to hear what others have to say. At present it would not run counter to any other organization, as the NFFF can be said to be out of the picture.

Possibly the NFFF is a victim of the war, or possibly it just aimed too high without a solid enough foundation -- but it is my personal belief that the NFFF failed because it contained too much that was of interest to only a few members and not enough that was of interest to all members.

THEY ALSO SERVE -

Speer, by inference, claims that soldiers who spend the war on this side of the ocean aren't performing their part so well as those civilians who volunteer for work overseas. What Juffus overlooks is that soldiers who are kept in the States rarely have any choice in the matter. We, too, can volunteer for overseas service -- but we can't get it until the War Department gets ready to send us.

I suppose that I'm one of those in uniform to whom Speer was referring, as I've spent over 2 years on the SE U.S. front, thru no fault of my own. It just happens that I'm in a branch of the army which is being largely held in reserve until such a time as gas is used, when we'll be called upon in a hurry to do some of the toughest and most dangerous work of the war. I also had the luck, or the misfortune, to get a training assignment, which few soldiers either want or request, and those two reasons account for my long period of service in this country.

Others are perhaps held back for physical ailments, which permit them to do work here but would hinder them in actual combat conditions. Overseas, a soldier is expected to serve anywhere under any sort of condition. Not so with a civilian worker, who never is allowed very close to the front. The essential difference between the worker in uniform and the one in civvies is this. We go where we are ordered and do what we are told -- the civilian doesn't. Then there is the little matter of freedom, something for which we are fighting, but which the army itself does not have.

LAST ISSUE SECTION

The 12 pages of this issue is a new high for IESP, but perhaps it only helps to make up for missing the last mailing. Quality I think has improved a little too, but it's hard to tell that until quite a while after the stuff has been written. The last 4 pages were done without the use of correction fluid, as I was in a hurry. That accounts for all the strikeovers.

May 3, and I'm all set to get the stencils in the mails. For a change it looks as tho I finished in plenty of time. Hope to make the next mailing.

Here it is page 11, and I'd only planned on having about 8 pages of INSP for this time. This can't keep up much longer as I only have two stencils left, and do not intend to get any more until time for the next mailing. A couple of things I still haven't touched, which I wanted to write about this time, so I suppose a couple more pages will take care of them. First;

Another suggestion concerning the question
Of a problem that never dims;
What could we do about, or should we do without,
AN ORGANIZATION FOR IMS

Many ims have come to the conclusion that a national organization would serve no useful purpose, and experience tends to prove that this is so. Ims are too individualistic to be regimented into any semblance of unity, save for an ill-defined "Code of Ethics." Such objectives as influencing the prozines to print better stories are silly, as few fans can even agree on what constitutes a good story, and many never even read prozines.

There are, so far as I can see, only two useful functions which a national or international federation of ims could accomplish. First of these is to act as an informational clearing house, and the second that of interesting new imagists into imagidom.

There is a definite need of a group in imagidom to act as informational headquarters, to keep in touch with ims, either individually or in local clubs, to know where any im is anytime he changes address, to know which subscription imzines are being published and when, to aid and to solicit aid on such im projects as directories, etc., and to give a certain amount of news concerning prozines and prozine changes.

Notwithstanding such work as is being done along these lines by Unger, and other news publishers, a news bureau maintained by the great majority of ims would be of more value. If the officers and publishers of, say, a monthly news imzine were chosen by election and replaced periodically, as in FAPA, the chance of feuds and discrimination which has been so evident in the past would be largely eliminated. I would propose such a news monthly (weekly is too often to really compile any news) supported by dues from imagidom as a whole, and sent free to all members of the supporting organization. It would be the duty of the editors to keep a file on all members, to report any changes in membership, and to keep a list of all ims with addresses and approximate degree of activity to be published once a year.

It would be a lot of work for one im, but perhaps a group could handle it satisfactorily. There are several such groups now, such as the LASFS, the Slan Shackers, and others. After the war there will be more. There will, I'm positive, be a group in Detroit with the facilities and ability for the job. By rotating the editorship among the various groups, the possibility of a national organ becoming too localized in nature will be largely eliminated.

The other function of the organization would be the direct responsibility of the president, that of interesting prospective ims. An intelligently worded mimeographed form letter would be best, I should think; one based on the idea of finding in imagidom a group whose thoughts are linked to those of the new im by bonds of imagination. Stuff such as the fun had at conventions or in publishing imzines of your own should be eliminated I think, as an im has to be gradually broken in to the more advanced phases. The idea of having individual members of a committee each write a separate letter is, I believe, impractical. Names of prospective imagists would be gotten from the readers columns of prozines, or obtained from other ims.

sion in life. In regards to the Cosmic Circle, Raym is absolutely sincere, and I gathered the impression that he is a bit fed up, along with the rest of imagidom, with the actions and tactics of Degler.

Our conflicting ideas on imagidom was our main difference, as I am quite likely the supreme cynic so far as seeing anything constructive in imagidom is concerned. But even tho I don't believe in it, I am interested in imagidom and in ims. No doubt I shall be in Live Oak again before long. Having finished traveling, I take up

SKY WRITING

and that subject is quite deceiving.

If Milty can talk about what he's doing in the army, I guess I can too, up to a certain extent. As you may know, I'm in the Chemical Warfare section of the Army Air Forces. One of the more important functions of chemical warfare is the laying of smoke screens, and the most spectacular method of laying a smoke screen is by use of airplane spray. That is my principle job, working with airplane spray apparatus.

Remember in the long ago days before the war how you would gaze up into the sky watching a plane trail a long streamer of smoke to spell out such important messages as "DRINK ZIPPO" or "TRY BURPS PILLS"? Imagine a larger, faster, plane of war, trailing not a thin streamer of smoke, but a large, dense cloud providing an impenetrable blanket of white over a large area, and you have some idea of the way it works.

But what has all this to do with s-f? Nothing, except for some speculating by a group of us the other day on possible post-war uses of the airplane spray. Some of the ideas brought forth were really futuristic. Possibly the most practical immediate use thought up, and undoubtedly inspired by the pre-war use of the plane for "crop-dusting", was the use of the plane in insect control. Several new types of sprays which hang in the air for hours have been developed since the start of the war, and a fleet of planes could clear cubic miles of air within the space of seconds by using such insecticides in wartime spray apparatus. Possibly the warplane of today will also be the warplane of tomorrow against the most deadly enemy of mankind, the insect.

But that is a commonplace idea, and it wasn't until we got into the more far-fetched plans that the discussions really got under way. Several of them depended on the use of as yet undiscovered liquid plastics, such as the one about the fast-drying plastic to be used in road construction. Imagine surfacing a road at the rate of 6 miles a minute!

Then of course, there was the use of planes for painting large surfaces, only nobody could figure out just how to prevent the spray from extending beyond the limits of the object to be painted. One of the boys got the idea of sowing crops from the air, until the difficulties of spraying even finely particled solids was pointed out -- and then he decided that the plane could be used for watering crops in areas where irrigation wasn't effective.

But the ultimate in inspirations came with the idea of using a super-chilled gas, one which liquefies at almost absolute zero, to freeze a path across the ocean. Then large cargo carrying rocket cars could follow the planes by crossing the ice on runners! With that I close, for nothing could top that suggestion except possibly the one about spraying an atmosphere around an asteroid, by using liquid air. Yeah, that last was my idea.