

TWILIGHT ECHOES

By Joe Fortier. FAPA Winter 1944

STRICTLY ECHOES. Nothing like a few subtitles thrown recklessly here and there for appearance. While throwing things, such as the bull and the horns to boot, Laney will find I've thrown a little cabbage his way--and please don't let me find anyone chastising me for the construction of this sentence; it just turned out like this, that's all, sorta--yeh--thrown together.

Thanks a million, to strike a depth of cliches, for turning out Twilight Echoes as you did, FT. I never expected anything quite so nice, so I'm rather pleased and happy. I'm sorry if anything could be construed or misconstrued as libel; don't you rather think you use the label differently than I? You seem to define anything that might be called such as libel; I usually define anything that can be proven such as libel. Therein lies the lie, or something. But to hell with such chit-chat, meanwhile begging pardon for violating the sacred vow never to use four letter words, especially strong or virile ones!...I misphrased my closing bit last time about the marriage. Yes, I'm getting married a little after this mailing comes out--if China doesn't make a bid for me first--but I'm not backing out on fandom as last mailing's news seemed to indicate. Yours truly is going to skip a mailing or so, that's all.

But Wiedenbeck,

the coward!

"Forgotten Fantasies", par En Garde, was one of the terrific items of last mailing. Continue to hang such stuff together, Ash. ..Sardonx brings to mind the fact that I've always thought fondly of Peter Pan and Wendy in the land of Never-Never where Captain Hook and a host of others dwelt. Not even "Slan" could impress me as much. Does anyone remember the beautiful fantasies about the water babies, the delightful cherubs who lived under water? Lovely... Bravo for Buck!

The Fantasy Amateur under the direction of Shaw shows for the first time a sign of life, a spark of originality. The new officers seem off to a fine start except that--if I can be pardoned for seeming a little blunt and perhaps being unwarranted in my thoughts--Lowndes and Wollheim speak as though they were going to run the whole show. Suppose there should be someone who wants to do some running too? Moot point that.

Sappho, and little fingers of ecstasy run up and down my spine. (So I am infringing on black magic, so what?) Watson once mentioned, after viewing an old FAPA mailing--one of those glorious affairs in somber shades of slop--that he'd someday top them all in the FAPA. This is great, with today's worst on a par with yesterday's best--and Willie tops them all in a blanket average. This is roundabout reprove for the "Warner disgrace". ...If you haven't heard: Harry Cag Fortier from the unknown, the Joe who invented Reitrof and raised hell with fandom. But Li'l Joe found Willie, albeit mayhap not completely, so in the long run Harry did a good deed. Y'know: that A equals B equals C stuff, then differentiate.

Oh yes. Probably because I don't understand poetry as a poet should, I enjoyed the untitled poem and "Kaleidoscope in Swingtime" best of all... Banshee is another nice title. Spencer will be quite a loss, to put it mildly. He was 50% of the mag's interest. But Glory Day has arrived and now I can die happily. Being no more than an average fan when I entered fandom, my dream

was to someday be great and wonderful and good and godly and fine like Forrest J Ackerman. In whispers I would confide to myself, "Someday, Joe, you may tie in a poll with Ackerman." Then guiltily I would look about for fear someone had overheard such blasphemous thoughts. And now at last my dream is a reality. Ackerman and I have tied for fourth place as the worst fen in fandom. Maybe I should say shucks and forget it all, but I can think of a four letter word that describes the situation better. Maybe you don't think so, 4e, but I think it's funny as anything in the mailing.

"Yesterday's 10,000 years" continues to be one of the brightest spots of the mailing and so Fan-Tode remains one of the better Fapubs... The Panty Raiser vies for first-spot honors of this mailing. Please inform Morojo that for proper postage I'll be willing to contribute one slightly used but neatly laundered pair of silk panties. They fit perfectly if she hasn't put on weight since I last saw her--properly dressed, I hastily add. Anyway, I have to rid myself of surplus stock before taking those final matrimonial steps. (and what were you saying about libel, Laney?)

The Mad Muse I saved until last. Through the efforts of James Russell Gray, you've done it again, Bill. This collection does not equal the work of George Eby by any means, but nevertheless it certainly takes first honors of this mailing.

But there are some publications which are praised and reprimanded consistently. I'd like to ask the membership why (if for other than dogmatic reasons) and I'd like to let the editors know at least one guy doesn't give a hoot, though his hoot doesn't count a good toot. This is the list: The Nucleus, one of the most illegible, ungrammatical, poorly presented bits of illogic in fandom; Beyond, which uses childish material and ridiculous illustrations--excepting Weidenbeck, the doward!; Horizons, illegible, unreadable, and an eyestrain to boot--though it might be good if I could risk my peepers; Fantasy Commentator, as interesting as a congressional report from Washington and as colorful as the stock market reports; Agonbite of Inwit, the point of which escapes me entirely--all of which may be my fault; The FAPA Fan, dull and strictly a dud, not excusable even on the grounds of the oldest Fapub.

It's good to see that a few are getting away from this idea--still prevalent in Caliban and such--of commenting on the last mailing to such an extent that there is nothing new for this mailing. I'm cutting my comments almost in half this time and intend to continue to do so. Incidentally, if as Fran intimated, I injured anyone's pride and prestige or hurt his dignity or position, I want to apologise for the last mailing. Such doings are not my purpose even though my normal overly frank manner may suggest that. In this issue, the jibes at Weidenbeck and Douglas are purely in fun, no more. And now to slink to a corner, there to write ponderous prose for FAPA.

INTERLUDES. I'd like to push back time for a bit, dragging out the most remembered things about the fans I've met while in service.

Lynn Bridges dug up stakes recently to join the glider infantry, but before he left MacDill Field I had the distinct privilege and honor of making his acquaintance. The tech-sarge didn't disappoint me by one bit; he was everything I had imagined and much more.

It's good to be able, even though only now and then, to meet someone as level headed as Lynn. He's strictly a man with his feet on the ground and his mind on the future. Genial, sincere, his interest in fandom lies

solely with the FARA and perhaps slightly with the NFFF. His steady blue eyes are like the rocks on which to anchor a frank meeting and a later friendship. Lynn's the kind of guy who knows immediately if he's going to like you--and he's the kind of fellow you like immediately.

John Cunningham and Jackson, Mississippi I met for the first time a year ago last summer. Both of them disappointed me, to be frank, and I know that I at least disappointed Johnny. The story goes that Cunningham has grown to be considered a humanitarian of sorts, one of the religious corners to the table of fandom. In John's mind, at least, I was pictured as a devil-raising pervert. So what was the result? Johnny, as a result of army life and goaded by our meeting, was hell-bent on finding the roughest liquor and the smoothest women, or turnabout, I'm not sure; GI Joe, as a result of army chapels in the desolation of Mississippi and egged on by memories of Cunningham, was determined to spend a sane three-day pass and stay clear of the evils of life. We didn't click one bit, because the contrast was a disappointment rather than a surprise.

Paul Spencer was my first GI discovery in army life, two years ago this spring, and the sort acquaintance at Pawling remains one of my bright army memories. Paul is much like Tom Wright in many respects, which may be one reason I took a fancy to him. As a fellow crypto I can think of no one with whom I'd rather be stationed overseas. Paul has a good head on him and a distinct taste for good reading and even some fair writing, so I expect great things from him when this damnable war is over. Our correspondence drifted off due to just one of those things in army life, known mainly as discussing life with a canine in regard to writing each other.

Then there were some nice civilians too. Oh yes, they're still to be found. Ossie Train helped brighten some moments in Philadelphia. He's a swell egg, despite a slight nervous disorder which keeps him out of the army, and he has the makings of a good author. His collection is really one of the finer unknowns. Ossie is strictly on my list to visit again. Julie Unger provided me with pleasant Brooklyn afternoons about the time I knew the Spence. For some reason forgotten by now we never did make our final date--and Julie never did send me his newsy (hint). Hoping I haven't been too unreadably dry, I'll call this to a halt and do a tape session as I hit the sack until tomorrow, when I'll wrap up this ragged.

FADING INTO STARLIGHT. Admittedly that title reeks of Edgar Guest--and what one doesn't?--but it's strictly literal, chums. As is often my habit, I've taken to reminiscing at this writing in the latter part of September on what led to Starlight publications. It started 15 years ago when I started reading scientific fiction...or maybe it started with the first strip of Buck Rogers. It makes little or no difference.

I'm celebrating or suffering, knowing not which, six years as an active fan off-and-on, mostly on. 1938 it was, and fall at that, when I decided to become that strange being, an actifan. Through the medium of Spaceways and Le Zombie I had some material published in 1939 which led eventually to my own magazine that fall, a pre-publication title of Stunning Scientific Fiction by Smashing Publications, later changed at publication to Stunning Scientific. Haw! I laughed too as time wore on. Finally the second issue boiled down to Scientifan.

I scrapped an incomplete third issue and lifted a department--"Mercury"--to start publication in springtime

of 1940 of The California Mercury, which ran regularly through most of the year as the Pacific Coast's only newsmag. After that it was a hit and miss proposition with a couple of strictly gag issues for the hell-uvitali, no type of distribution barred. It did run fairly smoothly for a period in 1943.

Speaking of gag issues there were such things as Spicy Tellus, The Oakventioneer, etc. And then there were such flimsy fly-by-nights as convention issues of Starlight, Comet, Mercury, etc. not to mention variously titled paraphrases on Twilight. (Even if this is boring the hell out of you I'm enjoying it all.)

The Comet, which I helped Tom Wright to produce, was a nice specimen. Starlight is my pride and joy of all time, Wright assisting; much as is Dawn in Tom's estimation, myself assisting. There have been other odd issues, some of which I own no copies of myself, and a few of which I can't recall without searching through my files. They were all a lot of fun in the making.

Scientifan and Starlight were the largest fanmags of their time, the latter being acclaimed the best at publication... 'Merk' I believe was the neatest all-around newswy ever put forth, the only one to give a complete coverage... And I'm as proud of the successful Comet and Dawn as if they had been my very own...

"Hellfire" I believe to be the most sensational column of all fantime--and also at its outset the most distasteful. If I'm proud of nothing more in my fan career--starting the Golden Gate Fantasy Society, creating a few streamlined ideas in publishing albeit not overly neat, writing, etc.--I'm glad I entered fandom and discovered Tom Wright, the best buddy I've ever known and the best artist fandom has ever had. He's stfandom's forgotten fan, no doubt about that.

What is all this? Name it and take it. I've got it off my chest, all those thoughts which went flashing through my mind at the completion of six years work in fandom, all those basic things for that warm glowing feeling I experienced at the realization, all that made me so happy for so many years. All I can say is that we are both glad it was six years of Li'l Joe and not six years of Reitrof.

"SO ADIOS..." (Excerpts from Li'l Joe's letter of 10/10/44 which accompanied the material for this mag. --FTL) I've had in my mind a bit of blank verse, entitled "It's Autumn", for Sappho perhaps. And I've thought of continuing my features in the PSFS News, this time on the choice of fan club to make. For you I had envisioned a three-part article of "When Joe Fann Returns", but that will have to wait while I gather more material. "Suddenly It's Spring Again" was a nice title for an Endymion saga. Then there was a series partially done for Trailer Dust, a company journal I write for.

Well, I had in mind all those things, but it's winter now--or will be soon--and while fading autumn finds me married in a week, the cold finds me still warm, in fact hot for overseas. I'm going on my last furlough tomorrow, so adios until I have a chance to get back pitching in the FAPA.

A short note but time is shorter, and life is sweet. Happy Fapaping... Joe.

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