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This issue of PHENOTYPE, if all goes well, will -- but there now; who ever heard of all going well in fandom? Aside from being more than we deserve of the Universe, it makes a dreadfully dull story to boot. In fact, it'll probably turn out that this lot, Operation Crifanac CCXXV, will be considered a hostile action by Wilson (assuming the pundits are right about the elections) and diplomatic relations broken off, followed by an embargo on mail...which is just as well, since that'll prevent the American members from finding out that behind all the obfuscatory official explanations for the collapse of NATO, OMPA, EEC and such groups

## It's Eney's Fault

ACCULTURATION FAILS Well, not many OMPA members seemed to react to the quiz last time, but I'd better give the answers in this for those who did take a stab at it.

- 1. HG Wells' "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" worked a miracle on the lamp in the bar of the Long Dragon, and "The lamp hung inverted in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down."
- 2. Non-Americans can be excused not knowing the last verse but one of "The Star Spangled Banner" -- Francis Scott Key -- in which the band which swore to show the Yankees where to head in came to such an end that "Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution." Discriminating bullets they must have used.
- 3. Kipling's friend has received "The Mark of the Beast", and has just voiced the howl of a wolf. "People write and talk lightly of blood running cold and hair standing up and things of that kind. Both sensations are too horrible to be trifled with. My heart stopped as though a knife had been driven through it, and Strickland turned as white as the table-cloth."
- 4. Bram Stoker's narrator thinks that <u>Dracula</u>, having killed Lucy Westenra, is nibbling the kiddies now, but Dr. van Helsing thinks of a different origin for the marks on the children's throats: "He threw himself with a despairing gesture into a chair, and placed his elbows on the table, covering his face with his hands as he spoke:-"'They were made by Miss Lucy!'"
- 5. Ezekiel 37: 1-3, being crossexamined about the resurrection by the recognized Authority, gives a politician's answer: "And I said unto him, O Lord God, thou knowest."
- 6. Alice in Wonderland, having been ensmalled by a magic potion, eats an equally magic cake. Whereupon: "'Curiouser and curiouser!' cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English); 'now I'm opining out like the largest telescope that ever was!"

And I still believe that anybody who doesn't recognize a passage from Alice is a Fake Fan.

OFF TRAILS No, the last Phenotype wasn't a premailing -- I just sent your copy out as soon as it was ready. Mailing wasn't completed until I got this Off Trails.

SIZAR But my sakes, you don't need a prescription from your ductor for pills that will put you to sleep and then kill you. I suppose it wouldn't be in the public interest to give details right here, but really, anybody who wants to Go can Go on his own motion. \*\* I think the best line in the mailing may have been your "If God had wanted us to be telepaths he'd have given us brains". \*\* In case Bobbie doesn't answer, the catch is that you can't cut across the grain of either wood or flesh with a stone axe and produce anything like neat results.

BURP! Ghood lhord, Bennett, Richard III was scragged at the battle of Bosworth Field. The chap you're thinking of, who got an enema with a red-hot poker -- so his warders could display a corpse with no wounds on it -- was Edward II. \*\* There are quite a lot of stories about why this chap or the other predicted Britain, or the Allies, would win World War II -- Churchill and the carp pond, you know, and the one about the British having longer bayonets -- of which I think my favorite is about Roosevelt, who came into a Cabinet meeting one morning on the broad grin. "We're going to win after all!" he exulted. "You know we require five carbons of every military document? I've just found out the Germans call for nine!"

SOUFFLE Read African Genesis? Better than that; I assigned the thing -- as extra reading for my Sociology 2 class. No reports in yet, but I'll let you know.

WHATSIT Things wouldn't be half as much fun if we could figure

ENVOY out who was publishing which, after all. \*\* George Scithers has a counterploy for reincarnation, or perhaps an extention of it to the Logical Limits; he considers that, since the soul is not bound by mundame time, that there's really only one soul in the entire universe -- which passes through all our life-spans in what, from its viewpoint, is succession, but from ours is an unpredictable skipping thru time and space. I tried to argue with him but he says he speaks from experience, because he remembers when he was me and he's evolved ever so far from then.

\*\* Monitor was called that because it would "admonish" the rebels -- having been laid down when the Civil War was still regarded by much of the north as a very-large-scale police action.

 TNAMS&SCF The cover looks reminiscent of Eric Needham's work, which is g\*o\*o\*d. Conscious imitation, or mrely accident? \*\* "The fan-shaped future which Seabrook's friend advances..." Did you forget to add (disclaimer!), or did you have A Reason for not doing so?

SCOTTISHE The only cavil I can offer is that it was Sheridan, not Sherman, who discovered that a warlike, elusive enemy could be starved easier than beaten -- Sherman's operations in the March to the Sea had quite a different character, if that was what the reference really was. If the operations against the Indians are meant, it was Sheridan -- and he didn't discover the principle, at that. Hitting at the Indians' food supplies -- since they had very little surplus -- was a stock move, ever since the early days of the Republic when Wayne beat the Eastern Woodlands Indians by this teachnique.

AMBLE 'Tain't so simple; the degree to which an enclosed drainage centre becomes salty depends a good deal on whether the overflow is greater than the evaporation. If it is, the fresh water will undergo very little concentration by evaporation, and the sea, lake, or what have you won't be too salty. Thanks to the temperature, the Arctic Ocean has trifling loss by evaporation from the water; in fact, quite a lot of the water is covered by ice and can't evaporate. So even now the Arctic O isn't as salty as other oceans, and a lot of what saltiness there is is due to mixing with water that comes from the Atlantic and Pacific basins. When the Bering Bridge was there, of course, the Pacific basin couldn't contribute any salt water, so we had this fresh-water runoff sweetening the sea in the area of the Bridge, while the nearest source of extra-salty water from outside was the Atlantic -- which is clear on the other side of the Arctic Ocean from the area we're interested in. Twiggez-vous?

COMPACT Perhaps it's attachments that keep good candidates from being TAFF fen recently. Grennell and Tucker have never stood because of the need for keeping their families going; why ATom and Archie Mercer have never stood you people over there know better than I. \*\* Splendid to see ATom w\*r\*i\*t\*i\*n\*g again. Sterno is a sort of proto-Napalm -- jellied wood alcohol; it's a fairly common item in the USA. It's dark red or violet; comes in a tin about four inches across, with a press-fit lid. It's burned right in the can, and may be snuffed with the lid for re-use at later conveniences. Smokeless, nearly odorless, and trifling fire hazard as compared to other fuels, it's used for compact cooking-kits. \*\* Oh, we have commercials for the Armed Forces, Ella -- you must have missed them. Tennessee Ernie Ford sings commercials for the Army every evening on the local folkmusic station.

SAVOYARD Read my last -- well, next-to-last, by the time this appears -- Cultzine and you'll find (a) my explanation of the Feketastrophe, (b) Gordon Eklund's comment that he'd noticed it too, (c) a specimen imprint of the "Danger -- Subversive Material" stamp that caused the trouble, and (d) the offer to explain to non-hostiles any apparent discrepancies. To re-state more strongly my

comments to Gordon Eklund: if you won't check the by-our-lady facts when you're told exactly where they can be obtained, don't blame anybody when you wind up looking silly.

BINARY Never quite understood people getting sick -- that is, nauseated -- from smoke. What happens to me is that my eyes start to burn, quite painfully. That seems fairly reasonable, but how does the stuff irritate the right nerves to upset one's stomach? \*\* But the report I saw -- possibly a later one -- was that the US had rejected massive retaliation (less euphemistically, terror-bombing of cities) after having run thru a series of war games with the computer battery at the Pentagon in which the users of that strategy were badly beaten.

MORPH Ah, but is "The Mark of the Beast" really a werewolf story? I suppose the definitive one hasn't really been written, in the sense that, say, the definitive Vampire story was written in Dracula; perhaps if one had to be chosen it would be a toss-up as between Endore's Werewolf of Paris and Blish's There Shall Be No Darkness. \*\* I forgot last time to answer your question about toxins. A toxin is, in a large sense, any poison -- arsenic, radiocobalt, botulinin, or what have you -- but medically it's a poison of animal or vegetable (including microbic) origin. In a strict sense toxins are more or less unstable; they don't cause symptoms of poisoning until after a period of incubation; and they are antigenic -- that is, you can become immune to them not through accomodation (the way people "become immune" to, say, arsenic and strychnine) but by your own cells\* elaborating an "antitoxin" which is specific for whatever you've gotten.

CURIOSITY SHOPPE Dian Girard, I believe, gave the Definitive Definition of Don Studebaker's drinks: "The Sip of Fools".

HE.X Philosophical arguments for god, like the ontological perfect being one, not to mention that from order, carefully fail to mention the concept of god's personality. One objection I have always liked to bring up depends on the fact that all the links between this philosophical concept and the actual — so to speak — god you're being touted onto have to be just so. I mean, what if you die and, sure enough, there is survival after death; and sure enough, there is a god; and sure enough, he does call you up for judgement — only he's not JHVH at all; he's Allah or Olympian Zeus or Brahma or Ehecatl or some god nobody ever heard of on Earth? What price having abstained from belief as against having backed the opposition? \*\* O come now, Chas. The grid plan for cities appeared in the streets of Piraeus. \*\* "In 1745 — two centuries earlier than Sherman!" Thou'lt be rich, Mivarsh, if thou reckon gold pieces o' this fashion thou dost days. \*\* No offense taken, ol' man, but I would just as lief not see that stupid nickname "Dikini" spread around among civilized folk...

Carl computes Cult culture-components by the Caspian C.

<sup>\*</sup>mostly the white blood corpuscles of the lymphocyte group, it would appear.

That ancient fan, DICK GEIS, wrote me a while ago with some reflections about mundame activities...

Ahhh..OWW. EEEK..ooto graan...

"No, I am not reading a copy of GALAXY. I'm thinking of torture. I got to thinking of tortune a few days ago as a result of reading about the Inquisition and the heretic-hunts of the Dark Ages. Then I remembered the Chinese water torture and similar classic devices for eliciting information. Then I want to the library and couldn't find one book on the subject. Odd that such an interesting subject, and one man has given so much time and effort to, should be so ignored by publishers.

"There is the novel Torture Garden, and tortures are mentioned in many books, yet there is not, so far as I know, a book that brings together all types of torture, tracing it from ancient times to our modern era, and in the process condemning it. For I assume that should such a book be written it would almost HAVE to pass moral judgement on the past men who used torture to gain their ends. It would have to pass judgement because I don't believe an objective history and classification of torture could be published.

"There is an almost instinctive shrinking away from evidence of man's inhumanity to man; a sort of walling off of the damning subject from the sight of society. Torture is, by its very existence in Coventry /disclaimer! -- RE/, an argument against the 'essential goodness' of man which the dealers in faith sell so assiduously. Forced to deal with necessarily arbitrary value-judgements, these people are forced to hide evidence that man is essentially evil, and are forever blaming such things as torture and atrocities on a 'denial of God', insanity, deplorable wartime necessities, and like that.

"Torture is not normal, they say, and while regrettable, can be explained. I would say that torture is normal. But that since it makes a lie of all man's spiritual pretensions, he prefers to pretend that only the noblest causes make its use permissible or excusable, and that even then only perverts actually enjoy it. Of course they refer to scenes in which the sadistic Nazi captain is having the hero tortured in an effort to make him reveal the secret of the thingamabob which means defeat or victory. They almost always prefer not to think of prisons, congressional investigating committees, and Spillane books. To say nothing of parental torture of children, and childish torture of pets.

"So we are face to face with a familiar Christian character trait: if a subject is painful to think about, or embarassing, then ostracize it and pretend that it doesn't exist. Of course Christians aren't the only ones who behave this way, but they seem to exhibit these characteristics most often...probably because their odd-ball faith requires it if it is to make any sense at all.

"I think it would be a healthy thing if a pocketbook titled

Your How-T-Do-It Torture Manual were brought out. Then people could go about torturing one another in a scientific spirit instead of relying on instinct and imitation. And once torture in public and private life was formalized and recognized for what it is, it could be fought privately and publicly. Everyone, from an early age, would learn all the techniques and styles of torture, and could master the defenses against them.

"Bring Torture out into the open. I say. But then, I suppose I am being an optimist. And if there is anything I hate as much as an idealist, it's an optimist.

"Hoping you are the same, GEIS"

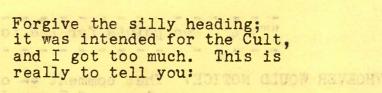
"That's two points for the format."

WHOEVER WOULD NOTICE? That comment -- or I should say short article -- of Terry Jeeves on the problems he ran into parking his car by the roadside is another of a long series of items which keep reminding me what a lot of assumptions, not only unspoken but unfounded, I (and, I trust, others) have always made about the similarity of life in two countries as near to being mutually comprehensible as ours are. Terry fairly croggled me not directly by what he said but by not ever saying outright -- and thus suggesting the assumption that everybody understood -- that in England cars parked that way had to leave their parking lights burning after dark. All night.

My surprise will tell you how we do it here, but what I got to thinking about was a practice more vital to fandom. Everybody knows (do they? Maybe this is another wrong assumption) about the Typical English Pub, but I've never heard about a Typical English State Store. Maybe you can buy liquor by the bottle in a pub, for all I know; there's no means of comparison, for in Virginia we not only sell nothing stronger than beer by the drink, but serve even that only with a meal. (Don't shudder; it gets worse.) To get bottles for home consumption, we have to go through this:

Wait a bit; before going through anything, we have to find a state store. These are buildings with plain, unidentified fronts, of concrete with a glass door at each side and a display windom across all the front remaining; within are seven rows of shelves. These are end-on to the windows; six feet up the center one is a large electric clock. In front of the shelves is a counter, the full length of the store; flanking the ends of the counter, lists of the stock liquor available. (Nonstandard brands can be ordered specially.) One looks up the desired on these and orders by number; the first you see of your purchase, probably, is when the clerk brings it out, gums on a tax stamp, and hands it over. That isn't the kicker by any means, though. No. This is: there is no other way to get bottled drinks; there are about a thousand of these stores in the state; and every one of them is like this, barring a few particulars of dimensions. And, just possibly, the color of the concrete in the fronts. Now, your system is...?





## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

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In our last installment, Francis Towner Laney, a Mundane type, began to read fantasy and made contact with various "fans". Getting word that he was to become draft-liable, Laney moved southward, looking for a new job which the War Manpower Commission would regard more generously. On his trip he made many contacts with the "fans", and arriving in Los Angeles he was invited to meet a whole club of them, called the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society. As we closed our last installment, Laney was on his way to his first LASFS meeting.

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## CHAPTER FIVE -000Utopia In Shangri-La \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*

It was on November 4, 1943 that I made my first personal contact with the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and I encountered the club at one of its all-time highs both in membership and activity. Nevertheless, as will shortly appear, the LASFS left a great deal to be desired. Even on that night, certain features of the group left me with a slightly unpleasant taste in my mouth. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

We drove up at about 6:30, and found the clubroom in the sole possession of a thirty-ish looking man considerably inclined to embonpoint. It turned out to be Joquel, the one man in fandom whose normal speaking voice can drown out Andy Anderson. He greeted us cordially, explained that a large number of the members were even then about to arrive from their dinner at a nearby cafe, and we commenced a desultory conversation. Aaron very shortly left to find a room, and I began roaming around the room, examining the originals, which were the first I had seen except for the ones at Smith's.

Then as now, the LASFS occupied the 14x16' storeroom in the Wellman Apartments, with a street entrance at 637 South Bixel. room is a blend of pigsty and monk's cell. When I first saw it, it was even worse than it is now, since many of the members were using the place as an office, and their personal papers and other impedimenta were strewn around in careless abandon. There was an austere and extremely dirty couch in one corner, and a rickety old square table covered with typewriters and loose papers. A large mimeograph sat on an upended fibre barrel, and another similar barrel was packed to the bursting point with wastepaper. A couple or three ramshackle home-made bookcases filled with tattered magazines, and 25 or 30 uncomfortable folding chairs comprised the remainder of the furnishings. The shortcomings of the room and contents were made even more apparent by the pitiless glare of six or eight naked light bulbs set in sockets around the wall. The floor was a welter of cigarette butts and other trash, not the least of which was the filthiest and most badly worn out rug I have ever seen.

I had of course followed with great interest the accounts in SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES and elsewhere of the LASFS and its new clubroom, but the Utopian atmosphere of these accounts certainly had not prepared me for such a hole. I had imagined that a clubroom such as this would have indirect lights (probably from a couple of cheap floorlamps), a number of second-hand but comfortable easy chairs and davenports, desks and/or tables, an old radio, facilities for drinks soft and otherwise, a neatly filed library, and some sort of workroom for mimeographing. Above all, I had assumed that the place would be reasonably clean, and most certainly designed for comfortable sitting and talking, reading, and other activities.

My disappointment must have been fairly obvious, for Joquel explained that the club was still uncleaned from a halloween party held the preceding Saturday. Our conversation had nearly died out when the place was suddenly invaded by a horde of noisy people. I cannot remember exactly who came first, or indeed much of anything about the next few minutes except that a whirling dervish which I later learned was named

Walter J. Daugherty commenced laying about him with a broom as one possessed, and a quietly smiling chap who I recognised from his pictures as Phil Bronson told me not to mind, that the fellow frequently suffered from these outbreaks of frenetic energy when he had or thought he had an audience.

The next half hour was pretty much of a madhouse; I met 25 or more people, tried to remember who all of them were, and at the same time was quite astonished that most of them seemed familiar with THE ACOLYTE. (At the time Freehafer, Bronson, Ackerman, and Burbee were the only Fangelenos on the mailing list—and nore of the 1943 members had ever heard of Burbee, who was carrying on a ne-man fandom of his own.) I took it for granted that I was being introduced to everyone, not learning until later that only known fans would be greeted by these people by anything more cordial than complete non-recognition.

Eventually the neeting came to order, and I commenced giving away to complete perplexity. Yerke, who has a metal-on-metal voice anyway, read a new constitution which seemed chiefly aimed at keeping out new members -- I didn't know whether to go or stay, but Phil pooh-poohed my wonderment and said it was all aimed at Degler. It went on and on and on, a document capable of handling a gigantio group, and subsequent arguments and quarrels about the wording took nearly as long as the original reading. Then Paul Freehafer read a resignation from his post as director effective two weeks from that night. Then, as though I had not already tried every possible contortion trying to sit comfortably on a club chair, Walter J. Daugherty was struck by one of his famous projects. He must have spent at least three-quarters of an hour remodelling the clubroom, building lockers and other furniture. As he talked, he ran about the room like one possessed, waving his arms, carpentering and hammering in frenetic blind pantomine, climbing over people and moving them out of the way of his mad girations, and building up to an impassioned stark height of excstacy. An authorization for him to proceed with an initial appropriation of \$25.00 was quickly passed by the club, but so far as I know nothing more ever came of this. Just another Daugherty project.

Finally, after about two and a half hours of the hardest sitting one can imagine, the meeting adjourned. I was ready to give the club a brush-off, but in the post-meeting milling around and talking I shortly realised that many of these people were well worth knowing. I hesitated, and hesitating, was lost.

Aaron wandered back, remarked that he'd gotten a room down the street, and commenced talking to Freehafer and me. He asked iff there was any good jazz nearby, and Paul mentioned that Wingy Mannone was playing just down the street and wouldn't we like to go? We would, and so would Walter J. Daugherty. So the four of us piled into Paul's 1939 Plymouth coupe and drove the seven or eight blocks to the Club Babalu, where Wingy played all that winter, and where I spent a vast amount of time listening to him. Daugherty, on getting him away from an audience, seemed like a swell fellow; Freehafer was as genial a host as one could ask for; and all four of us had a very good time. Daugherty invited me to stay with him until I got settled, but I'd accepted Freehafer's invitation before I even left Clarkston, so I declined with thanks.

When Paul and I finally got to the apartment, atiny one-room-and-kitchenette affair, I asked him if the club was always that had, and he mentioned its flaws that had not already been apparent to me, but pointed out that there were in his opinion enough

redeeming features to counteract them. I then asked why he had resigned as director, and he explained that it was due to his health. The conversation went on for some time, and I decided that the club was probably worth belonging to after all, since I could use the mimeograph (an automatic one), and could if need be store a good deal of my stuff in the clubroom. This in addition to getting acquainted with some of the more worthwhile members, of which Freehafer told me there were several.

Before telling of the events of LASES life in late 1943 and early 1944, perhaps I should describe the membership of the society at that time. These vignettes of course are derived from my total knowledge of the person in question, and do not pretend to be first-meeting impressions.

The director, the late paul Freehafer, was one of the most sunny natures I've ever encountered. His health was atrocious, and his personal appearence showed it, but though doomed from childhood to a very short life, he had resolved to make the best of it and live it fully. In this he was certainly successful. A graduate of Cal-Tech, he was making \$300 a month doing research chemistry in connection with rocket fuels; spending the money entertaining a fairly wide circle of congenial friends and surrounding himself with the appurtenances of a cultured life. Paul's chief recreational interests centered around music and the arts; he was a constant attender of the symphony, the ballet, the opera, the better class of plays-and had the most comprehensive record collection I have ever seen (comprising, I would judge, at least 500 albums). His books were of amazing variety, and were no mere facade, as a few evenings with him would abundantly show. Paul was one of the most erudite persons I have ever known, and moreover was completely without pedantry or intellectual snobbery. His interest in fantasy was still strong, though he had branched far afield from this major interest of his adolescence. I believe that his reason for remaining active in the LASFS was threefold: his interest and friendship with such members as Yerke, Hoffman, Bronson, Russell, and Ackerman; a certain nostalgic attachment for the group with which he found his first friendships when he moved from Idaho to California to attend Cal Tech; and a feeling that some day the club might realise its vast potentialities. Certainly one is justified in wondering why such a man as Freehafer, head and shoulders above the majority of the members, should elect to waste his time with such a group. As a person, Paul was universally liked, admired, and respected. He was not at all good-looking, but his quick, shy smile was most engaging and infectious; his quiet wit was sharp and brilliant without being barbed, and his general friendliness and good nature made him the sort of person everyone could not help but like.

The secretary of the LASFS in late 1943 was the redoubtable T. Bruce Yerke. Bruce is one of the most brilliant alumni fandom can claim, and it is certain that both fandom and the LASFS were heavy losers when Yerke moved on to greener pastures. He was and is a difficult person, hot and quick of temper, and possessed of a savage sarcasm and impatience with mediocrity; this did not endear him to the more muddle-headed members of the society. Yerke is rather unique in that he grew up in fandom, discovering Ackerman and through him the club when he was only 13 years old. He promptly went overboard for the idea, and although his interest in fantasy had pretty much faded out by the time he was 16, he found sufficient stimulation both in the affairs of the club itself and in the expanding minds of a few of the members to warrant his continuing activity. At the time I met him, Bruce had grown completely beyond most of the members and knew

it: yet the habits of nearly seven years kept him spending a sizeable hunk of his spare time around the club and its members. He saw the need of breaking loose, yet found this very difficult to do; and the peculiarly restricted mature of his early growing up (ie.in fandom) had not only left him with some amazing blind spots but made the exact means of breaking away rather unclear to him. He had a strong tendency to try by sheer brute force to drag the unwilling fans up to his own intellectual level, and upon meeting failure was both perplexed and angry. Bruce was not quite 21 when I met him, but looked to be at least 35 -- short, stocky, and about half bald-headed. Many of the members tended to regard him with awe not unmixed with terror, due to his often outrageous practical jokes (as when he wrapped the sleeping Bronson in old newspapers and set fire to them), his boisterous and sometimes boorish manners, his pronounced intolerance, the brutality of his flaying tongue, and the split second reactions of an extraordinarily incisive and brilliant mind. I regarded Yerke as an extremely desirable and stimulating associate, whose chief fault was a tendency towards intellectual snobbery and an occasional bit of bluffing as to the extent of his attainments, particularly in the languages. However, it is so difficient to judge Bruce as a young man in his early 20's, since both his looks and actions are those of a man 15 or 20 years older, and many of his more annoying actions and traits are perfectly understandable and acceptable if one can remember that the perpetrator is not the 35 to 40 years old he usually seems to be.

Myrtle R. Douglas, then known as Morojo, was the club's treasurer. She is very short, and in my opinion, very pretty. Since she herself has listed it publicly, I'll mention in passing that she is much older than most of the club members, having been born in 1904. She has led a fairly tough life, has been married and divorced twice, and the scramble of raising a strapping son and supporting herself has left her singularly without the ability to enjoy herself freely and casually, though others enjoy her company tremendously. Her chief interest in the club was her interest with Forrest J Ackerman, with whom she kept company for several years, and I hope he fully realises the extent of her services to him--keeping the club on a smooth financial keel throughout most of her membership, doing most of the drudgery of VOM and other Ackerman projects, and keeping the wolves from yapping about his heels in a score of other ways. Myrtle has an inquiring mind which is somewhat hampered by a too-conventional education, and thus is sometimes a sucker for something the least bit on the crackpot side. She is, however, and accomplished and stimulating conversationalist, and is well worth knowing from the intellectual point of view. And beneath that occasionally austere facade, there is one of the most kind hearted persons in Los Angeles, as plenty of club members past and present could testify. She is the first person most of the older members think of when they are in trouble. and in this selfish civilization people like that are rare.

Ackerman is a household name in fandom, but you have to live around the LASFS quite a lot to know him, really know him. In connection with someone else, Don Wollheim once spoke of the "necessary monomaniac", and that is Forry. He has made an adjustment to life which postulates that fandom is the life, and with one or two very minor lapses has lived that life from about 1930 until the present time. Vell, it's his life, and probably from the want of anything to contrast it with he seems to derive a reasomable amount of satisfaction therefrom. His interests are excessively narrow; being limited to stf and fantasy, fandom, stf and fantasy, and fandom, with a rather

slight side-interest in the motion picture. He also has a fabulous collection of photos of nude women, and enlargements of certain portions thereof. But I believe I'm safe in saying that 95% of Ackerman's interest in life -- vocational and avocational -- centers around stf, fantasy and fandom. He loves to be with fans, has certain rather closely derined standards which he feels fans should live up to, and is rather deeply hurt when they fail to live up to this code. He is not always successful in hiding his feelings along this line. He imagines himself to be a poor speaker in public, not realising how well he can talk to an informal group; this of course makes him a poor speaker in open meeting, particularly if the subject is somewhat controversial. Thus he has developed a technique of seldom showing his true feelings at the time a question comes up, and usually going along with the majority. His true feelings often do not come to light for months. One would not think offhand that such a person could be a leader, but nevertheless, Forry is the true leader of the LASFS and don't let anyone tell you differently. Forry's leadership might be termed the domineering of extreme passivity -- it is a far cry from the tactics of the outspoken and aggressive Yerke or the sly connivings and subtle sophistries of an Ashley -- but it has moulded the LASFS almost from its inception, and no doubt will continue to do so. In the first place, Forry has a most winning personality, and al-ways commands a block of votes among the less politically minded mem-Then it must be remembered that he has missed not more than a half dozen meetings in eleven years, while at least 300 people have been in and out of the club during that time. His star is now and then on the wane, when some particularly aggressive director and his supporters get in the daddle, but though perhaps momentarily vexed he knows that they will move on sooner or later, that the things they have done or tried to do will soon be as though never thought of, and that Forry's Club, the LASFS, will be back on the same plodding path, with the same mores and traditions, that he has more or less unconsciously set for it. Whatever the reason, for his ascendency, it is an eyeopener to compare the club with Ackerman, and see how much they are alike.

Right here I'd like to interject the remark that I like Forrest J Ackerman immensely. I may have been harsh with him in that last paragraph, and I may get rough with him again before I'm through with these memoirs, but I don't want him or anyone else to feel that I have any feeling towards him other than that of friendship. The fact that so hypercritical a person as myself can like a man with whom so much is wrong should be a pretty strong indication that this man has a tremendous number of good features in order to counteract the bad ones. I do think Ackerman would be, once he was over the hump of making such a drastic change, a far happier man if he quit fandom to quite an extent and lived a more mundane life. I think that there is an awful lot of man being squandered on fandom out there at 2362. But it is his life and I recognise his right to use it as he sees fit, even if my attempt at realistic and factual reporting may treat it roughly now and then.

Phil Bronson was one of the club's leading members back in 1943. He was still publishing the #1 fanzine, THE FANTASITE, was active in FADA, and had been a leading light in the MFS. He had also been one of my favorite correspondents, so I was extremely anxious to get personally acquainted with him. Phil in person was somewhat of a disappointment, though this is partly due to the fact that I probably had expected too much. He was a lazy ouss, full of a sort of ennui and welt-schmerz which made him a most aggravating companion for me with my violent runnings in circles. He had also an irritating tendency towards intellectual snobbery, and a ten-

tendency to imitate Yerke in ways which he simply did not have the depth to carry it off successfully. He suffered somewhat from too cloistered and fannish an adolescence, first in the MFS and then here. On the other hand, Phil was generally light hearted and agreeable, withy, and easy to get along with. He was good looking, well groomed, and was able to go places in public without committing any of the gaucheries to which so many fans are prone. By and large, he was a good man, and I have hated to see him drift out of my ken.

Daugherty is a swell guy who has a very few faults which taken together have made him my chief sparring partner all through the time I've been around the LASFS. In the first place, Walt takes himself very seriously, and has great difficulty in taking criticism. He is also one of the few really aggressive members of the society, and is not noted for tact nearly so much as he is for going off the handle over something of minor import. He has a peculiarly constituted nervous system in which nearly all the synapses discharge at once with an effect exhausting to both Walt and his associates. (This manifests itself most notably in the Daugherty projects, in which some usually good idea is built up and up and up into a glowing cloud structure. Usually nearly all of the available energy is discharged thru the speech centers, and nothing more comes of it.) These projects make Walt a wearing member to have around; he is aggressive enough to get and keep the floor for long xxxxx periods of time; one knows from past experience that nothing much is likely to come of them; yet the originator is so thin-skinned that he is prone to take even mild suggestions as personally antagonistic opposition, and we are off but good. An illuminating side-light on Daugherty is the fact that I found that the only way to be sure of killing off a Daugherty project quickly was to let it die out from lack of opposttion. Daugherty is really pretty much out of place in fandom, having but very shallow intellectual interests and but a comparatively slight interest in fantasy, but nevertheless found enough satisfaction in the LASFS to stick around it for nearly seven years. On the credit side, he is definitely fun on a <u>mundame</u> party (not a club party where he tends to crowd the intorverts out of the picture and put on a one man show), is good looking despite a growing bald spot and bad pock-marks, and is a veritable demon with the ladies. He tops it off by being easily the best ballroom dancer I have ever seen in action, even if he does like to show off his medals and loving cups. He and I have feuded with great vigor for years; I understand that he hates my guts something fierce; but I regret to say that I cannot return this favor. I just find myself opposed to most of the things he wants to do in fandom, and through a penchant for shooting off my mouth have often drifted into spearheading the anti-Daugherty faction.

Lora Crozetti was a gal somewhat past the first bloom of youthful beauty who found the club a part-time outlet while her husband was overseas. She was too sensitive herself to be as outspoken as she often was, and by no means was an easy person to get along with. Nevertheless, she was a spasmodically active member who could perhaps have been of considerable value to the club had any sizeable number of the members made any effort whatsoever to make her stay with us pleasant. As it was, Crozetti-baiting proved a major sport around the LASFS; I'm not surprised she is no longer in the club.

Sophie van Doorn and Ada Charles rounded out the feminine contingent. Both of them were women who spent considerable time attending various small clubs of intellectual pretensions and lecture groups, neither were ever more than semi-active in the LASFS, and gradually dropped away altogether due to the club's failure to offer anything of interest in lieu of its chronic preoccupation with itself and its internecine quarrels.

A very

young boy, slender and delicate, who had a not inconsiderable artistic ability was Ronald Clyne, who was around the club a great deal until the feud broke out. His chief interest in fantasy was art, and I still remember how persistent he was when someone had an original or illustrated edition which struck his fancy. He would run the person wild making offer after offer, eventually running the price up to a fabulous amount, particularly if it was a trade deal. He was very generous with his own artwork, but publishing it was not always much fun, since Ron was a perfectionist to end all perfectionists, and would think nothing of making some hapless editor have a Clyne drawing re-lithographed if he fancied he saw a slight blemish in it. Ron was too single-mindedly wrapped up in his artistic aspirations to be as good an all-around associate as some of the others, but he was a very smart kid and very likely will make a good name for himself in commercial art.

Alva Rogers was our other artist; possessed of as much talent as Clyne, he lacked that old urge which kept Clyne plugging away at the drawing board, and moreover had so many other interests that his time suffered from dispersion. Stocky, slow-moving, and slow of speech, Alva has carrotty hair and a brick-red face, is lazy and likeable. He is much more mundane than most other fans I've met, and taken by and large was about my favorite associate until he went completely overboard for the Communist Party in mid-1945. His outstanding characteristic is his extreme reluctance to stay out of an easy chair for any protracted period of time, like half an hour. Alva, I might add, has one of the solidest and comprehensive knowledges of magazine stf of anyone I've known. His presence around the club was on all counts a marked asset.

C. J. Fern, Jr -- Mike -- can only be characterized as a card. I doubt if the world has ever seen anyone remotely like Mike. Physically he is short and squatty, with extremely myopic eyes ensconced behind inch-thick lenses, and sandy hair of the lank consistency of piano wire. His personality is something to behold. In the first place he is almost completely selfcentered, and possessed of a power of concentration impossible to describe. (I remember one occasion when Mike, reading the current ASTOUNDING, started to sit down and became engrossed in the story before he quite reached the chair. He stopped right there, in mid-sit so as to speak, with a couple of inches between him and the Someone walked over and pulled out the chair, and he must have remained poised in mid-air in a sitting position for at least four minutes before we could restrail our mirth no longer and the hysterical roar of laughter aroused lim.) Almost totally lacking in self-consciousness, Mike would do some of the damndest things in public. I recall one time in the restaurant Mike was sitting by me and suddenly started pounding his head with his fist -- thwack, thwack, "My god, Mike," I gasped, what's the matter?" It appeared that he had heard that incipient hicoughs could be arrested by striking the inside of the wrist against a hard surface. Going to a meal with Mike was a constant fight if he had any sort of reading matter along; he would not only forget to eat, but would apparently forget everything but his magazine. His concentration made him very absent-minded at times, and the same concentration coupled with his marked unawareness both of himself and associates made him breathtakingly rude at times. Don't get the idea that Mike is a screwball. The little guy is smart as a whip, a glutton from for work (unless it gets in the way of his absent-mindedness), about the best promoter

ever to hit the club, and the kind of guy who uncomplainingly did most of the chores of routine drudgery on any of the projects on which he was engaged. It is amazing how much Mike permitted his friends to use him as a convenience -- particularly in running errands. Another thing which endeared Mike to me from the first is that he is even a worse trouble-maker than I am; as a team we were something for stirring up a fuss. Mike had about the broadest interests of anyone in the club except perhaps Yerke and Freehafer, and certainly the most insatiable thirst for knowledge. An example of this last is the way he went after my record collection. Jazz meant nothing to him particularly, but here was an opportunity to hear the highlights of a well-balanced ter my record collection. collection and try to find out what made it tick, so Mike set to work playing my records and asking all sorts of searching questions about I wasn't thoroughly aware that he was pumping me until later. Since Mike went at everything in a similar manner, it is easy to see why he is so well able to hold up his end of a discussion about almost The guy has a brilliant mind, and if he can anything under the sun. learn to subjugate his tendency to insult people unintentionally, and can curb his big stunt of coming calling at some of the most awkward and weird times (like the time he came calling at midnight, bringing a friend who wanted to use my mimeograph!) the lad is going to go far.

Merlin W. Brown was Mike's closest associate when I arrived in LA. attempt to give a complete vignette of Mel is a hopeless task, particularly if the finished product is to be compared with Yerke's brilliant and witty analysis. ("Merlin Brown: Paragon of Particularity" in the  $\frac{2}{\pi^2}$  FAN SLANTS.) Mel's ohiefest characteristics might me listed: extreme nervousness, appalling slovenliness of both person and living quarters, completely loyal and unreasoning friendship, completely. uncompromising and unreasoning bitter hatreds, wild generosity, completely unexpected lightning-fast reversals of plan and intention, strong class consciousness from the working-man's point of view, and above all a rather unchanneled yearning for erudition and culture. Taken by and large, Mel is a swell guy, whose minor idiosyncracies and whims are asily enough overshadowed by his notable good points. Nevertheless he is a most difficult person to get along with (even I who was for a long time his best friend finally fell out with him over communism), and he often embarrasses the thinner skinned of his associates, as much with his unwarranted gnerosity with money and. goods as by anything else.

Attempting to limn a word picture of James Lynn (Dirty Old) Kepner is fraught with difficulties if it is to be libel-free and still conscientiously factual. Jimmy is a tall and delicate young man, very frail and effeminate, who is cursed with an almost impossible block which keeps him from making up his mind about anything very often. Jimmy can see both sides of every question with almost equal clarity, and in his efforts to be impartial and factual jumps from one side to the other with astounding ease and frequency. He is a great one for crusading, a militant idealist one might say, but his great difficulty in taking and maintaining a positive stand often vitiates his genuine effectiveness as a proselyter. The prime example of all this occurred when I was director of the LASFS in mid-1945; Kepner took the floor to make a motion on something or other, stated the motion very hazily, and without relinquishing the floor asked permission to explain what he meant. wanted to know what he was driving at, so let him go on; he commenced talking about his motion and promoting for it very strongly, but gradually began seeing the other side and to the astonishment of even those of us who knew him so well he ended up talking most strongly

against his own motion. I listened in growing amazement, glanced about the room and noticed most of the members snickering, so banged the gavel and told Kepner he was out of order. He was momentarily furious, particularly when I told him that he was talking against his own motion. He denied this emphatically, and so complete had been his midtalk change of mind that he had extreme difficulty in believing that he had reversed even when everyone in the room agreed with me that he had. Kepner has a much better than average mind that seldom comes close to its potentialities simply due to this inability to channel it in any one direction. Personally, Jimmy is extremely likeable; friendly, and good company.—although his tendency to blow first one way and then another can get highly irritating if one is in his company a good deal. Still, striking a balance on the lad will end up with a favorable picture.

The scholar of the LASFS of course was the redoubtable Samuel Davenport Russell, a completely wonderful person. Sam is a beautiful example of the 1-1-6 cerebrotonic. His continued popularity around the LASFS is largely due to his polite silence in the face of the club's banalities -- if the club fuzzleheads could read Russell's mind they would recoil as from a Yerke or a Laney. Polite, that is one of Sam's outstanding traits -- a genial, easy-going politeness and courtesy. Quiet and unassuming, he seldom speaks up in meetings, but no discussion takes place long in his presence before his eyes light up, and in his precise way he takes the ball and starts I have yet to see the discussion in which Sam was for a touchdown. not able to contribute as much or more than anyone else present. The breadth of his knowledge and interests is breathtaking, and not a little discouraging to those of us who find other interests interfering with their pursuit of erudition. It might be said that Sam is a bit one-sided, since his avocational rounds center about the libraries to a very large extent; on the other hand his adjustment to life is so obviously satisfactory to him, and so adult, that it is plain that he is of a scholarly bent from free choice rather than as an escape from After a session with the LASFS' little escapists and frustrates, an evening with Sam is like a summer trip to the mountains after a week out in the desert. The man's head is loaded with facts which he presents with devastating logic; yet he is rarely if ever pedantic, and his sparklingly dry humor and twinkling grin round him off as a jewel which someday is going to get tired of the arid barnyard at 537 South Bixel. Bud as the club sometimes is, the time I've spent there is admost repaid by the fact that through the club I have added this prince of good fellows to my circle of friends.

different temperament, but in his own way a swell fellow is Eudie Chamberlain, a good-looking, stocky fellow with a notable inability to handle his liquor, but nevertheless a pleasant companion who is possessed of considerably more deapth than is apparent at first. Ed stands out in my mind chiefly from a long and probing discussion he and I once had down in my Georgia Street shack, in which he used me as an audience upon which to unburden some woes. Thus I learned a good deal about some of the difficulties of his adolescence, and of his attempts (which my own observation shows me are largely successful) to rise above them. I consider that Eddie has surmounted far greater psychic handicaps than those which have made life-long impossibles out of many fans, and this most certainly required a high order of both courage and applied intelligence. Though Eddie and I do not have an especial lot in common, he commands my sincere respect; something which I must admit I give but charily. He's one of the few fans I have met who really tries to improve himself as a person.

Though not a Fangeleno, strictly speaking, Michi-dogfan Dalvan Coger was pretty much of a LASFS regular on the weekends of late 1943. There is a guy I could stand knowing a lot better. Dal is in many ways an Alva Rogers without the interest or talent for illustrating. Much more mundane and practical than the typical fan, Dal's ruddy face and friendly grin were always welcome.

covers the LASFS membership in late 1943 as it comes to mind here in March 1947. Of course there were a number of others who were in and out of the scene from time to time. I might mention in passing Ewing Brown, of whom I remember nothing more than the name and a faintly distasteful (and unremembered) connotation in connection with him; Arden "Buns" Benson, another of the MFS expatriates, who was almost completely out of the picture when I arrived, and who has always impressed me as being one of the many normal people who quickly lose interest in fandom as soon as they see what a bunch of jerks most fans are; and a character named Vic Clark, of whose distasteful actions and habits I shall say more later on.

And of course the most prominent member of the LASFS as of November 1943 was the Ghost of Claude Degler.

Well, let's see. Before I got side-tracked writing these vignettes of the club membership, I had gotten myself through my first LASIS meeting, which came rather close also to being my last. Back to the narrative of events...

Being tired from the trip, I spent several days and evenings doing not much of anything except trying to get rid of my cough in the luscious Los Angeles sunshine, which amazingly enough actually came up to chamber of commerce standards during my first two or three weeks here, and browsing around the city.

One of the first things I did was to look up Bob Hoffman's mother, who turned out to be strictly wonderful---young, clever, enthusiastic, good-looking, and super-friendly. Not only did she help# me a lot with my house-hunting, but she even let me unload the Weird Willys into her cellar, and kept most of my stuff for me until I had a place to take it.

I spent a goodly part of those first few days rummaging in the book stores--alone at first, and later with Free-hafer and/or Rogers. I also very shortly learned that someone of other was in the clubroom nearly every hour of the day and night; being essentially of a gregarious nature, this led to my spending an increasing amount of time there.

So many of the members lived right there in the neighborhood; Brown and Kepner across the street at 628, Morojo next door at 643, Daugherty three blocks down the street, and Fern a ten minute walk away. Yerke, Bronson, Chamberlain, Benson, Russell, and Freehafer used the place a great deal as a meeting point to rally around a party to go to the theater or symphony; and Ackerman commuted nearly every night from Fort MacArthur, often spending the night next door on Morojo's and her cousin's guest couch. Then not only did many of the members work screwy shifts, but then as always fans were notable for absenteeism, skipping work at any time for any reason or none. In those first three months, I doubt if I ever spent more than an hour in the clubroom without being joined by one or more other members. The evenings especially saw the premises crowded; many of the members were actively engaged in publishing, kept their typewriters and other equipment right there in the room; there was usually someone reading something out of the club library;

and of course the usual droppings in and out.

Since such a large proportion of the LASFS regulars at this time were active fans, rather than hangers-on, the club made a definite appeal to me, despite its obvious flaws and drawbacks. While it is true enough that one does not turn out as much output when working in a distracting group as he would alone, there is much to be said for working with and in a group. Suppose the old output of balderdash does fall off a little; as long as one is enjoying himself what difference does it make?

first few days, I commenced job-hunting and house-hunting about simultaneously. The club, with its large backlog of stay-at-home intoverts made an excellent foil for the extraverted way I was spending my days; and it was not until I had gotten settled in a job that I found the companionship of the fans palling on me. By December 1, I had discovered that not more than one or two were willing to go anywhere outside of the restricted rabbit-run around the Bixelstrasse, and were likewise presentable enough so that I was willing to be seen with them in public. Naturally enough, I commenced a certain amount of non-fan night life--I'd have just as soon had fans as my companions, but if they didn't want to come along (or failed to meet my not very high standards) I went anyway. This is trivial to mention, except that it was one of the first factors that disgusted me with the club. Rimel and Baldwin, by whom I tended to judge all fans, were much less one-sided.

and my disgust and discontent with the LASFS grew apace as I learned more of the club's affairs--disgust with the club itself and more or less contempt for various of the members.

One of these matters was the Affair of the Burning Bibles, with its iftermath of censorship. Ackerman, as is well known, is a militant atheist. He was manifesting this belief by getting hold of all the religious literature he conveniently could with the idea of keeping it out of the hands of possible converts, was particularly concentrating on the vest pocket Bibles being distributed at Fort MacArthur for the troops. (One man against the American Bible Society!) Anyway, it seems that on at least one occasion, Ackerman and one or two others held a public Bible-burning on the pavement in front of the clubroom. column in the first FAN SLANTS, Kepner had artlessly told of this performance, and in doing so had set off an explosion. Most particularly had Yerke and Daugherty hit the ceiling, and demanded a censorship of this column, holding that it tended to hold the club in disrepute, and take away from the artificially built up myth of Shangri-La. (If the truth hurts the club, so be it; better to act in a way one is not ashamed to have made public was my own attitude.) And, typically, Kepner backed down more or less against Brown's wishes. and permitted the shaking of the big stick to intimidate him and emasculate his column.

Then there was the Affair of the Stolen Artwork. Ronald Clyne, it seems, had had a number of originals he wished to publish through fan channels, and had invited all of the publishing members of the LASFS to come to his house one evening at 8:00 and he would make an equitable division. Bronson, Brown, Kepner, and Ackerman missed Daugherty; went on without him; only to find, upon their arrival, that he had not only sneaked out to Clyne's ahead of them, but had hogged every original that Clyne had. Daugherty was not publishing at the time, other than verbally.

Echoes of the expulsion of Mrs. Henry Hasse, with the resultant resignation of her husband and

Bill and Peggy Crawford, were still rocking around the place. Mrs. Hasse, the former Dorothy Finn, had, it seems, threatened to break up the club; however, it was not unapparent that many of her objections to the group were only too firmly founded on fact, and it did not seem to me that the group wanted to do anything about removing these flaws.

The lack of solidarity among the membership was utterly beyond belief. Absent members were discussed more with license than with freedom—and it did not take too long for one to get heartily tired of hearing this anvil chorus. A month of it left one very well informed as to which members were sodomists, impotents, alcoholics, manic depressives, phallic succubi, communists, masturbators, overt devil worshippers, lesbians, and other quient forms of life. Oddly enough, it did not require more than an elementary ability to count to become aware that the freaks were definitely in the ascendency. This sad lessons in the Facts of Fan Life was sharply pointed up by the parade of homosexuals con#stantly being dredged up in Pershing Square and brought around the club by one of the residents at 628.

And of course to cap the whole sordid story was L'Affaire Degler. I never met Degler personally (though I slept in his bed at Ebey's), but during my first 6 weeks in Utopia, I became much better acquainted with Clod than, with any other member of the club. I'll try to summarise it all briefly. On his nation-wide tour of fandom, the comic coordinator arrived in Los Angeles in the early summer, moved in on Kepner, and immediately commenced propagandizing his Cosmic Circle, particularly among Brown, Ferm, and Kepner--all of whom joined. He also started using the club publishing equipment to turn out a flood of propaganda--the revoltingness of which is pretty well known. At first, the more intelligent fans largely ignored him--all except Ackerman, who joined the Cosmic Circle. Many objected to Clod's extreme filth of person (he arrived in Los Angeles wearing a dirty and sweatstained shirt which he wore every day without washing for around four months, and finally donned once again, dirt, stink, and all, when he left town in mid-October) but they merely ignored him.

Yerke happened to pick up a copy of COSMIC CIRCLE COMMENTATOR, and the row was on, but good. Bruce hit the ceiling, and, backed by Bronson, Daugherty, and others, demanded that Degler be expelled, and that his publications be confiscated. The more moderate members tended to believe Degler's fabulous claims as to the size of his organization, and felt it would be better to capture it by infiltration, take it away from Clod, and set it up as a successor to the then moribund NFFF. This did not set well with Daugherty, who of course was NFFF from top to bottom; but it did calm Yerke down sufficiently to cause him to send out a questionairre, aimed at finding out just how much the Cosmic Circle amounted to, and just how many of the name fans Degler claimed as supporters were actually in favor of it.

month following, row followed row almost daily, as various of the members got into savage arguments with Degler. Brown, Kepner, and Fern disowned the Cosmic Circle during this time--leaving it with two local members, Degler and Ackerman. As evidence came in, much of it directly from the Chief Cosman's own writings and remarks, the anti-Degler group became larger and larger, and when Yerke finally published his definitive REPORT TO FANDOM ON THE COSMIC CIRCLE they made an all-out, full-scale attempt to oust Degler from the LASFS. And hell broke loose in Shangri-La.

In the first place, the club constitution had no

provision for the expulsion of members for any cause whatsoever. And to make matters more difficult, the progressive element ran headlong into Forrest J Ackerman's deep and abiding principle that the LASFS and fandom should be a refuge for anyone who claimed an interest in scientifiction or fantasy, and who wished to escape from the world or from his own shortcomings. And many members supported Ackerman unreservedly—some through personal friendship, some because they were peace—loving outer-circle readers of stf who had not been bothered by Degler and did not believe in arguments, and, I fear, not a few because they too were more or less misfits and feared to set a precedent by which they too might some day be expelled.

A month-long deadlock ensued. Unable to get rid of Degler by constitutional means, and unable to force a constitutional amendment, Yerke and others tried personal intimidation. From all accounts, Degler's one good point is

that he stuck by his guns and refused to be run out.

Yerke finally delivered an ultimatum that if Degler ever set foot in the club again except on Thursday nights he personally would throw him out. He was heartily backed by Bronson, Daugherty, Fern, Brown and others. Kepner, typically, had taken up for the under dog, and was pro-Degler at this time. Matters came to a head one Sinday shortly after this when Yerke, out at Santa Monica, phoned the club only to have Degler answer the phone. The progressives boiled into town, augmenting their forces as they came, and found Degler alone in the clubroom. Yerke started to lay hands on Degler, and was struck down by a heart attack brought on by heat and excitement. Daugherty and Bronson, in comic opera tradition, almost came to blows with each other in quarrelling over which was to have the honor and pleasure of throwing Degler out of the premises; in the resulting turmoil, Degler slipped away. Some of the members went next door to get Morojo, and caught her red-handed in the act of taking \$10.00 from Degler in payment for a life membership in the LASFS.

Freehafer was chiefly instrumental in quieting everyone down enough to get them to sit down and talk it over. This was done in a series of meetings, during which Yerke, Bronson, and Daugherty were several times on the point of resigning from the LASFS. But the hot-heads were gradually mollified, particularly in light of the fact that Degler left town never to return. (Kepner rode up to Frisco with the fellow, and came back more bitterly anti-Degler than all the rest put together.)

These conciliation meetings resulted in the writing and adoption of a new constitution for the club, with stringent restrictions on new members, and the formation of a club within the club--The Rentpayers' Committee--which would have jurisdiction over the club premises at all times except during the actual Thursday night meetings. This group consisted of the more active members, who carried keys to the clubroom and paid extra dues of \$1 per month and up for this privilege.

But the Degler mess left the club deeply split down the middle, a legacy of ill-feeling that has never entirely left it, even today. It also left most of the members utterly obssessed with the subject of Degler. I heard little else during the first few weeks I was here. It horrified me to find a supposedly healthy organism which had no provision made for disposing of its waste-products; my high ideals for fandom were also outraged by the fact that anyone would support anyone so likely to bring all fandom into disrepute.

Kepner, I discovered, had two large boxes of Deg-

ler's personal effects in his closet, which he was supposed to ship back to Newcastle. When I learned that several members had missed things during Degler's stay, I suggested that his stuff be gone thru before it was sent--and offered myself as an agent, since I was the only person there who had not been in the Great Cosmic War of the previous month, and hence could be considered relatively neutral. Kepner demurred violently, but of course gave in-being easy to talk out of anything.

So he and I went at it one afternoon. I mearly fainted at the stench that came out of these boxes, a reek coming from some indescribably filthy clothing which was packed in the boxes. (I fished the stuff out with a bent wire--and I'm not at all squeamish, either.) We found a miscellaneous bunch of stuff obviously misappropriated from the club and various members; we also found a huge mass of undistributed cosmic Circle literature. I immediately demanded that this be destroyed--with the idea of crippling his propaganda campain. Kepner of course was too idealistic, but I got good enough support from Yerke, Bronson, Daugherty and Brown to prevent the stuff's being sent. (We later made up sets of this undistributed material and sent it out in the Los Angeles post-mailing to the December 1943 FAPA mailing, as documentary evidence to support our demand that Degler be expelled from FAPA.)

Meanwhile, I'd located a room at the Lee Hotel (6th and Figueroa) and moved out of Freehafer's crowded little apartment. I shortly secured permission from the club to use the premises as an office, keeping my locked footlocker and typewriter in the room at all times, and spending most of my evenings there. I worked the night-shift for awhile in the latter part of November and early part of December, which caused me to miss a great deal of club activity, and thus kept my disgust with the group from coming to a head as soon as it otherwise would have.

The jaw of even a hardened fan like Ackerman dropped when he saw the extent of my unanswered correspondence, and the way that letters kept pouring in four, five, six and even eight a day even though I was writing none in reply. I set to work and mimeographed a form letter to use in reply, typing brief notes on some answering the most urgent matters. I had figured that this would choke off my correspondence for a while and give me a chance to get out the 6th ACOLYTE. Huh! All my efforts did was to touch off a veritable deluge of mail; I shortly saw that I could answer the mail and drop THE ACOLYTE, or let the mail go to hell. I decided easily enough that THE ACOLYTE was more important—but my respect for fandom took another dive when I saw the crass way in which so many paltry characters seemed insistent that I correspond with them at fabulous length, regardless of other comittments, and regardless of the fact that I now got all the fan talk I wanted face-to-face, and only wanted to correspond to further ACOLYTE.

buring the time; I worked nights, I had Saturday nights off, and at first these were made the occasion for some ripping all-night bull-fests. Since these generally ended up at my room down at the Lee, they were known as the Lee-Cons. Kep-ner and Rogers were the most regular attenders, next to Dal Coger, Paul Freehafer, and Bob Hoffman. Dal Coger was responsible for my initial aversion to the NFFF, of which I had heard scarcely anything while up at Clarkston. Its president, I learned from Slan Shacker Coger, was E. Everett Evans, who supposedly was engaged in secret navy work stemming from his experiences in World War I and was being held pretty much incommunicado. Evans, according to Coger, had only been a ship's musician during his long Navy service, and, instead of

serving his country, as the published report in BONFIRE stated, he was serving time in the Michigan State Penitentary for homosexuality. Now I he ve no aversion to homosexuals as such. If they let me alone, I am only too happy to let them alone. But I heartily despise the dishonesty of sailing under false colors, and this bit of goseip shook me to the bottom! I felt that since Everett claimed he had been framed, he would have done much better to tell the truth. and trust to the tolerant mercy of his fellow fans. In any case, this sordid bit of deceit, remanently soured me on R. Everett Evans, all the more when he began publishing his sanctimonious TIMEBINDER! and gave me a bitter distrust of the NFFF which was not at all lessened as I got better acquianted with NFFF's leading Los Angeles disciple, Walter J. Daugherty.

My afternoons, particularly on Saturdays, were spent in book and magazine hunting. One amusing episode occured at the a well-known Holly-wood bookshop; I had gone there with Ronald Clyne, who had gone immediately to the back of the store while I had stopped to broswe at a front table. A clammy hand was laid on my arm, and, startled, I looked into the rolling eyes of one of the fruitiest fruits that ever got blown, from a tree or elsewhere. "Who is youah fwiend?" he lisped. "Huh?" from me. "Who is youah young fwiend?" the fairy repeated. "Oh, he's just a kid I came in here with; why?" "Oh-h-h! He's such a bee-ootiful boy-y-y!" came the trilling response. Since this wan character was one of the clerks in the store, it may well be imagined that I never went there again with Ron! (So far as I know, Ron is OK; he can't help it if he's good looking!)

The bookhunting spree came to an abrupt halt a few Saturdays later when I totted up after a jaunt with Rogers and discovered to my horror I'd spent nearly \$25.00 in a single afternoon. (Of course I had a two-foot stack of WEIRD TALES and a mint copy of the last issue of THRILL BOOK, but even so....) I told the people at the club that wine, women and song were a lot more fun and a hell of a lot cheaper--and proceeded hitting the Zenda and other spots on my Saturday nights. My tendency to cut loose was all the more augmented by the fact that I was having the first of a terrific series of battles through the mails with my dear wife, who seemed to feel that the housing shortage was something I had invented to plague her, and was kicking me in the teeth right at the time I needed a modicum of consideration and loyalty.

At about this time, an amusing passage occured between Yerke and Ackerman one Saturday night. The clubroom was very well filled with fans, most of whom were doing crifanac to beat the band. At about 8:00 o'clock, Yerke put on his coat, said good night, and started for the door. "Bruce, where are you going?" said the Ack. "Oh, I have a date." "You mean you'd leave a roomful of fans to go out on a date?" demanded Ackerman with a strong note of disbelief and disapproval in his voice. "Oh yes, hadn't you heard? I'm a pervert. I go out with women!"

with the rest, and dismissed the whole thing as a gag. However, I was stunned and not a little hurt to discover the change in Ackerman's attitude towards me when I myself commenced missing the Bixel stye from time to time to go dancing. Though he said nothing overt, he made it very plain that he disapproved, and in divers ways he made his disapproval evident if not obvious. At the time I ignored it all, though it added to my discontent with the club.

Shortly before I arrived in Los Angeles, Ron Clyne had met Albert de Pina, a Hollywood script writer who was knocking off scientifiction for PLANET on the

side. Early in my acquaintence with Ron, he suggested that I come out to de Pina's with him, and eventually I got around to so doing. De Pina turned out to be an extremely ebullient individual, not without a certain patina of Hollywoodishness, but nevertheless a genial host, stimulating conversationalist, and all-round good fellow. He seemed particularly struck with the possibilities of the LASFS as a retreat for Hollywood characters, and we had many conversations along this line. According to de Pina, a surprisingly large proportion of the people in the film industry, including such top-flighters as Olivia de Havilland, read the better science-fiction magazines regularly; in addition he felt that among this group there was sufficient demand for a relatively unpublicised retreat where they could dodge their public that the LASFS could quite conceivably be of interest to them.

Both Ron and I told him at considerable length what sort of hog-wallow the physical plant of the club usually was, warned him of the weirdly impossible individuals who made up a good part of the membership, but he persisted. He pointed out that we'd have to get a clubroom in Hollywood or the San Fernando Valley, and fix it up somewhat more civilizedly than we had described the club as being; on the other hand, he also pointed out that it was a pretty good gamble, that he was almost convinced that he could get us enough interested and interesting members out of the film colony to repay our efforts many times, that if they did come in they could certainly be expected to pay most of the freight, and that even if his plan failed altogether the club would still gain through having secured more suitable surroundings.

Well. De Pina's scheme sounded rather fantastic, yet there was no question whatever about him, or his connections (which were well documented by his fabulously interesting scrapbooks---I myself saw his copy of his \$250 a week contract as a script writer which had been in effect at the time he was drafted), or his sincere interest in stf--which he continued to write as a hobby long after he had been signed up at the fabulous figure of \$750 a week.

While I could see possible drawbacks to the scheme. I most certainly talked it up around the club --- and my growing disgust with the LASFS got still another boost from the way the people received it. Mike Fern was about the only member outside of Ron Clyne who liked it at all; Mel Brown, forgetting that it was only a scheme to talk about, went off into a veritable tantrum and said he'd resign if any of those people tried to get in the LASFS. Daughefty was firmly opposed --- after all, he was only a stand-in. Ackerman characteristically said little, but indicated that such a move was contrary to the spirit and traditions of the LASFS. And so on... Oddly enough, the poorer integrated an individual member was with life, the more bitterly he objected to de Pina's scheme; even though it must be remembered that I did not even bring it up officially, but merely talked it over with some of the members. It was from this episode that I first got my belief that to most of its members the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society was no more than an escape from reality and an attempted escape from themselves and their own woeful shortcomings, a belief which subsequent experience has only confirmed.

My report back to de Pina, oddly enough, did not deter his interest in the LASFS. Finally, one
Sunday evening, I took him over to the clubroom, much against my better judgement. The room was occupied by Ackerman, Morojo, Fern, and
Brown. When we entered, Brown looked up, dropped what he was doing,
crowded past us and left before he could be introduced. Fern went on

reading, acknowledging the introduction with a barely perceptible grunt. Ackerman and Morojo were mimeographing VOM; they did acknowlegge the introduction, though coldly and with obvious lack of enthusiasm, then immediately turned their backs pointedly and went on with the mimeographing. Shaking with rage, I showed de Pina a chair, tried to entertain him with notable lack of success, and watched him spend half an hour trying to be friendly. Everything he said just floated out a ways, then dropped with a soggy splat on the filthy floor. If a direct enswer was imperative, morojo or Ackerman would usually mutter a constrained monosyllable. At no time did they stop their feverish mime ographing, except when de Pina expressed a wish to buy a certain issue of UNKNOWN and Ackerman stopped long enough to hunt it up for him and pocket the money. Finally, de Pina left; I accompanied him to the door and offered to drop him, but he reminded me that he had an appointment at the Biltmore (eight or nine blocks down the street) and that the walk would do him good.

I went back into the club and proceeded to stand things on end. I was so angry I could hardly talk, but I managed to indicate what I thought of this rank boorishness. Mike I forgave up to a point when he claimed that he had been so deep in his reading he did not realise what was going on; something that was characteristic of him, though a trait difficult to condone. Ackermen muttered something about, "After all, he'd just had a few stories in PLANET; who was de Pina, anyway?"; I blew my top at the boy, pointing out that this made no difference, that the man was as much a fan as enyone present, was this club open to fans or wasn't it, and so on -- well interlarded with choice Anglo-Saxon remarks of dubious semantic bearing on the dispute. Ackerman subsided. Myrtle quite huffily pointed out that it was the only night the duo could work on VOM for a week, and that they were too busy; I blazed back that perhaps VOM was not of quite such cosmic importance as its editors liked to imagine, and besides there was such a thing as common courtesy. Brown came back in time to get a tongue-lashing from me. Later he told me that the Ack-ojo bloc in the club had decided to cold shoulder de Pina if he ever came around, for fear the members might try to take up his scheme of LASFS expansion, but I have never been able either to prove or disprove this statement.

I shouldn't have permitted all this to affect me as it did, but I never felt the same about de Pina after this, felt vaguely humiliated over the whole mess, and gradually ceased visiting him. He was as good a sport about it as one could imagine, but I never could quite look him in the eye after exposing him to such an uncalled for series of snubs.

Needless to say, this episode fanned my discontent with the LASFS to open revolt, and set me to making political plans for the first time; partly with the idea of revenge (I hate to admit it) but mostly with the idea that with a bit of support I might be able to lead the club into a somewhat less revolting groove.

I did not see de Pina for over a week after this, but when I saw him next it was under pretty exciting circumstances. An Earl Carrol girl, June Harris, had had a long fan letter in the then-current PLANET; de Pina mentioned that she had suggested he bring a couple of friends to Christmas dinner, and wondered if Clyne and I would like to be those two. (I nearly walked through the phone saying yes!) As an aside, I should mention that Daugherty like to fused his jets when he saw June's letter in PLANET, immediately dashed off a letter to her in which he mentioned he was connected with Warner Brothers, and in his excitement sent the letter

airmail special delivery though it only had to go from one substation of the Los Angeles post office to another, a bit of assinity which occasioned much merriment around the club. Anyway, Ron and I went out to de Pina's and shortly after he took us to June Harris'. I no longer recall who all was there, except that it was a small gathering and everyone had a very good time. In the course of things, June discovered I belonged to the LASTS, and mentioned having received a letter from some starry-eyed boy (yes, that's what she called him) that had perplexed her. She got it out, and read passages which brought good laughter from the people around the table, as did that airmail angle; finally asking me if I knew the fellow (slightly, I said) and what was his connection with Tarmer Brothers. "I'm not entirely sure," I said, "but I think he's just a stand-in for someone." Whereupon, June tore up the letter. (My telling of this episode around the club somehow did not amuse Daugherty as much as it did some of the others, but then, I've never claimed to be a very good raconteur.) June was tall and ravishing, a very smart girl, and possessed of much more mind than most women I've talked with. Sure, I talked science-fiction and fantasy with her; after all, that was my speed, and mink-coated beauties with brand new Buick convertables are definitely not. Christmas dinner with an Earl Carroll girl: Yes, I'm afraid I was a bit awed.

Apart from the regular fan gatherings, I also got in on a couple of other social events in late 1943 that perhaps should be mentioned. Lora Crozetti had several of us, including Brown, Kepner, and myself, for a luscious home-cooked Thanks giving dinner; and Morojo took a number of us to an exclusive Italian restaurant in Hollywood for Christmas Eve dinner, one of the few times that Ackerman has ever eaten out without going to Clifton's.

But I must veer away and pick up the political developements of November and December 1943 in Shangri-La. At that time, the club had only one elected officer, the director (actually president), who appointed the secretary and treasurer, plus any other officers he might wish, such as librarian. These, plus the chairman of the Rent Payers' Committee, formed an executive committee which under the constitution had almost unlimited powers, though at the time I came to LA they did not avail themselves of them to any great extent.

Freehafer's resignation as director necessitated the election of a pro tem director to fill out the balance of his one year term which was to expire December 31, 1943. Walter J. Daugherty, in one of his frequent political moods, spent a great deal of time outlining to all who would listen his proposed platform; oddly enough, no one would nominate him, so he was unable to run for the office. Jimmy Kepner and Buns Benson were nominated; when Kepner was elected, I was astounded when Buns and his supporters (Bronson, Chamberlin, Yerke, and one or two others) got up and walked out of the club. Kepner seemed stunned, but rallied enough to appoint Lora Crozetti as secretary (she did not attend a single meeting in that capacity; something of a record for an officer even in the LASFS) and continue Morojo as treasurer.

This walkout was followed in a very few days by some very bitterly worded resignations from Yerke, Bronson, and others. At the time I did not know enough about the club to realise how well founded their strictures were, so tended to oppose them. Another factor was my very slight acquain tence with the gent elman in question; this mass resignation occurring only three weeks after I arrived in town. So particularly when the first KNANVE came out, with its poorly worked out Bronsonian attack on new fans, I was for a short time

quite strongly anti-Knanve. It must be remembered that the Knanve resignation occured but three weeks after my arrival in Los Angeles, and that I had but little chance to become well acquainted with the "genial knaves" during this time; also that my being around the club so much tended to give me for a short time the club's viewpoint.

result of all this was my faux pas with Lionel Innman. At the time the #1 KNANVE came out, I wrote a red-hot article attacking Bronson extravagantly, signed it as director of the LASFS, and submitted it to VULCAN (which Phil had particularly singled out for criticism) for publication. By the time the article appeared, the feud had broken wide open, I was an Outsider and on good terms with Bronson. So I sent Innman an equally red-hot retraction, attacking Ackerman and the LASFS as wildly as I'd previously attacked Bronson. At about this time, VULCAN went on an irregular basis and I gradually forgot all about this article, only to have it come out about two weeks after I was once more back in the LASFS. I believe that in this VULCAN/Bronson episode I did the most thorough job of making an ass of myself that I ever did anywhere. If I weren't trying to write a factual and realistic account, I'd be only too happy to suppress all mention of it.

A person standing on the outside might have jumped to the conclusion that the LASFS, after the resignation of the Knanves, would have been a pretty much united group. How wrong he would have been: There were at least three distinct cleavage lines, marked by extreme hostility, which divided the membership into overlapping

groups.

Most important was the strong anti-Daugherty feeling. Mel Brown spearheaded this, having conceived a violent hatred of MJD over the Affeir of the Stolen Artwork. Which was not in the least abated by. Daugherty's being taken on the staff of FAN SLANTS as the only condition by which Daugherty would permit Brown to use any of Clyne's artwork. This situation came to a head in early December when Daugherty jumped Brown for running off a Clyne illustration on the wrong color of paper, and the resulting ruckus nearly brought the two to fisticuffs. I had to lead Mel outside and reason with him for nearly an hour to calm him down. Daugherty was also cordially despised by some of the members who resented his grabbing the floor for ego-boo purposes. was held in slight regard by most of the more intelligent members who resented his strident floorgrabbing tactics on the grounds that they detracted from the intellectuality of the club. At the time I was on good terms with Walt, and actually liked him a good deal, despite the fact that I tended to regard his tendency towards self-glorification as rather amusing.

Secondly, there was a marked anti-homosexual feeling held by several members. It must be remembered that the club had from two to four active homosexuals in its membership at all times, that one of the most active members of the club was also its most vocal homosexual, and that he was continually bringing other fags around the club.

The last cleavage line was that between Ackerman and the rest of the club. Ackerman was riding extremely high on his "fandom is all" philosophy, and was not only expressing strong opinions against various members who chose to vary their crifanac by music, the theater, sex, liquor, or anything else (usually behind their backs) but was developing a most exasperating habit of handing "delinquent" fans prim little notes of rebuke in which he chided them for going to the symphony, or shooting craps in the club room, or going dancing, or taking a drink.

Despite the swirling tides of an tagonisms, the LASTS was rolling along quite merrily. Kepner, in his capacity of director, instituted a very successful series of discussion meetings, at which basiness was held at a minimum. His technique was excellent. He himself would prepare an introduction, and would proceed to lecture the club on the chosen topic, expressing himself as extremely as possible. The moment one of his outrageously unsupportable statements would set someone off, Kepner would subside, and would resume talking only as it was necessary to keep the discussion moving along. Right at the point when the bullfest was at its height, with two or three individuals clamoring at once for the right to be heard, he would adjourn the meeting, which would immediately break up into several violently arguing groups.

I got transferred to the day-shift in early December, and very quickly got a belly-ful of the club. In typical Laney fashion, I commenced shooting off my mouth as to what was wrong with the LASFS, and before I knew it had outmaneuvered myself into a position where I had to put up or shut up. Unfortunately for

my own tranquility, I am not the shutting-up type.

Brown and Fern be-came angered at Kepner over some of the non-fan friends he kept bringing around the club, and came to me with the request that I run for director with their support. I turned this offer down, pointing out that I'd not been around the club long enough to get elected, and that I had enough to do without taking on a task which I knew regretfully I'd be sucker enough to take seriously. But they kept after me. Then one evening in mid-December, Walt Daugherty button-holed me on the way back to dinner, asked where we could go for a private talk. I led him to my car, where he told me that he thought my ideas would never take, that they were too close to his own ideas with which he had taken the directorship in 1940, but that he felt about the same way, and that if I'd accept, he intended to nominate me for director. We talked the matter over, counting noses and votes, and I came to the conclusion that I could probably run a pretty good race at that. Between my reluctance to back down on my severe strictures on the club and Walt's persuamive tongue I gave my consent.

This led to an idiotic contretemps. I immediately told Brown and Fern what I'd decided, only to have Brown blow his top and tell me that if I let Daugherty nominate me he not only would not support me but he would fight me with all he had. Fern backed him up. This attitude really got up the Laney irish, and led to a six weeks rupture between myself and Brown, since I told him off but good.

Kepner was nominated against me, but after talking over my platform with him he expressed a wish to withdraw. I tried to talk him out of it, but he did. Ackerman and Morojo talked him into reopening his nomination, and this action was the first thing that set me veering towards the side of the Kranves, since Yerke had bluntly pointed out that the Ackojo block, as he called it, stood entirely for neutrality, banality, and the status quo-I'd not believed it, but this action so clearly proved the truth of this one statement that it set me off reconsidering the entire Knanve matter, something one could not do objectively without being turned against the LASFS.

My platform might be of incidental interest: (1) Unite all Los Angeles fan dom under the banner of the LASFS. (This was worded around the club in such wise as to lead Ackojo to believe I would oppose any further attempts at ousters (such as the Degler ruckus); actually meant that I intended to try to get the Knanves

back into the club). (2) Continue Kepner's discussion meetings. (3) Clean up the club and its membership both physically and psychologically. (Yes I was naive, wasn't I? But I've always had a strong yen for improving myself and ironing out my own many mental kinks; my big error was in presuming others around the club had any similar motivation.) (4) Get out an issue of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES, which had been in a disgusting state of suspended animation for nearly six months.

the course of my political maneuverings, I approached Kepner, and suggested that if he felt my ideas on uniting the LASFS and the Kmanves were any good (he did) that it might help unite the club if he and I made a reciprocal agreement that whichever one was elected director would appoint the other secretary, which of course was the #2 pfficer of the club. The effect of this of course was to guarantee the club a reasonably non-partisan slate of officers, a coalition cabinet, so as to speak. Kepner accepted this deal.

on the night of the election I happened to sit next to Kepner. As the ballots were being passed around, he leaned over to me and said, "Are you going to be a gentleman and vote for me, or a heel and vote for yourself?" "Why, did you ever hear of a Laney being a gentleman?" I tossed back. Of course I voted for Kepner. The ballot was a tie. Walter J. Daugherty was extremely annoyed, since as teller he had to pass out a new set of ballots. We voted the second time, and it was still a tie. Walter J. Daugherty hit the ceiling, accused the club of making fun of him by deliberately tying up the vote, demanded that either Kepner or I withdraw from the race, and in general put on a typical Daugherty display, including the customary threat to resign from the club. Kepner leaned over to me and suggested that we break the tie by decideng between us which one was to be director. I said, "OK, I've been voting for you; I'll change and vote for myself." "My God," Jimmy screamed, "I've been voting for me too!" The club howled. It ended up that both Kepner and I voted for Laney, so I appointed him secretary, as previously agreed, continued Myrtle in office as treasurer, and adjourned the meeting. 1943 was over in Shangri-La.

I seem somehow to have missed the exhumation of Charles Edward Burbee Jr., so before closing this chapter, I'd better backtrack. Both Andy Anderson and I had corresponded at some length with Burbee in my pre-LASFS days; when he dropped into town during the Christmas holidays he suggested we look the guy up. The idea of a mystery man who wrote long letters to fan editors, subscribed to all fanzines, yet apparently had never been around the LASFS appealed to Kepners imagination, so the three of us grabbed a streetmap, and drove out to Burbee's house. He was most friendly, made vastly with the beer and whiskey, and explained that he had gone to the club about eight months previously, had walked into a roomful of people who ignored him for half an hour, and had finally left in disgust. (This was and is the LASFS' most annoying feature -- the rude way in which visitors are deliberately ignored and made to feel as unwelcome as possible unless they are either known fans or are sponsored by some aggressive member who will force the club to recognise them.) We secured a promise from Burbee to try again, and left after a most lovely four or five hour bullfest.

So I guess it is time for a vignette of Burbee, the guy who for a long time was my best friend in fandom. Physically he is tall and slender, with a leonine head wobbling on a pipestem neck, bushy curly dark hair, swarthy features, and a pronouncedly Mexican cast of features (which no doubt stems from the fact that he is of English extraction.) He is very much married to a

somewhat shrewish wife and an indeterminate number of children. Burbee is not worried about matters of child-raising -- he counts noses at night, and if there are less than three he says, "Oh well," and statts another one that night. He is very easy-going, rather vain in some respects, and smooths his passageway through life with a sense of humor that can be called nothing less than unique. He is lots of fun, but never appears to take anything seriously, a factor which at times can be annoying. He is also the dirtiest talking man I have ever known. But he is a good egg, even if he is motivated only by a profound jealousy of Al Ashley's superior mind. (When I get to Ashley, I intend to say: Al is a good egg, even if he is motivated only by a profound jealousy of Chas. Burbee's superior mind. This may be a peculiar form of symbiosis.) At any rate, neither Al nor Chas ean talk to me for ten minutes without commencing to run down the other, so I believe I am justified in presuming there is some sort of obscure attraction here. Burbee, despite his easy-going ways, can be a very difficult person, but is well worthy of cultivation, particularly if you are bawdy-minded, for the guy is the best off-color raconteur I have ever known. His interest in fandom and fantasy is reading without collecting and publishing without ego boo (except of course for Charles Edward Burbee). Alter-interests include beer, bawdy reminiscenses, tinkering with radios and other sound equipment, and record

Another arrival on the December 1943 scene was Jules Lazar, a hefty young jewish boy from Boston and the Strangers Club. He was tall, heavily built, and strong as a bull. He did not fit He was tall, heavily built, and strong as a bull. He did not fit he was tall, heavily being prone to take offense where none was very well into the club, being prone to take offense where none was very well into the club, being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet intended, and yet intended,

chapter will be about the feud. Hold onto your hats, folks!

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## CHAPTER SIX -000Thunder Over Paradise \*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*\*\*

With my election to the directorship of the LASTS, the stormy affairs of the club became my own peculiar responsibility, or so I felt at the time. I had criticised the club savagely though constructively; here I had been given the driver's seat, and so it seemed up to me to try to do something about the conditions which I had deblored.

Trouble broke out almost at once.

My first ruckus of 1944 was with Nalter J. Daugherty over my membership in the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Everett had come out of durance vile in late 1943 and had commenced his strong membership drive; his bosom buddy Daugherty seemed to regard it of prime importance that all members of the LASFS join the NFFF. "Los Angeles 100% behind the NFFF." was an oft-reiterated cry about this time. Well, I heartily despise this sort of imitation chamber of commerce stuff. Thy should we be 100% behind anything? What had the NFFF ever done to warrant our supportin it? It apparently was just another new attempt of the Cosmic Circle type of mind to get a lot of free ego-boo. All I did was to ask a few searching and honest questions. Daugherty answered my three chief objections most unsatisfactorily: we should be 100% behind the NFFF because it was the national, the NATIONAL, fan organization. It was not new, either; was established in 1941. OK, what had it done in the past 21 to 3 years? Uh, well...fandom did not cooperate; the president was called away to the service of his country (!); well, uh, well my god Laney it is the NATIONAL fan organization and the LASFS should be 100% behind it.

So I turned it down cold. Daugherty told me if I couldn't afford it right then he'd put up the dollar, and it made me pretty thoroughly disgusted to be so totally unable to get across my point that I saw no need for the NFFF, and that I felt it should prove itself before I joined.

So Mr. D. sent in a dollar in my name anyway, over my flat refusal to join. I did not mince words when I found out about it, but finally allowed that the prestige of the LASFS demanded that it#s director belong to the NFFF, so I paid over my dollar and slid back behind the sophistry that Laney the fan was not a member of the NFFF but Laney the director of the LASFS was. But it strained the air between Daugherty and myself no end.

(Oddly enough, neither at this time nor any other time during the feud, did anyone tell Daugherty that his idol was in the clink on a morals rap. We didn't want to hurt Daugherty. He did not learn of this until Al Ashley told him about it in the fall of 1945.)

next fuss, coming almost simultaneously with the NFFF embroglio, concerned a fanne named Patti Grey Wood, a cousin or something of Morojo's who had for several years been more or less active in fendom under the name of Pogo. She had been a member of the LASFS for several years, had married a club member (Russ Wood), and moved to San Pedro. Now her husband had gone in the Navy, she was going to live with Morojo, and she wanted to rejoin the LASFS. But it seems that she had had some sort of major quarrel with Ackerman, part of which is a matter of public record in 1942 FAPA mailings and part of which I never

did find out anything about. The upshot of it all was that Ackerman flatly refused to have her in the club. Quite frankly, this burned me up. Pogo was a member of FAPA, had published two fanzines under her own power and three or four jointly with her husband; her stuff did not rate especially well either in quality or quantity, but it wasn't so far below average but what it could be read with more or less interest; I felt that the club needed members, particularly feminine ones, and that Ackerman had no business whatever to try to keep anyone out of the club, particularly in light of his assiduous fostering of Clod Degler.

Nearly all of us applied the pressure pretty hard, and Ackerman, appalled at the apparent loss of the esteem of most of the club, rather grudgingly permitted her to join. (His method of keeping her out was to state that he personally would boycott her in every way, refusing to speak to her or acknowledge her presence if she rejoined. Pogo naturally enough did not wish to rejoin under such conditions.) This whole thing soured me pretty completely on Ackerman for a while, and my disgust with the lad was not decreased by the comic opera bust-up with Morojo with the contradictory post cards which occured at the same time. (Ackerman broke off with Morojo because she wanted to smoke in the clubroom, sent out about 50 postcards to fandom announcing the split-up--then had to send out another postal a day later when Morojo gave in on the smoking.)

way, Pogo joined the club, so I suppose a vignette is in order. She is a rather large woman--not fat, but tall, big-boned, and well-built; carries 140 pounds in a manner that makes them look like 120. She is brunette, pretty good looking, and notable for an air of vague help-lessness which largely stems from myopia and is not at all reflective of a rather self-sufficient and competant personality. Her interest in fandom was almost entirely limited to the people in fandom, rather than in fantasy, stf, or other facets of the field; and she was far more interested in going dancing than in sitting around the turgid atmosphere of the club.

The first three or four meetings of my term ran rather smoothly. The Kenner-led discussions featured them, and for the most part I did fairly well in keeping business (or quasibusiness) off the floor. This was pretty hard on some of the boys like Daugherty, whose chief pleasure seemed to be getting the floor and holding forth for half an hour on how dirty the club room was or something else of equal moment-but it did tend to make the meetings of more interest, particularly to the outer-circle members who after all did not care a faint damn who got his ego boo and how, but were more interested in serious discussions.

But what business there was turned out to be red-hot. Then the Knanves resigned from the club, Yerke had retained his title of Honorary Secretary, and early in my term of office approached the LASFS with the idea of being confirmed as an honorary member. Since the club had permitted Bluce to use the title "honorary secretary" repeatedly in club publications, it seemed to me a foregone conclusion that the group would acknowledge the honor. Ackerman, Morojo, and Daugherty had a fit -- claimed he had never been made an honorary member, and that he had never even been made honorary secretary, though it developed that he had held that office for over five years. An attempt to check the conflicting claims by referring to the minutes merely showed that certain sets of minutes were lacking altogether. It could have been carelessness, but at the time I felt they had been deliberately extracted and destroyed. still think so, though I haven't a shred of proof. The affair came

to a head at dinner one night before the regular meeting. Accusations of tempering with the minutes were being hurled pretty freely, and Ackerman, who apparently felt very deeply against Yerke, seemed to think that some of us wanted to destroy the club by permitting T. Bruce Yerke to belong to it. It was all very assinine, but feeling was rising very high. Wishing to preserve a modicum of peace in the club (after all, I'd been director only two weeks) I suggested to the arguing parties that the whole Yerke matter be turned over to me, and that I would make a constitutional interpretation on the strength of which the matter might be decided. Oddly enough, this seemed satisfactory to most of them. Of course my line of thought was pretty obvious; Yerke himself had written the club constitution no more than three months previously, and I was certain that he had provided for himself therein. Unfortunately he had neglected to do so; though I spent most of the evening studying the document I could find no pretext on which I could announce Bruce as an honorary member. course I had to rule that the constitution did not provide for honorary officers; however, I pointed out, it would be a fine gesture if we were to grant Bruce an honorary membership, "since he has served as an officer of the club for years and moreover is one of the few local fans who has any sort of reputation ovtside Los Angeles. This made Ackerman very angry; "Give him an honorary membership? Why, he has insulted the club!"

My personal affairs struck a nadir in mid-January. In the first place, I was rather dissatisfied with my job at the time, yet could not as yet figure any angles to get around the war manpower commision and make a change, particularly in light of my rather shaky standing with my draft board. Secondly, the quarrel between myself and Jackie had become terribly bitter --- she seemed to hold me personally responsible for the housing shortage, raved and raved because I had not rented a house and sent for her (though she steadfastly refused to allow me to buy a house at swollen wartime prices -- nearly 40% of what a house would cost today in 1947), demanded that I come back immediately end go to work for Boeing (and live with my in-laws), and so on. Well, the Weird Villys was done, finish-It would still hobble around town after a fashion, but both it and its tires were too far gone to take off on a trip. And I most certainly did not intend to spend the furniture money for a dubious used car which might turn out to be even worse. To lend greater immediacy to the situation, my room at the Lee was becoming impossible --the hotel was trying to put me out (so they could make more money on the room by renting it by the night) and had managed to make it uninhabitable -- through ransacking my dresser daily while I was at work and leaving my clean clothes strewn all over the room, unlocking my door and leaving it standing open, not permitting me visitors, and so To top it off, I still had that bronchial cough which had been chronic since early October; I felt lousy physically, and missed enough work to cut my earnings away down -- this of course leading to a certain amount of psychological upset and worry which was not in the least abated by the letters my supposed helpmate was knocking me over with once or twice a week. I mention all this simply to point out that I was not myself during those first few weeks of 1944, and that these other conditions undoubtedly contributed to my getting so bitterly involved in the feud. Imagine it, here I was caught in a situation in which I could see no avenue of satisfactory escape, yet one tiny facet of it (the club) most definitely was suseptible to being worked on.

It was in the middle of my depressed period that I brought out the "drunken" FAN-DANGO which caused so much ungavorable

comment for the next year or so. The Sunday of January 16, 1944 saw me confronted with a FAPA deadline, a date with Pogo, and a bottle of rum. I started the afternoon cutting stencils furiously to try to get most of them done before my date; being in the dumps anyway started sampling my bottle, and first thing I knew all my disgust with life in general and the LASFS in particular started pouring out of that machine. Somewhere along the line I knocked off, went on my date, and came back around midnight gloriously potted. Kepner was there and wanted company, since he intended to mimeograph all night, so I went back at it with more force than judgement. On looking over that once notorious issue, I find myself in hearty accord with nearly everything I said. The trouble was that I did not substantiate my remarks (taking my proofs for granted without realising that most fans idealise both the LASFS and fandom) and that my language occasionally got just a shade vulgar.

Along about this time I had discovered that pogo intended to divorce her husband, and commenced taking her out quite a bit, seeking in her and one or two other girls a bit of compensation for my own stormy matrimonial situation. And this brought me headon into collision with Ackerman. Certainly I was around the club a number of times when I had been drinking. So were a lot of others. As long as I could carry my liquor (which I definitely could and can do) I couldn't see that it was anyone's business but my own, and I not only resented the fact of meddling on Ackerman's part, but even more his refusal to tell me off like a man and his constant circulating of lurid and unfounded tales about me, tales which came back to me almost daily at about that time.

Also, when I commenced dating three to five nights a week, Ackerman and some of his friends began howling that I was neglecting the club, forgetting that I was still spending more time around the sacred stye than any director since except Ackerman himself. Though I find myself unable to remember specific instances, I still recall vividly how bitterly I lashed out, "was this place a male nunnery, and had I taken some perverted vow of chastity and self-denial?", when all this finally came to my attention once too often.

The drinking situation came to a head in mid-January. Pogo and I had decided to use the clubroom and Mike Fern's radio as a spot in which I could teach her to dance; I had part of a bottle of rum, perhaps two-thirds of a pint. We waited until the fans had left, then went over and spent perhaps an hour dancing and talking and taking an occasional short nip. Kepner dropped in and also picked up some dancing lessons by remote control. (No, Burbee, I didn't dance with him.) About 11:30 the radio went sour, we talked for a while and then decided to play pinochle, which we did until about 2:00. We still had some of the rum left when we adjourned, so it is pretty evident no one was more than faintly happy; and we also tidied up the club, leaving it neater than it had been when we entered it.

next evening all hell broke loose. Daugherty and Ackerman both jumped me for turning the club into a whorehouse, holding a drunken party, and destroying the members' property. I gave right back with as good as I got, and it was a honey of a fuss. From here on out, it was open war between Ackerman and Daugherty against me.

I finally had gotten my bellyful of both the Lee Hotel and my dear wife's fantastic refusal to face the facts on housing. I decided to lay off work and hunt full time for a rental. When I finally saw that such did not exist, but that there were a number of cheaply available store-buildings,

many equipped so as to be convertable into housing with little or no effort, I ecided to make a comprimise, rent and furnish a store (after all, I had to buy furniture anyway and had the money for that purpose), then sell Jackie on the idea of buying a house.

Very shortly I had located a former vegetable market, located at 1104 South Georgia. It was horribly filthy, having been empty since its Jap tenants had been put in a concentration camp in early 1942, and was in a tough part of town; on the other hand it was filled with shelving, had a small separate room in back, a toilet room, a sink with running cold water, and several gas outlets. The landlord agreed to give me a gas hotplate on which to heat water and permission to do anything to the shelves I wanted to. So I rented it for \$50.00 a month, bought a bedroom set and a living room set, and moved in. Jules Lazar helped me move and do the heavier lifting, and one weekend of really hard work saw me fitted up with a really nice apartment. I tore out all but two sections of the shelves, rebuilt these into an "L", using the leg (backed with the corrugated board off my mattress box) as a parti-This gave me a three room suite: 20x30' living room, 20x18" bedroom (containing the sink and hotplate as well), 12x12' utility room (..hich later was fitted up as a publishing workroom) and of course the toilet room back in the far corner. That was the once-famous Fran Shack. It had its flaws, notably the tendancy for street dirt to blow in under the door, and the inconvenience of having to bathe out of a small pan. But I had a broom and was not afraid to use it, and you'u be surprised to know how much bath water can be made out of a gallon of furiously boiling water.

of my directorship, I announced that since I could find no qualified person willing to take over the editorship of SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES to replace Phil Bronson, the club would devote the last meeting of each month to getting out a jointly published issue. I asked for a show of hands to see who was willing to do what, and very shortly had a pretty good issue lined up. Daugherty came in shortly after this, and immediately had a fit, claiming that joint publishing had been tried before (under his aegis) and had failed abysmally. "It can't be done." Ackerman, under this prodding, allowed that he was afraid of being stuck with all the work.

Since everything I had yet suggested, since my election, had been greeted not only by this Daugherty "can't be done" sound-off, but by apparently sustained attempts to discourage anyone who might want to try it anyway, I called Daugherty on it right out loud, accusing him pointblank of trying to sabotage my attempts to do anything with the club and suggesting that his possible motive might be that he did not want to see anyone succeed where he had failed. Somehow, Daugherty's and my relations took a turn for the worse about this time.

But the membership went on anyway, writing and stencilling for SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES. I wrote a two page article entitled, "Knanveism: A Boon for Fankind?", in which I analysed the first issue of THE KNANVE, and suggested possibilities for the group, likening them to the alumni associations in mundane ayjay. The tone of this article was on the whole rather friendly towards the Knanves, though it was not without a certain amount of sarcastic undertones, and wondered out loud if they'd be big enough to rise to their opportunities. Ackerman, incensed by the #1 KNANVE, wrote a really rugged article called "Knanve is a Louse, by L. Sprague de Campfollower" in which he stuck his usually retracted neck out just as far as it would reach, and put out a pretty sharp personal attack on Yerke and Bronson

Among other things, it stated that Bronson and Yerke had stated that they would walk across the street rather than speak to Ray Bradbury, that Yerke was rejected from the army as a manic-depressive, and a number of other items which would be hard to prove. (Yerke, for example, was put in 4-F on account of hypertension,) Forry showed the article to me, and asked me what I thought of it. Yell, I knew very little of the facts of Yerke's seven year sojourn in the club, so I told Ackie that if he were reasonably sure of his facts I thought it was OK. I figured it would get a rise out of the Knanves, that they probably would answer it, and that in the course of the resulting controversy the truth would probably come out. And I didn't care a rap who ended up with a tarnished reputation.

In due season, the last meeting of January rolled around, the meeting at which we were to publish SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES. I had done a considerable amount of advance planning, assigned Keown and Fern (both shaky typists) to the mimeograph, and had arranged that some stencils were already cut for them to start in on. Before the meeting, I went next door to Pogo's, got to talking, and let the time for starting the meeting roll past. made no difference, really; everyone knew what was planned and that there was to be no formal meeting other than a call to order, reading of minutes, and adjournment; and the secretary (Kepner) was supposed to preside in the absence of the director. For some reason, Kepner could not bring himself to call the meeting to order, and a number of the people (notably Joquel) got extremely angry because I was not present. Joquel had a tantrum and stormed out of the club, and shortly I got a phone call from Fern, who also seemed in evil mood. I asked if the meeting had started, found it hadn't, and told Fern to tell Kepner to call it to order and get it over with, that I'd be over as soon as I finished my drink. A few moments later, Fern came into the apartment without knocking and walked right down my throat. I blew up at him, told him I didn't intend to preside, that Kepner had certain definite duties in my absence, and that I would come over as soon as the club was ready to start publishing. Following which, I shoved him out the door and slammed it on him, and went back in for another drink.

I arrived at the club, finally, just as Kepner was adjourning the meeting, doled out assignments to the few who did not already know what to do, and commenced stencilling my own article. I cut the two stencils, checked to see that everyone had something to do, and took Pogo around the corner for a short drink. Everyone seemed furious at me. I got back, found little had been done in my absence except cuss me, but I merely sat down and composed an editorial on the stencil. I got it finished all but two or three lines, was called across the room to settle the order in which certain unforeseen items would fit into the iddue, looked around and saw that everyone had a half an hour of work while I had perhaps two minutes, so took Pogo around the corner again for another drink.

back, the atmosphere was pretty tense. Mel remarked he needed a stencil to run off, so I sat down to finish mine only to discover that Ackerman had finished it in a most insulting way. I blew up about it, and the meeting ended up in a savage quarrel. Ackerman, Brown, Fern, and Daugherty (the latter having just dropped in) waded into me for neglecting my duty; I came right back to point out that I had written and stencilled three pages out of a twelve page issue, had coordinated the work, that I was only one-fifteenth of the people present but had done a quarter of the actual work, and what did they expect for two bits. I further gave Ackerman the tongue-lashing of his career

for sabotaging my stencil. The upshot of it all was that we did not quite finish the issue, having, as I recall, 10 of the 12 pages done.

The next day at work, I thought the whole thing over, realised that while I probably should have made a point of being on hand every second there was nothing to make such a fuss about, since after all I had done my part of it (if I was that much faster a typist that I could go out for a while too that was just the reward of genius(!!) or something) and that anyone would resent being sent for in so insulting a fashion when there was no need to send for him at all. On the other hand I realised that I had never had any serious trouble with anyone while I was merely a member of the club, and it occured to me that I'd better give the club back to the nitwits and confine my fanning to publishing THE ACOLYTE. So that night I wrote out a resignation as director, which I thenceforth carried in my pocket, with the resolution to use it the moment another fuss came over the horizon.

But that was on Friday.

Sunday the whole complexion of the brewing feud changed sharply. Alteng about noon I was puttering around Fran Shack when there came a rap at the door and there were Phil Bronson, Buns Berson, and Bruce Yerke. Yerke was at the point of a temper tantrum over Ackerman's "Knanve Is A Louse" which the three had just read, and peremptorily demanded that I suppress the article. I told him I was double-dammed if I'd be intimidated, particularly in my own house, that I took orders from no one on club affairs, but I would be only too happy to talk to him about it if he could present his case civilly. He more or less subsided, grumbling like a bear, and Bronson took the conversational ball, from time to time subduing Yerke. Benson throughout the afternoon said little or nothing.

seemed that all of them had taken violent exception to the article, particularly on certain points which they assured me were totally unfactual, and that they felt Ackerman's characteristic ducking behind a pseudonym would make the publishing of it an official semtiment of the club.

I pointed out that Ackerman had submitted the article to me in advance, that I had told him it would be OK if he were reasonably sure of his facts, and that since it was petently impossible for me to have witnessed most of the stuff the article was talking about I could do little but take Forry's word. However, I pointed out that the pages of SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES were open for a rebuttal, that if necessary I would mimeograph the Knanve's article myself, and that I was quite willing to put it right in the same issue as "Knanve Is A Louse" and let fandom as a whole pass judgement on who was truthful.

Yerke looked very much startled. "Just where do you stand between the club and us?"

I'm trying to be neutral, but I'm getting sick of some of the stuff that goes on around the LASFS", I replied, and went on to tell of the various troubles I'd had, and of my intention to resign as director. I got out the resignation and hended it to Phil.

He read it over, burst out laughing, and remarked that it read like Yerke had written it. "My god! Are you one of us?"

So we settled down for an afternoon of conversation which definitely was the turning point of the feud. I did my best to talk the Knanves into rejoining; pointing out that four more votes would control the club,

and that if we could only maintain political control for a while we could probably raise the standards of the club sufficiently to make it an organization worth belonging to. Bronson at length seemed willing to rejoin, Benson said he wanted no further part of fandom, and Yerke seemed wavering but more or less unwilling to back down on his previous resignation unless the club could make some concession.

commenced comparing notes on the LASFS during the past two months, and very shortly discovered that both Ackerman and Daugherty had done everything they could both to turn all club members against the Knanves and to convince the Knanves that the club was united against them. Before long we had worked out a neoulous sort of pact; Bronson was to rejoin the LASFS for voting purposes and attempt to bring Chamberlain in with him, Yorke was to remain cutside the club but it was vaguely understood that if the matter of his honorary membership were to be settled one way or another he would rejoin and take over the secretary job once more, with Kepner being kicked upstairs to a post as program director. At the same time, he made it plain that he was dubious as to the possibility of the club amounting to anything, and that he felt a separate group, minus Ackerman, Daugherty, Morojo, Crozetti, and one or two others, would be the best ultimate solution to the problem of having an adult and intellectual fan club in Los Angeles.

this point in the conversation, I remembered my anti-Bronson blast I'd sent to Innman. Gulp! So I told them about it, hended Phil the carbon, and dashed off an airmail note telling Innman to kill the article. (Our comparing of notes had shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had largely based my article on erroneous conclusions.) Phil was pretty angry over the carbon, but Yerke exploded into gargantuan laughter when he read it, reminded Phil of a letter they had received on the same subject from Art Sehnert, and shortly we were all friends.

Late in the afternoon, the Knanves headed towards the club with the intention of talking Ackerman into withdrawing his article. He withdraw it.

The next evening, I learned of this, and was stunned. In the first place, this necessitated rerunning over half of SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, and for no good reason that I could see. In the second place....

"Regardless of what the Knanves said or did not say yester-day, that article is either more or less true, or more or less false. If it is more or less true, then your withdrawing it under pressure brands you as a coward. If it is more or less false, then your writing it at all brands you as a liar. Can't you say something reasonably objective to me, that will give me an excuse to preserve a good opinion of you?"

Forrest J Ackerman said nothing.

"Then as far as I'm concerned, you are a lying and cowardly son of a bitch; " I said coldly, and walked out of the club.

The feud was on.

Two days later, on Wednesday, Fern and Brown came to me, apologised for their part in the row with me at the publishing session, pointed out that they were sick of the club in general and Ackerman in particular, and could I as director use a couple of new henchman who were willing to vote to expell Ackerman from the club.

I welcomed their support, naturally,

but pointed out that I wanted a more or less united club, that Ackerman was easily the most interested fan in town, and that he belonged in the club. I went on to say that I felt he was riding entirely too high, that his self-righteousness was driving the better class of members out of the club, and that he most certainly needed a shaking down.

"why don't we just suspend his honorary membership for 30 or 60 days with the idea of handing him, with a jolt, the factual picture of what he is doing to the club, which we all know he thinks so much of?" Of course I didn't know Ackerman as well then as I do today, or I never would have made such a suggestion. I wrongly supposed that he would be shocked into examining objectively his relations with the club, see for himself how his actions were alienating so many of the members, and mend his ways somewhat.

joined the club, and I appointed him to the executive committee as a member at large, and called a meeting of the group to be held in Pogo's apartment for a half hour before the meeting. Knowing that Morojo would not countenance any disciplinary action directed at Forry, I did not inform her of the meeting, which of course was a grave error in political tactics, as well as ethics. But I was afraid that she would talk the other members of the executive committee around against me, and that she would thus nullify the effect of what I intended to spring as a surprise. The only way around it would have been to dismiss her #as treasurer, something I did not feel justified in doing without cause, particularly in light of her long service in that office.

Present at the committee meeting were Jimmy Kepner, secretary; Mel Brown, librarian; Mike Fern and Phil Bronson, members-atlarge; and Pogo as an interested bystander. Now Kepner had been my chiefest supporter through the entire month previous, but when it came to actually implementing some of the things we'd been talking about he had one of his frequent changes of heart and flatly refused to have anything to do with it, adding that he intended to get Forry and Morojo and run me out of office. I asked for and received his resignation as secretary, on the grounds that my administration had to be united and that if it did something the club didn't like they could get a new administration in which Kepner, no doubt, would find a place. He immediately left the meeting and went tattling to Ackerman and the club. I appointed Mel Brown decretary, and we fell to discussing the Ackerman ouster. Cold feet became in evidence at once, particularly from Pogo. I emphasiezed that the last thing I wanted was for Ackerman to leave the elub, that all I wanted was disciplinary action to try to bring him to his senses a little, and that I felt it would do the trick if we, the executive committee were to vote unanimously that we felt his honorary membership should be suspended for thirty days, saying why of course, and that we should couple this announcement with some remark from me stating that I felt the matter had gone far enough to open someone's eyes, and announce that I should like to hear a motion to table this report for a period of thirty days. We so agreed, and went over to the club.

really stood them on their ears, and the place was buzzing like a hornets' nest. And by no means was the sentiment all pro-Ackerman, either Forry gave me a look that I will never forget--a half-hurt half-angry stare--and never looked directly at me again until the feud was over. (Nor did he speak to me again for three months.) I called the meeting to order, ran through the prescribed ritual of minutes and treasurer's report, announced that Brown had replaced Kepmer as secretary. Moro-

jo had passed Pogo a note, requesting to talk with me; I saw it, and declared a recess for a second meeting of the executive committee, including Morojo. She did her level best to talk me out of my ideas, but failed to get very far because she insisted on getting off on a tangent explaining why Ackerman was more worthy of being #1 fan than Tucker, who had just succeeded to that position. She and I agreed. however, that Forry was badly in need of psychiatric care, that he was harming the club with his fanatical puritanism and other actions, but disagreed violently on what to do about it. She emphasized that if the club suspended Forry he would commit suicide, a possibility that had never occurred to me since I could not envision anyone becoming wrapped up in fandom to that extent. Finally, we decided to let the matter rock along (after all, Forry had been given ample evidence that his ways were offensive to a sizeable portion of the members -- which was all I had ever intended to do). So we went back, I called the meeting back to order, remarked that everyone knew what had been discussed earlier in the evening, thank's to the "loyal cooperation of my late secretary", that the only intention was to show someone that his attitudes and actions around the club needed a certain amount of attention, and that the matter was dropped. I adjourned the meeting, but then made a side-remark that if we were going to purge anyone, it would be a good idea to start in with Walter J. Daugherty. I then went over to Ackerman, and tried to tell him the underlying ideas of the apparent attempt at an ouster, but he turned his back and refused to listen.

So the next day, before going to the Bixelstrasse, I wrote Ackerman a friendly enough letter, in which I set forth the things he had refused to let me tell him the night be-When I arrived at the clubroom, I walked into an embroglio de luxe. Walter J. Daugherty, who had not been present at the meeting the night before, had heard that I suggested purging him, and for some reason did not seem to like it. He lit into me and I lit right back. In response to his remarks I told him just precisely why I considered him to be a liability to the club: his utter intractability, his complete lack of reliability, his floor-hogging, his apparently deliberate attempts to sabotage everything that was not emblazoned with the name of Daugherty and the complete lack of accomplishments (other than on a verbal level) of anything that was emblazoned with the name of Daugherty. Oh, it was a honey of a spat! I daresay ten people sat quiet as mice in that room while we had it out. I expected him to take a poke at me any moment; it was running through the back of my mind that I shouldn't get into a fist fight with him because I'd be giving away twenty-five pounds (FTL, 155 lbs; WJD, 180 lbs); at the same time I was med clear through with an inner fury that was like icy fire, and I was damned if I'd back down a fraction. No blows were struck, as it turned out, but it was mighty near to it more than once. In retrospect, I've felt that I gave a definitive statement of the case against Daugherty that night -- at least, everyone present except Ackerman has been strongly anti-Daugherty ever since.

Right at this point in the feud, I realised that I had gone far too far to think of backing down, yet realised with a sudden burst of clarity that my following, such as it was, was in the first place almost entirely losing interest in fandom, and secondly was too lacking in common interests to make an enduring separate club. I finally came up with an idea for a club within the club which, it seemed to me, would guarantee political control (thus preventing a few of us from being suddenly expelled if the Ackojo block should ever get the upper hand) and at the same time try to lift the club to

a higher intellectual level, despite the hard feelings which, I felt, would gradually die out if we could avoid any further hostilities for a few months and couple this interegnum with an attempt at a constructive program.

I went so far as to draft a rough charter, in which I gave a few of the possibilities as a basis for discussion. the group "The Outsiders and Others", and set it up as an honorary political organization, semi-secret in nature, whose avowed purpose was to build up the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society through both example and precept. Even to this very day (April 1947) the LASFS has suffered acutely from a general low level of membership standards and a preoccupation with political wrangling in pregerence to constructive activity. Since the club claims to take to its bosom anyone professing an interest in fantasy, it is a lodestone to crackpots and psychiatric freaks of all descriptions, and the presence of so many of these impossibles tends constantly to drive away the few worthwhile people which the group attracts. A reasonably mature and intelligent person very shortly finds greener pastures than the LASFS unless he happens to be deeply involved in fan publishing or to a lesser extent collecting, but the fuzzleheads, socially inacceptable almost anywhere else, not only find themselves welcomed by the club but find enough other impossibles to associate with that driving them out is almost impossible. And the preoccupation with its own inner affairs, which can never be of other than clinical interest to the newer member, prevents the club's having anything remotely resembling an intellectually stimulating plane of activity save in spurts; if for no other reason than because the constant grind of intrigue and counter-intrigue and the long and deadly business meetings consume all the time and energy available to the group.

I proposed to cope with both these major problems. The group, as I envisioned it, was to be invitational and highly selective, with a unanimous ballot required for admission. Since we would refuse to accept the more dubious specimens, their inability to get into the inner circle would tend to drive them away, and our being united would make it possible to expell the more thick-skinned ones. In short, I wanted to substitute the cold shoulder for the glad hand, and reserve our hospitality for worthwhile people, instead of wasting it on the misfits, crackpots, and impossibles.

Since the club revolved so exclusively around its own politics, I proposed making the Outsiders a political machine to end all political machines, take and keep political control of the club, and then attempt to focus the meetings on something worthwhile for a change. Previous attempts at discussion meetings frequently ran foul of someone's desire to get the floor and, through lack of intellectual depth sufficient to present anything of interest, talk about the club's already too much talked of affairs. I wanted constitutional changes put through which would force all club business to be submitted in writing and passed on by the executive committee before being allowable on the floor. This would eliminate 90% of the business I have seen brought up in the LASFS between 1943 and 1947, because so little of it is really business; most of it is just Daugherty or some one like that trying to get some ego-I wanted extreme powers wested in the director, under the theory that he should perform much as a city manager, discharging most of his duties without a lot of time-wasting pelaver, and being subject to recall or impeachment if he got out of hand. I wanted more stringent controls over the recruiting of new members, with a reasonable probationary period so that we could spot the worst cases before we

saddled ourselves with them.

this control through the use of block voting in all elections and club business. Whenever necessary, The Outsiders would meet and discuss any proposed piece of business or select the next group of officers or do whatever else was needful. Among ourselves we would use completely democratic methods, with full and free discussion, then vote. Each Outsider was to pledge himself to vote in the ensuing LASFS meeting the way the majority of Outsiders had voted in their own meeting. In this way control of the LASFS would be child's play, since we would have had at most times a bloc of 10 to 12 votes to cast en masse in a club of 20 to 25 members, some of whom would be sure to vote our way just on the intrinsic merits of the matter under consideration.

It may be wondered why I kept harping so much on pholitical control of the LASFS, but it must be remembered that without this control there was no way of keeping the less worthwhile things from coming on the floor and consuming an entire meeting, nor was there any means of trying to build up a qualitative membershop.

In the form I have just described, The Outsiders never existed. Yerke opposed it because he felt that we would do better to get clear out and away from the club and make a fresh, clean start. Kepner and one or two others had their idealism outraged by the realism of the bloc voting and other points. However, the real death blow to the club-within-the-club came in the rushing events of the next few days.

Immediately following the abortive disciplinary action aimed at Ackerman, Jules Lazar sought me out and was going to knock my block off for taking overt action against Forry. The best my occasionally glib tongue could do was to calm him down a little; he was completely unable to see any reason why we had attempted to set Forry down a notch. Two or three days later, Jules and one or two others had a crap game in the clubroom; Ackerman got wind of it, and handed Jules one of those primly stuffy little notes of rebuke he was so free with in those days. Lazar hit the ceiling as though he had just attained critical mass.

portance, he came to me, apologised for wanting to knock my block off, and gave me the most extreme anti-Ackerman lecture of the whole feud. He added that his vote was strictly anti-Ackerman from then on, and that he also held the proxy of Alva Rogers, who had just left town and returned to his parents' home in San Diego. (It might be added that Rogers had given this proxy to Jules with verbal instructions to use it as Ackerman directed, not realising that Jules was going to change sides.)

Well, this gave us two more votes; I counted them over in my mind and nearly fainted when I saw that we could for the first time in the feud probably carry a two-thirds majority vote. So at the next meeting, I instituted a motion to elect T. Bruce Yerke to homo-rary membership in the LASFS. Apart from Bronson, who made the motion for me, I took no one into my confidence as to what I intended trying; and in fact set up as a smoke screen the discussion among the Outsiders of what we could do to ruin the LASFS just before we resigned—such as send the entire treasury to Ziff-Davis for long term subscriptions in the clubs name, or elect Walter J. Daugherty director, or perform some other heinous piece of sabotage.

sons qualified to vote attended the meeting. Lazar submitted the pro-

xy of Alva Rogers, but it was with a sudden sense of misgiving that I heard Ackerman submit the proxy of John M. Cunningham, a character whose army career had carried him briefly through Shangri La but long enough for him to part with ten bucks for a life membership in the LASFS. (The category of life member, and the dues for it, were easily decided when Cunningham asked about becoming a life member and the club discovered he had ten dollars.) It was pretty obvious that if Ackerman were going to write to every fan who had ever been a member of the LASFS and tell them a few carefully censored and misleading half-truths he could get enough proxy votes to run the club by himself, even though he turned every fan actually on the scene totally against him. The idea of challenging Cunningham's proxy flashed into my mind, but I quickly saw that it was more important to try to get Yerke's honorary membership (with the consequent return of Bruce to the club), and that it would be easy enough for us to quash this proxy idea if we had the two-thirds majority vote in hand, since we could even amend the constitution with that.

cussion on the motion to grant T. Bruce Yerke an honorary membership, looking directly at Ackerman as I did so. There was a short silence. Finally someone called for the question. I appointed a couple of non-voters to act as tellers, and stupidly declared a recess while they passed out the ballots. Even more stupidly, I neglected to watch them like makkur a hawk, and was stunned when they announced the result of the vote before I had called the meeting back in order. The vote was 11 for and 5 against, giving Bruce his two-thirds majority by a margin of one vote. I knew that this ballot would certainly be challenged, since it took place while the club was in recess, and tho we probably could have bulled it through (such as by my claiming to have reopened the meeting) it seemed evident that the motion would carry, and it seemed far better to have it absolutely in order. So I apologised to the club, explained what had happened, and requested a new ballot.

As these new ballots were being passed out, Ackerman got to his feet and said, "If T. Bruce Yerke is given an honorary membership in this club, I shall feel that all honorary memberships are without honor."

The result of the new ballot was an 8 to 8 tie.

was completely stunned by this reversal. I shan't make any comments on the tactics Ackerman used, except that their success showed me beyond controverting that there was no use trying to do anything with the club as long as one member could sway that many votes with so little effort; particularly when that same member's actions were nearly all in direct opposition to making the club into an adult group, and when he could get proxy votes right and left.

I suddenly remembered the resignation as director which I had written a couple of weeks previously, and the next thing I knew I was reading it. Burbee made his long promised visit to the club just in the middle of the recital and he has told me since that he could not understand why a whole roomful of people would sit quietly and hear themselves torn apart so insultingly without doing something about it.

This resignation caught everyone by surprise, including me. It elevated Mel Brown to the director's post, and the meeting fell into chaos for a few minutes while he was getting the feel of things. I went over to the typewriter and wrote out a brief resignation of my membership in the LASFS, dating it to take effect two weeks hence 'thereby giving

myself a chance to wind up the 6th ACOLYTE), showed it to Pogo. She immediately signed it too, passed it to Bronson who signed it and passed it on, and the next thing I knew it was circulating among all the Outsiders, all of whom signed it except Mel Brown. It finally came back to me, I asked and received the floor, and read it. Mel then stunned us by pulling a paper out of his pocket and reading to the group a resignation of his own, a two page affair which for sheer vitriol has never been approached by enything else I've ever read anywhere.

Walter J. Daugherty, after a whispered consultation with Ackerman, took the floor and demanded that the resignations be made effective immediately. This was refused by us. He then demanded that we be kept out of the clubroom, on the ground that we would destroy the mimeograph and other club property. This insulting remark led to some very bitter discussion, at the end of which a motion granting "all resigning members the full and free use of the club and its properties until their resignations actually took effect" was carried by an 11 to 4 vote.

This motion was implemented by Morojo the very mext day, when on her own authority, and in direct violation of the vote of the club, she had the lock changed on the door, thereby keeping resigning members from using their keys. (This didn't bother us much, since Brown and Fern talked Kepner out of his key for a short time-long enough to have some duplicates made for those of the Outsiders who wanted them\$)

Mel then remarked that since the club lacked a director, the floor was open for nominations. (I'll skip the maze of constitutionalities which first tend to show that an election that night was illegal and later indicate that it was in order. You readers who have not been around the LASFS will just have to take my word as to the astounding complexity of the organic law for this group of 18 or 20 people.) I immediately grabbed the floor and said, \*Since we have just been accused of wishing to wreck the club, I'd about as soon have the game as the name. Since the worst piece of sabotage I can think of at the moment is to saddle the club with an incompetant director, I'd like to nominate the man whom I feel is most capable of making this club even worse than it is now---Walter J. Daugherty."

Phil Bronson and others then commenced tossing in nominations until nearly everyone present was nominated. When the victims of this merry prank had gotten their names withdrawn, Walter J. Daugherty and I found ourselves standing alone to be voted on. (I've always been hugely amused to think that Daugherty wanted to be director so badly that he accepted a nomination even from me and in such language.) The poor visitors we had used before found themselves again passing out ballots. (Boy, they must have just loved that meeting!) As they called the votes aloud, nearly everyone in the room kept a tally. Laney, Laney, Laney, Daugherty, Laney, Daugherty....I took the lead from the beginning and held it the whole way. Daugherty was white with rage, but the last vote was for Daugherty and brought it into a tie: 8 to 8.

One or two other pieces of business were then tried, but ended in that same futile 8 to 8 deadlock. Finally Kepner took the floor, stated that his resignation had never been accepted in due form as prescribed by the constitution, and claimed the directorship. Mel looked blank, but I rushed to the gap, withdrew my own resignation on the same grounds, and found myself once more director of the dear old LASFS. Strictly comic opera, wasn't it? But all I did was to ad-

journ the meeting and go home. I did not attend another meeting of the LASFS until I rejoined the club the following summer, though I did spend a considerable amount of time around the club finishing up the ACOLYTE stencils which I'd previously cut with a spacing that made them runnable only on the club mimeograph.

And of course the quarrel between Ackerman and myself reached the stage of sheer idiocy long before I finished up the last stencil. Since I was seeing a great deal of Pogo at this time and Ackerman of course was keeping company with Morojo, he and I managed to run into each other at least once a day, either at the club or in Myrtle and Pogo's apartment. But Ackerman positively refused to speak to me. This of course made sense, but it did not make sense for him to hand me a long and vitriolic letter almost every time he saw me. Since he would not talk to me, I fell into the hebit of answering these letters, stopping only when I left the club neighborhood for good a couple of weeks later. He continued to send me weirdly conceived letters, clippings, and postcards for a few weeks after that, but after I had failed to answer three or four of them in a row he stopped. But it didn't take me long to learn that I could make Forry horribly uncomfortable by tossing succinct remarks at him; I regret to say that I was not above this sort of childishness.

Also during the post-club pre-Outsider interregnum I had a most amusing brush with one of the club queers, a character who from sponging off one of the residents at 628 had taken to hanging around the club. The moment the fruit saw Ackerman, he fell madly in love with 4sj. Ackie, with his all-inclusive brother love for anyone supposed to be a fan, probably did not even realise that the guy was a fairy, and most certainly did not realise that he, Forrest J Ackerman, was the object of the nance's unrequited yearnings. He saw in this pansy an industrious new fan, sincere, unassuming, and worthy. The poor swish spent the next three or four weeks drawing for VOM, cutting stencils for it and SHAGGY, and even running the mimeograph for Ackerman. He finally gave up and commenced trying to make some of the others of I was alone in the club one afternoon, trying to finish up my ACOLYTE work, when I smelled an overpowering whiff of very cheap perfume. Turning around, I saw this dear fruit standing clear across the room from me. He immediately commenced a gambit, which I cruelly egged on until he was thoroughly committed --- then burst out at him with a full-voiced roar of the well-known Laney laugh, a reaction which caused him to leave looking, believe it or not, rather deeply hurt. Faugh!

The last three or four days of February found me in bed, sicker then a horse. Several of us had spent Sunday afternoon at Paul Freehafer's apartment, playing records and drinking a little wine. Pogo and I had been invited to visit de Pina; when Alva Rogers heard of this end wanted to go, we decided to take him along. About halfway between Paul's apartment and Hollywood, we were struck by one of LA's famous cloudbursts, this one laced with hail and driven by a high wind. With two windows broken out of the Weird Willys, it took perhaps 30 seconds for us to become soaked to the skin; yet we were marooned in the car by the swirling water which was running six inches deep over most of the sidewalks. So we kept on to Hollywood, called de Pina and explained we were too nearly drowned to come on out, went to The Streets of Paris for a short, warming drink, and back to LA. This exposure touched off my bronchitis but good, and I made up my mind to spend the next few days trying to throw it off altogether, resting, baking in front of the fire, and so on. Except for a couple of trips to the corner grocery, I spent three days and

nights absolutely alone.

During that time, I did a whole lot of hard and often unpleasant thinking, made myself face a number of facts I'd done my level-best to avoid. I realised that my besetting curse was a lack of confidence in myself, coupled with a hitherto unrealised oedipism, and that my tendencies towards introversion would always rob me of the better things in life unless I forced myself to overcome them. For the first time I realised, with a start, how seriously fandom was hampering me in leading the sort of life I wanted to lead, and yet, at the same time, I thought I could see ways in which I could make fandom serve me as a stepping stone to new contacts and new confidence. (Most of these ideas turned out, on being practised, to be utter poppycock--probably merely indicatave of my narrow escape from being completely submerged in the microcosmos.) The chief results of this painful session with myself were, so far as these memoirs is concerned, a resolution to ease out of fandom and a determination to try to replace the semblence of success that had greeted THE ACOLYTE with an attempt to succeed in something more mundane and worthwhile. My determination to quit fandom was seriously weakened by the reservation that I should fulfull all my existing commitments, but at least it gave me something to strive towards. And the total results of this big session with myself have done me lasting good; though I strayed from the straight and narrow and fell back into fandom more than once since that time, on the whole I have managed to keep forging ahead bit by bit towards the goal I then set myself of adulthood. I don't know how he'll like it, but since that time I have consistently used Forrest J Ackerman as my personal bug-a-boo: "There, but for keeping trying, goes FTL", or something like that. After all, Ackerman is my superior in every native ability that matters, except in physical strength (about equal) and manual dexterity (I think I've got him skinned in this one). We are near enough the same age to give point to the comparison. And, though I admit it with extreme reluctance, I have been as deep or deeper in fandom and similar escapes as Ackerman. He just hasn't made himself look at the handwriting on the wall as yet. \*\*\*\*\*

Don't get the idea that January and February was all childish feuding, as far as I was concerned. During those two months, I finished up the #6 ACOLYTE, the issue which I consider to be the best of all fourteen. And I made some personal contacts, strictly through fandom and THE ACOLYTE, which made my resolutions to quit pretty much of a dead letter for some time.

Mike Fern, an aggressive little devant and near great that he could scrape out an excuse for meeting. Thus it was, while in San Francisco, he dug out a gentleman named Villiam A. P. White, who is better known to you under his psuedonyms of H. H. Holmes and Anthony Boucher. They corresponded to some extent later, and, unbeknownst to me, Mike gave him a big build-up on THE ACOLYTE. Tony shortly expressed a wish to be sent a complete file up to date; I sent him the five issues and forgot about it.

ruary, I received a bulky envelope from Boucher, containing no less than five unpublished short-shorts (three of which were as good or better than any of his stories in UNKNOWN), and a medium long, brilliant letter of comment on the five ACOLYTES. Needless to say, I was thrilled half to death, and commenced a spasmodic correspondence with Boucher. His next letter took up the matter of Craig Rice and a fried

of hers named J. F. McComas---both, said Boucher, were great admirers of Lovecraft; Rice, though a highly successful who-dunnit author, had been unable to hit with fantasies, though the failure to do so distressed her; and several of these people and their friends were somewhat interested in forming a Lovecraft club similar in concept to the Baker Street Irregulars.

Of course Craig Rice was not the name in 1944 that she is in 1947, but she was still definitely gig-time in anyone's language; while I am not a celebrity chaser by any means, it may well be imagin#ed that I lost no time following this up. She was the personification of cordiality, urged me to come out to Santa Moni-

ca any Sunday afternoon and see her.

Sundays as a guest of Craig Rice, in real life Mrs. Lawrence Lipton. The Liptons, it developed, held open-houses nearly every Sunday, and the assorted collection of people that dropped in and out was as interesting and stimulating as it was heterogeneous. Most were writers, musicians, cinema directors and technicians, and others of artistic tastes.—but you never knew, until you got to talking with an individual, who or what you had stumbled into. One thing, though, I never met a bore or an unintersting person out there—the Liptons were exceedingly gifted collectors of people.

I can no longer remember one visit from another, nor even how many there were (between three and five). But when I went I'd arrive about one in the afternoon and stay until nearly midnight. It was at Craig Ricess that I met J. Francis McComas, Mr. and Mrs. Cleve Cartmill, and Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Leiber Jr. I believe that sums up the fantasy celebrities.

Some vign-

ettes are perhaps in order.

Craig Rice is a woman in her early forties, attractive enough and friendly to a fault. She is capable of any kind of conversation one can imagine, though her best facets are literary criticism and writing shop-talk, and rapid-fire badinage. She has a fine sense of the dramatic, and plays excellent piano, both boogie-woogie and bar-room. All in all, she was a terrific hostess.

Her husbend, Lawrence Lipton, is a novelist in his own right; is short, dark, debonnaire, and full of fun. One of his chief interests in life is making phonograph records; he has file after file full of acetates, and what a gamut of sound they cover. Radio shows, news-shots of famous events, dubbings of hundreds of unobtainable commercial and not so commercial records, originals of Danny Kaye at the Lipton's, Meade Lux Lewis beating out boogie on the Lipton piano, trick combinations (such as Shostakovitch and Raymond Scott dubbed together in an utterly spine-tingling fantasy)...well, just name it. If it can be put on a record Larry probably has it ten-deep.

not get particularly well acquainted with the Cartmills. They had happened to drop into the club during one of our most furious brawls; we recognised each other; I shied away from him because I was ashamed of the company he had seen me with before; he shied away from me just as any intelligent and informed person would shy away from a known member of the LASFS.

J. Francis "Mick" McComas is a big, jolly, roly-poly Irishman, with a rich booming voice, and a terrific personality. He is more a salesman and promoter than a creative artist (west-coast representative of Random House), though he has written successfully under pen-names, and is an editor of no small qualifications (cf. AD-

VENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE). But his most noticeable characteristic is a joie de vivre that just doesn't quit. Mick has read ASTOUNDING for several years, and also has a very nice collection of fantastic books--but fantasy plays only a minor point in his life, as it should.

Fritz Leiber Jr. is one of the most interesting men I have ever met. Tall, rather heavy, with dark bushy hair and his father's leonine head, he is as fine a figure of a man as one can imagine; and his quiet, rather slow, speech is packed with interesting experiences, valid literary criticisms, and everything else needful to make Leiber into one of the finest conversationalists in the fantasy field. and I struck it off very well from the first; he had been one of HPL's last correspondents, and with Derleth and one or two others was one of the tiny handful of HPL's old friends who was really trying to keep the Lovecraft fires burning as it were. From Lovecraft we gradually came to discuss other things. In passing, I might mention that Leiber, more than any other person, was responsible for the last 8 issues of THE ACOLYTE; he kept handing me such superlative material, much of it written especially for THE ACOLYTE, that no matter how ennuied I felt at publishing a fanzine I felt almost a compulsion to bring out another issue, just to feature the Leiber contribution. Vocally at least, ACOLYTE'S readers never appreciated Leiber as much as I felt they should have.

On different occasions Sam Russell and Pogo accompanied me to the Liptons'. All these soirees were rather similar, except of course for the conversations. The pattern centered around a profuse use of liquor--everyone present having entree to the refrigerator and passing around drinks to all present whenever someone got dry, a practice which often led to one's having two or three drinks in front of himself simultaneously. I never saw anyone get out of line from drinking out there, but on the other hand the amount of booze flowing around the place made it really rugged for me, since I was supposed to be working regular hours, while few of the others were. These parties used liquor in the way I've always felt the stuff was designed to be used: as an ine-breaker and tonguelossener; and such was the high level of most of the conversation that partaking in it burned up most of the slochol as fast as it was drunk.

The best discussion I recall at the moment was an afternoon spent psychoanalyzing Lovecraft, his methods and his stories, and later branching out through a psychoanalysis of various members of the Lovecraft circle, to an attempted psychoanalysis of the whole fantasy field---fantasy, its psychological appeal. A number of people partook of this session, chiefly Rice, Laney, Russell, and Leiber, but it eventually ended up as a duologue between Leiber and Russell which I would have dearly loved to have had transcribed for publication.

The Lipton home was loaded with phonographs, at least three of them, and every room had stacks of records somewhere in it. The Liptons seemed most interested in humorous recordings, something I never cared too much for, but there was also a lovely lot of jazz, including a stack of rare Bessie Smiths and a flock of Muggsys, and I saw to it that I got loose in these more than once. Of interest, perhaps, is the fact that I never did hear any symphony out there, except for the fragment of Shostakovitch blended with Raymond Scott.

had in my possession Duane Rimel's series of 36 letters from Lovecraft; these I loaned to Craig for source material for some Lovecraft article she contemplated at the time for SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE. She in turn loaned me various books.

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In addition to the phonographs, there was a good deal of other music around the Liptons'. Craig played the piano a great deal, as did many of the other guests, and there was also a certain amount of singing. I recall with especial relish the time that Craig improvised a little song for everyone present, and the half-pleased, half-embarrassed expression of Sam Russell when he suddenly realised that one of these songs was not only for and about him, but that it summed him up perfectly, though Craig had only known him for a couple of hours.

I've often regretted that I drifted away from these bashes, but at the time my reasons for so doing seemed perfectly valid. In the first place, I invariably slept through my alarm and missed work the next day, with a resulting hole in my paycheck. (Not that these soirees were such drunken brawls as all that, but it must be remembered that they were not only an hour or more from town, but that they were being held by people who could, and probably did, sleep until noon the next day.) The other reason was that I began to feel somewhat like a sponger going out there so much, what with drinks and eats in such profusion; I began to doubt if I had any business trying to associate with people so far beyond me financially; and to top it off began to wonder just what I could contribute to such gatherings to warrant my presence. Well, anyway, I left before I wore out my welcome entirely, and those sessions are something I'd not have missed for anything. I met some brilliant people, and had some delightful Sundays -- what more could one ask?

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

On the Outside Looking In

The mass resignations from the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society took place so suddenly that we were not prepared for them. Though another organization had been discussed, it was the club-within-a-club idea, and nothing had come of it. Yerke gathered with several of us the Saturday following the resignations, we went out to dinner en masse, and empowered Bruce to write a letter to fandom on the subject of the resignations.

At this time, Mel Brown's apartment was a scene of heavy publishing activity; the Knanves having moved Bronson's mimeograph there and being busily engaged in turning out the #2 KNAN-VE and what developed to be the last issue of Bronson's FANTASITE, then the #1 fanzine. So we retired to the top floor of 628, and Yerke turned out a rough draft which we all approved and signed; most of us then went about our affairs leaving Yerke, Fern, Brown and one or two others to turn it out and mail it in an edition of about 80 copies. (An amusing sidelight to this letter is Chamberlain's signature; he at first refused to sign it, then changed his mind after it was all mimeographed, and had to sign each copy with a pen.)

During the next couple of weeks, most of us were just resting from fanning and feuding. though we came to discuss the formation of a club at greater and greater length. Since Yerke at the time was working nights for North American Aviation in the photographic department, one of our first acts was to set aside each Saturday evening as a dinner meeting of the as yet unnamed new club, this being the one evening that Yerke could meet with us. These dinner meetings were held at Freed's Coffee Shop at 5th and St. Paul, and continued regularly until Yerke resigned from the group.

My old title for the club-within-the-club seemed peculiarly appropriate for our new group, since we all felt very strongly that we had been turned away from the LASFS for daring to question the mores of the group and of Forrest J Ackerman. The Outsiders. It was not long before fandom began to hear about us.

Our original roseter consisted of the three surviving Knanves: T. Bruce Yerke, Philip P. Bronson, and Edwin Chamberlain (Benson was never an Outsider); two members of the LASFS: Paul Freehafer and Samuel D. Russell; and those of us who had resigned from the club: Francis T. Laney, Pogo, Merlin W. Brown, C. J. Fern Jr., and Jules Lazar---with a former member of the LASFS, Jack Rhodes, very shortly joining us on the recommendation of Bronson and Yerke.

I suppose a vignette is in order for Rhodes. He was older than most of us, about 38, I imagine; was married, had four children, and might best be described as a chronically dissatisfied person. His earnest adoption of Alfred Nock and other promulgators of vitriol and pessimism made him a singularly depressing companion much of the time, though he was otherwise widely read, and was gifted with occasional bits of puckish humor. Very quiet, very serious, Jack had little interest in fantasy or fandom, and did not stay with us long, particularly after The Outsiders became committed to a large publishing program.

Just before my big sick spell and thinking session in the latter part of February, The Outsiders had its first

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full-scale business meeting which, in common with almost all our seious meetings, was hel at Fran Shack on a Thursday night. (Our first decision of policy had been to make our meetings conflict with those of the LASFS so as to force local fans as well as visitors to make a choice between the two groups.)

All of us except Yerke attended this first meeting, and the contrast between it and any LASFS meeting I've ever seen still astounds me every time I think of it. Though this meeting set up all of the groups policies and most of the means of implementing them, with some very sharp differences of opinion arising from time to time, there was no gavel, no chairman, no formality. We were a group of friends sitting around talking things over; we did not have any Daugherties to assuage and to give ego boo to, nor did we have any Achermans to coddle and cater to. Everyone spoke his mind freely, everything that was brought up got discussed enough but not too much, and when a given item seemed worked out Phil or I would write it up in a few terse sentences, read them, and inquire if this suited the pleasure of all present.

In addition to setting up our constructive policy, the group had just received an almost unforgiveable letter from Ackerman, and it resulted in our dropping our original intention of letting the LASFS alone and deciding to attack the club as much as possible. (The letter summed up the affairs of the past month or so, bandied around the word "treason", implied that the writer intended to run all of us out of fandom, and closed with the utterly gratuitous remark that our only activity would probably consist of "getting drunk and taking turns in publicly copulating with Pogo". Needless to say, several tempers got lost over that remark, and it was decided that those of us with any amount of correspondence would undertake a poison pen carpaign against the LASFS, in which we would simply tell the truth about Acherman and the club; that we would make a point of trying to get national newszine coverage of our activity and thus try to overshadow the LASFS, and that we would continue THE KNANVE as a satirical political fanzine.

The Outsiders decided that the focus of the group was to be half social and half serious; that the social portion of our activities should consist of gradually larger dinner meetings which eventually would feature stimulating outside speakers and of Fran Shack soirces patterned frankly after those out at Craig Rice's; and that the serious portion of our activities would revolve around writing and publishing.

raison d'etre was to be "Project M", a sinister sounding designation which once caused the handful of remaining LASFSers to waste a gob of time in fruitless speculations. It had occured to Bronson and myself that all of the worthwhile Los Angeles publishers and writers with the exception of Ackerman were members of our group. This of course was before the rise of Charles Edward Burbee, and during one of Kepner's frequent interludes during which he had quit publishing. We figured out the amounts of work that was being lavished on our separate magazines: FAN SLANTS, FANTASITE, and ACOLYTE; examined our backlogs of material and our potentialities for getting more good material; and realised that if we were willing to assess ourselves \$5.00 a month apiece, we would have enough money to try a semi-pro printed fanzine.

This was Project M. We gave it this cryptic designation, and bound ourselves to secrecy, because we did not want any inkling of our intentions to leak out. If it fell through, we did not wish to be accused of fostering a Daugherty project. And if it succeeded,

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we felt that the presenting of a concrete accomplishment would pretty much "make" The Outsiders, and that the element of surprise would do much to make the magazine successful. One grows tired of reading glowing advertisements that never pan out.

ject M would have the best available material and editing, we agreed to abandon all fanzines other than limited editions circulating exclusively in FAPA (with the proviso that each editor might finish the issue on which he was working at the time), and that all writings of any Outsider be submitted first to Project M.

Project M was to be a somewhat glorified ACOLYTE, but was to include scientifiction, and a limited amount of the better type of stefnistic material featured by FANTASITE. Bronson and I were to be co-editors, and Sam Russell was to be literary editor, but with powers which virtually made him editor-in-chief so fas as selection of material was concerned.

ject M occupied most of our time for the first month. It took several evenings to work out the details of the publishing agreement, to decide on policies, and to go through some of the material we then had on hand (most of it out of ACOLYTE's backlog). Mike Fern was appointed business manager, and spent many hours canvassing back-street print shops, finally coming up with a fantastically low bid from a rather large shop which was willing to do the work at cost if we could get the paper, since the management was having difficulty finding enough paper to keep even a skeleton crew occupied and feared that its business might fall by the wayside altogether. The paper of course required a priority, so Mike promptly stunned us all by wangling an allocation for several times as much paper as we would have needed. By the middle of March, we had Project M well under control, with the first issue pretty much figured out.

But at this point we found ourselves confronted with a FAPA mailing. And since we had originally decided to permit ourselves to keep up FAPA activity, Project M was temporarily shelved in order that we might pour some stuff into FAPA.

The last, and in some ways the most important, facet of our publishing program was to be THE KNANVE. We designed it as our organ to fandom, and intended it to carry out its original policy of exposing and attacking stefnistic abuses, satirizing the foibles of fandom, and serving as a organ for the occasional venting of spleen.

So there we were, the fan club that was the new hope of Los Angeles. Humph!

The Outsiders as a group carried the seeds of its own demise from the very beginning. In the first place, the majority of us were for one reason or another heartily sick of fandom and all fandom implies. Secondly, there was no common bond of interest among all of us. Brown, Russell, Freehafer, and I were still quite deeply interested in fantasy itself--collecting it, writing about it, talking about writing about it, and even reading the stuff. Yerke, Bronson, Freehafer, and to a lesser extent Brown and Russell were deeply interested in classical music. Yerke, Russell, Freehafer, Rhodes, Fern, and I were interested in various cultural subjects; all of those named knew enough about some of these subjects to talk about them; others professed an interest, but regrettably their knowledge did not compare with their volubility. Lazar, Pogo, and I liked to go out socially with members of the opposite sex--some of the others talked a lot about it. And so on. There was no clearcut, positive inter-

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est which bound <u>all</u> of us together. This is one of the chief factors which has hampered the LASFS for as long as I have known the group-lack of a common focus. And we, being LASFS alumni, carried this lack right into the Outsiders with us. We were bound together by a common motive--anger at Ackerman, Daugherty, and the LASFS--but this was bound to evaporate in a short time. Third, the strong attitude held against newer fans by Yerke, Bronson, Russell, and to a lesser extent myself kept us from making any sustained or successful effort to attract the younger new arrivals away from the LASFS as fast as they showed up--something we could very easily have done had we made up our minds to.

But we didn't do so badly in the short time we were functioning. Our first social event was a house-warming of Fran Shack, held on my 30th birthday, March 11, 1944. It was nothing more than a drunken riot, but it definitely was the most rousing party I ever saw in fandom. The invitations were worded urging attenders to bring "bottles and babes; neither is required though both are requested", and resulted in a full-strength gathering of Outsiders, most of them with bottles and several with women. As the drinks began to take effect, more and more of the misfits began to forget how introverted they were-first thing you knew people were dancing, necking, going in twosomes to be alone for a while, and generally cutting up. Through the entire brawl, Yerke remained relatively sober, and took a series of photographs which can only be described as classic.

Some things took place which showed that The Outsiders, alas, were not much better than the despised LASFS. Brown spent the evening pouting in a corner reading Stapledon. Fern started the same way, but shortly found himself tending the phonograph. Lazar got too much to drink and shoved some of the people around, called me a foul name when someone jogged my elbow and made me spatter a drink on him; I threw the whole glass at him and a fight was prevented only by some remarkably quick action on the part of others. Bronson passed out with a cigarette burning in his mouth, crumpled it into the daveno and nearly asphyxiated from the strangling fumes when the upholstery started to smoulder. But all in all it was quite a party—all good clean fun; thank god I don't have to have that much good clean fun every night!

Also in March, either just before or just after the housewarming, the ubiquitous Mike Fern promoted us an arrangement with the Carolina Pines, a swank eatery in Hollywood, whereby we could hold dinner meetings there and at the same time have free use of a most attractive two room upstairs meeting place. We held several meetings there, after some of which we adjourned to Jack Rhodes' nearby home for a party.

But at about the time of the Fran Shack Warming, I myself was forced to strike the first blow at the Outsiders. Evening after evening passed, but every evening at least one fan would come straggling in, and often-times not want to leave even when I pointed out that I had a date or was otherwise not at home. I found it necessary to promulgate a rule--no visiting except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except by special arrangement. This did not sit very well with some of the group, even though Fran Shack was my own place, and I was supporting it entirely with my own money.

The next rift in The Outsiders came when Jimmy Kepner made another of his famous reversals of opinion, and expressed a wish to become an Outsider. I opposed his being admitted, because I felt him to be untrustworthy; on being voted down, I made it a point to treat him as cordially as

though nothing had happened. Not so Lazar, who resigned from the Outsiders in a huff.

Lazar's resignation, however, was not to be won-He had already gotten the group into a peck of trouble with a very ill-timed and poorly considered letter in which he told of the blowup in the LASFS, and cited as one of the chief reasons the fact that overt homosexuality was running rife in the club, and that Kep-ner was one of the chief homosexuals. This letter he mailed to Julius Unger, editor of FANTASY FICTION FIELD; Unger sent the letter on to Walt Dunkelberger, who was publishing FFF for him; Dunkelberger stencilled the letter verbatim and published it without deletions, an act of stupidity which soured me for all time on both Unger and Dunkelberger, who after all are grown men chronologically and should have known better. Kepner and the LASFS were outraged. We in The Outsiders were beside ourselves. Regardless of the truth in the Lazar letter, it put us on an awful spot, and moreover gave The Outsiders a black eye which we never quite lived down. We promptly disavowed the letter, read the riot act to Unger and Dunkelberger and got a profuse public apology from all concerned. It was right at this time that Kepner expressed a wish to join The Outsiders, and Yerke, that astute politician, saw that by taking Kepner as a member we could really implement our disavowal of Lazar. So we admitted D O K to our ranks.

Paul Freehafer had been a doomed man almost from birth, suffering from a chronic heart condition which could never be cured. We all knew that Paul was in poor health, but few of us realised how poor, since Freehafer had resolutely set out to make the most of what life he had, and had done so so well that it was difficult to think of him as an invalid. Paul caught a bad cold in the same rain-hail outbreak that put me out of circulation for three days. He found himself unable to throw it off, and took a leave of absence from his job with the idea of going home to Idaho to rest for a few months. The Saturday night following the housewarming, Paul met with us for the last time. A week later, he passed away quietly in his sleep, having lived just long enough to get home.

When we heard of Paul's death we were both stunned and crushed. In the first place, Paul Freehafer was at all odds the best beloved of the entire local group; friendly, cheerful, tolerant—totally above all rifts and quarrels; a well-integrated and brilliant adult who was almost entirely free of the maladjustments and adolescencies so characteristic of most of the other localites. And secondly, none of us were quite able to adjust to the fact that Paul was gone.

It was indeed in a sober mood that we brought out Yerke's eulogy for Paul, an essay which I believe is one of the finest pieces of writing fandom has ever produced. We mailed it to nearly all the fans on our mailing list.

with bitter fury that we learned of the LASFS' reaction to Paul's death. The club mourned his passing sincerely; I did not believe it at the time but have since come to realize it. But it came to us very, very straight that the first action of Daugherty and Ackerman, upon receiving the telegram from Idaho, was to go right up to Paul's apartment and try to talk his roommate out of Paul's collection, for the then nebulous Foundation. When I heard of this I went completely berserk--ghouls and vultures were the mildest epithets I could turn out--I started walking the half-mile to the club with the intention of beating Ackerman into a red mush. Somewhere along the way, the realisation struck me, for the first time, that Paul was really dead.

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I burst into uncontrollable tears, and somewhere along Bixel between 8th and 9th had one of the darnedest cries you can imagine; finally allowing myself, spent and trembling, to be taken back home by the Outsiders who were with me, and who had been trotting along with me trying in vain to calm me down (so they told me; I'd not even known they were there).

Perhaps some of you are smiling because FTL sounds like such an emotional dope. Well, perhaps he is. But I thought the world of Paul, and his death was one of the hardest things I've ever had to take.

The Outsiders did not feel happy about the memorial brochure put out by the LASFS, holding it to be cheap, tawdry, and in utter violation of nearly every precept of good taste. I just reread it, and now, three years later, it looks even worse to me than it did then, particularly Ackerman's sidetracking himself into what is almost a defense of atheism.

AFFAIRES made us even angrier. It bore a lithographed portrait of Paul, which was fine--but on the back of the picture, the pettiness of the LASFS could not bear to see all that blank space, so they had smeared on three of the most atrociously horrible poems in the history of fandom. Purportedly memorials to Freehafer, they were written by people like Cunningham and Daniels (the latter of whom had never even seen Paul), and moreover were grotesquely lacking in both taste and literary merit. We weren't the only ones who were annoyed; Art Joquel, who had been one of the mainstays of the post-Outsider LASFS, had been editor of this issue of SHAGGY. Both the picture and the poems were inserted without his knowledge, and he quit both the editorship and the club as a result.

Paul's death could, conceivably have brought the warring factions together. As it was, it alienated The Outsiders still further from the LASFS.

Early in The Outsiders' career, an aftermath of the last bitter fighting in the club brought us one of the funniest letters I have ever seen. When Ackerman commenced his collection of proxies, I at first tried to match it. ong others I approached was the same John M. Cunningham whose proxy Ackerman had actually voted at the meeting where we all resigned. Cunningham made a lightning-fast reversal of form, wrote to the club cancelling his proxy and raising the devil with Ackerman for asking for it in the first place, and sent a new proxy to me. Someone around the LASF3 evidently didn't like this, for just about the time we'd forgotten all about the proxics came a most official sounding letter in duplicate to LASFS and Outsiders from Cunningham. He used official army forms, official army-style rhetoric, and made with a beautiful gob of unintended humor. Cussing both Laney, Ackerman, Outsiders, and LASFS with God-like abandon in his well-known incoherent style, Cunningham outdid himself with the punch-line: "I am therefore of my own free will resigning my life membership in the LASFS at the request of Walter J. Daugherty. "

In mid-March I had a spat with Pogo, whom I had been buzzing quite consistently for a while, taking her dancing and what-not; and we quit dating each other. Rather to our surprise, Pogo quit the Outsiders almost at once. She has since gotten her divorce, remarried, and apparently gotten into a satisfactory life-groove which has no reference to fandom. More fans should do the same.

Also in mid-March, Yerke startled us by

asking us if we would be willing to publish his memoirs for him. He had for some reason started reminiscing to himself of his seven years in the LASFS, had actually written down portions of the first section, and felt an urge to continue if publication would be guaranteed in advance. Not only did we know that Yerke's memoirs would be one of fandom's best pieces of folk-lore, but we also realised that if Yerke told the truth about the LASFS it would damn the group with anyone who read them. So our answer was obvious. It was decided that Yerke would stencil the memoirs, that the group would run them off, and that they would be submitted to FAPA under the franks of Bronson, Brown, and myself. He promised four booklets of approximately 30 pages, but only the first was ever completed, since Bruce dropped the project a couple of months later when he finally quit fandom entirely.

ponsibility of getting these produced, and of trying to get some of our other proposed publishing completed, weighed rather heavily on me. I suggested to the group that we suspend work on Project M for the nonce--it had about reached a stasis anyway--and institute a monthlong program of publishing, during the course of which we would not only bring out the first volume of MEMOIRS OF A SUPERFLUOUS FAN, but a third issue of THE KNANVE, and as much FAPA material as possible. This was quickly agreed to.

Our equipment was meager as compared to that of the LASFS, but we did have the manpower to make the most of it. My old LCSmith was the only typewriter regularly at our disposal; although Brown's rented Underwood occasionally made the trek to 1104 and Phil's portable was there about half the time. So most of the stencils were cut away from Fran Shack, though of course a good deal was done on publishing nights. Among us we found we had four lettering guides, though we sorely missed the LASFS Speedoscope. And there were two mimeographs—junk heaps in comparison with the flossy automatic machine at the club—but in good enough working order: my old original machine from Clarkston, a 1906 model Dick; and Phil Bronson's little Sears Roebuck job from Minneapolis and the MFS. Both were hand—crank, hand—feed models, and required two persons for most efficient operation, one turning the crank and the other slip—sheeting.

It was evident almost immediately that these sessions would have to be organised, so I took matters into my own hands and put a stop to the old LASFS custom of everyone doing his own work. We went cooperative altogether; stencils to be run off were turned over to me, and I not only doled them out to the mimeographers, but pretty much bossed the whole show, suggesting needful tasks to unoccupied Outsiders and taking steps to assure, as much as possible, an even flow of stencils. It worked like a charm. Most of the time there were four people actually mimeographing, one person de-slipping, one or two cutting stencils, and one or two lending moral support by talking, playing records, or what not. We changed off often enough as not to get tired of the same old drudgery, and we still found enough fun in each other's company that we found the same evening of fun we had always had was turning out an imposing stack of completed pages that we scarcely realised we had done, so busily were we talking and joking and cutting up.

The #3 KNANVE was the first item put out under the new program. Most of it was written, stencilled, and run off on a Sunday and the following Saturday night. When the bunch left about midnight, two pages had yet to be run off, and Mike Fern and I, having a midnight snack, suddenly decided to go back to Fran Shack and finish it off. We worked on the fool thing until 4:00 in the morning.

But that was the only one of the publishing sessions which went to any extreme; as a rule they were confined to Tuesday and Thursday evenings; commencing about 7:00 and lasting until 11:30 or 12:00. And these sessions certainly paid off; from them came not only this one issue of THE KNANVE, but over 130 pages of FAPA material, and nearly all of the #7 ACOLYTE. Since they lasted only a couple of months in all, one has only to compare these results with the average two months output of the LASFS in order to find another of the many things wrong with the club. Publishing is usually drudgery, but group publishing is fun--no matter what you are putting out; and any group wishing to establish a common focus can by adopting a group publishing program not only accomplish this aim but in addition add mightily to both the quantity and quality of contemporary fan publishing.

In the latter part of March, the feuding factions were treated to a protracted visit from a Chicago fan, Frankie Robinson. Frank is chiefly notable for the possession of the most fantastic eyebrows in the world. At the time of his visit here he was just short of 18, had never been away from home very much, and found the strain of the two factions vying with each other to attract him a bit too much for his poise. He ended up rather sadly disillusioned with fandom, having stayed with Yerke, that master of intrigue and innuendo, that fountain head of devastating gossip. Frank's experiences with the LASFS were not happy; he met them all at their worst the night he was in town fresh off the train when Yerke and I in a moment of madness invited the LASFS to come out to Bronson's with the Outsiders and have a joint welcoming party. Ackerman sat on the davenport and pouted, saying scarcely a dozen words all evening; and Daugherty got into a three way verbal battle with Bronson and me which surpassed even the epic row Daugherty and I had had that night in the club. Needless to say, Frankie was revolted; and his subsequent experiences with some of us went far to sour him on the Outsiders as well.

It might be of passing interest to back-track at this point, and say a few words about the LASFS during the spring of 1944. In the first place, the feud utterly shattered the club. Despite Daugherty's and Ackerman's valiant efforts to get fandom to think all was well with the LASFS, a moment's glance at the dark window would have told the true story. Before the feud, the room was packed every night, with various members working and publishing, some reading, and a half dozen others dropping in and out during the evening. On meeting nights, 25 to 30 people usually showed up; though many were visitors. After the inception of The Outsiders, the club was almost invariably dark except on Thursdays; for a time Ackerman tried to hold the fort alone, but between the echoing silences of the described room and the frequent heckling from Outsiders as they walked past the club on their way from the street-car to my place, Forry very sortly took to doing his fanning in a more secluded spot. And the meetings had dropped off to nearly nothing. Daugherty was director, the newcomer Burbee had been saddled with both the secretary ship and the editorship of SHAGGY, Morojo was treasurer, and Ackerman was chief mourner. Crozetti came to most of the meetings with her five year old daughter who also joined the club as the old guard strove valiantly to increase the roster. And there was one new member who stuck, Glen Daniels, a friend of Kepner's who shortly became coeditor of Crozetti's VENUS. Kepner pulled out of the club a month after the feud, utterly fed up with Daugherty. And, rumor has it, there were a few casual dropper-inners, who came once or twice, saw the LASFS was moribund, and moved to greener pastures.

the Outsiders, he quickly became one of the most active of the group, particularly in the publishing sessions. He was not at all quiet about comparing our activity with the inanities of the dying club, so very shortly both Daniels and Crozetti expressed a wish to join the Outsiders. Yerke, Bronson, and others opposed the membership of both of these individuals—which of course was perfectly within their rights—but made the mistake of peremptorily telling me not to allow these two at Fran Shack. Well, now. I promptly announced that the Tuesday night sessions were open to everyone, LASFS and Outsiders alike, and only the Thursday night sessions were limited stretly to the Outsiders. This considerably weakened our homogeniousness.

about this time, Burbee became quite friendly with the Outsiders, spending as much time with us as at the LASFS, and even having all of us to dinner at his house to celebrate Yerke's birthday in mid-April. This last furnished me with my favorite S. Davenport Russell anecdote. Yerke, always a brilliant conversationalist, was outdoing himself that day, and a terrific discussion was in full cry. I kept noticing Sam, sitting across the room from me. He at first tried to read, but Burbee's two-year-old daughter kept pestering him so finally he gave up and lifted the little girl into his lap; where he held her, talking quietly to her and very obviously making a terrific hit. She lay back in his arms, looking up at him with her heart in her eyes, hanging on every word. Sam in turn was looking down on her most affectionately, talking toher, talking.... Suddenly a silence fell on the other conversation, and Sam's flat voice cut through it: "Cthulhu. Yog-Sothoth. Nyarlathooep..." (!!)

Burbee never joined the Outsiders, though we considered him as a member. (Our organization was so completely informal and nebulous at all times that this sort of thing could happen with the greatest of ease.)

But the brave little group was foundering. Mike Fern, one of our mainstays, left us early in April to go to New York, where he managed to make himself quite unpopular with his lack of tact and his inquisitiveness and his free comments on different ones. (A rumor came back to me a year or so later that I had financed his trip in order to spy on the Futurians. If anyone has positive information on the origin of this idea, he will confer a great favor on me by dropping me a note about it; something tells me that the inside story on this one would make priceless reading). Jack Rhodes left us about the same time, tired of us as most of us were of him. Yerke was obviously approaching a crisis -- he had broken loose from one fan club only to find himself floundering in the same kind of morass he had tried to escape -- and his irritability and obvious dissatisfaction with the group had repercussions with Bronson, who fell into a sort of listlessness, characterised by an Ashley-like unwillingness to do anything more drastic than just sitting around talking. And Eddie Chamberlain had gone into the United States Navy by the end of April.

By May 1st, the Outsiders consisted of Yerke, Bronson, Laney, Russell, Brown, Kepner, and the anomolous Charles Edward Burbee Jr. Though this was not the strong group with which we had started, it still possessed a certain amount of potential. Yerke, Russell, and I wanted to re-commence work on Project M. Kepner and Brown had gotten off onto a socially-conscious tangent which eventually culminated in their joining the communist party; Burbee at this time was just feeling his way into the editorship of SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES and had no time for other commitments.

of factors came up that had to be handled at once. In its six issues up to that time, THE ACOLYTE had been prompt as clockwork, and its contacts with the pro world seemed to me largely to depend on this promptness and regularity. An issue was due June 15; either it had to start by May 5, or Project M had to get far enough along so that I could depend on it to take ACOLYTE's place. We had the material for Project M, but it was all ACOLYTE material except for a short story Yerke had written for us. Bronson both failed to turn over his back log and refused to do any work. "Aw, let's just sit back and blow smoke rings," he used to say when we'd suggest doing something. I had no intention of publishing an ambitious magazine single-handed, and in fact in the 6th issue had announced a curtailed circulation and a decreased number of issues per year.

A week or so of Bronsonian lotus eating, led me to approach Sam Russell, and ask him if he would be co-editor of ACOLYTE, with a 50-50 split on both work and finances. (This last meant nothing, since the magazine had been slightly more than breaking even since its 4th issue.) "I am committed to Project M," said Russell.

"Suppose ACOLYTE withdraws from

Project M?"

"Since Project M, basically, is THE ACOLYTE, in that case I'd be only too pleased to step in and help it out."

it. I gave Project M. to Bronson, with my compliments, and SDR and I picked out the material for the #7 ACOLYTE that very night.

Yerke, still working on his night shift, heard of this developement he had a fit. Under date of May 16, 1944, he wrote The Outsiders a letter of resignation. In it, he assailed us savagely for our short-comings, particularly berating Bronson. Phil was crushed, for he had always maintained a semi-heroworship for Bruce, and Yerke had in this letter flayed-him unmercifully. This letter was the end of both Yerke and Bronson in fandom. Yerke had some spasmodic dealings with Bill Watson that summer, and Bronson, more from habit than anything else, kept coming around for a couple of weeks -- but neither of them ever again did anything of a fan nature. An amusing sidelight on Yerke's letter of resignation and renunciation was that he called our roll, so as to speak, describing to each of us his personal habits and peculiarities which made him impossible to associate with. Only SDRussell got a clean bill of health. Bu, oddly, with the exception of Bruce's remarks about Mel Brown's unkemptness, every single one of these accusations applied to Yerke with as great force as it did to the person he was condemning for it.

But the Outsiders no longer existed, except as a name. Mid-May of 1944 saw the LASFS with four or five members and The Outsiders with about the same. Neither group had any longer sufficient momentum to expand itself. If Los Angeles was to have a fan club, it was pretty evident to me that the two factions would have to combine, and fast.

A certain amount of intermingling was already in evidence. Crozetti and Daniels did a good deal of work on VENUS at Fran Shack with Outsider equipment, and since Daniels had also become co-editor of Brown's FAN SLANTS and Kepner's TOWARD TOMORROW, a good deal of work on these two Outsider fanzines was performed in the LASFS clubroom. Ackerman still refused to speak to me, and there was considerable resentment between various Outsiders and Walter J. Daugherty, but by and large the groups seemed

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drifting towards a merger.

I commenced angling around, trying to work out some sort of truce with Ackerman. Walter J. Daugherty stepped into a role of peacemaker, telling us how implacable Ackerman was towards us and telling Ackerman how these overtures of friendship merely presaged some sort of Trojan horse deal. I dated Myrtle a time or so, and in the course of talking things over with her saw that she would eventually cause the hatchet to be buried.

have drifted on, except that Lora Crozetti, the very evening after Brown, Kepner, and I had spent a couple of hours helping her run off VENUS, took the floor in the LASFS, told the club that the room had been so full of Outsiders she couldn't work, and demanded that the club ban all Outsiders from its premises, under pain of having them thrown in the pokey for trespassing. Director Walter J. Daugherty allowed such a motion to pass; appointed Burbee to come down and tell us about it, then came down himself and did not allow Burbee to more than say hello as the Great Daugherty read the riot act. I tried to talk to the fellow in a conciliatory fashion, despite some rough remarks from a rather intoxicated Bronson, who quit fandom completely when it became evident that Brown, Kepner, and I were and had been dickering with the LASFS.

This last week of May was devoted mostly to negotiations of one sort and another. The reconciliation was finally implemented by Morojo, who talked Ackerman around into seeing both the need for a merger and the advisability of letting bygones be bygones. The feud was closed despite Walter J. Daugherty's efforts as a peacemaker, when one Sunday morning, a nervously doubtful Forest J. Ackerman tapped diffidently on Fran Shack's door until a dumb-founded Francis T. Laney opened it and peered sleepily out at him.

But that, and the happenings that led from this surprise visit, belong in the next chapter.

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