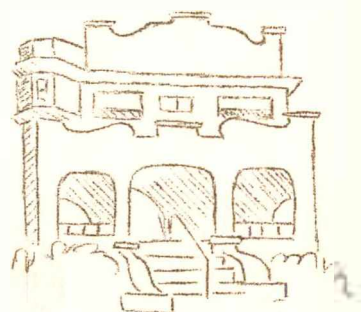


BIXEL

Nº 3

JUNE 65



BIXELANGSYNE.....editorial type jazz by.....

Alva Rogers

Let's see, now...the last issue of Bixel was for the 34th mailing, December, 1962, a long time ago. Originally I'd hoped to make Bixel a quarterly genzine as well as an OMPazine and with that in mind I lined up what I hoped would be two regular, or semi-regular columnists, Cleve Cartmill and Harry Warner. The unexpected death of Cleve Cartmill early last year cut short his career as a fan and writer, but more than that it brought to an end a friendship that stretched back some sixteen years or so.

In many ways Cleve was a tragic figure. But in spite of the fate that seemed to constantly frig him he never complained or blamed others for his troubles. As a child in Oklahoma Cleve was hit with polio and after recovery was forced to use crutches. When he was about eleven his parents, who were devout fundamentalists, took him to a big revival being conducted by a fundamentalist faith healer. Caught up in the fervor of the revival his mother took him up to the "healer" who pronounced him cured and told him to throw his crutches away. He did, and immediately collapsed suffering serious aftereffects as a result. The deterioration of one whole side of his body was progressive and by adulthood one arm and one leg were shriveled and totally useless; but even so he managed to get about with the use of two canes.

In time Cleve became a newspaperman, and a helluva good one, too. In the early forties, during the time he was writing memorable novels and stories for Unknown and Astounding he was working on rewrite for the Los Angeles Daily News, along with Neison Himmel and Roby Wentz. When the Daily News folded (a sad day for Los Angeles) Cleve moved to San Diego and went to work on the rewrite battery of the San Diego Journal, a great, but short-lived liberal paper in the heartland of reaction. Cleve was married at this time to a very beautiful and voluptuous girl, Jeanne, with whom he was devotedly in love. In the mid-forties Jeanne divorced Cleve, almost literally breaking his heart, and most probably his spirit, for he was never really the same afterwards. Out of this marriage came one child, a son. Mat, a phenomenally gifted child with an IQ in the high genius bracket, was Cleve's great joy and everlasting pride. Although Jeanne retained custody of Mat after the divorce Cleve kept in constant touch with him as he grew up, and the last days of his life were highlighted by the visits from Mat and the quiet evenings of conversation and chess they would have.

Shortly after the war Cleve married again, this time to Vida Jameson, the daughter of s-f writer Malcolm Jameson. This was an unhappy marriage that also ended, a few years later, in divorce. By the time of this marriage Cleve had apparently burned himself out as a writer, and no matter how he tried he just couldn't seem to cut it.

Vida kept riding Cleve to write, and God knows, he tried. But the more she prodded him the more pitiful the results. Along with her prodding Vida also tended to baby Cleve, to emphasize his infirmity, making him feel less than a man. Both of them hit the bottle pretty hard and in time it got so that Cleve couldn't face a new day without first downing a full water glass of straight gin -- before getting out of bed. Unable to write and alone in his apartment (Vida being at work), Cleve would frequently get in his old Model A which he drove with surprising skill and come to our place to while away the afternoon visiting with Sid. No sooner would he get in the house than he'd start to fidget and eventually suggest to Sid that she go out and get a half-gallon jug of cheap wine, after which he'd settle down and relax.

Probably more than any of his other close friends, Henry Kuttner, A.P. White (Tony Boucher), Stuart Palmer, Craig Rice, etc., Sid was conscious of the deterioration that had set in with Cleve. Sid worked with him on the Journal while he was still powerfully creative, still in love with his wife, proudful of his fatherhood. No matter the causes of the subsequent divorce, Joanne at least had the decency not to treat Cleve as a hopeless cripple. Cleve's great moment as a newspaperman came, according to Sid, when a troopship of Marines returned to San Diego from the South Pacific. Cleve was assigned to write the story, and without leaving his desk he wrote an "eye-witness" account of the debarkation of the Marines and their reunion with family and loved ones that tore the heart out of San Diego and is still talked about with wonder by newspapermen in that city.

In addition to being a newspaperman and a fiction writer Cleve, who had a beautifully resonant voice, had been a radio announcer and, surprisingly so considering the condition of one arm, a saxophone player in a band. For a while after the war he worked in an editorial capacity for Bond-Charteris (later Saint Enterprises), and more than once hinted that he had more than a hand in the writing of a couple of Charteris's Saint stories. Cleve did do ghost writing and for one wrote screen actor George Sander's best selling mystery novel.

The death of a good friend always releases a flood of memories, memories of things said, of things done together, happy memories, some sad memories, a few wild memories. One of my happier memories of Cleve Cartmill took place in 1950 or 1951. Cleve hadn't seen his son Matt (incorrectly spelled with one "t" on the first page) in some time and I offered to drive him to Los Angeles on a weekend so he could visit with him. We left San Diego early Saturday morning and arrived in Los Angeles shortly before noon and then proceeded to the Hollywood hills where Matt was living with his mother and stepfather. Cleve had wanted to surprise Matt and so hadn't given the child or his mother prior warning that he was coming. When we reached the house, a magnificent structure hanging on the side of a hill overlooking Hollywood and all of Los Angeles (Joanne had done well by herself with her second husband -- at least financially), we found no one home.

Although intensely disappointed Cleve suggested that we not waste the day or the trip, so he called the Kuttners to see if it would be okay to drop in for a visit. Catherine said that we just damn well better and that she had a great pot of chili on the back burner she'd been working on for two days and we had to come help eat it. We spent a very enjoyable afternoon and evening with the Kuttners, just talking, eating Catherine's delicious chili and drinking beer. Before leaving that night I asked Hank if he would give me his autograph, or something, to take back to Sid who, being very pregnant with our second son Bill, had been unable to make the trip, and greatly admiring his writings would be very disappointed at having missed a chance to meet him. Hank got up and went into the bedroom and a few moments later came out and handed me a small slim white box about three inches long. I opened it and inside was a small black fountain pen with a gold ring on the cap, the kind women used to carry on a thin gold chain, all nested in snowy white cotton. The note with it, written with the pen, said: "Dear Sid, This is the pen with which I write my short-short stories -- Henry Kuttner." A nice gesture from a fine man.

That was the last time either of us ever saw Kuttner alive.

Cleve had it rough over the next few years, an increasingly stormy marriage ending in divorce, a loss of faith in his writing ability, a serious drinking problem, an apparent attempted suicide: but in time he met and married a woman who loved him for himself and not for what he was or should be, became an accountant and studied for a CPA, and began to think again of writing. The future looked real good to Cleve Cartmill.

But, before he could truly begin to enjoy that future fate again stepped in and, with all five fickle fingers, gave him the final frigging.

As I started to say at the beginning of this piece it's been a long time since Bixel #2 appeared in OMPA. Of course, I haven't been entirely absent from OMPA during that time -- I did have FTL and ASI in the 38th mailing for December, 1963, thanks to Dick Eney. But, no Bixel -- even though Eney did put the title of BIXELtype on the OMPA version of FTL and ASI.

Since the appearance of Bixel #2 many eons ago much has happened to me. Mainly, I've had a book published, helped put on two major conventions, a Westercon (the XVI) and the 22nd World Science Fiction Convention, Pacificon II and, in connection with the latter, got myself embroiled in a raging controversy that rocked the very foundations of fandom...according to some fans.

Inasmuch as my book had its beginning right here in OMPA it occur-

red to me that it might be of interest to a few of the members to hear how it all came about and learn some of the details concerning its production.

As you all know (if you're good OMPAns) it all started in the 27th mailing in Bill Donaho's Viper #2 for March, 1961. That issue contained the first installment of "A Requiem for Astounding," a 9½ page article with five full-page mimeod reproductions of early Astounding covers. That 9½ pages of text covered a lot of ground, the first seven years of the magazines history plus introductory material. The response to this article was surprising and gratifying to me, I had no idea it would be so well received.

When Donaho and I first talked about doing this article we thought of it as at the most a two-parter, the first to embrace the earliest years, the second to bring it up to date. But by the time the first was finished and on stencil I could see it would be impossible to do the magazine any sort of justice in two short articles. It would take at the very least three.

BIXEL • 3

JUNE '65

This issue of BIXEL is published for the 44th mailing of the Off-Trail Mag Pubbers Association by Alva Rogers, 5243 Rahlvos Dr. Castro Valley, California, 94546

This issue of BIXEL is also being put through FAPA by Norman Metcalf, PO Box 336, Berkeley, California 94701, and is therefore a combined TENDRIL TOWERS/CRUDPUB production. Aug 65 FAPA distribution, mimeo by Norman Metcalf. Anyone who wants a copy of this issue will more than likely be obliged if they write to me, Alva Rogers

CONTENTS

bixelangsyne	alva rogers	1
tribune primer	eugene field	11
pacificon ii	alva rogers	12
gutless wonders	fran lanoy	22

With the second installment I decided to go into greater detail than I had in the first, to take more time and care with it. As a result it was 13½ pages long, but only covered 1938 through 1940. Again there were five mimeod covers, but by this time I was more adept with stylus and light box and these were vastly improved over the first batch. By now, of course, it was obvious to both Bill and me that in order for me to follow through on what I had so rashly announced in the first installment as my intention, that is, to cover Astounding from 1930 to 1960, there would have to be several more installments. Donaho was delighted -- this meant he was assured of material for Viper for several issues to come. The third installment was seventeen pages long and took in only two years, 1941 and 1942 and again with five cover illos. It looked for sure that I would never be through with it, that I'd be writing "Requiem" for the rest of my life.

The fourth installment was a bit shorter, eleven pages -- but it covered only one year, 1943, and with only three illos. The fifth and last

installment (in OMPA) appeared in Viper #6, September, 1962, covered the years 1944 through 1947, was eighteen pages long and had six illos.

That was the last of "Requiem" in Viper, although I didn't know it at the time. Although the manner in which I ended this installment led some of the readers into believing this was the end I had every intention of writing at least one more to take it up to 1960. I put off starting installment seven in order to get out Bixel #2 which left too little time to finish it before the deadline for mailing Viper to England in time for the 34th mailing. In September Donaho, Al Halevy and Ben Stark went to Chicago for the Chicon III and laid the groundwork for our bid for the 1964 worldcon which we planned to make the next year at the Discon I. The next few months were busy ones for both Bill and me and we let another deadline go by. In the first months of 1963 we found ourselves spending more and more of our spare time on committee work for the upcoming Westcon which was to be a big four day con, second only to a worldcon in terms of attendees, but every bit as big as far as the amount of programing was concerned.

In the meantime, reviews of "Requiem" in fanzine review columns had been generally good, and in some instances fulsome. Some of the most enthusiastic reviews had come from Dick Lupoff in Axe, and his review of the fifth installment had been the most enthusiastic of all. In that review he came out and said some book publisher should look into the possibility of putting "Requiem" between hard covers. This tickled my ego, but I discounted the possibility. But...

Sometime in May, 1963 I received an airmail letter from Earl Kemp informing me that Advent: Publishers was thinking of putting out a series of inexpensive paperbacks in the \$2.00 range and "A Requiem for Astounding" had been suggested as a possibility (by Dick Lupoff, I learned later), and would I send him the manuscripts or tearsheets for his consideration. Would I, indeed!

Most of the installments had been written first draft without a carbon and Donaho couldn't immediately lay his hands on them so I tore up five issues of Viper and sent the sheets of to Kemp airmail, and then sat back and anxiously awaited his decision. On June 5th I got the word from Earl, "...let's go," he said.

As he put it in this letter his general idea for the book was to more-or-less do a straight reprint from Viper with minor revisions and and rewriting to tie the installments together and the addition of new material to round out the full thirty years of Astounding's history. He also suggested that I incorporate a separate long chapter dealing exclusively with Unknown, but later changed his mind. He mentioned also the desirability of getting Campbell to write an introduction to the book, but said he would worry about that when the book was finished, or nearly so. In the matter of illustrations he thought Advent might be able to afford maybe twelve, but not much more. All this sounded great to me, but when I wrote back I told him I'd prefer to do

-6-

a radical rewrite job, making some changes here, adding much there. As long as this was going to acquire permanency in book form I wanted to give it more care and attention than I had in the mimeographed fanzine form. This met with his hearty approval.

Earl suggested a working deadline of the manuscript in his hands at the Discon with a backup deadline of Christmas. This seemed reasonable enough, but, oh boy! In the first place the Westercon was just a month away and most of my spare time was taken with work on that, and secondly I had promised Dick Eney an extensive critique of Fran Laney and his magnum opus, Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, and I felt honor-bound to give writing priority to that. So, what with the Westercon (which was a roaring success), unexpectedly losing my job two days before the con, a two week visit with Sid's parents in San Diego following the con, looking for a job after getting back to Castro Valley, finding a good job and then almost immediately having to return to San Diego for the funeral of Sid's father who'd died suddenly after a prolonged illness, and then staying there for another week for the reading of the will before returning home and starting my new job (salesman for a small surgical supply house), I had really very little time for writing. But even so I'd managed to finish the Laney piece for Eney and to do quite a bit of work on Requiem during all this. It was obvious, though, that I couldn't even begin to meet the first deadline and it was doubtful that I could make the second, even if I had more spare time than I actually did.

Time marched on with giant steps. The Discon came and went and Stark, Halevy, Doncho and I found ourselves responsible for putting on the next worldcon. Earl all this time was the soul of forbearance and understanding and gave me one deadline extension after another, but always keeping the pressure on me so it would be ready to go on sale the first day of the con, September 4. Shortly after the first of the year Earl gave me the welcome news that it was quite probable that we would be able to illustrate the book with reproductions of fifteen covers and possibly as many as twenty-four interiors and to send him a list of what I wanted to use and he would clear it through Conde Nast.

In a way, selecting the art for the book was one of the most difficult things I had to do. From a total of 350 covers I had to pick fifteen to go in the book -- and without even looking I could think of at least three times that many that deserved to be chosen for one reason or another. But, I finally narrowed it down to fifteen, hard as it was to do. There were certain covers I felt had to go in because of historical or sentimental significance: Wesso's for the first issue and his cover for the last Clayton, originally intended for E. E. Smith's "Triplanetary," Brown's "Skylark of Valeron" cover, Wesso again for the first cover with "Science-Fiction" as part of the magazine's name, Schneeman's for December, 1938 and the new style logo, Hubert Rogers' first for February, 1939, Schneeman's Saturn painting, Rogers' "Gray Lensman" cover, Rogers again for the first

"bedsheet" Astounding (January, 1942). Ideally, the covers displayed in the book should give a visual record of the development of the magazine over the years and at the same time give a representation of the work of the major artists associated with the magazine during its various phases. This, I think, we accomplished, within the limits imposed upon us. Covers by Wesso, Brown, Schneeman, Rogers and Timmins were chosen. Several fans have asked me why I didn't select at least one of Alejandro's covers, and why nothing by van Dongen, Freas and Emsh were included. Alejandro was left out because I didn't consider him a major science fiction artist or of any particular significance as far as Astounding was concerned and the inclusion of one of his covers would have meant not being able to use one by Rogers or Brown or Wesso. Van Dongen, Freas and Emsh were conspicuous by their absences because Kemp was unable to get copyright clearance from Conde-Nast for anything after 1950, which meant that nothing by these three artists could be used. The same guidelines used in selecting the covers were used in the choice of black and whites used, and the problem was just as difficult -- if not more so.

The first week in April I got a fat air mail from Earl that made me feel good all over. Kemp's letter was, as usual, succinct, but it contained much good news. First, he said, JWC was coming through -- well, it was almost certain, anyway. Secondly, the list of covers I'd sent would all be used and had been incorporated with the list of interiors I'd sent along first and were being sent to Ed Wood for photographing. Third, and perhaps the most exciting news of all, was the totally unexpected information that Harry Bates had agreed to write a foreword to the book. Enclosed with Earl's letter were a number of letters from Bates' personal correspondence file relating to the early days of Astounding which he was sending me (unasked) with the hope that it might be of help to me. It was indeed. Unbeknownst to me Earl had contacted Bates, sending him at the same time the about two-thirds completed manuscript, asking him if he would like to do a foreword, and got an immediate yes in reply. A couple of days later I got the manuscript back from Bates with a covering letter to me and a carbon of a letter to Earl. In the letter to me he said, "I admire you for the job you've done. What energy you've shown! What wide digging! How interesting (to any s-f addict) you've made the subject! On the whole, within the limited area of which I had personal knowledge, I quite agree with your judgments. (Of course no one in the world would agree with you, or anyone else, completely.) What love you are capable of! Lucky you! Of course all love is more or less blind -- but so, too, are eyes which look on love, unloving."

I was touched. From this point on a wonderful and lengthy correspondence developed with letters coming on an almost daily schedule at times, and this from a man with crippling arthritis in both hands. Within two weeks I received the manuscript of his foreword (he wanted me to see it first and then send it on to Earl) with the hope expressed that I would find it satisfactory. I did. A couple of days later I received an air mail letter (dated April 26) saying, "I am ashamed

of myself -- I apologise -- but I am sending you three pages of alterations to the Foreword. Herewith.

"It's the same damned old thing. I've never yet written anything to be printed under my name with care; the stories I rushed out, leaving in a mess of lousinesses -- and I didn't care. But I have resolved to be at the other extreme for the rest of my life -- and in fact I wrote the Foreword with much care -- only after I'd typed a fair copy yesterday afternoon, I was in such a lather to get the thing off my hands and away that I said to hell with a final good run-through with a clear mind after a night's sleep. So today, when I came to look at my carbon and see what I'd done, I saw all those flaws.

"I won't see any more. Please forgive me."

The next day I received this: "Dear Alva: Here are a couple of more alterations -- laugh at me -- go on. I've just got up with a clear mind, relaxed, and looked over carbon again, and found several more things which tended to raise my hair, what's left of it.

"If justice were done, you and the heavens would compliment me. This is the first time in my life that I've done such things. In the teeth of a lifelong habit I'd decided to write one thing right, for once -- and took a lot of pains -- and then at the end old habit reasserted itself and I took to mailing the thing out too hastily.

"I am a jerk -- but really I'm a terribly improved jerk over the one who sat down for the first time on this job.

"You see, I just wanted the pleasure, for the first time in my life, of doing something right. As right as a natural born anti-writer can make it."

In the meantime I'd written him telling him how much I liked the foreword, and also that Sid, after having followed our correspondence, had told me how much she loved him. In reply, I got a long letter which began thusly, "Dear Alva: That you liked the foreword that much is itself full payment to me for writing it. That your wife has come to love me is a terrific bonus. Love wakens love -- I love you too, Mrs. Alva!"

And then, the next day (May 1st), I got a letter from Harry telling me that after studying the thing he'd decided to completely rewrite the foreword and to hold off using the first version he'd sent. Okay, but frankly, as far as I was concerned the first version was fine, and Earl thought so, too. But, we went along with him. About a week later he wrote Earl (with a carbon to me) apologising for putting him to this added work and explaining his reasons for redoing the foreword. At the end of the two page letter he said, "Don't be so thankful (and you too, Alva). I have always intended that the fans should have my

story, and the Requiem provided the perfect place. You see, as editor I got to be quite fond of the mad, mad fans.

"Note, Mr. Kemp: I stipulate that Rogers and I have all reprint rights to the final version; i.e., either of us, independently, can reprint at will."

This correspondence with, and help and encouragement from Harry Bates was all the more appreciated by me because for years he'd been to me an almost legendary from science fiction's early years, not only as the first editor of Astounding; but also as the author of some of my favorite stories of all time.

Harry Bates' enthusiasm for the book was not quite echoed by the only other living editor of Astounding, John W. Campbell, Jr. At first Campbell tentatively agreed to write an introduction pending a reading of the manuscript. In the letter that accompanied the returned manuscript Campbell said, "I feel that I cannot properly give implied approval to the attitude shown here by associating myself with it." Campbell, rightly or wrongly (wrongly, in my estimation), seemed to feel that I was denigrating modern science fiction and Analog by dwelling so much on the past history of Astounding. Well, this was a big disappointment because both Earl and I had counted heavily on getting Campbell to write an introduction. We already had a foreword by Harry Bates, the first editor of the magazine; Ed Wood had come up with a couple of articles written by F. Orlin Tremaine for Science Fiction Times some years before he died which could be combined into a suitable piece for the book. All that remained was Campbell, and Campbell wasn't buying. Earl wrote and advised me that he hadn't entirely given up on Campbell and was writing him trying to get him to change his mind, but for me not to get my hopes up too high. I didn't...and from this point on I wrote Campbell off as far as the book was concerned.

All this time I was working like mad and on May 9 I got word from Earl...copy must close permanently and completely by Friday May 29 in order to make it for the convention. Both of us by this time were burning the midnight oil by the gallon. As soon as I'd completed a dozen or so pages of manuscript I'd throw them in an envelope and shoot them off to Earl. Earl would then type up the dummy and send me the carbon for proofreading, answering my questions on the text he might have and making any additions I might wish to incorporate in what was already written. I would then make the corrections and additions, cluing them in on the line numbering, and send them back to Earl for final editing. Inasmuch as I'm a slow writer Earl naturally kept ahead of me and there would be times when he'd be sitting back in Chicago, all caught up, impatiently waiting for additional copy from me. At one period during this time I was particularly slow in sending him copy which prompted him to send me the shortest letter I ever got from him: "Dear Alva, whatever happened to Baby Jane? Earl." This convulsed both Sid and me and from then on we always referred to

the book as "Baby Jane."

A little later Earl extended the deadline to late June, and then in a letter dated June 29 he said, "ANYTHING you want to expand, and can get into the mail to me, including revisions on (mss) pages 137-157 as they now stand, BY MONDAY JULY 13, VIA AIRMAIL, you can do. Otherwise, make your minimum revisions now and get that copy back to me quickly. Beyond July 13, we must forget the thought of having the book on sale in Berkeley." As it happened I got another week beyond that, but with that my end of the production of the book was over and it was now up to Earl Kemp and Advent.

A couple of weeks before the con I got a pessimistic progress report from Earl. Everything had progressed nicely through the printers, but had run into a bottleneck at the binders, and only a miracle would get it out in time for the convention. Earl took all the blame on himself for cutting it too fine. But he was being too generous -- the blame was as much mine as his. So it was that by the first day of the con I still didn't know whether or not we'd have the book, and wouldn't until Earl got there, and he wasn't scheduled to arrive at the hotel until 4 that afternoon.

Friday afternoon, after the opening ceremonies of the convention, I was down in the bar (where else would you expect to find a hard working committeeman?) when I noticed it was 4 o'clock and decided to go up to the mezzanine to see if there was any word from Earl. As I approached the registration desk where Sid was helping out, she leaped to her feet and shrieked across the floor, "Alva, Earl's here and he has Baby Jane with him and it's beautiful!" Several people standing around the desk looked a little startled, no doubt wondering about this baby named Jane Earl had with him, and why Sid was referring to her as an "it" with such excitement. Just then Earl stepped out of the freight elevator with a load of books bound for the Husckster Room and he came over with a big smile on his face and a copy of the book in his hand. He handed it to me and, with the hesitant eagerness of a new father being handed his first-born for the first time, I took it. And I held it in my hands and I looked at it and it was beautiful. It far exceeded anything I had expected -- it was a lovely and loving job of book making and, by God! it even had an intro by Campbell!

Needless to say my respect for, and gratitude to Earl Kemp is beyond expression.

Another tidbit from

THE TRIBUNE PRIMER

JAMES AND THE FAIRY...

Mama told little James not to go out of the Yard. But little James disobeyed mamma and Ran away. As he was going down the Street a Fairy met him and said did you Run away from Home? Well, I should Smile, replied little James. And then the Fairy gave him a new Top and Lots of Beautiful Glass Marbles. Little James never Forgot the good Fairy, and he used to Run away from Home every Day so the Fairy would give him Nice Presents. Children, who knows but what the Fairy will give you a Nice Present if you Run Away?

And, for good measure, another --

THE POET...

Who is this Creature with Long Hair and a Wild Eye? He is a Poet. He writes Poems on Spring and Women's Eyes and Strange, unreal Things of that Kind. He is always Wishing he was Dead, but he wouldn't Let anybody Kill him if he could Get away. A mighty good Sausage Stuffer was Spoiled when the Man became a Poet. He would Look well Standing under a Descending Piledriver.

--Eugene Field, 1882

MOROJO

The news of the death of Myrtle R. Douglas (Morajo) came to me after I had already written some words about another friend now dead, Cleve Cartmill. To have to comment on the deaths of two old friends in the same issue of my fanzine is not a task I find much pleasure in. But I can't let either death go by unremarked.

Morajo was a "name" in fandom when there were few if any women associated with it. In the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society of the late 30's and early 40's she was an active member and mainstay, permanent, unswervingly dedicated. Although devoted to Forrest J. Ackerman for many years she was lavishly generous with her affection to those she liked. My memory of Myrtle is of a kind, generous and affectionate friend, fun to be with and fun to be around. Myrtle was no raving beauty, but she certainly was not unattractive -- what she lacked in stereotyped beauty was more than made up for by the warmth and generosity of her personality, her kindness and her understanding. I last saw Myrtle in 1946, but I never forgot her...

Nor will I ever.

PACIFICON II

A conreport can never take the place of actual attendance at a convention, nor can it even begin to convey all the sights and sounds and impressions obtained by the reporter, no matter how exhaustive he is in his coverage. And it certainly can't reflect the impressions and opinions of others at the same con. And whether or not a conreport has any lasting, or even transitory value is certainly subject to debate. What follows is not intended to be thorough or nonobjective: as a member of the Pacificon II committee I had a very personal stake in this convention, and as a result this conreport will more likely than not be quite personal and even prejudiced -- how could it be otherwise?

For most fans who attend a convention the convention begins when they arrive in the con city; for me (and the other members of the committee, Bill Donaho, Ben Stark and Al Halovy) it began at least a year before.

The four of us had been planning for this convention since Chicon III and we used the Westercon XVI (1963) as a grand rehearsal for the Pacificon II, for which we were confident we would get the bid at the Discon. After we got the bid we set into motion the plans we had already formulated and, using the Westercon as a guide, stroked in the broad outlines of the various programs. Things moved along with hardly a hitch. Then, on the evening of January 24, 1964, the committee held a meeting, the results of which brought considerable abuse heaped upon our collective and individual heads, but which also brought us strong support.

This meeting was the so-called "Hearing" at which we declared that Walter Breen was barred from attending the convention for reasons too well known already to bear repeating here. The shrill outcry over this from some quarters was not unanticipated by us, but we hoped it would be pretty well over with by convention time. It was confidently predicted by some that our action in barring a well known fan from the convention, for no matter what reason, would destroy the convention. Others called it Copecon I (because the convention would presumably be crawling with police as a result of the charges we had made), still others called for a boycott (one fan-pro even bought an ad in the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction urging a boycott) and suggested that everyone ask for a return of their membership, but by convention time only ten fans had asked for a refund of their membership fee, and one of these later changed his mind (Mike Domina) and attended the con.

Sid and I checked into the hotel around 6 p.m. Thursday evening and after stashing our luggage in the room went to the mezzanine to do whatever needed doing. Sid pitched in and helped on the registration desk with early arrivals and I did things committeemen do at these affairs. The mezzanine was buzzing with activity: Al Lewis and a bunch of other Angelenos were busy setting up the Project Art Show and worked straight through the night and well into the following morning; Co-committeeman Ben Stark, with the help of Norman Metcalf, Lauren Exter, and his son John Stark, was whipping the Book Display Room into some semblance of order, and other hustlers were setting up their wares. In the Regency Theater, where the formal programs and entertainments were to take place, Joe and Robbie Gibson were busy trying to hang a huge net and aluminum foil "Pacificon II" banner (made by Joe and Robbie, bless'm) across the proscenium of the stage. While most of the early arrivers were getting reacquainted with each other, registering, splitting for the bar and dinner, lining up parties for the evening, we of the committee were busy checking the program, making last minute alterations, consulting with the hotel staff, and all the other things that were necessary to get the convention off and running the next day.

It would be foolish of me to say that we didn't worry a bit at the beginning of the con as to just what actual effect the Brocn exclusion would have on the convention. However, it was early evident that it hadn't adversely affected the registration. By the end of the con we had registered over 500 attending members and closed out the books with over 800 total members -- somewhat of a record for a West Coast convention. Obviously, the call for a boycott that would materially damage the convention was totally ineffective. One of the ironies of this "Boycott the Pacificon II" movement was the presence at the con -- as a member -- of one of the earliest and most strident advocates of a boycott, Ted White. The fact that Ted had recently become an editor-of-sorts of F&SF, of course, had nothing whatsoever to do with his rather sudden decision to attend the con after all. One of the most ludicrous episodes connected with the boycott movement was Kevin Langdon's threat to picket the Leamington Hotel and the convention on the first day of the con. A couple of weeks or so before the con the Hotel management informed us that they had received a letter from one Kevin Langdon informing them that he and ten or so other people were planning to picket their hotel in protest against the convention committee for a certain number of hours on September 4th, the first day of the convention. It's hard to fathom just what Kevin hoped to accomplish by this. We, of course, couldn't have cared less if he did follow through with his threat and picketed us. Any fool with half a brain could see who would be harmed the most by this bit of hairbrained action. We were mightily intrigued as to just what he would declare on his picket placards, and the speculations as to what he would say to the press when they queried him -- as they would -- led to some tantalizing possibilities. However, he called it off at the last minute, more's the pity.

Because of the declared intentions of some of the bitterest critics of the committee to bug the convention and embarrass the committee we took certain precautions to minimize both possibilities. We determined well in advance of the con just what our status was with the hotel and, particularly, what degree of authority we had over the mezzanine where all the formal activities (except for the banquet) were to take place. From the beginning we had the wholehearted support of the hotel in our exclusion of Brøen and kept them informed of any major developments in the situation as it might affect the hotel. We were told, emphatically and without qualification, that we had complete control over the mezzanine during the four days of the convention and had the right to ask any unauthorized person (non-member) to leave. If we got an argument we were to call the manager and he would see that they were removed, forcefully if necessary. We hoped we'd not be forced to resort to those measures, but it was comforting to know just where our area of authority lay. We appointed Bob Buechley, who is big and stands in awe of no man (he was Sergeant-at-Arms at the SFcon and kept J.W. Campbell cooling his heels outside a door because he was late) Sergeant-at-Arms and hired a private guard to check membership cards for admission to the wine tasting, masquerade and open parties on the mezzanine.

True to their words, certain fans did their damndest to give us trouble, but most of it was just plain nuisance, not trouble. The most persistent and offensive nuisance was Bob Lichtman who kept hanging around downstairs in the lobby with other anti-committee dissidents, with an occasional foray up to the mezzanine to see if he could get away with it. Saturday morning I spotted him standing over by a pillar in front of the elevators, looking for all the world as if he'd been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, so I went over to have a word with him. As I approached he looked like he was torn between running or standing his ground, and to give him his due he stood -- albeit nervously. I asked him if he was going to register as a member and he said no, so I told him he had no right to be there and I would have to ask him to leave, preferably quietly. He gave me an argument about his rights and me not having the right to chase him off and he was going to stay right where he was, so what was I going to do about it? So I told him. I told him that if he didn't leave voluntarily and without a fuss I would get the manager to ask him to leave, and if he defied him the manager would then call the police and have him escorted out. Bob made some feebly disparaging comment and just then Al Halevy came toward us. As Al came up to see what was going on I turned and said, "Al, Bob refuses to leave the mezzanine, so go on down and get the manager." Without a word Al wheeled and started for the stairs. Bob shuffled his feet and looked distressed; then, without saying anything, he turned and went to the elevator. Silently I followed him into the elevator and punched the Lobby button. We got out together and I stood there as the elevator doors closed and watched Bob to see that he didn't turn the corner and go up the stairs. He didn't. Al was standing by the desk talking to the manager and I motioned to him that the incident was all over. As far as I could tell this little byplay went virtually unnoticed by most of the members who were on the mezzanine at the time.

Not being present at the time I can't comment on the Gretchen Schwenn/Redd Boggs/Bob Buechley set-to. Gretchen was a full \$3.00 member although she hadn't registered or picked up her name badge (actually, the committee had given Gretchen an honorary membership in payment for the excellent help she'd given us in the preparation of the Western-con program book. It was because of this, undoubtedly, that Gretchen refused to resign her membership although she'd been quite outspoken in her criticism of the committee); Boggs was not a member and had no intention of becoming one.

The bone of contention between us and the non-paying boycotters was our apparent presumption of authority in trying to keep them out of the "open" parties which, they insisted, we had no business doing, these parties being sponsored by others and therefore outside our area of authority. Well, we didn't quite see it that way. The parties were open to all members of the convention, but not to any freeloader who wanted to come in off the street for free beer. At every convention there are complaints by fans that they have trouble finding a party in the evening that isn't closed for some reason or other, so we wanted to be sure that every night there would be at least one big party that would be wide open to every member. Although Detroit and Cleveland and London fronted for three of these parties the committee in fact footed the tab for all the beer served up which gave us somewhat of a proprietary interest in them. After laying out in the neighborhood of \$150 each night for these parties we couldn't see the sense in passively letting people in who had attacked the committee, boycotted the convention and refused to pay their membership fees. But even if we hadn't paid for the beer the convention members had paid for the right to attend the parties, so it just didn't seem right to let any old freeloading dead-beat come in and share the same privileges the members had paid hard cash for.

Saturday night saw the explosive climax between the boycotters and the committee; and the detonator of this explosion was Jerry Knight, once considered a friend by all four committeemen.

At the conclusion of the masquerade I came down from the stage where I'd been manning the microphone and began to mingle with the crowd which was beginning to break up and head for the party in the con suite, when suddenly I bumped into Jerry who was standing alone in the center of the floor with a drink in his hand (given to him by Sid who'd been conned by Jerry into believing he was a paid up member). I gave him the standard pitch about being there and asked him to leave without making a scene, but he said the only way I could get him to leave was to use force, that otherwise he intended to stay. There were a hundred or so people still in the hall, all having a good time and looking forward to the partying, so I said to myself, what the hell, let 'im stay and enjoy his hollow little triumph, it wasn't worth fouling up the atmosphere by making a public stink. For the record I repeated that his presence was unauthorized and then left for the First Fandom meeting in Fred and Carol Pohl's suite.

Sometime later Bill and I were relaxing in the Pohl's suite yakking with the rest of First Fandom (Bill isn't First Fandom, but we made a special dispensation for him because he was on the committee) when the phone rang and it was for me. It was Al and he wanted Bill and me down on the mezzanine immediately, we were confronted with a crisis. I asked him what the crisis was (although I had a good idea) and he said Jerry Knight was there acting like he owned the joint, that he'd heard Donaho had refused to throw Jerry out, and if Bill and I didn't get down there instanter he was going to resign...and where the hell was Ben? I said I didn't know where Ben was, that Bill and I would be right down, swore under my breath at having to leave a good party, and hung up.

When we got to the mezzanine we found the party a roaring noisy success with fans jammed into the con suite and overflowing onto the mezzanine, sitting on every available piece of furniture, sitting on the floor in a row along one wall, standing in clusters trying to shout each other. Standing in an open area a short distance from the con suite was a small group: Buz Busby, George Scithers, Dick Ellington, Dave Kyle, Danny Plachta, and maybe a couple of others. There was also a drunk and distraught Al Halevy and a not so drunk and smug Jerry Knight. Without going into all the gorey details Al had heard that Donaho knew that Jerry was on the mezzanine and hadn't done anything about it. Were we or were we not keeping non-member boycotters out? If we weren't he'd like to be told, and if that was the case he was quitting as co-chairman. Bill said, why yes, he knew Jerry was there but thought it best to just ignore him and not make a big scene. Al flipped. And then when I told him I also had seen and talked to Jerry earlier in the Regency Room, but decided it would be best for us not to make a big flap... Al ripped off his committee badge, stuffed it in my coat pocket, and said, "Alright, you bastards, I quit!" We watched him stagger off to the elevator. Al was too drunk and emotionally wound up to listen to any reasons Bill and I might give as to why we, independently of each other, decided to play it cool with Jerry. We let him go, figuring we'd catch him in the morning after he'd sobered up.

After Al left I turned on Jerry and told him what I thought of someone who would do what he was doing to friends. I rather bitterly pointed out that Sid and I had always considered him and Miriam as special friends, and wondered just what his concept of friendship was. Dave Kyle also tore into him, comparing his conduct to that of crashing a private party in my home. As the dialog between Jerry and me became more heated I could feel my temper begin to go so, afraid that with one more crack out of Jerry I'd haul off and clout him, I turned and walked away. I learned later that Jerry told Bill and Dave that he'd come expressly to cause us trouble, but the results had far exceeded his most sanguinary hope.

Oh, yeah. The next morning Bill and Ben and I went up to Al's room and, without too much difficulty, got him to take back his name badge.

And while we were at it we reviewed our policy on attending non-members who were "boycotting" the con, and decided to follow a new tack for the remaining two days of the convention.

In the sober light of Sunday morning it was obvious that the boycotters had been pathetically harmless to the convention and only pesky nuisances to the committee. Even the dramatic events of the night before had not visibly dampened the spirits of most of the members or interrupted the business of the convention. The number of boycotters actively trying to bug the committee were few: Redd Boggs, Kevin Langdon, Jerry Knight, Bob Lichtman. Others, like Andy Main and Calvin Demmon confined their activity primarily to the lobby in the daytime and parties on the upper floors at night and gave us no trouble. Most of the nearly 500 paid-up attendees were blissfully oblivious to the boycotters and their efforts to embarrass the convention and remained so throughout the entire four days. Because of this, and because we felt we'd made our point we agreed to ignore them from then on and let them go unopposed where they would. They were so few and so pitifully ineffective that there was no longer any point in even recognizing them. Actually, the longer they maintained the burlesque of "boycotting" the con by attending it without paying for a membership the more they looked like deadbeats and less like Rebels With a...Cause?

In spite of the unpleasantnesses involving the boycotters and the necessary time spent doing my share of running the convention I still managed to have a good time and came away from it with more pleasant memories than bad. Because of my duties I didn't get to see as much of the program as I would've liked, but what I did see I thought was great, particularly Fritz Leiber's talk. But there were other things that more than compensated for missing most of the programs, namely, people.

I suppose the most memorable thing about this convention was seeing my book go on sale, seeing people buy it, autographing copies, eating up the egoboo. Having people like Cliff Simak sign my copy with "My thanks for this book," and then telling me he'd gone up to his room for a nap only to start reading the book and forgetting to nap; Sam Moskowitz putting his arm around my shoulder and saying it was a damn fine book; Jerry Pournelle cussing me out because he'd gone to his room at 4 a.m. after a party, sat down on the john and opened my book and didn't get up for an hour and a half: things like that made me feel good all over...Another thing that got to me happened down in the bar the first afternoon. During a short break I made for the bar for a quick drink and in the process of getting the drink I met Boyd Raaburn who, on meeting me, gulped down his drink, told me to stay right where I was, and then tore out of the bar. When he came back he had a manila envelope in his hand which he put behind his back as he stood in front of me and said, "Twenty years ago a bunch of fans in Los Angeles got

together and published Jack Speer's Fancyclopedia in a limited edition of 250 numbered copies. In the following years copy number seven made its way to New York and then to me in Canada. And now, at long last, it returns to where it belongs." By this time I was pretty choked up because I knew damn well what Boyd held behind his back before he handed it to me. When I opened the envelope there it was, the familiar simulated red leather bound Fancyclopddia by "John Bristol," and inside on the title page the notation in Perry Ackerman's distinctive green ink that this was "Copy No. 7 Prepared for Alva Rogers." I just plain did not know what to say; what could anyone say after a selfless gesture like that?...Friday night Walt Daugherty got all mysterious and insisted that I catch the program for youngsters the following morning at 10. He was so insistant that I said okay, I'd be there. I was glad that I did, in spite of a hangover, because it was one of the highlights of the convention. It was a marvelous production got up by Walt Daugherty, Samuel D. Russell and Fritz Leiber on the works of H.P. Lovecraft as interpreted by various artists, using slides of the artwork and taped commentary by Russell and dramatic readings of the appropriate Lovecraft passages by Fritz. Again, I anticipated what was coming, but even so, seeing slides of drawings I'd done twenty years ago for Fran Lamy's Acolyte and paintings I'd done for Perry up there on the screen along with Fritz's spine tingling reading of the illustrated scenes was a never to be forgotten thrill.

Sunday was the most eventfully jammed day of the convention and, for me, started fairly early in the morning. I'd no sooner gotten up and had breakfast when I was called into the banquet room for a consultation with Bjo's mother who was setting up the floral decorations for that evening's festivities. All I could do was heartily approve Mrs. Roberts' sure taste in what was appropriate. As I walked out of the banquet room and passed the desk the assistant manager called me over to tell me a tale of woe. He said there was a young girl walking around the hotel dressed in electric blue tights with obviously nothing under them and, although he was very broadminded, some of the hotel's permanent guests were objecting. Could I do something about it? I said I would take care of it, and just then Tom Hall and his girl Cathy walked across the lobby headed for the stairs. I got Tom aside and told him my problem. Tom was very distressed, said he knew Cathy was causing a sensation, that it was the costume she wore at the masquerade the night before, that she didn't have any other clothes with her, they'd been trying all night and morning to get a ride to Berkeley because they couldn't go on the bus, but hadn't been able to get a ride from anyone. I told him I couldn't leave the hotel or I would give them a ride, but I'd see if Sid couldn't drive them to Berkeley, and to stand by. I hunted for Sid, finally finding her in the bar talking to one of the ladies who lived in the hotel, and told her about the situation. Sid said she'd had too many beers to want to drive to Berkeley, and then the gal next to her piped up and said she had a couple of dresses in her room that might fit the child. So she and Sid rounded up Cathy, took her to the lady's room and fitted her out with a couple of dresses, and saw the two kids happily off to the bus to Berkeley.

Following this was the committee session in Al's room and then the beginning of the scheduled programs. Things were pretty tight that afternoon: the business meeting was scheduled for 4:30, followed by that day's auction, then the Meet the Authors Social, and finally the Banquet. During the afternoon a camera crew from KRON TV showed up on mezzanine to shoot some footage for their regular 6 p.m. weekday news program. The mezzanine was a chaotic shambles with fans milling around and sprawled on the chairs and couches, Sunday newspapers scattered around on tables and the floor, empty beer bottles on every available surface. First they took some shots of Forry Ackerman and some glossy stills from old s-f movies, and then Jerry Jensen, the commentator, asked if any official of the convention was around and I said I was on the committee. Then he asked for Tony Boucher and set up a little scene with Tony and me. He had us standing in the middle of the floor talking together while the camera held a medium long shot on us; then he moved in, apologised for interrupting us and started asking Tony the standard questions about science fiction and the meaning of the convention while I stood there looking attentive.

Finally the time for the business meeting rolled around and members began to stream into the Regency Theater until every seat was taken and some fans were standing along the walls. The place was packed. Just before the meeting was opened I was walking down the side aisle to take my place in the rear Bob Silverberg called me over to where he was sitting. Bob and Dick Lupoff were making a "bid" for the Virgin Islands for 1965 and Bob was going to make the pitch for it and wanted to know how much time he was going to have at the microphone. It was all a big joke, but he wanted enough time to play it up right. Bob did an inspired job of extolling the virtues of the Virgin Islands as the ideal spot for the 1965 Worldcon; so good was his buildup, in fact, that when the vote was called for and the hands shot up I thought for one wild moment that the Virgin Islands had nosed out London. After the meeting Bob, a little awed by his persuasive powers, told me he thought for a second there that their little gag had backfired and he and Lupoff were going to be stuck with a con in the Virgin Islands.

The meeting seemed to go on interminably what with all the flapping over the Hugo business and the time for the banquet was drawing closer and closer. As it turned out the business meeting didn't adjourn until almost six-thirty, the time scheduled for the Meet the Authors social before the banquet. I was anxious to get out of the meeting because I still had to shower and shave and change clothes before getting down to the Troubadour Room for the social and to do my share of the work. Although the Banquet was sold out, more-or-less, there were still two or three tickets left which I wanted to have on hand for last minute sales, Ruth Berman had given me her ticket to sell because she'd been invited to dinner outside the hotel, and Cele Lalli had bought a ticket for late arriving Ed Emsh and wanted me to be sure he got it. And I also had to see about getting the orchids distributed to the ladies. As soon as the meeting was over I tore upstairs and got ready for the evening in record

time (for me).

Downstairs chaos seemed to be reigning supreme. The Troubadour Room is a goodly sized room with a fair sized bar but it seemed hardly big enough for the occasion what with fans standing four deep at the bar to get a drink. I didn't even bother to go in except for a minute or so in order to dig out Emsh and give him his banquet ticket.

I went on in the Versailles Court to start passing passing out the orchids to the gals. They were small vanda (sp?) orchids we'd bought from Mrs. Roberts and quite lovely. Earlier in the afternoon I'd asked Karen Anderson if Astrid would like to be a flower girl and pass them out for us, but Karen was a little doubtful because Astrid was wearing capris and a blouse and didn't have any dresses with her at the hotel. I told her, hell, it didn't matter what Astrid wore, she was a pretty girl and everyone liked her, but it was up to Karen. As I started passing out the orchids I looked out in the hall and standing there, with tears streaming down her cheeks, was Astrid, looking pretty as a picture in a crisp starched dress. I put down the orchids and hurried out to her and her mother. Karen explained that Astrid was so thrilled at being asked to be a flower girl that she had begged Karen to take her home to get a dress and they'd just returned from Orinda and Astrid thought she was too late and that was why she was crying. I told Astrid she looked just beautiful and that she wasn't too late and took her in and gave her the orchids. The smile she gave me as she took the orchids almost made me wish I was thirty years younger than I am.

In spite of the banquet program going longer than anticipated there were moments that made it worth it, at least to me. Tony Boucher did his usual fine job of mastering the ceremonies with the right balance of wit, erudition and solemnity. A particularly solemn note was struck when Tony tolled off the names of science fictionists who had died in the year since the Discon: Hannes Bok, Cleve Cartmill, Mark Clifton, Ray van Houton, T.H. White... When Tony got to Cleve's name Sid got pretty broken up and it was all she could do to maintain her composure for the rest of the program. She was extremely fond of Cleve.

When it came time for the Hugo presentations not even Tony knew who they were going to. We were highly gratified that everyone who was awarded a Hugo was there to receive it in person -- except one, John Campbell. In only two instances did we break silence before the con and notified a winner that he was a winner, but we did it for what we felt was a very good reason. With no derogation intended toward the other Hugos we felt that the Best Novel and Best Prozone categories were the top awards and that it would enhance the award ceremonies if the honorees were there to receive the awards in person. Before the final ballots had been counted we'd written to all the nominees on the final ballot to find out if they planned on attending the con and if they weren't to suggest a proxy to receive their award in the event they were a winner.

John Campbell replied saying he wasn't going to be able to make the con and suggested that Frank Herbert accept the Hugo for him if he won it. Clifford Simak was very apologetic, but he just didn't see how he was going to be able to get away for the con. After we counted the final ballots we found that all the winners were planning to be at the con except Campbell and Simak, so we decided to try once more to get them to the con by informing them ahead of time that they had won their respective Hugos, hoping this would be a strong enough incentive for them to change their minds. Campbell's decision remained unchanged; however, Simak had changed his mind and said he'd be there to accept. We'd sworn both men to secrecy and Cliff told us he'd not even told his family about winning, that he was going to California on business for his paper.

The perfect capper of the evening, for me, came after the banquet. The Hamiltons had a small party in their suite to which they invited the committee. When Sid and I got there we found Cliff Simak, Fred and Carol Pohl, Sam and Chris Moskowitz, E. Hoffman Price and his wife, the other members of the committee and a few others. The party went on for some time with lots of good liquor and equally good talk and then gradually began to thin out as people left for other parties until the only ones left were Ed and Leigh Hamilton, Ed Price and Mrs. Price, and me. And I found it impossible to leave. By the time everyone had left the two Eds were well oiled and for the next two or three hours -- with me as a fascinated audience of one -- those two, and Leigh Brackett and Mrs. Price as well, indulged in an orgy of reminiscing and tall tale telling. I can think of a no more fitting climax to a science fiction convention for an old science fiction fan than to sit in a room drinking good Scotch and listening to two real old pros of the weird and science fiction pulp era resurrect memories of the twenties and thirties; bringing to life H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard, Hank Kuttner and other now dead giants; reliving again some of the wild adventures of their youth when the two Eds and Jack Williamson used to be the scourge of the southwest. These were pulp writers of the old school who lived adventure as well as wrote it, hard drinking hard loving men who were members of a select clan, writers of pulp weird fiction, intensely devoted to the genre and fiercely loyal to all fellow members.

No account of a convention by a member of the convention committee would be complete without mentioning a few of the individuals who helped in many large and small ways to make the convention a success. People like Norman Metcalf who helped in so many different ways that at times we almost thought of him as a fifth member of the committee; Walter J. Daugherty and Ed Wood who did such fine jobs of auctioneering and voluntarily helped in many other different ways; Larry and Donna Broed and Steve Russell who held down the registration desk for long boring hours; good ol' Danny Plachta who helped in so many ways that we'll never be able to thank him enough; Fred Prophet, one of the best bartenders in fandom; Al Lewis, Ron Ellick, Bjohn Trimble, Stan Woolstan and assorted other unsung Angelinos for their incomparable work in publishing the progress reports and Program Book; George Scithers for support above and beyond; Don Wollheim, Cole Lalli, Don Benson, Dirce Archer, Earl Kemp,

Ed Meskys, Frank Dietz, Fred Pohl, Joe and Robbie Gibson and many others. Nothing I can say can begin to convey my personal appreciation and the appreciation of the committee for the help these and others freely gave to the convention.

Thank you one and all...

* * * * *

a few words in preface to FTL's GUTLESS WONDERS.....

/Fandom of late has been rather hotly debating the issue of Expulsion. The hottest issue, of course, continues to be the expulsion of Walter Breen from the Pacificon II by the convention committee; but almost equally controversial has been the FAPA blackball of Walter Breen which was, in the opinions of many fans, both in and out of FAPA, simply an extension of the convention issue. This is a new problem: fans have agonized over it in years past -- after the 1939 convention, for instance, and over Claude Degler vis-a-vis FAPA in the early forties...

In my critique of Francis T. Laney's fan memoirs, Ah! Sweet Idiocy! I quoted, as an example of Laney's writing style, a couple of paragraphs from his FAPAZine Fan-Dango No. 5, "Gutless Wonders -- A Discussion of Fan Ethics." The portion I quoted in FTL and ASI concerned the issue of Degler's expulsion from FAPA (which Laney strongly advocated) and was from the first part of his essay. What follows here is the second half of this essay, reprinted for the first time in twenty-two years (to the best of my knowledge). Fran was a man with strong personal opinions and the ability to express them forcefully in print regardless of whether-or-not they were popular opinions. Fran's comments on fan ethics in this essay were not particularly well received by fandom-at-large in 1944, mainly because they went counter to the attitude prevailing in fandom then -- an attitude that obtains to some extent in fandom to this day. I think that what Francis T. Laney had to say about fan ethics in 1944 is just as pertinent today as it was then -- read and ponder well.../

GUTLESS WONDERS -- A Discussion of Fan Ethics (Part II) * Francis T. Lancy

My sub-title mentioned something about fan ethics. I went into the Degler question again solely to furnish a hideous example for us to keep in mind as we discuss these ethics. On a less specific plane, I should like to outline the ethics and behavior patterns which I personally believe should govern fans not only among themselves but in their dealings with the outside world.

First, however, it is necessary for us to arrive at a working interpretation of fandom, for our outlook on fandom itself is certain to reflect itself in our ethical approach. There are a number of us, unfortunately, who lack completely anything even remotely approaching a sense of perspective. To these pitifully warped individuals fandom is all things: hobby, life-work, sexual satisfaction (through sublimation), religion -- it is their entire world, and any dealings they may have to make with untainted humanity are performed grudgingly and half-heartedly. To such an individual any person calling himself a fan is something sacred, something apart from his fellows, and to be protected from the buffets of an unkind world by the same amnion which surrounds the typical total fan. Obviously, such a fan will object to any positive action which will cause the faintest ripple in either his or any other fan's bath of amniotic fluid. If this is to be the generally accepted approach to fandom, there is nothing in fandom for me or any other person who attempts to lead a reasonably well balanced life.

If we are to adopt a sane and sensible view of fandom, however, a great deal of muddled thinking along ethical lines will be cleared up. We will no longer feel impelled to tolerate anyone simply because he happens to read (or claims to read) scientifiction, but instead will be enabled to judge him as a person. Fandom, in other words, is nothing more than a hobby -- a singularly engrossing and pleasurable hobby to be sure -- but not a way of life or a pseudo-religion. Those who try to make fandom anything more than a hobby are demonstrating an extremely stupid lack of perspective.

If we accept fandom as a hobby, we are ethically free to make or reject friends wholly without reference to sf fandom. No golfer feels impelled to be on an intimate basis of brotherly love with all other persons who happen to play golf; why should you and I feel any necessity of displaying fraternal affection for each and every reader of LeZ? (Le Zombie: Bob Tucker's great fanzine. Ed.) I personally am glad, even eager, to meet other fans, but I certainly intend to retain the right to choose among them the ones with whom I wish to be friendly. Whether or not a person reads sf is the least of my considerations; I judge my acquaintances on a basis of all-round congeniality when I decide whether or not I wish to be intimate with them.

This old custom of holding an open house for any and all visiting fans is in one sense a magnificent display of the loving of one's neighbor. On the other hand, why should you or I put ourselves out for any stupid

drip who wants to get some free board and room? I fail to see why there should be any feeling of obligation in the matter. Yet, such is the spineless aura of insane and mawkish sentiment displayed by a few warped total fans, that other fans are expected to welcome any other fan into their homes. Some misguided persons even have the brazen offrontery to discuss in print whether or not some other fan is within his rights when he refuses some fan admission to his home, as in the recent (Al) Ashley disposal of Degler.

Also, it apparently is impossible to expell any fan from membership in any fan organization. Why should this be? Why should there be this frantic pawing through constitutions, this desperate effort to avoid offending someone simply because he is a fan? Should not fan clubs -- being no more than hobby clubs -- use the same realistic approach to their membership problems as would any lodge or fraternal society? Must we resign ourselves to continued association with unworthy persons, simply because they are fans? The Querkians have a word for it: TYFE!

It may be argued by some that to set a precedent of arbitrary expulsion might conceivably lead to dictatorship, to ruthless elimination of disliked persons by those who happen to be in control at the moment. Such a naive concept would be laughable, were it not so unforgivably stupid. Fan clubs are merely hobby clubs; the expulsion of any one member or group of members should not prove completely fatal to either party. As far as that goes, I fail to see why any fan or anyone else would care to remain in an organization where he was unwanted. Dictatorship? So what? After all, a rational view of the importance of a hobby club should prevent any fatalities here either. If fandom is nothing more than a hobby to the powers that be in FAPA, they are not likely to attempt dictatorship; if they do, the discriminated-against members can always resign and pursue their interests unmolested. Of course, if fandom is life itself, something without which we cannot exist, I can see some slight basis for the hot and bothered attitude. But I hope a majority of the members of FAPA are not such moronic fools as to take so intense a view of their hobby.

There is little point in my continuing to rave in this vein. My views of fan ethics (or any other kind of ethics for that matter) may be summed up in a nice, selfish nutshell: look out for yourself, I'll look out for myself. If we find mutual pleasure in each other's company, let's be friends; if we cannot, let us not feel obliged to tolerate each other to such an extent that we lose all sense of moral righteousness, but at the same time, let us try not to be so small and petty as to feud over it. Repay good with good, and evil with evil -- both on a rather grandiose scale. Rather simple, isn't it? In my own case, this plan of life, system of ethics, or whatever else you may wish to call it, worked without a hitch for over eight years. I'll admit it didn't work so well with certain Los Angeles total-fans, but then, such a program is designed for dealing with normally balanced, intelligent, human beings. Think it over. /Fan-Dango No. 5, Summer 1944, published by Francis T. Laney for FAPA and distributed with the 28th Mailing/