

CINCINNATI

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Postpaid

July 1967

As a club, The Cincinnati Fantasy Group is not that everybody seems to have
heard about, but actually have very little of. Its members turn up at almost every
major fan gathering at which to pop up at your doorstep - and you must expect

FANTASY

As a club, we have no formal structure, no dues, no officers, no committee of four-
teen. The club is a loose collection of individuals who have been brought together
by the fact that we have the reputation for being "The Wild West of S.F.A.".

Our club has been influential in the past 5 years, without any conscious
effort on our part of doing so. The influence being the more extensive example.

Members of the club are fun-loving, and free of formality. They discuss, write
and produce; they are not afraid to say what they think, and all that goes with them. They
are free to do as they please. This is the main reason for the club's success.

As a result, the club means many things to many people. A club made up of
highly intelligent individuals, it must present a paradox to the contrary.
Don Ford was asked from the 1966 New York Convention saying that someone had
asked him: "What was it that the club was so successful? How many members
do you have?"

That's what started this one shot. Since it all on Don.

Whether you are a fan or not, it is up to you. By this time I have
your question and an answer.

GROUP

Don Ford

THE CINCINNATI FANTASY GROUP

is published by:

Don Ford

Box 19-T, RR #2,
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July 1957

25¢ postpaid

As a club, The Cincinnati Fantasy Group is one that everybody seems to have heard about; but actually know very little of. Its members turn up at almost every major fan gathering; or they're apt to pop up at your doorstep when you least expect them to.

As near as can be determined, nobody hates us or considers us worthy of feuding with. Our relations with the fan world at large have been generally harmonious, despite the fact that we have the reputation for being "The hard nosed S.O.B.'s".

Our ideas have influenced fandom for the past 9 years, without any conscious effort on our part of doing so. The Midwestcons being the more noticeable example.

Members of the CFG are fun-loving, and foes of formality. They despise: rules and regulations; pompousness; inflated egos; and all that goes with these. They prefer deeds over words. This is frequently contrary to fan nature.

As a result, the CFG means many things to many people. A club made up of highly individualistic members, it must present numerous paradoxes to the observer. Lou Tabakow came back from the 1956 New York Convention saying that someone had asked him: "Just what is this CFG that makes you so powerful? How many members do you have—50?" etc.

That's what sparked this one shot. Blame it all on Lou.

Whether you enjoy this group self-analysis is up to you. By this time I have your quarter and am reaching out for the next sucker.

Don Ford

CFG HISTORY

by

INFORMALITY, UNINCORPORATED.
THE LIFE HISTORY, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY
OF THE CINCINNATI FANTASY GROUP.

DALE TARR

(Writer's foreword: As will be pointed out in the following article the fan doings around Cincinnati have never had a chronicler. Dates, names and places become obscured by the successive veils of the years and this would-be historian can only do his best to cover as completely and as factually as is possible, a period of approximately twenty years.)

In December of 1935 I picked up the current copy of *Astounding* at the usual newsstand and discovered therein a letter from Ross Rocklynne referring to his first published story, "Man of Iron". The address given was only a few blocks away so I hustled down there through the snow and got a sleepy Ross out of bed. We had about an hour's conversation and it developed that he had just recently contacted Charles R. Tanner and had invited him around on a subsequent Sunday. Make it three of us. Of course. So I suppose that the beginning of Cincinnati fandom took place on a bleak Sunday p.m. when the three of us met and hashed over the field.

At that time Charlie was the dean and organizer of a non-science fiction club which met every Friday evening for an informal bull session. There were no officers, dues or anything and the meetings were rotated from one member's home to another. It was natural for Charlie to invite Ross and me to join the group, which possessed only one other person who came near to being an sf fan. That was Phil Stevenson, who had read the old *Amazings*, but had then dropped sf except for an occasional E. E. Smith story.

For much of the next few years I was out of town working in Indiana and in Michigan but apparently the group was more or less static during that time, for the occasions when I was back in town for periods up to 6 months there had been little if any membership turnover. Tanner, with a flashingly alert intelligence, was a wonderful guy to meet and Ross was a fan's dream of an author. Tall, goodnatured, he was not at all reticent about letting me in on his story ideas, reading his stuff in manuscript before it had been accepted for publication, and the three of us had many a good time hashing over story ideas and several of Ross's ideas and stories developed from our conversations.

In 1941 I was back in Cincinnati on a more permanent basis and began an active search for fans. Charlie had brought around a youngster named Ron Howes and we contacted others through the pro mags and the University of Cincinnati. The turnover in the group accelerated with non fans dropping out and the real fans coming in. Sometime in '41 the halfway point was reached; and one night in the labor pains a group which was approximately half and half met and we voted ourselves a name, "The Hell-Pavers". Through the connections of one of the members this meet and the name received notice in an afternoon paper but it was all quickly forgotten. Then in a short time the turnover was complete and Cincinnati fandom was born.

Along about the end of 1941 we had a rather large roll-call, Ross, Charlie, myself, Creighton Buck (who sold one story to Unknown and became a prof. of math. at the University of Wisconsin after the War.) Marvin Heller, Ingolf Otto, Fred Burch, Ron Howes, Sheldon Myers, Phil Stevenson, Floyd McClure, Lawrence Lambert (Killed in the Battle of the Bulge.) Kay Benton, and possibly another or two. Nelson Bond was discovered to be in town somewhere along in there and he was a member of the group during his few months stay in Cincinnati.

The group continued, as I have said, informally, rotating the meetings among the members' homes, no name, no dues, no officers, — just happy conversationalists. The group had no activities as such; but the group as a whole was interested in the accomplishments of each individual. Ross was developing a name as an esset writer and was now on nearly all the top ten lists. Charlie had turned out a few more saleable yarns but unfortunately Charlie was one of those fellows who can talk a good story but rarely follow through. I was doing a lot of stuff for the fan field, writing for Pluto, Spaceways and many others.

The group was largely composed of fellows in their early twenties and up, perhaps a little more serious and less hare-brained than some. As a whole the group leaned towards philosophical and scientific discussion with some geopolitical stuff. Mostly theoretical and not so much on the action level.

It might be noted here that at one time Myers and Buck took a trip to the East Coast and stopped in on L. R. Chauvenet who later wrote me to this effect: (more or less paraphrased) "Finally some science fiction fans have visited me who have found favor with my family. Previously I have had Perdue with his long hair, Vidner with his goatee, and an assorted bunch of scatterbrained juveniles and oddballs."

While a majority of these things were probably transitory effects and had no particular bearing on the character and disposition of the visitors, nevertheless Chauvenet was not the only fan whose family may have wondered what the hell their scion was taking up with. This is not to deny that Cincinnati fandom has not come up with its share of the more picturesque history of fandom in general.

In 1942, Cincinnati fandom scattered to the four winds. Some married and left, and some left for jobs elsewhere and some went into the armed forces. In 1945 Charlie Tanner postcarded me in Anderson, Indiana.. "Come back to Cincy so there'll be two fans here." I came back and for some months Charlie and me worked at putting out "Science Fiction World", a little fanzine, which soon came to the usual bitter end.

In 1946 Don Ford and Stan Skirvin came home from the armed services and got in touch with me at just about the time Ron Howes had met Duke Henslee and contacted Tanner. Once again the Cincinnati group started clattering along. Don Ford's dry-cleaner turned out to be Lou 'let-me-talk' Tabakow the man who immunized Cincinnati against Dr. Brauner. The roster soared and we had a special meeting at Stan Skirvin's house; we adopted the name, Cincinnati Fantasy Group; elected officers (who incidentally still hold their tenure to this day because no one has ever thought another election necessary); and at the time determined by unanimous vote that our informality was not something to be lightly exchanged for tedium. Standard organizational patterns were thrown out the window and to this day if a member has any business which he thinks necessary for club action he brings it up, and without recourse

to officiating or parliamentary procedure, the club discusses and disposes of it.

Don Ford turned out to be a man with a prodigious flare for fanactivity. He was in attendance at the Torcon in 1948 and was easily talked into making the last minute bid which gave Cincinnati the Cinvention in 1949. It was rather unfortunate in a way, for as it turned out, most of the work connected with the Cinvention and the later publication of the Memory Book devolved upon Don and Stan. However, despite a couple of irritating minor quirks of nature such as unnecessary secretive-ness Don is a big man - not only in physique. He gets things done. (He makes Lou Tabakow and me slave at the typers, writing articles for him for one thing.) And since his last issue of POOKA (#4) I'm wondering if he isn't trying for #1 fan.

Booming into '49, Cincy had the highest roll-call in history.

Don Ford, Stan Skirvin, Charlie Tanner, Dale Tarr, Charles Smith, Chick Houston, Bea Mahaffey, Pat Lake, Phil Stevenson, Bill Funk, Edmund Bierly, Betty Sullivan, Darrell Richardson, Lou Tabakow, Ray Bruckner, Walter & Thirsa Pratt, Norm Wagner, Matt Rebholtz, Bill Eggert, Wanda Stephenson, Duke Henslee, Addie Huddleston, Nancy Moore, plus honorary out of town members such as: Roy & Dee Dee Lavender, Fred Rothfuss, Marshal Spangler, George Early, Joe Martino, Keith Hoyt, and after the con, Doc Barrett.

There is a distinct difference between the postwar and the prewar groups despite the underlying similarities in structure of the organizations. The postwar group developed and has today less than the prewar amount of theoretical discussion and more of the practical; today's group lays a heavier accent on fan activity.

After the convention the group decided to take a clubroom in a central location down town -- an official location which everyone could reach with ease. (For some people it was a mite too easy.) For a few months the club held their weekly meetings there and had attendance of over 30 which was no mean feat since the clubroom was approximately 9 feet long, Don Ford high and 12 feet long (Matt's feet.) Then the more juvenile members of the group soured the clubroom idea and the meetings went back to the rotation among homes.

Charlie Tanner quit the group after the Cinvention due to personal feelings, incited, he said by Ford and Houston, in what was the first break of its kind in Cincy history. Wanda and Bill got married and got lost; Phil Stevenson died of kidney trouble; Bea Mahaffey left for Chicago and OTHER WORLDS, Houston went to Minnesota to raise chickens, Smith went to Texas, Wagner went looking for an engineering job and ended up in Chattanooga, Darrell Richardson hung on for a couple of years of very rare attendance and left to be an Army Chaplain and is now in Germany, and sometime before the Cinvention Ron Howes had left on a rather odd career high pointing in Colorado mixed up in Dianetics and Scientology. (He later came back to Cincinnati but did not rejoin the group.)

In the post-convention lull, (during which I was absent from the group for months) Ford, Skirvin, Lavender, Tabakow and Doc Barrett got together and initiated the now well-liked and well-attended annual Midwestcons. In the beginning these annual gettogethers were held in a fan's paradise of a location...Beatley's Hotel on Indian Lake. To all practical intents and purposes the fans took over the entire hotel on that particular week-end, but some of them took it over so thoroughly that

Mrs. Beatley finally demurred at further cons being held there. The Midwestcon moved into the Hotel Ingalls in Bellefontaine and when the doors and beds failed to hold up there, we brought it down to the North Plaza Motel in Cincinnati.

Another annual event for Cincinnati is the celebration in January of Don & Lou's birthdays which occur on the same day. This event garners a high local and out of town attendance.

In the last few years our Roster has been: Don & Margaret Ford, Lou & Carrie Tabakow, Oscar & Mary Ellen Moeller, myself, Mark Schulzinger, Stan & Joan Skirvin (a few years ago Joan came around to the club with a couple of others who turned out to be transients and Stan captured her en passant—making the 3rd marriage among the CFG. Wanda, Nancy and now Joan & Stan. Since then Jim Holtel has married), Fred Schwartz, Jim Holtel, Fred & Martha Adler. The attendances of some of our younger members has suffered grievously because of developing interest in the opposite sex. Jim has moved to Dayton since he married, Walter & Thursa Pratt were transferred to West Virginia. Our steady out of towners have dwindled to Roy & Dee Dee lavender.

Some of the above members may drop away in the years to come and there will be newcomers, but in this year of 1957 there is a hard core to Cincy fandom. The hard core can look back on about 500 weekly meetings since the post-war redevelopment. There is a maturity about the group — a knowing that while fandom may not be 'the' way of life, so-called fan-activities, particularly those of a social nature, are one of our ways of life. The group has a confident approach to the fan field as an area of personal enjoyment.

The Cincinnati Fantasy Group has no axes to grind; their outlook is informal, friendly, constructive, and honest. If we become convinced that an idea (rotation of convention sites) is good for the fan field in general, we'll work for it.

And in the annual Midwestcon we of Cincinnati, cordially invite the fan world to join us in a protracted meeting. We enjoy them and sincerely hope that you do.

CFG AS SEEN BY

BOB MADLE

Science fiction clubs have come and gone by the scores since the influx which began with the formation of the Science Fiction League, by Hugo Gernsback, in 1934. Several of the older group of clubs are still with us; the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, and the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. Over the years quite a few articles have appeared concerning the first two organizations, but little, comparatively, has been written about the CFG. So this publication of Don Ford's will fill this "vacuum", and I am pleased, indeed, to be able to say a few words about the club and the impression it has made on me.

Historically, some of its members date back pretty far in the annals of S-F. Take Charles R. Tanner, for instance. He was first heard of in 1930 when his first-prize winning story appeared in the March, 1930 SCIENCE WONDER STORIES. ("The Color of Space", written around the cover for SWS, November, 1929.) Following this, Tanner went on to write several memorable stories, the best of which are the "Tumithak" series.

Another noteworthy case is Ross Rocklynne who, unfortunately, is no longer with the group. Like Tanner, I believe Ross was a long-time s-f reader before he became an author. Ross wrote quite extensively; his stories appeared in just about all the magazines over a fifteen year span (1935-1950). He has been missed in recent years.

Then there is good old Doc Barrett. Doc, I believe, was not a member of the CFG for quite a while, although he lived in nearby Bellefontaine for as long as I can remember. And I can remember receiving subscriptions to my FANTASCIENCE DIGEST from Doc back in 1937. Never much for lengthy correspondence (after all Doc's been a busy MD for the past couple decades.) he would enclose a two-bit piece in a pill envelope briefly marked, "For next 3 issues". I can pleasantly recall my first visit with Doc Barrett. There were four of us returning from the 1940 Chicon: Art Widner, Julie Unger, Earl Singleton (one of the real mysteries of science fiction—whatever became of Earl?), and, of course, myself. Totally unannounced we dropped in on Doc early one morning. Don't know what kind of an impression we made but it is interesting to note that it wasn't until 1947 that Doc showed up at a con.

Another boy who dates from way back when is Don Ford. Don was also a subscriber to my old fanzine which, I believe, was my first contact with him. Then we can't forget the other "ancient", Dale Tarr. Dale, as I recall, was a demon letter-writer in the mid thirties and was one of those instrumental in the actual formation of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group.

But let's try to bring this thing a little more up-to-date. Always a comparatively quiet group (the CFG had little, if anything, to do with the "fan wars" and feuds which occurred in the late '30's), the club has come into its own in recent years. I suppose the 1949 World Convention was what really put Cincinnati on the s-f map. I'll never forget (and neither will Don Ford and Doc Barrett) the

politicking which went on at the 1948 Toronto Convention. The Cincinnati group agreed to take the 1949 affair to keep it out of Vill Sykora's hands. It was at the Cincinnati convention that Ray Palmer hired pretty CFG member Bea Mahaffey as his assistant editor. (Ray was just getting OTHER WORLDS underway then.) Bea, as many of you know, stuck with Ray until recently when it became imperative for her to eat more regularly.

Recent years have seen the CFG soar into national prominence via the sponsoring of the annual Midwestcons. These annual affairs attract a hundred or so attendees every year and are, in my estimation, the best of the regional affairs. The success of these annual beer-busts is due to the hard work of Don Ford, Doc Barrett, Lou Tabakow, Stan Skirvin, and Roy Lavender. The Midwestcons are just one continuous party and it is solely through the congenial hosting of the aforementioned group that everyone has such a swell time. I've only been able to make two of these affairs (1954 and 1956) but have every hope of getting back to the North Plaza Motel this year come June.

In recent years, at World conventions, the group mentioned above have become known as "people to know". If you're a friend of Doc's or Don's or Lou's or Stan's you're in for a jolly good time. For these boys pool their resources and bring refreshments by the case. It is nothing unusual to find thirty-five or forty people making merry in the Cincy suite.

Don said he didn't want me to write a "sweet" article about the group. But what else can I do? Everyone I have encountered from Cincy has struck me as a jolly good fellow, with several of them being the proverbial "Hail fellow well met". Two of the CFG members I consider among my closest fan friends—Don Ford and Doc Barrett. Don, of course, has been a firm proponent of fandom for many years. Right now he handles, all by his lonesome, the U.S. end of the Transatlantic Fan Fund, one of the most noteworthy of contemporary fan projects and one which should receive the support of all fandom. Don and Doc were also instrumental in arousing southern fandom from its lethargy—they are the patron saints of all Southeast Cons. In fact, Doc Barrett was MC at 1955's (held in Charlotte) and proved himself to be just as ghoulish as Robert Bloch in this capacity.

In all seriousness, the CFG is a fine, mature group of fans—a group whose value to the science fiction world has not been fully recognized. As stated above, I have known and associated with members of the group for many years—and look forward to seeing Doc, Don, Stan, Lou and all the rest at conventions and conferences for many, many more years.

CFG IN FOCUS

by

BILL GRANT

Like many others I can only capture the memory of the Cinvention via old con reports, but as Ned McKeown and John Millard have since added, "The Cinvention had the personal touch and nobody was left out of things."

And from other sources I gather that nothing since that year has come close to the atmosphere that was evident through the hard work put forth by Don Ford. There are others such as Bea Mahaffey, the Lavenders, Doc Barrett, Betty Sullivan and many names that have long since disappeared from the 'fan' world.

Since the Cinvention the ideas put forth later turned up in a sort of capsule form, minus a planned program. Most of the same people are behind the yearly Midwest gatherings and to me these have been moments that will be well remembered.

As for the people as individuals, this is yet another story, but if they'll excuse me, one worth a few rambling comments.

Don Ford: Don had me fooled completely, it wasn't until the appearance of a 'limited edition' that I really began to appreciate the mind behind the face. Up until this time Don represented 'rules and regulations', which is a good virtue, especially when you have gentlemen like Harlan Ellison and Randy Garrett to contend with. His hobbies are somewhat along the same lines as mine. His collection of SF items is far ahead of mine, in fact his collection is really the second time 'round. During the Second World War the first collection came to a sad fate, so afterwards Don started all over again. Thank heavens his other half understands this SF bug, there are not many that do.

Dr. G. L. Barrett: I have felt that Dr. Barrett has been a longtime friend to the SF fan, but it wasn't until 1948 that he appeared in person at a convention. From that moment on wherever there has been a gathering or a convention that Doctor has been very much in evidence as a host or as a more than interesting conversationalist. As for the welcome sing in Bellefontaine I would think that any visitors are almost indebted to the graciousness of Dr. and Mrs. Barrett. I particularly remember the converging of the entire Midwestcon at the cottage on the lake. Believe me hospitality that can handle a crowd like that is rare indeed.

As for the Doctor himself, there is an almost "lepriconish" look on his face when he starts to tell of some of the local incidents in the hospital. In fact there are times when the subject matter is quite outspoken even for mixed audiences. Between bull-sessions he slips away and performs operations on some of these long weekends and still manages to look bright the next day. With the Midwestcon being held in Cincy, he can't be called back to the hospital.

Roy and Dee Dee Lavender: These people are always first on hand to meet the early arrivals, at least as far as I can remember. This quality is essential, and creates a warm introduction to the traveller. Both of them had a hand in the previous mentioned 'limited edition', which by the way still gives me moments of

pleasure. Their contribution to the Midwestcon is to the individual and might go unseen to some, but there are those who have shared this welcome and appreciate it.

Stan Skirvin: I remember Stan almost vaguely up until his marriage. It was in that suite of rooms in Philadelphia that I saw a very happily married couple and it was about this time I identified him. This particular moment I captured on films and it is a time I will long remember.

Normally Stan is a soft-spoken person, a camera bug, plus the likes and dislikes of most of us. He in turn in his own quiet way has contributed to the success of past Midwestcons.

Lou Tabakow: I think some of you might find Lou a little loud, but when one speaks facts its just as well he can be heard. To listen to Lou is to capture some of the past as well as the present. His opinions are final, a spade is a spade.

Some of Lou's unfulfilled schemes have been hammers. I recall the Florida deal and at the time wished I could do the same thing. In a way I'm glad it never went through, otherwise he would have gone from the scene. Never would I have heard the adventures of a Cab Driver as related to me by Lou himself; and also from Doc and Don. These stories are fabulous and should be set down in print for the enjoyment of all and Lou is certainly the boy that could do it.

Again let me repeat: there are others in this group, but the preceeding people are very much alive in my mind even though I see them once or twice a year. And I hope this will go on for many years to come.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

by H. KEN BULMER

On our all-too-brief trip to the United States, Pamela and I had the very great pleasure of living with Don and Margaret Ford for a while. This was an experience we would not have willingly missed.

The Cincinnati Fantasy Group, I think it is fair to say, was the closest parallel to the type of loose organisation we had left in the London Circle; as of Autumn (Fall) 1955, that is; our system has altered radically since then.

We had been lavishly welcomed and entertained, with only a very minor sour note, on the East Coast and now, as we Greyhounded through the night, we were to meet the fen of the near-Midwest. What would they be like? Certainly Republican, Certainly Isolationist, most probably, saving in our presence, anti-British.

We'd had a lousy trip, and crawled out at the depot not feeling very bright. (That's one of my predominant memories of US - the feeling that I was acting like a moron all the time and quite unable to do anything about it.) Pamela and I were looking for a tall man called Don Ford. We had a drink at the water fountain and then went back to the yard and this tremendous hunk of man still stood there. Eventually our orbits intersected. We knew Don was tall; but there are limits to upward growth - Don doesn't know that.

He whisked us to his and Margaret's home. As they have since moved, all I'll say is that again we knew that the Hollywood pictures weren't all lies; Margaret is, if Don will pardon the expression, a honey and the children, although reasonably shy (as who wouldn't be of this odd character, with an incipient beard, they couldn't understand?). We really felt at home. What Margaret thought, of course, is another matter; but that week brought us into fighting trim for the con after the drain of NY and we bless the Cincy crowd for giving us this respite. (Respite from enjoyment as well, mind, NY were real lavish.)

The members of the CFG were happy to meet and all seemed to us to have the same general outlook on life as applied to fandom. This is for fun; let's forget any outside differences. (Even though most were Republicans, as we had surmised.) The CFG are mature. As a group, that is, and that is best shown by Mark Schulzinger, who, although young in years and full of the jumping beans essential to youth, still had a more balanced outlook on life than other contemporaries.

Jim Holtel, who always raised a laugh whenever he talked about driving a car (why?), was quiet and perfectly relaxed and damn good company. As for the man who received the award for the best unpublished short story of the year (Now that it has appeared, do you give it back, Lou?), he was so much larger than life and full of it that, although Lou Tabakow is a big guy, it makes you wonder where all the energy comes from. One sort of opened out when Lou was around; you couldn't sit and mope in a corner.

I've detailed elsewhere the interesting business about the poem and Dale Tarr; how I'd known of it since 1941, and thought Dale a pseudonym; now, here he was, right out of the blue, a real person. We never did get down to talking about Labour, either; but outside problems seemed very remote in the CFG. Wrong? Perhaps. Makes for easier living and less ulcers that way, though.

It would be superfluous to explain how magnificent the houses were, the 'Ranch Type' bungalows. Mark's father had a basement fitted up as a workshop, with two fabulous Duesenbergs on the side. Don had a basement lined with 'zines-literally. At the Youngs we found, beside tremendous hospitality, the sort of home you see in the glossy pages of the magazines devoted to the millionaire houses. Suffice it that it was also a home, which is the acid test. And this business of hospitality was again found at Lou's; we understood that it had in the recent past had a sort of spiral effect, which we could well understand. That's from goodness, though, I feel sure, and not (as it might well be in other places) from a spirit of 'outdoing' others. Unfortunately, Stan Skirvin didn't make it. I always think of the CFG in connection with Doc Barrett, as I think he and they do. But he is such a vast \$64,000 question, that I'm sure he's outside the scope of this resume. Our regret was that we didn't see near enough of Roy and Dee Dee Lavender; but gaps have since been remedying that. As an integrated unit of interestingly individual people, you'd have a long way to go to match the CFG.

That, although very inadequately, covers the personnel of the CFG. But, what of the Group itself? What sort of impression did I take away? I suppose the over-riding one was that here was a group of people who were happy to be in one another's company, with ideas in common and with ideas opposed, able to relax, not out to prove themselves better than one another in the group and with friendship as the keystone besides sf, even tho' sf was the original attractive force and even now might be considered the dominant factor.

But there is more to it than that. The CFG, I am told, has in one form or another been running since 1935. That makes it incredibly old as fannish institutions go. There are other groups that began as a number of friends that long ago and have clung together since; there are mighty few with the same degree of interest and homogeneity as the CFG. Old age is no sign of quality in itself; you have to have something worth being old before age starts to count. The maturity, the relaxed atmosphere, the fun of being a sf group, are some of the things that make this one a quality group apart from a long-established one.

One of the best groups in the world is the Belfast Triangle. It's not strange that I should see parallels between Belfast and Cincinnati. There are differences, of course; there must be otherwise the world would stop spinning through lack of friction (!) but in neither is there this screaming heebie-jeebies that stigmatise the mushroom growths that bulge and proliferate and excrete and die. Tolerance? Yes, and understanding, too. No-one is perfect, thank gh, but as a good working approximation, the CFG would serve as an admirable model.

To take a f'rinstance: Two members joined OMPA - Don and Mark. The Cincy World Con Memory Book was a magnificent effort. There is Scintillations. Yet I would like to see a greater interest in the fanzine publishing field here; the good side, that is. The CFG has a great contribution to make to the serious and progress-

THE CFG UNMASKED

-ive side of fantasy publication; with Doc's vast storehouse of memory to call on the possibilities are breathtaking. Perhaps the most important aspect of this would be the counteraction of the crud in fanzine publishing that is so much deplored by Doc himself, and by all of us; and yet young faneds must walk before they can run.

Taping is well represented in the CFG activities; maybe here lies their key activity for the future. Along with photography, of which Don is a past master, maybe the cine camera will rear its whirring head and we will have CFG sf and fantasy films with sound? If Liverpool can do it, so can Cincinnati.

In Don Ford TAFF has a sound administrator, if one who decides what to do and does it with resolution that shocks; at least he gets things done. That perhaps is the secret of the CFG. If they do a thing, it's no Daugherty project; it gets done. The CFG have a great tolerance between and for its members; perhaps that could be extended a little to cover those engaged in outside interests in the greater sphere of fandom?

Two things are absolutely certain:

1. That Pamela and I would not have missed our meeting with the Cincy Group and that if all strangers are treated like that, then.....
2. Other groups should model themselves upon the Cincy group pattern.

I don't think you can say anything greater than that.

THE CFG UNMASKED

by

NICK & NORLEN PALASCA

Don Ford has asked us for our opinion of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, and we, ever ready to let anyone know what we think of him, were glad to oblige. After an intensive study of two hours and fourteen minutes, we concluded that the Cincinnati Fantasy Group is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, brave, clean and reverent. In other words, very hypocritical. This is satisfactory as a group analysis, but complete comprehension cannot be approached without first studying certain prominent characteristics of each individual. To start, let us present a brief dossier on each person. These are not necessarily listed in the order of their importance.

DON FORD

Although he poses as a magazine collector, his real love is collecting apple boxes. Now, anyone who collects apple boxes should writhe in shame at the stupidity of such a pursuit. He is aware of this and therefore uses the feeble excuse that they are merely to house his magazine collection. This argument deteriorates however, when you back him into a corner and start talking apple boxes seriously. His eyes glow as he describes the various types of wood (pine, birch, mahogany and teak - the last two are quite rare and are considered prizes), different methods of construction and unusual knothole formations. His current project is cataloging them according to age as determined by counting the number of rings in the grain.

At one time, Kinsman Ohio's favorite son and Leigh Brackett's favorite husband, Edmond Hamilton, observed Don to be listening to Dixieland on a Hi-Fi system while taking photographs at a science-fiction meeting, thereby scoring in Ed's immortal words, "a grand slam".

C. L. BARRETT, MD (alias the Mad Doctor of Madriver St.)

No one knows who he is mad at, however some suspect it may be Lou Tabakow who started driving a cab shortly after Doc's old car disappeared. He appears to be disgustingly rich and at the same time has a sincere interest in science-fiction. In fandom, this is unique and Bertrand Russell has yet to explain the paradox. He is well known for the annual party that he throws in his home town, however the location has been changed to Cincinnati because it is next to impossible to go to Bellefontaine from anywhere else, and the townspeople have long ceased to a-door science-fiction fans.

STAN SKIRVIN, DALE TARR and ROY LAVENDER

This sinister trio is probably the most deceptive of the entire Cincinnati group. They appear as good natured chaps, friendly, honest and very ordinary, by fan standards. Do not let their chameleon coats deceive you. Dale Tarr, in reality,

is a master financial wizard, who can, by manipulating a few figures, live a full six months off the proceeds of a Midwestcon banquet. Stan Skirvin, a man not to be dismissed lightly, was the scourge of Battelle Memorial Institute, and his reasons for leaving to return to Cincinnati are only discussed in whispers. Roy Lavender, a brilliant engineer with a passion for tape recorders, has made his hobby pay off handsomely by placing the tape unnoticed at Cincinnati fan meetings.

BEN KEIFER

Ben Keifer has the unusual distinction of being the only fan in North Cincinnati, that is, if you can consider Columbus, Ohio as a part of North Cincinnati. Ben is welcome wherever he goes because he has an exceedingly useful hobby, cooking. The Cincinnati group uses his talents to full advantage when ever he is so unfortunate as to be captured by them.

LOU TABAKOW

At last we arrive at the most controversial personality in the group, Lou (Sauron - The Dark Lord*) Tabakow**. In spite of a magnificent effort by Doc Barrett who purports to be the leader of this band of semi-civilised savages, Tabakow is the true power and brains. This is evidenced by the fact that he is the permanent president of the CFG and never attends meetings. His puppets vote his ticket without question and accept their fate philosophically. He is best known for his short-short story, SVEN, which appeared in OTHER WORLDS, a magazine of great reputation and little circulation. The real Tabakow has a deep-seated scorn for science-fiction and has been working on the Great American Novel for the past seven years. It will be published by Random House at random under the title "I Remember Zwiebach Sven", it would be wise to place your order now as the first edition will be limited to the manuscript copy.

Well, enough of this love-making, off with your clothes; or to put it more simply, let's get down to business.

Our opinion of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group has been a long time in forming and has varied considerably during the seven years we have known them. There was a time when we found them, as a group, extremely awesome. From our point of view, they seemed to be trying to live up to their own advertisements. Later on, as our contact grew more frequent, we found them not awesome, but friendly. They gave us some very real help and advice when we needed it. In the last two years, we feel that we have become close friends. Our all together too infrequent get-togethers can best be characterized by a quote that we have used before, but seems to apply to our feeling for the Cincinnati fans, "What is fandom? Friendship, based on mutual interests."***

* For the earlier exploits of Mr. Tabakow, see Vols. 1, 2 & 3 of "The Lord Of The Rings", by R. J. Tolken.

** Mr. Tabakow is the only Cincinnati fan who is not reverent, in fact he is not even thrifty.

*** Robert Bloch, F & SF Sept. 1956

WHAT THE CINCINNATI FANTASY GROUP HAS MEANT TO ME

by

LOU TABAKOW

Although I'd been reading Science Fiction since that first wonderful issue of *Amazing*, I'd never run into anyone else to whom it was the ultimate in escape literature. The few others I'd met who even pretended to enjoy SF were desultory readers who could miss four or five issues in a row and still consider life worth living.

I was familiar with fandom only through the letter columns which I avidly devoured, silently (I was a quiet one in my youth) ranging myself on first one side and then the other of the various deep and esoteric discussions raging on the back pages.

Moskowitz, Tucker, Ackerman and their ilk were to me the Great Immortals of Fandom -- venerable graybeards, who sat apart from us lesser mortals and cogitated on the deeper aspects of philosophy and religion. I was certain that if Einstein could only have sat down in a bull-session with them many of the things that still puzzled him could have been ironed out without any difficulty. Years later when I finally met some of these behemoths of Fandom I was quite startled, and I must confess, somewhat irked, to discover that most of them were no older than I was and quite a few, considerably younger. Either they had all been child prodigies or I had been extremely lucky not to have been locked up in a home for the feeble-minded.

In the late summer of 1948 I had been out of the Service for a little over two years, and I was finally getting my collection together again; the same collection that my wife had somehow MISPLACED during my absence. I've sounded her out a number of times on this but still haven't discovered how to MISPLACE about three hundred mags in a four room apartment.

I was in the dry cleaning business at the time, and noticed Don Ford's name and address signed to a letter in some mag. The name struck a familiar chord and on reflection I realized that I'd been delivering dry cleaning to his home for the past year or so. The next time I stopped there I mentioned it to his wife and asked her whether or not he might have some mags to trade.

This was enough for Ford. When I delivered their cleaning the following Saturday, he was laying for me (Literally speaking let it be understood). He gathered me to his bosom (Again speaking literally, let me hasten to add), and informed me that there was an active group of SF aficionados who met every Saturday night for a bull-session. When I asked him how a married man managed to get out EVERY Saturday night he informed me that if a man was a man he just opened his front door and said, "Goodnight honey, I'm going to the meeting."

I figured I could get away with it at least once and made plans to attend the meeting that night which was at his house. Somehow, I never missed more than half a dozen meetings in the next six or seven years, and if anyone were to ask me how I got away with it I'd be forced to answer, "Well, if a man is a man he just opens his front door and...."

I think in those first six months I lived in a sort of daze. I'd finally found a group of kindred souls (Screwballs if you prefer) who didn't think I was an odd-ball because I read SF and liked to speculate on Time Travel and Relativity; the Microcosm and the Macrocosm; the Beginning and the Ultimate End; the Why and If and Maybe.

I listened entranced to Charlie Tanner's clever hypotheses; to the mathematical juggling of Ron Howes and Dale Tarr; to the cynical and knowledgeable Roy Lavender. I was enchanted by Stan Skirvin's lucid explanations of difficult theorems. I think the thing that drew me to the group the most was that I was accepted as an equal and any idea or thought I expressed was accepted on its own merits and without the usual professional's sneer at the amateur who dares to speculate.

That Fall Don went to Toronto and came back with the World Convention for 1949; the Cinvention. The work and co-operation ensuing knit the group even closer together, and by convention time I had met and corresponded with a number of other fans, not the least of whom was Doc Barrett. His fabulous collection and almost eidetic memory filled me with awe, and I must confess, not a little envy.

By convention time I was able to assume a pose of blasé cynicism, and didn't even blanch at the sight of the Fabled Greats of SF prone and glassy-eyed being swept like driftwood under beds and couches.

Doc Smith had been a legendary hero to me for more years than I cared to remember, so you can imagine what a thrill it was to have him and Jeannie as dinner guests in my home. I'm sure that I read and re-read the autographs he inscribed in my Skylark and Lensman series at least a dozen times.

Shortly after the Cinvention Doc Barrett invited Ted Carnell to spend some time with him at Indian Lake, a beautiful resort area where Doc owned some cottages. The next week end the CFG drove up to the lake in a body. If I recall correctly Dave MacInnes was also present as were Roy Lavender and Fred Rothfuss. At any rate this small group hit it off so well that we decided to invite a number of our friends to meet at Indian Lake the following year. We invited about forty expecting about two dozen and wound up with 60 that next year; and from this sprang the Annual Midwestcon, one of the largest if not the largest, but certainly the most informal regional con in the country.

Shortly after the gathering at Indian Lake Bea Mahaffey left for Chicago to assume her new post as editor of Other Worlds. Now I could be really blasé. Wasn't I on first name familiarity with an honest-to-goodness editor?

The Committee which disbursed the profits of the Cinvention voted the CFG \$300 so since we now had a treasury we decided to elect officers and get a club room. Charlie Tanner was elected President and Don Ford Treasurer. Bea Mahaffey was Sec'y. until she left, and I was elected Veep. We were really in business now and grandiose plans were made for the future.

Then came the Dawn. A schism in the group split it wide open.

A few months after the Cinvention the group had dwindled down to only three or four members. Don and I vowed that as long as we were around Cincinnati there would be a Cincinnati Fantasy Group. For a number of months the two of us alternated

visiting each other on Saturday nights, and frankly some of these two man meetings proved to be more enjoyable than some of the larger ones had been. Don claims this was because at a two member meeting, Tabakow could be talking at least half the time which is a little more difficult when there are a dozen people present.

During these dark days, when it looked like the CFG might cease to exist we began to invite fans from: Cleveland, Columbus, Louisville, Lexington, Dayton, etc. to visit us, and occasionally dropped in on Doc Barrett at Indian Lake. Slowly some of our former members began to drift back and we picked up new young blood in the persons of Fred Schwartz, Jim Holtel, Roy Dixon and Mark Schulzinger. Then; I believe it was through Matt Rebholz, a number of graduate Engineering students from the University of Cincinnati began to drop in on the meetings. In this manner, Norm Wagner became a member of the group. By this time we had all become close friends socially and the wives now took an active part in the meetings and some of them had even been persuaded to read a bit of SF and since we screened it carefully, their reaction was mostly very favorable. After all, only an old time fan who had built up a strong constitution through the years could be expected to read some of the crudzines without becoming violently ill and (Pardon the expression) vomiting all over the front page.

Now after nine years in fandom I feel like an old jaded fan, with four World Conventions and seven Regional Conventions under my belt. I can argue unblushingly with Doc Smith, usurp George O's bar stool, grab Asimov's seat next to a pretty girl and play strictly business-like poker with Evelyn Gold, Charlie Devet, Mel Korshak and Tucker. I can declaim against the mechanics of a Randy Garrett story, having known him when he was only an ASPIRING author and sneer at Harlan Ellison prostituting himself in an expose' mag, with not too much envy about the fat check such prostitution must have brought.

I guess the sense of wonder is finally gone, leaving a sneering cynical husk of the bright-eyed worshipping young fan that was.

The Cincinnati Fantasy Group goes on stronger than ever, and now as the young eager-beavers troop in I can sit in a corner like an ELDER STATESMAN and recount to the wide-eyed neo-fans anecdotes concerning MY FRIENDS, the late greats of Science Fiction Fandom.

THE END

TURN YOUR HEAD AND COUGH TWICE.....

by C. L. Barrett, MD

Dear Don:

You have asked me to write an article concerning the MIDWESTCON. In attempting to find any literature on the times, dates, etc. I found that all I could find was letters from you about this and that and the other, but nothing definite. Could not find where I had written down the exact dates on each one. So most of this is just from memory.

The Midwestcon was founded because you and I couldn't go to Portland to the national convention that year because of distance, finances and other reasons. We both felt that we had to see and talk to somebody and of course the first one we thought of was Dr. Smith, because I knew him, he was fairly close; then I happened to have the bright thought that maybe Dr. Keller could come. That was during the years when Dr. Keller was still active and fortunately he was able to attend. I remember that Ray Palmer was there and I think that was the first time we were introduced to flying saucers. Bob Tucker was there with his inimitable humor and the other notables (I don't remember just how many there were). I do know we thought we'd start out having Smith and Keller, Tucker and our friends, and finally we wrote to Palmer and he showed up, too. We thought maybe we'd have fifteen or twenty here at the office and it ended up with between forty and sixty at the dinner at the Logan Hotel which was put on at the spur of the moment.

I can still remember Doc Smith sitting in the corner expounding certain things and Andy Harris needling him every so often to keep him in high gloom. I can remember Dr. Keller sitting at the end of the kitchen table turning slightly choleric at one time when someone brought up a particular subject and the highlight to me was Dr. Keller's talk on the Vanity Publications where this one man was publishing a book on the training of skunks. I think that's been published since and has even appeared in a professional magazine; it was exceedingly good.

I might say that the group who are the founders of the MIDWESTCON are Don Ford, Stan Skirvin, Roy Lavender and Lou Tabakow. Dale Tarr was in that group also (that was the year that he was president of the NFFF). At a later date Ben Keifer, Ben Jason and Frank Andrasovsky, after they first came, were in on it. Jason and Frank came to one of the meetings at Beatley's, the first one they attended, and they heard us discussing with the Canadian Fan group the differences of the governments and fighting over the Revolutionary War and decided that we were no fan group. I checked at the desk downstairs and found that I knew them by name but not by face; their room was next to where we were talking so we went in and got them up and we were up the rest of the night.

This reminds me of another thing, actually the Canadian group has always been one of the bulwarks of the Midwestcon. Grant and McKeown and all the younger ones that have been coming in...including about three years ago the original hard-luck girls that every where they went they were as bad as "wrong-way Corrigan" going the opposite way. But that shows how this memory runs - you go from the two Cleveland boys then you come back to the Canadians and realize they have always been a bulwark.

Then you remember the time at one of those meetings Harlan Ellison got a prize for being the most obnoxious, vociferous, seventh fandom personality in existence. It was at this same meeting, I think, that Arthur Clarke had the first pacron suit that I had seen; and my boy Jerry took him out and got him wet. This may have been the thing that started Arthur underseas. Up on top with that boat and a 25 H.P. motor was too dangerous so he took to undersea excursions after that. He had astronomical pictures but the ones that struck me most, and ones that I'd like to have copies of, are the pictures of this storm that he took from a plane flying to Texas. These show the end of the plane and then the storm building up and going away. A most beautiful set that I'd certainly like to see again.

Arthur Clarke has almost become a custom or standard just like Bob Bloch being the Master of Ceremonies. I forget just which year that Bloch first came down. I imagine we brought him down to try to squelch Tucker, but since that time he has become the perennial Master of Ceremonies. Of course there are many other personalities and incidents; the times out at the Karus Motel when it was in Bellefontaine; the time when one particular individual dropped water on another's head and little 280 pounder went through a door after a big 90 pounder and finally the cops came in on that; it was quite interesting but those have all grown up since and have become luminaries in the field of literature - both of them. I can remember going to sleep on a couch watching some exotic movies and movies of personalities and so forth at three o'clock in the morning and then being punched in the ribs and being told I wasn't a true fan because I couldn't stay awake and watch the pictures and so on.

Of course you know the history of it starting out as a simple little meeting in my office and then going to Beatley's and then finally coming back to Bellefontaine and then outgrowing Bellefontaine and moving to the North Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati. The amazing thing about this was that the first time we just had a few friends and acquaintances around. A lot of other friends and acquaintances that we didn't know, knew about the thing and appeared, too. Each year the same thing has been true. There have always been certain ones who have become particular friends of ours; Ellis Mills one year; Phyllis Economu another year; Crawford and the other boy from Pittsburgh last year. There has always been an addition of friends. I remember the first time Lynn Hickman came with his leg in a cast, the shock of Harlan Ellison's appearance on the scene..the atomic bomb in such small size we felt that it wasn't capable of fission in such small quantities but apparently we were wrong.

The MIDWESTCON group is an organization without a President, Secretary, Treas., By-Laws, Constitution or anything else. It's just a bunch of stiff-necked individuals that tried to get a gang together for a glorified bull session. We did it and we continue to do it and, so long as the original group exists, so long as there are two of us, there will always be a Midwestcon, just so long as two of us can get around and talk. There have been attempts in the past made that this should become an institution like the World Convention and should be shifted to different sections of the Midwest, but we've always felt that this was our own personal property and that we got together just to talk. You remember the one year that we advertised that it was the same dictatorial group, the same worn-out old Master of Ceremonies Bob Bloch, the same heckler Bob Tucker, the same grand old man Doc Smith always there, the same Eshbach and Greenberg huckstering and that there was no set program, no registration fee, no nothing and if they wanted a set program it was something to stay away from. We still feel the same way about it...it is just a bunch getting together to have a good time.

PORTRAIT OF THE FAN AS A YOUNG FAN

by Stan Skirvin

Aye, 'twas a strange and lonely thing to be a fan in the Queen City in the early Forties. A tenuous half-life, sustained only by the letters in the pro-mags and the letters which at first trickled in, then rolled in, thru the mails.

I had first come into contact with stf in the mid-thirties, but it wasn't until about 1943 that I got around to reading the letter columns and discovered the world within a world which carried on there. Ere long I was writing letters like a real letter hack and meeting, by mail, fans from various parts of the country.

But it was a half-life, lacking the fullness that can come to fan life only by talking face-to-face with fans. Noontime conversations with an occultist at the Ohio Bookstore during the summer of 1943 were mediocre fare; he wasn't a faaaaaaaa. Ran into a linotype operator from one of the local newspapers. He collected first editions of Burroughs—wasn't a talker, tho; not a real faaaaaaaa. Ran into Chad Oliver in Acres Of Books one day. He was interested in corresponding (across the breadth of Cincinnati!), but not in talking; was he really a faaaaaaaa?

Thus passed the doldrums of my early fan years. Shortly after I entered the Navy in 1944, one of my letters appeared in Astounding. There were a great many interesting responses to this letter, not the least of which was a phone call my parents received from a Charlie Tanner who told them that there had been a group in Cincinnati, but they had disbanded during the war.

This was somewhat heartbreaking word, but I was pretty well preoccupied for the major portion of the next two years. Life was fuller; I met many, many fans and talked, talked, talked. My cup runneth over.

Eventually, I returned to Cincinnati with an honorable discharge clutched in my sweaty palms. I got in touch with Charlie Tanner posthaste. The only other fan with whom he was in contact was Dale Tarr, who had been a member of the prewar group. The three of us met many times during the summer of 1946 and made many plans to gather fans into the fold, but we could find nary a sign of another fan, altho someone was buying the magazines on the news stands.

The summer ended with the three of us still getting together frequently, but still unable to make any new contacts. I took off for the University of Kentucky where my fan life consisted of visiting occasionally with one of the fans with whom I had corresponded before the war and becoming firm friends with Sam Basham, a rah-rah boy like myself, but one who had consorted with many of the Great Names of fandom. Found out all sorts of dirt.

Lacking a diary and being too lazy to dig thru old, moldy correspondence, I cannot say with certainty when I came into contact with Cincinnati fandom again; it was either during the school year or as soon as I returned for summer vacation. But this time it was fandom, in full flower. Fans were popping up like dandelions on a lawn, creeping from under rocks, crawling from out der voodvork.

It was great, man, really great! The bull sessions ranged untrammelled across

the macrocosm and the microcosm. New minds meeting, clashing, mingling! New concepts being presented, absorbed! (Or were they, really?) Anyway, it was a great summer. Met a variety of characters who, tho I did not know it, would prove very educational. More important, tho, I met three men who were to remain close friends thru the years; Don Ford, Lou Tabakow, and Roy Lavenier.

Roy, a boyhood friend of Don's, lived in the Columbus area and occasionally visited the Saturday night meetings of the Cincinnati group. When I returned to college in the fall, this time at Ohio State University, I frequently visited with Roy and we held occasional informal meetings with local fans along the pattern of the Cincinnati gang. As a group, though, they never caught fire and the center of my fannish activities continued to be Cincinnati. However, except for summer vacations, I became essentially an expatriate member of Cincy fandom.

The year of 1947 was best characterized, as I noted earlier, by its enthusiasm. However, as the years rolled by, what had seemed like new and fresh ideas gradually were revealed as well-worn grooves in unfamiliar records. It took several years for this to become apparent.

The year of 1948 added new dimensions to Cincinnati fandom; female fans and national fan politics.

Formerly, there had been occasional visits at meetings by wives and girl friends, but now girls and women presumably interested primarily in science fiction began to attend meetings. There could be much discussion pro and con as to whether this invasion was beneficial to the group, but for a purely masculine group to have continued would have represented a case of arrested juvenilism, in my opinion. For better or worse, though, women were and are here to stay.

The entry into national fan politics was accomplished when Don Ford returned from the Torcon with the bid for the 1949 National Convention. There was a great flurry of planning and promises, but the fruition did not come until the following year.

Most important to me, in 1948, was meeting and becoming friends with Dr. C. L. Barrett. Doc has always been a bulwark in the oft-times unstable world of fandom and his influence and stature have been of tremendous aid to Cincinnati fandom, as in obtaining the 1949 convention bid.

The year of 1949 can be briefly described as prelude, CInvention, and aftermath. A very limited number of the fans gave their all amidst the vanished promises of '48, Don possessing the broadest and most heavily loaded shoulders. The CInvention itself was pronounced a resounding success and there was a transient feeling of the oldtime camaraderie that welded the local fans briefly into a non-dickering group. Possessing a treasury, as a result of the vote at the CInvention business session, the Cincinnati fans named themselves the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, (hereafter designated CFG) elected officer, and rented a downtown clubroom.

The following year saw the growth of personality conflicts, the loss of the clubroom, and a complete split between two factions of the group. One group, composed primarily of Don, Lou, and Dale, retained the name of the CFG and the treasury. The other group, under the aegis of Charlie Tanner, subsequently lost cohesion as a

functioning group. On the credit side, 1950 saw a casual gathering at Doc Barrett's home in Bellefontaine prove so successful that it became the first of the noted annual Midwestcons. The Cincvention Memory Book was birthed in an orgy of eagerness by Don, Lou, Roy, and myself. Also, the Cincinnati fans got wheels in earnest, the major effort being a trip to New York. These peripatetic inclinations have never died out completely, as has been related by the more historically inclined writers in these pages.

My own contact with the Cincy group tended to lessen somewhat after those first hectic years. I went on occasional group trips, attended meetings, and even managed to meet and marry a female-type fan in 1952. I attended all the Midwestcons and went to Chicon II in '52 and Philcon II in '53, but nonetheless there are not the vividly drawn memories that characterize the early years of my association.

I may be accused of attempting claim to a quiet maturity for the CFG that reflects merely the fact that I was a resident of Columbus from the time of my graduation in 1951 until 1956. Thus, some of the more recent skirmishing may be less familiar to me than that of my wild youth. However, my observations since returning to live in Cincinnati have confirmed to me that the CFG has entered upon a moderately stodgy middle age.

There is a hard core of adult members now, and they are jaded and they are cynical and they are relaxed. New and young members are welcome to present any subjects or ideas for discussion, but they (the ideas) are not eagerly seized upon as would have been in the old days. It is hard for anyone to present an idea or subject that was not mulled over a couple of years back. There are many reasons for believing that this is not a good state of affairs, but it is an existing and inevitable state of affairs.

As I noted earlier, the parade of characters through the CFG has been both fascinating and educational. There has been a generous selection of deadbeats, neurotics, pseudo-intellectuals, and reassuringly, a lot of very nice people. A notably educational episode was that involving a man for whom I initially felt a great deal of admiration, but who later revealed himself to be a real crudball and a fraud, ultimately achieving the distinction of an uncomplimentary mention in TIME. Sic transit gloria mundi!

I have carried on at considerable length about the tenor of the CFG as the years rolled by. By way of winding up this hysterical discussion, it seems highly appropriate to ask and answer the question; What is the Cincinnati Fantasy Group?

The CFG is Don Ford and Lou Tabakow, with a strong assist from Doc Barrett, & with able support from Dale Tarr and myself. The personal friendship between these men has been the glue which has held this nucleus together. Note that I did not say they run the CFG. They are the CFG.

The past holds a record of honorable participation in science fiction fandom. What does the future hold? Perhaps the stodgy maturity I see now will decline into senility. More likely, there will be greater glories, for the CFG shall endure as long as these friendships endure, and they look solid, man, solid!!

Stanley C. Skirvin

THE HIGHBALLS ARE ON ME

by Don Ford

Every time I'd get another article in part of what I'd written would be duplicated. Finally Lou and Dale suggested that I sort of tie up any loose ends in the other articles and bring up anything that had been missed. So far everything is in pretty good shape. I have not cut or edited the different articles beyond changing a word or two here and there. Anything I have to say can be combined with my impressions of the various CFG members.

LOU TABAKOW

Some people have actually been shocked when they discover Lou & I are friends. We needle each other so violently that those who do not know us very well expect to see blood flowing any moment.

One predominant theme runs through Lou's mind. You'd think an old time fan would come up with time travel, space warps, giant brains, psi or something like that. Not Lou. Lou is more basic. Sex is his theme. If someone would publish a magazine like Spicy Spaceship Stories Lou could be happy.

Lou also shares the January 14th birthdate of Ken Bulmer and myself along with other great men of history. For years the CFG has held a birthday meeting and combined reunion on the nearest Sat. to that date. However since 1953, when that girl at the Philcon asked me who that nice grey-haired old man was, Lou has had his hair cut close in an attempt to shave off the 6 years difference in our ages. (6 years chronologically & 16 physically.)

At Chicago we all went to a chinese restaurant. Lou ordered southern fried chicken as any true gourmet should.

There are several ways of getting a word in edgeways with Lou. One is to keep talking louder & louder without stopping. Practice talking on the intake, too, & you will prevent those split second pauses which are so deadly. Doc simply says, "Lou, shut up!" One gambit I've found quite effective is to move my lips without actually saying anything. When Lou lowers his voice to hear what you're saying, come in loud and strong.

Lou has musical taste. With my old record player he used to say that was the kind of music he liked to hear & then proceed to drown it out. This forced me into Hi-Fi. Now, with a simple twist of the volume control, counter force is applied. However I'm still one behind in this game of 'oneupmanship'. Right in the middle of a jazz session, Lou says, "My favorite song is Ave Maria, sung by Marian Anderson." Yeah, that cat really sends me.

After 15 years delivering dry cleaning, Lou swore that nothing interesting had ever happened on his route. He sold out and started driving a taxi while looking around for another business venture. Immediately all sorts of things began to happen. Women climbed over from the back seat & threw their arms around him. Movie stars & visiting celebrities rode in his hack. Northern Kentucky gambling houses and other

houses started giving him a cut for bringing them customers. All of this had such a narcotic effect that it took us two years to rescue him and put him into the honest profession he has today...a traveling salesman.

Several stories of Lou's have been published: Other Worlds, Spaceways, Astounding, and coming up, the Magazine of Fantasy. However these outside activities have sapped Lou's strength to the point where writing comes hard these days. In fact, Carrie Tabakow does all of the writing anymore.

Ever since Lou sold her a typewriter (By God, I call that salesmanship!) Carrie has been forced to write in order to meet the payments on the typewriter. So, when she switches over to science fiction, a new writer will join the field. Maybe there's a method in Lou's madness. He sends Carrie to writing school one night a week. In a few years he'll probably retire, letting her support him.

STAN SKIRVIN

Stan manages to survive on more food and less waking hours than anyone I know of. My earliest meetings with him bring back memories of calling his house at noon and being told by his Mother that he was still asleep.

He also purports to have a darkroom and an interest in photography. This has some basis in fact. I understand that he plans to develop some negatives this summer of our Philadelphia trip in 1953. If we live long enough we may even see prints of these.

Stan & Joan met at a CFG meeting and owe their marriage to Lou Tabakow. One time Stan, Lou, Dale, Roy and myself were up at Doc's. At that time Stan was living in Columbus. Lou kept telling him how good he had it: single, a car, and an apt. You know the line. In fact, Stan never had it so good. Lou's pitch was so pathetic it brought tears to the eyes of every married man there. He kept telling Stan how smart he was in avoiding the pitfalls the rest of us had made, etc. That evening we drove back to Cincinnati with a warm glow in our hearts. Stan followed us down in his car and proposed to Joan. The next week-end he sprang the news to Lou and to us.

Stan has a fund of stories and songs and makes a nice raconteur. His timing & inflection of voice is perfect. He can make an average story sound funny as hell; the good ones uproarious. I've seen joke sessions last until 4 - 5 AM with Stan in there matching story with story.

Master of the repartee, many an opponent has found himself neatly punctured. Even Lou has been known to remain speechless for 10 seconds after a barb aimed his way.

One time at Doc's Lou was rambling on and when he came to the words, "sexual intercourse", he lowered his voice to that sly stage whisper of his. We immediately asked him why he suddenly lowered his voice and in a doctor's office of all places. Stan came up with the appropriate description that has followed Lou ever since: "Sanctimonious S. O. B."

Stan is interested in Hi-Fi, classical and jazz music as well as photography. He helped me move, for which my back was saved & proved to be a great audience when I once tore up the Cincinnati Telephone Directory.

OSCAR & MARY ELLAN MOELLER

Oscar comes to our meetings and either sleeps or reads. If the conversations turn to: sex, cards, crap shooting, gambling or politics, he emerges. Otherwise he's the quiet one. He probably reads more science fiction than the rest of us do, but he's not the noisy loud person like a few of us are. He has been a soldier, dancing instructor, machinist, and for the past 8 or 10 years a hair stylist. He claims to be our only member who actually gets paid for pleasing women.

Mary Ellan is the fan half of the Moellers. She attends all of our meetings and the Midwestcons, etc. She has little time to read very much science fiction, but knows fans from all parts of the country. Long time members of the CFG, both the Moellers have become fixtures of the group. We expect them to continue their fan activities and would miss them if they did not.

DALE TARR

Dale has been a fan for many years. He can recount the plots, themes, artists and magazines of the twenties and thirties with ease. He attended CHICON I in 1940 & was quite active in the fan mags of that era. At that time he must have been a real ball of fire. Later, when he quit sublimating, his fan writings tapered off.

One of the founders of the original group in Cincinnati, Dale is the only one left who can give us any of the history of that period. When I first broached the idea of this one-shot, Dale was helpful with ideas & suggestions on the various ways of approaching the subject. He brought his typewriter out to my house several times and we both slaved away in getting the task started. His article was the first one completed and he has been valuable in needling Lou & Stan for completion of their sections.

Dale was inactive for a couple of years and during this time we got the annual Midwestcons started. Since then, Dale has been in on the planning of all the rest. While no one really does much work on these, Dale has always assumed as large a share of the work as the rest of us have.

His hobby is mathematics & I guess you'd say politics is, too. During election years and local campaigns, our meetings get quite lively and animated. A rather shy person when I met him 9 years ago, Dale is not a shrinking violet today. It takes a good man to stand up to his finger pointing, table pounding, and shouting without quailing. Newer members cringe in the corner until we nobly offer them our protection. (Lou's standard protection fee is \$1.00) A special election in Cincinnati on the P R method of electing city council will no doubt bring its full measure of panel discussions this fall.

It has been said that one should avoid three subjects in verbal discussions: Politics, Religion and Sex. We usually cover all 3 before any CFG meeting is over.

JIM HOITEL

Jim graduated from the College of Pharmacy; moved to Dayton; got married; and should be a papa by 1967 Midwestcon time. He also built up a nice collection of mags, books and fanzines. What else can I say...Jim's a busy man!

ROY LAVENDER

I met Roy in 1932 at school in Delaware, Ohio. He lived on a farm then, but later in the school year stayed in town with his grandparents for easier commuting. By 1933 he & I were closer friends and it was Roy who introduced me to the pulp mags. It wasn't long before I was off! I started collecting them then & have been at it ever since.

We were mean bastards in school & would probably have been classified juvenile delinquents today. What saved us was that we never got caught at anything. I moved to Columbus in 1934 & it probably was just as well that I did. Throughout all of our moves about the country & in military service, we kept in touch with each other & tried to visit when we could. I made trips to Angola, Indiana where Roy was in college & into the swamps of Louisiana where he was working on an oil well crew.

In the early Forties Roy & I visited around Ohio & Indiana quite a bit. We made the Ohio-Indiana Conference in 1940 at Ft. Wayne. This was organized by Ted Dikty & drew in fans from considerable distance. Degler was there & was spouting off on his Cosmic Circle theories. We never took him serious and were surprised that other fans did. We tried to get an Ohio fan group going, with not too much success. The summer of 1941 saw us hitch-hiking many times to Cedar Point to see Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman, and the big bands of that era. We also would go 2 or 3 times a week to Buckeye Lake, about 35 miles east of Columbus, to see Bunny Berigan, Johnny Long, Bob Crosby and practically every name band of the summer of 1941. That fall I went to Cincinnati & Roy to Oklahoma, Texas & Louisiana. The Columbus fandom was extinct.

Roy interested me in photography & I in turn passed this disease on to Stan. Possessed of that off-beat sense of humor, the two of us can get our jollies over something Lou feels is not complete. (Lou is of the Abbott & Costello slapstick type of humor. Doc & Stan are on our side, though.)

There's hardly a subject that you can bring up, especially on the technical side that Roy cannot hold an intelligent conversation on. His vast reading of the technical journals is not confined to any 1 subject. I usually go to Roy for advice on Hi-Fi, etc.

We used to see Roy & Dee Dee quite often at our meetings, even though they drove 100 miles each way. Now, the overtime at North American and the time involved from being a home owner, has reduced our visiting times to mail & the get togethers at Doc's. Anyway, Roy's been around so much that we consider the Lavenders members of the CFG, as well as our friends. They attend Midwestcons, national cons, were active in the NFFF, but since they don't devote 24 hrs a day to being a fan, would be considered by some as not being true faaaans.

WALTER PRATT

Walter & Thursa are now in Parkersburg, West Virginia in connection with Walter's service with the Bureau of Internal Revenue. We hated to see them leave.

When the Cinvention publicity started coming out in the fall of 1948, it turned out that Walter lived only two blocks away from me in Sharonville. Walter could talk about the stories from Argosy in the early twenties and lose me entirely. His memory of what he had read never ceased to amaze me. We spent many hours in pleasant conversation. A devotee of opera & the classics, Walter also takes pleasure in listen-

ing to jazz and found Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress Series quite interesting.

Thursa founded the LOU TABAKOW FAN CLUB in 1952 at the Midwestcon and carried it to Chicago, where she kept telling Boucher how good an author Lou was...much to Lou's embarrassment. He never met Boucher that year. After all that build up he was ashamed to admit that he was Lou Tabakow.

The CFG misses these two people and hopes for a transfer back to Cincinnati.

C. L. BARRETT, MD

Although his first name is Charles, he's better known as Doc to all of us. He was reading Weird Tales before Amazing Stories ever appeared & his father had the old Black Cat Magazine going back to the 1890's in the family library. We first met in 1948 in the early part of the year & wound up that July in a smoke filled room in Toronto working out the bid for Cincinnati for 1949.

The way Doc's geared up, time is his most precious thing; and he has shared many pleasant hours with all of us. About 4 or 5 times a year we go to Bellefontaine for a stag get together. We sit up until daylight talking, talking, talking. If Doc gets called away to an emergency at the hospital, we'll browse through his large library of rare books and magazines. The older copies are kept in the waiting room. However, we usually end up in the basement playing the pinball machine until he gets back. The pinball machine is crowded between tons of magazines stacked in the basement. Doc once offered me a 15 year run of TIME magazine so he could use the space for something else. I declined the offer since they had no fanzine review columns. As a pack-rat Doc has only met his master in one man. This is a junk dealer in Clermont County I stumbled across a few years back. Doc still hasn't gotten around to collecting dinner bells, or thunder mugs. He's off on music boxes, though.

At Bellefontaine there's that midnight meal, a few drinks, the latest jokes to swap, new ideas & stories to discuss, the latest fan gossip, convention plans, tape exchanging, slide viewing, and music to listen to. Fiendish gags are planned and many's the time we've helped Doc in perpetrating a local gag. One time Lou was writing on a store's front windows at 4 AM one Sunday morning. He shuddered to think what would happen if a cop had questioned him, knowing full well that Doc would have denied ever seeing him in his whole life. The thoughts of such a triple-cross paled him.

Doc can take it & dish it out...only it's best to avoid his dishing out. One never knows how one will be awakened at Doc's. One time it might be by the pressure can of shaving lotion directed in the face, or the next time a freezing solution at the seat of your manhood. We've all become very light sleepers and at the first sound of reveille, we jump out of bed and pop to attention. Even Stan. The past 9 years of bull sessions have been wonderful. The Midwestcons have been merely an attempt to extend these sessions.

Bloch's description of friendship based on mutual interest is an apt one here. Doc is curious about everything; you can't get near him without being involved in an interesting and lively conversation. From him I've learned much on diplomacy, tact, how to meet & influence people, etc. I've still lots to learn, of course. We count Doc as our friend & look forward to many years of continued friendship.

BEN KEIFER

A resident of Columbus, Ohio, Ben has attended all the Midwestcons & every national con since the Cinvention. He's a lover of both classical and jazz music & is a pack rat as well. His collection of records rivals his science fiction collection. A visit to Ben's mean hours, as there is so much to see, hear & talk about.

Another hobby with Ben is cooking. A true gourmet, he leaves most of us lost when it comes to that delicate flavor, etc. We are simply the quantity eaters. Many a chinese preparation has been devoured at Bellefontaine that Ben fixed for us. Sometimes I wonder if Ben feels imposed upon when he does this; but the aroma and cooking sounds emanating from the kitchen subdues any qualms of conscience.

BEA MAHAFFEY

Now an old married woman with the last name of Baird, Bea attends now & then. She's still our CFG Sec'y, and takes active interest in the club, but not too much in the field of science fiction anymore.

Everyone knows how Palmer stole her away at the Cinvention to end up as his editor of Other Worlds. She has never said too much about this job, but I and many others have felt that she would make a better editor than Palmer if she were given complete freedom on the job.

Pat, Bea's sister, has attended many CFG meetings and conventions; but never really was much of a fan in my estimation. Her interests have been more in the fans than in the stories. This would not be the case if raising a family & operating a restaurant did not occupy so much of her time. This certainly didn't hinder her being accepted into fandom & she probably knows more fans & pros than most of the eager beavers do. Both are nice people to know & to have in any group.

MARK SCHULZINGER

Now goes to college. He found out about girls & is rapidly going gaffa.

The same holds true for FRED SCHWARTZ and ROY DIXON, both balls of fire like Mark was at one time. We expect them all back in a few years.

The case of Hal & Nancy Shapiro is a bit different, though. After years of fan activity, convention going, publishing, collecting, etc., they quit coming to the CFG meetings and sent word back via Mark that fans and fandom were too juvenile. We now see them once a year...when the Midwestcons are held.

This concludes my report on the CFG. By now you are probably tired of hearing us talk about us. By this time you are either sick to death of us, or think we're wonderful. Either way we'll still be here next year.

Don Ford

BEN KATZ

A resident of Columbus, Ohio, Ben has attended all the Midwestcons & every national con since the Ginnvention. He's a lover of both classical and jazz music & is a pack rat as well. His collection of records rivals his science fiction collection. A plus to Ben's many hours, as there is so much to see, hear & talk about.

Another hobby with Ben is cooking. A fine gourmet, he leaves most of us lost when it comes to that delicate flavor, etc. We are simply the quantity eaters. Many a Chinese preparation has been devoured at Ballantynes that Ben fixed for us. Sometimes I wonder if Ben feels imposed upon when he does this; but the aroma and cooking sounds emanating from the kitchen add a new quality of coziness.

BET MAMATRY

Now an old married woman with the last name of Holld, Bet attends now & then. She's still our GPC Sec'y, and takes active interest in the club, but not too much in the field of science fiction anymore.

Everyone knows how Palmer stole her away at the Ginnvention to end up as his editor of Other Worlds. She has never said too much about this job, but I and many others have felt that she would make a better editor than Palmer if she were given complete freedom on the job.

Bet, Bet's sister, has attended many GPC meetings and conventions; but never really was much of a fan in my estimation. Her interests have been more in the fans than in the stories. This would not be the case if raising a family & operating a restaurant did not occupy so much of her time. This certainly didn't hinder her being accepted into fandom & she probably knows more fans & gets them most of the sugar beavers do. Both are nice people to know & to have in any group.

MARK SCHULINGER

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Don Ford

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