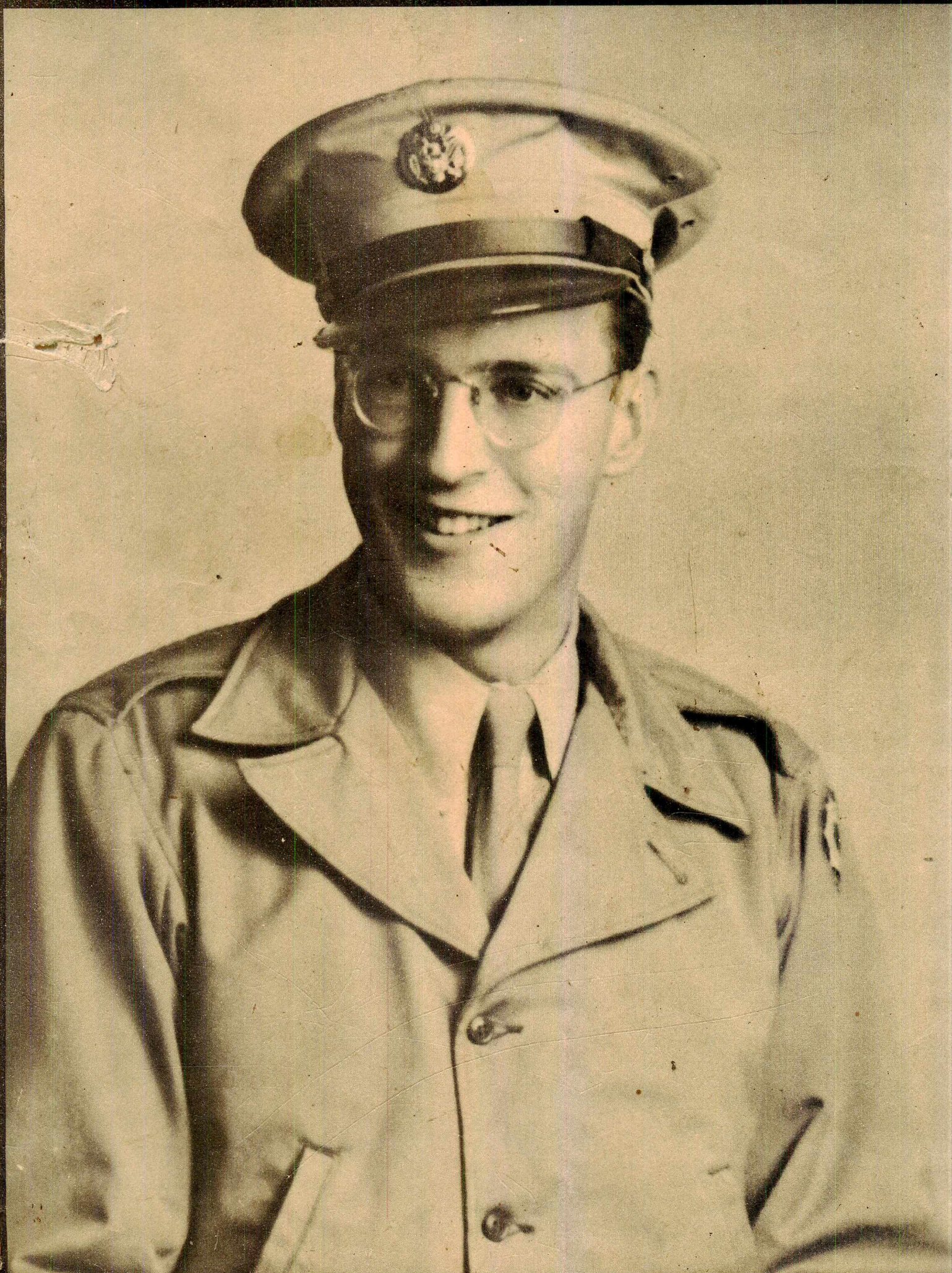


V O M #39

K.I.A. - Belgium - 1 Jan 45

Private FIRST CLASS Alden Lorraine Ackerman



MY BROTHER

Note:

My respected friend, Mr Heinlein, has criticized fans' propensity for doing, as he terms it, "an emotional striptease in public." In view of my feelings about my brother, I hope it will not be felt I have presumed on the reader, or embarrassed him in any way, or overstepped the bounds of good taste. While this is being written 3 weeks after his death, the news is fresh to me by less than 48 hours--if that explains anything.

ON 27 DEC 44 he wrote: "This is my last letter to you until I don't know when." On New Year's Day, he died.

Little Aldie--my kid brother--my only brother. Eight years younger than I. I call him "little", but actually he was taller than I by a good inch. Gone were the days when he could threaten the neighborhood kids, "Leave me alone or I'll tell my big brother on you." So, naturally, they took this tall clean kid and crammed him in a tank. Now we have a purple heart to replace a golden one--and mine is blue.

Fandom never heard much about Alden. He wasn't a fan. Even I never knew him too well, since we generally lived about 500 miles apart and anyway never had much in common. He was quite the opposite of me: He was athletic, a Scout, an outdoor boy. But he was a student, too. The last time I ever talked with him--it was in the LASFS Clubroom, I believe, less than a year ago--I learned that he had become an agnost.

He was--almost 21. Consider that, my friends. It's a wonderful world, when a sweet kid can live to be almost 21. He died on New Year's Day, fighting, they told him, for a New World. I don't know whether he wholly believed that. I, myself, have strong doubts. But if anybody was kidding him, it's my business from now on to see he didn't die in vain. I can't make the authorities responsible to me, to see to it that his life was not sacrificed for nothing; I can't personally reform the world; I can only turn my gaze inward, try to set an example by being a good guy, possibly good enough for both of us. This will not necessarily make for popularity--people are inclined to like the "right" guy, the guy with an easy conscience, better than the man with moral fiber. (While strict semanticists may argue "moral fiber" right out of existence--all the same, I aim at keeping mine from getting frayed.)

My brother's death came at a very opportune time for me. A concatenation of events had conspired to beat me down, "spiritually", to a very low ebb. I never appreciated being born in the first place, and I had encountered so much scorn for my ideals, praise for abandonment of principles, and the like, that I was reduced to a rather "hell with it all" attitude. There is, at the present time, not one person living that I know of who believes in me, really & truly believes in me, that would say, "Forry, hop to it; you've carte blanche with me; I'm behind you 100%." So it works out this way, that I say "OK, I'll dedicate myself to humanity thru my brother." He was a good kid, but he died before he ever got much of a chance to do anything about it. Let his chance, then, be incarnated in me. I will be good & do good, as I see it, for his sake. By being true to his memory I will be true to myself. If nobody living understands me or cares for what I'm doing, I can console myself that he would have approved. Maybe it's kind of screwy psychology, deciding someone who's gone would have appreciated you, because there's no way now of proving he wouldn't have. But it seems foolproof to me. Time cannot touch him, ever; he'll always be Aldie--nearly 21--a dear lad with an infectious smile, a sterling character, an inspiration for a loving brother.

--Forry Ackerman, Editor.

VOICI L'IMAGINATION - aka VOM - #39. Feb '45. 15c, 7/\$. This is

An "Aka-Aka" Publication

6475 Met Stn, LA Zone 55

of 705 Scott St. Alexandria 2, Ia. leads
off with an analysis of the Annish, the
Yngvidious Mr Searles & the not scotfree
Sergento Acque-Acque:

Liebscher's account of the latest Laughing Academy meeting at Battle Creek is very entertaining. I've long cherished the plan to attend one of those get-to-gethers, but I suspect that I'd take part only as a listener. I noted, in passing, that Elsie J. seemed to be mentioned rather frequently. Am I, as usual, a year or so behind in this? (I dunno--Walt, will U ansr that? Is Don a little behind? O, dear, that sounds wicked!)

Next comes Laney. His letter is a major feature in the issue, and generally interesting, which is far from being unusual. I'm particularly concerned with the Searles-Yngvi business.

As you know, in the Winter Mailing of FAPA there are some rather harsh comments on your castigation of Searles for his threat to run to the authorities. Not that I object to your castigation of Searles; I fully agree with you on that score, and consider your resentment fully justified. What I do object to are two assumptions that you make; first, that the FAPA is safe so long as no member tattles; and second, that Fandom is "....a society asynchronized with space and time, a world unto itself."

Laney has already written me, reiterating your statement that there is no danger to FAPA except from tattle-tale members. Dunkelberger very neatly discredits that claim; it was an outsider--a busybody, of whom there are legion--who did the dirty work to NUZ FROM HOME. It happened once, and it can happen again.

So far as I am concerned, nothing has appeared in FAPA to justify official action, even under current laws; but I'm not the official whose duty it is to decide such matters; neither are you, nor is Searles. The fact remains that certain items have gone beyond the limits which have resulted in action against other publications. The only possible safe policy for FAPA is to stay within the bounds indicated by such actions in the past. It may be pointed out, moreover, that whenever any individual or group takes advantage of special low mailing rates, he tacitly accepts the provisions of the law under which the special rates are set up.

A crusader may be justified in violating those provisions as a means of protesting against them, so long as he does not endanger the rights of others in so doing. So you, for example, are acting within your rights when you present in VOM, material which may result in the revocation of those special privileges; but when you put such material in a FAPA mailing envelope, you are endangering the rights of all the other members, and are therefore at fault.

As for the "World sufficient unto itself" idea--well, if I thought that any considerable majority of fans accepted that credo, it wouldn't take me long to drop out of all fan activity, because I would have too little in common with such a group. But I'm quite sure such a concept is not generally accepted; too many fans have written at length, expressing their opinions as to the place of Fandom in life, to permit such a statement to go unchallenged. Searles, I think, was all wrong; but you are far from right.

I doubt very much if recognition of the names of the major exponents of such curious exorcismos as the French decadent school of art correlates very closely with intelligence; at best, it probably measures little except curiosity. Of course, curiosity is a factor in intelligence. On the other hand, the names of Spengler and (to name two very divergent examples) Billy Holiday, are probably significant. So far as I know, I had never heard of Billie before. I may have heard her via radio, but if so I don't recall it. There is nothing strange about that; my ability to forget the names of people associated with activities in which I have no special interest is no less than phenomenal.

Kepner's brief comment on the matter of the "wasting" of leisure time is reasonable, I think. I suggest that there is a greater tendency to "waste" leisure time in periods of over-work and general stress than in periods of greater leisure; at least, there seems to be some evidence that way. During periods of stress, there appears to be a tendency to seek recreation in activities which add to the strain.

Tigrina seems to be still the wondering adolescent, in many ways; I imagine that she is about as Satanic as Little Eva. The appeal which Black Magic and "The Left Hand Path" have for her is apparently religious in character. A rather silly business, I should say.

I always wonder whether Tucker is deliberately running competition for his own LeZ by writing his hilarious Pongish stuff for all his competitors in the fanzine business--or does he consider it a form of free advertising?

Washington is still the bright young idealist. Some of those of his own age, in the upper teens and the lower twenties, who sneer at him so cynically, might well adopt his attitude toward some things. (Hah; preaching again!)

Ah, Bloch; there is a really significant list of names; but how did Ackerman get there? -- Lowndes' "Plans for Slans" is a little too reminiscent of Pegler to suit me, although he does have a point.

Bloch again; Dawgone; this guy is calling for gal with real intestinal fortitude; no?

The cover is excellent; the gals are a little too well handled (Sir! Do U-all intimate those nubile nymphs had been handled? Call me Errol Chaplin & carry me back to Ole Virginity, if ah'll permit any such aspersions to be cast on the Beaumont Beautys. In future, suh, ah'll thank U-all to conduct yo-self like Geo Fred'k; who knew how to Handel himself) from an artistic standpoint to conform to the usual VOM standards, but that is no drawback. The back cover is good.

although the shading of the torso of the woman puzzles me a little; I can't conceive of any light source giving that effect. (Doubting Thompson--lucky man!--has been dispatched the fotogenic fotografic model from which Rogers workt, demonstrating beyond the shadow of a shadow that there was nothing impossible about the umbrage. The moral being: The Shadow Knows!) #

lands East Indies on New Yr's Day: For whatever *Dick Wilson* airmaild from Nether clinical reasons or no shame that I recognize a mere dozen of the 38 names his Brewer (here we pause for vile pun by Forrest about teetotaler Speer and his Brewer) (ah, yes, the pause that represses. But when speaking of Speer as a teetotalitarian it should be remembered also that Miles J. was a Breuer) submitted. I spy, or think I spy, in the list: a composer, a Russian writer and film producer, the original top kick (1/Sgt de Sade), a philosopher, a psychiatrist, a man with birds in his beard, a Broadway playhouse (I'm only kidding), a modern dancer, a poet-collaborationist, a poet-noncollaborationist, a novelist and a jazz singer. I don't doubt there is at least one thoroly fictitious character somewhere in the list to trap the wise guy who'd claim he knew them all.

I came across Satie purely by accident. A composition of his (the name of which I can't spell but which has a G in it) was the extra side of a record in an album of the Bolshoi. It had such a pastoral hypnotic quality that I used it to put me to sleep for five-minute periods when I had finished lunch at home but had to beware of oversleeping and getting back to the newspaper office late. The record would lull me to sleep and four or five minutes later the needle rocking in the center groove would wake me with more consideration that could be expected of an alarm clock. Satie immediately climbed a rung higher in my regard than Ravel.

To such thoughts do I turn this sweltering New Year's Day. But then it never snows in LA, so I can expect little sympathy from you. We had a White Christmas--but it was only the glare of the sun beating on the coral.

Cut back to paragraph one. I'm sure that from now on you'll be deluged with similar lists, so I'll refrain from compiling one, tho I'd like to. But can some intellectual giant please tell me who Sigismondo Malatesta was, and what there was about him that interested John Barrymore? (Je ne sais pas, m'sieu, mais--by accident or design, 3/4's of the strange name is Esperanto. Sigis has no meaning I think, but the rest could be World Daring. ???) And who has an old copy of "So It Doesn't Whistle" he doesn't want? I want it. What do you want?

I'm glad to see that the crude nudes have given way to whimsical, captionless cartoons--even if they are swiped from Army News Service and (I believe) Collier's. (Militaristiccartoons recently mainly copyd from campaper sent by Cunningham. From Colliers, nothing.) I'd like to think it was dignity that got you over your childish preoccupation with latrineana and not a fear that some militant prude would complain of you to the authorities. May I? (Sorry to disappoint, but I withdrew from the Nude Feud simply because I was sick & tired of so much ado about nothing on. I salute the vision of those who recognize that no clothes make the woman & that bare skin aint no sin. Beneath the corn, for the others--scorn.) In this era when a capricious official can ban a periodical from the second-class mailing privilege (perhaps heralding a day when he could take more drastic steps which might imperil even "our microcosm") it is reprehensible of anyone to threaten you with extinction merely because he is offended. He has three decent courses to pursue: drop himself from membership or cancel his subscription; don't read or look at the nasty things; try to persuade the publisher to grow up. You sound persuaded, certainly; I hope you were persuaded by myself and other friendly critics--not by blackmail.

It's amusing to see how you people fall all over yourselves and preen when a Big Name notices you. (DICK WILSON has noticed us! We preen!)

One satisfying result of the Searles imbroglio: On 8 October 1944--mark the date--Ackerman wrote a page in English. (Shux; twarnt nuthin.) #

Doc Lowndes sends "Greetings, Peasants --" from 306 W 11 St, NYC 14. Before we get down to cases--was there supposed to be a blank page in V-37 on the reverse side of the McPherson full page cut, and on the reverse side of the Crime Book Center ad? (Yes.)

These notes are being typed by a common cold, at present inhabiting the body of Lowndes -- Doc's away somewhere plotting new crimes against FAPA -- who has just read V-37 and is amused.

Particularly interesting is the Washington letter inasmuch as it discloses a number of interesting possibilities, outstanding of which is the one that Raym is ripe for subscription to totalitarianism, provided some movement can offer the right type of idealistic bait for him. Add these notes on leadership to Raym's various "Take-Offs" and you see the incipient fascist intellectual. It would be stupid to try to predict outrightly that Raym will go the whole way, or to say how long it would take for such a move to happen. I offer it only as a first order probability under conditions yet to attain: disillusionment with democracy during a possible period of limited chaos and weariness following the end of the war; disillusionment with people, and particularly those from whom he expects the most -- fans; and a desire to find himself in some whelming program for change. These basic things could drive almost any person to accept the bait of a clever fascist movement, but the outstanding thing in Raym's case is the indication that he could make a brilliant totalitarian intellectual.

Dunkleberger's account of his experiences might have saddened me more had I not long ago come to the realization that fans are in no way different from non-fans, so far as simple reactions and emotions go. It is merely the dress with which they clothe these reactions and emotions that

gives the appearance of differentness. The basic thing to be realized is that being a devotee of science fiction, being a science fiction fan, does not make a person either more intelligent, more sophisticated, more mature, or more desirable as a person than does being a devotee of detective stories, or of any other type of reading. Those fans who are actually more intelligent, sophisticated, and mature than the so-called average would be little different in that regard had they never seen a copy of a science fiction publication. Fans have built up many illusions, the most dangerous of which is this mistaking a difference in degree for a difference in kind as regarding themselves, and even the difference in degree is considerably over-rated.

Bloch's list of great names warms the cockles of my heart, as I recall with inner glowings the simple charm of F. G. Coprophalia; the caustic, yet kindly wit of Hiawatha Donglepoetzer; the unforgettable virility of J. Strapp; and the bellylaughful pranks of Hotfoot O. Ouch. Verily, these are the salt of the earth, and if I do not go into detail on all names in this hyleconian list, it is only because time does not permit. Well do I recall the time when Bishop Shapiro and I -- well, after all this is a family magazine, isn't it?

Almost forgot to commend Bloch's capital idea, worthy forsooth of a Torquemada. Truly, the world can only find redemption through suffering. Let there be more and still more Ackermans; let the flood gates open, and Ackermans emerge like the offspring of a Surinam toad. In fact, let an Ackerman machine be made for every home. I'm thinking of founding an Ackerman Foundation for this noble cause, and our slogan is "Hell Would Be Welcome". Contributions gratefully accepted, although certified checks are preferred. (Since FJAckerman has a fine and noble sense of humor, I won't bother to add that I do but jest at his expense.) #

CAPT DONN BRAZIER, 27 Dec 44, from the Marianas: Here's the way I feel toward A. Langley Searles and other "white japs", though I know nothing whatever of the circumstances except what you wrote on your sheet, Yngvi-1944. If a fan does not like the material of a certain fanzine, and he is alone or in the minority, his only action should be one of two: either conduct an impersonal intelligent campaign against the offending magazine and attempt to convert his minority group to a powerful, majority pressure group, or quit the field, get out, and go back to collecting postage stamps. After all, there is no law which compels him to buy and read an offending publication. If he's a moral missionary setting out to "clean up" the field for the "good of fandom", his course of action should follow the campaign I described above. The course that Searles has threatened to take brands him forever in my mind as a thing unworthy of fandom, and he deserves the severest boycott that can be devised.

I liked the cover (#36) very much, especially the way the "horror's" tongue curls in his violent Bronx cheer. The little man in the lower corner must have just been the recipient of a Kornbluth hot foot. He doesn't appear to be enjoying it.

Does anyone have a science-fiction book written in French? If so, I'm in the market. (Oui, mon soldat, j'ai quelques romans fantastiques dans la langue française: L'Homme Invisible, La Guerre du Lierre avec les mains et le machin --aussi, dans Conquêtes, le commencement de Kilsons: monde atomique. Unfortunately, The Garage does not carry any of these items in duplicate, so the foregoing stiff-tease will have to be attributed to a touch of ego-boo.)

I'll probably 'sink into a routine job' as Speer suggest will happen to ex-service fen, but my marriage is certainly not unhappy! All your child-raising and educational letters appearing recently have been greatly enjoyed.

Those interested in liberal versus vocational education should read Barefoot Boy with Cheek which is a broad satire of all things that happen in college. There is a very humorous, satirical section on how valuable a liberal education is against the education of those who simply want to learn how to do something. This book is written about the University of Minnesota, but any Liberal Arts college will qualify for the satire.

Can't you find out the literary project which Baring-Gould of Time is working on? (We'll send him a copy of this, with the question mark, see if he has anything further to say.)

Harry Warner's experience with this Miss Jean Bogert (the telephony of Philly, reported HWjr) has probably made him

the Hermit of Hagerstown for all time to come! I wish to support him in his next campaign against legal size paper. I never have subscribed to a magazine of legal-paper size, and that mere detail of format may possibly have had something to do with it. (The double spacing several lines above was strictly a mistake but we might salvage something from the situation by offering the explanation that it was done to make it easier for U to read between the lines!)

Dali's book Hidden Faces was mostly trash! It was certainly old-fashioned; it seemed to be a Seabury Quinn story plugged up with abnormal psychology! It had none of the moving freshness of a Quinn story, none of the literary merit of a Derleth story, none of the whimsy of a Collier story. It was simply a cake that had fallen in the middle, becoming soggy and lumpy throughout. Dali's "Secret Life" was a thousand times better and well worth reading.

Am I ignorant! Of the names selected by Dick Brewer, I knew for sure only three: Spengler, Jung, and Billie Holiday. Where have I been and what have I been doing all my life?

Did you see Newsweek of Dec 11? In the art section is a summary of the Bernard Rudofsky clothing exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. We will dine while reclining, drape our clothes not cut and sew, and whereas our shoes today are not shaped to fit the foot which we have but a foot with the big toe in the center, our shoes in the future (or right now if possible) will be sandals with thongs. The

whole thing smacks of Rome in its heyday, with a touch of "Things to Come".

Has the subject of dowsing or divining ever been discussed in VOM? I've just read an account of it by Kenneth Roberts in the Sept. Country Gentleman (you'd read anything out here) which supports the phenomenon. Roberts closes the article in a way that can be used by every scoffed at pioneer: "I have heard that my unhesitating acceptance of water dowsing clearly shows me to be a sucker. People have been heard to laugh until their sides were sore over my stubborn credulity. Thus everybody's happy; for, while they have their laughs, I have my nine springs." #

"BOOB" TUCKER

of Powderd Opium Box 260, Bloomington, Ill advises us: I'm afraid I'm not very bright. In fact, I am apparently illiterate, uneducated, moronic, unversed and only semi-intelligent. I confess to never having heard of a single name on the Dick Brewer-Jack Speer list. I suspect they are a bunch of foreigners but am afraid to say so, lest I be proved wrong and made to seem snide.

Likewise, most of the names on Mr Bloch's list are unknown to me. Oh, I'll grant you that I know a few, a very few. It seems to me that I have heard of Mr Jacques Strapp somewhere. Did he not at one time hold a position of trust in some sort of uplift movement in this country?

Too, the name of Mother Naked sounds vaguely familiar. It is possible that at one time or another I have met her son Jay, or her nephew Stark.

There used to be an Ouch family living near here, but there was no Hotfoot O. Ouch among them. I recall Tackinbottom Ouch, Hitmyfinger Ouch, Takethat Ouch, and Homer "Goosey" Ouch, but no Hotfoot O.

I read in the papers that the Cue family was wiped out. Burly had a sister, a sweet lass of about sixteen named Barbara, but someone --an axe murderer I think-- crept upon them one night while they slept, and it was curtains for the Cue tribe. Now ring in a pun using the word diatribe, damn you. (Not after your touching tribe beaut.)

I never heard of Forest J. Ackermann. #

From 25 Poplar, Battle Creek, Mich, postcards

LIEBSCHER: The seventh annish of VOM was glorbuntious, and the cover, ah!, the cover, that was vombaeous.

Anent the list of names compiled by Bob Bloch to test the erudition of the perusers of VOM: The only familiar name in the list was that of Forrest J. Ackerman; I believe he is the guy that prevented technocracy. #

Concluding KEPNER's masterly contrast of Generation of Vipers with Memoirs of a Superfluous Man. What Has Gone Before: Kepner, recommending both bks to "those who can take it", characterizes the former as a strong purgative, likens the latter to a noose. Paragraf by paragraf, forcefully resumé-ing Wylie's work, Kepner builds with consummate skill tord a crashing climax! Now, go on (aw, gwan--we dare yuh!)

In MEMOIRS OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN, Nock sets down, in classic style, a record of the development of his personal philosophy. It would almost seem that this had been written by a far-seeing, deep thinking European of the last century, for Nock lived and wrote with a reserve and an absence of provincialism quite uncommon in Americans.

One of Nock's most typical mental traits was illustrated by one of the earliest memories of his childhood -- that of coming across, in an old primer, a stanza,

"In Adam's fall,
We sinned' all."

Nock says that his reaction upon reading such a thing as this would not be to accept it, nor to vigorously deny it. Neither would it be to dogmatically dispute whether Adam really fall, or whether we all sinned therein. Rather he would shrug, "How can we possibly know anything whatsoever about it?" This was his answer to all metaphysical or theological disputants. In the absence of evidence, he was loath to affirm or deny.

Another tenet of his philosophy is shown from his reaction to the famous Beecher-Tilden scandal of his boyhood days. Reflecting on this, he came to the conclusion that the sanctions of taste and manners should be given precedence over the Courts of Law, Religion, and Morals, together with their pernicious doctrine of Expediency.

He emphasized the "law of diminishing returns." He felt that our entire educational system had backfired by the inexorable law that literature (for instance) is cheapened in exact proportion to its popularization. The magazines of his childhood days, he felt, had maintained a constant level of literacy that is seldom reached today. (Harpers, Scribners, etc.)

In his early years, he had been a follower of the democratic ideas of Jefferson, Rousseau, et al. He felt, as they had, that the human race, under favorable conditions, was indefinitely improvable. He was at times frustrated by the seemingly wide chasm between men as they obviously seemed to be, and men as he felt they could (and should) be. This led to a spirit of impatient intolerance of mankind's shortcomings, until he came on an article in a magazine which forced him to completely remold his ideology.

The article, "Why We Do Not Behave As Human Beings," advanced the hypothesis that according to "human" standards, (those qualities of which all humans are supposed to be possessed, i.e., integrity, intelligence, educability, taste, virility, etc.) the vast majority of people are psychically sub-human, lacking the capacity for human conduct in an advanced culture. All are crafty and cunning up to a certain point, and trainable in various skills, but only the few are in any proper sense educable, possessing the finer qualities, and the capacity for culture. Since our world, and all

its institutions are run by and for the "mass-man", the psychically human individual is superfluous (as was Odd John, for instance.) The best he can do is to live a full, tasteful, intelligent, and cultured life.

Nock lived variously in Brooklyn, Canada, the midwest, and Belgium. He was a keen observer of human affairs, and a thorough student of history. Politics, he felt to be beneath contempt: political action to improve the world, hopeless. He felt that whatever the mass-man claimed for his own -- democracy, culture, education, literature -- would be reduced to mediocrity. There is one fallacy in Utopias -- the men who must compose them are what they are, rather than what we would like for them to be. If we see men as they are, we must realize that humans are incapable of administering any social system larger than a tribal unit. We just aren't up to it. Maybe a million years from now, when the mass man has wiped himself out, or nature has done it for him -- but that is idle conjecture.

Nock would no doubt consider Wylie rather Quixotic. "Him that hath eyes, let him see." Only a few have eyes -- only they can see. Let them see things as they are, that is all. Quoting Bishop Butler, "Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be. Why would you be deceived?" #

From Palo Alto comes the Voice of the TIGRINATION: I was glad to see another issue of "Vom"--that magazine of abnormal dimensions--cramped into the narrow confines of Box 13. At least, I suppose it was "Vom". The trio of maidens of lovely proportions Cavorting and romping in varied contortions

seemed to indicate that this was indeed 4e's publication. Very unique--having the supple damsels, by means of their various spritely postures, obligingly spell out this three letter title!

The illustrations on the covers, both front and back, were admirably drawn. The drawing on the front cover suggests to me a zodiacal design, even though no actual astrological symbols are utilized. The various "jewels" scattered at random also add sparkle to this unique and truly fantastigover. The fellow on the "table of contents" page wasn't kidding when he said, "Yep, that front cover knocked my eyes out."

I enjoyed Walter Liebscher's breezy summary of Slan antics in his neck-o'-the-woods. Alas, I grieve when I think of the enjoyment that I miss by not residing in a region abounding with Fantasy fans.

Francis Laney and James Kepner aroused my curiosity when they mentioned the weird song, "Strange Fruit", and I made enquiries at the two music stores selling records here in town. It seems as if I shall not have the chance to hear this unusual recording for awhile, however, since it will not be available at either of the music shops for quite some time. The subject is most unusual for a song; the lyrics are certainly weird and eerie, and I am anxious to learn what manner of melody accompanies such a verse.

I was greatly amazed to find another issue of "Vom" awaiting me before I had a chance to scribble off a few words concerning the superb Annual edition. I am neglecting my correspondence a bit lately, due to the fact that I am seeking the impossible--the non-existent--the unattainable--namely: suitable lodgings. Here is proof that I am indeed a devotee of Fantasy, if I can entertain the fantastic notion that I might be able to obtain a roof over my head during these wartimes! Of course, I prefer a large rumbling house, with a creaky door, a la Inner Sanctum, and complete with hot and cold running ghosts, but during these days, I'll be lucky to get standing room only under a park bench. #

HARRY WARNER favors us with a letter from the ole manse at 303 Bryan Pl, Hagerstown, Maryland: The Bill Temple letter in no. 36 is probably the finest thing you've ever published in VOM; it is certainly better than any letter that has yet appeared, and worth more than most of the Plans for Slans, supplements, and the rest put together. Very required reading for the fan who thinks he sees the light and should quit fandom because he finishes school and goes out into the world and gets a job, like Fortier.

Excellent cover for no. 37. The letters are better than those in the preceding four or five issues, too, for the most part; long ones like Dunk's, Speer's, and Liebscher's are usually good ones. Tigrina, however, has fallen into an abysmal habit of repeating herself, and here and there you publish something obviously for no other reason than that it was submitted, and you don't want to hurt the author's feelings.

I always did think Speer was the perfect bureaucrat, and now I know. How does he expect me or anyone else to keep fanzines clean if they're stored in file folders? Unless you have a filing cabinet, of course, or are willing to spend several hours once a week dusting the three open edges of each folder. Nay, large manila envelopes are the only answer that is simple, cheap, and safe for the condition of the magazines themselves, even if I will have to buy special ones for VOM.

Dunkelberger's letter presents some facts I didn't know. Why not take the obvious way out in all these cases, though, and go to the local postmaster for a ruling on the mailability of the matter in question? It won't settle the question of what is and what isn't filth, but it will stop the ridiculous way you, Dunk, and Searles and bristling at one another, and it'll end talk of lawsuits.

Incidentally, I don't think anyone would have much trouble getting away with anything that goes first class. I understand that most of the mail from this country to servicemen overseas isn't censored, on the theory that we are kept enough in the dark about military stuff here to prevent information of any value to the enemy from possibly falling into the wrong hands. And Speer, who so dearly loves to diagram sentences, had better provide himself with a very large sheet of paper if he wants to go to work on that.

I still think that VOM has outlived its usefulness in the present form, that some sort of a change of policy would be for the best. I have spoken. #

"JAZZMAN" FRAN LANEY jives in: A certain feeling that I should help you conserve stencils leads me to bypass the superb annish entirely, and to comment on only one letter in the excellent #38. My long article will doubtless bring considerable controversy, and I want to save my stencil space for that purpose.

I do, however, want to compliment you unreservedly on the tremendous overall improvement in Vom. This morning I got out my file and spent several hours browsing through it. Starting with #19 (first Regal length), the magazine gradually went downhill, striking a very low depth with issue #28, and holding this depth for several issues. Along about #32 or #33, a faint improvement became evident, and this upswing has become more and more noticeable with each succeeding number. It is my considered opinion that the rejuvenated Vom is a fanzine that no one claiming any real interest in either fandom or the stefnate can afford to be without.

Roy Johnson's letter in #38 is the one that I can't pass by. In the first place, he misuses the word "jive". Quoting Ramsey and Smith in JAZZMEN (Harcourt Brace, 1939, \$2.75): "... 'jive'--kidding, clowning, nonsense..." (p. 130). Jive includes such interpolated vocal remarks and breaks as, "Oh, Play That Thing!", "Yas! Yas!", "Hidee, Hidee, Ho!", and so on. This is about all the jive one would get on a record, but various clowning and smart-aleckiness performed on the bandstand would also come under this heading---watch a performance of any colored band and you will see what I mean.

The words jazz and swing are pretty much synonymous. About a year ago, the magazine METRONOME took a poll of a number of prominent musicians on their definitions of these two words. Aside from a minority who limited the term jazz to the old-style, contrapuntal dixieland stuff; these men used the terms interchangeably. The terms are some times differentiated, however; jazz being used to refer to the comparatively unarranged music of small combos, and swing applied to the arranged output of full size orchestras.

Now for Mr. Johnson. His statement that "jive" (meaning, of course, "jazz or swing")...is not music, and cannot be liked as such.. is proof positive that he knows little or nothing about it. I defy him to give an adequate definition of the general term, music, which would not apply completely to jazz and swing.

From a technical point of view, jazz has just as rich a musical content as symphony. The mere fact that its basic melodies originally came from musically illiterate negro tonk musicians and tin-pan-alley hacks has no bearing on the subject. The embroideries on the simple, basic themes reach out into the highest realms of musical expression. Johnson evidently plays the piano; I suggest he investigate such things as Earl Hines' unbelievable improvisations on such hackneyed popular tunes as I AIN'T GOT NOBODY (Columbia 35875) or MY MELANCHOLY BABY (Victor 27562); the various recorded and written versions of Meade Lux Lewis' HONKY TONK TRAIN BLUES; Davenport's COW COW BLUES (Brunswick 80022), a solo which out-Boleros the Bolero---and antedates it!; Miller's tremendous TEA FOR TWO (Victor 27766) and VIPER'S DRAG (Victor 27768); and scores of other brilliant sides of jazz piano. If this material is not music, and music at its best, then nothing is.

And how about Louis? (Louis Armstrong, of course!) Louis has never blown a note that wasn't good; Louis at his best is the greatest music in the world. Try THAT'S MY HOME (Bluebird 10236), STARDUST (Vocalion 3172), TIGER RAG (Vocalion 3009), DARLING NELLY GRAY (Decca 1245) SAVE IT PRETTY MAMA (Columbia 35662), KNOCKIN' A JUG (Columbia 35663), BASIN STREET (Cutout, OK 8690), ST. LOUIS BLUES, (Bluebird 5280), and WEATHER BIRD (Columbia 36375). These give a very sketchy cross section of the genius of Louis.

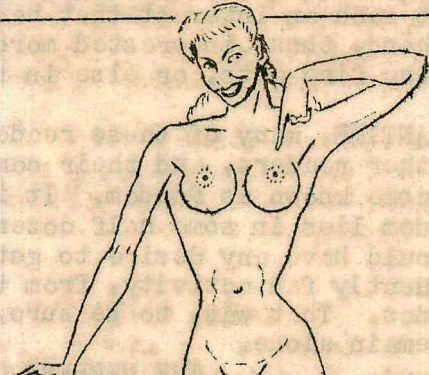
Or if he likes the more symphonic material, what makes him think Duke Ellington is not music? Huh?

And how about Coleman Hawkins? Or the earlier, less commercial Count Basie? Or Don Redman? Or Fletcher Henderson? Or even Bennie Goodman and Artie Shaw at their best?

No, Mr. Johnson is 'way off the beam. Jazz and swing are music; he can't around it. He's just not heard enough of it when he make such statements as he did in this letter.

I will, however, agree fully with him that it is necessary to know music in order to appreciate it to its utmost. This knowledge, unfortunately is among my many lacks; and I've noticed many times that my ignorance keeps me from appreciating material which sends cognoscenti such as Rimel, Baldwin, Perdue, and others into ecstasies. The way it is, I get my kicks; but it is plain that a fuller technical knowledge of music would make them kick a lot harder sometimes.

And bravo to Johnson for wanting to see musical discussions in Vom.



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AIR

A STEFNIST MANIFESTO

by JAMES KEPNER



IN SO FAR as the development of the political philosophy of fandom is concerned, Fran Laney's article in the last issue of Vom was little short of revolutionary. However, I should like to question certain points in his major thesis, that "Fandom" and the stefnate, as he sees fit to define them, are two different groups. I don't intend to challenge it in any basic way, for I agree with his article in the main. A few changes in wording, a bit more objectivity, and considerable less use of language with intent to prejudice, and I should say that Fran has quite unwittingly made a welcome addition to the political philosophy of our "culture". Strictly speaking, other fans have had the same idea, but have not put it so well.

(I SHALL HEREINAFTER use the term "Fan" to refer to its use as in Fran's definition, and shall use fan--in small case letters--when referring to the older use of the term, as including both those whom Fran has termed "Fans", and those whom he has termed stefnists.)

THERE ARE BROADLY two types of interests in this field which we have up to now called fandom, for lack of a better term. These interests fall under the definitions of "Fan" interests, and those which have been classed as "stefnistic". I feel that Fran is in grave error with his attempt of a strictly bi-polar classification of all individuals concerned, as either "Fans" or stefnists.

SUPPOSE WE FIRST attempt to arrange our subject matter;

A FEW YEARS AGO, a group of pulp magazines began publishing fiction which may be classified as generally fantastic. The stories were of two loosely defined types: Those that were based on scientific concepts; and those that were extensions of concepts generally supposed not to be scientific.

THESE MAGAZINES rapidly drew about them a close group of followers, some of whom preferred science fiction, and some fantasy, altho the vast majority liked both. These followers became regular, almost fanatic, readers, and eventually developed an interest in almost anything incident to the conceiving, writing or publishing of their favorite form of fiction. Due to the subject matter of at least the best of these stories, they generally had a broadening effect on the reader, and often directed his interests into sidelines from which the authors had invariably drawn their own ideas.

AS A GENERAL RULE, those who most closely followed the stories based on novel scientific concepts were stimulated to further interest in the various sciences, if indeed it was not such an interest that had led them to the field in the first place. On the other hand, those interested more in fantasy were somewhat likely to become interested in the fine arts, or else in the various offtrail subjects classed as occult.

IN THE MEANTIME, many of these readers had, in one way or another, come into contact with other readers, and their common interests drew them into the close society which has become known as fandom. It is admitted by all that the lowest common denominator of fandom lies in some half dozen pulp periodicals. But the very fact that two readers should have any desire to get together meant immediately that fan interest, and consequently fan activity, from that moment amounted to more than just reading the magazines. That was, to be sure, the prime, i.e., the first interest, but it did not long remain alone.

THE MEMBERS OF THESE came to share interest in a number of things: The literary style of a certain author; the background, that is, the personal life and affairs of the author; the scientific or metaphysical concepts on which various stories may have been based; thence, the body of the sciences behind that; the concepts of future conditions, possibilities and methods for bringing these conditions ultimately to pass--that is, idealistic political action; the refinements of that higher culture which many feel will come about in the world of tomorrow, and--as naturally follows--the interest here and now in whatever the present world can offer in the way of culture; interest in one's own ambitions in the writing or illustrating field; acquisitive interest--the desire to possess everything obtainable that's remotely connected with science fiction; and eventually, the trifold interest in fan publishing: (1) Amateur attempts at imitating the pros; (2) "Fan" journalism, quite parallel to movie Fan journalism; and (3) amateur publishing which concerned itself with the discussions of subjects on which science fiction was based.

THE "FAN" JOURNALISM eventually subdivided itself into fanfare adulating prodom, and fanfare adulating fandom. It was at this point (rather than with the advent of Michelism) that "Fandom" departed from its original intents. Previously, it had somewhat paralleled

film fandom, and was quite similar to it in almost all respects. When the fans started concentrating on their "bobby sox" adorations of prodom, and began turning their interests to one another, they departed from the way that was set for all proper "Fandoms". (It might be highly interesting, incidentally, to see what would happen if a number of film fans would introvert themselves in this manner. Perhaps the flighty young bobby-sox might find solace in one another's company, and develop similarly to science fiction fandom.)

IT MUST BE REMEMBERED that a large variety of persons, of extremely different types, had been drawn into fandom. They were interested in science fiction and fantasy, and therefore in fandom, for as many reasons as there were separate individuals. Fran, in his article and in conversations, has made the mistake of identifying his own motivations as the only valid ones. Fans were attracted to this circle for any number of causes.

THERE WERE THE reader-critics, with their letters to the editors, and later their fanzines. Beginning as bobby-sox in every sense of the term, they usually developed into the hard-to-please type, whose letters were filled with vitriolic commentary on the mag's latest issue. Their sadistic pleasure at dissecting a magazine, an author, a story or an artist for any minute sort of flaws, from typographical errors to inconsistencies of plot, would make excellent material for a psychological research.

THEN THERE ARE the embryo authors. They almost invariably plan to be great authors--usually of steif or fantasy--some day, and occasionally one of them does become a fair-to-middlin' pro. This group splits into two general types. One of these sub-types has read a book or two by Jack Woodford on how-to-break-into-the-writing-racket, and the young bambino is all set to become a super hack. All he has to do is start pounding hell out of his typewriter until he clicks. There is some deep osoteric meaning in this "clicking" business, but at any rate, he's always sure it will happen to him, if he just keeps plucking away. The other type is the self-styled "artiste". Classic writing is at a premium, therefore he's going to sit down one of these days and write a few classics. They will be literary. They will be artistic. They will have style. Art for art's sake. Altho he's usually about as hazy on certain points as the embryo hack, he's convinced that as soon as he gets himself in the right mood, the guilded words will flow forth in a veritable torrent that will put Aristophanes, Khayyam, Arelius, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Thackeray and James Joyce to shame. That is, as soon as he gets started.

EMBRYO ARTISTS are a close parallel.

THEN, fandom has its pack rats. As soon as this type discovered his first science fiction magazine, and found that more than one issue was going to be, or had already been, published, he became seized with an overwhelming desire to possess every magazine that had ever been issued, and anything remotely connected with them that he could possibly lay his hands on. I suppose this is the type that's hardest for so-called practical people to understand. "Why anyone should want all those trashy magazines, and all those perfectly horrible pictures" is beyond their feeble powers of comprehension. Probably a psychiatrist could offer some explanation. In a large city, this type will spend hours on end looking around dusty old bookstores, searching for single issues of magazines to complete their files--they usually feel that a collection is next to worthless if it is not complete.

THEN THERE ARE the card-file fans, and the bibliographers. These seem to be taken with a phobia for making all sorts of files and "biblio's", usually covering exactly the same territory that several dozen other fans have already covered. But whatchell? They enjoy it. (Lost anyone gain a mistaken impression that I look down on these various interests, let me assure them that I don't. I have at one time or another fitted each of these types.)

THERE HAVE BEEN the crusader-reformer types. Being discontent with the conditions of this world, and reading continually about future utopias (even if most of them did pan out sour) they hoped to set about changing the world. What could be a more fertile field for recruits than such an idealistic group as the science-fictionists? They usually found out the fallacy of this assumption, but in most cases, not before they had become embittered. Quite a few of these turned even more cynical than had been the fans who showered cold water on their budding idealism.

OTHERS WHO FELT STRONGLY the shortcomings of our day and age were merely looking for a refuge, in fantasy, and in fandom.

MANY OF THE PURISTS, or "Fans" according to Lancy's definition, were considerably antagonized by these enthusiastic fans who always seemed to be wanting to "do something". They tended rather strongly toward conservatism and were annoyed by the enthusiasm of many of the steifnists. They were much more annoyed by the fact that these few steifnists were continually presenting them with problems they were afraid to face.

AND THERE IS THE dill-tante type who makes much show of flashy culture, and such. It is not to be supposed that all fans interested in the fine arts and in the social sciences were merely putting on the show. I have only known one or two whom I might seriously suspect of this.

THOSE ARE STRICTLY intensional types--that is, they do not apply as descriptions of any individual fan, but are rather caricatured descriptions of certain similarities found in many fan. Nearly every fan is a helter-skelter combination of these types, and there are not too few who possess enuf of the characteristics of each to fit in any class in which you should care to place them.

IN A COMMENT on a letter from Robert Bloch on the FANCYCLOPEDIA, Fran deploras what he seems to consider the utterly conceited, abnormal and ridiculous idea that fandom (or, according to Fran, the steifnate) composes a civilization. I must beg a change of terms. Would society, in its fairly broad sense, suit you better, Fran? In my opinion, fandom as a whole

(including both your stefnate and your "Fandom") do compose a society. Fandom is a group of people, non-local, in this case, who are distinguished from outsiders by certain general similarities of habits, interests, speech, mores, ideals, etc. The members of this society combine in various sorts of social activities which are exclusive of persons not connected with the society. Like other societies, the group known as fandom possesses a reasonably definable degree of social stratification. I shall go into this subject in more detail in an article in the next issue of Toward Tomorrow.

IN CONTRADISTINCTION to Fran's conclusion that there are 2 groups of people ("Fans" & stefnists) I maintain that it would be more accurate to say that there are 2 diverse types of interest in what has been known as fandom. The rift in interest at present is far too small to justify the naming of 2 separate groups.

loosely, "Fan" interests concern themselves most directly with non-professional interest in scientifantasy, as well as various types of "bobby sox" activities and interests. Stefnic interests, then, would be any other interests which two or more persons already designated as fans may hold in common. If it is agreed that their lowest common denominator of interest is scientifantasy, and they later discover that they also share certain other avocations, such as Jazz, somantics, Esperanto, symphony, chemistry, agnosticism, sociology or Sanscrit love lyrics; and granted that they are perfectly free individuals; is there any reason why they should be denied the right to discuss these other interests? If they happen to have got into a group where the majority, if not all, of their friends are fans, and if they share several of these other avocations with these fans, why in the hell should they spend all their lives discussing nothing but scientifantasy?

I THINK it would be well to break these two types of interest down to, let us say, nine. The classification is arbitrary, but it will serve to illustrate my point. It must be kept in mind that what follows is not a classification of 9 types of persons, but rather of 9 ranges of interest. I have met only one or two fans who did not possess several of these interests in mentionable proportions:

#1- Fantasy enthusiasm is strictly reader or fan interest, the desire for horror or whimsy in fiction. (If Fran wants to go into psychological types, I think he would find a large percent of the morbid paranoids & schizophrenics are heavy on this end.

#2- Scientifiction enthusiasm is also strictly reader or fan interest. (Altho the old Gernsback himself must have been an apostate, as he felt it to be the purpose of scientifiction to teach science in a sugarcoated form.)

#3- Actifan interest is interest in that fandom which has introverted itself. (Fans of fandom) For instance, an interest in a person merely because he is known to be a fan, or interest in such an organization as the Neff, and, to a certain extent, Fapa. I should say that about 75% or more of fan publishing falls into this section.

The interest in collecting, I should think would be about equally divided between these first 3 interest ranges. Some collect to be able to read science fiction, and some to read fantasy, but many collect in order that they may have a collection.

#4- Cultural interest, or interest in the fine arts, would seem quite logically to stem from range #1, out of the fantasy fan's frequent interest in art (in fantasy literature) for art's sake. However, this hasn't seemed to work out in the fans I have known, that is, not as an even semi-applicable rule. At any rate, interest in music, literature, painting, poetry, the stage, etc., play a major rôle in a large majority of fans' interests as they mature.

#5- Scientific interest is obviously closely tied with #2.

#6- Social & socio-sexual interest, in the companionship and, often as not, of one other person. Fans' friends & wives, if they have anything whatsoever to do with fandom, would fall into this class, unless of course they develop other interests along some of these lines. I suppose this range would include the Carrie Nationlike desire of several fans to see that other fans live their lives according to the standards of the particular reformer, whether he be Speer, Laney or Ackerman.

#7- Sociological interest, or interest in the various social sciences, often grows out of #2.

#8- Altruistic interests include the desires to help improve the world. These stem from #2; and in their more mature state are not greatly distinguishable from interest range #7, other than that they might place more emphasis on action than study.

#9- Professional interest includes the desire to become a professional writer or artist, as well as the fulfilled interests of those in the pro field who possess some interest in science fiction or fantasy. This would exclude a writer who turned out a scientifantasyarn occasionally just because it's another market.

THE PURPOSE of that outline is to be able to classify various fans. I shall attempt to classify a few to illustrate my point, that most of us are neither "Fans" nor stefnists in the strict sense which Laney applies to these terms. Most of us are just fans who lean one way or another, and probably somewhat sporadically at that. The classification below is purely my own opinion. If I tagged you with the wrong numbers, don't get hot about it--I just didn't know you as well as I thot. And if I left

your name out of the list completely, it was probably because I didn't know your interests well enuf to risk setting you down in numbers. Beside, the list is meant only as a sample; maybe Vom will have a poll later. Underlines denote special interest.

SPEER: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.
BRONSON: 2, 3, 4, 6.
TUCKER: 1, 2, 3, 9.
WOLLHEIM: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9.
LANEY: 1, 2, 3, 6.
LOWNDES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9.
DOUGLAS: 2, 3, 6, 8.
SEARLES: 1, 2, 4.
KOENIG: 1, 2, 4, 5.
ACKERMAN: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8.
DAUGHERTY: 3, 6.
DEGLER: 1, 2, 3, 8.
RON CLYNE: 1, 2, 4, 9.
MEL BROWN: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.
WIDNER: 3, 7, 8.
WATSON: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9.
YERKE: 3, 4, 7, 9.
MIKE FERN: 2, 3, 5.

POGO: 6.
SAM RUSSELL: 1, 4, 7, 9.
ART SAHA: 2, 5, 7, 8.
EBEY: 2, 3, 4, 9.
FORTIER: 2, 3, 9.
HEINLEIN: 2, 7, 9.
CAMPBELL: 1, 2, 5, 7, 9.
TIGRINA: 1, 3, 6.
MERRITT: 1, 2, 4, 9.
LOVECRAFT: 1, 4, 9.
DERLETH: 1, 2, 9.
PALMER: 1, 2, 9.
BURBEE: 1, 2, 3, 6.
MRS BURBEE: 6.
TOM WRIGHT: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9.
TRUDY: 2, 3, 8.
LEO MARGULIES: 9.
YOURS TRULY: 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9.

IN THE CASE of those no longer connected with fandom, I have classed them as they would have been when they were around last.

IT IS OBVIOUS that if we stick to Laney's contention that only interests #1, 2 & 9 would classify as "purist" "Fan" interests, it would be hard to classify anyone on that particular list as a purist fan, except Derleth, Palmer & Margulies, and in the latter's case, I doubt if #9 should be classified as "Fan" interest unless it is accompanied by either #1 or 2.

NOW TO CLEAN UP a few odds & ends:

IN VARIOUS ARTICLES in Fandango & Shangri-L'Affaires, Fran has stressed to the furthest limits the point that a fan club should devote a major part of its activities to social life...by which he meant mainly plenty of rosebud & drinking. I've no objection to that, but I don't think he's being quite logical when he says that those activities should have a major part in purist "Fandom", whereas the interests on the subjects on which most of the good stories were based is strictly taboo.

SOME FEEL that an interest in literary criticism has more place in fandom than has an interest in sociology or, for that matter, in metaphysics. They tend to meet the person interested in the social sciences with what they consider to be an earth-rending indictment: "If you're so interested in politics and all that baloney, why don't you DO something about it?" I think this answer should just about even matters up: "If you're so interested in literary style, why don't you create some of it?"

OF COURSE, I don't expect any of the "purists" to take me up on that--I doubt if more than 2 or 3 of them are capable of it, and they're usually too damned lazy, or else too busy with their "bobby sox" dervish dancing. I don't expect any of the purist "Fans" to write a classic any more than I expect to run for first President of the Federated States of the World. However, one or another of them might do it, and for that matter, I might do something not quite that spectacular. (Fat chance.)

HE GOES ON to show certain aspects of the stefnate, with seeming intent to show that all stefnists are pseudo-intellectuals & sophisticates, unadjusted to life and the Great God Sex, running around with their heads in the clouds, faking an interest in semantics and "certain phonograph records", and being generally possessed of all sorts of repulsive tendencies. I do not even consider these comments worthy of an answer. None of these faults can be found in stefnists that can't equally be found among Fran's "Fans". From Searles on down to Degler.

AS FOR THE TWO GROUPS: Things may eventually come to pass that after a few years "Fandom" and the stefnate may be going their separate ways, but so far they're still both revolving around the same core. However, Fran, you might be an accurate prophet.

Grateful thanx are exprest to ELMER PERDUE, without whose crankiness (on the mimeo, on the mimeo handle!) this issue woud be quite a bit yet delayd. As is commonowledge, via the medium of the ubiquitous Fanewscard of Mr Ungerberger, your editor was struck down with a 9-day attack of measles (thereby clinching the arguments of Searles, Koenig & Lovecraft that Ackerman is an incurable juvenile, measles being a child disease). But for the voluntary assistance of Elmo, Vom woud be later than I care to think.

Lined up for the Mar number, out just as soon as I can possibly put it out, for I aim at 12 issues in '45, are letters from Speer...Rothman...Croutch...Tigrina...Fred Baker & Chas McNutt. Cover will be a goodie by Sandra Michel. Incidentally, sincere apologies to Bill Watson, who several mos. ago stencild a cover for us on the double, & now it has not been used after all. It will be; it is being saved; it was a caricature of myself, inappropriate for this ish, as Bill will understand. Thanx a mill', anyway, Watso; Apr might be an ideal time.

