

FAN-DANGO

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PACIFICON DIARY

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(Note: This is going to be a rough, very rough, on-the-stencil diary-in-retrospect of a very enjoyable week. I'm setting it down while the stuff is still reasonably fresh in my mind, not with any idea of attempting to report the Pacificon, but simply for my own edification. The diary will cover the entire week, since I was vacationing, but in the main will soft-pedal happenings of a non-steifnistic nature. Also, I'm going to try to be very candid about everything. This account will probably contain in black-and-white a lot of things which otherwise exist in fandom's lore only as furtive gossip; it may also possibly have constructive suggestions which may interest Milty and his slaves as they prepare for Philly in '47.)

SUNDAY, June 30. This, the first day of my vacation, seems in retrospect to have been singularly unexciting, both from steifnistic and other viewpoints. I went nowhere, did nothing. The afternoon, as I recall, was largely spent playing records with (Imo)Gene, the girl from the Vinc Maur who is staying with us. (The Vinc Maur is the nitery where my wife works.) Gene has rather good musical taste, meaning that she likes most of my records, particularly some of the race blues. This is to be expected of a gal who has sung with bands since she was six years old, hung around with musicians most of her life, and even been featured as a vocalist with Jan Savitt. Anyway, after Gene and Jackie had gone to work, I dragged myself to this instrument of torture, and cut all the stencils for Mike Fern's FAPazine MAHOPE. Such a silly way to waste an evening, particularly when I could sleep in the next morning. Crifanac--phooey!

MONDAY, July 1. My tame Sunday evening paid dividends, as I got out and away shortly after eight o'clock. My first call was to be the Ross-Loos Clinic, but I was too early for them, and, fortuitously, discovered a new record store nearby. Juke-box castoffs at 24¢ each are my meat--the stock wasn't so good, but I found a very lovely Blind Boy Fuller Vocalion, and half-a-dozen other lesser items.

At the Clinic I discussed at some length with one of the surgeons the matter of sterilization. I don't want anymore children (two are enough for me, at least) and I thought it might be interesting to lay some of the old wives' tales on the subject. I learned one thing new to me: that the operation is not necessarily irrevocable, and that in 50% of the cases it is possible to rejoin the cords in the event the patient changes his mind. Otherwise, the facts are about as I had understood them: local anesthetic, five minute operation, no loss of working time, no effect on one's sexual powers except for a slight strengthening if anything, and so on. Due to some stupid state law, cooperative clinics are not permitted to do the operation except in cases of proven necessity, but private urologists do the operation all the time. I'm still toying with the idea, but so far have made no definite decision.

Thence I went up to the LASFS, with the idea of running off MAHOPE for Mike. The place was sleepily deserted, though Goldstone shortly after came in, passed the time of day, and left. About an hour later I ran out of ink, and while running about the neighborhood trying to locate some, came upon a carload of fans: Goldstone and Hart of the LASFS, Max Sonstein of the Bay area, and Milt Rothman. Goldstone chose this moment to inform me rather nastily that the pacificon edition of FAN-DANGO had been banned from the Combozine; between my disgust that he had not mentioned the matter to me privately when he saw me before and my anger at the extremely huffy way in which he went about telling me, I hit the ceiling. Fortunately, perhaps, they had driven away before I calmed down enough to become articulate.

In-vestigation later showed that Goldstone took the matter on himself, that Evans (Combozine editor) supinely allowed him to make hash of EEE's published statement that there would be no censorship in the combozine, that Daugherty knew nothing of it until after it had happened. At the time I was set on making an issue of it, since several other questionable items were in the Combozine, and since Fan-Dango had been lying around the club for two weeks before any attempt was made to ban it; thus this last minute banning not only had certain illegal aspects about it, but effectually prevented my being represented in the Combozine at all.

This sort of stuff is an everyday happening around Shangri-La, the self-termed stcfnistic paradise.

The balance of the day was thoroughly wasted by a mixup with Jackie which had us playing hide-and-seek all over LA in an effort to get together. Every time I headed out to the house, she went down to the corner to telephone Stan Shack--so then I would get back to the Bixelstrasse just in time to miss the next call.

The evening was not stcfnistic, but was of sufficient interest, perhaps, to warrant a few words. It certainly was more fun than most of the Pacificon. Gene and a date, Jackie and I, went to the burlesque (which was not even a good teaser) thence to a Main Street bar with a very neat rhumba band, and then spent the small hours in a black and white after-hours joint down at 54th and Central. I've been in such places before, of course, but this one is about the best yet. The place is a mere hovel, sans decorations, but was crowded with the most completely heterogeneous mass of people one could ask to see. There were a number of all white parties, several all negro parties, but the majority of the people were colored men with white women. And such women! Some appeared a bit shopworn, perhaps, but all were good-looking above the average, most being definitely striking. Speer would have loved this place! The music was not bad if you like the modern trio a la King Cole---Lorenzo Flennoy holding down the bandstand. Many visiting musicians sat in from time to time, the best being a superb blues shouter who was introduced as Jo-Jo. Flennoy's backing was pretty anemic for this sort of thing, but Jo*Jo was good enough to rise above it. If he'd kept on singing I'd still be sitting out there. Visitors to LA are advised not to miss this place--The Cafe Zombie. A couple should be able to get by on \$10.00 for the evening, including a very good dinner. The place opens around midnight, does not get going until 1:00 or 1:30, and you have to have your own bottle.

TUESDAY, July 2. This day was sacred to record hunting. After three years of noodling around, I finally got hep to myself and went down to Central Avenue. After hitting a number of blanks, I finally discovered a colored new-and-used platter shop at 25th and Central which

made the whole week worthwhile from the jazz standpoint. The place handles both new and used platters, the latter being purchased and/or traded for by them from non-juke box sources, largely negro ones. The contents of their miscellaneous used bin (35¢ each and take your own chances with badly beat records!) were unbelievable, and after I had knocked out both myself and my finances, the proprietress mentioned that her good used records were on shelves behind the counter--would I like to see them? Wow! This store had the best pickings I've yet found in LA, and the payoff is that on a return trip two weeks later I discovered their stock had changed so much that I got even more than the first time. This place would not be regarded too highly by the lover of white jazz, Nicksieband, big swing bands, and such--but if you like race blues vocals--old and rare ones--their stock will drive you mad.

The balance of the day, unfortunately, was wasted much in the same way as all days of this week were wasted for most convention attendees. On the way from Central Avenue to Hollywood, I dropped by Stan Shack for a moment, showed the records to a Perdue who was too drunk to be very appreciative, and then supinely allowed myself to be inveigled into sitting around waiting for Tucker and Mari Beth. Fellow waiters included the Ashleys, Rothman, the Lost Weekend, Ackerman, and, I believe, Sandy Kadet, plus two or three others whose names escape me.

The people finally showed up, and I finally got away, but not without making a solemn vow I'd be drawn into no more fannish foolishness of this nature. Fans seem to have a great deal of difficulty figuring out anything to do with or to each other; at least the amount of time various individuals spent awkwardly sitting around waiting for something to turn up could not be imagined by one who did not actually observe it himself. Here they were, all these footloose and fancyfree people; and here was LA, beckoning and waiting their onslaught. So what did they do? Sat around for a week and waited for something to happen.

Sonstein, Lucas, and a few of the others spent most of their days rummaging around the used book marts. When some of the more braintrusty people got together--Speer, Widner, Rothman, Ashley--there were some very good bullfests. But so far as I could observe personally, the typical convention attendee was largely incapable of doing anything on his own initiative apart from sitting on his pratt looking shy and embarrassed. I would have thought that at least these people would have enjoyed discussing stf with one another. Well, no matter....

When I finally left for Hollywood, Milt went along. Part of our trip was spent discussing Dunk, the NFFF, the Foundation--but most of it we were busily getting acquainted, comparing our tastes in this and that, and so on. Objective was the Tempo Record Shop, a recently established rival to Marili Mordan's Jazzman Record Shop. Oddly enough, since Milt is Elmer's favorite fan, in the Tempo we ran into one of Perdue's nonfan friends, a jazz collector named Joe Orr. The haul at Tempo ran strongest to quality rather than quantity--the four HRS reissues of Hines' QRS solos, and the original Okeh of Armstrong's Monday Date/Sugar Foot Strut.

I'd intended to devote the evening to non-fan pursuits, but stupidly dropped by the Half World on my way, and supinely allowed myself to follow the course of least resistance. This course consisted largely of sitting around in the clubroom, lending Liebscher moral support as he ground the crank for some obscure fanzine he occasionally publishes, and which seems largely sacred to the memory of

Ogden Nash. There were some good men around that night: Burbee, Tucker, Rothman, Perdue, and perhaps Ashley and Ackerman. Perdue was more than a little drunk, but Rothman was drinking twice as much and staying cold sober, so maybe Elmo didn't climb on the wagon too soon at that.

Various individuals wandered in and out, but none stayed for any appreciable time except Andy Anderson. By eleven, the group had simmered down to Perdue, Rothman, Laney, Anderson, and Liebscher--and was shaping up into the best bull fest of the convention, one of those quiet but intense discussions which is more often spoken of than experienced. A combination of LA's obscenely early midnight closing law and the lack of proper home environment in the early life of Gus Willmorth broke up the discussion. And I mean broke it up.

The night was suddenly made hideous with unseemly bellowing, and a roaring drunk Gus Willmorth burst in the door. Others were with him, but were able to carry their liquor. Gus started his evening in the club by reeling through Liebscher's mimeographing, thereby reducing that worthy to a state better imagined than described. Since Willmorth was the only officer of the club present, and since no one else apparently had the guts to do anything about it, I tried to subdue the fellow. He didn't subdue worth a damn.

Willmorth sober is not unbearable. Willmorth drunk is the most obnoxious drunk I've ever seen, and I've seen some obnoxious ones. He prances and bellows. He sits and bellows. He reels and bellows. He likes to bellow in one's ear, asphyxiating his unwilling audience with stale beer fumes and drowning him with sprayed sputum. He likes to shove people around. All the time he is bellowing--much worse than any drunken lumber jack. His friends were not exactly quiet, but at least were amenable to reason. Willmorth varied his techniques by going out in the street and bellowing under the landlady's window, then running up and down the sidewalk whooping. Or, to be technical, bellowing.

Needless to say, this revolting performance completely ruined the evening for everyone else. It also brought the landlady down on our necks like a ton of brick. Nothing any of us was able to do palliated the horrible bellowing. Upon being told he was getting us kicked out of the club, he replied, "To hell with the club--it's been here too long as it is." (I mention all this as a possible antidote to some of the praise he may perhaps have been reaping for his well-conceived FANTASY ADVERTISER.)

After two hours of hectic struggling, we finally got rid of Willmorth. Milt and I took Liebscher coffeewards, with the idea of soothing his nerves. Perdue, to our surprise, was on the point of passing out, so we took him along. Perdue, riding high on his last week as a wino (the events of the Pacificcon combined with other factors to cause Elmer to climb on the wagon, where he's been ever since July 7 or 8) found himself too drunk to wait for a street car, and found me unwilling to take a chance on hauling him in my "new" car, so he went down and passed out in the clubroom. This caused the landlady to find his prostrate carcass the next morning when she came around to evict the LASFS from their headquarters, and dragged Elmer in the soup with Willmorth.

If the drinking around the LASFS were left to Perdue, no trouble would be caused, since liquor makes him quieter and ~~quieter~~ quieter, but I find myself at a loss for words to comment on the actions of Willmorth who got the club kicked out of its room on the very eve of the convention. Had it not been for the very able diplomacy of Walt Daugherty this is precisely what would have happened.

As it is, the club is now in the position of having to sublet from Walt Daugherty, who, for his own protection, naturally has to make the rules for the management of the clubroom.

WEDNESDAY, July 3. I spent the entire day roaming the downtown district taking care of various odds and ends of business, including the successful pursuit of some clothes. It was an exhausting struggle in the hot sun fighting through crowds of dawdling shoppers trying to find a toggery that did not confine itself to sleezy, soft-finish pants that might hold a press for all of five minutes.

The evening was spent apart from fandom, though I did meet Widner before I took off for parts. which, in these pages at least, shall remain unknown. On my way home, about 3:00 AM, I saw a light in the Half World, and dropped in. Liebscher was assembling Channy, so I pitched in, together with Widner, Rothman, Ashley, and probably one or two others. Afterwards, we wended coffeewards.

THURSDAY, July 4. I overslept, and sat down to breakfast about the time the convention was supposed to get under way. RA Hoffman and I finally drove over to it, and found we had missed only the first hour of the endless introductions and egobooing that marked the first session. (A suggestion, Milt. At Philly, just have them stand up and speak their names. It saves much wear and tear on the gluteus maximi of the conventioners. And for Pete's sake, a mike is sheer ostentation in a small hall for a crowd of 75 or 80 people.)

van Vogt's talk has been circulated through FAPA, so I needn't say much about it. But it definitely was disappointing. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to sit in on sessions with the man know what he was driving at; persons who heard this talk out of a clear sky probably didn't dig it. Van spoke without notes, and ended up with an uncoordinated series of digressions from digressions from digressions. He did not tie up the loose threads at all, with the result that the point largely got away from us.

The presentation of the Fantasy Foundation was pretty badly muffed, but in retrospect this is quite understandable since Ackerman was, at the time he was talking, only a half hour from the collapse which knocked him out of the convention he had worked so hard to present. Original plans had called for Ackerman to describe the history of the Foundation, to outline its activation, and to sketch briefly the plans for the museum/library facet of its work. He was then to turn the meeting over to me for a brief talk on the Foundation's publishing plans, at the end of which I was to turn it back to him for a punch line, following which the first Foundation publications were to be distributed and as many as possible of the people present signed up as subscribers.

All went as scheduled until I turned the meeting back to Ackerman for the punch line and windup, but it trailed off into mere nothingness. I was frantic, tried to get Ashley (who as local board member was the logical man to do this) to take the meeting over and try to salvage it, but he wouldn't do it. (Well, did you ever hear of a puppeteer who would let his audience see him jerking the strings?) I scared the living Jesus out of Widner by asking him to fill in then, forgetting that he'd not been in on enough of the discussions to handle it, but ended up grabbing it off myself. I hated to do it, because I'd already made a talk on Foundation, and thought a new face and voice would be a most welcome change. After the questions from the audience got answered, and some discussion of the subject was carried on, the meeting finally adjourned, and then I discov-

ered that Ackerman was sprawled out on a table in a semi-faint. It was believed at the time that the man had suffered a nervous breakdown, but it fortunately turned out to be no more than a prostration brought on by overwork and heat and nervous excitement and tension. It still kept Forry from the remainder of the convention; something I regretted very much since he was one of the few persons about to whom the convention meant enough so that his missing it was a definite loss.

The evening was taken up with the auction, ably enough handled by Erle Korshak. It was a relief to me to attend a fan auction at which one of the two Walts--Liebscher and Daugherty--was not the auctioneer. Korshak's line of jive was as corny as the local variety, but at least it had the merit of coming out of a different mouth. Since I was able to spend the evening getting acquainted with Tucker and Mari Beth, I did not mind sitting in the convention hall that night, but if I'd had any intention of buying anything, I would have been furiously angry at the utterly unjustifiable prices. The reserve figures on most lots were at least twice what I would have considered paying for them. But no blame can really be attached to Daugherty and the convention committee for pegging them so high, in light of the fact that the suckers present consistently bid far beyond them. Barnum was right.

Following the auction came what was, for me at least, one of the most pleasant gatherings of the convention. Jack Speer's room at the Mayfair (1326) was pretty much of a convention in itself throughout the weekend, but this first night the gathering was small enough so that one could keep track of what was going on. As I recall, I wandered in after festivities had commenced; in any event, the boys got one of the shocks of the convention when I casually mentioned that I'd been delayed by going up to Daugherty's and drinking beer with him. The lion and the lamb, no less!

Anyway, it seems that Milty and I left the auction early to take Bloch down and pour a drink into him; on the way back to the car, we met the Daughertys and one or two others starting to walk home. Naturally I offered them a ride. Such have been the hard feelings from time to time between Walt and myself that I was genuinely surprised when he invited us all up to his apartment. But I was glad enough to go--after all, I've feuded with WJD so much and so long that I've developed towards the guy a feeling of camaraderie; who else in fandom could possibly have been such a consistent opponent? Conversation at the Daugherty's centered around the Palmer debacle, with Bloch giving us many interesting sidelights on Ziff-Davis.

Eventually, Milty and I wandered the block down the hill to the ~~foxvaders~~ Mayfair (I can't keep these brothels straight in my own mind) and went up to Speer's bagnio, which he shared with prize-winning houri Charlie Lucas. The discussion, among Rothman, Ashley, Widner, Speer, and Laney, centered largely around the psychological misfits in fandom, the collapse of the NFFF, Dunk, and eventually I inadvertantly tossed the conversation down to the low cultural level of dirty jokes, on which note the gathering broke up.

The transition from abnormal psych to smut was brought on by my elaborating on some ideas I'd developed in a letter to Speer last spring--an intriguing little theory which suggested that Dunk might very likely be partially impotent, and used the four descendents as one of the strongest arguments. Cheer up, Dunk, I didn't really mean it--but I did manage to make it sound plausible, enough so at least to set the brain trusters off on a veritable orgy of dirty jokes; none of which, I hope, were of an autobiographical nature!

FRIDAY, July 5. Andy Anderson started this day off by making the fatal mistake of wandering over here in search of a ride to fannish haunts. He got the ride all right--but he also got put to work. We drove out into the wilds of north Hollywood to pick up Theodore Gottlieb, the star of the coming weird session, and help him corral his props and set them up. The trail led us to the Gateway Theater out on Sunset, a fascinating place cuddled into the side of a hill and reached by climbing down 50 feet of winding stairway. It would make an ideal bachelor apartment and playhouse, with its large main room, surrounding cubicles, and general layout.

We hauled Theodore and his props down to the convention hall, and spent most of the day getting them set up to Theodore's liking. Eventually I managed to work this part of it off on Walt Liebscher, since I wanted to attend the business session of the convention.

Not much need be said about the Friday afternoon session. Though Daugherty was ostensibly in charge, he did not wish to speak from the chair, and consequently turned the gavel over to Russ Hodgkins. Now Russ is a good guy, but he also is one of the more incompetant gavel-wielders of fandom, and the meeting ran clear ~~away~~ from him, while he looked about him helplessly. Most fans are willing to say what they have to say in a reasonably business like way and sit down, but every gathering also manages to have one or two relative outsiders who know nothing whatever of what is going on but who insist on latching on to the floor, and a quibbler or two. Such people should be resolutely squelched, and people prone to chronic paralysis of the gavel are for this reason unsuitable for the chair. (Take a hint, Milty, and have a chairman at Philly who (1) knows parliamentary law and (2) isn't afraid to assert himself to keep a meeting from bogging down into a mess of futile assininites.) Daugherty, who is one of the most able presiding officers I've seen in fandom, should have kept the chair himself, even if it did seem a bit irregular for the chairman to be discussing the business on the floor. I have no doubt a resolution authorising him to do so could have been passed in a fifth of the time that was wasted by unchecked hairsplittings and nonsense.

In the course of this session I lost my temper at arch-quibbler Elmer Perdue and called him an a--hole in a voice which carried over at least half the hall. This is the first equally public opportunity I've had to apologise to Elmer, and I'd like to do so. I have no apology to make to the convention, since an adequate chairman would have kept things well enough in hand so that the temper-raising quibbling would not have happened.

I wish I could remember just who I went to dinner with Friday. I enjoyed the meal and concomitant billfeasting exceedingly, but I'm damned if I can remember now (August 27) just who and what happened.

The evening, of course, was devoted to the weird session, which for me at least was the highlight of the convention, even if I was supposed to be in charge (ouch!) of it. In actuality, this show was arranged and staged by Forrest J Ackerman; all I did was to preside and act as master of ceremonies. Any credit for the evening should go to Ackerman, not to Laney.

Theodore is very likely one of the great actors of our time, and I have little doubt that the chief merit of the Pacificon in years to come will be the fact that it enabled a number of us to "know him when". No one was able to describe the man's routine adequately to me; nothing anyone said prepared me for the tremendous dramatic power,

the chilling terror, the almost unbearable tension, the gargantuan humor, the gripping atmosphere with which this one man--unimposing, squat, towed--was able to invest the stories of his repertoire. Consequently I shall not attempt to describe this portion of the program, except to say that it alone made the convention worthwhile--anything else was just the foam on the beer.

Sam Russell's able talk on the place of fantasy in literature was of such stature that it took a giant like Theodore to overshadow it. Some enterprising fan editor should try to get permission to publish it, as it deserves a much larger audience than the handful of people at the Pacificon. Sam, incidentally, is about my favorite fan speaker. Not only does he know what he is talking about, but his intense enthusiasm for anything he studies is a pleasing contrast to the stunt most of us have of just talking off the tops of our heads. His delivery is a bit too much like that of a college professor, but his voice carries well, and his enunciation is impeccable. He is certainly much more worth listening to than 90% of the so-called erudite speakers I've yet heard.

After the weird session was over, Burbee (making his one appearance of the weekend) and I bought Theodore a beer, and while drinking it were regaled with his dramatic description of the woman he would want for his mistress if he were going to have a mistress. Eventually, Liebscher, Burbee, and I took him home, and headed towards room 1326 for another bull fest with Speer and the boys.

Unfortunately, the word had leaked out that van Vogt would be there, and when we arrived, the room was bulging with around 30 people and would be people. No one could really get in on anything under such conditions, despite Lucas' valiant efforts to act as host in the absence of Speer, Ashley, Widner, and Rothman who had snuck out to discuss the Foundation. I found myself eventually in a discussion with a very sticky gentleman from Portland, RA Hoffman, and a chap who had just arrived after hitch-hiking from Philadelphia. It was fairly fun, but I was glad enough for it to end. I imagine the management of the hotel was too.

SATURDAY, July 6. I had intended to do some record hunting this morning, but the week of consistent 3:30 to 4:00 AM bedtimes was beginning to get me, and I just did make it to the special meeting of the NFFF. The meeting had been intended to make a constructive addition to the organization's work for the year by affording an opportunity for public discussion of NFFF's aims and projects, but thanks to Dunkelberger's insistence that there was a state of emergency, nothing was done but to air all the charges and countercharges, and to underline the complete futility of this disappointing organization.

Actually, the only emergency was in the lard-encased mind of the Visceratonio Vice-roy; there had been some sharp differences of opinion between Dunk and the board of directors, and he had heard garbled rumors concerning the foundation of the Foundation. So Fargo Fatty got the idea that someone was out to sink an axe in the NFFF, declared a state of emergency, made an unfounded attack on me and one or two others, and in general filled the air with flimsy fulminations.

At the meeting, the charges were read, Rustebar picked out the actual truth of the matter from the multiplicate letters of Dunk and the board, I got up and defended myself a bit, asked for a vote of confidence and got it with but one dissenting vote (my old pal Daugherty), and the meeting ended on a note that Dunk was obviously incompetent and irresponsible and that the board should try to save the NFFF from him until 1947, at

which time, it was hoped, a competent president might be elected.

It seemed a pity to waste this meeting with such worthless trivia. The NFFF has done nothing since the first of the year, due largely to the incompetency of its president and the quarrelling in the official family; yet here was a sizeable slice of the membership together for the first time in the group's history. Had the meeting not been choked with Dunk-inspired assininites, something constructive might perhaps have been accomplished, perhaps even a program for the year (something Dunk has consistently refused to present to his board) might have been discussed and put into shape for presentation. As it was, the meeting merely highlighted the futility of the NFFF, the worthlessness of Dunk-elberger, and the fact that there have been some sharp differences of opinion in the past few months. For those who had been unjustly accused by Lard Walter, the meeting was of course worthwhile, since it cleared them unequivocally. But from the point of view of both the NFFF and the Pacificon, the meeting should never have happened. It is highly doubtful in my mind if the NFFF retained any vestiges of prestige whatever among the majority of the convention attendees, and it is certain the afternoon was highly boring to most of those present. Give the thanks to Gargantua, the biggest...in fandom.

I went out to dinner with the sticky gentleman from Portland and Sandy Kadet. The dinner conversation was enjoyable enough, but it was spoiled for both Sandy and myself when the said sticky gentleman made a pass at Sandy on the way out to the convention hall. He was repulsed, of course, but it was an ugly incident, any way you look at it. Sandy is one of the most likeable people I met at the Pacificon, and I am very sorry that he was exposed to such an experience in my car. (Future conventions should warn us little innocents about hitherto unidentified homosexuals. The sticky gentleman from Portland makes it ten. Yes, fellow FAPs, he is the tenth active homosexual who has made his appearance on the local fan scene. Fans are slans.)

Prior to dinner, I just remembered, I hauled a bunch of the collectors out to my house to look over the books I had for sale. Liebscher, Korshak, Kadet, Sonstein, and Sneary came out, and inflated my finances to the extent of some \$35.00 to \$40.00.

Saturday evening, of course, was devoted to the masquerade. I found it a rather dull affair, but some of the people seemed to enjoy it. This affair underlined the inability of fans as a whole to mingle with people and have a good time socially. During the small portion of the evening which was not devoted to planned entertainment, 80% of the people present sat around in the uncomfortable folding chairs doing nothing. There was a small amount of dancing to some thoroughly lousy records (Daugherty had lost his records at the last moment and had been forced to fill in with anything he could grab on five minutes warning), some attempts on the part of various people to entertain the crowd (Rothman doing the best job), and of course the transcription of some horror program. I enjoyed the dancing.

I was especially disgusted with the treatment meted out to Marijane Nuttall. Here she was--tall, red-headed, well-dressed, and definitely good-looking--standing by herself being totally ignored by everyone present. Imagine any other group of a hundred people (including at least 80 unattached young males) doing a stunt like that! Fans are slans. Anyway, I attempted to bridge the gap, and finally turned her over to Everett Evans and party. I hope that among us we were able to dispell partially the horrible impression which must have been made on her by these ~~drift~~ fans.

Following the masquerade, I went through several rapid contortions which enabled me to shake the sticky gentleman from Portland, and went up to Ashley's, where such people as Hart, Widner, AA 19.4, Liebscher, Myrtle, Abby Lu, and perhaps a few others, beat their gums at a great rate for some hours.

SUNDAY, July 7. The afternoon session didn't amount to much. Apart from an atomic scientist, who made a very lucid and worthwhile talk on the good and bad to be expected from the atomic age, the meeting would in anyone's language have been worth skipping. Some character named Donald Day had apparently had nothing better to do with his time than to tabulate the numbers of stories written for the pulp stfzines by each author. Since he listed pseudonyms as separate authors, his findings meant little or nothing from even a statistical point of view, and it was difficult for me to see the point in his reading and discussing his findings for what seemed like a month, but what was probably only about an hour and a half. Had this talk contained anything of criticism, or even mere review, it would have been worthwhile, maybe; but as it was it would take a better man than I to attempt to justify its inclusion on the program. I was glad that Donald Day is not a boogie fan; had he been, he would probably have compared the different versions of Honky Tonk Train by telling us how many notes were in each version!

Following this wasted afternoon, Perdue, Rothman, Widner, and Kadet came over with me to play records for a while. For Kadet, I fear it was a bit boring. Widner, who had recently become interested in jazz, was having a big time sampling (his taste seems to run strongest to Chicago style and Dixieland); Rothman, whose classical leanings were first menaced by Perdue back in 1940 or '41, was busily renewing his acquaintance with Meade Lux Lewis and Earl Hines, while Perdue and I, who like anything that kicks, were just plain enjoying ourselves. So far as I know, this was the only bash of the Pacificon.

I shan't discuss the banquet, except to say that I felt robbed and starved. When I coughed up \$2.50 a plate for a meal, I expect something moderately edible, and this was one of the worst meals I've had in LA. I had been jokingly threatening to try to round up a congenial group, give the banquet a miss, and go out to dinner at a certain Italian eatery I'm very fond of. I wish now I'd tried it.

Speer, Rothman, Kadet, and I skipped the motion picture and went down to the half world to bring out an issue of STEFNEWS a la jam session. It was loads of fun. I knocked myself out trying to write fanzine reviews in Speer's style (which is a damned hard thing to imitate, in case you've never tried it), Milty was writing up the convention in Rothman's style (which is also very difficult work for anyone as tired and sleepy as Milt was at the time), and Speer was benignly dummied an editorial a couple of spaces too narrow. At this point, Andy Anderson hove on the scene to take over some of the work, Milty went home (after having first raided Ashley's sign painting stuff to letter a big "PHILLY IN '47" to hang in the LASFS), and eventually, after showing Kadet and Speer how to run the LASFS mimeograph, I drifted away. The Pacificon was over for me, but some of the drones kept going the following day, while I was at work.

Taken by and large, the convention was enjoyable. The early muff-up on publicity held the attendance very low, but generally speaking, Walt Daugherty did a thoroughly creditable job. He never would have made it without the devoted work of Ackerman, Evans, and Goldstone but then it was a big job. Good as the convention was, though, I doubt if I'll ever attend another one. Quite frankly, I don't believe that it is worth it.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.....

This is going to be a rambling sort of mess, but I've been cussing fandom to myself the past few months, and decided that there was nothing to equal FAPA publication of these musings as a way of straightening them out in my own mind. I trust these remarks will amuse some of you, anger others, perhaps even interest one or two. Many of you are certain to be bored, but then..I'm doing this for my own kicks, not yours.

Back in March 1946, I was an interested and very active fan. I was toying with the idea of dropping ACOLYTE, because it was interfering with other things I wanted to do, but I was not really serious about it. I had little doubt in my own mind but what I'd continue actively in fandom for the rest of my life. Though I was well aware of certain unsavory truths about fandom, I'd managed to push them far enough to the back of my mind that they didn't annoy me in the least.

Then in early April came a major change in my job status. A sudden flareup of labor trouble led to several men quitting their jobs suddenly, and with perhaps an hour's warning I found myself in charge of a department of the shop...temporarily, but with permanency assured if I made good. There was, of course, a coincident and very noticeable uplift of wages. Naturally, I started hitting the ball, working considerable overtime (at time-and-a-half, of course), and giving myself pretty unreservedly to my work; whereas previously I'd coasted through the day so as to have unimpaired faculties for an evening of recreation.

So I started coming home from work too tired for any creative work. I wrote at least twenty letters during April and May which I destroyed without mailing, because they did not seem lucidly enough written for me to mail. Other fannish obligations became somewhat distasteful to me, because I just didn't have what it took to perform them according to my own standards. I was still interested in fandom, I kept telling myself vociferously, but still, somehow, the crifanac didn't get done.

Well, I am one of those unfortunates who cannot long put off facing the facts, once they have hit in the face four or five times. (This may be one of the reasons I always enjoy picking flaws in THE TIMEBINDER.) Anyway, I arrived at a conclusion which I would not have believed a few months previously, and which would have really caused an explosion if someone else had accused me of it. Okay, you guys that I've razzed for chasing that will-o-the-wisp, ego-boo. Let's razz that fellow Laney.

As far as I can figure out, fandom's chief attraction for me was that it furnished me with a quasi-success which somehow compensated for the fact that I was not especially successful otherwise. It must have been, because my interest evaporated too nearly simultaneously with my getting the new job for this to be any coincidence. Just think. Some of you guys who don't like me could have gotten rid of me years ago by putting me in charge of eight punch presses, four lathes, a screw machine, and some other miscellaneous equipment. Aren't you disappointed to find it out at this late date? And, when one compares the actualities of a machine shop with the roseate self-delusions of fandom, didn't I sell out cheap?

But I am disgusted to find out how I kidded myself for a while there. I actually believed all the high-sounding things I used to say about fandom as a hobby, much as some of them may gag me today.

Well, anyway, I very quickly came to the conclusion that any portion of fandom which no longer interested me would be quietly dropped. I disposed of (or have for disposition) all my prozines and most of my fantasy books, keeping for my permanent edification only such items that I liked in spite of their being fantasy, and such few things as had been given me by various fans, and which I prize for the associational value. (Sentimental, isn't he?) ACOLYTE definitely went overboard, though I hope to help the Foundation carry on the name and traditions of this magazine so as not to lose completely the strong circle of contacts which I spent four years building up, and which can mean a lot to the fandom of the future if they are properly handled. (And idealistic too, hoity toity!) Though, if the Foundation doesn't show some signs of life pretty soon, I'm going to refund the subscriptions and wash my hands of the whole thing. The NFFF means even less to me than it once did, but I intend to serve out my term of office conscientiously, since it after all is a definite, if implied, promise to the individuals who elected me. When my term is over, I shall of course resign from the group. Correspondence is a thing of the past. There are a few tried and true old friends with whom I hope to stay in touch, but just writing letters for the sake of answering other letters is something I shall no longer do. Rimel, Baldwin, Wakefield, Warner, Crane-Wesson—a few like that I consider to be among the best friends I have ever had or ever hope to have, and certainly hope that my reaction against letter-writing will not cause me to sever all ties with them. And there are three guys I met casually here in LA, who have never been correspondents to the extent that others have been, but for whom I entertain a high regard: Speer, Rothman, and Widner. But the rest of fandom—well, I love you all dearly, as Everett would say, but I don't want us to take up each other's time except when there is some immediate and specific reason for so doing. Fanzines I still love, so I'm going to try to fix it so I can go on receiving as many as possible; and also hope to continue my column in VAMPIRE if the new #1 face wishes to have it cluttering up the new #1 magazine.

The LASFS contains a large number of egregious drips. It also contains a remarkably varied assortment of people whom I genuinely like for one reason or another (including some who'd astonish you, so I'll name no names); thus I intend to attend the meetings fairly regularly for an indefinite time to come, even though I may perhaps come to use the club more and more as a focal point rather than as an end in itself.

And, for some as yet undetermined reason or reasons, I still like FAPA. While I won't paraphrase a certain hideously smug and horribly corny phrase and say that "there'll always be a FAN-DANGO"; the fact remains that it will probably clutter up the mailings for an indefinite time to come.

Well, now, back to the point, which eluded me up there at the top of the page. I have tried to sum up the advantages and disadvantages I have gained from fandom. Then, using the customary fallacious Laney reasoning (i.e., if something is so for me it is therefore so for you, QWED!) I have come mighty close to deciding that fandom as such is a definite hindrance to its followers, and that they'd be, for the most part, better off if they quit—or rather, if fandom itself ceased to exist, so as to be unable to allure and beckon any longer. (For such heresy, St. Forrest is no doubt even now preparing for me a warm spot in the fannish hell.)

Of course, to make an adequate assay, it is rather necessary to postulate certain aims and desiderata, a building up of a personal philosophy which is quite outside the scope of the present rambling. But I'm going to make one

terse postulation, which of course some of you may not care to accept: namely, that, all things considered, a happier and more successful life can be built if the individual orientates himself to people and actions, rather than to things and contemplation. Or, if you'd like it better this way, a moderate amount of extraversion is preferable to introversion. Or, perhaps most accurately, it is better to be a somatotonic in a somatotonic environment than a cerebrotonic in a somatonic environment, or an ivory castle cerebrotonic oasis in the modern somatotonic civilization. Well, regardless of the terms, this ideal necessitates a certain amount of inherent somatotonia, something that nearly all of us probably possess, whether we admit it or not.

My god. Did I say that postulation was going to be terse?

Well, let's see what I got out of fandom: (This might make more sense if I point out that I rate about a $3/3\frac{1}{2}/4$ temperamentally.)

Definitely, I tend to be introverted. I can go up to anyone, usually, and get acquainted with him/her, but it does require a measurable amount of effort and will-power. It is not the thoughtless natural action of the extreme somatotonic, nor the gushy friendliness to all displayed by strong visderatonia. And if I'm trying to get the person to do something for me, like give me a job or go to a Motel with me, the amount of effort is definitely greater. The net result of all this is that, unless I'm constantly on guard, I'll cultivate a limited circle of friends or bed companions or whatever, take the course of least resistance, and confine myself to them. On the other hand, the more I practise extraverted actions, the easier they are for me, and the less inward hesitations and misgivings there are for me to overcome.

So, here is fandom. A good-sized circle of friends ready-made, or ready for the making (depending upon whether or not one is a book collector). An advantage for the timid, one would say, particularly if he craves people to any extent. Why yes, I imagine that I have had a larger circle of acquaintances since I've been in fandom than at any other time in my life.

On the other hand, this is only a quasi-advantage, and, if one gets very deeply involved with the doings of these people, it may turn out to be a fatal disadvantage. Most of these people are badly orientated towards other people, and a constant association with them is certain to bring out all one's own undesirable cerebrotonia. I would judge that my four years in fandom set me back at ~~least~~ least seven to eight years in personality development. And the insidious part of it is that one gets to liking these people, gets drawn into their little interests and affairs, and he finds himself not only losing interest in other people and actions, but actually getting to the point that he is unable to hold a comfortable conversation with a person not a fan.

Someone is going to say that I'm just showing myself up and not proving anything. Sure, I'm showing that I too am an introvert if I don't fight it constantly, but on the other hand, I'd like to have the name of just one person who has been active in the LASFS, has quit the club and fandom, and has been able to adjust himself to any group of persons who were not, basically, the same type of group, though of course with slightly different interests.

On this one basis, I'd say that the LASFS has consistently done its members more harm than good, at least since I've been in a position to observe the local scene. Persons with introverted tendencies can train themselves to overcome them; they will not make any measurable

progress if they confine themselves to associating with other introverts, particularly when there is a mutual bond of interest which is not only unaccepted but virtually unknown in the macrocosmos.

Fandom, it is said, provides unparalleled opportunities for self-expression. To a certain extent, this is true; on the other hand, I believe that a strong case could be made against the means of self-expression fandom affords its participants. In the first place, the opportunities are too damned easy. Anyone with the price of a 3¢ stamp, an envelope and a sheet of paper, can write something which some fanzine, somewhere will publish. Opportunities for self-expression in real life are beset with obstacles, and it is just too easy to take the supine course of letting one's life drift as it will, and get one's hearing the easy way, through fandom.

Furthermore, fandom does not afford nearly as wide a field for self-expression as does life. The fan can write or publish, he can get up in a LASFS or convention meeting and shoot off his face, he can gnaw the fabric with his bosom buddies. But does fandom furnish analogous opportunities to such modes of self-expression as picking up a desirable woman at a dance (I said desirable woman; I'm not talking about chippies), talking your way out of being arrested for drunken driving, jewing down the asking price on a house that is for sale, borrowing money in an emergency from a comparative stranger, selling a piece of writing to a slick magazine...? The analogous happenings are myriad, certainly, but how about the comparative difficulty? Is there not, when all's said and done, more satisfaction in doing a difficult job well than an easy one?

Of course. Well, all it takes is confidence. And you can build up that confidence in fandom, can't you? Well, can you? Is the competition tough enough to build you up well enough to face life, really face it, on your own two feet with no holds barred? Doesn't confidence come as much from weathering a defeat as from anything else? Certainly the confidence coming from a long and unbroken string of easy victories isn't going to last long when it runs up against its first real defeat. But there is the anodyne! You can always fall right back into fandom, where most blows are soft and cushioned, and where ego boosting victories are a nickle a dozen.

And so it goes. Actually, I've been unable to find a single advantage I've gotten out of fandom, except an increased skill in written self-expression and greater manual dexterity with a typewriter. Of course I've made a lot of valued friends (and not from being a book collector, either!) (or in that sense!) and I hope to hold onto their friendship--but I could have made nearly as many friends of the same type without ever hearing of fandom. And, at the same time, I would have been able to make a much larger number of friends who are, more of an extraverted nature.

Well, I don't seriously expect to cause anyone to drop fandom because of my remarks. At the same time, I don't know of any fans who would not be improved if they'd sit down and think the whole thing out, without fear of facing the most unpleasant facts, and try to assay fandom much as I have done. When it comes right down to it there is a certain inescapable little grain of value in the field; where most of us slip up we seem to find it necessary to absorb a bushel or so of chaff as a chaser.

And I hope that none of you take offense at my castigating you. If you can't take it, just comfort yourself with the thought that I've given myself a much worse beating than I have you. And if you don't have the guts to try to do something about it, don't feel harshly towards me for trying.

MAILING COMMENTS, AND STUFF LIKE THAT THERE

Feeling especially wicked tonight, I should like to comment briefly on an item in this same mailing. For perpetrating such an unethical action, I have no doubt forfeited the good-will of all loyal FAPS. I trust that the editor of the magazine in question will not try to run me out of fandom.

But in any event, I'm not the least bit satisfied with the four page article immediately preceding this one. I dashed it off on the stencils about a month ago, but on reading it over I am struck forcibly by the complete failure to drive home the points, and at the interminable digressions. The points are there, but buried pretty deeply. Of course a revision is in order, but then, it must be borne in mind that Al Ashley is the secret dictator of FAPA, and that he has stated from time to time that I am a bit near. Thus, if I were to tear up four entire stencils it would make Al Ashley out a liar. If I thus showed him ~~in~~ ~~his~~ ~~the~~ ~~light~~ up, he would, no doubt, team up with his fellow dictator, Fargo Batty, and run me out of fandom. So, the ineptnesses of that article are ENTIRELY ASHLEY'S FAULT!

---ooOoo---

When I received the last mailing, I got highly enthused over reviewing it. But I decided that I should wait and get the postmailing first, and in the length of time which elapsed, I somehow lost interest. I do remember a few items with especial pleasure, however: Crane and Wesson's TUT, with its delightfully irreverent approach; the return of FANTASY COMMENTATOR; the results of Speer's archaeological delvings; and most particularly Frank Wilimczuk's AD INTERIM.

He speaks of it as a stop-gap. I hope that he makes AD INTERIM his chief contribution to FAPA; it has a freshness, a sparkle, an independence which make it stand out in any mailing. I'd give almost anything if I could do as good a job as he of being insulting without being nasty about it.

---ooOoo---

Speer suggests that we make certain changes in our mode of reviewing the mailings, that we do our commenting in letters direct to the publisher in question with an implied obligation that he publish them. I object to this procedure for more than one reason. In the first place, the conscientious reviewer is apt to find his work very much increased, since he must not only write out reviews and comments in a number of different letters, but must also stencil and reproduce the comments sent to him. For some of you, this may not even be an objection. But I want to do as little actual work as possible, consistent with remaining active in FAPA.

A more serious objection lies in the fact that often someone's trenchant comments would, for one cause or another, fail to be published. Not only are there many perfectly legitimate reasons why some editor might find himself unable to publish a given batch of comments, but I question that all of us would be trustworthy to publish unflattering comments. Grutch, for example, (and there are others) has a habit in non-FAPA LIGHTS of interjecting so many arguments, objections, and comments into the body of a letter with which he disagrees as to vitiate it completely. And I will never forget the gentleman with the pose of saintly patience who publishes THE TIMEBINDER. I once wrote a letter to this sterling assemblage of stuff in which I commented at some length on the matter of conchies. Everett rejected it because, he said, it was too sarcastic. He submitted to me a dummy of a letter he would be willing to run, a revision of mine. I had not too much objection to his editing out some of the insults, but he also was careful to edit out most of

the points I was attempting to make. The end result was polite, inconsequential, and said precisely nothing, except that I disagreed with Virginia Newton about conscientious objection to military service.

I suggest that the best solution to unwieldy review columns is to ignore resolutely anything that one doesn't feel like commenting on, rather than forcing out some sort of mention just because the magazine happened to be in the mailing. I, at least, would prefer being ignored to being made the recipient of a comment which is obviously being made simply because someone feels it is his bounden duty to give me some ego boo. To hell with it; if I don't publish anything provocative enough to rate a real comment I deserve to be ignored.

I do believe, however, that a series of related comments long enough to be submitted as an article should, as a rule, be submitted to the editor of the magazine which inspired them, provided that he publishes them wholly without revision in the next mailing.

---ooOoo---

Burbee's bit of off-color whimsy in the last issue has a lovely companion piece in the new Warner Brothers' cinema, THE BIG SLEEP. Half-enthusiastically and half-warily, Bacall and Bogart are angling about getting into one another's pants, and the conversation gets on horse racing for several exchanges. It is even better than Burbee. ((All right, Oxnard, there is your ego boo.))

---ooOoo---

In the next issue of FAN-DANGO, FAPA's two demon boogie-woogie men will take a page each to analyse each other's pianistics. Perdue on Liebscher is in my hands, and it's a killer; Liebscher on Perdue has not as yet transpired but I am waiting with bated breath.

Another hoped-for attraction for these hallowed pages is HOW I DID MY BIT: THE OL' FOO IN WARTIME. In this essay, E. Everett Evans will describe in detail the secret work which removed him from the fan scene and the helm of the NFFF for over a year in the early part of the war.

FAN-DANGO is the personalised, composed-on-the-stencil magazine of Francis T. Laney, 1005 West 35th Place, Los Angeles 7, California. It is published by him quarterly for inclusion in the mailings of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. He also likes to exchange it with editors of non-FAPA fanzines; all of FAN-DANGO for all of yours. If you are such an editor, this issue is sent you as an invitation to exchange. Please do so.