

# Alexandria Trio



Cover by Joe Mayhew. "Son ferrito!" is merely  
a furrin phrase for je suis blessé.

ALEXANDRIA TRIO is a combozine published for the  
heck of it and the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.  
It comprises TARGET: FAPA, AN OPEN LETTER TO  
LEE HOFFMAN, and PTL AND ASI. The latter title  
is available as a separate item.

I have been obliged to disregard the advice of  
certain of our members who wanted me to put the  
filksong and the Apex article from TARGET: FAPA  
into an issue of STUPEFYING STORIES and add that  
to the combozine...which, by the way, is Opera-  
tion Crifanac CCXLI. After all, if I did that,  
just to have another item in it, I'd have to be con-  
sistent and count all the elements, like the cover,  
and give the 'zine some such title as  
ALEXANDRIA QUINTET.

Whoever heard of a nutty title like  
ALEXANDRIA QUINTET, anyway?

- - - - -  
It's Eney's Fault  
- - - - -



TARGET:

AAAA

I didn't haff der Hearts to told dem  
ve're holdink der negst Zigma R'o  
gonvention in Boikley...



### *'Katzenjammer Kids' Get Licked*

Anyone who has followed the misadventures of "The Katzenjammer Kids" in The Washington Post comic section knows the mischievous boys often deserve the "licking" they get at the hands of Der Captain and the Inspector. Hans and Fritz—or, rather, their German predecessors who inspired the comic strip, Max and Moritz—now appear on a West German stamp issued on 50th anniversary of the death of Wilhelm Busch, German artist, humorist and versifier.



Here, for the many friends who wait for it and the few schlubs who don't even feel apprehension, is another issue of TARGET: FAPA, complete with horrible jokes inside. For those who remember the DisCon we have a horrible joke outside, too. Our first bit of graveyard humor is the declaration that this is Operation Crifanac CCXXXVIII, and the second:

-----  
It's Eney's Fault  
-----

I'm an old fan of Astounding, by Roscoe, friends, I am;

For this new rag called "Analog" I do not give one damn!

As-tro-lo-gers think I'm a fink, and Dean claims I'm a clod,

But I'm not about to be brain-washed by the fancies of John Ghod!

-----

This effusion was dedicated to all the people who claim that FAPA members don't write enough lyric poetry. Lyric, after all, means intended to be sung.

-----

QUICK, WHILE HE'S STILL GROGGY DEPT.: Redd Boggs is doing wonderfully little service to his ostensible cause with his continuing attacks on FAPA as a Nest of Sinners.

Lots of his wilder comments, I grant you, might stand as rhetorical exaggeration, meant to lash our calloused consciences back to life with a whip of scorpions. With such remarks it would be ineffably Sercon to assume that he meant just what he said ... as if John Baptist's clients had replied to the generation of vipers crack by proving that they had no scales and didn't eat fieldmice. However, in addition to moral exhortations in the best Cotton Mather style, Redd has gotten so



excited as to introduce a pretty gross error in a matter of fact, which I must take the liberty of straightening out. (I know there are some elements who think that it's Unrefined to take notice of even careless misstatements. Consider that I note their protest.)

I assume, at least, that it was excitement that made Redd forget fact so far as to claim, last time, that us Vile Degenerate FAPA members had done nothing about the Ed Martin affair until Ruth Berman circulated her petition. Without wanting to detract from the merit of Ruth's action, I can cite off the top of my head a series of things us Vile Degenerate FAPA members had done before she acted. Harry Warner, for one, complained loudly and pointedly in print; both Ted White and I (and you can hardly ever get that kind of collaboration) complained in person to the SecTreasurer; and Redd himself, of course, made as many sounds of protest as the most vocal of us. I believe that others also made themselves heard, and any omissions are due to lapse of memory on my part rather'n gamesmanship.

That Ruth acted via petition -- more credit to her, since Martin's readmission would be more of an imposition on herself & fellow W-Listers than on the active membership -- while we didn't is no very grave reflection on our characters. At first, there was no reason to think so drastic a move would be necessary; later, it seemed that Martin was uninterested, until I wrote him shortly before the date of the Berman petition and filled him in on developments. Then, indeed, he did reply and claim interest in getting readmitted; but kindly note that he hasn't followed his claim up in any way.

Now, it occurs to me -- to attack the subject from a slightly different angle -- that we can make some deductions from the evidence before us which will explain Redd's peculiar carryings-on, and in fact I implied them up there where I referred to his "ostensible" cause. Redd knows perfectly well the anarchically individualistic and skeptical bias fans exhibit routinely, and is as well able as anybody to predict the effect of moralistic exhortation and threats of resigning in a huff on a group like FAPA. Yet Redd's blasts have been, allowing for the correctness of spelling, as much of a distortion as the worst FAPA has seen, and that, apparently, without the excuse of some personal rancor underlying them.

Suppose, out there in the Mundane world of which so little filters through our fannish aspects, Redd has been infiltrating the John Birch Society and intends to destroy it from within, by getting control of its publications and exaggerating their attacks to the point of burlesque? Obviously, a little preliminary practice in subtly ridiculous billingsgate will be helpful. If a suitable subject can be found -- for instance, an obvious wrong, committed against a member who's deadwoodish enough for the disposition of his case to have no real importance to FAPA whether he's in or out -- why not try it on a group of fans? A wild notion, I admit, yet let us, as reasoning beings, not shrink from the bold application of logic even to an inexplicable situation.

— 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 —

"Last one out of Hamelin's a dirty rat!" piped Tom. (GHS)

SHOOTING BACK AT SPEER DEPT.: Juffus carried on about my sins at such length, in "Little Lessons in Grammar", that I suppose I'd better present criticism of his criticism, if only to keep up my image. Not that all the typos he cites against me are not founded, mind you.

In this case, it isn't hard to find a flaw that just about wrecks Speer's basis for grotching. I do proofread my stencils before running, and so, I presume, do the other people ticked off for their typos. (Those who catch it for slipshod wording rather'n bad spelling are another matter, and can defend themselves.) Improvement could be obtained by spending much more time -- to go over the things several times, say -- or by spending money or benefits to get somebody else to do it. None of these commodities are available to fans -- at least, not for uses as far down the scale of priority as improved proofreading. Speer is perfectly aware of our subjection to these limitations (although he may have happened not to think of it while writing "LLiG"); his criticism, therefore, ought to have taken them into account. By failing to consider realpolitik, seems to me, Speer has deprived his comments of any value save as catharsis for his insulted eyeballs.

If there is such a thing as eyeball catharsis.

Fans are probably natural-born poor proofreaders anyway, for a reason Robert Graves touches on: people who have done lots of reading from an early age learned to speed-read -- to apprehend whole phrases and sentences at a glance -- before they got to the stage of learning the exceptions and eccentricities of English spelling. As a result, they are hardly more inclined to niggle over single letters than a good driver is to count the squares of concrete in the pavement under him.

As for Jack's self-justification for nitpicking, his most important point is merely a gimmick -- Psychological Fallacy 21a, "Fore-stalling Disagreement". He claims that rejection of his criticisms implies that the remarks damaged by the errors he points out weren't worth making. (To expand the reasoning to its tacit conclusion: all fans think their remarks are worth making; therefore, none of you will reject my criticisms.) The objection to nitpicking is different, and certainly not so modest: to wit, that the damage inflicted wasn't worth the attention given to it. Or any attention.

While Speer offers a pat -- suspiciously pat, now I come to think of it -- counter to his own arguments by citing Flesch's suggestion that people who persist in noticing typos are sickniks and need to be psychoed out of their abnormal perceptiveness, I think we can give our Oldest Member more points than that. Jack's a lawyer, after all, and has been trained -- either deliberately or by experience -- to look at everything closely enough to make sure nobody's slipping weasel words through. So his unfortunate sensitivity to our less happy Snearyisms is probably something he needs worse than an indifference to them; but even so, that's no reason he should brush the results on us.

— 3 — — 3 — — 3 — — 3 — — 3 — — 3 — — 3 — — 3 — —

"This hooch of Socrates' doesn't seem to agree with me", said Tom coldly



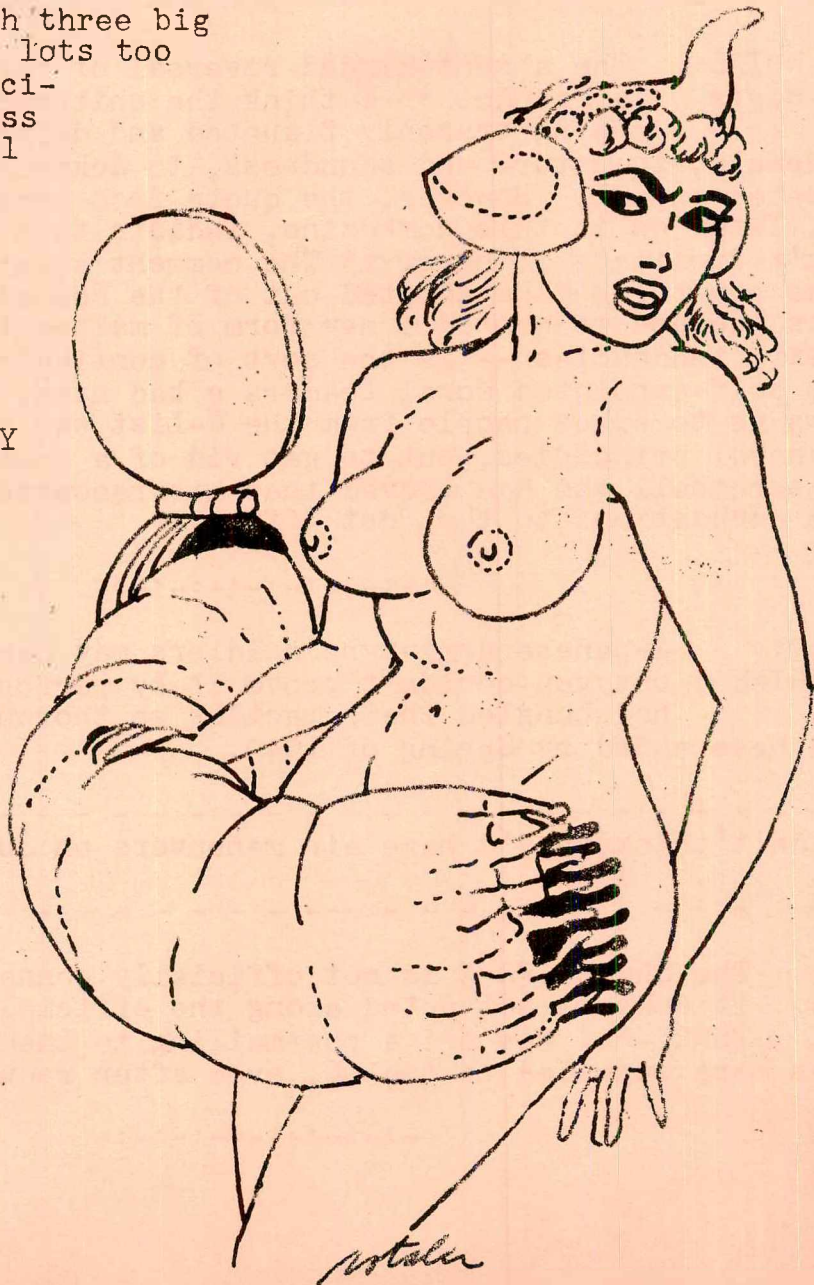
"TWO WRONGS DO NOT MAKE A RIGHT"? Well, they're not supposed to, Bill Donaho. Two wrongs can cancel each other out; if what remains isn't right, it was wrong to begin with. quote

This observation has been brought to you in honor of scuttle your ole catchphrases week.

-----  
This is a watchbird watching a catchphrase-scuttler  
-----

#### MAILING CIV

Ed Cox: 68 copies are not a "safeguard"; they're a requirement.  
ESDACYOS More than 68 is a safeguard. As for the missingness of WESTWARD HOOG!, we do have a continuing problem with double pickups at assembly sessions -- but they're with single-sheeters and items that have two pages held together with three big snaggy staples. WH was lots too big to be doubled by accident. As for carefulness of counting...hell, Bill Donaho counted as carefully as anybody could only to realize next day he'd goofed, thus leading to my receipt of a special delivery copy of ASP. Even Bill Danner short-counted on occasion, and STEFANTASY was easier to count accurately than any edge-stapled fanzine. Anyway, my claiming you erred isn't the same as accusing you of moral turpitude. \*\* "Every young fan dreams of finding the fem-fan Foo has created for him"? Well, if Foo is mixed up in it, no WONDER there are so many fan marriages breaking up! \*\* Roy Tackett should have filled us in on what set him off; as it is, his arguments appear superficial without anything to react against.











fare out there is? I'll prolly have to go somewhere else for my PhD...  
\*\* George Scithers and I were set off on a Tom Swiftly session by Harry Warner's comment on your account of the session which Poul Anderson kicked off at the Westercon...man, these three-cushion shots are wild, aren't they? It was George who thought of the combination of Tom Swiftly and Historighastly I have scattered around the magazine. \*\* O ghod, I can see now the reaction to your proposal of kicking in toward ASOF...

-----  
"You may claim it's just a freak of the weather, but I don't like Pompeii", said Tom, heatedly.  
-----

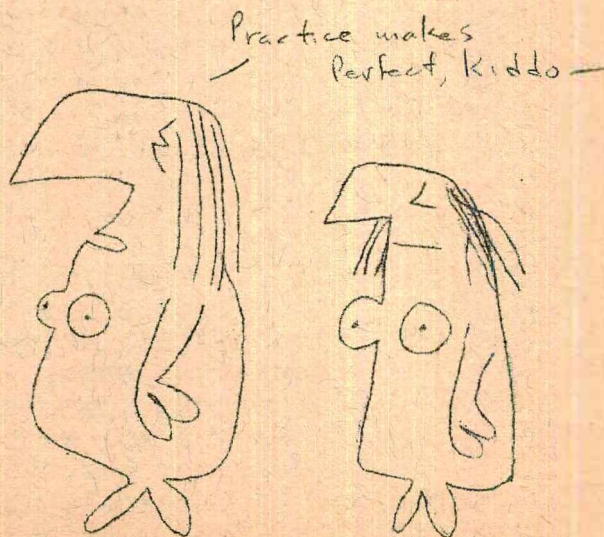
Grennell: You can get more accuracy from the deformed li'l steel  
GRUE balls used in BB guns by increasing the smoothiousness of the outside. Roll 'em in hot wax, enough to take up all the wax; then drop them a goodly distance into a pan of water. An interesting type of action target is walnut hulls, which you can sink or shatter at preference. That is, if you're the neat type of walnut huller who breaks the things right on the division between the halves. Remembering DAG's grip, I suspect he crushes them, one at a time, between three fingers and his palm.

-----

Lee Hoffman: Have you discovered the paste and semi-paste inks  
SELF-PRESERVATION made by Tempo? They seem to have phenomenally little set-off and show-through to them, although I found the hard way that they aren't little enough to allow ditto paper to be used on a Gestetner. \*\* Nice dissection of the pulp movie. I think Type 4, the Hero Not Really Involved, can be extended to cover a subtype in which there are, in effect, two heroes...like the Major in "Retreat, Hell!", who has a ghodlike superiority to the problems of the Recalled Reservist Captain and is apparently motivated by Gung Ho sentiments rather than the wish to make good which drives the RRC. At times a character in costume stuff will show the same kind of behavior.

-----

Art Wilson: You will get screams  
SCATALOG from Pete Graham because you don't show proper awareness that it is now right and proper for us to stand back and let people be enslaved. \*\* If published in 1871 the copy-right on Hans Breitman's Ballads would have long ago expired. The author, Charles G. Leland, died in 1903. Don't you just hate us people who take everything seriously?





Donaho: See my remarks under BELTE NOIRE on the blackball. \*\* You are  
ASP defining away in an unfair manner when you claim that those  
who have had their good faith challenged cannot properly evaluate the fairness of the Martin matter any more. If you think so, that is something you should try to prove. \*\* Pseudo-Campbellian means imitating the layout and effort for balance of a prozine, when you're publishing a fanzine. (This is a watchbird watching a pseudo-Campbell?)  
Redd Boggs it was who first inveighed against this practice, I think. \*\*  
Shux, gunpowder didn't at all change the necessity of holding ground as well as just winning battles -- no firepower weapon can do that. Fact is, when artillery developed enough to deny large areas around a battery to the passage of vehicles, it became even more imperative to seize a strong point rather than mask and bypass it. Anyway, what I was going to say was, it wasn't that "social conditions" made people unwilling to become longbow experts, but that improved firearms made it useless. The time required to pick up skill with the longbow is hardly more than that required for becoming fairly good with any weapon; that is, in six months you can learn all you're ever likely to have occasion for in a battle. The rest of the time needed to produce a veteran soldier isn't learning the weapon, but getting used to remembering it under stress... the nonsense about having to train a bowman from the age of three (or, starting with his grandfather) is so much mysticism. Nossir. What did in the longbow was the fact that to use it -- to draw the bow and control it well enough to get off an aimed shot -- you have to be in good condition, and sufficiently fed & rested to do exacting physical work. Even then, you can't readily carry over 40-50 rounds. You can lug 400-500 rounds of musket ammo if you need to; and even if you're a 98-pound weakling, dog tired and starving, all you've gotta be able to do is crook that finger on the trigger and your target is just as dead as if he'd been shot by Heracles. \*\* The "Literary Criticism" has the defect of assuming its important point: that poetry and drama are two of the most important forms of literature. As divisions of classification, they are; as preëminent in rank-order of value, they once were -- that is, before the more slowly developing forms of prose overtook and surpassed them. Drama, so far as it has value, is metamorphosed into dialogue...that is, any means of presenting divergent views even-handedly...and poetry withers in any case once critical intelligence rises, since it is an impossibly Sercon art form. ("How long could der Führer go on being der Führer/if he saw what everybody else sees whenever he looked in the mührer?") As a consequence, modern poetry ranges from abominably derivative (when the critical intellect's rejection can be reflected onto the original) through abominably pretentious (when the critical intellect is simply turned off) to abominably obscurantist (when a purposely analysis-proof fog prevents critical penetration.)

-----  
"I guess I miscalculated the strength of the Thresher's hull",  
said Tom, crushed.  
-----

Raeburn: The point -- indeed, the whole reason for the existence of  
LE MOINDRE -- "This Land is Your Land" is that it affords meat for  
that bitter little parody, "This Land is Their Land". \*\*  
The phrase "huckleberry friend" was not used in the US before "Moon



River". But as a generalized adjective for felicity it's pretty old; "huckleberry heaven", for instance, dates back to 1856. \*\* What the hell is this nonsense about me sticking up for the idea that you have an English accent? If you trace back, I was saying that I'd found other ~~Amaz~~ Australians/New Zealanders had the same sort of accent you did and that probably Americans were mistaking it for an English accent because it had more pitch-inflection on the vowels. You didn't think so, and so I told you in a huff to concoct your own explanation for the reason people say you have an English accent. I didn't say you had an English accent; I had said that, and then proclaimed that I was wrong. Crissake, Rae-burn, can't I even confess an error?

-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

Graham/Carr: DeCamp presents an interesting alternative to the cyclic/  
LIGHTHOUSE noncyclic history controversy; civilizations may have been cyclin until the rise of science and the machine introduced such a strong linear factor that no civilization now can fall, although they can still be absorbed. If this is so, we'll never know the truth, because the number of past civilizations is too small to provide a reliable sample. \*\* Concern for the rights and sufferings of others is, and deserves to be, an object of scorn when it is limited to Deploring in an elegant style, like the "sympathy" exhibited by Gentry of Feeling in FRevolutionary times, Terry. But currently Bleeding Hearts are either excessively sentimental like that, or likely to Cost Us Money...in which case I suspect a transferred epithet. Remember the Herblock cartoon with the Congressman grundling about "Cost of Enough Aid", and the figure of History offering "Cost of Not Enough Aid" with the comment: "Perhaps you'd like to see a larger volume...?" \*\* Terry actually did carry thru with that gag about us kicking each other in the shins, at Discon, or tried to. Unfortunately for him I hadn't read LIGHTHOUSE at that time and didn't dig the fact that it was a joke, so I reacted to it as another case of LT's Buddies F\*rtng Around Trying To Imitate Burbee: that is, I ignored it. O well.

-----  
"You go ahead alone, Pheidippides...I'm out of breath",  
said Tom, disgustedly.  
-----

Dan McPhail: Tsk, Dan, you just don't understand. Unless you go  
PHANTASY PRESS through the ritual of shuddering in horror every time words like "war", "atomic", "military", and sometimes "government" are mentioned, you will be assumed to be a Vile Bloody-Handed Warmonger. All Vile Bloodyhanded Warmongers, as is well known, mong war and steep their hands in blood (babies', for choice); so you needn't be seen actually doing so in order to be accused.

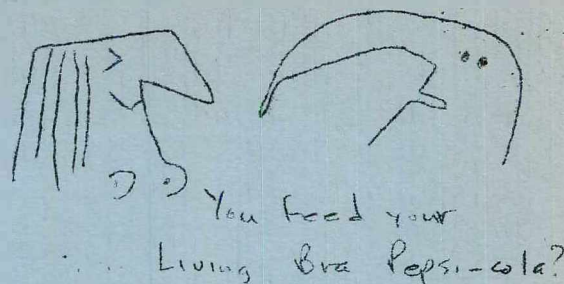
-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

White: Yes, obviously we did know how much better you were than your  
NULL F competitor for the VPship. Y'think we'd never heard of negative numbers? \*\* Your evasion of the point when you join in Breen's controversy sounds dreadfully as if you found peace getting on your nerves. Nuts to you, White; I feel too cheerful today. But later.



Speer: You just don't have enough  
SYNAPSE confidence in fans. One  
did write in for an expla-  
nation of that format-code you claim  
is so pellucid. He wanted to know if  
I was using "L" for Letterpress as  
well as Litho, and "D" to indicate  
Hekto as well as Ditto. As it hap-  
pened I didn't need to indicate either  
of the unexplained methods, though I  
would have used "Pr" and "H" if ne-  
cessary. ("Pr" to allow for "Ph",  
Photo -- a case that did come up.) \*\*

Though formally correct your statement is somewhat misleading. Two  
sides of a controversy need not be presented formally to the VP. I  
ruled on the admissibility of some of Taurasi's material when its pre-  
sence in the mailing was challenged by Boyd Raeburn (was it Boyd?), tho  
no direct argument for Taurasi was presented. They came to Boyd's at-  
tention because Marion had put them in the mailing bundle. It seemed  
hardly necessary to inquire whether another member, like say the OE, was  
of the opinion that Taurasi's zines should have been put in the bundle.  
\*\* London's Star Rover, and some of his other fiction in which racial  
memory is an element of rationalization, includes the narrators' comment  
of surprise at the results, since they'd started out believing in an-  
cestral memories and here were memories from people who obviously died  
without issue. If the mechanism was ever resolved, I never ran across  
the place; perhaps he had in mind discarnate entities like Piper's re-  
incarnating energy clouds. \*\* The alphabetical plastic-embossing gad-  
gets produce results much too sleazy-looking for a trophy. \*\* At least  
six hc Prince Valiant books, in black & white with lots more text than  
the strip, were put out by an outfit called Hastings House. That has  
the sound of a cover name for a larger outfit, but I couldn't find  
out which one. \*\* "Cosh" is slang for "life-preserver", not the other  
way around. A life-preserver club is one either padded, or filled with  
something dense yet yielding like small lead shot, so that it won't  
break bones when you clout somebody with it. \*\* "A Condition of Intelli-  
gent Discussion" doesn't deal with one situation that occasionally re-  
curs in FAPA: that in which an antagonist begins with such a gross dis-  
tortion that his good faith can be ruled out immediately. Though I sup-  
pose that in such a case intelligent discussion isn't the purpose, as  
it certainly is not the result. \*\* O get along with you, Speer. The  
suggestions about building the moonship piecemeal in orbit were made  
back when the largest practical rockets could only lift enough payload  
for that, and it seemed easier to work a gimmick than try going directly  
to supergiant rockets. You seem to have as little patience with obso-  
lete state-of-the-art predictions as Harry Warner.



-----  
"Miss Boleyn, King Henry sent me around to give you a little something  
from him", said Tom, cuttingly.  
-----

As a fan historian one picks up lots of odd information. At the  
last Seance of the Cult, for instance, I found out about

## The Fundamentals of the APEX

Six members of The Cult were nattering away at a great rate when this subject came up in the course of a legal wrangle ...for Cultists argue about the Constitution just the way FAPA members do, maybe more...

FRED PATTEN: If the OA doesn't like the Constitution he changes it anyway, so why not do away with the Constitution? This is my newest suggestion.

DIAN GIRARD: Why don't you get Ed Baker ~~/an Esperantist/~~ to draw up a Constitution for you?

TED JOHNSTONE: I'm all in favor of that. We had in the Carbon Reproduced Amateur Press the perfect anarchy.

GEORGE SCITHERS: Yes, but who ever heard of that?

(Exclamation of "I did!" from all others present.)

DICK ENEY: What is now APEX.

GEORGE: What is APEX? I know it's some sort of apa and I've seen the list of them, but what's the damned thing up to?

BRUCE PELZ: All right. CRAP was born about eight years ago; Bill Meyers started the thing when he started publishing a carbonzine called BEM...back in, oh, about 56-57. He started sending out four carbon copies to Al Andrews, Glen King, Es Adams, and people. He started getting letters of comment, and added a letter column, illustrations, articles, stories -- the thing was a five-person fanzine. It died after about the 20th issue until about '58, when it was started again with a rotating editorship...four members and different titles. This went on for a while; Myers himself dropped out and Johnstone went in; Adams dropped out and Rich Brown went in; and in '60 Lichtman found out about it and said, "put me on the waiting list".

TED: And there we were.

BRUCE: Then Main found out about it and applied for the waiting list...

TED: And since we couldn't make six carbon copies...

BRUCE: That was in '60, wasn't it?

TED: Yes, because it was at Detention that I got in.

BRUCE: We blew it into a full-scale apa, two-week publishing schedules, in sort of an imitation of The Cult.

TED: I wrote up a Constitution for it in eight sections, giving a rough outline of publishing procedure and so on. Section Eight was to the effect that any rule in the Constitution could be disregarded at any time, including this one.

BRUCE: So this went on for a year, until shortly before SeaCon...or thereabouts...no, shortly after SeaCon.

TED: At this time Fandom was getting badly over-apa'd. This was the beginning of the apa craze, when the IPSO was founded and the FAPA Waiting List was beginning to expand like the Blob.

BRUCE: A couple of people were late in publishing and finally Andy Main published a one-sheet, dittoed thing which said "I am hereby killing the thing off; nobody seems to be interested...so and so is quitting, so and so is not interested, et cetera etcetera ~~et cetera~~". And except for a Norm Metcalf four-copy carbonzine which followed, that was The End Of the CRAP. Disclaimer.



FRED: Although people are talking about publishing another zine, now that Bruce has had his set bound.

BRUCE: It matters very little. I'd simply put it in a pocket inside the back cover...but anyway, about a year later, we found that Andy Main's publication had been four pages. The other three pages had set up Apex, or Apa X it was originally called, and the four-page things had gone to all the CRAP members except four: Johnstone, Harness, Pelz, and Metcalf.

TED: I don't know how Metcalf got in there.

DIAN: Because he was collecting apas.

BRUCE: ...And it was set up along the same idea as the CRAP, just different members. And they would keep it Secret, In-Group, Vote on Members (as the CRAP did) et cetera. They kept it pretty secret for one or two years, until Rike blew the gaff. Of course, Superbeard had been mouthing off about a few things; this, that, and the other "from Apa X"...but it had gone past, because SAPS had so long been in the habit of calling FAPA "Apa X".

DICK: We've got to allow Walter his little status symbols.

BRUCE: Yes. Like talking about Things Nobody Else Knew.

FRED: And then DNQing them.

GEORGE: But let's get back to the...

BRUCE: Yes. Anyway, Rike blew the gaff in the Cult, as you may remember, and at the same time Andy Main came over to the West Coast.

TED: Came back to the West Coast.

BRUCE: About the time of the Westercon, yes. And Andy was one of the biggest Let's Keep It Secret boys, so what does he do? He leaves a file of Apex zines lying around Hubbard House.

GEORGE: What's Hubbard House?

DICK: Don't you mean Mathom House?

BRUCE: No, Hubbard House. It's Ellik and Lewis's joint.

DIAN: Al-Ron, get it?

GEORGE: OH! Ok, ok, ok...

DICK: Hubbard House around here is a chain of snack bars.

BRUCE: Anyway, he left a file of these zines around and half of LA fandom read them. He got lucky; I didn't see them...none of the ARBM saw them...but the Trimbles did, and Al and Ron did of course, and so everybody was reading these things that were supposed to be Ultra Top Secret. It got worse from there...we started finding out about names, and Fitch made a Big Thing about suchandsuch being only open to Apex members. We auctioned off at LASFS a stack of run-off illos, a stack of about 30 or so, which Fitch bought. I said, well, I guess you can just run them through The Cult; they're not enough for anything else. And Fitch said, I'm afraid when I get through running them thru Apex there aren't going to be enough left for The Cult. Ehh, all right, I said. Of course Bjo found out about it -- it was one of her illos -- and she Went Straight Up. Bjo really hates Apex...

FRED: ...Also, Apex was supposed to be so top-secret that not even contributors' copies were given out.

GEORGE: WHY does she hate it?

BRUCE: I don't know; maybe...

DICK: Bjo can't stand things that are Done Behind Her Back...

DIAN: She doesn't like Apex because of what Don Fitch told her about me.



But why don't you want to  
save the world through Art?

GEORGE: Let's cover that in depth later and bring Apex up to the present time.

(Unidentified voice, too far off  
mike to recognize): Drag them  
kicking and screaming into the  
Twenty-First Century?

BRUCE: Up to the present...well,  
I got a list of Apex mem-  
bers, and then from spies  
in Apex...

DICK: I hope you aren't calling them Spies A, B, and C...

BRUCE: Oh, no. I haven't even told the ARBM who told what...

TED: Or who they are.

FRED: Or whether they are.

TED: Their names are Hark, Whisper, and Listen.

BRUCE: Anyway, I started to get a couple of Apex zines from spies in Apex. This got real fun; I published the entire membership list in my Apa Activity Chart, a list of who was in what apa. For N'APA, the N3F apa, which is where I put all my charts. (It takes up three pages, and that's my activity.) It was actually a glorious feeling to publish this list and watch the Apexians go Straight Up.

DIAN: They were rather upset.

FRED: Yeah, wondering who had spilled the beans.

BRUCE: Actually, the first list I got was out of Ted White's own Apex zine, and he has never been able to figure out how in the devil I got it...but the next list was out of an Apex zine I was sent. I've heard next to nothing from Apex in the last six weeks /i.e. since mid-July (RE)/...

FRED: Security has clamped down.

BRUCE: Either Security has clamped down or they're being extra cautious again. Then BREEN publishes the entire current membership list, which I didn't have, with two new members. Figuring I already had them and was publishing. I didn't know about Esther Davis being a member, nor did I know about Ardis Waters. I thought they were hanging on.

FRED: Well, anyway, Apex is sort of Cracking Down or something?

TED: At least, it's some sort of S\*t\*a\*t\*u\*s when a whole Apa is formed just to exclude you.

BRUCE: That's true enough. Of course these days we have most of Apex swearing up and down that that's NOT what Apex was formed to do.

DIAN: Kevin Langdon told me that from all descriptions they might invite me to membership, but they thought I was too close to the two of you and that Secrets might be Divulged.

TED: Oh? What did you say your name was, miss?

$$-\frac{9}{8} - \frac{7}{8} - \frac{6}{8} - \frac{5}{8} - \frac{4}{8} - \frac{3}{8} - \frac{2}{8} - \frac{1}{8}$$



unopened letter

YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT IN FANAC

SENSUAL  
LEE HOFFMAN  
approved by leading educators

Dear Lee,

Bill Evans figured, Sunday evening, that there must be 650 people at this Convention we were having over the Labor Day weekend, but I'd say 649; there was definitely Someone Missing, a one-time editor of QUANDRY. Let me fill you in a little on what happened.

Y'see, here we were, upside down over Hamburg: flak to the right, fighters to the left, sweet nothing on the airspeed indicator...

I'm sorry, that appears to be the wrong war story. What I was going to spiel you a cataract of lies about was the DisCon, where I spent an entire weekend not going to programs.

From what reports are in the convention seems to have gone pretty well, though you understand I didn't actually see more than about forty minutes of it, in bits and pieces. Asimov, Blish, Cogswell, de Camp, Ley, Lupoff, Sky Miller, and Seabury Quinn were especially good, or so people tell me. Some folks even said they liked the food at the banquet (breast of chicken in wine sauce), a declaration never before recorded by men nor yet forecast by dubious oracles from antiquity.

-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

I won't go into any details of the rush in the week before the con -- of our struggles with the problem of translating the technique of aluminum etching into that of copper etching, say, or assembling the Program Book at the last minute after we'd held as long as possible for the promised ad from GALAXY. (Guinn, the proprietor, feels rather grotched about G's failure to cop a Hugo in all these years.) Such matters are being saved for a possible How-To Book for Committees that George Scithers is planning, for one thing; for another, to quote the classic Weird Tales warning, That Way Madness Lies.

Tenny rate, here it was Thursday and I was thinking of all the things I'd've gotten ready if I'd had the chance when who else should drive up but Ron Ellick? Calvin W Biff Demmon, Russ Martin, and Mike Domina, that's who else. These four hard-bitten pioneers -- they'd picked up some sand fleas crossing the desert -- staggered in, lug-

ging sleeping bags and suitcases, and Freshened Up for a bit before we all straggled off down to the Statler Hilton to Get Things Under Way.

Ron, it seems, had brought the Art Show props across the continent in Al Lewis' Econoline (Archie Mercer, if you're reading this it's a sort of miniaturized pantechnicon). He'd dragged two of his passengers from the West Coast and the third from Chicago. Knowing of his Art Show duties, I'd purely in a spirit of charity suggested to Ron that he stop by my place for a little R&R before making it to the hotel, since he couldn't begin to set up the Art Show until Friday. How fortunate it was that, just as he'd finished washing the Econoline off with my patent hose-fed chamois-cloth and cleaning the inside with my portable vacuum cleaner, I should recall that I had a big stack of Art Show paintings that he could pack down to the hotel, as long as he was having to load up the car again anyway. Ellik agreed...well, at least he hardly ground his teeth at all, and his fingers stopped twitching in just a moment...and after we'd all stoked up on hamburger and strawberry shortcake the lot of us went galumphing off to the hotel.

Alas for the notion of Getting Things Started! As we came in the door we spotted approximately two dozen fans in the lobby alone, and there seemed to be nearly as many in the convention suite when we got up there to deposit our stacks of material. I counted them over, surprised, and looked at Bob Pavlat.

He was grinning just as widely as I was.

— : — : — : — : — : — : — : —

"Look at the room they gave us, Dick!" Harriet Kolchak said accusingly. (I had to work a dramatic speech in here somewhere.)

One of my pre-convention duties had been to try getting things ready for the NFFF to set up its hospitality room at the Con -- buying supplies locally, and holding onto the permanent equipment from preceding years. Well, here I was with a packing case full of coffeepots and stuff and a packing case full of assorted grub and a third packing case full of hot-drink cups. And here was Harriet, who was supposed to act as Hostess, with a room approximately 8x10 feet in which to entertain hordes of screaming neofans. I had a ghastly vision of headlines in TNFF.

It turned out to be the hotel's fault; as nearly as I can figure it out, whoever received instructions to put the N3F in a room with no beds but a table instead got confused and put them in a room with no beds, sure enough ... but one of the li'l tiny rooms which instead of beds had fold-out couches. Things were straightened out eventually; the NFFF room was set up in a regular suite (with the germ of another complication which blossomed later), and a group of Neffers came up to the Con suite to collect the material I'd been holding.

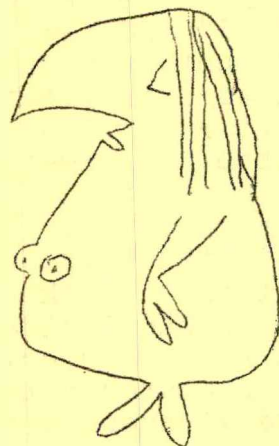


This group was, I think, collected by Janie Lamb, the NFFF treasurer, who arrived about this time. We were lucky to have Janie around, too, as it turned out ... she's a capable and levelheaded type who shortstopped more than one possible unpleasantness which might have embarrassed the con as well as the NFFF. The native bearers in the safari to the Con suite were lead by Larry Pinsker, a young Chicago fan who gave lots of assistance in the N3F room and elsewhere and, generally, contributed his share to the later opinions that youthful fans were several parsecs ahead of our neighbors of Sigma Alpha Rho fraternity, as far as the civilized virtues went.

Meanwhile, back at the ~~main~~ center of activity, Things Were Beginning to Happen. We'd cunningly laid plans to start registering at 5PM, having told the Hotel we'd start at 6; so, you see, if they tried setting the time up on us as the Chicago hotel did we'd be ready. Uh-huh. So instead of announcing registration for 5PM the way the Chicagoites did the hotel announced it for 3:30. There is no escaping some misfortune, I guess.

Now I recollect it was Friday that Dick Lupoff gave me a shot of egoboo and, unknowingly, guided me to a reliable steady source, when he asked my advice on a place where we could take Doc Smith for dinner... Dick wanted to talk over the forthcoming publication by Canaveral of a trilogy of n\*e\*w E.E. Smith novels (plug), and all the local restaurants were either hamburger joints or the coat&tie places Doc abominates with a fiery abomination. Dick's inquiry tipped me off to a useful psychic lift; on the following days, at mealtimes, I tried to make a point of strolling through the lobby and counting the number of folk gathered together, with their heads bent over my Fan's Guide to Washington, plotting a course to a restaurant. Then I'd stand in an inconspicuous corner for a couple of minutes and Gloat.

But I left a large party gathering for dinner: about ten of us, obviously too many to fit even in Dick Lupoff's Big Long Limousine. We had a comical scene on the loading dock of the hotel, which might have frayed tempers but that we all were amused by the realization that we were taking part in one of the ritual manifestations of fandom's opposition to Authority. We frittered away what must have been ten minutes trying to agree on the packing of people, without anyone quite daring to say plainly that it was daffy to try and fit ten people in a six-passenger car, when none of them were fraternity men. Fortunately, as I said, I think we were less annoyed than tickled by the spectacle of a group that included four ex-officers and NCOs, a couple of corporation executives, and at least one tech supervisor juggling the question as futilely as a canary trying to eat a coconut, just because each of them was



too shy about seeming bossy to be willing to decide by fiat on the obvious solution. Eventually it was Dick Lupoff who grasped the nettle and assigned four of the company to use a cab while the rest took his car. O well, it's this sort of thing -- and the fact that it doesn't cause heartburnings -- that helps make fandom fun...

— ♀ — ♀ — ♀ — ♀ — ♀ — ♀ — ♀ —

Did I tell you I called Randy Garrett by his first name? Buying him a drink at the same time, to make it safe. I'd have slapped him on the back, too (if you other people don't get the joke, ask somebody who was at the Detention) except that we were sitting on opposite sides of the table. Some other people who were at the Detention suggested that instead of slapping him on the back I should have Bashed Him in the Mouf, but this was mere frivolity.

The Costume Ball went off smoothly, as far as arrangements were concerned; I think the Wrath of God would have broken out otherwise, after all the work and worry and announcement George had put into it. Unfortunately, there weren't any really outstanding costumes this year, and only a moderate number of good ones. Such are the pitiless operations of Natural Law. (Fzot's Second Law of Perversity, if I remember rightly.) That much-advertised Cop At the Door worked fine, incidentally; almost all the Earth People got turned away, and when a bloc of five came in another door by the forthright expedient of simply pushing Phil Bridges out of the way, our man in the blue suit swept them right out again with hardly a ripple in the surface of the party. (Another note on fannish null-authoritarianism: Phil came over to me, rubbing his bruises and looking vaguely resentful, to report the event; I had to make the suggestion that he let me hold the door -- I'd been selling tickets -- while he went to find the guard and sicced him on these intruders. Phil has just never been an OE or other natural autocrat, I guess.)

And the screening idea was definitely a sound one. I told you we were sharing the hotel with a high school fraternity (!!), Sigma Alpha Rho? From my spot near the door I could hear the comments of the outsiders, most of whom seemed to be part of this crew of teenage reptilia. Their observations as the line of costumes went by were limited to these: "Gee, ain't she got nerve, showin' everything like that!" and "Aw, that's dumb". There were two exceptions: "Gee, ain't he got some nerve" etc., for Steve Tolliver (in loincloth and a dozen assorted leather belts, as a Red Martian warrior from the John Carter stories) and one that wouldn't pass in print even in The Cult, about a femmefan I druther not embarrass by identifying ... the sort of comment you don't even hear in locker rooms if they're above high-school level. I was listening with half an ear and a good deal of morbid fascination, wondering (a) whether they really had no other observations to make and (b) what would have happened if they'd been roaming around inside the ballroom, especially if their behavior was a match for their critical sense. Ghak. That Catholic Youth Organization or whatever that invaded the Chicon ball last year had certain negative virtues, after all.



Toward the end of the party I got assaulted by Dian Girard. I guess Costume Balls bring out the beast in her ... or possibly the kleptomaniac ... since she tried the same gig at Chicago; attempting to snatch my Hyborian Legion badge. This time I thought I was done for, as I had the convention record files in one hand, the (unlocked) cashbox in the other, dared not drop either, and was out on the floor where there was no place to set them down. After a couple of hectic minutes, though, we wound up with the badge still in place though bent, Dian's neck caught in the crook of my right arm with her hands behind my back so she couldn't grab blindly, and both record file and cash box still safely juggled. It sounds like a remarkable spectacle, and I wish I could figure out how it came about. I didn't think I remembered my close-combat training that well, but it can't have been supernatural intervention. At least, there is no other recorded case of Roscoe protecting his followers from the attacks of pretty girls.

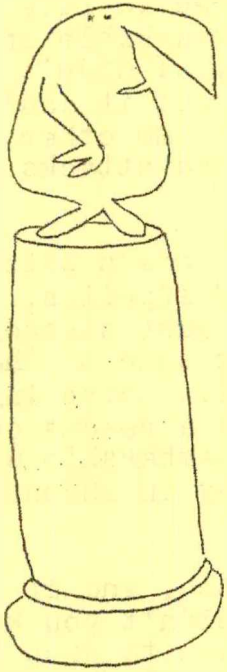
There was an alarm signal out when I got back to the con suite: the NFFF room called up to report that they were out of supplies, after only one day. False alarm, happily; Harriet had just stashed the things where nobody else could find them, on seeing some of the less mannerly neos using the paper napkins for confetti. Later in the evening Janie Lamb and Big Hearted Howard performed a rescue operation in fine style, retrieving the only one of our membership who passed out right in the open and neatly packing him away in inconspicuous safety.

Phil Harrell started a serial party this eveing, too, and it turned out to be one of the hits of the con, but -- wouldn't you know it? -- I never did get around to accepting his invitation to drop in, being concerned this evening with a hasty trip home for all the remaining copies of A Sense of FAPA. And as it turned out I was busy with still other unforeseenities Sunday night. Sigh.

$$-\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} -$$

Like a slug, I slept right through the meeting of the Dorcas Bagby Appreciation Society, though Bob Leman had announced it in my hearing the preceding day. I wish I'd been there to ask if any of the pros present knew the facts behind that blasted English company getting reprint rights for the memorial anthology. Haven't heard any details, but I hope Harry Warner was there to defend his claim that Dorcas has not joined the majority; check his conreport.

First thing I did -- after checking with Janie and finding that the supply situation in the N3F room wasn't as bad as had been thought -- was to rush around to the FAPA meeting and have a clash with the incoming OE, Pelz. (We were arguing before a select audience ~~/FAPA~~ members and waiting-listers/ the pros and cons of where to draw the line in ruling out "franked" material -- whether items could be ruled out if they were not actually the "contributor's" work, or only if they were not even so much as his publishing job.) Be it noted, with glee, that I was more Cruel, Sadistic, and Black Hearted even than Pelz, and you can't hardly get that kind no more.



As I said, the banquet ... the next affair on the schedule ... came off most satisfyingly, even if George Scithers did forget my name when he was introducing the committee. The food really wasn't bad -- even the greens were edible, which is as much as can ever be said for them -- and the speech by Murray Leinster went well. So did Asimov's presentation of the Hugos, which found only one of the winners (Dick Lupoff, Best Fanzine) present -- a record of some sort, I think. There was a painful instant when Fred Pohl accepted the award for "The Dragon Masters" on Vance's behalf; "so this is what they look like!" he remarked drily as he took the Hugo. (Poor Fred! Between his boss's grumbling and fans' sneers at artiness, he must twitch every time he sees one of those rockets...) You maybe read about the kicker at the end, when Asimov, who had been throwing humorous jabs at the winners all along, presented a special award to Sky Miller and embellished it with an amiable insult. Then he opened the envelope for the second special award, then he crogged, and then he howled at George Scithers: "Dammit, man, you've ruined the whole Bit!" The second award was for Asimov himself, but nobody ever got around to actually announcing it; we all r'ared up on our hind legs and cheered ourselves hoarse. That's the way to end a banquet, by Roscoe. (No offense, Lee.)

After the Banquet, as usual, Other Things came up to keep me away from the Program; none of interest, barring the one that gave me a chance to see how the Art Show was going. After we'd gotten a fine large room with lots and lots of display space we wound up with less art than we had display space for. Curse it! We might have displayed an Art Show twice the size of the one we actually did have.

Things were going well there, though the Coulsons looked harassed and, I noted in dismay, the Japanese art wasn't selling. As the receiving agent for Project Art Show, I would have to send all of it back if it didn't move ... the trouble was, the initial prices were simply too high. The artists had guessed as much, I suspect; at any rate, they had assigned backup prices for bidding if the work didn't move by Sunday afternoon, and I went around, now, and posted these lower prices. That must have done it; three of the seven paintings sent in by the Japan SF Art Society sold promptly. That led to an amusing situation; the semi-professionals, who had also sent in work separately, didn't sell, while the amateurs made a respectable number of sales and got a deal of appreciative comment.

My own accidental contribution, a plywood-and-flock composition one of the Fangelenoos had titled "Wizard Wood", had been assigned an artist's name by some spritely wit, I noticed. I wonder how they'll tell Terry that I too am now a reciprocal-pen-name of Carl Brandon?



--:--:--:--:--:--

Pete Graham, by the way, has not convinced femmefans that they shouldn't snog at Conventions. That's just as well for Pete Graham, by all the marks of Roscoe's Sacred Fangs. The only event in the partying of Sunday evening I can remember well enough to tell, though, was a scene in the lobby about two ack emma when some of us who had been out for coffee or the like were waiting for the single elevator to arrive and one indecently wide-awake member of the party suggested that instead of waiting for the elevator we should walk up the stairs.

"But I'm too tired to walk", said one charming lass, ~~zoox/oozz/y~~ weakly.

"That's all right", said another more managing type. "Dick can carry you."

"Yes", said the third, amiably. "Do your trick for us, Eney."

--:--:--:--:--:--

Here it was the last day of the con and the roof hadn't fallen in yet. I couldn't imagine what was holding it up, or off. Why I even sold out A Sense of FAPA, except for one copy I gave Ron Ellik to auction off for TAFF. Most of the English art had sold out, even if the Japanese didn't. The N3F room was ticking along reasonably well, Janie having things firmly in hand. The hotel was happy; the night manager was a Twitch, but the daytime man was very agreeable and even interested -- I spotted him at a couple of the program items and find here a note that he made a purchase at the Art Show. I even had time Monday morning to make it to the Hyborian Legion muster.

That consisted mostly of a lecture on magic, this year. John Boardman had been sorting through various Grimoires and came up with both historical observations of interest and a practical display. The historical observations were concerned with the various traditions and sources that went into making up Academic Magic in Western Europe; that is, the magic of scholars and pentacles as opposed to the Witch-Cult of the peasantry. The practical display was the construction of a type of pentacle -- that is, magic diagram, not five-cornered figure -- prescribed in the Grimorium verum in connection with the Operation, "How to Make a Girl Come to You, However Modest She May Be". This involves drawing a circle with cruciform, stellar, lunar, and solar symbols, and inscribing the girl's name within it. So Boardman drew his circle with cruciform, stellar, lunar, and solar symbols, and inscribed a femmefan's name in it.

I expect further information in his next Cultzine.

That segued nicely into the Burroughs panel and the convention moved right along ... this one didn't even begin visibly disintegrating early Monday afternoon as others seem to. Even the Inevitable Complication was handily fielded. About 2:30 it developed that the NFFF Room had really been two; the hotel people had absent-mindedly

opened up an extra double, which was fine, but now they'd discovered the mistake and wanted to charge for it. The NFFF room had been so valuable to the con, though, that the committee decided to pick up the tab for this extra room if necessary; a phone call to the manager, Van Buren, quickly got things straight and I think that Janie and Harriet never knew, until they were told later, that there had been a disturbance.

Looking back, in fact, I can see that Roscoe's BNFicent power guarded the whole affair; I'll even give you an instance, you being a Ghuist skeptic (though loveabobble all the same). When all the shooting was over, about 7 PM, I went out to dinner with Dian Girard and Bruce Pelz ... to the Tokyo Inn, where I had sukiyaki. Well, you know how the tips of the noodles spatter the gravy around when one eats sukiyaki with chopsticks? I collected a neat little shot-pattern on my left lapel when I got too hasty, and for an awful, soul-wrenching moment Doubted whether Roscoe were really watching over me. But then I realized what it Meant in a higher sense: that Roscoe had put off all misfortunes, even mundane ones like getting my only summer suit dirty, until after the con. And now it was after the con...

But you wouldn't know it by the scene in the Convention suite when we got back there. Twenty or thirty people were partying it up, and when one of them started to tune up a guitar and -- Pavlat, was it? -- made desperate shushing motions, I shunted the incipient hoot off into my room next door.

That was a swinging little minicon we had, though I understand it wasn't as good as Phil Harrell's room party Saturday. After I'd retrieved my Hyborian Legion badge from Dian (should've known better than to leave it in the open) we started off mildly with some tunes from THE BOSSES' SONGBOOK and then shifted over to some Authentic Ethnic stuff, like Nick Falasca himself singing the "WSFS Incorporation Song" and Ted Johnstone playing and singing "High Fly the Nazgul, O!" Sandy Cuttrell sang a four-liner I made up on the spot:

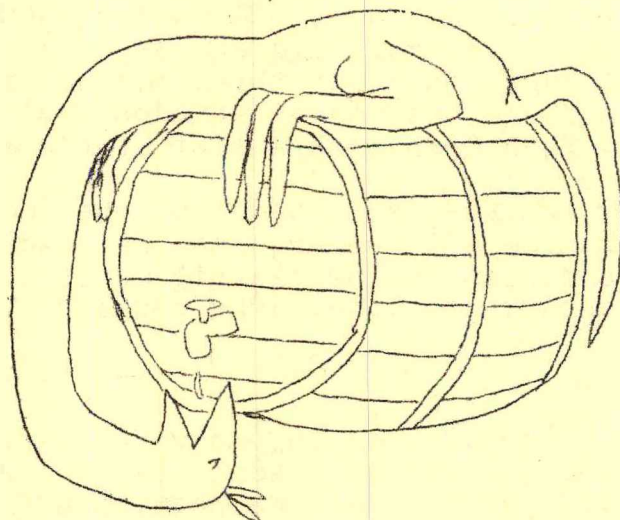
Oh, the Statler's made of plaster,  
With a guard on every floor,  
And the halls are filled with Sigma Rhos.  
We don't wanna see no more...

The noxious little purple-fezzed fratniks having stimulated the hotel's security people to preternatural activity, some of which caught fans in its blast area.

There was even a miniature Exclusion Act fuss, goshwow. We'd gotten pretty crowded, the air conditioner had given up the struggle, and I was keeping people out at the door -- what the hell, Charlie, it was my room and I'm not so libertarian I'm shy of keeping a crowd within endurable limits by arbitrary fiat. One of these excludées, however, was Les Nirenberg, who apparently has a lively sense of his own BNFship; at least, when I turned my back for a moment, he got in, and boomed at Boyd Raeburn across the room: "that crumb Eney turned me away from the door, imagine!" My immediate impulse -- and I'm



still not sure I shouldn't have put it into effect -- was to blare back: "Maybe repetition will give you a taste for the experience, buddy..." and usher him out again; in the interest of general tranquility I limited myself to casting a Dirty Look. Not that I agree with the idjits who babble that it's Not Fannish to resent insults and boorish behavior; I'm just too chicken-hearted to relish a fuss unless grossly provoked. But foosh, an incident that hardly made a ripple on the surface of a swinging party doesn't rate this much discussion.



Where were we? Making a great uproar (which Chuck Hansen got on tape, by the way), or listening to others do so. I remember Les Gerber getting the guitar from Sandy Cuttrell, a highly skilled player, plunking at it and grotching about the way it was tuned, then launching headlong into a shouting blues full of L\*O\*U\*D chords -- played by using a Cities Service credit-card as a pick -- in which god himself couldn't have distinguished the tuning of the instrument. Sandy recited "Casey and the Bat", and Ted Johnstone, drawing on his scholarly background, gave us the complete "Ballad of Eskimo Nell", with musical accompaniment. (I wasn't watching, but Sylvia Dees told me later that Ron Ellik was so embarrassed that he started reading a copy of GOD COMICS to excuse his blushes.) Things were going along splendidly when the Final Necessity put in its appearance.

The night manager called to say that if we didn't quiet down we'd be thrown out.

I'fackins I don't know but what that might be the optimum way to end a party; it cuts it off sharply, before everybody is exhausted, and without any soreheads having a fellow fan to grotch at for ending their fun. Anyway, the lot of us scattered to other places, apparently all still in high fettle and good humor, which is the way a hoot should break up rather than dragging on until it collapses in weariness.

But as a result of this I got to witness the most remarkable feat of trencherwomanship I saw during the whole con. Sylvia Dees and Ted Johnstone and I went around to Eddie Leonard's and there I swear and depose that I did observe Sylvia Dees eat an entire Giant Hero Sandwich -- a twelve-inch-long loaf of French bread, sliced open lengthwise and stuffed with twelve several regular-sized slices

of lunch meat (bologna and salami, I believe), fortified with onion, lettuce, tomatoes, oil, and condiments. ("Hero? Hell, a Conan sandwich!" exclaimed Johnstone.) Deponent further saith that she did thereafter eat three inches of another Hero Sandwich which Ted Johnstone had had to abandon lest he burst, and finished by washing all this down with a pint of black coffee.

Sylvia explained that she had been out in the fresh air and sunshine all summer, and that had given her such an appetite that she'd been eating six big meals a day and had put on nearly two pounds since June. The results looked fine, I must say.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--

Tuesday morning we were luxuriating in the sensation of having nothing to do and lazily assembling things -- packing the NFFF Room stuff for Ron to take west, stuffing our own bags to go home, and collating the rumors that had been floating around, so that the next issue of STARSPINKLE could open with a headline.

This year only three marriages are supposed to be breaking up: one that really is (and which you'll have heard about by this time); the Busbys' on account of Buz having chased Dian Girard at the Westercon ("after all", said Elinor when I passed this on to her, "who wouldn't divorce a man who chases girls that aren't there?"); and Jack Harness' -- which is really a good trick, Harness not being married yet. Five people passed out from liquor, one of whom really did -- the one I told you about the N3Fers rescuing. Forty-seven or fifty-two (I lost count) femmefans of all degrees of comeliness and complaisance got tumbled, according to various reports; I'd say that seven, maybe as many as twelve, were not sheer wishful thinking. (Or vengeful malice.) There were seventeen fabulous fist-fights, three of which corresponded to real arguments -- verbal ones, to be sure, but genuine nonetheless. All in all, quite a normal convention.

Well, at least, I thought it was normal, allowing for the rather wide limits "normality" has in the Microcosm. But looking around at my companions as we were straightening up the room before checking out I felt sort of dubious.

They were all wearing happy, reminiscent smiles. Who ever heard of a con committee doing something like that, the morning after?

Hoping you are the same,

Dick Eney

--:--:--:--:--:--:--

AN OPEN LETTER TO LEE HOFFMAN is an account of the DisCon, or at any rate bits of it, published for all and sundry as Operation Crifanac CCXXXV.

-----  
It's Eney's Fault  
-----



F. Jowner Laney's

# AH! SWEET IDIOCY!







Gentlemen:

As the chief targets of Laney's spleen in Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, you've probably suffered more damage, and certainly more pangs, than anybody else in consequence of the fact that F.T.L.'s work has stood so long as the uncontradicted, and thus by default official, history of Los Angeles fandom in the mid-forties.

So it's only fair, I think, that you should benefit a little now that a West Coaster has finally had the gumption to try and set the records straight. This, then, is dedicated to you:

F O R R E S T    J    A C K E R M A N

W A L T E R    J    D A U G H E R T Y

## PREFACE

- - - -

I.

I don't know if this is exactly what Dick Eney wanted or expected from me, but this is the way it came out. It really was a difficult thing to do, believe me. Few fans today have any idea just how close friends Fran and I were there for a couple of years or so. Reading ASI several times and then writing this was a painful experience, believe me. I know that many fans will undoubtedly take issue with my assessment of ASI and of Laney, and wonder how I can say what I do and still claim to have been his friend. Well, Laney wrote ASI two years after our relationship ended and I wasn't even aware of its existence until about 1959; so when I did read it -- read what he had to say about events with which I was thoroughly familiar and what he had to say about certain people who also were my good friends -- it was a little unsettling. I still remember Fran as a good and wonderful friend, but I think he was way off base with ASI. As to whatever I say about Fran personally, one can still love a person and be fully aware of his faults and weaknesses.

Alva Rogers

-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

II.

Fifteen years ago Fran Laney published Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, his bitter memoirs of half a decade in fandom. Both for the savage, circumstantial eloquence of its indictment of our microcosm and the immediate response of agreement it brought, it then deserved and still merits the praise it's been tagged with: the most important single fan publication ever written.

Considering that it appraised fandom as a fool's paradise for escapists, defectives, & maladjusted nitwits, it was rather surprising that the Laney Memoirs should be embraced as a gospel by so large a fraction of fanzine fandom. The glories -- for glorious they were a while -- of the Insurgent Movement, and the opposition to any seriousness in fandom which is still vigorously flourishing, are traceable in large part to Laney; and Laney's influence rests in large part on Ah! Sweet Idiocy! In addition, the tradition of plain speaking on previously tabu subjects ASI brought into fashion made it possible to awaken some younger fans to a sharp realization of their conduct and drive a few unsavory characters back into the woodwork.

But even when accepted as a gospel, the Memoirs need not be Gospel.



This distinction is important because, in addition to their general doctrine (which probably had healthy effects, all in all) the Memoirs have a specific content of attacks on the LASFS as the citadel of all Unclean Influences in fandom. Alva comments on the way in which "Just Like A Daugherty Project" has gained proverbial force; almost as much could be said for any of the personal attacks with which Ah! Sweet Idiocy! is filled -- the memories that exist are memories as given by Laney. The LASFS in general retains an even more damning reputation. I need only cite the LassGrass episode in Terry Carr's "The BNF of 'Iz" -- written ten years after Laney -- and the response of a Prominent New York Fan to a warning that the Discon would not tolerate the presence of a homosexual wolf: "I had never known that the streak of Laneyism was this strong in fandom!" -- to point up that Laney's Memoirs established the association of the LASFS directly, or of the Memoirs and thus the LASFS indirectly, with one of the more repulsive perversions, and that to a degree that still amounts almost to reflex conditioning. Despite the existence of earlier and later references, the Memoirs were almost entirely responsible for this, thanks to their minutely detailed accounts of the LASFS' adventures with such fauna.

With regard to all these specific indictments, naturally, the question rises whether, in addition to being detailed and circumstantial and like that, Ah! Sweet Idiocy! has also the felicity to be true.

That it has long been accepted as perfect truth is in large part the responsibility of Los Angeles fandom. When repeated inquiry by dozens of different fans, for purposes ranging from friendly curiosity to the collection of data for historical publications, produced no accounts disputing Laney's -- and mighty few unsupported denials -- it was not unfair for fandom as a whole to conclude that Laney's account was in fact beyond dispute. I'm quite unable to guess what aberration led the different members of LASFS -- who are neither stupid nor wanting in pugnacity -- to unanimously display so fantastic an attitude as their silence implies. The idea of a club-wide Conspiracy of Silence is beyond belief, unless we assume that the quod deus vult perdere principle was getting in itsicks; yet how could so many individuals just chance to react in such a peculiar way?

Whatever the explanation may be, it wasn't until the fourth inquiry I made for facts, or even memories, to reinforce the LASFS' members' bare claims that Laney made many errors that I finally contacted Alva Rogers -- the only person mentioned with any prominence in Ah! Sweet Idiocy! who seemed to be still active in fandom, barring Burbee himself. And that did the trick; Alva, ghod be praised, had something to say and was willing to put it down.

The result is presented herewith. This publication will be kept permanently in print, for the benefit of latecomers to fandom; that's the least I can do in view of the fact that I've also redistributed Ah! Sweet Idiocy! as a part of my anthology, A Sense of FAPA, and used Laney's Memoirs as a source for the historical data in Fancyclopedia II. Guilt feelings afflict me not at all; a major collection from FAPA could never justify the omission of the Laney Memoirs, and -- as I said -- an historial may fairly conclude that an undisputed account is

substantially valid. It's just a manifestation of my own drive for self-justification: I want to make sure those objectors Alva mentions know I wasn't faking it when I offered space and full credence for the victim's-eye view of Ah! Sweet Idiocy!

Dick Eney

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*



F T L   a n d   A S I :

- - - - -

A Critique of the Man and the Book

by

Alva Rogers

PROLOGUE:

Historical Note On the LASFS:  
Classical Version

AH! SWEET IDIOCY! IS rightly considered one of the great contributions to the literature of fandom. But its fame should rest on its merits as a polemical document, not as a history.

Since its publication and distribution through FAPA in 1948 Ah! Sweet Idiocy! has come to be regarded as the definitive account of certain tumultuous events that occurred in Los Angeles fandom from late 1943 to about the middle of 1946; a true and accurate analysis of the characters who were in and around the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS) during those years; and an effective demolisher of the myth that Los Angeles was Shangri-La. All this is true, to some extent; but to one who knew Francis T. Laney, in those years, as well as or better than most, who knew well most of the dramatis personae of his little drama, and who was in fact a sometime participant and always an interested observer of the dramatic events that took place, it is not entirely true.

Ah! Sweet Idiocy! was written in 1947 -- when the events it encompassed, and the bitterness, disgust, and disillusionment those events engendered, were still fresh in Laney's mind. Much of it was composed directly on stencil, thus precluding any temporizing revision that transferring from first draft to stencil might have allowed. I say "might have" because I seriously doubt that it would have made any difference to Fran. Regardless, what is written is written, and it is with the published work that we are concerned.

ASI is an intensely personal document written by a man with a strong puritanical streak in his makeup, who involved himself to the point of mental and emotional exhaustion in fan activities, at which point he felt compelled to unload his disgust for all things fannish as a warning to others not to follow the yellow brick road to the land where Fandom is a Way of Life. The republication and wide distribution of the memoirs has been disapproved of in some quarters\*; some feeling that it merely exacerbates old wounds or stirs the ashes of long dead fires, others feeling that it might tend to tarnish the god-like image of Laney that has been firmly built up in the minds of fans of a later generation by showing him to be a disputatious, self-centered character assassin.

It was not in Laney's nature to pull punches, even if they happened (as was frequently the case) to be wild ones. Laney refused to equivocate in his opinions of others -- right or wrong they were his opinions, and he believed in expressing them regardless of the consequences. As far as his image is concerned, I can't see where the republication of ASI is going to materially alter it. Laney is still a giant among fans (whether admired or hated); a prodigiously active writer in his heyday; and one of the most articulate members fandom has ever had. It's true, he was disputatious, he was self-centered, and he did indulge in character assassination (no matter what you prefer to call it, that's what it amounted to) -- but does that make him entirely unique in fandom? I doubt it.

In spite of its flaws I consider Ah! Sweet Idiocy! to be an invaluable book. In spite of its flaws it does give a quite good picture -- in general -- of Los Angeles Fandom in the early forties, and provides, in lieu of anything better, a "historical" reference to an important and fascinating period of fannish history. Its republication should be welcomed by anyone having any interest at all in the fannish past.

-----  
\*None of which, apparently, felt enough disapproval to voice it to the re-printer. Ironically, the complaints I got about A Sense of FAPA concerned, not Laney's misstatements, but two incidents whose truth is not in doubt. -- RE

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*



## CHAPTER ONE

### Sketch of a Fan (I)

IT HAS BEEN JUST TWENTY YEARS, as of this writing, since I first laid eyes on Francis Towner Laney. What there was about this tall, gangling, opinionated character from the hinterlands that appealed to me on first acquaintance I can't say; but appeal to me he did, and from the very beginning we became close and good friends. In appearance Laney was tall and lanky, slightly stoop-shouldered, and walked with a sort of lurching lope -- if you can visualize a lurching lope, that's the way he invariably walked. He had slightly cadaverous cheeks, a sallow complexion, a generous mouth with full lips, rather nondescript brown hair combed straight back in a no-nonsense manner, wore thick glasses that kept sliding down his nose, and had a laugh that had to be heard to be believed. He was also, probably, the least phlegmatic person I have ever known. Fran was twenty-nine and I was on the eve of twenty-one when we first met, but the difference in age was no barrier to our friendship. That was always on a firm basis of liking, respect, and trust. We had our disagreements in the months that followed, but no matter how we might have disagreed on things fannish or political it never affected our friendship.

At the time, the area of disagreement between us on matters pertaining to the LASFS and fandom was much narrower than it is today. Or I should say, rather, that today I disagree more with what he wrote in his Testament, with his views and analyses of people and events, than I did at the time. Time has given me a perspective that Laney lacked.

Not everyone found Laney as likeable as I did. It was easy enough to see how he might antagonize others. He was frank, at times to the point of cruelty; recognized no sacred cows; had a wicked sense of humor that turned many people off; and liked to be a leader rather than one of the led. It is obvious to anyone reading ASI that Fran had a mercurial temper -- at one moment hating a certain fan's guts, the next claiming a great liking for him. This tended to make a few of the LA fans a little skittish around him, wondering which it would be today.

Regardless of how much I liked Fran, or how much admiration and respect I felt then (and still feel, for that matter) for his mind and

talents, and fully recognizing the brilliant accomplishment that Ah! Sweet Idiocy! is, I feel that there are several points therein on which demurrer must be entered. In the past no one else seems to have been willing to do this, not even some of those most personally concerned; so (as Dick Eney puts it), "as the only known fan surviving from those remote times covered by ASI", it has devolved upon me to make these demurrers. In doing so it will be necessary to make some observations on the character of Laney, in an attempt to understand more fully why he reacted to certain things the way he did, and to present a somewhat different picture of the man than that the average fan today gets of him from the myths that have built up around him. What I say should not be regarded as invidious; I'm sadly aware that Fran is not around to defend himself or to offer any rebuttals, but what I have to say about him in no way affects the memory I cherish of a beloved friend, or is anything I wouldn't say were he alive today.

Reading ASI for the first time, fifteen or so years after the period it chronicles, left me with mixed reactions, a combination of excitement and disappointment. Excitement, because while reading it the intervening years were swept away and I could see all the friends and characters I had known then parading before me, marvelously brought to life by Laney's brilliant character sketches in Chapter Five; see the old LASFS clubroom at 637½ South Bixel in all its tawdry glory, bursting at its seams with countless fans involved with some form of fanac twenty-four hours a day; see the pyrotechnics that occurred when Laney and Daugherty clashed over some issue at a club meeting; and in general recall all the sights and sounds that made up the LASFS in those days. Disappointment, because of the dominant theme of bitterness and disillusionment that pervaded the book; the emphasis placed on the Feud; and the attendant annihilation of the characters of Forrest J. Ackerman and Walter J. Daugherty, who hardly deserved the treatment they got from Laney.

Laney, almost from the beginning of his fannish career, was noted for the brilliance of his prose when attacking someone or something he didn't like, his fine use of pungent words and phrases, the unmistakable meaning of his words, and his refusal to hedge. As Eney has correctly pointed out in his introduction to ASI, Laney's mastery of "plain speech and direct reporting" was an invaluable contribution to fan writing and most of the time was a delight to read, causing howls of outrage in some quarters and appreciative laughter in others. But this style of writing requires a certain judiciousness in handling to keep it from getting out of hand, as Laney found out a couple of times to his dismay. For instance, in his editorial for ACOLYTE #9, Winter 1945, titled "The Dog in the Manger", Laney -- undoubtedly with just cause for complaint -- criticized A. Langley Searles for his method of publishing a bibliography of fantastic book titles and for his threat to sue ACOLYTE's editors for copyright infringement if they proceeded with their plans for publishing a bibliography of their own; and reluctantly stated that he and Samuel D. Russell were withdrawing their plans for a bibliography. The matter would have ended there except for the fact that Laney's penchant for a pungent phrase or two led him into further difficulties with Searles, who took umbrage at



his choice of words and threatened a libel suit if a retraction were not forthcoming in the next ACOLYTE. A retraction was printed in ACOLYTE #10. Searles' threat of a libel suit against Laney was, of course, disapproved of by most fans and regarded as highly unfannish.

The point I'm trying to make is that Laney could just as forcefully and convincingly have presented his opinion of Searles' copy-right ban, gotten his point across, and made Searles appear ridiculous, by the use of less inflammatory words and phrases than he used, while depriving him of the ammunition he needed for the continued harassment of ACOLYTE.

Laney's slashing-attack style of writing most often led him into difficulties or untenable positions when used in attacking or criticizing someone whose words or actions directly concerned him, personally; as in the above instance and (in a somewhat different sense) in his involvement with Ackerman and Daugherty. In dealing with less personal issues, however, he was superb, as witness most of his comments concerning Claude Degler -- not only in ASI, but elsewhere.

In FAN-DANGO, his FAPazine, he teed off on both Degler and FAPA in the Summer 1944 issue, in an article called "Gutless Wonders -- A Discussion of Fan Ethics":

"The appalling amount of Shilly-shallying in the case of Clod Degler is enough to gag a maggot. Are fans so weak-minded, so spineless, so completely lacking in intestinal fortitude, that they cannot even expel an undesirable from their midst? I had hoped devoutly that it would not be necessary to waste further space on Degler, but the infuriating vacillations of cowardly pollyannas -- both in the LASFS and in FAPA -- make it imperative for someone to speak plainly."

He goes on to give his reasons why Degler should have been forcibly expelled from the LASFS instead of merely being informed that he was dropped, and why FAPA should also take positive action. The concluding paragraph in this section of the article is the purest distillation of the Laney spirit:

"It has been said by several that Degler has done nothing in violation of the FAPA constitution. This may very well be so, but I fail to see what bearing this has on the question. If FAPA is to be a general fan organization (which Cthulhu forbid!), a group to which any person may belong regardless of merit, perhaps this view of the constitutionalists is valid. If, however, FAPA is to make any attempt at being a worthwhile group, it seems to me its membership should be limited to the elite of fandom, that a person should not only prove himself worthy of admittance but should also continue to demonstrate this worthiness by his actions after he becomes a member. If these criteria are to be applied in judging Degler, there is no question but that he should be expelled. Despite the contentions of the sob-sisters and Pollyannas, all healthy organisms find it necessary to defecate occa-

sionally. I suggest we defecate Degler at once."

Here, in one pithy paragraph, Fran sums up: his view of what FAPA should be, his opinion of a certain faction in FAPA, his judgement of Claude Degler's qualifications for remaining in FAPA, and his suggestion as to what FAPA should do with Degler...and doesn't it all have a familiar ring to it, today?

Delightful though such bits of Laneyana are, they don't have much to do with ASI except as they demonstrate in capsule form the typical Laney style of attack. In ASI he is seldom this brutally direct, but the cumulative effect is the same.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--

Laney, in presenting his case against the LASFS, naturally emphasized those points which he felt bolstered his case and proceeded to ignore anything that tended to weaken it. Consequently -- as far as I'm concerned, and as far as other Angelenoes of the period are concerned -- the LASFS of ASI is a weirdly distorted picture of the LASFS we remember; even though we might recognize many of the details related by Laney, and accept the fact of them, these individual instances, contrary to Laney's insistence, did not go to make the totality of the organization or of Los Angeles fandom. In Chapter Five, "Utopia In Shangri-La", he makes his first charge against the LASFS. He tells of meeting Albert de Pina (through Ronald Clyne) and of how impressed he was by him and his idea of turning the LASFS into a retreat for Hollywood characters who were science fiction readers.

I was always somewhat bemused by the gosh-wow attitude Fran displayed toward professional writers in the flesh. Laney had an acutely developed critical sense of values when it came to the printed word, but this sense of values took a nose dive, occasionally, when he came in direct contact with a writer. Not always ... but this was one of the times it did, and it led to one of the first major explosions between him and the club. I met dePina for the first time a short while before Laney arrived in LA (in fact, I also met him through Ron Clyne) and remember quite well one evening spent visiting him in his home. DePina was pleasant enough and an interesting conversationalist, but impressed me as a rather egoistical, vaguely effete man who fussily brewed syrupy Turkish coffee (it had to be just so!) and talked interminably about himself. He had published a few stories in PLANET and was at the time doing some screen work -- although I must confess that I never saw any evidence of the latter, and I was an inveterate movie goer in those days. I was not as impressed by dePina as Fran was.

If Daugherty had championed dePina's idea of turning the LASFS into a retreat for Hollywood stars (and mind you, dePina never at any time produced one star to give any credibility to the idea), Laney would have been the first to hit the ceiling and say something caustic about another "Daugherty Project". But as it was, Laney presented the idea for discussion to the club and the club rejected it out of hand. The whole idea was so sophomorically unrealistic that it's small wonder we were not receptive to the idea and didn't treat it seriously. Laney



draws the conclusion, from the club's rejection of the idea, that the members were unwilling to broaden their horizons, that they were using the LASFS to escape reality, themselves, and their own woeful shortcomings -- the recurrent leitmotif of Ah! Sweet Idiocy! I like to think, however, that we were just being realistic and trying not to make fools of ourselves.

Fran took this first rebuff more-or-less in stride, but the fit hit the shan a short time later when he brought dePina around to the clubroom one Sunday afternoon, when a number of fans were there working on fanzines or otherwise puttering around. The reception accorded dePina was not at all what a visiting celebrity should have received, Fran insists; in fact, many of the members were downright rude, he claims.

DePina's reception actually was no more nor less than that received by most strangers walking into the club -- writers or no. The fact that dePina was a writer was of small consequence to most of the members present. After all, better known and more generously talented writers were not unknown to the LASFS -- Heinlein, Kuttner, Bradbury, Brackett, Hamilton, Cartmill, Rocklynn, Williamson, and others had all been either members or frequent visitors to the club. Writers were not novelties around the LASFS. Laney makes much of Ackerman's lack of warmth toward dePina, but Ackerman's reaction was quite understandable if one knew Ackerman in those days. Forry was the Number One Fan Face, the Compleat Activist, and probably knew as many science fiction writers on a first name basis as anyone then in fandom. He was the last person in the world to knock himself out over a second-rate PLANET hack. Forry was polite, but unenthusiastic. Laney blasted Forry for using the excuse of working on VOM as his reason for not devoting more attention to dePina, and accuses him of attaching more cosmic importance to VOM than the magazine warranted. Laney seems to have forgotten the degree of importance he placed on getting his own ACOLYTE out on time. Forry was limited to working on VOM during a few brief hours on weekends, and would naturally feel that under the circumstances VOM was more important than making small talk with dePina.

Laney got disgusted with the fans over this episode because in his mind they were so inwardly directed, insecure, and insular that they refused to accept the presence of an outsider with anything more than grudging acknowledgement. From my experience in the LASFS, and later the Little Men and the Golden Gate Futurians, I have noticed that almost invariably a stranger who walks in cold, or even with another member, is in somewhat the position of a person going through quarantine or probation until he passes muster and is accepted into the group -- it is up to the individual to prove himself to the club, not for the club to prove itself to the individual. In this case, Laney expected the club to prove itself worthy of Albert dePina, not the other way around; and in Laney's opinion the club fell flat on its face and convinced him it was composed of ingroupish, insecure adolescents.

It has always seemed to me that he made too much of this whole

sorry scene, exaggerated its importance, and reacted in a petty manner to the rebuff by the club of his grandiose scheme. He refused to accept the fact that others might not be as enthusiastic as he about an individual, and excoriated everyone for their lack of ardor.

Silly as this whole thing was it did have a greater significance, because, as Fran says, it crysallized his discontent with the club as it was constituted and decided him to enter into its politics seriously. Up to this point he was just another member of the club (and a very new one, at that, even if unusually vocal and dynamic); but after this he decided the club was travelling in a "revolting groove" and he was determined to change its course if at all possible. It was from this point that the political complexion of the club took on a hue entirely different from what it had been.

The LASFS didn't know what it was in for.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--

This episode was also an unconscious confession on Laney's part of the goshwow attitude he had towards professional writers -- a trait, God knows, no true fan is entirely without; but one which is not in keeping with the image of Laney the Insurgent, the Laney who abhors the fannish way of life. This was further amplified in the accounts of the Craig Rice soirees, the Healy and McComas collaboration, and the arrival of A. E. van Vogt in Los Angeles. In each of these instances the impression is given that the pros concerned dwell on some Olympian Height and are a breed apart from common fans, when nothing could be further from fact. I missed out on the Craig Rice soirees, but I knew her a number of years later, under slightly different and less elegant circumstances, and found her a fascinating, earthy woman who preferred to talk about things more basic than literature. I don't question Fran's description of the soirees, which were undoubtedly as pictured; but would like to point out that this was an obvious effort to draw a parallel between the Lipton salon and the LASFS "style" with the LASFS, of course, getting the short end of the comparison. Fran was always at his best in the kind of gathering that went on at the Liptons', and they constituted his ideal of what he'd like the LASFS to be; that the LASFS failed to come up to this ideal was a source of never-ending despair to him.

Laney's involvement with Healy and McComas (incidentally, for some inexplicable reason Fran persisted in spelling Healy's name with two l's -- an unusual bit of carelessness) had less syco-fannish overtones than the dePina or Rice incidents. He had every right to get excited about the opportunity to help with their anthology, and when I got rung in on it I felt the same way.

My first contact with Healy and McComas took place in the summer of 1945 when one Sunday afternoon I accompanied Fran to McComas's place in Santa Monica to discuss science fiction and the anthology. The enthusiasm generated by Ray and Mick as they outlined their plans (and plied us with Scotch the likes of which Fran and I had seen very little



in those war blighted years, was enormously infectious. This was to be an anthology drawn mostly from the pulps -- with an emphasis on ASTOUNDING -- and I had been recruited because Fran insisted that I had a greater knowledge of magazine science fiction than anyone else in the area, a bit of praise from which I modestly dissented. The high point of this whole business, for me, was a crash session held at Laney's attended by, as nearly as I can recall, Healy and McComas, Fran, van Vogt, and me. The final composition of the proposed contents was pretty well decided that night and everyone felt that something really great had been accomplished. The night was made complete for me when, as Healy and McComas were driving me back to Tendril Towers in the predawn hours of the morning, they asked if I would be interested in doing the dust jacket for the book. I naturally said yes and Mick said he would take it up with Random House. Due to a number of unforeseen circumstances, I'm sorry to say, this fell through.

Laney exhibited all of his better characteristics during these sessions -- spontaneous enthusiasm, erudition, generosity, and a willingness to subordinate his ego to others without demeaning himself.

I've already written at some length in an earlier article about the party Laney held in 1944 which marked the van Vogts' debut into LASFS society, so I won't take up any space with it here. There is one sentence in this account, however, that tends to corroborate my contention that Fran was incurably sycophannish. On page 101 of Chapter Nine, "Ebb-Tide", Fran refers to the van Vogts as "respectable people" and worries about their reaction to fans in the mass at a party. The van Vogts are indeed eminently respectable people; but one gets the impression that they are respectable by virtue of being pros and not for any innate qualities, whereas fans are, by definition, slobs. This is interesting in another context because it also shows that Fran was constantly concerned about the image of fandom, a concern that he never entirely purged himself of. Fran was afraid, of course, that if the van Vogts went away from the party with a bad taste in their mouths he himself would be lumped with the other fans who had contributed to that bad taste and his image would be flawed in their eyes.

All this is not meant to be in criticism, but merely to emphasize the fact that Laney was possessed of the same weaknesses as other fans; was not quite as cynical as he liked to make out. In connection with this matter of Fran's concern for the image of fandom, an article by him, "A Critical History of VOM", in issue #43, June 1945, of that magazine, constantly dwells on the subject of images -- the individual fan's image to fandom and fandom's image to the world as it comes through in the letters to Ackerman's great letterzine. This article, incidentally, had many glowing things to say about Forrest J Ackerman and his invaluable contribution to fandom.

$\frac{0}{\pi} \quad \frac{\pi}{6} \quad \frac{\pi}{3} \quad \frac{\pi}{2} \quad \frac{2\pi}{3} \quad \frac{5\pi}{6} \quad \pi$

As a sometime resident of the rooming house at 628 South Bixel, known also as Tendril Towers, I have naturally objected for years to

the common belief in fandom that that house was the focal point of homosexuality in the LASFS, that everyone who lived there was a sexual deviant. I knew that Laney was the major contributor to this canard, but it was only after reading ASI that I found one of the specific origins of the lie. The last paragraph on page 101 relates an incident, in a superficially humorous vein, which undoubtedly served to perpetuate this distorted image of Tendril Towers and its inhabitants. Laney tells how he -- on being informed by Art Saha that he, Saha, had moved into Tendril Towers -- told him that

"all the fans in TT were fruits, and that of course he'd have to pass a novitiate of promiscuity with all of them before being allowed to settle on any one or two of the boys, that they made all the new tenants kick through to them in all sorts of fascinating ways...."

So far this was just a crude put-on, but then Fran added the kicker parenthetically: "(So far as I know, this was just a gag -- the place has had some heterosexual inmates!)" This was a stupid and unfair thing to say in the first place, and it was doubly stupid -- a tasteless and totally uncorroborated piece of scandalmongering -- when printed in ASI.

Now is as good a time as any to dispose of and bury this whole question of homosexuality in the LASFS of the early forties. Up until the winter of 1945 there was in the LASFS, and resident in Tendril Towers, one admitted practicing homosexual, to my certain knowledge. No one in the club ever made much of the fact that this well known fan was homosexual (and the fact of his homosexuality was generally known, and generally disregarded, throughout fandom), except for Laney and, to a lesser degree, Mel Brown. It was unfortunately true that occasionally a "fruity" character would attach himself to this BNF and hang around the fringes of the club for a short time, but he would always be sent packing as soon as his distasteful personality began to show. Such characters were few and extremely far between, and to cite them as evidence that the LASFS was crawling with queers is to strain at gnats.

On page 51 Laney makes the incorrect charge that the homosexual issue was a major one with a number of members -- that the issue was threatening the very foundations of the club because

"...It must be remembered that the club had from two to four active homosexuals in its membership at all times, that one of the most active members of the club was also its most vocal homosexual, and that he was continually bringing other fags around the club."

The kindest thing that can be said is that this is an exaggeration. It may have been an issue with Laney and one or two others, but to say that most of the club was overly concerned with this problem is just not true. And if there were at all times two to four active homosexuals in the club I must have been awfully naive at that time, be-



cause I sure as hell didn't know that many were there.

In order to better understand Laney's attitude toward homosexuals, and sex in general, it is important to realize that Fran was essentially quite provincial and not nearly the sophisticated cosmopolite he enjoyed imagining himself. Until moving to Los Angeles he had spent most of his life in small to medium-sized towns in Idaho and Washington. He reflected the typical semi-rural attitude toward sex, with the concomitant contempt for and lack of basic understanding of the sexual deviant. Manhood, in Fran's mind, was equated with sexual prowess, and anyone who didn't take the same aggressive attitude towards sexual gratification as he did was not a whole man, no matter what his other attributes. And a man who preferred sexual associations with other men, no matter what compensating qualities of character, talent, or personality he might have, was deserving of nothing but contempt -- not pity, not understanding, but raw contempt. Laney gave every indication of being incapable of understanding the complexities and subtleties of sex -- of lacking the sensitivity to appreciate all its nuances, or to empathize with those who favored other nuances of sex than he. All of which made him a very poor authority on sex, hetero or homo.

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

## CHAPTER TWO

# Red Sabres Against the Green Star

THE FEUD OCCUPIES THE MAJOR PORTION of ASI and is dealt with in great detail. Thus it should, I suppose, occupy the major portion of this essay. Unfortunately (for my present purposes only) I wasn't as involved in the feud as some of the others and can't speak as a principal participant. I can, however, offer some observations of a general nature and attempt to illuminate some of the causes and effects of the feud, with a comment or two here and there about the political picture in the LASFS. What this will essentially involve will be a discussion of the prime characters in the feud; Francis T. Laney, Forrest J Ackerman, Walter J. Daugherty, and, to a lesser extent, Theodor Bruce Yerke.

The feud all happened so long ago that to attempt to cope with its torturous permutations in and out and through the club would be an almost impossible task, and to question the chronology of events as related in ASI would be silly. This is not important, anyway; what is important is the characters involved in the feud, their relationships with each other, their differences, their personalities. Laney gave the feud weight far beyond its real issues by the manner in which he dealt with Forry Ackerman and Walt Daugherty in the pages of ASI; by his unconscionable efforts to demolish their characters, to destroy their good names in fandom, to hold them up to ridicule and contempt -- to build his case against the LASFS by character assassination. Fortunately, neither Forry nor Walt suffered any permanent damage from Laney's assaults; but Laney's charges and innuendos still survive and there will always be an unthinking element in fandom who will accept Laney's words as gospel despite any evidence to the contrary, or extenuating explanations. It is my hope that whatever I have to say about Ackerman and Daugherty will help, in a small way, to neutralize some of the poison spewed out by Laney concerning these two fine -- and much maligned -- men.

— :: — :: — :: — :: — :: — :: — :: — :: — ::

The first serious rumblings in the club came about with the resignation of Director Paul Freehafer in late November or early December, 1943, and the election of Jimmy Kepner to fill out his unexpired term. This prompted the Knaves -- Arden (Buns) Benson, T. Bruce Yerke, Phil Bronson, Eddie Chamberlain, and one or two others -- to rise in a body



and leave the clubroom. This was shortly followed by mass resignations of the Knanves, the publication of issue one of THE KNAVVE, charges and counter-charges between the Knanves and the LASFS, Forry's writing of "Knanve is a Louse", the bitter words that arose over this between Laney and Ackerman, and Bruce Yerke's petition to be made an Honorary Member of the LASFS. At this stage of the game the issue was drawn between Ackerman and Yerke, with Laney still somewhere on the sidelines, but getting ready to charge in at a moment's notice.

Yerke was the physical and intellectual leader of the Knanves and one of the few members of the LASFS who had joined the club in its old Los Angeles Science Fiction League (LASFL) days. By the time of the Knanve blowup Bruce was hovering on the fringes of gafia, but it would still be some time before he took that final step. Phil Bronson was a pale echo of Yerke; Buns Benson was a nonentity; Eddie Chamberlain was a young kid who looked up to Yerke as his intellectual mentor. These three followed wherever Yerke led, were his ever present clique.

the Knanves soon found their self-imposed exile to be something less than the paradise they expected it to be, and began to extend feelers to the LASFS for readmission. Bruce, however, held out for an Honorary Membership, and to this Forry was adamantly opposed. The controversy concerning this in the LASFS was one of the contributing factors to the growing antagonism between Ackerman and Laney, and would eventually lead to the full flowering of the feud. Yerke himself was not a principal in the feud, but served more or less as a catalyst in bringing it about.

Laney's portrait of Yerke in ASI (page 35) is quite good -- so good, in fact, that I can see Bruce just as he was then every time I read it. Personally, I think Fran was a little more fulsome in his praise of Yerke's intellectual ability, and expressed a higher regard for his maturity than the facts warranted. Bruce was intelligent, even brilliant, in some respects, but no more so than several other members of the club. He was typical of the precociously intelligent young fan one finds in any given period in fandom. He was reasonably well educated, read omnivorously on many subjects without fully digesting any of it, and made a great point of displaying his vast wisdom in an arrogant and "I dare anyone to dispute me" manner. He did have a fine mind, though, and one which -- if properly disciplined -- could have been put to use as a constructive force in the LASFS rather than a disruptive one.

The walkout of the Knanves and Laney's election to his first term as Director occurred at almost the same time, so one of Laney's first orders of business was to attempt to heal the breach between the Knanves and the LASFS. A tentative agreement was soon reached and most of the Knanves returned on a semi-probationary basis to the club. Bruce, however, still held out for his Honorary Membership and Forry remained dead-set against it. Events kept snowballing at this point with the issue between Yerke and Ackerman becoming more and more bitter, culminating, finally, in the brouhaha over the article "Knanve is a Louse". The Knanves' insistence that the article be withdrawn from SHANGRI-

L'AFFAIRES, and Forry's agreement to this, goaded Laney into confronting Ackerman about the whole thing, and ended up with Laney calling Forry a "lying and cowardly son of a bitch". And, as Laney said, the feud was on. Directly on the heels of this scene Fran proposed to his executive committee that they discipline Ackerman by suspending his Honorary Membership for thirty or sixty days to try to force him into a re-evaluation of his relationship with the club, so he would "see for himself how his actions were alienating so many of the members, and mend his ways somewhat".

There is something almost pathetic in this progression of events, with both sides grimly pursuing their course without attempting to understand or compromise with the other. If Fran had made any effort at all to understand Forry's feelings toward Fandom, and particularly the club -- his hurt and bewilderment at what must have seemed to him the rapid disintegration of what was at that time the most important thing in his life -- then I'm sure he would have thought twice before making the confrontation he did. If Ackerman had been less stubborn and self-righteous about his stand -- had been willing to explain his position to Laney as Fran requested, giving him at least a reasonable justification -- then Fran probably wouldn't have said what he did, and the feud might have been headed off -- at least for a time.

But events transpired as they did, and Fran delivered the coup de grace by suggesting the suspension of Ackerman's Honorary Membership, which would have been an extraordinarily cruel act if it had gone through. Even though periodic truces were called in the feud over the next couple of years, and all was apparently sweetness and light, Forry never forgave Fran this effort to divest him of his Honorary Membership.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--

At this same time the rupture between Fran and Walter J. Daugherty became complete when Fran made the half-facetious, half-serious suggestion that if any purging were to be done it might be well to start with Walter J. Daugherty. Walt's reaction to this is understandable. Superficially Fran had some justification for criticizing Daugherty, but none for the savage attacks he made on him. Laney vastly over-exaggerated Walt's faults and withheld much credit that was due him. As a matter of fact it has always seemed to me that FTL merely echoed the stale, smart-alecky things Yerke used to say about Daugherty in the minutes of the LASFS when he was secretary. There was friction, of course, between Walt and Fran, and it became greater as time went on, but it still seems to me that he took his cue from Yerke in his initial assessment of Daugherty. Laney let piddling differences between himself and Daugherty stand in the way of a better understanding and appreciation of a man who had many outstanding qualities that far overshadowed his faults.

The greatest injustice done Daugherty by Laney was in the perpetuation of the myth of the "Daugherty Project". Almost everything else Laney had to say about Walt can be dismissed as personal animus, and is mostly forgotten today. But -- regardless of the unfairness of



its basis -- the term "Daugherty Project" is firmly entrenched in the lexicon of fandom and its meaning is clear to any fan having any knowledge of fanspeak. On what basis does Laney constantly deride Walt about "Daugherty Projects"? It was simply that Walt was irrepressibly enthusiastic; an individual who would constantly come up with a brainstorm of an idea, talk it up big in the club trying to instill some of his enthusiasm in others, and then maybe drop it -- or, more often than not, follow it through. The first LASFS Fanquet\* in 1944 was a "Daugherty Project" that has become a continuing and revered tradition in the LASFS. Perhaps many of Daugherty's "Projects", when completed, failed to come up to the original prospectus, but most of us, alas, have gone through the same thing. Ironically, Laney was as guilty as Walt of "Daugherty Projectitis" at times: his espousal of de Pina's plan to turn the LASFS into a movie stars' retreat, his plan for the Fantasy Foundation, Project M and his whole concept of the role of the Outsiders in LA fandom, and his dream of developing ACOLYTE into a semi-prozine, could all be regarded as "Daugherty Projects".

But what is so odious about enthusiasm? What is the harm in having big dreams, big ideas, and then not being able to fully realize them?

Walter J. Daugherty is one of the most abused and misunderstood fans in the LA fan scene ... largely due to Laney. For years Walt devoted time and energy in over-generous amounts to the LASFS and sparked many of its activities, in the pre-Laney days as well as later. Many times Walt prodded the club into doing things that wouldn't ordinarily have been done by the sheer force of his energy and enthusiasm. Walt took on jobs that others were either too lazy or too disdainful to be bothered with, and always tried to keep the club a dynamic element in fandom. Walt had a great deal of personal magnetism which, in spite of his flaws, and despite Laney's almost constant campaign to make him a pariah in the club, made him a generally well liked individual. He was a good natured character, always fun to be with, urbane and sophisticated in mundane circles, and generous to a fault. I can personally testify to his generosity many times over, but I won't embarrass him by going into detail.

Although the "cosmic" issues of the feud involved Laney's conflict with Ackerman's concept of life, the club, its activities, and fandom generally, Laney's impatience with Daugherty and his refusal or inability to get along with him on an operational level within the club contributed to the almost constant friction and tension that existed during most of the business meetings of this period and guaranteed the continuing of the feud. I'm sure that if it hadn't been for the personal animosity that persisted between these two the feud would have lost a lot of its steam and would eventually have sputtered out. Constantly throughout ASI Laney recounts incidents where he and Walt met head-on over some relatively minor issue on which neither party seemed able to reach accord. The way Fran presents these one would get the idea that Walt was invariably a fugghead and Laney almost in-

\*An annual LASFS banquet for those who have crashed the proz during the year -- RE





and on page 38 he admits that Daugherty is definitely fun on a mund party tho not a club party. (Laney's emphasis.) I can recall many conversations with Fran -- both drunken and sober -- which concerne nothing but this object of the ideal life. At the time Fran was go through a somewhat trying period attempting to adjust his domestic life and his fannish life: he was pretty well convinced that fandom was the wedge driven into his life that was forcing him and Jackie further and further apart, and the only thing that could resolve his difficulties would be the abandonment of fandom and embracment of a more mundane existence. Even so, he was reluctant to give up fandor completely -- the friends he'd made therein, his publishing, his wri ing, the exchange of ideas and opinions within the microcosm which he found so exhilarating. He was convinced that anyone who devoted as much time and energy to fandom as did he at this time (1944-45), who made of it A Way of Life, was actually retreating from life, was bui ing a safe, comforting womb in which to bury himself; and that the only way to save one's self from this schizoid fate was to take a greater interest in the mundane things of life. Fran was a little vague about what constituted his ideal of a mundane life, and a reading of ASI would lead one to believe that his interest in the mundan centered around drinking and fornication. This, of course, would be great oversimplification.

However, the fact remains that much of his criticism of Ackerman and others in the club, boiled down to nothing more than the charge that they would, if given the choice, choose fanac over drinking or wenching. As I said, Laney was never explicit in his explanations of the differences between a mundane and a fannish life, or why the one was intrinsically better than the other. Regardless, he knew that the fannish life as lived by Ackerman was unhealthy and fraught with unhappiness -- he knew that Ackerman was an unhappy man, Ackerman's protests to the contrary notwithstanding.

Ackerman was (and still is) a shy and introverted individual around other people, though he enjoys having friends with him. Early in his life Forry found a compensation for this innate shyness in writing letters to AMAZING STORIES and WONDER STORIES in their young days, in the correspondence with other readers that developed out of this, and eventually in the fandom that evolved in the early thirties.

In fandom, microcosm though it be, Ackerman achieved identity, status, a sense of participation and achievement, and a personal satisfaction that he couldn't obtain in a wider milieu. In the early forties Ackerman was the BNF, and in the opinion of most of his contemporaries (regardless of what they thought of him personally) he was the personification of the Science Fiction Fan in all its ramifications. Laney insisted that if Forry were to give up all this for the anonymity of a more mundane life he would be a happier man. This has always struck me as being one of the more awe-inspiring bits of assininity, or sidewalk analysis, ever to come from Laney.

Laney's greatest fault was his inability -- perhaps unwillingness -- would be a better word -- to respect another's convictions, beliefs,

of life, or what have you. Ackerman found great personal satisfaction in submerging almost his entire being in, and devoting all his free time to, fandom, and saw nothing intrinsically wrong in so doing; but Laney believed that such devotion to a hobby, to the exclusion of nearly every other interest, bordered on the psychopathic. Fandom As A Way of Life proved to be a disastrous influence in his own life, Laney felt, and was making a shambles of his marriage; therefore, he reasoned, because fandom was the cause of so much unhappiness in his own life, others as involved in fandom as was he must also be unhappy. What applied to him must apply to others -- Ackerman, for instance. Laney, of course, was entitled to his opinion of fandom's importance in one's life and had every right to sound off about it; he had a lot of good arguments to support his opinion and was not alone in his attitude. But where he was out of line was in arrogating to himself the role of final authority on this subject. And in this role he was arrogant and totally intolerant of any contradictory opinions. In declaring that Ackerman was, a priori, miserably unhappy because he was a total fan, Laney blithely ignored the fact that Ackerman just might not feel that he was unhappy; that, on the contrary, fandom had given meaning to his life, and in giving it meaning had made of that life a happy one. In the final analysis it was Ackerman's life; and if it was harmful, it was harmful only to Ackerman and to no one else -- and no one, least of all Laney, was qualified to pass judgement on how Ackerman lived his life.

In all fairness it must be pointed out that Ackerman was frequently critical of other fans who strayed once in a while from the straight and narrow fannish path. But this criticism usually took the form of personal notes expressing surprise and disapproval that he would rather do something mundane than fannish. Contrary to what Laney might have said or implied in ASI, Ackerman never forcefully attempted to impose his fannish will on other members of the club. Forry might disapprove of someone participating in some mundane activity when he could be doing something fannish, but he was resigned to the fact that his attitude toward the fannish life was shared by very few others. He did feel, though, that the LASFS clubroom was sacrosanct and any activity taking place there should be confined to, or primarily concerned with, science fiction or fanac; that it should be used as a bordello or a drinking pad violated his sense of the fitting.

Laney at times got carried away over the issue of smoking and drinking, accusing Ackerman of all sorts of prohibitory acts. Forry neither smoked nor drank, and at no time did he do anything so ridiculous as to attempt to force others to follow his example. The only exception to this was in the case of Morojo (Myrtle R. Douglas). As long as Myrtle was associated with him as she was Forry felt she should at least publicly observe the same abstemious habits as he. But as far as others were concerned he couldn't care less, as long as we did our drinking elsewhere than in the clubroom.

Although Laney professed to like Ackerman, by and large he never really got to know him on a genuinely personal level, never fully accepted him as he was with his foibles and idiosyncracies, never found



what a good friend he could be when given half a chance. For, almost from the moment he joined the LASFS, Laney felt compelled to take over its leadership -- either actually or in title, and preferably both -- for (he believed) its own good. Ackerman, sensing that Fran represented a new force in the club, a force that would undoubtedly lead to radical changes in the raison d'etre of the club and in the direction it would follow in the future, resisted Fran and tried to neutralize his influence on the other members. Fran couldn't tolerate this, of course, and so Ackerman was pegged as his number one opponent in his power struggle for domination over the LASFS. Because of this growing compulsion to dominate LA fandom and to supersede Ackerman's influence on the club, Fran could never fully lower his guard around Forry, could never allow himself to completely like him -- for if he did it would be tantamount to surrender to the Ackerman charm and influence. Even during the long periods of comparative peace that marked 1945 when he reigned supreme as director for four terms and the Ackerman influence was at its nadir, Laney still regarded him as a potential threat.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--

Fran generally found it hard to take people as they were. Even his closest friends were sooner or later found wanting in one respect or another. At any event, his attitude towards an individual, whether close friend or fannish acquaintance, would frequently be dictated by his mood of the moment. It was not unusual to see him take some demonstration of minor fuggheadedness on the part of someone, or a real or imagined insult, or even just an innocent remark, and work himself up into a real sweat over it -- and in the process almost invariably get others involved. As I said earlier, Fran had to be a leader, not a follower; and the one thing he could never be was a lone wolf -- even in a personal fight or argument he had to have the moral or actual support of others.

When one examines closely the political picture in the LASFS, particularly during the two most turbulent years, 1944 and 1945, one invariably finds Laney in the center of the political whirlwind. Fran presents an almost inexhaustible list of reasons for the various political upheavals, and particularly for the formation of the Outsiders. But the primary reason in almost every instance was simply either Laney jockeying for power, or Laney going off in a huff because he couldn't get his own way.

When Fran couldn't get the club to act in concert (as if anyone could ever get the LASFS to act in complete concert on anything!), when it seemed stubbornly determined to flounder along in its own stupidly happy fashion, resisting his every effort to shape it into something it could never be, Fran, like some Old Testament prophet, blessed it with his curses, and taking a few of the faithful departed into the wilderness to form a new and ideal society, the Outsiders.

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

### CHAPTER THREE

#### Historical Note on the LASFS: Revised Version

THE OPTIMISTICALLY IDEALISTIC PRECEPTS on which the Outsiders were founded were laudable, but just as impractical when applied to the Outsiders as they would have been if applied to the LASFS. The fact that the Outsiders were supposedly the intellectual elite of the LASFS made not a particle of difference in the final analysis, because they were each in their own way strong minded, opinionated individualists who were as incapable of prolonged united activity, or passive following of the leader, as they had been when they were part of the LASFS.

Fran frequently remarks, in ASI, that one of the most serious problems besetting the LASFS was the absence of any one interest held by all members which would act as a unifying force in the club, and that this same problem plagued the Outsiders. This is, I think, one of the keys to most of Fran's political troubles with LA fandom. There was, of course, one interest held in varying degrees by all members of the LASFS and of the Outsiders -- science fiction! The LASFS was, after all, by definition a science fiction fan club; but Fran, though he paid lip service to this fact, nevertheless tried to make of the LASFS an intellectual society which would be on a more rarified level than of simply a science fiction fan club; something on the nature of the present-day Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society, I think, which once had a dynamic and dominant interest in science fiction, but which has since become so enchanted with intellectualism that science fiction has almost become a dirty word.

Fran was beating his head against a brick wall in attempting to unify the LASFS and get it to behave in any sort of orderly manner; it was just too clique ridden, too full of prima donnas, too torn by conflicting jealousies to really be anything more than a loosely organized fan club. The worst thing that ever happened to the LASFS was the writing of its constitution, and its continued rewriting, ad nauseam. But the most immediate problem confronting the Director of the LASFS in those days, the thing that made of it a real nightmare as far as any organizational control was concerned, was the number of cliques within LA fandom, and their constant proliferation and changing. This was the thing that eventually beat Laney, is something he doesn't deal



with too explicitly in ASI, and is something I would now like to take up in some detail.

-:-:-:-:-

In August 1943 Los Angeles fandom was composed of one formal organization, the LASFS. Paul Freehafer was Director and the secondary leader in the club was Daugherty. Outside the LASFS there was Morrie Dollens off by himself, and the Hasses, Henry and Dorothy, who had recently resigned in high dudgeon. On the way out but still in the club was Claude Degler -- all by his noisome lonesome -- and George Barr and Eddie Chamberlain. There were two major cliques at this time: one composed of Freehafer, Sam Russell, Phil Bronson, Bruce Yerke, Buns Benson, and Eddie Chamberlain; the other of Ackerman, Morojo, and Daugherty, with Arthur Louis Joquel, Charlie Dye, and Rustibar (Rusty Barron) hovering on their fringe. Jimmy Kepner, Mel Brown, and Mike Fern formed a smaller clique that enjoyed a somewhat ambiguous identification with both of the others.

By November 1943 the LASFS had been fragmented by the disgruntled withdrawal of the Knaves. The club was led first by Kepner and then by Laney at this time. Degler and George Barr were now completely out of the club and Dollens was still out of the LASFS but partially in the Knaves, being second only to Yerke in influence in that group. The Knaves, Yerke (the leader), Bronson, Chamberlain, Samuel D. Russell, and Freehafer, were the biggest clique at this time, and Russell and Freehafer were a secondary clique within the LASFS from which they never resigned as did the other Knaves. Walt Daugherty was the leader of the second largest clique which was made up of Daugherty, Jules Lazar, and myself and was closely aligned with the Ackerman-Morojo clique which had the sometime support of Joquel. For a brief time here Laney and Kepner formed a clique which also included Pogo; and Brown and Fern were off somewhere by themselves, but somewhat sympathetic to the Knaves. All by himself with no clique to claim him as their own was one Charles Burbee.

By March 1944 things get a little complicated and confusing, for we now have the LASFS and the Outsiders. There is, of course, an overlapping of the two groups, and cliques within cliques. Surprisingly enough, the Outsiders were more clique-ridden than the LASFS. Laney and Mike Fern formed one clique, due mainly to the fact that Fern lived close enough to Fran Shack to be a fairly constant visitor there, and Laney could generally count on Mike to back him in any dispute with the others. Yerke, Bronson, and Russell formed another clique which revolved around a strong mutual interest in classical music and frequent attendances of concerts at the Philharmonic and the Hollywood Bowl; and Kepner and Brown were yet another clique, with Dal Coger and Glenn Daniels partial hangers on. The LASFS was essentially one clique -- Ackerman, Morojo, and Daugherty formed its nucleus, with Laura Crozetti more sympathetic to them than to the others, and Charles Burbee stubbornly maintaining his independence. Joquel, who usually was identified with the Ackerman - Morojo clique, was more-or-less with the Outsiders and well on his way out of active involvement with LA fandom. At this time I was bouncing back and forth between Los Angeles

and San Diego and wasn't bound to any particular clique.

One year later, March 1945, the picture had changed considerably. The Outsiders had dissolved and Yerke and Bronson had gaffiated, but were spending a good deal of time at Dollens' studio in Culver City, constituting a strong clique which still exercised a fair degree of influence in the fluid LA fan scene. Russell, although still in the LASFS, retained strong ties with Yerke and Bronson and spent a good portion of his free time at Dollens'. Laney was director of the LASFS and was the leader of a strong clique composed primarily of Kepner, Saha, Elmer Perdue, Brown, and -- to a certain extent -- Nieson Himmel and myself. In turn, Nieson and I were pretty much of a two man clique-within-a-clique. And to further confuse things Himmel and I could at times be considered part of the clique made up of Ackerman, Morajo, Daugherty, and Roscoe Wright -- with Laura Crozetti somewhere off in left field. Joquel was out of it altogether, and Burbee was still all things to all men.

Two months later, May 1945, things had taken a turn for the worse with the formation of the Los Angeles Futurian Society, a quasi-formal organization founded by Jimmy Kepner, Mel Brown, Art Saha and myself. This was not separate from the LASFS but within it, with all the members retaining membership in the mother club. The Futurians would continue to be the biggest and strongest clique in the LASFS until dissolution in September. In addition to the four hard core members the Futurians could generally claim support or sympathy from Elmer Perdue, Sam Russell, Nieson Himmel, Myrtle Douglas, and Art Joquel who, although out of the LASFS, showed a modicum of interest in the Futurians. I'll return in a moment to a fuller discussion of the Futurians. The LASFS per se was surprisingly free of strong cliques during this period due mainly to the breakup between Ackerman and Morajo. Ackerman and Daugherty could be considered a clique, although not a strong one; and Laney and Russell another because of their editorial association with ACOLYTE.

Toward the end of the year the arrival of E. Everett Evans in Los Angeles gave birth to a strong Evans-Daugherty clique, to be followed soon after by the invasion of the Slan Shack gang from Battle Creek, Michigan, who comprised a close-knit clique all their own -- Al and Abby Lou Ashley, Walt Liebscher, and Jack Wiedenbeck.

As this outline of the various cliques to be found during certain time periods in the history of the LASFS makes clear, LA fandom was an extremely fluid society, and one which was never at any time really split down the middle into two camps. The emphasis that Laney gives to his personal feud in ASI has tended to perpetuate the myth that the feud was of overwhelming significance to not only himself and Ackerman and Daugherty, but to all the other members as well. Actually, a comprehensive reading of LA fanzines, FAPazines, etc, published during the period of the feud will show that most of Fran's contemporaries regarded the feud as pretty much of a tempest in a tea pot, and of no lasting significance. It became significant almost entirely through the herculean efforts of Laney himself.



By the time Laney got around to spilling his guts all over fandom, he'd magnified many things all out of proportion, put undue emphasis on relatively picayune issues, and reported some supposed facts out of total context and, at times, with insufficient first hand knowledge. Like the Futurians, for instance.

--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--:--

Laney dismisses this group in one glib paragraph:

"The communists and their fellow travellers had at this time a rival club -- the Futurian Society of Los Angeles...it was no better than the LASFS, if as good. It existed for only a very few months, and died quietly when the communists moved to New York in the fall of 1945."

It may be a small point to make, but the Communists didn't found the Futurian Society of Los Angeles; Kepner, Saha, Brown and I did. Aha! But Laney said you guys were Communists, someone says. True -- but not when we founded the Futurian Society. That was to come later. Fran further says that his only informant on us was Perdue, who said we were no better than the LASFS, if as good. Whether or not we were any better than the LASFS had absolutely no meaning. We didn't set ourselves up as a rival club or try to compete with it in interest. In contrast to the Outsiders we made a point of having our meetings on Sunday night in order not to conflict with the LASFS or general fanac. As to Perdue being Fran's only informant on our activity, this seems hard to believe because Samuel Davenport Russell was very much a part of the Futurians -- more so than Elmer -- and was still associated with Fran on ACOLYTE, and certainly must have talked about us to him.

In many respects the Futurians successfully realized some of the aims of the Outsiders in that we -- while remaining in the LASFS -- constituted a homogeneous and separate group avowedly interested in the arts and, particularly, politics. At the same time we retained our interest in science fiction and fandom and the four of us were among the early joiners of the Vanguard APA. Our meetings ran smoothly, we had guest speakers from without fandom, and there was a gratifying lack of discord in the group as a whole. I firmly believe that in terms of relative significance to LA fandom the Futurians had importance equal to that of the Outsiders, if not greater. We had as many active fans, as much brain power, indulged in as much if not more activity, had by far less friction than they did, and had considerable political influence in the LASFS. But we didn't have a Laney to furnish propaganda for our group.

As to equating the Futurians with Communism this, in fairness to less involved individuals, deserves some clarification. At the time we founded the Futurians, we -- that is, Kepner, Brown, Saha and myself -- were in strong sympathy with the political left wing statements and activities of the New York Futurians, Wollheim, Lowndes, et al, and in fairly close communication with them. Because of this

identification with the Futurians we proposed to form a somewhat comparable group on the West Coast; and, because the four of us all lived in Tendril Towers, we tended to visualize it as a counterpart to Futurian House in which most of the eastern Futurians lived.

At this time our interest in politics was pretty academic, although decidedly leftward leaning. Because of our interest in politics we set up a long range program schedule for our Sunday meetings in which we would attempt to get spokesmen from all sorts of political and socio-political movements to speak before us and present an outline of their respective ideologies. We hoped to get communists, socialists, Trotskyites, fascists (if possible: remember this was during World War II), etc. Surprisingly, we were quite successful. And in one respect, too much so for our own future good.

I'll never forget the night that Marxism and the CPA (Communist Political Association, the form the American Communist Party assumed during World War II) was so eloquently presented to us by a lady organizer from the party. At the conclusion of her talk she announced that she had applications for membership with her and would be more than happy to sign up any of us who happened to be swayed by her convincing arguments. We four nincompoops looked at each other, nodded, and trooped up like sacrificial lambs to the slaughter. After signing up we looked at Sam Russell and one of us said, "Come on, Sam, why don't you join too? We know you think like we do." Sam looked at us, smiled in what I can only think of as an enigmatic way, and softly announced, "I don't need to; I joined the Party a couple of weeks ago."

We were amazed and delighted because Sam's already joining seemed to give intellectual sanction to our precipitous action. Little did we know, nor were we to know for some years to come, that Sam was in actual fact an undercover agent for the government, and would henceforth be reporting our every word and act to the FBI -- but this is another and sadder story.

We five, then, were the actual Communists in the Los Angeles Futurian Society -- no others. And none of the remaining Futurians could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as Communist fellow travellers, as Laney implies. I might point out here that Rogers, Kepner, Saha, and Brown have long since seen the error of their ways and dutifully recanted. And speaking for myself I might add that my interest in the party was very short lived and disillusioned. I am now by conviction a moderately liberal democrat.

I wasn't too upset, on first reading ASI, to find myself identified as a Communist; after all, it had never been a secret. What did distress me, though, was that in this book which purported to be a fearless document which would leave nothing unsaid for fear of hurt feelings or repercussions; in which Rogers, Kepner, Saha, and Brown are called Communists regardless of past friendships; in which Kepner is identified as a homosexual; in which Daugherty and Ackerman are ridiculed and calumnated -- not one word was said about Samuel Davenport Russell being also (apparently) a Communist. God knows, it



was known to everyone in the LASFS.

Perhaps it is a small point by itself, but it serves to illustrate what I contended at the beginning of this essay: that ASI is factually inaccurate in many instances and invalidated as a completely reliable historical document. If I had the time and the documents to refer to and the opportunity to interview as many as possible of those involved I could come up with countless other verifiable examples of omissions, distortions, and inaccuracies; but I have neither the time nor the inclination.

Regardless of the bias and nonobjectivity of ASI it still serves a useful function in that it provides a reasonably accurate chronology of events during the period it concentrates on and gives us some good profiles of many of the principals involved.

And it is a hell of a good piece of writing.

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

## AFTERWORD:

### Sketch of a Fan (II)

I CAN'T HELP FEELING, AFTER several readings of ASI, that as hard and unfair as Laney was with Daugherty and Ackerman (and others) he was even harder and more unfair with himself. I'm not speaking of the self criticism and analysis which is supposed to prove that he was being mercilessly honest in his dismemberment of virtually everyone in the LASFS, himself included -- an argument which crumbles to nothing when fully examined -- but of the unconsciously distorted and unreal Laney that emerges from the book.

Perhaps the incredibly egoistical character that Laney depicts as himself is the true Laney; I'm not sure anymore. I do know, however, that Laney as I knew him was somewhat less than the ogre he is believed to be by some, and certainly a long way from being the fannish demi-god the Laney cultists have made him out to be. He was, believe it or not, a man like you or me with the usual complement of faults and virtues, strengths and weaknesses. Fran did have a strong ego, it's true, but it wasn't as apparent in a day-to-day relationship as it was in his writings -- particularly in ASI. When I knew him as a close personal friend there was never any thought in either of our minds that twenty years later he would be the subject of as much controversy as he is today; that people who knew him personally and people who knew him only through his writings would argue and debate as to his real character; that to some he would be the very model of a model Insurgent, to others the very model of a Grade A-1 son of a bitch; that in some quarters he would be regarded almost in awe as a Priapian deity with a gargantuan sexual appetite; and that in other quarters it would be argued that his obsession with sex was merely a continuing effort to quiet his fears of latent homosexuality.

To me Fran Laney was a good friend and we had a lot of damn fine times together. We had our differences of opinion about various people in the LASFS, and about the LASFS itself. We didn't see entirely eye-to-eye on Life and Its Greater Meaning, or even on fandom. We had our differences on politics, particularly when I became a Communist. But in spite of all this we remained good friends and enjoyed each other's company. I had a high regard for him all the time I knew him and after, and like to think that most of the time he held a high regard for me. And it was precisely because I had such a high regard



for Fran and such warm memories of our friendship that I was so disturbed by ASI. Not because of anything personal he said about me in it, but because I felt it was unworthy of him. So much of it was small and petty; so much talent and effort was wasted on justifying his personal war against Walt Daugherty and Forry Ackerman -- so much unjustified savagery.

Although it is distasteful to me to do so I suppose I must make some mention of the last two pages of ASI. To me it seems obviously the product of a sick mind. When I first read it I was appalled -- not with its contents, but with the evidence it seemed to give of the deterioration of a once fine mentality. It seemed as if Fran had worked himself almost into a frenzy during the writing of the major portions of the book in an effort to demolish the LASFS and all who resided therein, and then, feeling that perhaps his object had not been reached, tried to make sure that his point was not lost by printing as many repugnant illustrations of the general depravity of the LASFS as he could cram into the remaining pages. I think it is worthy of note that of fourteen examples he cites ten of them have to do with sex in some degree of abnormality -- I'll let the Freudians debate the significance of this. The impression given, due to the compression of all these items on two pages, is that this was the way it was all the time, that this was representative of the characters and activities of the majority of the members. Most of what he says, I can testify from personal knowledge, is either greatly exaggerated or related out of context. In a couple of instances Fran himself, at the time, either thought nothing much of it or else thought it was hilarious -- like the drunken stark naked lad under the lady's bed. Hoo haw, you should have heard Laney laugh over that one when he heard about it! In these last two pages Fran seems to have flipped on the subject of sexual abnormality, to have taken a handful of unrelated and isolated instances over a four year span -- several of which he knew only by hearsay -- and put them down on two pages, saying: Look everyone! Look at what an iniquitous hotbed of perverts the LASFS is! It's really rather sad.

I hate to think that so much of Laney's reputation rests on Ah! Sweet Idiocy! Great as the book is as an example of a particular style of writing, it is -- like a distorting carnival mirror -- a misleading reflection of the real Laney. As time goes on, as the Now becomes further and further removed from the Then, the complex individual that was Francis Towner Laney will become increasingly reduced to the one dimensional image that is projected from ASI. ASI was the product of a sour and embittered man who pulled out all the stops, lost all sense of balance and restraint, and forgot that he ever had a sense of humor by the time he got around to writing it. It is not the true measure of the man. I prefer to remember the Laney I knew as a friend before he ever dreamed of writing ASI. And for those who didn't know him personally I would rather his reputation could have rested on ACOLYTE, on his FAPazine FAN-DANGO, and on his always entertaining and frequently thought provoking writings in other journals, than on ASI.

But in-as-much as so great a part of his present day reputation

is derived from ASI I can only hope that this examination of the man and the book will help others to a better understanding of Francis Townner Laney and to a more realistic evaluation of his controversial magnum opus.

\*  
\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*  
\*

FTL and ASI, by Alva Rogers, is published as Operation Crifanac CCXL By Dick Eney, 417 Fort Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Virginia, USA. 25¢ a copy. Permanently in print.