

It will save ever-so-much if you all just consider that I've given you here a long explanation of the tribulations attendant upon the forthcoming Convention in Washington -- 417 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria Virginia, being right on the outskirts of Washington -- with a claim that that's why this issue of PHENOTYPE, which is Operation Crifanac CCXXXII, is so skimpy, having only a bunch of mailing comments in addition to the final installment of Laney's Ah Sweet Idiocy. Mind you, this isn't all there is; next issue we have Alva Rogers and some others adding their critiques. But for the present, this is all there is to it, and

It's Eney's Fault

MAILING XXXVI

RECEIVED OCT 28 1963

Elinor Busby's DOLPHIN 5

Dunno about not knowing how to drive embarrassing all American adults. On the way to & from ChiCon I drove all the way between there and New York because, as I found out at the last minute, John Boardman and Avram Davidson never learned to drive a car. I think I'd have been only a little more surprised if they'd told me they never learned to read and write, but they didn't even bat an eye. Oh, I didn't drive all the way, now I bethink myself: Lee Hoffman (cheers) drove about 50 miles each way, when I was beginning to feel frayed at the edges. Lee is a Delightful Woman, I think.

Consider that I beamed with approval at your giving extra books to the Good Will people. I've gotta grit my teeth to actually (whisper it...) throw away even magazines, and hc or even pb books I will not destroy. Not even a bound volume of The Storm Trooper. (The OO of the American Nazi Party, you Anglofen.) I wonder whether that's more proper reverence for the principle, or a relic of the juvenile fan's persistent fear that Ignorant Adults will destroy his collection?

JMB Baxter's I-SHINE-in-lower-case & SOUFFLE 5

A deliberate attempt to counter MONDO CANE by showing "the beautiful things and the dignified human beings" would probably turn out so saccharine it'd make Norman Vincent Peale gag. Smug self-satisfaction, even vicarious, is no attitude to take when trying to produce intelligent art.

It may take a divining rod to get at it, but I can tell you what that blurt of Kennedy's means: we have to have inspection with any disarmament program, because dictators cheat and we don't. And I am willing & able to produce history to vouch for the dependent clauses there, if anybody wants to call me on them.

I think Martin Gardner appraised the idea of censorship to pro-

tect the kiddies rather neatly in The Annotated Alice: children are vastly amused by images of bloodshed, death, decapitation, and other Freudian incidents, and aren't harmed in the least. However, all such stories should be carefully kept away from adults who fancy themselves as armchair psychoanalysts.

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Ken Cheslin's WHATSIT and ENVOYS

Interesting thought, that of choosing one's way out when suicide time comes. But what of the sort who decide to go out like the boys at the OK Corral? Myself, I figured out the optimum method once; if I ever have occasion to knock myself off, it'll be by getting caught at one point as I work my way along a list of people the world would be better off without.

On account of our superstition (which we inherit from our English ancestry, so don't go getting smug) that it's a sign of Moral Degeneracy and Evil to mention war without making noises about its wickedness, there is nothing corresponding to a real opinion on Cornwallis or anybody else connected with the military end of the American Revolution to be found in any schoolbook in the USA. In specialist histories, he's made out a rather competent bloke who had the bad luck -- from his point of view -- to run into a very peculiar sort of military talent indeed when he mixed it with Nathaniel Greene.

Oh, competence is a good enough rule for selecting voters; on'y thing is, moneymaking isn't a proof of it. "The man who will turn his back on...all the fruitful, creative, life-pursuing activities into which the loftiest human energy can develop...and will set himself single-heartedly to gather gold in an exultant dream of wielding its Plutonic powers, will find the treasure yielding quickly to his touch."

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Bill Evans' CYRILLE

You too, ~~By~~ Bill! The word for a protracted clash is feud, blast it...E before U, ye servant of Ghu!

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Dave Hale's BIG DEAL 3

Tsk, three hours for 79 miles is pretty slow -- 26 mph and a bit is nothing for a motorcyclist to brag on unless you're running thru built-up areas all the way.

I don't know about other quasi-warmongers (but score one for you tumbling that it's quasi -- you'd be surprised the people take it as serious as so many owls) but I slang the CND people and their type not especially because they take part in peace marches and like that

but because these activities make it plain that they are the sort of stupid fribbleheads who believe in the Devil Theory of society. C Wright Mills may manifest this folly in other ways, but variant methods don't take off the stupidity of the Devil Theory -- in this case, the idea that the Cold War is all a part of a Fiendish Plot by the Vile Capitalists/Communists/Establishment/Pentagon/Trotskytes or name what you please.-- and that the Iron Curtain would evaporate if we only would stop worrying about it and think Beautiful Thoughts.

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Terry Jeeves' ERG 16

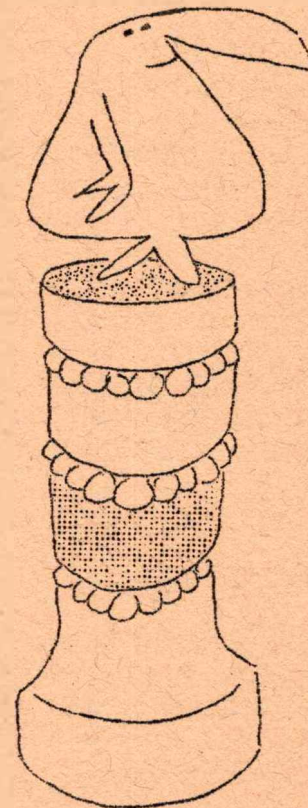
You drop a fascinating line about the fan captions to METROPOLIS...I wonder what results one could get by circulating a collection of movie stills for fans to title, as Dean Grennell once did? Must try it some time...

I'll add a pic to this page for your benefit, but if you'll take a good look at the irregular lines and shaky cutting you'll see why I set out, some time back, a standing comment for all who complain about my lack of illos: "I shall firmly ignore all such unless uttered by people who also have a long record of objection to the practice of publishing books in solid text..."

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Ethel Lindsay's SCOTTISHE 32

In some places people just won't grasp the idea of a society so large that something other than laziness can produce havens. Back in 1930 one of Hoover's Cabinet members was chewing the fat with the current Dean of the Faculty at GWU (at that time a junior professor) and told about the puzzle he was in at the way people were acting during the Great Depression. Back in his home town in Ohio things like breadlines would never appear, he observed, because as soon as a good worker was out of a job the whole town knew it and set itself to finding something for him to do. While Republicans in 1930 were more than somewhat stupid in matters of social studies, that a cabinet member could be this naïve hints at what must have been the case with people of even less practical experience.



Reincarnationists turn up in the oddest places, Dept.:

"...Tell me now, have I followed the sequence of images presented to you?"

"You have indeed," said the doctor. "You are uncanny, Holmes. A few centuries ago you would certainly have been burned as a wizard."

"Perhaps I was," said the great detective idly. "Who knows?"

Turning back to the Crucifixion for a moment: as Bert said of Socrates' death, it'd have been more meritorious still if the victim hadn't been so cocksure he was going to survive death and, indeed, be better off afterwards. Who wouldn't trade several hours of torture -- worse torture than Jesus had to put up with -- for omnipotence during the rest of eternity?

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And to return to our serialization of

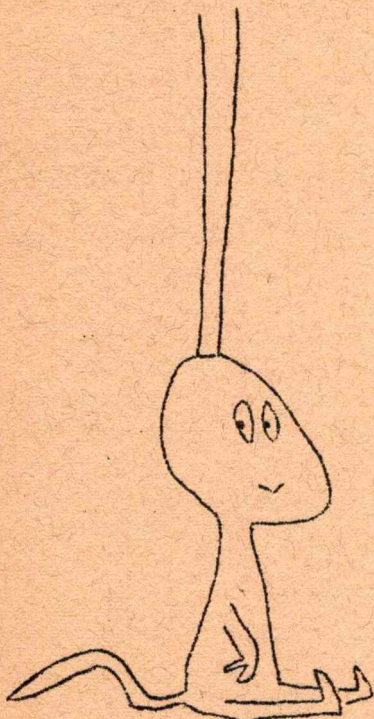
AH! SWEET IDIOCY!

What has gone before:

Our hero, Francis Towner Laney, has gotten a bellyfull and then some of the antics of science fiction fans in Los Angeles. Denouncing them and all their ways and works with scant temperance but lots of fine mouth-filling oaths, he has shaken the dust (and other unsanitary relics) of the LASFS from his feet and tried to organize another group on the basis of the more worthwhile folk who had resigned from or been driven out of the LASFS. Unfortunately, the schismatics have had about all the fandom they can digest, while their absence has deprived the rump LASFS of talent it badly needs to survive. Thus the city has, instead of an active fan club, two moribund ones.

But one Sunday morning Laney, wakened by a knocking at his door, peers blearily out to see Forrest J Ackerman calling on him. Now go on with the story...

And remember there's one more installment coming after this.



CHAPTER EIGHT

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On the Inside Looking Out

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Such had been the power of the Shangri-La propaganda, the Russell J. Hodgkins hush-hush publicity policy, which gave a cover-up to the manifold failings of the LASFS and its members, that fandom generally had not completely adjusted to the idea that there was a rift when lo! all was peace once more. Or was it?

In any event, nearly all established fans maintained a strict neutrality. Larry Shaw, Raymond Washington, and Claude Degler publically sided with Ackerman and the club. Shaw especially ran the matter into the ground. He was publishing a newszine called NEBULAH with an occasional supplement called BEULAH'S SCRAPBOOK in which he ran editorials, feature stories, and other material which was not suitable for the terse, factual news sheet that NEBULAH tried to be. In BEULAH'S SCRAPBOOK, Shaw ran a long and biased letter from Ackerman, giving his side of the feud. This was of course all right, but Shaw, removed from us geographically by more than 2000 miles and speaking from the depths of a profound ignorance of the situation, wrote an equally long editorial taking sides with Ackerman. Fern and I promptly wrote semi-official letters to Shaw, taking issue with his lack of neutrality, and I wrote an official account of The Outsiders up to that time and sent it to him for publication. Through some sort of odd coincidence, Shaw quit the newszine field almost at once--blaming a variety of factors for it, but we always felt that it was because he was unwilling to be impartial. The Futurians, notably Wollheim, took sides with us privately, but maintained public neutrality. The rest of fandom wrote letters of inquiry, raised an occasional eyebrow, but were otherwise unaffected.

Jack Speer happened to take a poll of the top 15 fans in the spring of 1944, with the idea of seeing how what he called expert opinion correlated with that of the general fan public as reflected in Widner's compilation. Since Bronson and I were both in this list, we decided it would be fun to omit Ackerman from our top ten voting, and both vote for him as the worst fan of the year. This of course ruined Forry's standing in Speer's poll. So in some distorted poll figures, the feud was reflected nationally.

But apart from what I've just mentioned, the only effects of the Big Fuss were strictly local.

One of the first things the LASFS did after we resigned was to write and adopt a new constitution. It was written largely by Walter J. Daugherty, and was chiefly aimed at keeping the Outsiders out, and preventing a recurrence of the feud. Since much had been made of the fact that I had been in the club only a couple of months before I started criticising it (as if one had to eat an entire egg to know that it was rotten) the Daugherty constitution provided a threemonth probationary period for new members, during which time they were required to attend 75% of all club meetings and were not permitted to vote. (Ackerman, I am told, had wanted a special clause requiring six months of this probation for any former member of the club who wished to rejoin, but Freehafer talked him out of this.) The Daugherty constitution otherwise pretty much continued the old organization

--rent payers' committee, executive committee, and so on--except it added one of the most pernicious dictatorial arrangements I have ever seen in an organization, the Governing Body. This group was a self-perpetuating, self-elected committee of up to five members, serving for life. Their control over the club was absolute. They could set aside any vote of the club, even a unanimous vote; they could set aside any election of officers, they could suspend or depose any officer elected or otherwise, they could expell any member. Any of these actions could be taken; nothing could be done about them. As originally constituted, the Governing Body was not quite so bad, since it had the well-liked and balanced Freehafer on it, and a couple of others having enough emotional stability to give a certain amount of assurance that these extraordinary powers would not be called upon except in time of great emergency. (Original membership of the Governing Body: Forrest J Ackerman, Walter J. Daugherty, Myrtle R. Douglas, Arthur Louis Joquel II, and Paul Freehafer.

But Freehafer died only a week or so after the committee was set up. And at about the same time, Joquel quit the club in a huff over the mishandling of Freehafer's picture in SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, leaving a three-man governing body: Ackerman, Douglas, and Daugherty. Myrtle was OK. She is level headed and kind-hearted enough so that she can be trusted with this kind of extreme power. But all that Daugherty needed to do to rule the club to suit his whim was to sway Ackerman (and Ackerman is not, shall we say, unswayable) and there he was. The minute I heard of this setup I smelled a rat, and when he explained to me that the GB lay quiescent unless it was needed, something still smelled bad.

So the earlier part of our negotiations with the LASFS were largely confined to trying to work around the Governing Body setup. It must be remembered that Ackerman was still not speaking to me, and that it looked probable that we would have to be admitted over 4e's objection. At the same time, we were unwilling to come back if there was any hint of surrender about our action--it merely seemed desirable that Los Angeles continue to have a fan club, and obvious that ten members in one club might conceivably have a chance of accomplishing something while two separate clubs of four or five were certain to founder for good, and soon. It had been arranged that Myrtle, in her capacity as a member of the Governing Body, would favor our readmittance under some sort of peace treaty which would demand no apologies or retractions from either side, and which would waive either the requirement of attending meetings or the requirement of the three month probationary period. In his role as Peacemaker, Daugherty had gone so far playing both ends against the middle that we felt he would have considerable difficulty in voting against our readmittance--though then as now, Daugherty was unpredictable.

Forry's early morning visit to Fran Shack changed the entire picture. Myrtle finally talked him into coming down and discussing the matter personally. I had had a very rough Saturday night, and when the first Sunday in June 1944 was heralded by a light but persistent tapping on Fran Shack door my first thought was to kick someone's tail clear across the street for waking me up at 9:00 AM. When I saw it was Ackerman, I nearly swooned with surprise, but I invited him in and excused myself while I doused my face with cold water and lit a cigarette in an attempt to get partially awake. When I came back into the front room, Forry was browsing along my bookshelves with every air of surprise--he had reiterated so often that I was a fake fan that he had come to believe it himself and walking into what was at that time a first class fantasy and stf

collection upset his notions considerably.

We sat down and commenced talking, asking each other about various things that had happened in the past few months, occasionally trying to explain our motivations to each other. In the course of a two hour conversation we got onto a more friendly basis than we had ever been before--particularly when it came home to both of us that we had each separately been trying to carry a club on our shoulders. I reassured him that there was nothing political about returning to the LASFS; he reassured me that we need not fear the Governing Body.

So the following Thursday, Brown, Kepner, and I rejoined the LASFS--not without a considerable amount of balking from Mel Brown, who is almost unable to back down on anything he has ever said, or do anything that looks as though he might be backing down. However, he had already agreed to rejoin the LASFS under terms which Kepner and I were willing to accept, so he came along. But the end of the Outsiders really ended Mel Brown in fandom. He took an active part in the LASFS through most of the time following, but dropped all his publishing and most of his collecting.

My chief motivation in rejoining the club has not as yet been touched on. I had finally established what looked to be an entente cordiale with my wife, and it was evident that Fran Shack's days were numbered. This being the case I was faced with the problem of either joining the club, or folding THE ACOLYTE, since it was very unlikely that I'd much longer have room for a mimeograph of my own. My increasing contacts with the better class of fantasy lovers and the surprising amount of first class materials continually being submitted to ACOLYTE by Leiber and others made me very reluctant to suspend the magazine, particularly now that I had Russell for a co-editor. And, despite my resolutions of a few weeks previously, I was having great difficulty in quitting fandom in the face of all this good material, a fast growing interest in FAPA, and a still unsatisfactory job coupled with a considerable amount of pathological self-doubting.

I had finally gotten Jackie to see that perhaps the housing shortage really existed, that I had not just made it up as an excuse not to send for her, and she had agreed to come to Los Angeles without Sandy and Quiggie, leaving them with my mother in Idaho, stay at Fran Shack for a while, and hunt for housing on a full-time basis. I agreed to go back up North if she was unsuccessful; she had agreed to do a whole-hearted job of looking. She still seemed to think we could get a rental.

But her trip needed money, and it seemed highly desirable to me that I spend as much time around the club and away from money-spending temptations as I could. So, once back into the LASFS, I moved my typewriter and trunk of immediately needed papers to the club, and shortly fell back into the habit of spending a good part of my spare time there.

Ackerman came in with me, and it was not long before the LASFS had an approximation of its pre-feud hey-day, with a number of people in the place every evening. Alva Rogers had just come back to LA from San Diego, Daugherty was feverishly active at the time, and Brown, Kepner, Daniels, and to a lesser extent Crozetti spent a good deal of time around the club on non-meeting nights.

A vignette of Glenn Daniels is in order. He was short, slender, ugly, and vivacious--definitely a boon companion type of person despite the oddity of his sexual tastes. His chief motivation apparently was sexual, but he was an interested and unin-

hibited conversationalist, and was almost as great a doer of fanzine and other drudgery for people as Mike Fern. From the national point of view, his activity in fandom was reflected only in a pile of mimeography and stencil-cutting for VENUS, TOWARD TOMORROW, and FAN SLANTS but locally he was one of the most active members of the LASFS from about March until August 1944.

The new entente cordiale with Ackerman was implemented by both of us in various ways. I commenced writing a good deal for VOM and even mimeographed one issue for Forry; I invited him to my place as an "accidental" dropper-inner the night Fritz Leiber came over to see my collection and talk fantasy (an evening which Ackerman reported for me in an article for FAN-DANGO); and I was enabled to see a revival of METROPOLIS as 4e's guest.

The Leiber visit occurred just before Fritz left town to take over a good editorial job in Chicago, and was just another of those big bullfests that is stimulating at the time, but of which little stays with one as specific impressions of that specific event. I remember how I kept trying to keep the conversation steered into fantastic channels because I had noticed how completely lost Forry seemed to be if anything outside this one narrow field was mentioned; and how nature took its course, and Fritz and I got wound up on literature generally. And I especially remember seeing Leiber to his bus, and how we loped back and forth for over an hour between 8th and Olympic, just missing a bus on each street, until finally we subsided, panting, on Olympic and talked far into the wee small hours until an owl bus came bumbling along. I've not seen Leiber since.

The showing of METROPOLIS was held at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' little theater located far up in an oper-air arcade which opens off Hollywood Blvd. just east of the Pickwick Bookshop. It was part of their regularly scheduled program, to which they sold season tickets at \$15.00 each. I would not have been able to go, except that Myrtle had already seen the picture a couple of times, and she and Forry asked me to use her ticket. The picture itself was mediocre, if interesting. It is replete with very brilliantly conceived sets and special effects, but the overdone hamminess of the acting proved such a major drawback that the picture as a whole was stupid. Individual scenes, however, made it worthwhile, and then of course the big attraction was Fritz Lang himself, who took the floor after the showing and answered questions and talked for well over an hour. At first he stayed pretty close to METROPOLIS, but before long was talking about his experiences in leaving Germany, and eventually was discussing the broad field of cinematic art from the point of view of the director. Good listening indeed! An amusing sidelight was the country bumpkin awe with which I regarded Lang's monocle, and the way it stayed in place despite the extreme animation of its wearer's features.

About the chief social activity of the LASFS during the spring and summer of 1944 was miniature golf. There was a course located two blocks from the club at 5th and Beaudry, and nearly all the members except Ackerman, Myrtle, Crozetti, and Burbee spent at least five evenings a week there. Particularly after Brown began clashing again with the club, the golf course proved an invaluable place to work off his steam, though playing 36 holes with Mel required a mighty degree of fortitude. His always great nervousness became hugely intensified, and he would rage, swear, prance up and down, throw his club, chew his finger, and in general behave like a maniac. I still think half the golfers on the course that summer went more to see Mel's perfor-

mance, than to play golf themselves.

Two or three weeks after we rejoined the club, Ackerman received a letter from Donald A. Wollheim which utterly soured me on the Futurians in general and Wollheim in particular. It wasn't very long, but it attacked me pretty strongly personally, told Ackerman that my only purpose in rejoining the LASFS was to destroy the club utterly, and belaboring him in no uncertain terms for letting me back in, closed by urging him to throw me out. What precise purpose Wollheim might have had in mind escapes me entirely; he is known to have been bitterly inimical to Los Angeles fandom and particularly Ackerman, and perhaps he may have thought that by stirring up the feud once again he could destroy the LASFS. As it turned out, Ackerman showed me the letter, and nothing came of it except to turn me very bitterly against the Futurians, whom I had previously known scarcely at all.

Though I was heartily sick of feuding and club politics, it was not long before I was once more embroiled up to my ears in a row with Walter J. Daugherty. The club was in sorry straits financially, and various plans were being discussed to increase the revenue without turning the club into an insupportable burden for its handful of members. Since this discussion was taking place on a non-meeting night, I did not see any reason why my being disenfranchised should prevent my taking part in it; particularly since my chief reason for rejoining had been to use the mimeograph, something I obviously could not conveniently do if we found ourselves unable to support the clubroom, 4e, Myrtle, and others liked some of my ideas--particularly one aimed directly at the people who kept personal property in the club for their own personal use--and asked me to incorporate them in a bylaw amendment for them to bring up at the ensuing meeting. I did so; the bylaw passed in the absence of Walter J. Daugherty, who just didn't happen to be there; and from then on the three individuals who maintained personal property for their own use in the club had to pay a minimum of \$3.00 a month key rent rather than the former rate of \$1.00. Ackerman, Daugherty, and I were the only ones who came under this heading.

It so fell out that on the ensuing Sunday, Daugherty called the club to see if anyone was there, and I happened to answer the phone. He wanted someone to help him bring in a large buffet, which his landlady had given him, and which he wanted to store his supplies in. Sure, I was willing to help him, but in passing, I mentioned that it would cost him \$3 a month rent if he kept it in the club, due to this new bylaw. I told him this, and the fellow practically walked through the phone. Five minutes later he was in the clubroom, shaking with rage, and foaming at the mouth about my having insulted him, having seized control of the club, having conspired to make his membership impossible, and god knows what else. It was not long before I had enough of this, and I told him off but good, and we were off. Bellowing something about the governing body, he dashed off after Myrtle and Forry, and wasted nearly their entire day trying to have the Outsiders evicted from the club. I went on halfheartedly cranking out ACOLYTE with Mel's help, expecting any minute that we would be expelled, for having incurred Lord Walter's displeasure. Ackerman and Morojo, however, refused to act against me. After all, I'd only told him of an action of the club--of an action on which I couldn't even vote--and it is difficult to see how Daugherty could justify his reaction. After some three hours of Governing Body deliberations, Myrtle came over and told me of her desire to keep the peace in the club, and that Walter would be willing to forgive and forget if I would write out an apology to him. What an apology that was!

The old LCSmith virtually smoked as I expressed myself in blazing sentences studded with four-letter words of Anglo-Saxon derivation, none of which were used in a masochistic fashion. "There's my apology to that bastard," I snarled, and thrust the paper on Myrtle.

She read it, and turned faintly pink. "Oh, but this will never do. It will just make him angrier."

"He can shove it up his --- if he doesn't like it in his face," I remarked. "That's my last word on the subject. Do you want my resignation from the club?"

"Oh, no."

She left the room, and about 6:00 o'clock reappeared with Ackerman, having pacified Walter J. Daugherty in something like seven hours.

When I next saw this mercurial gentleman, he seemed to have forgotten the whole thing, and was happy as a lark as he bubbled with plans for the next Daugherty Project, a portfolio of caricatures of fans drawn by Virgil Partch.

But I realised that in order to stay in the club at all, I was going to have to take part in politics. As the group was constituted under that pernicious Governing Body setup, the only way one could get along with Daugherty was to keep a wedge driven between him and Ackerman. I expounded this idea strongly for the next few weeks, and pointed out that if we once caught Ackerman right after Daugherty had made him angry (something that happened from time to time) we'd not only fix Mr. D's cookie, but would be able to toss out the entire governing body idea in toto. (We did, too.)

The FAPA election for the 1944-45 fiscal year took place at about this time, and Al Ashley, that caffeine soaked politico, had in appointing the ballot counting committee blithely ignored the feud, and appointed a non-partisan board with Daugherty as chairman, and Brown and Bronson as assistants. This led directly to another mess. In the first place, Daugherty did not read of his appointment, and Ashley, unable to imagine another fan who would not read breathlessly every word in the official organ, had not notified him by mail. In the second place, Brown and Daugherty on a committee worked together about as well as Molotov and Senator Taft. And worst of all, Bronson not only lived 18 miles from the club neighborhood, but had no phone and had definitely quit fandom. Poor old Walter J. Daugherty had a hell of a time, which was not especially helped by his native inclination to procrastinate. Before the ballot counting delays were over, a feud had sprung up between Daugherty and Larry Shaw (that's one I loved; no matter who got the worst of it, I liked it fine.) and FAPA had ground almost to a full halt. I finally wrote to Ashley about it. I'd struck up quite a correspondence with Sultan, arising out of the letter he wrote me about the drunken FAN-DANGO of a few months before. I'd been impressed by his extreme fairness and courtesy, particularly as contrasted by the reception that issue got from FAPA as a whole, and very shortly he had me highly interested in FAPA, both from the point of view of the contents of the mailings, and as an arena for the practising of organizational politics, something I tend to enjoy as an end in themselves. I happened to mention, with the idea of knifing Daugherty a little, that he had totally disregarded the secrecy of the ballot, and had made a tabulation of who had voted and how. Al was overjoyed, made a few anti-Futurian remarks which of course fell on fertile soil, and asked me to get these results for him. So I did. I mention this episode, since it was the first stir-

ring of the abortive group later to be known as the O O D, Order of Dagon.

Due to the three-month's probationary period before persons joining the LASFS were permitted to vote, and the extremely small size of the club at this time, it was not long before the futility of all LASFS meetings was starkly underlined. The typical LASFS meeting in June and July 1944 was attended by from 8 to 12 people, of whom sometimes as many as four were eligible to vote. But traditionalist Ackerman, reigning as director for a three month term, never thought to try turning the club away from its habitual bumbling rut of business meetings, and some rare scenes arose from this. It made no difference if a person were eligible to vote; if he had something to say and sufficient aggressiveness to get up and say it he could hold the floor for hours. But when the time came to vote on whatever was at hand, only a very few could or would exercise a franchise. I'll give two examples which illustrate the two types of things that habitually happened to club business during this madcap summer. I might add that virtually everything that came up was disposed of in one of these two ways.

One night, in connection with a discussion on improving club finances, we discovered that the club was holding the sack for over \$50.00 worth of mimeographing supplies which had been used by different members who had subsequently left the club without paying their bills. I got the floor, suggested that the club drop its requirement of using club materials on the club mimeograph, allow any member to use any supplies he wished as long as he paid the club a commission on their value to pay for the use of the mimeograph, that all club supplies be locked in the closet, and that they be issued under a cash only arrangement on whatever nights Ackerman might choose to be there and act as stock clerk. I dilated on the advantages of this scheme until I began to run out of breath, pointed out that I was unable to vote, and consequently could not put this into the form of a motion, and would someone else please do so. There was a prolonged silence as the notorious apathy inherent in the LASFS rose to new heights, I sat down mildly disgusted, and after a long and embarrassed delay, director Ackerman carried the meeting on to something else. The payoff came about two weeks later when I discovered to my utter amazement that the club was operating under my scheme and had been doing so ever since I had mentioned it. "What the hell...?" I asked Ackerman. "Well, it was brought up in a club meeting," he said. "-----????-----", I replied with my chin hanging down on my chest. "Well, no one seemed to say anything about it," said Forry, "so I presumed it had been passed." Comment by me at this late date would be superfluous.

The other way business was disposed of was even worse. Not only was Morojo on the threshold of her permanent split-up with Ackerman, but she was in very poor health; came only to the early portion of the meeting long enough to collect any money she could and read her treasurer's report, and then left for the evening. Walter J. Daugherty, as ever (even when director) only came to about two meetings in five. Daniels and Rogers were both in arrears with their dues, and hence could not vote. This left the regular voting members limited to director Ackerman, Burbee, and Crozetti. Since the latter two did not like each other very well, they habitually voted on opposite sides of whatever came up, regardless of the topic's intrinsic merits. The height of this folly came up one sultry July night when 13 persons, including visiting San Franciscans Ebey and Watson, spent nearly two hours wrangling over some now forgotten topic, finally got it to a vote, and (yes!) Crozetti voted yes, Burbee voted no, and Ackerman, characteristically,

refused to cast the deciding vote, although it was his clear duty as chairman to do so. The net result, of course, was to waste the entire evening.

My wife, Jackie, had arrived in Los Angeles early in July, and spent most of that month on a full-time house-hunt. Giving up on rentals, she finally consented to our buying, and very shortly we had a house. During this month, she naturally saw a good deal of the LASFS, and this added another source of trouble for our already tottering marriage, since there were few of the local misfits whom she could tolerate. I'd been around them so long that I'd gotten used to them, scarcely realising myself how bad most of them were. Had her manner of attack been less dictatorial and less "You do my way or else ..." I undoubtedly would have quit fandom completely in late 1944; the things she said about the club and its members were only too true, but I could see no future in permitting myself to be led around by the nose.

The chief worthwhile Los Angeles activity in mid-1944 was the publication of Jack Speer's mammoth FANCYCLOPEDIA, a scholarly and entertaining encyclopedia which not only gave definitions and background for all terms and words with fannish connotations, but in passing gave a considerable glimpse into stefnistic history. Jack had spent over two years writing and revising and sending the manuscript around to various elder fans, had then stencilled it and turned it over to Phil Bronson to publish for him. Phil went all out for lotus-eating, but did turn publishing permission over to the Outsiders, who even went so far as to buy some of the paper for it just before the final disbanding and resumption of LASFS membership. In the meantime, Speer, understandably miffed over the protracted delay in publication, had gotten after the NFFF, under whose auspices Bronson was supposed to have been working, and Evans had re-assigned the job to Walter J. Daugherty, who amazingly allowed the LASFS to take it over. So we spent a full month mimeographing, using three machines: the club's old automatic ABDick, my old ACOLYTE machine, and Walter J. Daugherty's flossy new Niagara. The NFFF is given a lot of undeserved ego-boo by being shown as publisher; Forrest J. Ackerman published it, furnishing 95% of the incentive and well over half the actual work. He worked pretty much along the lines of an Outsider publishing sessions, and the finished results show that even the LASFS can do something worthwhile if a certain modicum of intelligent direction and channeling is given to the club's potential.

Walter J. Daugherty had an acute outbreak of projectomania in June and July 1944, starting new magazines and brochures by the dozen. Most never got beyond the talk stage, and all were so delayed in publication that their eventual publication was greeted only by amused surprise on the part of local fandom. The second edition of Daugherty's DIRECTORY OF FANDOM came out first; he compiled a vast array of names and addresses, stencilled them, and ran them off like a house afire. For over three months, the completed directory gathered dust and obsolescence around the club because Walter J. Daugherty could not figure out a cover that suited him. No wonder it was so out of date when he finally sent it out. Stray pages turned out at this time for various other short-lived projects appeared in FAN at various times during the next year and a half; some of the stuff, I believe, never did get published.

In her column in SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, Lora Crozetti very aptly took to describing the rooming house at 628 South Bixel as the "Bixel Fairy Palace". (From November 1943 until now (April 1947 this building has always had at least one, and sometimes as many as four,

members of the LASFS who were also actively overt homosexuals). Anyway, this was too much for some of the alate ones, who frantically rushed into print with a new name for their house of assignation: Tendril Towers. Burbee and I took great glee in making up new alliterative take-offs on this euphemism--most are now forgotten or unprintable--but I still remember Goosey-butt Grotto with a certain amount of relish. (Lest I seem to be casting slurs, perhaps I should point out that the Bixel Fairy Palace has always had heterosexual LASFS members living there too.)

As the summer of 1944 wore along, I received a letter from Mick McComas that went far to thrust me back into fandom. This note mentioned that the Random House GREAT TALES OF TERROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL had just topped the 30,000 mark in sales, that McComas and a friend had been commissioned to compile a companion volume of science-fiction, and could I help them any? This led to a big session with McComas and his co-editor, Ray Heally, as an upshot of which I agreed to do a vast amount of preliminary scouting and story recommending. The first thing I did was to monopolise a club meeting, asking the members to suggest suitable stories, look them up in the club library, and tell me where they could be found. I sat there typing like mad and ending up with two single-spaced pages of story recommendations. During the next year and a half, I must have had at least ten long sessions with McComas and Heally, some of which I will describe in their chronological place in these memoirs.

Jackie returned to the North in early August, to sweat out the eviction time granted the tenants of our new house; I sat tight in Fran Shack, trying to avoid spending money and as a result becoming more deeply involved in the club for a while, bringing out gobs of crud---ACOLYTE, FAN-DANGO, and independent writings. It saved money, since I was doing no collecting to speak of, but getting deeply enmeshed in the LASFS once more was a very bad thing for me otherwise, and I've often regretted it. But in addition to the immensely exciting collaboration with Heally and McComas, and the ever increasing flow of good material for THE ACOLYTE, Tony Boucher stunned me with the first of two highly enthusiastic reviews of THE ACOLYTE in his book column in the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE. This one squib brought ACOLYTE no less than 23 cash subscriptions, and the ego-boo involved was a bit more than my equilibrium could stand. I began to have visions of building ACOLYTE into a genuine semi-pro, and going on from there into professional editing--a harmless enough will-o-th-wisp to chase if one does not take it too seriously. I'm afraid I took it too seriously for a while though--never stopping to think that I was making more money on my job than I could hope to get as one of the lesser editors, and that I am temperamentally unsuited to tackle publishing except as a hobby. (I.e. why take the fun out of a hobby by making a job out of it?)

Early August saw a major political upheaval in the LASFS. It had once more become time for a new director to be elected. Morojo announced that she would positively refuse to be treasurer again (having served continuously since mid-1937), and a wave of consternation ran through the two or three voting members who took the club seriously as they realised that they had no one available to take over the job. Finally (and I've always thought it was at Morojo's suggestion) Ackerman and Daugherty came to me and asked if I were willing to be treasurer of the LASFS.

"Can't," I said. "I'm not eligible either to vote or to hold office, and won't be for another month."

"Well," said Daugherty, "we can waive that about holding of-
fice."

"You mean you are willing to waive the rest of my probation-
ary period?"

"Oh no," said Walt, "you won't be able to vote, but you
can have the job if you take it, and of course you can keep the job
after your probationary period is over."

"What the hell do you think
I am? If I can be trusted with the club's money I can be trusted with
the other privileges of membership. And furthermore, Brown and Kep-
ner came back into the club with me, and I'll consider no special con-
sideration that does not apply to them as well."

"We can't do that."

"Well, I don't want the job anyway. I told you when I came back in
the club that I was through with club politics. What's the matter;
can't you find some public spirited fan like Ackerman and Daugherty
who is willing to sacrifice the tiny amount of time the treasurer's
job requires?"

"No."

"If you need a treasurer bad enough to restore
all of us Outsiders to full membership now, I'm willing to take the
job just to do you and the club a favor."

The result of all this was
a forgone conclusion; while Walter J. Daugherty had a few minor fits,
the Governing Body gave the executive committee permission to waive
the three-months probationary period for Brown, Kepner, and myself---
this after only seven weeks of novitiate. And it is noteworthy that
this three-months probation was thereafter honored only in the breach
until I became director again and chose to apply it in one or two
instances as a political move. (The best way to kill a bad law is
to enforce it rigidly.)

So Morojo found herself elected director,
Alva Rogers was secretary, and I was treasurer. Something about the
idea of the arch-Outsider in control of the LASFS funds seven weeks
after his return to the club, and moreover by the request of Walter J.
Daugherty, has always struck me as being rather funny.

Morojo's
term of office was short, and anything but sweet. Walter J. Daugherty
had taken to collecting mimeographs--I think he had some idea of using
the clubroom as an office for a commercial mimeographing service--
anyway he very shortly owned two late-model, fully automatic Niag-
aras, a post card machine, some sort of broken down standard mimeo-
graph which I never saw out of its box, the Phil Bronson machine,
\$30.00 worth of stylii and lettering guides, and the cabinet from
an old table radio. (I never did figure out what that last was for.)

Anyway, in light of Daugherty's mimeographical resources, it was not
odd that the executive committee shortly got in the mood to buy one
of the Niagaras, particularly when the club machine broke down. We
voted to do so, against Myrtle's protest. She went ahead the next
day and had \$25.00 worth of work done to the old machine. We decid-
ed to sell it to Daugherty anyway, and turn it in on a reconditioned
Niagara, with automatic paper feed, inking, and slipsheet. Myrtle
chose to take this as a personal affront and resigned her gavel, af-
ter serving for only about a week. (I've always thought she was just
looking for an out anyway, since she very shortly made her final
break with Ackerman, quit being Morojo, and became, as now, Myrtle R.
Douglas, an extremely inactive member of the club.)

This resignation elevated Alva Rogers to the post of director, and he replaced himself as secretary by appointing Walter J. Daugherty. About the only piece of business transacted during Alva's term was to elect Myrtle an honorary member of the society. Otherwise the group bumbled along, held a few entertaining discussions, and that was about all.

Sometime during the latter part of the summer, Bob Hoffman came to town to spend a protracted furlough. Paul Freehafer had left his entire collection to Bob, with the proviso that Bob pass on any of it he did not personally want in any way he wished. Bob decided to give all this stuff to me; including a number of prozines, a fat bundle of fan photos, and a very fine collection of fanzines. The bulk of Paul's collection turned out to have been in Idaho; and I'll never forget the amazement with which we unpacked the gigantic boxes of stuff which his sister sent to us. Paul's collection was the nucleus of my collection of fanzines, and since 1944 I have kept constantly expanding it until it is, in my opinion, one of the four or five best such collections in captivity--containing as it does almost all major fanzines from 1930 through 1946 in complete files, and large quantities of the lesser items. It is the one portion of my fan/fantasy collection that I have not discarded or weeded out; so far as I know now, I will probably keep it always--partly because I enjoy browsing in old fanzines, partly because fanzines tend to bring back to me memories of the more pleasant part of my fanning, and not a little because the collection, started as it was, is in a sense a memorial to Paul Freehafer.

Considerably publicised by the club in 1944 was the acquisition, on a loan basis, of Donald Warren Bratton's fantasy file and bibliography. Don Bratton is a pleasant but quiet young chap in his early twenties, notable for rosy cheeks and a deep, if not vociferous, interest in the bibliographical side of fantasy. The file, contained in a large oak card case of some fifty or sixty drawers is an attempt at a complete cross-indexed file of all fantasy everywhere, is nowhere near complete, but even so contains thousands of cards, and has proven highly useful to many of us. The file, and its making and augmenting, is Don's chief interest in fandom.

Another character who came on the scene in 1944 and was for a time the club librarian was Leonard Golding Pruyn. He was a peculiar person, unknowable to the nth degree, and was of so hyper-refined a nature that the casual conversations of the more virile members shortly caused him to drift away.

Of a more sturdy nature among 1944's members was Captain Vern Glasser, USA--a glib and handsome New York lawyer who found himself on the coast for a few months, who had read stf for many years, and who heard of the club through Rae Sisco, a girl who happened to work for Reed's Litho Company (the concern which turns out most LASFS lithography. Vern was in his element when it came to bullfesting; he had the actual experience as well as the background of reading to back him up; and sessions with him were among the chief highlights of the latter part of the year. He faded out of the picture when the army transferred him elsewhere.

And in the early fall of 1944 I got a letter from Art Saha, announcing that he felt he had done his bit in the war after having served over a year in the US Maritime Service (after all, the guy was 4-F), had retired from the sea, and was undecided what to do next, except that his hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota no longer appealed. So I tossed him off a note telling him that he'd just as well come to LA for a while and get a

bellyfull of the LASFS. He did and he did. The Saha who arrived in October 1944 was a far cry from the gawking bumpkin I'd met in Frisco the year before; the rough edges were knocked off, and here was a poised and personable guy who very shortly was one of the more desirable members of the club.

The latter part of 1944 saw me get into a most deplorable feud with A. Langley Searles of New York City, publisher of the scholarly and erudite FANTASY COMMENTATOR. This was just one of those things. I had had a certain amount of desultory correspondence with Searles--wherein nearly every thing he said to me was couched in such words as to make me furious, and apparently my own remarks to him acted much the same. But nothing came of this definite antagonism between us until he got the idea my friends and I intended to steal his bibliography of fantastic books, which at the time was running spasmodically as a supplement to FFF. This misunderstanding arose when, arising out of a suggestion by Tony Boucher in the SHAGGY letter section, a shortlived "Great Bib" movement arose, in the course of which some of us volunteered to help Searles with his existing bibliography. Searles apparently felt that he was doing all right on his own hook, with a coincident wonder as to where all this proffered help was during the earlier stages of his research; he refused the offer in such way as to make me mad; some of us decided to put out a bibliography of our own and announced this intention in THE ACOLYTE; Searles threatened to sue for infringement; I blew up editorially in ACOLYTE; Searles demanded a withdrawal of the editorial under threat of suing me for libel; I found on second glance that I would not be able to prove some of my allegations (under California law the truth is a defense against libel); and eventually made a rather grudging apology. Sam Russell acted as peacemaker, and actually got a short-lived, friendly correspondence going between Searles and myself--but a plan for Searles and I to swap contributions for each other's magazines fell through when Searles failed to write an article for THE ACOLYTE (I did two for Searles, both of which he published.)

The fuss with Searles was considerably augmented by the stand he took in FAPA over the inclusion of certain matter which he considered to be obscene--Langley having stated point-blank that he was tired of the wrangling of the members over this matter, and the next time he saw something he did not like he was going to turn it over to the post office department. While I usually admire direct action, on the other hand I have always been one to over-react towards anything which smacks of a restriction on personal liberties. And by the time the LASFS FAPA members had gotten done kicking Searles' threat around, nearly all were ready to boil him in oil--Forrest J. Ackerman going so far as to write a really nasty personal attack, in which he referred to Searles as a "white Jap"; the FAPA publication of which led to a permanent rift between Searles and Ackerman.

1944 had seen the 75% triumph of a Futurian slate of officers, riding high in an attempt to regain their former prestige in fandom (or for some reason I don't know)--anyway, Futurian Doc Lowndes was elected president, and Futurian yes-men Suddsy Schwartz and Larry Shaw were elected secretary-treasurer and official editor respectively. The old Futurian leader, Donald A. Wollheim, was nosed out of the vice-presidency by Al Ashley--a circumstance which shortly led to trouble in FAPA. The first act of the Futurians was to jam through, without warning, an election of constitutional amendments--some of which made sense, and some of which seemed to cover or be capable of covering something else. I didn't like the suddenness of the election, which

effectively prevented discussion, nor did I have any reason to love the Futurians personally; so I drew up a petition of protest, got it signed by nearly all local Faps, and mailed it to the membership. The petition discussed each proposed amendment in detail, usually disfavorably, chided the Futurian administration for its railroadish tactics, and urged the members to reject all amendments. (All amendments were passed except for one which proposed to prohibit discussion of racial prejudice.)

But though the petition did not appreciably affect the election, it led directly to two results of major importance as they affected my subsequent fan career.

Jimmy Kepner was one of the signers, and almost immediately he was subjected to a strong barrage of letters from Wollheim and perhaps others, urging him to change his mind. He actually wanted to put out another local letter to fandom, or rather FAPA, withdrawing his signature from the petition and urging the adoption of the amendments. I talked him out of this, but it was not long before the Tendril Towers bunch had swung en masse to the Futurian camp, a move which considerably complicated the political situation both in the LASFS and in FAPA.

Of more importance, it led directly into a political hookup between myself and Al Ashley--who by then was up to his ears in waging internecine warfare with the Futurians, a warfare which for the most part was unpublic, but which bore fruit in such leaflets as THESE AMAZING AMENDMENTS and THE PRECIPITANT.

I'd already interested myself in FAPA politics. At the time I arrived in Los Angeles, Clod Degler was still a member of FAPA, and it seemed to several of us that it would be highly expedient to expel him. Our first attempt came out as a signed petition dated in December 1943, urging the officers of FAPA to take some action. Al Ashley, in his typical let-somebody-else-do-the-dirty-work fashion, fluffed this off; mentioning, however, a constitutional expedient which might be used for the expulsion. Bronson and I promptly took this up, filed the necessary piece of legislation, and were gratified to see it passed in the 1944 Fapa election, although by a very narrow margin.

I was, however, highly disgusted with the shilly-shallying attitude manifested by so many members of FAPA, and by the actual antagonism which this ouster aroused in certain quarters. Discussing the matter with Bill Watson, we gradually got the idea of forming a FAPA political party (which never received a name more dignified than "potty"); aiming it directly at the conservatives in FAPA. Watson was to file for Official Editor, and I for secretary-treasurer. We got Bob Tucker talked into running for vice-president, and asked D. B. Thompson to file for president; however, Don shied off fast, explaining that he wanted no part of organizational politics. As second choice, we approached Norm Stanley, and he accepted the bid, though later he withdrew.

We had a number of ideas we wished to try out. At that time, FAPA was stifled by non-productive members, yet boasted an imposing waiting list--we wanted to tighten up membership requirements both quantitatively and qualitatively so as to get rid of the dead wood and get the new prospects admitted to membership before they got tired of waiting and lost interest altogether. Most of our proposed legislation centered around this one aim, though we did have other proposals which I have by now forgotten.

The political rapprochement with Al Ashley led to complications, since by the time it happened Watson had

definitely aligned himself with the Futurians and Al had reached the point of almost open feuding with them. But in October 1944, the point at which this chapter is supposed to break off, the potty consisted on candidates Stanley, Tucker, Laney and Watson--with loyal supporters Thompson and Ashley.

In connection with my attacks on Degler, I got into a rather amusing fracas with Raymond Washington, the one reputable fan who continued to support Degler after all the rest of established fandom had turned against him. Being right on the spot and knowing what Degler was, I felt rather strongly about Washington's misguided loyalty in sticking to Degler, and demanded in one of my anti-Degler petitions to FAPA that Raym be directed either to sever connections with Degler or resign from FAPA. This did not sit well with most fans; including many of Degler's strongest opponents, nor did it sit well with Washington. But Raymond wouldn't fight back, and it rather annoyed me that my blood-and-guts facet had grown so anemic that I couldn't get a rise out of someone with it. (!!!) So I proceeded to snipe at Raymond every time I got the chance, trying the rather Hearstian tactic of discrediting him by coupling him in the public mind with something distasteful. Since Raymond was a year or so younger than the general run of fandom, I commenced referring to him as "Young Washington", dismissing everything he said as being too puerile to be worthy of attention. (It wasn't of course, but it made an amusing line to take, particularly as I imagined at the time with a certain amount of justification that this psychology was working with quite a few fans.) So this sort of thing went on for months, in FAPA, in FAPA, and in my correspondence. And never a peep from RW.

Then, like a veritable bombshell, Raymond Washington blew up in my face, sending an open letter about me to the LASFS. Oh it was a honey--took me around and around--and incidentally was the most effective piece of attack work I saw in half a decade of fanning and feuding. The other members of the club had already read it when I arrived and were sitting around in pleased anticipation waiting for me to explode. I read it, was disappointed to find Raymond going all out for a form of idealistic unreality that I have always deplored as being impractical, and sorry to see that he had a number of totally erroneous ideas about me (as for example that I bore him malice, when all I was doing was having fun sniping); but at the same time was delighted to get a rise out of him. The LASFS was audibly disappointed as I sat down and wrote Raymond a long conciliatory letter which eventually led to a protracted correspondence that I at least found highly pleasurable.

But my big time in fandom was about over. My family was to arrive around November 1, and we were to move out away from the club neighborhood to the house at 1005 West 35th Place. Fran Shack was about to fold up and vanish; I offered it to the LASFS for the same \$30.00 a month I was paying, it being about three times as big as the clubroom, and fitted up with a toilet and cooking facilities to boot--but it was too far away for the timid provincials of Bixel Street who after all, being emissaries of the future and supermen one and all could hardly be expected to wander seven blocks out of their habitual orbit--even to get a nice new clubroom.

My plans had not contemplated making my family live in the store, but a delay in getting the tenants out of the house dumped us all right there. It was a horrible place for the kids--no yard, no nothing--and as a result Jackie and I took them away as much as we could. It seemed natural to gravitate toward the LASFS, and the children made such a hit with local fandom that it

proved a hard habit to break. I had rather expected the LASFS to object to Sandy and Quiggie, but instead the whole membership fussed over the little girls something scandalous. Sandy, who was then 4 $\frac{1}{2}$, very shortly found herself cranking the mimeograph from time to time, running errands for the members, going out to play miniature golf with them, and in general fitting in like she was one of them. Quiggie had her choice of a half-dozen lads to sit in, people to carry her piggy-back. And both of them had a big time looking at the pictures in the club's magazines, drawing and doodling on the crud sheets lying around, going out to dinner with local fandom, or what have you. I did not regard the relationship as particularly wholesome for the children, but for the two weeks it didn't hurt them, and it was amazing to see how reputed child-haters like Forry allowed Sandy and Quiggie to lead them around by the nose.

I was still treasurer of the LASFS; I intended to serve out my term and then cease activity in the LASFS--dropping in maybe once a month--and confining my fan activity to a decreasing output of ACOLYTE and FAN-DANGO--with an eventual cessation of activity altogether--probably by the end of 1945.

We moved out of Fran Shack in early November of 1944, and off I went, not without a nostalgic letter to Tucker about the end of an era as it were, to what I thought would be the beginning of the end.

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CHAPTER IX

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Ebb-Tide

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The first two or three weeks after I'd moved into my new house were almost totally lacking in fan activity, as I worked away getting moved in, continued getting re-acquainted with my children, and what not. About all I did was to write two or three letters to Ashley and Tucker concerning the FAPA political situation, though I did have THE ACOLYTE in the back of my mind, and intended to get to work shortly on another issue. My interest in fandom, however, was definitely waning.

It was given a powerful fillip one day in the latter part of November 1944 when I returned from work to find waiting for me an envelope bearing the return address of the Hotel Stillwell, a local hostelry. Opening it, I was stunned to find a note from A. E. van Vogt, announcing that he had just concluded a permanent move from Toronto to Los Angeles, that he was very anxious to meet me, and would I please get in touch with him. I was knocked over. Back in 1942 I'd gotten van's address from Johnny Mason, and had sent him an ACOLYTE. He'd written a nice, and publishable, letter of comment, and I'd continued to send him ACOLYTE without ever hearing from him again. But I had a very high opinion of the man, both from his published stories and from the glowing accounts Mason had given me of him, and it was with high excitement that I drove downtown to meet him at his hotel.

Alfred E. van Vogt turned out to be tall and skinny--with the same grasshopperish build as Bob Tucker (or myself for that matter)--has a rather high forehead, straight dark hair, and is bubbling over with a vivacity which is sometimes hidden by a superficial shyness. At the time I met him, he wore a rather old-fashioned pair of pinc-nez with a ribbon dangling over one ear as an anchor, but the salubrity of the local climate soon caused him to toss these artificialities to one side. I believe we were both rather ill at ease during much of this first meeting--I know I was. But there were so many things to talk about--the world is van's oyster, and he can talk about most phases of it, particularly the more obscure ones, endlessly and fascinatingly. I found myself liking him enormously, and subsequent meetings with him have only strengthened this feeling.

When I told the people at the LASFS that I had just had an evening's session with A. E. van Vogt they thought I was pulling a hoax. But he has been around the club so much since that he is almost taken for granted: he's certainly spent more time around the place than any other pro author. (Why, god only knows!)

Another extremely worthwhile person came on the scene for the first time in the tail end of 1944: Niesson Himmel. I never did know just how he got hooked up with the club, but he is quite a fait accompli nevertheless. A police reporter for several years, he has worked for the LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS, THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, and is at present a Hearst hatchetman with the LOS ANGELES EVENING HERALD. Here is a lad who spins the prettiest line of bull I ever encountered, who had been mixed up in practically every big murder or juicy sex case that has hit LA for the past four or five years. Talking to Himmel is more fun than reading Raymond Chandler. In appearance, Niesson is the typical college half-back, though his chief athletic sport, aside from torea-

dor work, is bending the elbow. His interest in stfantasy is almost nil, but he evidently enjoys associating with many of the fans, judging from the amount of it he does. An ornament to the LASFS, even if no one outside of LA ever did hear of him.

Having gotten pretty much settled in our house, we decided to throw a housewarming party on the last weekend of November. I was humiliated to discover, with rather of a start, that I had been sticking so close around the LASFS since early summer that I'd practically gotten out of touch with any non-fan acquaintances. But the brawl (and it was that, believe me!) did have about every LASFS member, plus a couple of girls from work and some others. Even Walter J. Daugherty attended--he and I got along fine, but his girl friend Tillie got into a ruckus with Jackie which nearly led to blows.

Two things made the party notable. In the first place, it was the debut of A. E. van Vogt and his wife (E. Mayne Hull). I had misgivings as to how well respectable people like them would fit in with such a commotion, but as it turned out they seemed to enjoy themselves. I particularly remember van backed into a corner of the dining room, hemmed into this culdesac by half a dozen yapping fans.

The second thing--Forrest J Ackerman had decided to prove to himself that he was right in frowning on the use of alcoholic beverages, and showed up with a pint. I had intended to mix his drinks personally, to make sure that he did not get too stiff--having some vague idea that if he were properly guided-guarded he might find the release of a moderate amount of alcohol sufficiently desirable to wish to try it again. However, someone (Rae Sischo, I believe) started mixing doubles and gave one to the Ack. He sat there looking like the wrath of God, and waiting for something horrible to happen. It commenced to hit him a little, the old frozen repression started to slough off, and first thing you knew, the boy was having a good time. Then, all of a sudden, he realised that he felt the liquor, and collapsed moaning in a heap, spending the remainder of the evening stretched out on the bed. Most of us felt at the time that the deal was pretty much put on, but of course we may have been mistaken. At any event, he proved to himself that liquor and Acks didn't mix--which was about all he had in mind.

I left my own party quite early to accomplish the dual purpose of taking van and Mayne back to their hotel, and giving some fresh air to the excessively intoxicated Burbee and Saha. We got involved in a couple of bars, from the restroom of one of which we had a hell of a time dragging the regurgitating Burbee, who quietly passed out in the car. Saha got in the back seat by himself, and I started buzzing out towards the house. Art made some pleased remark to the effect that he had at last gotten himself a room in Tendril Towers, goshwowboyoboy, and was shortly to move in. Little realising how much he'd take it to heart, I remarked casually that of course he knew that all the fans in TT were fruits, and that of course he'd have to pass a novitiate of promiscuity with all of them before being allowed to settle on any one or two of the boys, that they made all the new tenants kick through to them in all sorts of fascinating ways.... (So far as I know, that was just a gag--the place has had some heterosexual inmates!) But Saha really hit the ceiling; by God they weren't going to do that to him he'd show them by God just let one of those fruits try anything...and so on. So I told him what one of the Tendril Towers fruits had actually said about Saha's moist, ruby-red lips--and Art went postively berserk, getting into such a screaming frenzy that I overshot 35th Place and was clear down past Exposition before I realised it. I cannot recall ever having

kidded anyone with such spectacular success.

In the LASFS itself, a political farce was enacted in mid-November, when director Alva Rogers finally realised that he had not only served out the balance of Myrtle term, but had gone six weeks into the next three months term without calling an election. I immediately proposed that he be nominated and elected by acclaim--having been a very good director--but he demurred and nominated Walter J. Daugherty. I nominated Alva anyway, but was astounded when Mel Brown leaned over to me and told me that by god I had to run for director or he and Kepner would quit the club. Having no wish to be left alone in the LASFS with my ACOLYTE publishing at the mercy of Walter J. Daugherty, and figuring that I had about as much chance of being elected as Joe Stalin has of becoming president of the NAM, I said "Sure, go ahead." So Mel nominated me.

Well, I had fully intended to drop LASFS activity for the most part as soon as I was finished with my term as treasurer, but, I thought, if it would keep Mel and Jimmy in line, I'd be willing enough to be a forlorn hope, particularly since there was no chance of getting this headache wished off on me anyway. Bland optimist!

When the ballots were passed around, I got to thinking that it would be cruel to have just one vote for Laney (figuring that Kepner would vote for Rogers) so I voted for myself so as to have two votes to bring up the rear of the election returns with. (Never end a sentence with with.)

The final results: Laney 3, Rogers 2, Daugherty 2. So single-handed and without the aid of Walter J. Daugherty I elected myself to be director. And was I stunned at this outcome! I had no prospective officers in mind, no program, no nothing. On the spur of the moment, I appointed Saha secretary and Kepner treasurer, and told the people that I'd try to have some sort of program outlined in the next week or so, that I had not expected or intended to be elected, but that I was too weak to go against this great and overpowering popular mandate.

So December 1 found me director for four months (the balance of the split term plus the first three-months term of 1945). Oddly enough, if I'd not resigned during the feud, I would have been director anyway, since my election in 1943 under the old constitution was for a full year. Ain't fan politics silly?

The next event of the winter was one from which local fandom has never quite recovered, the advent of Elmer Benton Perdue, formerly of Washington, Wyoming, and other places, and an active stefnist from the time of the Chicon on. He had announced in FAPA that he had been declared insane, that he was coming somewhere for psychiatric treatments, and that he had a prescription for benzedrine sulfate to tide him over until he could be placed under psychiatric care. I for one was anxious to meet him, since he was about the only other fan who shared my interest in jazz, and when I received a card from him announcing that he was coming to LA, I was quite agog at the prospect of meeting this character.

As it turned out, he arrived one evening when a group of us were partaking of the hospitality of the Burbees: Jackie and the kids, Le, Saha, Kepner, and perhaps others. A phone call came from Myrtle that Elmer had arrived, and shortly he broke in upon us in all his weird grandeur. He was higher than a kite on benmy, had driven non-stop from Wyoming alone, and was apparently at the point of physical collapse. As his footsteps were heard on the stairs, Le quickly put a recording of Elmer's own piano playing on the phonograph. "Jesus, what stink-finger piano," blurted

Elmer as he staggered through the door, not realizing that it was his own pianistics he was hearing.

I suppose a vignette is in order, but I hate to tackle it. Elmer Perdue is such a character that it would be easy to fill a dozen pages with fantastically unbelievable descriptions and anecdotes. And too it may not be strictly accurate, for Elmer has, superficially at least, changed a lot since he commenced courting Betty Browder, who is now Mrs. Perdue. But I knew him best in 1945 and 1946, when he was a very regular visitor at my house, and when we spent dozens and dozens of hours together playing records and talking of this and that, mostly of jazz.

Physically he is pretty much of a chunk, rather tall and heavy set, and pretty generally husky. He has a swarthy, seamed complexion--looks a couple of decades older than his 25 or 26 years--wears his lanky dark hair about four inches longer than it needs to be, and usually in those days his clothes not only looked as though they had been slept in, they had.

He is a long way from being insane as he almost proudly claimed himself to be, though he does have quite a few quirks of one sort and another. However, he is one of the most exhibitionistic persons I ever encountered, and takes such a keen delight in acting batty that it is highly difficult to tell just what is put on and what isn't. Leaving some of the more dubious antics out of the picture and trying to consider Elmer objectively, there are one or two things that stand out. For one thing, his drinking during much of 1945 and 1946 was definitely bordering at least on the psychopathic, and caused both him and his friends a lot of trouble. It irritated me to such an extent that I was forced to tell him, in mid-1945, to stay away from me unless he was sober. He had used my house as a passing out ground just once too often, and I enjoyed his company too much to be willing to put up with him when he was so sodden as to be unable to focus. Because Elmer is definitely a brilliant chap, possessed of depth and background and a keen analytical ability which combine to make him a most stimulating companion. He could hardly be said to suffer from delusions of grandeur, yet when he gets on what Burbee and I call his Homo Superior facet he is not easy to tolerate. (But he can be backed off this groove quite easily if you know how to do it.) Let us say that he has an exceptionally high opinion of himself and let it go at that. And I have more than once wished that he could be more at ease with casual feminine acquaintances, quit calling them "ma'am" at every other breath, and talk more as he does with a bunch of the fellows, when his conversation is usually worth listening to--whether you are looking for wit and humor or serious discussion. When Elmer gets really amused about something, he tends to lapse dangerously near hysteria--in fact I myself have seen him refuse to finish reading something of Burbee's until he gets under control.

Well maybe I'm making my boy sound unprepossessing. And in lots of ways he definitely is. On the other hand, Elmer is one of the three or four fans with whom I always would like to be on good terms, regardless of my own activity in the field. He has more wrong with him than a lot of us, yet on the other hand he has enough good points to make him come out on the credit side despite his faults--and that is something I can honestly say about very few of the other LASFS adherents.

By December 1944, the Battle Creek-Bloomington-Los Angeles axis had its plans for the anschluss of FAPA well in hand. Our front was a nebulous group which we intended to call the Freedom Party. This group was to include all

FAPA members sympathetic to our overall program, which included strengthened activity requirements both qualitatively and quantitatively, FAPA sponsorship of important joint publishing projects such as a fanzine anthologies, and other things of constructive worth. Politically, we stood in direct opposition to the Futurians and others who might at any time wish to use FAPA as an arena for playing power politics, or who might perform official duties inefficiently.

Backing up the Freedom Party, was a secret and self-perpetuating group known as the Order of Dagon. Founders consisted of Al Ashley, Bob Tucker, and myself. This group proposed to implement the Freedom Party by the use of block voting in all FAPA elections, and through the intelligent wielding of a block of 10 or 12 votes control every FAPA election. All Freedom Party candidates for office were also to come from Dagon members, who were bound not only to vote en masse in FAPA but also in their own party caucuses. Since Dagon was to remain entirely secret, the effect publicly would be of free elections, but in actuality we intended to take FAPA over and run it progressively and dynamically, and thus prevent it from falling into interregnums, spasms of delayed mailings, and other disruptive contretemps. Ashley, Tucker, and myself each had an A list of prospective Dagon members, those whom we felt were definitely ripe for Dagonhood--as well as a B list of questionables and a C list of doubtfuls and impossibles. The combined A list of Ashley and Tucker consisted of: Walt Liebscher, Jack Wiedenbeck, Ollie Saari, Paul Spencer, Milt Rothman, and Les Crutch. (This list is taken from a letter from Bob Tucker to Ashley and Lancy dated February 14, 1945.) I don't know which of these were actually approached, but I know that some of them are, and that some of them accepted.

My own list consisted of Forrest J Ackerman, Elmer Perdue, Mike Fern, and Les Crutch--all of whom I approached, and all of whom joined the Order of Dagon. In the election of 1945, Ackerman and Perdue both voted according to Dagon orders, giving Bob Tucker the vice-presidency over Harry Warner who otherwise would have had it--since these two comprised Tucker's margin of victory, and their vote was gotten through Dagon--Ackerman in fact changing his vote when reminded of Dagon. (How do you idealists like that one?) (And I'm sorry, Harry--but the vice-president, with his power of making constitutional interpretations, is in many ways FAPA's most important officer--he had to be a Dagonite, particularly since you are known to be too idealistic to play the kind of politics we were, regardless of how justifiable the ends in view.)

Willie Watson having definitely allied himself with the Futurians, we threw him off the ticket, telling him why; since Ashley was ineligible to run again for editor, I changed to that job and slated Al as secretary-treasurer. The rest of the slate still consisted of Norm Stanley for president and Bob Tucker for Vice-president. Stanley knew nothing of Dagon, but was acceptable to us both for his fine reputation in FAPA and because he seemed sympathetic with our program as we'd outlined it to him.

Right around New Year's, Stanley wrote me a letter in which he mentioned that he'd just discovered Russell Chauvenet intended to run for president, and that he'd not run against him and consequently was backing out. (As it later fell out, Chauvenet quit fandom before the election, and Stanley not only ran but was elected.) But right at that time I was finding myself very much cramped for spare time, was trying to cut down on fan activity, and when I thought of how much time Dagon had already taken I boiled over and withdrew from the slate myself--retaining however an active interest in Dagon

itself.

It was not difficult to get disgusted with FAPA anyway. In the first place, the Futurian administration was rapidly getting the group into a jam from which it has never entirely recovered. Suddsy Schwatz, the secy-treas, was to say the least being careless with the FAPA funds, and messing up his office in other ways as well. And the Futurians had also put out an illegal surprise mailing (between mailing dates) which had annoyed several of the members for various reasons. I was especially irked, because this mailing included an incomplete FAN-DANGO. (I was at the time taking a music poll of FAPA, and due to my move had been unable to prepare the post card ballots at the time I sent in FAN-DANGO itself to get rid of it. As a result of the premature mailing, I was forced to prepare a supplementary FAN-DANGO to explain the card. While I was at it I asked the Futurians point blank why they seemed to be inimical to the LASFS, but was never given any reply except for some nebulous remarks by Doc Lowndes which actually said little or nothing.)

In the second place, I was getting some pretty rough treatment in the mailing comments. My "drunken" FAN-DANGO of a year previous had said bluntly, too bluntly perhaps, that fans were pretty much impossible, poorly adjusted, and that what most fans needed more than anything else was a normal sex life. (Now, three years and more later, I still feel the same way about it, though I do deplore the faults of the FAN-DANGO in question: a certain crudity of diction, and a failure to substantiate my charges due to my imagining that everyone was aware of the underlying facts about fans and fandom.) In any case, for one reason and another, FAPA didn't like it. In some instances, I imagine I hit too close to unpleasant truths certain of the members were trying to avoid noticing about themselves. And so I came in for a good hauling over the coals. Moreover, since I am constitutionally unable to let someone else get in the last word, I was having a hard time getting the acrimonius little wrangle choked off.

So I decided to give FAPA a rest, missing two mailings.

My available spare time was further curtailed by my rather abortive enrolling in a LaSalle course in higher accountancy. I had done office work before the war, and feared that I'd have to return to this sort of misery after the war, and wanted to get enough training so as to be able to approach the kind of money that a man can make working in a shop. So, grumbling half-hearted protests at the cruelty of life, I commenced working toward a CPA degree. (I dropped the course in late 1945, after having discovered that I had reasonably good chances of staying on in shop work as long as I wanted to.)

In between times of working on that accursed correspondence course and doing odd bits of carpentry around the house, I put out a rather half-hearted ACOLYTE (#9) but it meant very little to me--I was just putting it out because it was cheaper to continue than to stop and have to refund \$50.00 or so of outstanding subscriptions all in one chunk.

But fandom was shoved down my throat to a fare-you-well when, in late January 1945, Jackie decided to take a job for a while in order to build us up a small nest egg for after the war. She went to work as a cocktail waitress in a nearby nightclub, and very shortly was dragging down more money in tips than I could bring home working for a living. The job was supposed to be temporary, but she kept on at it until our bustup--the contacts and what not she was making proving too pleasant to her for her to terminate. Well anyway, feeling that I should try to help all

in the building up of the nest egg, so I commenced staying home every evening taking care of Sandy and Quiggie so as to avoid paying off for child care at a buck an hour. Through lack of anything else to do, I commenced working more and more with fandom--at first putting a great deal of time on the ACOLYTE, and then, as that palled more and more, occupying myself with political shenanigans of one sort and another. (Well, after all I could scarcely play records all evening every night.)

Not without misgivings I commenced taking Sandy and Quiggie to the club meetings--they seemed to have a good time and not to bother the members too much so this became a regular practise. The two little girls missed only three or four meetings of the LASFS during the first eight months of 1945--in fact I remember one meeting which consisted of Sandy, Quiggie, Ackerman, and myself. The club meetings on Thursday nights gradually became my only outing except for going to work--other nights I sat tight at home, usually alone, playing with the kids until it was their bedtime, and then banging out crifanac with increasing disgust. As Jackie and I commenced overtly breaking up, I saw less and less of her--even on her nights off--often going for 3 and 4 days at a stretch without even seeing her to speak to her. But this is not a chronicle of an unsuccessful marriage.

The necessity of taking care of the children made it almost impossible for me to do any mimeographing at the club, so it occurred to me that perhaps I could arrange to take the club machine out to the house on certain specified occasions. (I no longer had a mimeograph of my own, having given my old machine to the LASFS to be used as a partial payment on the new club machine.)

So one evening I sprang a proposition of the members, pointing out to them the obvious impossibility of my taking care of S&Q at the club if I were going to mimeograph, indicating that the machine was out of use most of the time anyway, and requesting permission to borrow it for one week every three months. I asked that no discussion be held on this proposal, but that it be considered by them during the ensuing week, so that they could talk about it in my absence, and that I would bring it up for a vote the following week--going on to point out what a poor precedent it was to set, that as director I really was opposed to it, but that I saw no other possibility of continuing ACOLYTE. Actually, I was half hoping they'd refuse permission--because that would choke off ACOLYTE once and for all, and I was getting increasingly sick of the magazine.

But the LASFS graciously granted permission, and I found myself with full permission to take the machine as requested, provided that I fitted in my schedule with those of other members who might need to use it about the same time I would. This arrangement led to a well-nigh chronic war with Walter J. Daugherty, who seemed to take the granting of this permission as a personal insult.

Until E. Everett Evans arrived on the local scene in the late summer of 1945 and calmed Walter down a little, Daugherty and I indulged in open war--with most of the incidents revolving around the mimeograph. This all came to a head in the late summer, when the machine broke a spring the day I was to take it and Daugherty bought one out of his own pocket. He announced that he was retaining title to this spring, that any LASFS member might borrow it from him but me, that my week to have the mimeograph would soon be passed, and that after that time I'd have to wait three months before I could ask to borrow the machine again. I arrived on the scene late Saturday afternoon, after all mimeograph supply shops were closed, to

borrow the machine under my agreement only to run into this situation. When I got to the club, Ackerman was finishing up an issue of VOM, the machine was purring along nicely, and of course I had no inkling of anything untoward. I told the Ack not to hurry, that I didn't mind waiting on him, and commenced chatting with the various people who happened to be in the clubroom. Ackerman looked ill at ease, finally told me he had something private to tell me, and took me out of the room. When he told me about the spring and the rest of the sordid story I really hit the ceiling, raving about it for nearly an hour. Everett Evans, who had just arrived in town left looking perturbed. I later learned that he tried to buy the spring off Daugherty, and that Daugherty refused to sell it to him because he was afraid Everett might let me use the mimeograph. Everett then went down town, and of course found all the known mimeograph shops closed for the day, but did locate a spring of sorts which he bought and brought home only to find that it could not be made to fit. Everett then got after Daugherty again, who finally agreed to donate the spring to the LASFS if a panel of members (whom Daugherty named at the time) agreed that he was in the wrong. They did so unanimously, the spring and the mimeograph were on the way to the weird Willys within ten minutes, and the largest battle of the Great Mimeograph War between Daugherty and myself was over.

The first half of 1945 saw the LASFS faltering into what appeared to be an almost certain demise. Not only were the members apathetic as always, and bitterly at odds with one another over this and that, but the total number had shrunk to a mere ten or twelve, three of whom worked nights in the same war plant (Burbee, Perdue, Kepner). When this situation was topped by an increase in the club's rental from \$20.00 per month to \$30.00, the group found itself within a hairs breadth of vanishing.

It may well be imagined then, that my terms as director (there were four of them in 1945) gave little opportunity of presenting a dynamic program of accomplishment, but were mostly spent in a bitter last ditch struggle to scrape up the next month's rent and to try to keep the staggering society together. Being director was especially frustrating, not only because the members were more willing to grumble about the club's ebbing fortunes than to get in and do anything about it, but due to the horrible vicious circle which brought to naught every thing that was done. What the club needed, of course, was members-- and in one way and another a number of likely prospects passed fleetingly through the local picture. Having more members would of course both made the club more nearly solvent and improved the interest level of the meetings, most of which were shot through with ennui and boredom or else frittered away in an acid battle between a couple of angry neurotics. But in order to hold new members it was necessary to pep up the meetings, something that proved impossible to do in the face of the LASFS' notorious apathy, a pose of boredom with it all which makes the liveliest efforts at introducing something worthwhile fall flat.

Several newcomers came on the scene during the first half of 1945, and some of these stayed around long enough to rate vignettes.

The most active was Gerald Hewett, a bright-eyed thirteen-year-old to end all bright-eyed-thirteen-year-olds. Gerald was short, slender, noisy, and excitable--and his fourteen years of life had not given him either the poise or the background to make a success of associating with so many people who were so much older. When he first hove on the scene, he was smitten by the most violent case of hero worship I have ever seen, the worshipper being Ackerman, who was excessively embarrassed

at the rapt way in which Gerry would spend evening after evening watching he's every movement almost with awe, and the breathless manner in which the kid hung on his most casual words. I imagine Forry suspected he was being kidded. As Gerry got better acquainted with the club, he passed through a short period of being a useful member (during which time he was pro-tem editor of SHAGGY) but shortly turned hoodlum. After several months of making himself increasingly disliked by the club, Hewett finally resigned and moved on towards greener pastures. He was very fortunate to get out of the club when he did, as he thus avoided the pitfalls of being a fan, and has now a reasonably good chance of living a normal adolescence and growing up into an integrated man.

Portly, jolly Bob Bradford--an ex-Marine of about 35--came on the scene about February 1945, never became especially active in the club but still drops around from time to time. He's just an ordinary civilised man, with no interest in fandom, but with a yen for reading stf and getting into bull fests. He's a good man to go on a beerbust with, and a good man to talk with. Everybody likes Bob, and for some inexplicable reason he seems to like almost all of the club members.

In one day of February 1945, I got subscriptions from two hitherto unknown localites who had read of THE ACOLYTE in STARTLING. I wrote come-ons to both of them and both joined the LASFS. Lloyd Casebeer, a pleasant, intelligent chap in his late forties came around for several meetings, but soon got fed up with the hurly-burly of inane futtily characteriseing the club. That he retained an interest in fantasy is shown by the fact that he renewed his ACOLYTE subscription nearly a year after any of us last saw him personally.

Pete Grainger was my other recruit, and he is still an occasional dropper-inner, though his chief pleasures are intellectual discussions with Ashley, Burbee, van Vogt, Wiedenbeck, and others of our local braintrust, and the playing of a wicked game of chess. Pete is tall, dark, and slender; looks a good deal like Bob Tucker; and in fact might be described as a Tucker with brains. ((Hiya, Boob?)) He is very quiet and reserved on first acquaintance, but among those he feels are his friends is noted for a scintillating wit and vivacious conversation.

A handful of other new faces showed up during the first half of '45, but none of the rest stuck around long enough to rate a mention. After all, you don't have to eat a whole egg to tell if it is rotten, and one or two meetings of the LASFS are enough for most people.

Despite the struggle to maintain bare existence, my administration attempted a certain amount of permanently constructive business.

The first bit of accomplishment was the engineering of a deal with Elmer Perdue, under which the LASFS took over the custody of his printing press and type. Both were too badly battered to be of maximum utilization, but nevertheless made an excellent nucleus for what could have been rather cheaply developed into a first class amateur printing plant. The whole idea gradually fell into disrepute and the press and its appurtenances were finally moved out to Art Joquel's--due mostly to the lack of interest with which LASFS members collectively seem to greet anything which confronts them.

Discovering that the publicity director of the National Amateur Press Association was an Angeleno, two or three of us got the idea of working with the NAPA to form a local amateur press club, which could share expenses on our clubroom

in exchange for the use of it and its equipment. No merger with NAPA was contemplated, but rather the formation of a sister organization, which might have the use of the clubroom a maximum of one evening a week for meetings, and the members of which might use the clubroom on non-meeting nights on the same basis as members of the LASFS.

Though it had somewhat fallen into obsolescence under the Daugherty and succeeding administrations, the rent payers committee as originally set up by Yerke to be used in keeping Deglers out of the clubroom as much as possible still existed. We revamped the setup, wording the rent payers' document (a constitution of sorts) so that members of as many clubs as the rent payers wished to include might join the committee, regardless of affiliation with the LASFS. None of us were astute enough politically to see what this did both to the LASFS and the infamous governing body--in effect it turned the clubroom and all its contents over to the jurisdiction of the rent payers committee at all times except when the LASFS was actually in session on Thursday nights. The LASFS, in other words, became a mere appurtenance of the rent payers committee, existing in the clubroom only on sufferance--and except on Thursday nights the LASFS, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist and was supplanted by this committee. Sounds metaphysical, but in actuality it was an overthrow of the Daugherty faction in the club, since the governing body no longer had control of anything except for a brief time once a week, and anyone could join the rentpayers without being a member of the club itself. It left Daugherty holding an egg-shell from which all the contents had been removed.

In early 1945, one of NAPA's top men, Burton Crane of New Jersey, was in and around LA for a couple of weeks in connection with his preliminary training for the OSS. Crane had published, in early 1943, a brief castigation of FAPA and fandom in one of his NAPA publications, and in my earnest way I had written him a letter taking issue with several of his allegations, sent him an ACOLYTE, and given him a few selected fanzine publishers to contact. I'd forgotten all about it when about a year later came a most cordial and interesting letter from Crane, telling me that he'd looked into fandom more in detail, had found it of considerably more worth than he had imagined, and mentioning his intention of taking a minor part in it for a while. Very shortly we had worked up one of the best correspondences I have ever had, so I was highly excited when word came that Burton was in town.

Burton Crane is one of the very few individuals I have met who may rightfully be described by the word fabulous. The fabulous Burton Crane. Here is a tall, rather athletic man who very probably is in his late forties but who has that ageless approach to life which makes him fit in with any group, of any age. He is handsome, though balding, has one of those rich voices which is resonant without being booming, and a personality which must be encountered to be believed. Winning, analytic, witty, sympathetic, natively brilliant, Burton Crane is a man who has been everywhere and done everything--and who can apparently do almost anything with near-championship skill. He is probably the nearest thing to a genius that I have ever encountered in the flesh, easily the best integrated, most adult person I have met. He is by profession a newspaper man, but he has also met success as a playwright, as a magazine author, and as a musician. If he cared to commercialise his hobby of fine printing he could very easily make his mark as a 20th century Aldus. He spent many years in Japan in the twenties and early thirties, speaks the language well and idiomatically, and is definitely qualifiable as an expert on the Land of the Rising Sun. At present he is in charge of the New York Times

office in Tokyo. During his previous incarnation in Nippon, Crane was one of Columbia's top recording stars. Billed as the Japanese Maurice Chevalier, he waxed several dozen sides of American hit parade tunes sung in Japanese. And what a voice that man has! Some of us were out at my house talking about this and that, his recording career came into the conversation, and without warning he threw back his head and commenced singing the Japanese lyrics to WALKIN' MY BABY BACK HOME. I'd rather listen to Crane than Crosby anyday, and that isn't just idle flattery either; if I thought his singing stank I'd say so.

Any-
way, Crane, in his magnetic way, did a lot towards helping the LA Amateur Press Club get organised, and got us acquainted with Wesley Porter, a local advertising man who was at that time the publicity director of NAPA. Porter turned out to be a typical business man of the better class--a good egg and all that, but with a tendency towards being somewhat the bigshot executive type.

After so much piddling along, the LASFS finally held a meeting at which all local amateur journalists were asked to be present; we knocked ourselves out sending mimeographed letters to everyone who had belonged locally to NAPA, AAPA, or UAPA in the preceding decade--getting for our pains a turnout of six. The group seemed rather enthusiastic about organizing, and sharing our clubroom, but through some sort of singular coincidence the amateurs dropped the LASFS like a hot potato immediately following their second meeting, which was held at Clifton's and at which Walter J. Daugherty was present.

Perdue, Laney, and others of us were incensed, felt that Daugherty had sabotaged the club due to his known dislike of the administration. Still, there was nothing on which to accuse him. The upshot of it all was that I got Crane to look into the matter a little by letter; he did so and reported back that as far as he could learn Daugherty was innocent of any double-dealing. Crane's word was good enough for me--so I have written the matter off as a singular coincidence and nothing more, though one or two others are not as sure.

The eventual upshot was that the LAAPC quickly got on its feet as a growing organization, and that nothing came of the clubroom sharing idea, though a meeting was held at my house as late as September 1945 in which some last negotiations were made. Poor Porter; the conflagration was interrupted by the advent of the Ashleys and menage an hour after they hit Los Angeles for the first time--he strove manfully but I am afraid had rather a rouinous evening. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Apart from the attempt at amalgamation with the amateurs, the only other constructive business attempted during the first half of the year was to set up a series of planned programs, set up in 12-week series, and publicised through mimeographed letters. This attempt didn't do very well--too much apathy on the part of both the club and the scheduled attractions. Notable defaulters were Alva Rogers, who played hooky from his own talk on prozine illustrators, and Walter J. Daugherty who failed to show up for a lantern-slide lecture until after the meeting was adjourned and I had left the premises, explained that he had delayed so as to avoid having to show them to me, and then proceeded to show them to the handful of people who were still at the club. I gave two or three talks, mostly of a Lovecraftian nature; Samuel D. Russell gave us a memorable series on witchcraft; but the star was none other than Ackerman. Always dependable, he proved able to give a good and interesting talk on a moments notice, and was the only factor that kept the whole program idea alive at all.

As spring wore along into the summer, word reached the society that E. Everett Evans was on his way, to join our giddy throng. This expected arrival left me with mixed feelings. In the first place, my very low opinion of Evans (due to the hypocrisy with which he disguised his penitentiary sentence as secret war service) had not been in the least enhanced by the detailed anti-Evans letters I had received from various Slan Shacklers and other midwesterners, nor did I particularly care for the close liason reputed to exist between Evans and Walter J. Daugherty. (One of the most amusing things that happened during the Evans NFFF administration was the resignation of Walter J. Daugherty from the board of directors. Daugherty, as always, threatened to resign about something. Everett soft-soaped him into reconsidering, adding that he continued in office as president largely because of the fine support he was receiving from Daugherty and that if Daugherty resigned from the board he, EEE, would have to resign the presidency. So Daugherty reconsidered. Then later on something else came up, and Walter J. Daugherty resigned once more, thinking that Everett would do so too, or at least hinting in that direction in his conversation at the club and telling us what Everett had said before. So E. Everett Evans accepted Mr. Daugherty's resignation, and merrily continued to be president.) So, I reasoned, maybe this liason isn't as close as one might think. And, on the favorable side, it seemed to me that I was in a very minute minority in disliking Evans; practically all of fandom seemed to hold him in high esteem. Well, I thought, maybe I am wrong. The man must have something on the credit side, or fewer people would like him. And, partly in support of this theory, I found myself enjoying a correspondence I'd gotten into with Everett.

I made up my mind that I should try to welcome Everett Evans to the LASFS just as though he were the best of freinds, and that I should attempt to withhold judgement on him until I'd had an opportunity to know him personally. This led to my having to swim against the current; many of the club members, including several who fell all over Everett when he did arrive, regarding his advent in a rather dim way.

At about this time we were having a great deal of trouble with Daugherty, and one day to my amazement I found a letter from Daugherty to Evans put up on the club bulletin board, in which Everett was warned not to have much to do with the LASFS and to realise that he'd do better to have himself a two-man fandom with Daugherty, or words to that general effect. This irked me, and siezing on the opportunity to answer it as an open letter I knocked off a five or six pager to Evans in Battle Creek listing the latest half dozen things Daugherty had done to earn him our execration, and urging Evans to meet us himself rather than trying to judge the club through Daugherty's eyes.

When he finally arrived, it was maneuvered so that few of the members got to see him for a day or so, except for two or three of the Tendril Towers boys who crashed the welcoming party. I didn't see him for nearly a week. But he turned out to be a rather personable individual, tall, thin as a lath, close-cropped grizzled hair and moustache, and an odd froggy voice. He tends to be on the wishy-washy side as a conversationalist, seldom coming out straight from the shoulder and liable to believe too much of what he reads, but is by no means unenjoyable as a companion. If he'd just toss away that pose of saintly patience and relax into being one of the boys, he'd be a good egg; and as it is he's not such a bad one.

I was going to tell about the time that Everett and I went bookhunting and he erased the price of a book,

marking it down from \$2.15 to \$1.15, but if I did people might think that he does not follow the teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom he believes, so I won't mention it. Since I was the only witness, and I have resolved to keep my mouth shut about it, this matter rests between Everett and his God.

It was at about this time (June or July 1945) that the club underwent a machiavellian coup d'etat, for which Daugherty apparently blamed me, but which actually not only came as a complete surprise to me but deflated my office of director to a mere nothing.

My chief support was coming from the neutrals plus the Tendril Towers gang, and I fell out violently with these latter over the matter of communism. Brown, Saha, Rogers, and Kepner all went violently red--and while I did my best to hold my tongue, I'm afraid they learned my opinion of communism, and of American communists as dupes who have surrendered their right to intelligent analytical discrimination and choose instead to prate the ready-made credos of the party line. As all newer communist converts, these boys had it like it was religion, and my failing to abandon my faintly left-of-center liberalism cooled our friendship considerably.

So one day the boys got together, and using the rent payers document as a pretext, tossed out the noisome governing body set-up for good, getting the governing body's consent to its own demise by promising Ackerman something about the Foundation, riding in a new constitution which reduced the director to a mere gavel-wielding figurehead, and vested the real power in the chairman of the rent payers, Mel Brown. I was more amused than anything else, particularly when I discovered Daugherty thought I had engineered this deal.

The communists and their fellow travelers had at this time a rival club--the Futurian Society of Los Angeles. I can tell little about this group, since I was not invited to join. Burbee was invited, but laughed at them. Perdue, my only informant on the group, told me that it was no better than the LASFS, if indeed as good. It existed for only a very few months, and died quietly when the communists moved to New York in the fall of 1945.

V-J day found me drinking a bottle of liberated German champagne with Bob Hoffman, and laughing at the excited way all the fans were acting as though they themselves, through the reading of a minority group of cheap magazines and the participating in the dubious activities of a crackpot hobby group, had brought about this somewhat dubious scientific discovery.

The end of the war showed me a possible end to my efforts as director. (I had more or less vowed to try to hold the club together until the boys came back from the wars, and then step down to relative inactivity.) It also dropped in my lap the problem of the Pacificon, originally slated for Los Angeles in 1942, and put in cold storage due to the war.

The Pacificon was a knotty problem, and one which I found myself unable to solve. Originally, the chairman had been Walter J. Daugherty, but I regarded his leadership with grave doubts, particularly in light of the fact that Yerke had told me in minute detail of how luckily Daugherty and the LASFS were rescued from the debacle of another Daugherty project by the outbreak of war. According to Yerke, Daugherty had done nothing except quarrel with his committee, put out some publicity, and talk as though the convention were in the bag. I would have liked very much to put the convention into someone else's hands, but was stymied in this both by

the complete lack of any other prospective convention director and by the obvious difficulty of shunting Daugherty out of the picture if he still wanted the job, which, it developed shortly, he still did.

At the first LASFS meeting following V-J day, Daugherty got wound up on the subject, talked for something over an hour on how he had not gotten cooperation in 1942/42, and that he would not take the job except under his own terms, which chiefly meant that he was to have the say on everything (his famous veto power) and that the committee was to be advisory only. It all seemed silly, but the club gave it to him un-animously, except for Elmer Perdue. He then asked for volunteers to the committee, a group which seemed to change compositione very time it met or Daugherty had abrainstorm. I do remember positively that I volunteered and was accepted, as were Ackerman and Andy Anderson. And since the first committee meeting was held in Everett's apartment, he must have been on it too. But this can just as well go in the next chapter.

Late August 1945 found me in a detestable rut. Jackie was working at the night club and I was staying home with the kids. The marriage had gone all to pieces, but I was sticking around chiefly for the sake of Sandy and Quiggie, but partly because I thought that since the situation was dissatisfactory to Jackie as well as myself there was a reasonably good chance that time might tend towards healing the breach. This is not a discourse on my marriage by any means, but it is germane to this account to point out that I had drifted into a situation where I had practically all the disadvantages of both marriage and bachelorhood, and mighty few of the advantages of either. Fandom being at hand, I naturally flung myself into it frenetically as an attempt to keep my evenings from being quite as bleak as they would have been otherwise. But it meant nothing to me in itself any more. I continued ACOLYTE partly from force of habit and partly because I hesitated to refund all those subscriptions (by then \$75 or \$80 worth) when I could put out another issue for scarcely more than the money coming in between issues. Since Brown, Rogers, et al had gone communistic they didn't come around much any more; Burbee was in the army, and about my only regular visitors were Perdue and Andy Anderson. It was, frankly, a hell of an existence, and before long I was casting about trying to figure ways to stir up some excitement in fandom-- anything to break the deadly monotony.

If any change had come in my domestic situation in the summer or early fall of 1945, I would have dropped fandom cold, overnight and without a particle of regret. Feeling that way about it, it is not difficult to see why I shortly became embroiled in a series of hectic squabbles.

But a turning point was at hand. Two not dissimilar characters, Jack Speer and Al Ashley, quite unwittingly shot my fan interest into an Indian summer, perhaps aided a little bit by Walt Liebscher. But that goes in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER X
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Indian Summer

My virtually waned interest in fandom was revived by two people, Jack Speer and Al Ashley. Al of course had been a correspondent of mine, and had also been a fellow conspirator in FAPA politics, so when he moved to Los Angeles it was just a question of carrying on a previously established friendship.

But Jack Speer was something else. I had first heard of him early in my fan career when I was unfavorably impressed by a letter of his in the first VOM I ever saw, in which he inveighed against women smoking and chewing gum. After I got into FAPA I of course saw more and more of his writings, but between their air of almost pontifical authority and Jack's tendency towards prudishness I came more and more to form a vague antipathy towards the Hily Magnified WB. This crystallised when I came to LA and met Mel Brown, who heartily despised Jack, probably because Speer cleans his fingernails once in a while. I was fertile ground for the planting of anti-Speer seed, and Mel did a thorough sowing. So I came to spat with Speer from time to time in FAPA, particularly over the matter of racial prejudices. Then when I discovered the awe with which Phil Brownson regarded Speer, it amused me to snipe at Speer, both verbally and in print, simply because it got Phil's goat for me to take potshots at Jack. In time, this had grown into an incipient feud, with Speer and me indulging in some rather acrimonious fencing in VOM, FAPA, and even SHAGGY.

But in the meantime I had acquired vastly of back issue Speer publications, and one day commenced reading them. Speer sounded pontifical as ever, making his points with a ponderous finality which made them sound like the definitive summation of all knowledge. But on reading a sizeable chunk of Speer I also discovered that he is eminently readable--something that can be said for few fan writers--and also that he usually has something interesting to say. I'd been too busy picking out things to snipe at to realise all this.

Along about this time, I received the first STEPHENS, and was enormously well impressed by its neat succinctness, its journalistic style, and its hearty neutrality (which means that Speer always tends to make nasty cracks at the same kind of people I do). It made a lovely contrast to any of the other newszines. So I dropped Speer a note and some news, and shortly a rather wary correspondence sprang up.

Then, along in September 1945, Jack Speer paid a short visit to Los Angeles, and I was dumbfounded to find that I liked him as a person. He has a highly original sense of humor which scarcely shows in his writing--rather, which is far more prominent in his persona than in his written output. And my ideas about his pontifications faded into surprised mist when I listened to his rapid-fire whimsical patter, noted the faint suggestion of a stammer, and saw how undogmatic he actually is.

The customary vignette: Jack Speer is a little guy, slender and vivacious, with sandy hair and very fair complexion, and gives the impression of a small dynamo with the governor removed animating a widget consisting largely of piano wires and steel springs. I've met very few people who have the apparent energy, both physical and mental, possessed by Speer. Conversing with him is not unlike

fencing without corks, but it's fun. The chief characteristic of his personality is a whimsical puckishness; he might, with justification, almost be referred to as a puckhead. A staunch ally or a bitter enemy, he steers a pretty consistent course through both life and fandom, and can be expected to be one of the few really prominent fans who will make his mark in the macrocosmos.

His arrival coincided quite closely with that of the Slan Shacklers, within 2 1/2 hours in fact. Al Ashley, who, I understand, was once expelled from the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society for failing to pay his dues, had in his pre-Los Angeles incarnation set himself up as the chief factotum of a cross between a boarding house and a bedlam, filling a large house in Battle Creek Michigan with a number of other fans as permanent residents, and an even larger number of transients. Called Slan Shack, this venture probably was to bolster Ashley's atavistic ego with an illusion that he was the Old Man of some cave-dwelling tribe of prehistorics; the group had also, through heavy activity, made a most enviable mark in the fan world.

Ashley and his menage had spoken for a couple of years of moving out to Los Angeles, had induced Bob Tucker, at heavy expense to himself, to give them an annual farewell party for some years, and had even gone so far as to set at least a dozen Definite Dates of Arrival. We in Los Angeles of course disregarded the date in September 1945 which was supposed to herald the arrival of these people, holding it to be just another aberration. Imagine our surprise when a carload of Michiganders actually pulled into town! It was loaded down with Al and Abby Lu Ashley, Abby's daughter Toople, Jack Wiedenbeck, Walt Liebscher, and Black Flame (a young cocker bitch).

Al Ashley is a person that cannot be described in a printable vignette if one is to get the true savor of the man who keeps Brazil prosperous. Physically he is minuscule--about 5'3", but his well-muscled and husky--a balding brunette who intends to live to be 150 years old, and who probably will, since nothing any of us have ever seen him do is likely to burn up any great amount of energy. He is a nice, unscrupulous, tough-minded individual that I immediately liked enormously; he has managed to live a normal life; and he is the best bull-shooter in Los Angeles. It has been said of him that he has an IQ of 194--simple justice makes me point out that he has never made this claim for himself. On the other hand, he has never denied it, and he certainly looks smug when someone mentions those three fascinating figures in his presence. Al is a man who found many possibilities in fandom, explored most of them to his heart's content, and is now drifting out of the field. It took but a very few weeks of the LASFS to lose for Al his illusions of fandom and make him just another trouble maker like myself. He is a master at intrigue, a gossip from way back, and can be depended on to know just who is queer and how and when. Widely read, and with an exploring trend of mind, he can usually be depended on for a stimulating evening of conversation.

His wife, Abby Lu, is an attractive red head who has little if any interest in fandom, but who is not unamused by some of the wierder antics indulged in by the Slans.

Jack Weidenbeck is one of the nicest guys I've ever known. Generous, kindhearted, stimulating, he has been an intimate buddy of Ashley's for many years. He's had no use for fandom for years, but still occasionally does a bit of artwork for someone. A draftsman by profession, he has done commercial sculpture, and is at present writing a novel. Jack is quiet and retiring, has never mixed much with the LASFS (for which he

can scarcely be blamed), but is a most stimulating person to be around and is definitely one of the few people around the Bixelstrasse whose acquaintance is worth cultivating.

Walt Liebscher is a one-time fan big-shot, noted equally for Tuckeresque and Tuckerisque humor and for serious bibliographical doings--both in the fields of collecting and publishing. He still collects and reads book fantasy, I understand, but has otherwise dropped all fan activity; having discovered far greener pastures, which of course is not difficult to do. His rather marked inferiority complex is the least justified one I've ever seen, and it is to be hoped he will outgrow it. Walt is good-looking, bubbling over with wit; the life-of-the-party type, he can really go places if he just gets over the idea he doesn't have what it takes. He has it to burn. This boy could very easily make himself a pot of money as an entertainer--contrary to some opinions he is not a very good musician, but he has facile fingers on the piano, his playing may tend towards frothiness but it is definitely the kind of 88 the general public likes, he has no singing voice but he knows how to put over a comic song, he has inventiveness and originality, and he has that touch that sells a crowd. As a bar-room entertainer he is just the sort of guy that could make a pile of money as a featured act at the Florentine Gardens or some such place, and I doubt if he'd have to play in cheap joints like the HangoverClub very long before he made the big time. Why he wastes his talent on his friends, Lord knows.

Anyway, the simultaneous arrival of all these people coinciding with the weekend on which I met Speer for the first time brought me out of it with a snap. Very shortly I was going bookhunting with the Slan Shackers, making political plans with Speer and Ashley, reviving my interest in FAPA, and going to work on THE ACOLYTE with the first real enthusiasm I had given that magazine since early 1944. Here, for a change, were people. I don't mean to say that Speer or the Slan Shackers are faultless, or that they are necessarily the best integrated people in the world--certainly all of them have their faults and failings and minor maladjustments. But these are people, honest-to-god normal people, and to find that there actually were some fans besides Baldwin and Rimel and one or two others who were not neurotic impossibles was wonderful. Here, at long last, were the kind of people I had once in my naive enthusiasm thought all fans to be.

The chief

club activity of the late summer and fall of 1945 was the Pacificon. And it was nothing but a peck of trouble. At the first committee meeting, a good deal was decided--the date was tentatively set for the week of July 4, 1946, and it was decided to invite A. E. van Vogt to be the guest-of-honor. Daugherty outlined many of his plans for 1942, indicating what of the previous work he thought could be salvaged, discussed publicity, and announced to his committee that he would have a Pacificon News in the mail within two weeks. He asked that no leak of plans be made, since he wanted to have first scoop in Pacificon News--but I was sending news to Speer in a day or so, was naturally rather enthusiastic about the convention, and so told Speer all about the meeting. It just didn't occur to me to tell him not to print it--in the first place I knew that all he would do would be to give it a bare, interest-whetting outline, secondly I felt that the Pacificon could not be given enough publicity anyway, and third, though I should have known Daugherty better, he was so plausible in his enthusiasm that I actually thought he would get the PACIFICON NEWS out right away. As it turned out, Speer's bare paragraph was the only publicity the Pacificon received for a good many weeks.

What a furious turmoil this innocuous paragraph in STEFNEWS created! The next club meeting after the release appeared, Daugherty, his face as grave as though his mother had died, called me away from the clubroom and told me to come to a committee meeting in Everett's apartment. Andy Anderson and I went over only to find Evans sitting there with that same death-in-the-family expression, and Ackerman just sitting there. I was handed the issue of STEFNEWS and told to read it. I could see nothing wrong, but acting instinctively to avoid a row said something to the effect that Speer must have violated a confidence, and that I'd bring the carbon of my letter the next time I came. I've regretted having said this, but at the time I figured Daugherty would have cooled off enough to listen to reason. But the fellow commenced to rave and rave--the publicity for the Pacificon was wrecked, forever and beyond repair, there would be no surprise effect, there would be no news after this one release because repetition would be avoided in order to make a successful advertising campaign...and other equally stupid rantings. (Avoid of repetition in advertising is no doubt responsible for the wide public knowledge of such things as: "It Floats" "LSMFT", "Ask the Man who Owns One", etc.!) Everett, wearing his best stuffed owl expression, agreed solemnly with all this just as if it meant something.

But this one little episode completely ruined the publicity for the Pacificon, just as Daugherty said that it would. Walter J. Daugherty did not produce or allow to be produced an issue of PACIFICONEWS for at least six months, and then just the single issue. Walter J. Daugherty refused to give Pacificon publicity to the #1 and #2 fanzines of 1946, ACOLYTE and SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES. (There was a blurb in ACOLYTE but I made it up myself, largely out of whole cloth, since even I, a member of the committee, know little or nothing about the Pacificon until the month before the convention.) To my knowledge, the only publicity given the Pacificon until far too late to do the convention any good was the one issue of PACIFICONEWS, one rather meaningless lithographed poster produced by Goldstone, a certain amount of haphazard and unappealing coverage in FANEWS, and what bootlegged information could be given Jack Speer for STEFNEWS. In short, Walter J. Daugherty got his back up over nothing, and used a premature news release seen by 50 people as a pretext to send out no real Pacificon publicity. It is small wonder that only a handful of non-Californians attended this wouldbe World Convention.

I shall refrain from calling Daugherty's actions in this matter juvenile. I doubt that any seven year old would refuse for long to play with his new electric train just because someone else played with it first.

A fellow traveler of Daugherty's, Walter Dunkelberger of Fargo, North Dakota, shortly cooperated to make this utterly picayune issue of the premature news release into a cause celebre. Dunkelberger was at the time having himself a feud with Jack Speer, and it was not long before this matter of Pacificon news was getting a terrific play in Dunkelberger's news magazine, THE FANEWS. Material printed by Dunkelberger at that time was controversial, and, I felt, showed me not only in an unfavorable but in an untrue light. Since Dunkelberger had been one of my earliest fan correspondents and I had always been on friendly terms with the fellow, it never occurred to me that he would not print my side of the story. But he didn't. And as issue after issue of FANEWS took my name in vain more and more, with no trace of anything from my side of the story, I became increasingly exasperated, ending up with a half-formed notion of loading for boar. All this helped the Pacificon a lot.

In the meantime, the LASFS seemed to be taking on signs of life, as new faces and returned veterans appeared to be on the premises. One of the first arrivals was Edythe Eide of Palo Alto, a rather handsome young lady who through her VOM-publicised romance with Ackerman received more notoriety and less fame than she deserved. Tigrina, as she preferred to be called, took a genuine interest in weird fiction and cinema, was a not incompetent poet, and, in a pedantic sort of long-winded way, a pretty good fan writer. She was rather short, neatly built and pretty, and with a whooping laugh which sometimes embarrassed her a little. Everyone around the club seemed to like Tigrina, and she managed to stay around for close to two years without becoming embroiled in any fusses, apart from one memorable occasion when E. Everett Evans unadvisedly patted Tigrina's little posterior one night after the meeting, and came within a hairsbreadth of having his face slapped as T told him off in a way that I hugely loved. Right there in the clubroom, too.

Sometime during the spring or summer of 1945, Andy Anderson, who has previously been described, moved to Los Angeles in order to attend USC. He has pretty much dropped both fandom and the club, but was moderately active as one of the more desirable LASFS members for around a year.

One of the first returning veterans was Russell J. Hodgkins, an old-time member of the club who had been director back in 1937 and 1938, had pretty much dropped out for a year or so, and had then gone in the army in 1942. Russ is tall, pallid, bespectacled, and quiet--reserved enough so that I still don't know him very well even after a year and a half or more. His chief interest is in book collecting; he is now rumored to be branching out into book publishing; but all in all, I doubt if fantasy or fandom take up any sizeable share of this gentleman's time.

Another was Norman Willmorth--a squat but hulking 200 pounder who had spent two years in England at the Army's expense while he rode high in British fandom and accumulated an unbelievable collection of fantasy books. (He also finally got around to performing some military service.) Gus is jovial and hail-fellow-well-met, sports a beard much of the time, is a mighty guzzler of beer and pincher of barmaids' bottoms, and is the one major publisher left in the LASFS. (Burbee doesn't count, because he has more or less turned dilettante.) Gus takes fandom much more seriously than it deserves, and has a touchy streak of idealism which crops out from time to time--on the whole, though, he is a good egg. Prospective friends of Willmorth's are warned not to go drinking beer with him unless they have ten-gallon stomachs, two tin ears, and are capable of outshouting the bull of Bashan. Gus, ordinarily quiet and tractable, gets noisy at such times. He goes to USC once in a while when he can find time between beer busts and issues of FANTASY ADVERTISER.

One non-veteran came to Los Angeles in late 1945, a former fan from San Francisco named Louis Goldstone. Lou, back in 1940 or thereabouts, published the first fanzine to sport a truly artistic and handsome format, setting a mark at which many subsequent publishers have aimed. Long out of fandom, Lou came to LA to try garret dwelling and commercial art for a while; somehow he ended up doing a fabulous amount of work for the Pacificon, taking an active part in the LASFS, and so on. I don't know him very well, so will attempt no description, other than mentioning that he is tall, slender, and mail looking; and that he has his full share of artistic temperament. On the whole, however, he seems like a good joe. He vanished from our ken shortly after the Pacificon.

And there were others who appeared on the scene for a greater or lesser length of time during the last half of 1945, but somehow I don't at the moment recall any names. It must be remembered that although I was director and thus presided over each meeting, I was scarcely ever around the club otherwise. In the get-togethers after the meetings, I tended to go coffeewards with assorted Slan Shackers, Perdue, Burbee, Anderson, Tigrina, Ackerman, and van Vogt. It was not snobbishness, simply that I had so much fun with the individuals named that I failed to branch out as much as I should have.

And my tendency towards a sort of provincialism in the club was augmented by the gradual building up of a traditional "Saturday Night at Laney's". I was still going through the motions of being married, sticking close at home with the kids and hoping that for their sake maybe things would get better, and spending my time playing records and monkeying around with fandom. Saturday nights gradually got so that from two to ten of the bunch would come over and stay until Jackie came from work at 2:00 AM. We had some mighty good times--sometimes a jazz-minded bunch giving my records a going over, but more often some of the great minds waxing eloquent as they put the world to rights. And there also was a considerable amount of steffnistic political intrigue--particularly by Ashley, Anderson, and myself.

The Slan Shackers had been in Los Angeles for less than a month when they commenced getting fed up with the LASFS. Wiedenbeck and Liebscher practically quit the Society after three or four meetings, and Ashley very shortly got to the point where he was actively anti-club, though he still came around regularly. Since all the Slan Shackers are outspoken when pressed a little, it was not long before the LASFS came to hear more and more of their discontent with the group. As a result, an investigating committee consisting of the three Michiganders named and perhaps one or two others was set up to analyse the LASFS and make recommendations as to what might be done to make a worthwhile organisation out of it.

Each member and former member of the club that could be induced to hold still long enough was quite thoroughly interviewed. After a couple of months of investigation, the committee submitted a rather startling report in which they unanimously recommended that the LASFS be given back to the Indians, that there was nothing that could be done with the club, and that if it ceased to exist it would be absolutely no loss. The chief obstacle in the way of having a worthwhile organisation, it was found, is that there is absolutely no common focus held by all the members or even by a sizeable group of them. Each member, on the other hand, has very strong preferences and tastes coupled with a minimum of toleration for the tastes of the other fellow. The various interests and motivations of the various members are so diametrically different from one another, often indeed being at direct variance (as for example Ackerman who affects to be interested in NOTHING but fantasy-stf-fandom and Joquel who is totally without interest in these). This situation and analogous conflicts of interest are so widespread that it is a complete impossibility to present a meeting of ANY sort which will interest ALL the members. When this handicap is coupled with the extreme prevalence of pathological neurotic symptoms, with a good sized proportion of the members being so utterly unprepossessing and undesirable as personal associates, and with a widespread tendency towards boredom with the club coupled with lack of get-up-and-git to move to greener pastures; it is small wonder that the LASFS is so worthless.

At the time the committee was deliberating, Ashley and I

worked up quite elaborate political plans for the January 1946 LASFS elections. I did not wish to serve any longer as director, Ashley at the time thought he wanted the job, and so we laid plans to elect Al to the highest gift in the power of the LASFS to bestow. He was to appoint me secretary, in which capacity I'd be the #2 man of the administration, and would also have a chance to write barbed minutes. But as he saw more and more of the club, his interest in it waned to such an extent that he was unwilling to take any active part in its affairs.

Another factor which affected both the LASFS as a whole and the connivings of the politicians was the removal of the communists from our midst. Alva Rogers, piddling along indolently with commercial art and attempts thereat, decided to go to New York City, where he felt that he'd have a better chance of getting commissions. For some weird reason, Brown, Kepner, and Saha--the other three active communists--decided that they too must go to New York--chiefly, it seemed from trying to get from them logical reasons for the move, because Rogers was going. So all four of them laid plans to move East, selling their possessions, and quitting their jobs. Along about October, 1945, Kepner, Brown, and Saha actually went to New York--Rogers going to San Diego to visit his folks before taking off cross-country. Rogers never did get there, and the other three left just in time to have the blowup in the ranks of the Futurians happen while they were en route, so that when they arrived the strong Futurian group they had expected to join had dwindled to Wollheim et ux, and Michel. The situation amused those of us who either disliked the Futurians for one cause or another, or who were out of sympathy with communism. The departure of these four from the local scene also made a drastic upheaval in politics in the club. These four had been steady supporters of mine--not because they particularly liked me, but simply because they hated Daugherty and knew that I would stand up to him and refuse to allow him to intimidate me. As Mel Brown actually told me once in so many words, I was in their minds the lesser of two evils.

But the newer club member, the guy who had been in service and had built up all sortsof unfounded illusions about fandom while he was in the army, wanted no part of any quarrelling. Anything anyone said or did was all right with him, provided it was not antagonistic. And for someone to rise up in his might over some wrong or fancied wrong--as I did when Daugherty pulled that deal on the mimeograph spring which I mentioned a few pages ago--or to attempt to prick the balloon of someone's illusions was to these people an act of antagonism.

So the club lost the one strong common focal point which had held it together for a year and a half almost--a violent dislike of Walter J. Daugherty.

For what after the passage of time seem like very insufficient reasons, I commenced to interest myself in the affairs of the NFFF. Part of it was due to a desire to push along certain radically un-Evans-ish ideas broached to me in personal letters from Harry Warner and Jack Speer. Part of it was a hangover from my old idea that as long as I allowed ACOLYTE to go to so many worthwhile people, I should do my utmost to keep at a minimum the assinity so prevalent in the fandom of which I was a part.. Part of it was because I had so often stuck my neck out in criticisms of the group that I was more or less being backed onto a spot where I had to put up or shut up. And, I fear, a big reason was that I saw a chance to have some fun working out political maneuvers. Politics, in other words, as an end in themselves.

So I let my name go on the ballot as candidate for the board of directors in

in the election for 1946 officers. This was the election which was virtually uncontested--there being seven candidates for the five board of directors posts, and one candidate each for the other offices. Warner had seriously entertained the idea of running for president, as my files attest, but according to a letter from Warner he was persuaded not to run by presidential candidate Dunkleberger and his Father Superior, E. Everett Evans. This gave Dunkleberger the presidency by default.

Despite the fact that Dunkelberger was running unopposed, the election gave him a priceless opportunity for ego-boo, and he didn't miss--not only putting out a special issue of FANews with his picture as candidate but even going so far as to distribute printed postal cards, again with his picture, just before the election.

And it was in the early stages of the campaign that my growing distaste for Dunkelberger grew into a violent antipathy. When I had first filed, he had indorsed me--listing me in FANews as one of the five he wished elected to serve with him--but in a very short while he put out another list of recommended candidates in which he had replaced my name with that of Joe Fortier.

This piqued me, so I asked Lard Walter how come. It developed that he switched, deciding not to back me for the directorate, simply because I entertained Jack Speer as a guest in my home on the weekend the Slan Shackers arrived in LA. Since every active fan in Los Angeles except Evans and Daugherty attended this party, and since the whole affair was strictly impromptu and they could have come if they'd wanted to (no one being invited or uninvited) it was difficult for me to see how I could have refused my hospitality to Speer even if I'd wanted to.

Keeping my temper for once, I attempted to draw Dunkelberger out a little--saying that there must be something dreadful about Speer if Dunk were to react so to my letting him come into my home and suggesting that if he could advance factual and logical reasons for his violent anti-Speer feeling it "might" lead to improved relations between Fargo and 1005 W. 35th Place. He wrote a typically incoherent letter, and I made up my mind that Lard Walter needed to be set down a peg.

By the time that the election was over, I had fairly concrete plans laid for the term of office. Speer, Warner, and I--all candidates for the board of directors--had gotten together with multiplicate letters and worked out quite comprehensive plans for the year: a new constitution, service features of one sort and another, publications--much the same sort of program as was later announced by the Fantasy Foundation. After Speer turned out to be an unsuccessful candidate, we of course no longer held a voting majority of the five man board, but as it turned out it would have made no difference anyway, since Dunkelberger proved himself so totally unfit for office as to waste the entire first half of the year with personalities, impossible appointments, and the mere routine of keeping the organization functioning meaninglessly.

I inaugurated a scheme of sending my letters in response to NFFF presidential messages to all members of the board of directors, using onion-skin and carbons for the purpose, and received enthusiastic cooperation in this from Warner and Hevelin. Tarr was spasmodic. This scheme proved eminently workable; it came the nearest to an actual in-the-flesh meeting as anything that could be devised, and the opportunity it gave us for discussion made it possible to work out ideas somewhat before springing them half-cocked.

With growing disgust, I waited nearly six weeks for president Dunkelberger to present a program for the year. Finally, in mid-February, I presented one myself, but little ever came of it, due chiefly to the fact that by the time anyone could have done anything about any of it the administration was plunged in the internecine wrangling which culminated in the wild talk of treason from Dunk, and in the wasting of an entire year. So far as I know, Dunkelberger never did present a program for the year. But nevertheless, his administration was a success, since he got to send his picture around to all fandom a couple of times, and got other ego boo of one sort and another.

My willingness to continue THE ACOLYTE had dropped to nothing by early 1946. I still enjoyed seeing the magazine come out; wonderful material kept rolling in unabated; and the magazine was showing a slight profit on each issue, not enough to do me any good financially but enough to pay for both ACOLYTE and FAN-DANGO. But I was absolutely black in the face from the seemingly endless ordeal of typing and mimeographing and assembling and mailing; the mechanical details had not only grown so burdensome as to destroy my interest in the magazine but were by association, I suppose, killing my liking for fantasy and science-fiction. Co-editor Russell helped with the assembling and mailing (without him the magazine would have folded a year and a half before it did) but even so it would seem that I'd just got off the chain gang from one issue and I'd have to start another one. It had ceased being a hobby and had become an incubus.

So I tried to ring in some help. Several of the Saturday night sessions were devoted to mulling over a scheme aimed at putting each department under the complete control of an assistant editor, who would be responsible both for selection of material and for any needed mechanical details, leaving Russell and myself to function in the true sense as editors, arranging for material, helping with revisions when needed, and in general acting as co-ordinators. We got some most interesting figures on photolithography, and saw that ten co-editors, each of whom contributed \$5.00 per issue, would be able to finance an ACOLYTE to end all ACOLYTES. An edition of at least 500, circulation in various book stores (through McComas and his connections), and eventually (maybe) the dream of all fan-editors since the beginning of fan-editing--- a real, died-in-the-wool semi-pro, aimed at fans and collectors.

Some of the co-editors who accepted: Russell and I were of course to continue--Russell as editor-in-chief and Laney as managing editor; Tigrina, poetry editor; Andy Anderson, make-up editor; Al Ashley, art editor; Forrest J Ackerman, film editor; Bob Hoffman, editor without portfolio.

Plans for the new magazine were well under way when the editorial for the last ACOLYTE was written.

But then, quite in the manner of a sudden stroke of lightning, we were bitten by the Foundation bug, and promptly decided to turn THE ACOLYTE over to the new organization.

The Fantasy Foundation has had a most peculiar career. When Ackerman went away to war in the fall of 1942, it seemed like the end of the world to him, and he wrote a long letter to fandom in FANTASY FICTION FIELD, in which he told of willing his collection to fandom and setting up a \$1000 insurance policy to help fandom maintain it. Though the idea as Ackerman broached it was impractical and rather lacking in utility, there was the germ of an idea there, one which worked on me all through my fan career. In some of the maneuverings around the LASFS, I offered to help Ackerman implement

the Foundation right here and now (instead of waiting for his death as the original proposal had envisioned) in exchange for his voting support. The support was forthcoming, so as a starter on my part of the bargain, I jotted down a proposed program for the Foundation in mid-1945, gave it to Ackerman, and heard nothing more of it.

One Saturday in early April 1946, Andy Anderson, Elmer Perdue, Al Ashley, Sam Russell, and one or two others were at my house. We had gotten sick of discussing the NFFF and the futility to which its curvaceous president insisted on committing it, and, half-seriously half as a joke, I dragged out the carbon of my rough draft of the Foundation, remarking that "Here is the blue-print for a real fan organization."

And the gang went overboard for it.

Ackerman and I had diametrically opposite notions as to what the Foundation should be. He wants it to be a museum, kept directly under fan control and financing. This means a Foundation such as we now have--a secondary Ackerman collection housed in a small frame garage opening into a Hollywood alley, poorly arranged and almost impossible for anyone to derive good from. I wanted a dynamic organization which would attempt to be of such service to any student or lover of fantasy and stf that it would grow into a necessity.

I'll copy from my files the original program for the Fantasy Foundation, as it stood after the gang had worked it out and revised it:

IMMEDIATE. Publish checklist of fantasy and stf-zines in time to distribute it at the Pacificon.

IMMEDIATE. Institute circulating library in time to make an announcement at the Pacificon of the first volumes. (One of my most important facets of the Foundation was to be bound volumes of magazines and excerpts and copies of the scarcer books, not to be mildewing in a shed somewhere but in active use as part of a mail-order circulating library. The three or four pages of details which were actually worked out to implement this scheme are too unwieldy to publish here.)

IMMEDIATE to SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Send publicity material to every person who is at all likely to subscribe to the group, or to donate material either now or later. This sending should include an mimeographed blank of a will which would leave all suitable material to the Foundation. This form should be drawn up by a lawyer in such way as to be enforceable at law.

IMMEDIATE TO SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Set up a system of double-entry books of account, and a system of permanent inventory. Arrange for insurance covering fire and theft of all foundation material not in the possession of a public institution. (This refers to a plan of attempting to induce some Los Angeles library, either the Public Library or the one at one of the Universities, to take the main part of our Foundation collection as a permanent special exhibit. This would not only furnish some excellent publicity, but would save our having to provide our own fire-proof quarters.)

IMMEDIATE TO SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Set up an ambitious publishing program of major items, and commence work on them.

SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Catalog and inventory anything belonging to the Foundation, and set up the first and main collection.

SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Commence the actual writing and compilation of items to be published so as to assure ourselves of a steady

flow of publications. This is to include a general investigation of the field of fantasy bibliography in order to ascertain what assistance, financial and otherwise, we may be able to give bibliographical work.

SEMI-IMMEDIATE. Attempt to mobilise national fanpower, so as to put it to work on our various projects.

LONG-RANGE. Out of Foundation duplicates attempt to set up duplicate collections in other major cities of the United States.

LONG-RANGE. Work out a permanent program for the expenditure of Foundation funds. Much of this money will be used for freight on stuff shipped to us for the Foundation. Much of it should be used binding fanzines and prozines. Some might be used to purchase rare items for the main collection. Some of it will be required for operational expenses, publication of reports of business and the like. A definite percentage of our income must be set aside for future projects.

LONG-RANGE. Investigate the possibilities of the Foundation going into business as a fantasy dealer, selling surplus duplicates to private collectors in order to add further to the Foundation funds.

End of quote.

In other words, the Foundation was designed by the original group at my house as a business proposition, relatively free from personal idiosyncracies, and aimed much less at fandom than at scholars, students of literature generally, and serious fantasy collectors.

The actualities that have grown out of this concept are little more than laughable.

Right off the bat, we got into a terrific local row when Walter J. Daugherty heard about it. He had not been consulted, not because some of us don't like him, but simply because he wasn't around. Everett Evans and Gus Willmorth also felt deeply hurt that they had not been personally asked to take part in the deliberations. (Since it was well-known that my Saturday night sessions were open to anyone, and since the idea just grew up spontaneously, I don't see their angle except in terms of a craving for ego-boo.)

Anyway, with Daugherty spearheading them, the malcontents raised so much hell with the anxious-to-please-everybody Ackerman that he held a meeting to discuss the matter with all localites who wished to attend. It started very tensely, particularly as I counted noses and saw that Daugherty had a clear voting majority in the event he wanted to force the thing to a vote. As a starter, Ackerman read the material I have just quoted. When he finished reading, Daugherty stunned us all by getting up and stalking out of the room without saying a word, followed by his wife. It was amazing the way everyone that was left turned pro-Foundation instantly, and Daugherty sealed his doom by calling up a few minutes later, apparently expecting Ackerman to invite him back. (He didn't.) Daugherty's walking out on his own majority killed the overt local opposition to the Foundation.

But I, in an unguarded moment, made a reference to the Foundation in a multiplicate letter to the NFFF board; Dunk leaped to the conclusion that the NFFF was being betrayed, and declared his state of emergency over this and other matters. This finished the NFFF so far as I was concerned, showing the group up for a bunch of childish nitwits.

But a combination of circumstances in April and May 1946 knocked me out of fandom.

CHAPTER XL
-oOo-
Death of a Fan
***** ** * ***

Two things knocked me out of fandom, a change in my job status and my final realisation that there was no chance of salvaging my marriage to Jackie.

The change in job came in early April 1946. I was still working in the same shop I had entered when arriving in Los Angeles in the fall of 1943. I had of course had a number of raises, but I was still just a machine operator, running an engine lathe for the most part. A sudden outbreak of unrest--demands for higher wages plus talk of a strike--came to a head when my immediate supervisor, who had been chosen to act as spokesman for the shop employees, lost his temper and quit his job. And I was it; the foreman came to me and asked me to take over the department temporarily, that if I made good I could have the job permanently.

Actually this put me on quite a spot. The department consists of nine punch presses and five lathes plus miscellaneous supporting equipment. But the way that shop is set up, at least one member of the department has to be able to do anything in the shop, since we carry department jobs all the way from start to finish ourselves. (For example, a circular drilled part, classified as a lathe department job because it has to be turned, will also require sawing and drilling--but this will not be done by the saw or drill press departments but by us.) And here I was, with gobs of punch press experience, but a veritable neophyte on the lathe, and no actual production experience to speak of on anything else except saws. To top it off, the department consisted largely of green help, and I found myself on the spot of teaching work which I did not know how to do. (Needless to say, I learned!)

Since we were doing very heavy business anyway, it may well be imagined that I had my hands full. Not only did I have to work beyond anything I had ever imagined during the days, but we were so short-handed that I quickly commenced working from 8 to 12 hours overtime per week after supper. (Anyone who has not tried to keep punch presses set up for four operators while trying to break in one lathe man and still trying to do production work himself is advised to try it as an antidote for inertia.) Well, I was tired out for a couple of months--dog-tired. I had just finished stencilling the last ACOLYTE before this change of jobs hit me, and somehow I managed to get the magazine mimeographed and mailed out. And I kept trying, all through the latter part of April and the first part of May, to answer some of my fannish mail; but I was simply too tired to write coherently, throwing away at least twenty letters as being too Dunkish to send out.

Finally I said "To hell with it."

By the time I had gotten acclimated to the new job, and had some spare-time oomph once more, I had collided with a most painful fact: that my chief interest in fandom was ego-boo, a compensation for the fact that I had never been especially successful in any other way. Particularly in light of some of the things I had said about ego-boo seekers, this was a tough morsel to digest. But somehow this lead-man's job, with its almost negligible authority and its slight amount of executive work, gave me the self-confidence I'd always lacked. Fandom seemed a good enough stop-gap until I got onto a job I really liked; now the job was more interesting and rewarding than fandom.

Then came the

blow-off on the marriage. Sometime in the latter part of May, a slight incident took place which was the straw that broke the camel's back, which showed me that there was no use trying to patch up the marriage, kids or no kids. So for several months I tried a marriage-in-name-only, with the idea of providing some sort of home for Sandy and Quiggie while their parents went separate ways though living under the same roof. (This didn't work either, a final separation in October leading to a divorce in February 1947.)

My marital affairs of course do not belong in these memoirs, but it is obvious that with the motivation which kept me leading the life of a fannish recluse shattered for good, I very quickly got out of fandom.

Quit fandom. Sounds easy, doesn't it? But I was shortly to learn that it was a tough job. In the first place, the four years of plugging away on THE ACOLYTE had built it up into a rather worthwhile going concern, and I hated to throw all that hard work away and let it bubble away into nothing. For this reason, I tried the various schemes of joint editorship that I mentioned in the last chapter. They were abandoned for one reason and one alone; I found that despite all fans might say about the desirability of keeping THE ACOLYTE going, none of them were willing to do enough work collectively or individually to amount to a hill of beans. If ACOLYTE were to continue, I, and I alone, would have to do the hours and hours of hard routine drudgery that each issue required. And this I refused to do. If the local fans cared enough for the magazine and for the fantasy field it tried to portray to get in and do the bulk of the typing and other mechanical work (or pay for its being done) I was quite willing to devote a lot of time to keeping up the contacts which were bringing in so much fine material, and to writing serious material for it myself. But if these people cared so little for it as they obviously did (that idea of a jointly prepared magazine professionally published still enthuses me somewhat, even after a year of non-fandom) I was through, completely and irrevocably through.

At the time The Foundation's plans for ACOLYTE gradually wanted away into nothingness, an implemented guarantee of 60 hours per month work would have saved the magazine. Since the LASFS at that time had over 20 active members, this simply means that if each member had been willing to devote one evening a month to ACOLYTE, the fantasy field would boast today a 48 to 60 page lithographed magazine combining the better features of ACOLYTE and FANTASY COMMENTATOR. And, regardless of other commitments and interests, one Francis T. Laney would have been doing his full share and more. But when these people, who profess to be interested in fantasy and/or scientifiction, care so little for the field as the LASFS has shown itself to care--caput!

There were around \$90.00 in outstanding subscription to ACOLYTE, owed in dribblets of 12¢ and 25¢ and 37¢ to nearly 200 people. Until the divorce stripped me of assets, I was well able to pay this off. But it seemed like too much of a job to prepare individual refunds, so I went to work trying to get rid of the magazine as a whole. And as you know, I was unable to find a competent fan publisher who was willing to take over ACOLYTE's fine backlog of material together with an itemised subscription list and cash to cover every cent of it? Not one! Here was the #1 fanzine, plus material for 2 to 3 more issues, plus all the contacts, plus 200 readers, plus around \$90.00 in cash money--and it went begging! Liebscher, Willmorth, and Walter Gillings of England are among the ones who turned it down.

The lack of interest displayed by active publishers was the last straw. I let

Helen Wesson have the backlog, when she stopped through Los Angeles on her way to Tokyo, but as for the money...phooey. As I cast back over those months and months and months of work that resulted in THE ACO-LYTE, I feel I've earned it many times over. If some late subscriber raises enough hell, or hits me up for it personally, I'll give him back his 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. Otherwise, once again, caput!

This defalcation is not without precedent in fandom; in fact, most quitting fan editors just hold onto the money without a qualm. Like Phil Bronson or Al Ashley.

The second thing, an active fan accumulates more obligations than he is aware of. I found myself with certain commitments, many of which I fluffed off, but most of which I fulfilled after a fashion. After my demise was clear in my own mind, I stencilled the Foundation's check list of stff/fantasy prozines, stencilled and mimeographed a FAPazine for Mike Fern, wrote several letters to the NFFF board of directors, and made contributions to several fanzines. One thing I definitely did fluff off was my correspondence, and finally feeling myself free of this constant typing of letters, letters letters, was the most wonderful sensation I ever had in fandom. (These memoirs have been written in about one-quarter the typing time I would have spent keeping up my correspondence during the period they've been written in.)

And worst of all, I had contracted such a habit of going to the LASFS every Thursday that it was almost like a compulsion. It took six months to break it, but I did. I now go to the LASFS about once every two or three months, and then merely to pick up some money from Ackerman, who has been doing a whale of a job in peddling my collection for me.

Once the scales had completely fallen from my eyes, I saw the club, as a collective entity, with a revulsion amounting to loathing. Faggots, pansies, dykes, queers of every sort and description; bums, loafers, dead-beats, moochers and parasites on society; pathologically neurotic incompetents imagining themselves as fine minds and cultured individuals; pretentiousness, hypocrisy, dishonesty with each other and with themselves running rampant.

I had wanted to see the club at its best and I had. There were and are a modicum of decent, normal, worthwhile people who pass through the portals of the sacred styce from time to time; and I seized on them as samples of the whole, ignoring the questionable aspects of the questionables, unless I practically had my nose rubbed in it. There are people I met around the LASFS that I hope to number among my lifelong friends, but there are damned few of them.

I have at the present time (June 27, 1947) no interest in either fantasy or fandom, with the exception that I do like a very limited bit of science-fiction and intend to keep it in my permanent books. Old fanzines no longer attract me very much, though I still like them enough so that I intend to keep the files of the better ones. I am still interested in FAPA, and will continue to belong on a semi-active basis as long as there are men like Jack Speer, Milty Rothman, Harry Warner, Norm Stanley, and one or two others represented regularly in the mailings. I still feel the need for a bit of occasional written self-expression, I guess.

Why don't you quit fan@ m? If you face the truth about fans and their microcosm, face it fairly and squarely as I have done or tried to do, it looks to me like the only alternative.

Until I get nauseated beyond control, which may occur anywhere during the next eight or ten pages, I'm going to give you a

punch line to end all punch lines----fandom as it is. These, gentle reader, are actual happenings in the LASFS, happenings to which I was either an eye-witness or was told about by one of the participants. For the sake of libel, I name no names, give no dates. But these are not obscure people who dropped into the club once or twice and then vanished. These are name fans. The prime actor in every one of these cases was at the time of the happening in question one or more of the following: an officer in the LASFS, a fanzine editor, a member of FAPA, an officer in the NFFF, or a member of some other local club of repute (MFS, Strangers, PSFS) who had transferred to the LASFS. The dates are between 1943 and 1947.

First I might name the homosexual wolf, the boy who caused at least three sissyfied but unhomosexual LASFS members to toss their hats over the windmill and become out-and-out overt homosexuals. What a harem he built up among our boys!

Of a less sexual nature was a character who came to LA having run out on his minor offspring and owing so many bills that he dared not post his address at the club for fear he might be caught up with.

An interesting character to have been caught with during a police raid was the gentleman who had such a gigantic collection of nude female photographs. These pictures are of course classifiable as art, but how shall we classify the fact that he also had an enlargement of a certain portion of each picture--about an 8x10 of this particular woman's genitals?

At least two individuals I personally know of--minors who were supposed to be attending high school--habitually used the club as a hideout during protracted spells of truancy lasting as long as two months at a stretch.

And there is one interesting lad who, practically in the same breath, described the intricate and ingenious mechanical contrivance he has built to aid him in his masturbation, and then went on to explain quite seriously that he is a superman mutant. (Poor superman, unable to bend the females (or maybe males!) of this inferior race to his desires!) (NB. This was NOT Dogler!)

Another boy may have been perfectly normal in all ways. I'll let you be the judge. In a moment of lowered reticence he confided in a roomful of people that his bitterest regret in life is that he is physiologically incapable of being a lesbian. (I don't believe Krafft-Ebing mentions that one!)

A very nice boy indeed is the one who spent a half hour or so in a Bixel Street living room, letting the assembled company hear his soliloquy on whether or not to marry the girl. It seems that if he married her he couldn't be queer any more, but that was an awful lot to ask--even so, he was getting a little tired of just having other men, and maybe he should branch out. Perhaps he should have an affair with --who is such a revolting old man that it might give him the needed boost into heterosexuality; on the other hand, --- has been at it so long that he's probably so good that he'd make queerdome more attractive than ever-----and so on, ad nauseum. (Just nice conventional small-talk!)

Or how about the boy who got drunk and showed up under a lady's bed, stark naked and passed out like a light one New Year's eve. (He did not have a date with the lady, just wanted to.)

And of course there was the manly and versatile fellow who within a few hours tried to make both a woman and her half-grown son. The objects of his affections were non-fans, but he's in the top ten.

EPILOGUE.....July 23, 1948.

One page of anecdota horrida was all I got around to when I stopped writing these memoirs over a year ago. I was going to fill it on out for a few more pages, but, I dunno, I can't quite get in the mood. I'm not enough of a fan any more to treat of some of these more typical stefnistic acts without unsettling my stomach a little.

One of the incidents indeed is of such nature that no one has been able to tell me how to word it so it would go through the mail. Imagine the most revolting thing, I might say the most far-fetched revolting thing you can imagine one queer doing to another, and maybe you will have guessed something almost as bad as what one of our former directors admitted he had allowed one of the "boys" to do to him. Words fail me!

And of course there was a 100% homosexual group of fans and ex-fans holding forth in a Southern California city. I'd like to tell you about them and what one of them did to a LASFS member, but I won't.

I could tell you how one fan took charge of another's record collection while the owner was in the army; of how he sold me a number of the records; and of how angry the original owner was when he came through here and found them in my collection. Well, after all, I got them in good faith.

Or on the subject of honesty, you might ask Ackerman how many sets of FANTASY MAGAZINE and VOM he has given to the LASFS. You might ask him what happened to the club copy of BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP. You might ask him where the club WEIRD TALES went. You might get him to tell of the stfzines with club stickers in them which show up from time to time in second hand magazine stores, of the books that are forever vanishing from around the place. I don't know if he's started covering this up, now that the LASFS is under public attack, but I do know that this used to be Forry's favorite gripe back in the days when I was active as director--the way stuff seemed to melt out of the club library. You may call this a charming foible; I call it sneak-thieving.

Oh there is one tale I must tell. It seems that there was a LASFS member who believed fans should be above sex, that sex was not worthy of fandom. His girl friend didn't feel this way about it, so he told her she could lay anyone she wanted to, "as long as the fellow is a sincere fan".

---ooOoo---

On that inspiring note I shall leave you. I hope you've enjoyed this little opus of mine, and that you set it down with a resolve to make it a false picture insofar as your own participation in the field is concerned. If we ran the misfits out of fandom, we might end up with a hobby we could claim proudly as our own.

Also I hear that Ackerman thinks my recollection is faulty or something like that. I hereby challenge him to write his own memoirs. The same challenge goes to Daugherty, Hodgkins, Willmorth, or any other LASFSian who thinks I've done the club wrong. Personally, I think I've painted too alluring a picture--one that will draw the LASFS more good will than it deserves. (Snaryistic word split used by permission of the originator!)

"I don't know what Lancy is kicking about. In his memoirs, that is. By his own account, he has met a number of exceptional people, and has had some fine times. Maybe he could have done the same thing without fandom. Maybe not.

"Furthermore, he makes a mighty mistake in considering the LASFS as being characteristic of fandom as a whole. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I recommend very much that he come east and meet the Philly bunch, and then run up to New York to a meeting of the Hydra club. You'll find among us as fine an assortment of characters and drunks as anywhere, but the majority of them have more stature than the characters at the LASFS. And we keep our sex life more or less respectable. That is, not more than one woman at a time (who can afford more?), and only the normal perversions."

-- Milt Rothman, in PLENUM 10

"Los Angeles, Nov. 22 (AP) -- Craig Rice, 41-year-old mystery story writer, today was committed for an indefinite term in a state hospital on an alcoholism petition signed by her daughter.

"At the hearing in psychopathic court the daughter, Mrs. Nancy Atwill, testified that Miss Rice has used liquor to excess for four or five years and needs institutional care.

"The court ordered Miss Rice to the state mental institution at Camarillo for treatment.

"The author filed divorce suit against her fourth husband, Henry W. Demott, jr., 29, last August but later said she was seeking a reconciliation."

-- quoted by Norm Stanley in FAN-TODS 19