

FAANTHISTORICA



Advent of the
Great Ghod Roscoe

W. H. Miller
© 1918

Fanhistorica

is available for contributions
of art, written material, old
fanzines, trades, letters of
comment or \$1.50 (5 for \$5.00).
Published irregularly. © 1980

Editor & Publisher: JoeD Siclari
Mailing address:
4599 NW 5 Ave.
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Table of Contents:

Ticka...Ticka...Ticka...editorial by JoeD.....	4
F. Towner Laney - A Survey by Harry Warner, Jr.,.....	6
Faned's Soliloquy (a filksong) by Karina Girsdansky & JoeD Siclari.....	16
...Some More About Laney by Charles Burbee.....	17
Ah! Sweet Idiocy! (part 2) by F. Towner Laney.....	20
The SF Con (a filksong) by Girsdansky & Siclari.....	39
Fanhysteria (LoColumn).....	40
Laney's a Liar by Sam Moskowitz.....	44
The Immoral Storm by Walt Willis.....	46
Proxyboo, Ltd. by Walt Willis.....	49

Art Credits:

Ross Chamberlain.....cover logo
Stu Shiffman.....cover art
3(logo), 20, 46, 47
Bill Rotsler.....5

Electro-stencils courtesy of Linda
Bushyager.

Fanhistorica Press Publication

August, 1980

TICKA...

TICKA...

TICKA...

Yes. Fanhistorica is back with its almost biennial issue. If I keep this up I'll be able to compete with Lee Hoffman's SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE YEARLY, which is due out any year now.

This lackadaisical schedule so far is the result of an effort to make each issue giant-size and extra-special. It is easy to make high quality issues - I've got the best of 50 years fanac to plunder. Making these large issues is more difficult since it involves not only the exciting part, selecting the contents, but also increasing amounts of the drudge work, typing, mimeoing, and collating. This results in a mini-burnout between each issue. (Read "Faned's Soliloquy" thish. It's not all fictional satire.)

The burnout is increased by two other factors. 1) A zine of this type gets little personal response. LoCs are far between although trades are pretty good. 2) I see new articles that are perfect for Fanhi but who wants to wait two years for publication.

THE TYPER

GOES EVER

ONWARD

BY JOE D.

SICLART

So, the giant plans for Fanhistorica are being shelved. The zine will continue but I am revising the contents and size. Thish was originally going to be double-sized, #3/4, and it may never have come out. All that material will be published but staggered over several separate issues. Future issues will probably have a limit of 40 pages to, hopefully, keep the egoboo on an approximate level with the work. (Small apazines that I pub have gotten as much response as a large Fanhi, and so have been more frequent.)

ARTISTS - PLEASE TAKE NOTE!

***I also hope to vary the layout a little more. All that print bothers me. I'd like some artists to illustrate a few pieces. Please contact me if you ***are willing. Stu Shiffman has been great thish.

I'd like to recommend that you buy WARHOON 28, the special 614 page hardbound Walt Willis issue, from Richard Bergeron, 1 West 72 St., New York, NY 10023 for \$25.00, and well worth the price. One warning: Most of the material is collected columns and reports intended to be read over a period of years. No matter how well written, this type of writing suffers when lumped together and read through. You will be better off to dip into this at anyplace and read and then try again. On page 46 of this Fanhi, I mention my intent to publish "Willis Discovers America". That has been changed because of its inclusion in this giant WARHOON. Other items include all of Willis' trip reports, all the Harp columns, a biography by Harry Warner, Jr., and much more. Buy it!

The enormity of the amount of fanhistory has been bothering me lately. I just completed a 90 page summary history to be published in a reference work by Greenwood Press. For that my research included all the major books and fan projects and about 2-3,000 fanzines. As I was doing this I began to realize how much I must not even be considering besides the amount I saw and decided to ignore. It was relatively easy to do the period from 1930 to 1959 because previous works gave me a solid source of information from which I

could start. However, this research brought something to my attention.

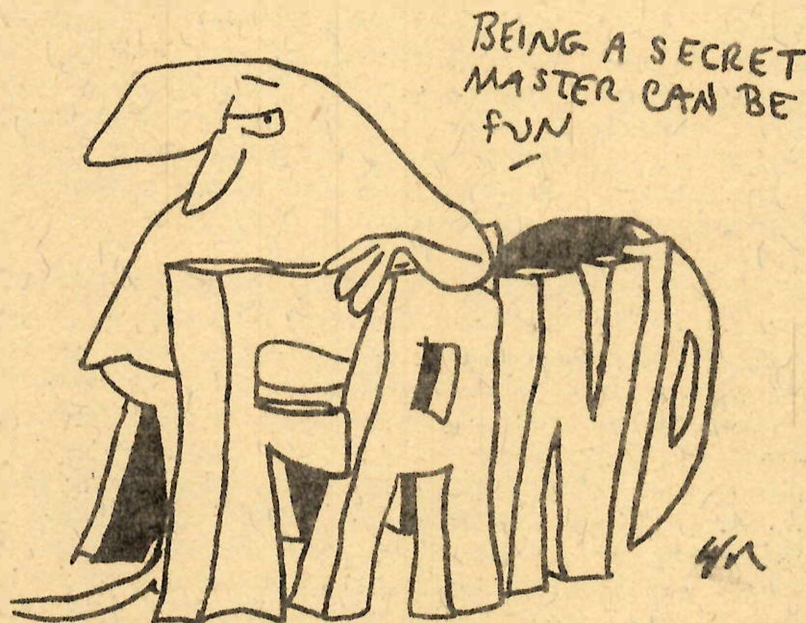
The decade starting with 1960 may actually defy compilation into a comprehensive one volume history by anyone. The Fifties nearly did. And the Sixties was the first real era of fractionalization, major sub-fandoms, and the popularization of in-groups within numerous apas and fan clubs. This period started with a wide fannish unification under the leadership of FANAC which culminated in the 1962 Chicon and the second Willis trip. Almost immediately, fandom plunged into a war over the Boondoggle and splintered.

Those fans that survived licked their wounds in relatively isolated pursuits in the apas or in creating smaller fandoms. This was the gestation and birth periods for APA-F,L,45, etc., and the start or boom of interest in ERB, Tolkien, HPL, REH, comics, fantasy films, and numerous others. A separation across the Atlantic between English-speaking fandom also first became obvious at this time, leading to the vast difference that currently exists in the styles of fanac in the U.S. and in the U.K.

The result is a fandom today that has no commonality except an initial interest in science fiction. And, oftentimes, that interest is totally visual. The closest some fans get to written SF is a Marvel Comics adaptation, if that.

Twenty years, or fifteen, or even ten years ago, a fan could be knowledgeable about, if not participating in, all aspects of the SF field and fandom. I used to try hard to keep up with things. I like reading, films, comics, collecting, fanzines, conventions, filksinging, art and damn near everything else. Now there are sub-fandoms in damn near all of these interest, each as large as fandom was totally not too many years ago. My dedication was strained to breaking, not to mention my budget. And now I wonder if it's worth it.

It's not surprising that there seems to be a growing group dissatisfied with the immensity and impersonalness of fandom as a whole. This smaller group with its more intimate interest and contact through fanzines, apas and at cons is also aware of its past. This group may be the only way to identify the continuity between fandom past, present, and...hopefully, future.



F. TOWNER LANEY-A SURVEY

by Harry Warner, Jr.

Reprinted from THE STORMY PETREL, published by Terry Carr, May, 1959.

The death recently of Francis T. Laney has brought home to me the fact that few fans today realize the multiple talents, inexhaustable interests, and topnotch ranking that Laney possessed during his peak of fannish activity. The fan who has wandered into the field during the past half-dozen years probably knows that Laney was a pioneer in the field of realism in fan writings, left active fandom with unequaled elan through production of AH! SWEET IDIOCY! and figures as a central character in the Burbee mythos. This mental picture of FTL is accurate but too fractional. I suspect that even we oldtimers in fandom have tended to forget the extent of Laney's activities, his leading place in fandom, his fecundity as a publisher and writer, and the sercon aspects of his fanning. If someone were to take a poll to determine the ten most important fans of all time, I would unhesitatingly put FTL in this list, and he wouldn't go into the tenth slot, either.

It is impossible to review even in an article of this length all the facets of Laney the fan eith any great detail. If the excerpts that follow sound choppy, it is the fault of the Boswell, not the Johnson.

Laney's reputation as an iconoclast, as a debunker of the less savory things about Los Angeles fandom, and as a stamp collector in his last years may have helped to cause fandom to forget exactly what he did in fandom. As a fanzine publisher, his creativity can be largely lumped into three divisions: THE ACOLYTE, his subscription fanzine that was largely sercon in nature and for four years a leading example of the fact that fanzines can be literate; FAN-DANGO, largely confined to FAPA, which was still appearing as the 1950's began, years after the suspension of THE ACOLYTE; and the one-shot AH! SWEET IDIOCY!, a volume of fannish memories that was unparalleled at the time as a revelation of things that were more often said than written about fans. I would guess that this publishing activity must have contained a thousand pages, more or less. Add to that the several hundred articles by Laney that appeared in almost every important fanzine of the late 1940's and early 1950's, and a career as a letterhack for fanzine letter sections that must have run to several hundred thousand words in published form. The total is enough to give the shivers to any fan who might undertakethe job of choosing the materials for a memorial anthology.

I don't believe that Laney's type of realistic fan writing is quite understood, even today. It was not the realism that is obtained by peering through a dirty windowpane and applying an ear to a door and describing what has been seen and heard through the eavesdropping tactics. It was instead the realism that you obtain from a very expensive, high-quality mirror set in full view in a fully lighted room, a mirror which magnifies slightly the things that it reflects, bringing into prominence every quirk and small detail that the normal eye might overlook. In a word, it is frankness, as an observer and as a writer. Laney was as scrupulously frank and candid as any person who has ever been in fandom. He said what he thought, sparing neither himself nor his friends nor his enemies in the process. He wasn't to blame for the poor imitations of this kind of realism that resulted: the articles that contain a puke to the paragraph when describing a convention, or the character defamations

that are written in an effort to gain the spotlight that a feud casts upon the participants. The obvious way to illustrate the real Laney method would consist of long quotations from AH! SWEET IDIOCY! However, I'm going to quote from a less accessible, earlier document of less scope, the "Pacificon Diary" that appeared in the 13th issue of FAN-DANGO. This was distributed with the Fall, 1946, FAPA mailing, in the wake of the first real postwar fan convention. In the quotations that follow, I shall not indicate omissions from the original by means of dots, asterisks, or any other signals. These abridgment symbols are distracting to the reader, and unnecessary when the reader understands that condensation is in progress:

Monday, July 1. At the Clinic I discussed at some length with one of the surgeons the matter of sterilization. I don't want any more 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 that is 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 as I had understood: 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 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.

Tuesday, July, 2. The balance of the day, unfortunately, was wasted much in the same way as all days of the week were wasted for most convention attendees. On the way from Central Avenue to Hollywood I dropped by Slan 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 waiting for Tucker and Mari Beth. 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. O 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.

Thursday, July 4. 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. 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. I scared the living Jesus out of Widner by asking him to fill in then, forgetting that he'd not been in enough of the discussions to handle it, but ended up grabbing it off myself. Then I discovered 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.

Friday, July 5. Not much need be said about the Friday afternoon session. Though Daugherty was ostendibly 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 incompetent 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 manages to have one or two relative outsiders who know nothing whatsoever 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, Milt, 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 assinnities.) 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 apologize 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.

Saturday, July 6. 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)

Sunday, July 7. The afternoon session didn't amount to much. 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 sfzines 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 shan't discuss the banquet, except to say that I felt robbed and starved. When I cough 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. Taken by and large, the convention was enjoyable. 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.

The original of this article runs to ten tightly packed pages. However, Laney was perfectly capable of terseness, when there was any need to be succinct. Joe Kennedy published an enormous 1946-47 FANTASY REVIEW, which covered the entire fan and professional science fiction field for a dozen months. Laney got the job of writing a page about the LASFS. I quote from it briefly:

Fan clubs come and fan clubs go, but the LASFS seems to go on forever, bumbling along in the same old rut and never quite getting into the groove. 1946 was a typical year, marked by an average number of quarrels and ruckuses, an occasionally stimulating meeting, and highlighted by the club's arriving on a solid financial basis for the first time in several years. The club maintained an average attendance of 25 to 30 at its weekly meetings, most of which were of a trivial nature. Following the convention, nearly everyone succumbed to an overdose of crifanac and fans. Some of us have still not recovered. But as the club settled back into its pedestrian routine, it was momentarily reurrected by what was for many of us the outstanding event of the year, Samuel D. Russell's July 25 talk on constitutional psychology. It was just an ordinary meeting, except that for once we had a worthwhile meeting presented ably. Also about this time occurred the illstarred picnic known as Liebscher's Folly, which has been so ably and completely written up by Tucker that I can't feel like trying to describe the indescribable. E. Everett Evans found himself elevated to the directorship. Everett's caliber as an organizer and executive is well-known to all fans and the LASFS may be expected to follow in the footsteps of the nfff.

The later Laney turned more and more to the kind of writing that was deadly for its brevity and directness. Early in 1950, he was deeply immersed in a fuss with Ackerman. The 24th issue of FAN-DANGO, distributed in the first FAPA mailing of 1950, contained such musings as:

The Big Pond Fund was a collection started by Anglophiliac Ackerman to import a sample British fan for one of the conventions for what other purpose God and Forry alone know. For Christmas of 1947, FJA gave me a dollar. He knew better than to give it to me directly, so he put it in the Big Pond Fund under my name. The next anti-LASFS article I write, I'm going to sign Ackerman's name to it, and then we'll be even.

The current FAN-TODS gave an interesting parallel quotation arrangement proving whilom fan and pro-author of splendid stories, Henry Andrew Ackerman, was a plagiarist. Ah yes. In the Summer, 1944, ACOLYTE, I too exposed this boy Ackerman, showing that two of his fannishly published stories were lifted, stolen, plagiarised. For over a year, I was kept busy assuring people that this

was NOT Forrest J Ackerman. A few, I am afraid, never did clear
4e in their inmost heart of hearts and one cannot blame them.
After all, he is a man who will do ANYTHING for fandom!

Let me hasten to assure you that Laney's typewriter ribbon was dipped
in acid only occasionally. Some day, when a fan university exists, the
most popular theme for theses may be the influence of Laney on Burbee
and vice versa, as a writer of fannish humor and satire. "Spawn of the
Blue Tiger" by FTL appeared in a tremendous issue of Bill Rotsler's
MASQUE late in 1949 or early in 1950, whose issue number I have been
unable to find. Laney is describing a telephone call from the 13-year-
old Con Pederson:

"But don't you see?" Burbee was getting wrought up. "Don't you
see? In five or six years Buddy will be old enough to be a fan."

"You mean Charles Edward Burbee III, don't you?"

"That's just it!" Burbee Shouted. "In five short years that
clean-limbed, intelligent, oldest son of mine will be dabbling in
advanced semantics, publishing fanzines, going to the LASFS, join-
ing FAPA. And don't laugh, damn you--how old is Sandra?"
I tried to tell him that girls don't become fans--while the ghosts
of Myrtle, Marijane, Trudy, and Pogo and others paraded past my
mind's eye.

Our children, sweet, lovable, demure, fetching--just like their
fathers. These precious innocents of ours, who have indubitably
inherited our broad mental horizons and keen analytical brains.

What ghastly retribution it would be for them to become fans!

Our kids, our sweet lovable kids, would turn out to be serious
constructive fans! I tried to tell Burbee something of all this.

"Naw, it won't be like that, Towner."

We sat and looked at each other for a time.

"I'll tell you how it will be," said Burbee. "There will be this
thirteen year-old boy-wonder, a real brain truster at 12, a dabbler
in advanced semantics at 13, and a good friend of mine. He will
be coming over to my house all the time.

"And, of course, Buddy will be 13 or 14 then, too. And his friends
will ask him, 'Who is that goffy looking kid that keeps coming to
your house all the time?'"

"And Buddy will say, 'Hell, he doesn't come to see me; that's one
of my old man's fuggheaded fan friends!' And apart from wondering,
in their innocent way, what an old man like me can see in a young
boy like that, that's all there'll be to it."

I hope he is right.

The 21st issue of FAN-DANGO, which circulated through the Spring, 1949,
mailing of FAPA, contained more philosophizing about fans in general,
fizzing up as the result of a visit that Laney, his wife Cele, and his
mother had paid to Ackerman on February 13. He was entertaining Eph
Konigsberg, Jean Cox and Con Pederson when the Laney's arrived:

The whole experience terrified me, terrified me and set me to think-
ing. I believe that all of us have a certain inner fuggheadedness,
more or less latent, which lies fallow and does not arise very
much unless especially brought into the open. We live our little
lives and do our little deeds and die our little deaths, and only
rarely do we ascend to any great heights of fuggheadedness.

One of the chief things that brings out our own latent fuggheaded-
ness is protracted association with fuggheads en masse. Let me
hasten to say that none of the four gentlemen who were at 4e's are

basically fuggheads. No, indeed. And that they said many fugg-headed things must emphatically not be held against them, for they are in a sense unwitting victims of their environment. Surely few will fail to agree that the LASFS, the matrix of these four, is one of the twentieth century's great citadels of fugg-headedness.

If we consider a woman apart from her social matrix, we are apt to look somewhat askance at her habit of plastering her hair with fresh cow dung. We might even be a bit dubious about her manure coated skull, hesitate perhaps before we took her to the Palladium. But if we realised that she was a Ubangi woman, that all women of her tribes made cow dung coiffures, we would understand and accept and think no more about it. In an analogous way, any fugg-headed remarks made by these four gentlemen can be explained and forgiven as part of their matrix. Where fuggheadedness is the norm, no one can be blamed for falling into occasional fuggheaded lapses. But constant association with fuggheads inures us. Our threshold of receptivity for fuggheadedness becomes dangerously high. It takes a titanic and overwhelming piece of assininity to rise above the background and strike us. The typical fugghead and his typical fuggheaded remarks just slide right by; we accept him and them; in fact we even top them with fuggheadedness of our own. I'd been away from fans too long, I guess. My fuggheadedness threshold was extremely low--too low to protect me--and I am still quivering inside from the impact. I'll bet that if any one of them were to stay around non-fans exclusively for eight or ten months, then go back and talk with the other three, their reaction would be the same as mine.

So far, I have dealt mainly with the Menkenish Laney, the side of Laney that was to be found in his personalzine for FAPA, FAN-DANGO, and in many of his contributions to other people's fanzines. But the sercon side of Laney appeared in THE ACOLYTE, which was devoted to weird and fantasy literature in general, with much emphasis on H. P. Lovecraft. Toward the end of his fannish career, Laney undoubtedly wished that some specialized kind of catastrophe could wipe out most of this phase of his creativity from fanzine collections throughout the world. But it was a good sort of devoted fannish fervor, which was always literate and grew dull less often than most serious-minded fan writers. "Criteria for Criticism: The Preliminary to a Survey" was the lead article by FTL in the Summer, 1945, issue of THE ACOLYTE. It typifies the soberminded side of Laney. Not one fan in a hundred would guess that he was the author of this typical quotation from his six-page article:

Of perhaps lower artistic stature than genuine satire is unadorned humor. Humor in fantasy, to my mind, is well-nigh the least acceptable of any secondary motivations. This is not to deny the very genuine place in general literature of humor; it is merely to state that so-called fantastic humor seems of questionable value except, perhaps, for occasional bits worked now and then into serious stories. At this moment, no piece of all-out fantastic humor comes to mind which approaches the quality of stories cited as examples elsewhere in this article. Perhaps this is partly due to definition. Thorne Smith, for example, is satiric fantasy throughout, with frequent interludes of all-out slapstick. L. Sprague de Camp is frequently admired as a writer of humorous fantasy, but an analytical reading of such masterpieces as "The Land of Unreason" or "The Incomplete Enchanter" leaves little justification for listing them as other than serious fantasy. It is true that each of these

writers has an exquisite knack of limning fantastically absurd and amusing incidents which abound in all their stories, but these are incidents rather than being the chief components of the stories themselves. John Kendrick Bangs wrote many volumes of humor, both fantastic and mundane, in the 1890's, but the writing style unfortunately dates these tales badly. A. M. Phillips' "The Mislaid Charm" is the best available example of fantasy humor, and it suffers exceedingly by comparison with Thorne Smith, to whom its author owes a great deal. Since it is a blend of Smith's fantastic plots and mundane slapstick incidents without Smith's subtle and delightful satire, it seems rather emasculated by comparison. A whole article might well be devoted to the place of humor in fantasy; perhaps I am dismissing it too curtly. But it seems to me that in a branch of literature devoted to soaring ideals, brilliant imagination, powerful mood creation, prophecy of the future, and similar lofty topics mere laughter for laughter's sake is out of place. Furthermore, it is well-nigh impossible to find any humor, even in fantastic settings, which does not owe its power of amusement solely to mundane factors. For these reasons, I tend to object to fantasy humor, always differentiating between mere humor and genuine satire.

However, THE ACOLYTE normally was easier going than that article, which must have been written too soon after perusal of HPL's famous essay on weird fiction. Most of THE ACOLYTE was devoted to contributions from other writers, but the intense Laney bobbed up in the editorials quite frequently. Hardly a man who is now alive remembers the vendetta that sprang up between Laney and the only other fan who was publishing a really literary fanzine at the time, A. Langley Searles. The Spring, 1945, issue of THE ACOLYTE devoted most of its editorial to an astonishing "retraction" of which the following is typical:

We deeply regret the necessity of devoting further space to the rather futile antagonism existing between co-editor Laney and A. Langley Searles. Searles has complained that Laney's brief account of it in the last ACOLYTE is incomplete, inaccurate, and gives an improper impression to readers who may not be fully cognizant with the full facts on the matter. Searles, in fact, has demanded an amplification and/or retraction on penalty of his bringing suit against us for libel. As stated in the previous editorial, Laney's family obligations preclude his participation in the always expensive folderol of court proceedings. To put it bluntly, Laney does not feel it worthwhile to jeopardize the possible future of his two infant daughters by taking any chances whatever on making big donations to lawyers and their works. If this be cowardice, make the most of it.

Searles points out that Laney did not answer his letter dealing with the possible collaboration on the biblio, and that Laney attacked him in his Fantasy Amateur Press Association Magazine, FAN-DANGO. These facts are true. The editorial was incomplete, however, in that it did not mention that the chief point of difference between Laney and Searles arose over Searles' statement in his FAPA publication to the effect that he would submit to the Postmaster General any FAPA magazine in future mailings which seemed to him illegally pornographic, and therefore unmailable according to P.O. regulations. Searles agrees that a previous official FAPA decision had set up machinery to cope with submissions of this nature, but states that he felt it had been disregarded and that prompt action, rather than words, was therefore demanded.

Laney, in addition to being completely opposed to any censorship

other than that imposed by the good taste of individual FAPA members, felt that Searles' proposed action could be construed in no way other than as that of a would-be informer. The page of his magazine which carried this threat was included in the same envelope as the letter which was wrongly referred to as arrogant and supercilious. Laney admits freely that his extreme anger at this statement caused him to ignore the letter from Searles, caused the attack on Searles in FAN-DANGO, and caused him to announce that he would boycott Searles altogether. Laney wished to point out that the chief bone of contention, this ruckus in FAPA, was left out of the original statement, and, thus toned down, the editorial in #9 ACOLYTE was not a complete statement of fact.

The 14th issue of THE ACOLYTE, published in Spring, 1946, led off its editorial in this fashion:

This, dear readers, is the last issue of THE ACOLYTE as you have known it. It is not, I hope, the end of our association with one another.

I have been considering seriously for more than too years the termination of this magazine. The amount of sheer drudgery connected with its production in a quarterly issue of 200 copies cannot be imagined by one who has not himself undertaken something similar. Each issue involves at least 6400 pages through the mimeograph, at least twelve hours of assembling and wrapping, and at least twelve hours of clerical details in connection with the mailing list. If one has anything else whatever to do, a chore such as publishing THE ACOLYTE quickly becomes unsupportable.

Things have gotten to the point where I have time to solicit the material for a good magazine, or I have time to publish a magazine. I do not have time to do both. And with THE ACOLYTE's two-and-a-half year old momentum gradually petering out, it is evident that something must be done about it.

So, friends, this is the last ACOLYTE.

I have mentioned Laney's extreme prominence in fandom in those years. This might be a good time to pause and look at documentation of that remark. The 1946-47 FANTASY REVIEW, to which I had recourse earlier in this article, included poll results. Laney received 489 points to lead the poll in which "voters were asked to pick the best fan writers and publishers of 1946--to be judged on a basis of quality, not activity." He was described in this manner in that poll report, probably by Joe Kennedy:

Laney retained his crown as the leading fan journalist. Though his excellent literary fanzine, THE ACOLYTE, folded during the course of the year, Laney continued to maintain a reputation as a forceful and convincing fan writer, with critical articles in FANTASY COMMENTATOR and a regular column, "The Fanzine Scope", in VAMPIRE. He carried on his FAPazine, FAN-DANGO, and devoting himself to more stentorian activity, held for a time the post of publications director for Fantasy Foundation.

Moskowitz finished second to him, Searles was third, and Speer fourth. Although THE ACOLYTE was discontinued before the year under consideration was half finished, it finished fifth in the fanzine division of the poll. And this popularity was no flash in the pan for Laney. As late as the February, 1950, issue of THE FANTASY AMATEUR, the FAPA's official organ, we find Laney finishing among the leaders in a bewildering array of classifications. FAN-DANGO was rated third best publication in FAPA for the preceding year--and was rated among the best five FAPA publications by more persons than the publications that finished first and second. Laney was rated fourth among the best fiction writers, third among the article writers, seventh for mailing comments, first for poetry, second for humor, and second as the best FAPA member. In addition, the summary showed that Laney had contributed 141 pages to FAPA during the preceding year, by far the greatest output for any member, and only seven pages fewer than the second and third placers combined.

Laney as a letter-writer deserves an article all to himself. He claimed in print that he had purposefully developed his prose style from terrible beginnings through hard work. However, I never detected major differences between Laney's formal essay style and his letter-writing style, where the difference between an instinctive and an acquired writing technique normally appears. While I am tempted to quote extensively from his letters to me, to prove my point, it will be more consistent with the nature of this article to limit myself to letters that appeared in fanzines. The following extracts from Laney epistles that appeared in various issues of VOICE OF THE IMAGI-NATION, in the mid-1940's, are not breathtaking for the depth of their thought. But they provide an excellent clue to the ease with which Laney wrote taut, clean prose in first-draft form:

It seems to me that Raym's twin desires to "gain as much knowledge as possible... about just what had gone before, and what is happening in the present" and reading the "classics of literature" are rather incompatible. While such works as Pepys' Diary or Cellini's Autobiography will do their bit towards gratifying both aims together, I cannot see the point of reading "classic" American history by Washington Irving or George Bancroft in preference to the modern works of such historians as the Beards, nor the need of wading through the theology of Milton or the musty tediousness of Pope when one can read George Sterling. Or why bother with the chauvinism and archaic social viewpoints of Kipling when there are books around like Strange Fruit or Ulysses, or the Studs Lonigan stuff? Mankind is bound to change, one way or the other, and too many fictional works reflect a momentary state of society that is either gone or on the way out.

If Joel, as he claims, has this "genuine appreciation of fandom", he would do well to consider underlying motives before he rushes into print to attack a person who has always acted towards him with friendliness. My defense of him may have been "utterly vulgar"-- I do not presume to state if it was or not-- but at least it was sincere. He states that he does not need any defense...well? I trust the readers of VOM are familiar with the average Vulcan publication. About all that can be said for the best of them is their burning sincerity; the material as a rule is definitely second-rate, and the presentation is very poor. I felt all along, and still feel, that each of these magazines and editors shows sufficient promise to be worth encouraging. I felt moreover that outbursts such as the Bronson article would tend to drive new editors out of the field, so I felt that it was desirable for some fairly prominent fan editor to take up cudgels in the lads' behalf. For my pains, I get torn apart in print.

FTL left most of fandom with the impression that Los Angeles was Sodom which was trying to live up to the reputation of Gomorrah. However, as long as Burb edited SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES, the golden vein of Burbee material was turned into a precious alloy by the silver of Fran's more benignant writing moods. Burb described how this happened once:

Laney, that old of the fanzines, was the main attraction and elemental force behind this astonishing occurrence at 637 $\frac{1}{2}$ Burbee Street; he dashed around like an amiable lapdog and addressed us in his gently bellowing voice telling everyone just what he could do. Finally he decided there was something he could do, too. As the full comprehension struck him with all its dazing force, he was forced to sit down and slowly assimilate the stupidindous facts. Then, with a brave shrug and a shuddering inhalation, he sat down and went to work, too...

Here is Laney himself, filling a page on what might have been, but probably wasn't, that very occasion:

This is one of those things! Someone conceived the quaint idea of having a gala publishing night here at Shangri-La, a night when the clubroom would be sacred to the holy rites of publishing an issue of that once sterling fanzine, SLA. Well, I'm working. On my immediate lift is that doughty fellow, Prince of Pockerannas, ye olde fooie, Tripoli. He has a harrassed expression on his usually benign pan, for he is attempting to use my 1915 model LCSmith. Also he

is one of the very few people in this room who is actually working. Across from me catty-corner is that newest arrival, Tigrina. She too is working. You can tell that neither EEE nor TNT have been here for long. Me, I have to work. I'm the director and have to set a good example.

Any scientifiictionist this week is undoubtedly filled with thoughts of atomic power. It is as I write this some three days since the first atom bomb dropped on the Nips. I suppose that this discovery was inevitable, but somehow I'd been hoping that it would be deferred for another couple of centuries. The implications of atomic power do not leave me particularly happy.

In the first place, from the releasing of atomic power it is but a comparatively short step to harnessing it. Many difficulties remain to be solved--true enough--but it seems reasonably probable that 25 years from now will see this mighty power available for general use. Will we get the benefit of it? I doubt it. Probably some powerful group will use it to make themselves more powerful; the rest of us can go to hell.

And consider the fun we will have some two decades hence when these bombs start dropping on our cities?

We have a civilizatoon, so-called, which has shown itself to be incapable of even making an equitable distribution and use of steam power. A civilization which curtails its food production while a large proportion of its population is enduring sub-standard conditions of nutriment. A civilization which has its sawmills running three days a week in 1938 while half its populace is living in antiquated hovels and warrens. A civilization which cannot even make suitable use of so relatively simple a thing as an internal combustion engine, as witnessed by the thousands killed and maimed thereby annually.

And now we have atomic power.

Children playing with matches. Cthulhu help us!

This criminally brief summary of Laneyana has left untouched a major area of his output: the writing that had nothing to do with fantasy of fandom (and for lack of space, I've always passed over the bibliographical work that he did during his Lovecraft kick). Most of the writing on mundane subjects that reached fandom appeared via FAPA. It is startling to look over old FAM-DANGOs, and find in them definitive articles on subjects which were allegedly new when they bobbed up in this or that FAPA publication just the other day. Sailing ships, for instance: nine years ago, FTL published in "Larboard Your Helm, Burbee!" a three-page article that provides more information about sailing ships than you would normally acquire by reading a couple of reference works. Naval history was one of Laney's eddless collection of interests. It's easy to see that he was writing from knowledge, not from the pages of this or that encyclopedia, when he goes on like this:

I also see I neglected to mention yards, the transverse timbers on which the sails are spread. Each yard takes the name of its sail. And at the tops of the masts proper (i.e., just below the joint between the masts and the topmasts) are the tops, large platforms on which we station the Marines to fire muskets at the enemy's decks.

The frigate has one gun-deck. This gives her two rows of guns. (Well, after all, a ship is divided into stories, or tiers, or decks. In counting the decks: of a warship, the spar deck doesn't count.) The gundeck is a long, flat room, running the length of the ship without transverse compartmentation, and divided longitudinally only by beams, the masts, and other supports and fixtures.

It has been a hot summer in Hagerstown. I spent a couple of hours in a stifling attic

in my home, getting myself smudged on every accessible surface with the grime and dust of two decades, while hunting through disordered fanzines for the raw material of this article. The repression that was required to prevent this searching period from stretching into dozens of hours must have left permanent scars on my subconscious, because the temptation was almost unbearable, to halt the hunt time and again in order to read this or that long-forgotten fanzine or to go through the contents of letters from people who were once favorite correspondents. I strained my back once, trying to lift out a pile of fanzines without moving other piles far enough to get a proper grip on the bundle that I wanted. While dancing on one leg in an effort to relieve the ache, I suddenly realized how marvelously my undertaking was fulfilling Laney's convictions about the incurable gyrations of fans. Two vases that had somehow squeezed into the attic were buzzing around me when I finally decided that I'd done enough researching, and as I raced them to the safety of the lower regions of the house, I suspected that the spirit of Laney might be chortling somewhere. If so, I'm thankful that I've made him happy.

-- Harry Warner, Jr., 1958.

A folksong:

FANED'S SOLILOQUY

By Karina Girsdansky & Joe D Siclari. Tune: "Sunrise, Sunset" from Fiddler On the Roof.

Is this that little zine I started?
This hundred page, four-color thing?
It's all so diff'rent, I can't figure,
Why I cling?
When did it get a color cover?
When did it stop being a ball?
Wasn't it yesterday when it was small?

Pub morn, pub night,
Pub noon, pub night,
Swiftly flow the days.
Stencils turn overnight to paste-ups,
Increasing even as I gaze.
Pub morn, pub night,
Pub noon, pub night,
Swiftly type the keys.
One issue following another,
Laden with articles and fees.

What words of wisdom can I give them,
These faneds who will hear my song?
How they must learn from Geis and Porter, *
Wrong by wrong.
They start so innocent and helpless,
Just like a neofan should be,
Striving for fan awards, before they see.

*Alternate line if you are Geis or Porter:
That they may learn from me and my zine,

Pub morn, pub night,
Pub noon, pub night,
Swiftly type the keys.
One issue following another,
Laden with articles and fees.

Reprinted from a one-shot,
THE BEST LOINS ARE ON THE FLOOR,
edited by Dave Locke for FAPA, February, 1976,

...Some More About Laney...
by
Charles Burbee

((Burbee probably knew Laney better than anyone else in fandom. They managed to get along better together than Laney did with anyone else. They shared a decided tendency to stick pins into those they thought too self-righteous or fuggheaded. During Burb's editorial reign over SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES (from May, 1944 to November, 1947 except for three issues), the fanzine reached one of its more enjoyable and interesting peaks. Much of SHAGGY's personality came from Burbee's humorous but inciteful looks at LA fandom. Burb was thrown out of his editorship over some controversy stemming from some Laney articles on homosexuals, of course. Perhaps Burbee's most famous contribution to fannish myths, after his discovery of sex of course, was his continual defamation of Al Ashley. JoeD))

I had my memory jogged the other day by a letter from some new fan who was reprinting or about to reprint Laney's delightful booklet, AH! SWEET IDIOCY!, which everybody except me renders as ASI.

I don't know how many times that darned Laney work has been reprinted. It has probably set a record for fannish reprints, and, considering its length, that is quite a formidable record.

Laney and I worked in the same machine shop in Los Angeles in the late Forties and early Fifties. Laney was a punch press leadman in those days. It suddenly occurred to me a few moments ago that since I was running a lathe about five feet from the nearest punch press, I might have had Laney for a leadman. My God, Laney for leadman? A sincere acolyte of H. P. Lovecraft for a leadman?

Well, as I said, I had my memory jogged by this fella's letter, and little snippets of memories about Laney and his fulfilled desire kept popping into my head during the evening. I wrote some of them down and I will string them together here for a while, and pretty soon I will have something I can call an article.

I have a fine, clear memory of Laney standing there (with a huge punch press in the background) saying something like: "I'm going to write my memoirs. My fan memoirs."

He pronounced it "meem-wahrs". He went on to explain a little about the project but I am afraid I wasn't listening very hard. I didn't really think he would do it. I thought it would always remain an unfulfilled desire. You see, at that time, Laney was pursuing the lady Cele, who was to become his third wife, and when Laney--who longed for a cologne called STUD--pursued women he did it with the same unrelenting zeal and boundless energy that had made his ACOLYTE the Number One Fanzine in the whole wide world.

A few years later, to give an example of Laney in prrsuit of woman, I went over to his house in Alhambra one evening. This was after Cele had died, and Laney was again on the prowl. His mother was keeping house for him. I forget exactly for what several purposes I was visiting him, but one of them was to play for him my newly-made wire-recording. It was a playlet titled THE FIRST SPACESHIP and concerned itself with a ship manned only by homosexuals. It was obscene and kind of clever and Laney fell off his chair two or three times during the playing of it. Later, his mother confided: "You know, this is the first time Francis has been home in 42 nights. He just comes home from work, cats, washes up, and disappears for the evening. You're the only person in the world who could make him stop chasing for one night."

It was at this same time he had put an ad in a local paper, THE DAILY NEWS, now defunct. The ad had been placed in the "Personals" column, and that column was fine reading each day. In it people advertised in various manners for sex. Sometimes the language

was rather bold for the Fifties. A lot of ads were amusing, such as the one that appeared now and then from a man who was seeking "a heavy-set, domineering Spanish lady." Another one I liked was from a man who claimed to be "a wounded hero since the age of five."

Laney's ad, couched in fluent English developed through the writing of many fannish articles, drew a fair number of replies. As I recall, the paper printed no names or addresses or phone numbers. You had to place your ad in person. They assigned you a Box number, care of the paper. Then you had to show up in person and pick up your letters. You took it from there. It was convenient for Laney to run down during his lunch hour; the newspaper offices were only five blocks away.

Each morning he gave me the rundown on what had happened the night before, as he followed up each lead. As one might surmise, all of the women were of a special kind. Most of them were dogs. But Laney, in rut, didn't give a damn. He was getting some offhand banging and that was all that mattered.

When the response from his first ad tailed off, he put in another ad, even more nicely phrased. Then, to his surprise, he began pulling in strong results from his original ad. We discussed this, and came to some quite logical conclusion about it. I wonder what conclusion that was?

Out of the second ad he got a fascinating young lady five feet tall who outclassed any minks he'd met up to that time. He called her "my little watch-charm." She declared that every normal woman had to have at least five orgasms a day to keep her mind clear.

Laney was permitted to clear her mind twice a week. Another boyfriend, and ex-husbands, and likeable passersby cleared her mind the rest of the time. Sometimes, when she experienced a shortage of men, she mounted the bathtub faucet, though she claimed that made her sore,

She it was who loved to sixty-nine in an overstuffed chair.

When Laney told me about this, I was puzzled. Laney was six feet two inches tall and was sixty-nining with a five foot woman in an overstuffed chair, yet? I pressed him for details. He drew me a picture, giving me a rather charming chalk-talk the while, but I still couldn't make out the details. I was vitally interested. After all, I was six feet tall and I might some day meet a five-foot lady who owned an overstuffed chair.

Oh, the meem-wahrs. Have I been digressing?

Each morning, at work, Laney would say, "Well! Last night I cut three more stencils on my meem-wahrs."

He kept me posted on the total. When it reached sixty pages I began to regard him with awe. After he passed page one hundred I could only shake my head and wonder if he would ever stop.

He did. Quite suddenly. The serious Laney student will note that the last few pages are in the nature of a quick let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here wrap-up. One has the feeling that he left out a lot. One would be correct.

I still wonder how he had the energy to come home after an evening of riotous living and sit down and cut stencils. I remember, too, I once asked him why he didn't rough draft first and then revise and edit as he cut stencils. That was the way I wrote fan stuff, and still is, for that matter.

He rejected the idea flatly. It is just as well he did. I think if he'd ever roughed

it out, he'd have run out of steam. He never would've cut a stencil. Then he'd have gone ahead and died and the rough draft would have stayed in the clutches of his fourth wife, Edith. She was a real witch to deal with. She wouldn't even give me the extra copies of AH! SWEET IDIOCY! that Laney had told her to give me. He was in Chicago at the time, far from the madding creditors, and she was still in Altadena.

He had met her as a result of his second ad in the paper. I think I mentioned that most of the women he met that way were dogs. This woman had the gall to sit there in my living room and tell me and my wife that she had met Laney in Chicago in 1946 when they both worked for the Allied Radio Company there. My wife and I just sat there, unable to comment due to a phenomenon known as common courtesy, because we knew full well that he was living with second wife Jackie in Los Angeles and was working with me in a small machine shop in the same city. Or was he moonlighting in Chi?

Now, to publish this major work of his, Laney traded his copy of The Outsider and Others to Al Ashley for Al's mimeograph. So, each morning I could ask him how his publishing was coming and he'd shake his head and mutter something about not being able to get that damned thing running right. I wondered about this. Laney was fairly handy with tools and machines. So I quizzed Al Ashley about the mimeograph.

Al claimed that Laney didn't have the mechanical know-how to run the machine, but further questioning brought out the not-too-amazing fact that Al Ashley couldn't run the machine worth a damn himself. Oh, he didn't say so in so many words, but as he spoke, it became evident that he thought it quite acceptable to spoil a ream of paper while he was running off a medium-size FAPazine. It seemed that when you wanted 100 copies of something, you ran off 150 copies, for starters, and sorted out the good ones. Then you ran some more, if needed.

When I passed this information on to Laney he was appalled. First, his frugal nature, which caused him to cram as many single-spaced lines per page as he could, cried out against such useless and stupid waste. Second, his horse-trading nature, on which he prided himself, had showed up second-best to Al Ashley, for whom Laney had not much regard.

So he came to me and asked if I would let him use my mimeo. I kiddingly balked at first, till a look of alarm began to creep into his otherwise benign eyes. Cut stencils were sacred to Laney. He often said to me: "Cut stencils are sacred."

Of course I agreed to help run off his magnum opus, and because my mimeo was conveniently situated in my living room and was in such fine fettle that it scarcely ever skipped a sheet or shot a double, we got that stack of 130 stencils run in short order.

A couple of times, during the smoothly running mimeography, Laney cursed Al Ashley and his rotten mimeo. But about the third time he reviled poor old Al, I said: "But, Fran, Al is such a sincere acolyte of Stanley G. Weinbaum, how could he do anything underhanded."

I noted, with a kind of pleasure, that Laney had listed me in the credits as co-publisher. I thought it darned nice of him to do that. I thought it was a nice friendly gesture.

A month or two after the meem-wahrs were distributed, he explained the friendly gesture to me. "I put your name down," he said, "so that if anyone wanted to sue me, they'd think twice about taking on both of us." --Charles Burbee, Jan. 18, 1976

((Burb's memory jog mentioned in the first paragraph was probably when my then co-editor, Gary Farber, wrote to him mentioning that we were going to reprint ASI and asking him if he would write something new about Laney. Well, he did a new piece but I still had to reprint it. This does give a slightly DIFFERENT view of Laney than did Harry Warner's article. And this is only the second complete reprint of ASI.))



Chapter 5: Utopia in Shangri-La

It was on November 4, 1943, that I made my first personal contact with the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, and I encountered the club at one of its all-time highs both in membership and activity. Nevertheless, as will shortly appear, the LASFS left a great deal to be desired. Even on that night, certain features of the group left me with a slightly unpleasant taste in my mouth. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

We drove up at about 6:30, and found the clubroom in the sole possession of a thirty-ish looking man considerably inclined to embonpoint. It turned out to be Joquel, the one man in fandom whose normal speaking voice can drown out Andy Anderson. He greeted us cordially, explained that a large number of the members were even then about to arrive from their dinner at a nearby cafe, and we commenced a desultory conversation. Aaron very shortly left to find a room, and I began roaming around the room, examining the originals, which were the first I had seen except for the ones at Smith's.

Then as now, the LASFS occupied the 14x16 storeroom in the Wellman Apartments, with a street entrance at 637½ South Bixel. The room is a blend of pigsty and monk's cell. When I first saw it, it was even worse than it is now, since many of the members were using the place as an office, and their personal papers and other impedimenta were strewn around in careless abandon. There was an austere and extremely dirty couch in one corner, and a rickety old square table covered with typewriters and loose papers. A large mimeograph sat on an upended fibre barrel, and another similar barrel was packed to the bursting point with wastepaper. A couple or three ramshackle home-made bookcases filled with tattered magazines, and 25 or 30 uncomfortable folding chairs comprised the remainder of the furnishings. The shortcomings of the room and contents were made even more apparent by the pitiless glare of six or eight naked light bulbs set in sockets around the wall. The floor was a welter of cigarette butts and other trash, not the least of which was the filthiest and most badly worn out rug I have ever seen.

I had of course followed with great interest the accounts in SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES and elsewhere of the LASFS and its new clubroom, but the Utopian atmosphere of these accounts certainly had not prepared me for such a hole. I had imagined that a clubroom such as this would have indirect lights (probably from a couple of cheap floorlamps), a number of second-hand but comfortable easy chairs and davenports, desks and/or tables, an old radio, facilities for drinks soft and otherwise, a neatly filed library, and some sort of workroom for mimeographing. Above all, I had assumed that the place would be reasonably clean, and most certainly designed for comfortable sitting and talking, reading, and other activities.

My disappointment must have been fairly obvious, for Joquel explained that the club was still uncleared from a halloween party held the preceding Saturday. Our conversation had nearly died out when the place was suddenly invaded by a horde of noisy people. I cannot remember exactly who came first, or indeed much of anything about the next few minutes except that a whirling dervish which I later learned was named Walter J. Daugherty commenced laying about him with a broom as one possessed, and a quietly smiling chap who I recognised from his pictures as Phil Bronson told me not to mind, that the fellow frequently suffered from these outbreaks of frenetic energy when he had or thought he had an audience.

The next half hour was pretty much of a madhouse; I met 25 or more people, tried to remember who all of them were; and at the same time was quite astonished that most of them seemed familiar with THE ACOLYTE. (At the time Freehafer, Bronson, Ackerman, and Burbee were the only Fangelenos on the mailing list--and none of the 1943 members had ever heard of Burbee, who was carrying on a one-man fandom of his own.) I took it for granted that I was being introduced to everyone, not learning until later that only known fans would be greeted by these people by anything more cordial than complete non-recognition.

Eventually the meeting came to order, and I commenced giving away to complete perplexity. Yerke, who has a metal-on-metal voice anyway, read a new constitution which seemed chiefly aimed at keeping out new members--I didn't know whether to go or stay, but Phil pooh-poohed my wonderment and said it was all aimed at Degler. It went on and on and on, a document capable of handling a gigantic group, and subsequent arguments and quarrels about the wording took nearly as long as the original reading. Then Paul Freehafer read a resignation from his post as director effective two weeks from that night. Then, as though I had not already tried every possible contortion trying to sit comfortably on a club chair, Walter J. Daugherty was struck by one of his famous projects. He must have spent at least three-quarters of an hour remodelling the clubroom, building lockers and other furniture. As he talked, he ran about the room like one possessed, waving his arms, carpentering and hammering in frenetic blind pantomime, climbing over people and moving them out of the way of his mad girations, and building up to an impassioned stark height of exstacy. An authorization for him to proceed with an initial appropriation of \$25.00 was quickly passed by the club, but so far as I know nothing more ever came of this. Just another Daugherty project.

Finally, after about two and a half hours of the hardest sitting one can imagine, the meeting adjourned. I was ready to give the club a brush-off, but in the post-meeting milling around and talking I shortly realised that many of these people were well worth knowing. I hesitated, and hesitating, was lost.

Eventually, Aaron wandered back, remarked that he'd gotten a room down the street, and commenced talking to Freehafer and me. He asked if there was any good jazz nearby, and Paul mentioned that Wingy Mannone was playing just down the street and wouldn't we like to go? We would, and so would Walter J. Daugherty. So the four of us piled into Paul's 1939 Plymouth coupe and drove the seven or eight blocks to the Club Babalu, where Wingy played all that winter, and where I spent a vast amount of time listening to him. Daugherty, on getting him away from an audience, seemed like a swell fellow; Freehafer was as genial a host as one could ask for; and all four of us had a very good time. Daugherty invited me to stay with him until I got settled, but I'd accepted Freehafer's

invitation before I even left Clarkston, so I declined with thanks.

When Paul and I finally got to the apartment, a tiny one-room-and-kitchenette affair, I asked him if the club was always that bad, and he mentioned its flaws that had not already been apparent to me, but pointed out that there were in his opinion enough redeeming features to counteract them. I then asked why he had resigned as director, and he explained that it was due to his health. The conversation went on for some time, and I decided that the club was probably worth belonging to after all, since I could use the mimeograph (an automatic one), and could if need be store a good deal of my stuff in the clubroom. This in addition to getting acquainted with some of the more worthwhile members, of which Freehafer told me there were several.

Before telling of the events of LASFS life in late 1943 and early 1944, perhaps I should describe the membership of the society at that time. These vignettes of course are derived from my total knowledge of the person in question, and do not pretend to be first meeting impressions.

The director, the late Paul Freehafer, was one of the most sunny natures I've ever encountered. His health was atrocious, and his personal appearance showed it, but though doomed from childhood to a very short life, he had resolved to make the best of it and live it fully. In this he was certainly successful. A graduate of Cal-Tech, he was making \$300 a month doing research chemistry in connection with rocket fuels; spending the money entertaining a fairly wide circle of congenial friends and surrounding himself with the appurtenances of a cultured life. Paul's chief recreational interests centered around music and the arts; he was a constant attender of the symphony, the ballet, the opera, the better class of plays--and had the most comprehensive record collection I have ever seen (comprising, I would judge, at least 500 albums). His books were of amazing variety, and were no mere facade, as a few evenings with him would abundantly show. Paul was one of the most erudite persons I have ever known, and moreover was completely without pedantry or intellectual snobbery. His interest in fantasy was still strong, though he had branched far afield from this major interest of his adolescence. I believe that his reason for remaining active in the LASFS was threefold: his interest and friendship with such members as Yerke, Hoffman, Bronson, Russell, and Ackerman; a certain nostalgic attachment for the group with which he found his first friendships when he moved from Idaho to California to attend Cal-Tech; and a feeling that some day the club might realise its vast potentialities. Certainly one is justified in wondering why such a man as Freehafer, head and shoulders above the majority of the members, should elect to waste his time with such a group. As a person, Paul was universally liked, admired, and respected. He was not at all good-looking, but his quick, shy smile was most engaging and infectious; his quiet wit was sharp and brilliant without being barbed, and his general friendliness and good nature made him the sort of person everyone could not help but like.

The secretary of the LASFS in late 1943 was the redoubtable T. Bruce Yerke. Bruce is one of the most brilliant alumni fandom can claim, and it is certain that both fandom and the LASFS were heavy losers when Yerke moved on to greener pastures. He was and is a difficult person, hot and quick of temper, and possessed of a savage sarcasm and impatience with mediocrity; this did not endear him to the more muddle-headed members of the society. Yerke is rather unique in that he grew up in fandom, discovering Ackerman and through him the club when he was only 13 years old. He promptly went overboard for the idea, and although his interest in fantasy had pretty much faded out by the time he was 16, he found sufficient stimulation both in the affairs of the club itself and in the expanding minds of a few of the members to warrant his continuing activity. At the time I met him, Bruce had grown completely beyond most of the members and knew it; yet the habits of nearly seven years kept him spending a sizeable hunk of his spare time around the club and its members. He saw the need of breaking loose, yet found this very difficult to do; and the peculiarly restricted nature of his early growing up (i.e. in fandom) had not only left him with some amazing blind spots but made the exact means of breaking away rather unclear to him. He had a strong tendency to try by sheer brute

force to drag the unwilling fans up to his own intellectual level, and upon meeting failure was both perplexed and angry. Bruce was not quite 21 when I met him, but looked to be at least 35--short, stocky, and about half bald-headed. Many of the members tended to regard him with awe not unmixed with terror, due to his often outrageous practical jokes (as when he wrapped the sleeping Bronson in old newspapers and set fire to them), his boisterous and sometimes boorish manners, his pronounced intolerance, the brutality of his flaying tongue, and the split second reactions of an extraordinarily incisive and brilliant mind. I regarded Yerke as an extremely desirable and stimulating associate, whose chief fault was a tendency towards intellectual snobbery and an occasional bit of bluffing as to the extent of his attainments, particularly in the languages. However, it is so difficult to judge Bruce as a young man in his early 20's, since both his looks and actions are those of a man 15 or 20 years older, and many of his more annoying actions and traits are perfectly understandable and acceptable if one can remember that the perpetrator is not 35 to 40 years old as he usually seems to be.

Myrtle R. Douglas, then known as Morojo, was the club's treasurer. She is very short, and in my opinion, very pretty. Since she herself has listed it publicly, I'll mention in passing that she is much older than most of the club members, having been born in 1904. She has led a fairly tough life, has been married and divorced twice, and the scramble of raising a strapping son and supporting herself has left her singularly without the ability to enjoy herself freely and casually, though others enjoy her company tremendously. Her chief interest in the club was her interest with Forrest J Ackerman, with whom she kept company for several years, and I hope he fully realises the extent of her services to him--keeping the club on a smooth financial keel throughout most of her membership, doing most of the drudgery of VOM and other Ackerman projects, and keeping the wolves from yapping about his heels in a score of other ways. Myrtle has an inquiring mind which is somewhat hampered by a too conventional education, and thus is sometimes a sucker for something the least bit on the crackpot side. She is, however, an accomplished and stimulating conversationalist, and is well worth knowing from the intellectual point of view. And beneath that occasionally austere facade, there is one of the most kind hearted persons in Los Angeles, as plenty of club members past and present could testify. She is the first person most of the older members think of when they are in trouble, and in this selfish civilization people like that are rare.

Forrest J Ackerman is a household name in fandom, but you have to live around the LASFS quite a lot to know him, really know him. In connection with someone else, Don Wollheim once spoke of the "necessary monomaniac", and that is Forry. He has made an adjustment to life which postulates that fandom is life, and with one or two very minor lapses has lived that life from about 1930 until the present time. Well, it's his life, and probably from the want of anything to contrast it with he seems to derive a reasonable amount of satisfaction therefrom. His interests are excessively narrow; being limited to stf and fantasy, fandom, stf and fantasy, and fandom, with a rather slight side-interest in the motion picture. He also has a fabulous collection of photos of nude women, and enlargements of certain portions thereof. But I believe I'm safe in saying that 95% of Ackerman's interest in life--vocational and avocational--centers around stf, fantasy and fandom. He loves to be with fans, has certain rather closely defined standards which he feels fans should live up to, and is rather deeply hurt when they fail to live up to this code. He is not always successful in hiding his feelings along this line. He imagines himself to be a poor speaker in public, not realising how well he can talk to an informal group; this of course makes him a poor speaker in open meetings, particularly if the subject is somewhat controversial. Thus he has developed a technique of seldom showing his true feelings at the time a question comes up, and usually going along with the majority. His true feelings often do not come to light for months. One would not think offhand that such a person could be a leader, but nevertheless, Forry is the true leader of the LASFS and don't let anyone tell you differently. Forry's leadership might be termed the domineering of extreme passivity--it is a far cry from the tactics of the outspoken and aggressive Yerke or the sly connivings and subtle sophistries of an

Ashley--but it has moulded the LASFS almost from its inception, and no doubt will continue to do so. In the first place, Forry has a most winning personality, and always commands a block of votes among the less politically minded members. Then it must be remembered that he has missed not more than a half dozen meetings in eleven years, while at least 300 people have been in and out of the club during that time. His star is now and then on the wane, when some particularly aggressive director and his supporters get in the saddle, but though perhaps momentarily vexed he knows that they will move on sooner or later, that the things they have done or tried to do will soon be as though never thought of, and that Forry's Club, the LASFS, will be back on the same plodding path, with the same mores and traditions, that he has more or less unconsciously set for it. Whatever the reason for his ascendancy, it is an eyeopener to compare the club with Ackerman, and see how much they are alike.

Right here I'd like to interject the remark that I like Forrest J Ackerman immensely. I may have been harsh with him in that last paragraph, and I may get rough with him again before I'm through with these memoirs, but I don't want him or anyone else to feel that I have any feeling towards him other than that of friendship. The fact that so hypercritical a person as myself can like a man with whom so much is wrong should be a pretty strong indication that this man has a tremendous number of good features in order to counteract the bad ones. I do think Ackerman would be, once he was over the hump of making such a drastic change, a far happier man if he quit fandom to quite an extent and lived a more mundane life. I think that there is an awful lot of man being squandered on fandom out there at 236 $\frac{1}{2}$. But it is his life and I recognise his right to use it as he sees fit, even if my attempt at realistic and factual reporting may treat it roughly now and then.

Phil Bronson was one of the club's leading members back in 1943. He was still publishing the #1 fanzine, THE FANTASITE, was active in FAAPA, and had been a leading light in the MFS. He had also been one of my favorite correspondents, so I was extremely anxious to get personally acquainted with him. Phil in person was somewhat of a disappointment, though this is partly due to the fact that I probably had expected too much. He was a lazy cuss, full of a sort of ennui and welt-schmerz which made him a most aggravating companion for me with my violent runnings in circles. He had also an irritating tendency towards intellectual snobbery, and a tendency to imitate Yerke in ways in which he simply did not have the depth to carry it off successfully. He suffered somewhat from too cloistered and fannish an adolescence, first in the MFS and then here. On the other hand, Phil was generally light-hearted and agreeable, witty, and easy to get along with. He was good looking, well groomed, and was able to go places in public without committing any of the gaucheries to which so many fans are prone. By and large, he was a good man, and I have hated to see him drift out of my ken.

Walter J. Daugherty is a swell guy who has a very few faults which taken together have made him my chief sparring partner all through the time I've been around the LASFS. In the first place, Walt takes himself very seriously, and has great difficulty in taking criticism. He is also one of the few really aggressive members of the society, and is not noted for tact nearly so much as he is for going off the handle over something of minor import. He has a peculiarly constituted nervous system in which nearly all the synapses discharge at once with an effect exhausting to both Walt and his associates. (This manifests itself most notably in the Daugherty projects, in which some usually good idea is built up and up and up and up into a glowing cloud structure. Usually nearly all of the available energy is discharged thru the speech centers, and nothing more comes of it.) These projects make Walt a wearing member to have around; he is aggressive enough to get and keep the floor for long periods of time; one knows from past experience that nothing much is likely to come of them; yet the originator is so thin-skinned that he is prone to take even mild suggestoons as personally antagonistic opposition, and we are off but good. An illuminating side-light on Daugherty is the fact that I found that the only way to be sure of killing off a Daugherty project quickly was to let it die out from lack of opposition. Daugherty is really pretty much out of place in fandom, having but very

shallow intellectual interests and but a comparatively slight interest in fantasy, but nevertheless found enough satisfaction in the LASFS to stick around it for nearly seven years. On the credit side, he is definitely fun on a mundane party (not a club party where he tends to crowd the introverts out of the picture and put on a one man show), is good looking despite a growing bald spot and bad pock-marks, and is a veritable demon with the ladies. He tops it off by being easily the best ballroom dancer I have ever seen in action, even if he does like to show off his medals and loving cups. He and I have feuded with great vigor for years; I understand that he hates my guts something fierce; but I regret to say that I cannot return this favor. I just find myself opposed to most of the things he wants to do in fandom, and through a penchant for shooting off my mouth have often drifted into spearheading the anti-Daugherty faction.

Lora Crozetti was a gal somewhat past the first bloom of youthful beauty who found the club a part-time outlet while her husband was overseas. She was too sensitive herself to be as outspoken as she often was, and by no means was an easy person to get along with. Nevertheless, she was a spasmodically active member who could perhaps have been of considerable value to the club had any sizeable number of the members made any effort whatsoever to make her stay with us pleasant. As it was, Crozetti-baiting proved a major sport around the LASFS; I'm not surprised she is no longer in the club.

Sophie van Doorn and Ada Charles rounded out the feminine contingent. Both of them were women who spent considerable time attending various small clubs of intellectual pretensions and lecture groups, neither were ever more than semi-active in the LASFS, and gradually dropped away altogether due to the club's failure to offer anything of interest in lieu of its chronic preoccupation with itself and its internecine quarrels.

A very young boy, slender and delicate, who had a not inconsiderable artistic ability was Ronald Clyne, who was around the club a great deal until the feud broke out. His chief interest in fantasy was art, and I still remember how persistent he was when someone had an original or illustrated edition which struck his fancy. He would run the person wild making offer after offer, eventually running the price up to a fabulous amount, particularly if it was a trade deal. He was very generous with his own artwork, but publishing it was not always much fun, since Ron was a perfectionist to end all perfectionists, and would think nothing of making some hapless editor have a Clyne drawing re-lithographed if he fancied he saw a slight blemish in it. Ron was too single-mindedly wrapped up in his artistic aspirations to be as good an all-around associate as some of the others, but he was a very smart kid and very likely will make a good name for himself in commercial art.

Alva Rogers was our other artist; possessed of as much talent as Clyne, he lacked that old urge which kept Clyne plugging away at the drawing board, and moreover had so many other interests that his time suffered from dispersion. Stocky, slow-moving, and slow of speech, Alva has carrotty hair and a brick-red face, is lazy and likeable. He is much more mundane than most other fans I've met, and taken by and large was about my favorite associate until he went completely overboard for the Communist Party in mid-1945. His outstanding characteristic is his extreme reluctance to stay out of an easy chair for any protracted period of time, like half an hour. Alva, I might add, has one of the solidest and comprehensive knowledges of magazine stuff of anyone I've known. His presence around the club was on all counts a marked asset.

C.J.Fern, Jr--Mike--can only be characterized as a card. I doubt if the world has ever seen anyone remotely like Mike. Physically he is short and squat, with extremely myopic eyes ensconced behind inch-thick lenses, and sandy hair of the lank consistency of piano wire. His personality is something to behold. In the first place he is almost completely self-centered, and possessed of a power of concentration impossible to describe. (I remember one occasion when Mike, reading the current ASTOUNDING, started to sit down and became engrossed in the story before he quite reached the chair. He stopped right there, in mid-seat. Someone walked over and pulled out the chair, and he must have remained poised in mid-air in a sitting position for at least four minutes before we could restrain our mirth no longer and the hysterical roar of

laughter aroused him.) Almost totally lacking in self-consciousness, Mike would do some of the damndest things in public. I recall one time in the restaurant Mike was sitting by me and suddenly started pounding his head with his fist--thwack, thwack, thwack. "My god, Mike," I gasped, "what's the matter?" It appeared that he had heard that incipient hiccoughs could be arrested by striking the inside of the wrist against a hard surface. Going to a meal with Mike was a constant fight if he had any sort of reading matter along; he would not only forget to eat, but would apparently forget everything but his magazine. His concentration made him very absent-minded at times, and the same concentration coupled with his marked unawareness both of himself and associates made him breathtakingly rude at times. Don't get the idea that Mike is a screwball. The little guy is smart as a whip, a glutton for work (unless it gets in the way of his absent-mindedness), about the best promoter ever to hit the club, and the kind of guy who uncomplainingly did most of the chores of routine drudgery on any of the projects on which he was engaged. It is amazing how much Mike permitted his friends to use him as a convenience--particularly in running errands. Another thing which endeared Mike to me from the first is that he is even a worse trouble-maker than I am; as a team we were something for stirring up a fuss. Mike had about the broadest interests of anyone in the club except perhaps Yerke and Freehafer, and certainly the most insatiable thirst for knowledge. An example of this last is the way he went after my record collection. Jazz meant nothing to him particularly, but here was an opportunity to hear the highlights of a well-balanced collection and try to find out what made it tick, so Mike set to work playing my records and asking all sorts of searching questions about them. I wasn't thoroughly aware that he was pumping me until later. Since Mike went at everything in a similar manner, it is easy to see why he is so well able to hold up his end of a discussion about almost anything under the sun. The guy has a brilliant mind, and if he can learn to subjugate his tendency to insult people unintentionally, and can curb his big stunt of coming calling at some of the most awkward and weird times (like the time he came calling at midnight, bringing a friend who wanted to use my mimeograph!) the lad is going to go far.

Merlin W. Brown was Mike's closest associate when I arrived in LA. An attempt to give a complete vignette of Mel is a hopeless task, particularly if the finished product is to be compared with Yerke's brilliant and witty analysis. ("Merlin Brown: Paragon of Particularity" in the #2 FAN SLANTS.) Mel's chiefest characteristics might be listed: extreme nervousness, appalling slovenliness of both person and living quarters, completely loyal and unreasoning friendship, completely uncompromising and unreasoning bitter hatreds, wild generosity, completely unexpected lightning-fast reversals of plan and intention, strong class consciousness from the working-man's point of view, and above all a rather unchanneled yearning for erudition and culture. Taken by and large, Mel is a swell guy, whose minor idiosyncracies and whims are easily enough overshadowed by his notable good points. Nevertheless he is a most difficult parson to get along with (even I who was for a long time his best friend finally fell out with him over communism), and he often embarrasses the thinner skinned of his associates, as much with his unwarranted generosity with money and goods as by anything else.

Attempting to limn a word picture of James Lynn (Dirty Old) Kepner is fraught with difficulties if it is to be libel-free and still conscientiously factual. Jimmy is a tall and delicate young man, very frail and effeminate, who is cursed with an almost impossible block which keeps him from making up his mind about anything very often. Jimmy can see both sides of every question with almost equal clarity, and in his efforts to be impartial and factual jumps from one side to the other with astounding ease and frequency. He is a great one for crusading, a militant idealist one might say, but his great difficulty in taking and maintaining a positive stand often vitiates his genuine effectiveness as a proselyter. The prime example of all this occurred when I was director of the LASFS in mid-1945; Kepner took the floor to make a motion on something or other, stated the motion very hazily, and without relinquishing the floor asked permission to explain what he meant. I naturally wanted to know what he was driving at, so let him go on; he commenced talking about his motion (and promoting it very strongly, but gradually began seeing the other side and to the astonishment of even those of us who knew him so well he ended up talking most strongly against his

own motion. I listened in growing amazement, glanced about the room and noticed most of the members snickering, so banged the gavel and told Kepner he was out of order. He was momentarily furious, particularly when I told him that he was talking against his own motion. He denied this emphatically, and so complete had been his midtalk change of mind that he had extreme difficulty in believing that he had reversed even when everyone in the room agreed with me that he had.. Kepner has a much better than average mind that seldom comes close to its potentialities simply due to this inability to channel it in any one direction. Personally, Jimmy is extremely likeable; friendly, and good company---although his tendency to blow first one way and then another can get highly irritating if one is in his company a good deal. Still, striking a balance on the lad will end up with a favorable picture.

The scholar of the LASFS of course was the redoubtable Samuel Davenport Russell, a completely wonderful person. Sam is a beautiful example of the 1-1-6 cerebrotonic. His continued popularity around the LASFS is largely due to his polite silence in the face of the club's banalities--if the club fuzzleheads could read Russell's mind they would recoil as from a Yerke or a Laney. Polite, that is one of Sam's outstanding traits--a genial, easy-going politeness and courtesy. Quiet and unassuming, he seldom speaks up in meetings, but no discussion takes place long in his presence before his eyes light up, and in his precise way he takes the ball and starts for a touchdown. I have yet to see the discussion in which Sam was not able to contribute as much or more than anyone else present. The breadth of his knowledge and interests is breathtaking, and not a little discouraging to those of us who find other interests interfering with their pursuit of erudition. It might be said that Sam is a bit one-sided, since his avocational rounds center about the libraries to a very large extent; on the other hand his adjustment to life is so obviously satisfactory to him, and so adult, that it is plain that he is of a scholarly bent from free choice rather than as an escape from life. After a session with the LASFS' little escapists and frustrates, an evening with Sam is like a summer trip to the mountains after a week out in the desert. The man's head is loaded with facts which he presents with devastating logic; yet he is rarely if ever pedantic, and his sparkingly dry humor and twinkling grin round him off as a jewel which someday is going to get tired of the arid barnyard at 837 1/2 South Bixel. Bad as the club sometimes is, the time I've spent there is almost repaid by the fact that through the club I have added this prince of good fellows to my circle of friends.

Of a totally different temperment, but in his own way a swell fellow is Eddie Chamberlain, a good-looking, stocky fellow with a notable inability to handle his liquor, but nevertheless a pleasant companion who is possessed of considerably more depth than is apparent at first. Ed stands out in my mind chiefly from a long and probing discussion he and I once had down in my Georgia Street shack, in which he used me as an audience upon which to unburden some woes. Thus I learned a good deal about some of the difficulties of his adolescence, and of his attempts (which my own observation shows me are largely successful) to rise above them. I consider that Eddie has surmounted far greater psychic handicaps than those which have made life-long impossibles out of many fans, and this most certainly required a high order of both courage and applied intelligence. Though Eddie and I do not have an especial lot in common, he commands my sincere respect; something which I must admit I give but charily. He's one of the few fans I have met who really tries to improve himself as a person.

Though not a Fangeleno, strictly speaking, Michi-dogfan Dalvan Coger was pretty much of a LASFS regular on the weekends of late 1943. There is a guy I could stand knowing a lot better. Dal is in many ways an Alva Rogers without the interest or talent for illustrating. Much more mundane and practical than the typical fan, Dal's ruddy face and friendly grin were always welcome.

Well, that about covers the LASFS membership in late 1943 as it comes to mind here in March 1947. Of course there were a number of others who were in and out of the scene from time to time. I might mention in passing Ewing Brown, of whom I remember nothing more than the name and a faintly distasteful (and unremembered) connotation in connection with him; Arden "Buns" Benson, another of the MFS expatriates, who was almost completely out of the picture when I arrived, and who has always impressed me as being one of the many normal people who quickly lose interest in fandom as soon as they see what a bunch of jerks most fans are; and a character named Vic Clark, of whose distasteful actions and habits I shall say more later on.

And of course the most prominent member of the LASFS as of November 1943 was the Ghost of Claude Deglor.

Well, let's see. Before I got side-tracked writing these vignettes of the club membership, I had gotten myself through my first LASFS meeting, which came rather close also to being my last. Back to the narrative of events....

Being tired from the trip, I spent several days and evenings doing not much of anything except trying to get rid of my cough in the luscious Los Angeles sunshine, which amazingly enough actually came up to chamber of commerce standards during my first two or three weeks here, and browsing around the city.

One of the first things I did was to look up Bob Hoffman's mother, who turned out to be strictly wonderful---young, clever, enthusiastic, good-looking, and super-friendly. Not only did she help me a lot with my house-hunting, but she even let me unload the Weird Willys into her cellar, and kept most of my stuff for me until I had a place to take it.

I spent a goodly part of those first few days rummaging in the book stores--alone at first, and later with Frechafer and/or Rogers. I also very shortly learned that someone or other was in the clubroom nearly every hour of the day and night; being essentially of a gregarious nature, this led to my spending an increasing amount of time there.

So many of the members lived right there in the neighborhood; Brown and Kepner across the street at 628, Morojo next door at 643, Daugherty three blocks down the street, and Fern a ten minute walk away. Yerke, Bronson, Chamberlain, Benson, Russell, and Frechafer used the place a great deal as a meeting point to rally around a party to go to the theater or symphony; and Ackerman commuted nearly every night from Fort MacArthur, often spending the night next door on Morojo's and her cousin's guest couch. Then not only did many of the members work screwy shifts, but then as always fans were notable for absenteeism, skipping work at any time for any reason or none. In those first three months, I doubt if I ever spent more than an hour in the clubroom without being joined by one or more other members. The evenings especially saw the premises crowded; many of the members were actively engaged in publishing, kept their typewriters and other equipment right there in the room; there was usually someone reading something out of the club library; and of course the usual droppings in and out.

Since such a large proportion of the LASFS regulars at this time were active fans, rather than hangers-on, the club made a definite appeal to me, despite its obvious flaws and drawbacks. While it is true enough that one does not turn out as much output when working in a distracting group as he would alone, there is much to be said for working with and in a group. Suppose the old output of balderdash does fall off a little; as long as one is enjoying himself what difference does it make?

After the first few days, I commenced job-hunting and house-hunting about simultaneously. The club, with its large backlog of stay-at-home introverts made an excellent foil for the extraverted way I was spending my days; and it was not until I had gotten settled in a job that I found the companionship of the fans palling on me. By

December 1, I had discovered that not more than one or two were willing to go anywhere outside of the restricted rabbit-run around the Bixelstrasse, and were likewise presentable enough so that I was willing to be seen with them in public. Naturally enough, I commenced a certain amount of non-fan night life--I'd have just as soon had fans as my companions, but if they didn't want to come along (or failed to meet my not very high standards) I went anyway. This is trivial to mention, except that it was one of the first factors that disgusted me with the club. Rimel and Baldwin, by whom I tended to judge all fans, were much less one-sided.

And my disgust and discontent with the LASFS grew apace as I learned more of the club's affairs--disgust with the club itself and more or less contempt for various of the members.

One of these matters was the Affair of the Burning Bibles, with its aftermath of censorship. Ackerman, as is well known, is a militant atheist. He was manifesting this belief by getting hold of all the religious literature he conveniently could with the idea of keeping it out of the hands of possible converts, was particularly concentrating on the vast pocket Bibles being distributed at Fort MacArthur for the troops. (One man against the American Bible Society!) Anyway, it seems that on at least one occasion, Ackerman and one or two others held a public Bible-burning on the pavement in front of the clubroom. In a column in the first FA! SLANTS, Kepner had artlessly told of this performance, and in doing so had set off an explosion. Most particularly had Yerke and Daugherty hit the ceiling, and demanded a censorship of this column, holding that it tended to hold the club in disrepute, and take away from the artificially built up myth of Shangri-La. (If the truth hurts the club, so be it; better to act in a way one is not ashamed to have made public was my own attitude.) And, typically, Kepner backed down more or less against Brown's wishes, and permitted the shaking of the big stick to intimidate him and emasculate his column.

Then there was the Affair of the Stolen Artwork. Ronald Clyne, it seems, had had a number of originals he wished to publish through fan channels, and had invited all of the publishing members of the LASFS to come to his house one evening at 8:00 and he would make an equitable division. Bronson, Brown, Kepner, and Ackerman missed Daugherty; went on without him; only to find, upon their arrival, that he had not only sneaked out to Clyne's ahead of them, but had hogged every original that Clyne had. Daugherty was not publishing at the time, other than verbally.

Echoes of the expulsion of Mrs. Henry Hasse, with the resultant resignation of her husband and Bill and Peggy Crawford, were still rocking around the place. Mrs. Hasse, the former Dorothy Pinn, had, it seems, threatened to break up the club; however, it was not unapparent that many of her objections to the group were only too firmly founded on fact, and it did not seem to me that the group wanted to do anything about removing these flaws.

The lack of solidarity among the membership was utterly beyond belief. Absent members were discussed more with license than with freedom--and it did not take too long for one to get heartily tired of hearing this anvil chorus. A month of it left one very well informed as to which members were sodomists, impotents, alcoholics, manic depressives, phallic succubi, communists, masturbators, overt devil worshippers, lesbians, and other quaint forms of life. Oddly enough, it did not require more than an elementary ability to count to become aware that the freaks were definitely in the ascendancy. This sad lesson in the Facts of Fan Life was sharply pointed up by the parade of homosexuals constantly being dredged up in Pershing Square and brought around the club by one of the residents at 628.

And of course to cap the whole sordid story was L'Affaire Degler. I never met Degler personally (though I slept in his bed at Ebey's); but during my first 6 weeks in Utopia, I became much better acquainted with Clod than with any other member of the club. I'll try to summarise it all briefly. On his nation-wide tour of fandom,

the comic coordinator arrived in Los Angeles in the early summer, moved in on Kepner, and immediately commenced propagandizing his Cosmic Circle, particularly among Brown, Fern, and Kepner--all of whom joined. He also started using the club publishing equipment to turn out a flood of propaganda--the revoltingness of which is pretty well known. At first, the more intelligent fans largely ignored him--all except Ackerman, who joined the Cosmic Circle. Many objected to Clod's extreme filth of person (he arrived in Los Angeles wearing a dirty and sweatstained shirt which he wore every day without washing for around four months, and finally donned once again, dirt, stink, and all, when he left town in mid-October) but they merely ignored him.

Then one night, Yerke happened to pick up a copy of COSMIC CIRCLE COMMENTATOR, and the row was on, but good. Bruce hit the ceiling, and, backed by Bronson, Daugherty, and others, demanded that Degler be expelled, and that his publications be confiscated. The more moderate members tended to believe Degler's fabulous claims as to the size of his organization, and felt it would be better to capture it by infiltration, take it away from Clod, and set it up as a successor to the then moribund NFFF. This did not set well with Daugherty, who of course was NFFF from top to bottom; but it did calm Yerke down sufficiently to cause him to send out a questionnaire, aimed at finding out just how much the Cosmic Circle amounted to, and just how many of the name fans Degler claimed as supporters were actually in favor of it.

In the month following, row followed row almost daily, as various of the members got into savage arguments with Degler. Brown, Kepner, and Fern disowned the Cosmic Circle during this time--leaving it with two local members, Degler and Ackerman. As evidence came in, much of it directly from the Chief Cosman's own writings and remarks, the anti-Degler group became larger and larger, and when Yerke finally published his definitive REPORT TO FANDOM ON THE COSMIC CIRCLE they made an all-out, full-scale attempt to oust Degler from the LASFS. And hell broke loose in Shangri-La.

In the first place, the club constitution had no provision for the expulsion of members for any cause whatsoever. And to make matters more difficult, the progressive element ran headlong into Forrest J Ackerman's deep and abiding principle that the LASFS and fandom should be a refuge for anyone who claimed an interest in science-fiction or fantasy, and who wished to escape from the world or from his own shortcomings. And many members supported Ackerman unreservedly--some through personal friendship, some because they were peace-loving outer-circle readers of stf who had not been bothered by Degler and did not believe in arguments, and, I fear, not a few because they too were more or less misfits and feared to set a precedent by which they too might some day be expelled.

A month-long deadlock ensued. Unable to get rid of Degler by constitutional means, and unable to force a constitutional amendment, Yerke and others tried personal intimidation. From all accounts, Degler's one good point is that he stuck by his guns and refused to be run out.

Yerke finally delivered an ultimatum that if Degler ever set foot in the club again except on Thursday nights he personally would throw him out. He was heartily backed by Bronson, Daugherty, Fern, Brown and others. Kepner, typically, had taken up for the under dog, and was pro-Degler at this time. Matters came to a head one Sunday shortly after this when Yerke, out at Santa Monica, phoned the club only to have Degler answer the phone. The progressives boiled into town, augmenting their forces as they came, and found Degler alone in the clubroom. Yerke started to lay hands on Degler, and was struck down by a heart attack brought on by heat and excitement. Daugherty and Bronson, in comic opera tradition, almost came to blows with each other in quarrelling over which was to have the honor and pleasure of throwing Degler out of the premises; in the resulting turmoil, Degler slipped away. Some of the members went next door to get Morrojo, and caught her red-handed in the act of taking \$10.00 from Degler in payment for a life membership in the LASFS.

Freehafer was chiefly instrumental in quieting everyone down enough to get them to

sit down and talk it over. This was done in a series of meetings, during which Yerke, Bronson, and Daugherty were several times on the point of resigning from the LASFS. But the hot-heads were gradually mollified, particularly in light of the fact that Degler left town never to return. (Kepner rode up to Frisco with the fellow, and came back more bitterly anti-Degler than all the rest put together.)

These conciliation meetings resulted in the writing and adoption of a new constitution for the club, with stringent restrictions on new members, and the formation of a club within the club--The Rentpayers' Committee--which would have jurisdiction over the club premises at all times except during the actual Thursday night meetings. This group consisted of the more active members, who carried keys to the clubroom and paid extra dues of \$1 per month and up for this privilege.

But the Degler mess left the club deeply split down the middle, a legacy of ill-feeling that has never entirely left it, even today. It also left most of the members utterly obsessed with the subject of Degler. I heard little else during the first few weeks I was here. It horrified me to find a supposedly healthy organism which had no provision made for disposing of its waste-products; my high ideals for fandom were also outraged by the fact that anyone would support anyone so likely to bring all fandom into disrepute.

Kepner, I discovered, had two large boxes of Degler's personal effects in his closet, which he was supposed to ship back to Newcastle. When I learned that several members had missed things during Degler's stay, I suggested that his stuff be gone thru before it was sent--and offered myself as an agent, since I was the only person there who had not been in the Great Cosmic War of the previous month, and hence could be considered relatively neutral. Kepner demurred violently, but of course gave in--being easy to talk out of anything.

So he and I went at it one afternoon. I nearly fainted at the stench that came out of these boxes, a reek coming from some indescribably filthy clothing which was packed in the boxes. (I fished the stuff out with a bent wire--and I'm not at all squeamish, either.) We found a miscellaneous bunch of stuff obviously misappropriated from the club and various members; we also found a huge mass of undistributed Cosmic Circle literature. I immediately demanded that this be destroyed--with the idea of crippling his propaganda campaign. Kepner of course was too idealistic, but I got good enough support from Yerke, Bronson, Daugherty and Brown to prevent the stuff's being sent. (We later made up sets of this undistributed material and sent it out in the Los Angeles post-mailing to the December 1943 FAPA mailing, as documentary evidence to support our demand that Degler be expelled from FAPA.)

Meanwhile, I'd located a room at the Lee Hotel (6th and Figueroa) and moved out of Freehafer's crowded little apartment. I shortly secured permission from the club to use the premises as an office, keeping my locked footlocker and typewriter in the room at all times, and spending most of my evenings there. I worked the night-shift for awhile in the latter part of November and early part of December, which caused me to miss a great deal of club activity, and thus kept my disgust with the group from coming to a head as soon as it otherwise would have.

The jaw of even a hardened fan like Ackerman dropped when he saw the extent of my unanswered correspondence, and the way that letters kept pouring in four, five, six and even eight a day even though I was writing none in reply. I set to work and mimeographed a form letter to use in reply, typing brief notes on some answering the most urgent matters. I had figured that this would choke off my correspondence for a while and give me a chance to get out the 6th ACOLYTE. Huh! All my efforts did was to touch off a veritable deluge of mail; I shortly saw that I could answer the mail and drop THE ACOLYTE, or let the mail go to hell. I decided easily enough that THE ACOLYTE was more important--but my respect for fandom took another dive when I saw the crass way in which so many paltry characters seemed insistent that I correspond with them at fabulous length, regardless of other commitments, and regardless of the fact that

I now got all the fun talk I wanted face-to-face, and only wanted to correspond to further ACOLYTE.

During the time I worked nights, I had Saturday nights off, and at first these were made the occasion for some ripping all-night bull-fests. Since these generally ended up at my room down at the Lee, they were known as the Lee-Cons. Kepner and Rogers were the most regular attenders, next to Dal Coger, Paul Freehafer, and Bob Hoffman. Dal Coger was responsible for my initial aversion to the NFFF, of which I had heard scarcely anything while up at Clarkston. Its president, I learned from Alan Shacker Coger, was E. Everett Evans, who supposedly was engaged in secret navy work stemming from his experiences in World War I, and was being held pretty much incommunicado. Evans, according to Coger, had only been a ship's musician during his long Navy service, and, instead of serving his country, as the published report in BONTIME stated, he was serving time in the Michigan State Penitentiary for homosexuality. Now I have no aversion to homosexuals as such. If they let me alone, I am only too happy to let them alone. But I heartily despise the dishonesty of sailing under false colors, and this bit of gossip shook me to the bottom. I felt that since Everett claimed he had been framed, he would have done much better to tell the truth, and trust to the tolerant mercy of his fellow fans. In any case, this sordid bit of deceit permanently soured me on E. Everett Evans, all the more when he began publishing his sanctimonious TIMEBINDER, and gave me a bitter distrust of the NFFF which was not at all lessened as I got better acquainted with NFFF's leading Los Angeles disciple, Walter J. Daugherty. ((The preface was published in Fanhistorica #2))

My afternoons, particularly on Saturdays, were spent in book and magazine hunting. One amusing episode occurred at ~~the~~ a well-known Hollywood bookshop; I had gone there with Ronald Clyne, who had gone immediately to the back of the store while I had stopped to browse at a front table. A clammy hand was laid on my arm, and, startled, I looked into the rolling eyes of one of the fruitiest fruits that ever got blown, from a tree or elsewhere. "Who is youah fwiend?" he lisped. "Huh?" from me. "Who is youah young fwiend?" the fairy repeated. "Oh, he's just a kid I came in here with; why?" "Oh-h-h! He's such a bee-ootiful boy-y-y!" came the trilling response. Since this character was one of the clerks in the store, it may well be imagined that I never went there again with Ron! (So far as I know, Ron is OK; he can't help it if he's good looking!)

The bookhunting spree came to an abrupt halt a few Saturdays later when I totted up after a jaunt with Rogers and discovered to my horror I'd spent nearly \$25.00 in a single afternoon. (Of course I had a two-foot stack of WEIRD TALES and a mint copy of the last issue of THRILL BOOK, but even so....) I told the people at the club that wine, women and song were a lot more fun and a hell of a lot cheaper--and proceeded hitting the Zenda and other spots on my Saturday nights. My tendency to cut loose was all the more augmented by the fact that I was having the first of a terrific series of battles through the mails with my dear wife, who seemed to feel that the housing shortage was something I had invented to plague her, and was kicking me in the teeth right at the time I needed a modicum of consideration and loyalty.

At about this time, an amusing passage occurred between Yerke and Ackerman one Saturday night. The clubroom was very well filled with fans, most of whom were doing crifanac to beat the band. At about 8:00 o'clock, Yerke put on his coat, said good night, and started for the door. "Bruce, where are you going?" said the Ack. "Oh, I have a date." "You mean you'd leave a roomful of fans to go out on a date?" demanded Ackerman with a strong note of disbelief and disapproval in his voice. "Oh yes, hadn't you heard? I'm a pervert. I go out with women!"

I whooped with the rest, and dismissed the whole thing as a gag. However, I was stunned and not a little hurt to discover the change in Ackerman's attitude towards me when I myself commenced missing the Bixel styce from time to time to go dancing. Though he said nothing overt, he made it very plain that he disapproved, and in divers ways he made his disapproval evident if not obvious. At the time I ignored it all, though

it added to my discontent with the club.

Shortly before I arrived in Los Angeles, Ron Clyne had met Albert de Pina, a Hollywood script writer who was knocking off scientifiction for PLANET on the side. Early in my acquaintance with Ron, he suggested that I come out to de Pina's with him, and eventually I got around to so doing. De Pina turned out to be an extremely ebullient individual, not without a certain patina of Hollywoodishness, but nevertheless a genial host, stimulating conversationalist, and all-round good fellow. He seemed particularly struck with the possibilities of the LASFS as a retreat for Hollywood characters, and we had many conversations along this line. According to de Pina, a surprisingly large proportion of the people in the film industry, including such top-flighters as Olivia de Havilland, read the better science-fiction magazines regularly; in addition he felt that among this group there was sufficient demand for a relatively unpublicised retreat where they could dodge their public that the LASFS could quite conceivably be of interest to them.

Both Ron and I told him at considerable length what sort of hog-wallow the physical plant of the club usually was, warned him of the weirdly impossible individuals who made up a good part of the membership, but he persisted. He pointed out that we'd have to get a clubroom in Hollywood or the San Fernando Valley, and fix it up somewhat more civilizedly than we had described the club as being; on the other hand, he also pointed out that it was a pretty good gamble, that he was almost convinced that he could get us enough interested and interesting members out of the film colony to repay our efforts many times, that if they did come in they could certainly be expected to pay most of the freight, and that even if his plan failed altogether the club would still gain through having secured more suitable surroundings.

Well. De Pina's scheme sounded rather fantastic, yet there was no question whatever about him, or his connections (which were well documented by his fabulously interesting scrapbooks---I myself saw his copy of his \$250 a week contract as a script writer which had been in effect at the time he was drafted), or his sincere interest in stf-- which he continued to write as a hobby long after he had been signed up at the fabulous figure of \$750 a week.

While I could see possible drawbacks to the scheme, I most certainly talked it up around the club---and my growing disgust with the LASFS got still another boost from the way the people received it. Mike Fern was about the only member outside of Ron Clyne who liked it at all; Mel Brown, forgetting that it was only a scheme to talk about, went off into a veritable tantrum and said he'd resign if any of those people tried to get in the LASFS. Daugherty was firmly opposed---after all, he was only a stand-in. Ackerman characteristically said little, but indicated that such a move was contrary to the spirit and traditions of the LASFS. And so on.... Oddly enough, the poorer integrated an individual member was with life, the more bitterly he objected to de Pina's scheme; even though it must be remembered that I did not even bring it up officially, but merely talked it over with some of the members. It was from this episode that I first got my belief that to most of its members the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society was no more than an escape from reality and an attempted escape from themselves and their own woeful shortcomings, a belief which subsequent experience has only confirmed.

My report back to de Pina, oddly enough, did not deter his interest in the LASFS. Finally, one Sunday evening, I took him over to the clubroom, much against my better judgement. The room was occupied by Ackerman, Morojo, Fern, and Brown. When we entered, Brown looked up, dropped what he was doing, crowded past us and left before he could be introduced. Fern went on reading, acknowledging the introduction with a barely perceptible grunt. Ackerman and Morojo were mimeographing VQM; they did acknowledge the introduction, though coldly and with obvious lack of enthusiasm, then immediately turned their backs pointedly and went on with the mimeographing. Shaking with rage, I showed de Pina a chair, tried to entertain him with notable lack of success, and watched him spend half an hour trying to be friendly. Everything he said

just floated out a ways, then dropped with a soggy splat on the filthy floor. If a direct answer was imperative, Morojo or Ackerman would usually mutter a constrained monosyllable. At no time did they stop their feverish mimeographing, except when de Pina expressed a wish to buy a certain issue of UNKNOWN and Ackerman stopped long enough to hunt it up for him and pocket the money. Finally, de Pina left; I accompanied him to the door and offered to drop him, but he reminded me that he had an appointment at the Biltmore (eight or nine blocks down the street) and that the walk would do him good.

I went back into the club and proceeded to stand things on end. I was so angry I could hardly talk, but I managed to indicate what I thought of this rank boorishness. Mike I forgave up to a point when he claimed that he had been so deep in his reading he did not realize what was going on; something that was characteristic of him, though a trait difficult to condone. Ackerman muttered something about, "After all, he'd just had a few stories in PLANET; who was de Pina, anyway?"; I blew my top at the boy, pointing out that this made no difference, that the man was as much a fan as anyone present, was this club open to fans or wasn't it, and so on--well interlarded with choice Anglo-Saxon remarks of dubious semantic bearing on the dispute. Ackerman subsided. Myrtle quite huffily pointed out that it was the only night the duo could work on VOM for a week, and that they were too busy; I blazed back that perhaps VOM was not of quite such cosmic importance as its editors liked to imagine, and besides there was such a thing as common courtesy. Brown came back in time to get a tongue-lashing from me. Later he told me that the Ack-ojo bloc in the club had decided to cold shoulder de Pina if he ever came around, for fear the members might try to take up his scheme of LASFS expansion, but I have never been able either to prove or disprove this statement.

I shouldn't have permitted all this to affect me as it did, but I never felt the same about de Pina after this, felt vaguely humiliated over the whole mess, and gradually ceased visiting him. He was as good a sport about it as one could imagine, but I never could quite look him in the eye after exposing him to such an uncalled for series of snubs.

Needless to say, this episode fanned my discontent with the LASFS to open revolt, and set me to making political plans for the first time; partly with the idea of revenge (I hate to admit it) but mostly with the idea that with a bit of support I might be able to lead the club into a somewhat less revolting groove.

I did not see de Pina for over a week after this, but when I saw him next it was under pretty exciting circumstances. An Earl Carroll girl, June Harris, had had a long fan letter in the then-current PLANET; de Pina mentioned that she had suggested he bring a couple of friends to Christmas dinner, and wondered if Clyde and I would like to be those two. (I nearly walked through the phone saying yes!) As an aside, I should mention that Daugherty like to fused his jets when he saw June's letter in PLANET, immediately dashed off a letter to her in which he mentioned he was connected with Warner Brothers, and in his excitement sent the letter airmail special delivery though it only had to go from one substation of the Los Angeles post office to another, a bit of assinity which occasioned much merriment around the club. Anyway, Ron and I went out to de Pina's and shortly after he took us to June Harris'. I no longer recall who all was there, except that it was a small gathering and everyone had a very good time. In the course of things, June discovered I belonged to the LASFS, and mentioned having received a letter from some starry-eyed boy (yes, that's what she called him) that had perplexed her. She got it out, and read passages which brought good laughter from the people around the table, as did that airmail angle; finally asking me if I knew the fellow (slightly, I said) and what was his connection with Warner Brothers. "I'm not entirely sure," I said, "but I think he's just a stand-in for someone." Whereupon, June tore up the letter. (My telling of this episode around the club somehow did not amuse Daugherty as much as it did some of the others, but then, I've never claimed to be a very good raconteur.) June was tall and ravishing, a very smart girl, and possessed of much more mind than most women I've talked with.

Sure, I talked science-fiction and fantasy with her; after all, that was my speed, and mink-coated beauties with brand new Buick convertables are definitely not, Christmas dinner with an Earl Carroll girl! Yes, I'm afraid I was a bit awed.

Apart from the regular fan gatherings, I also got in on a couple of other social events in late 1943 that perhaps should be mentioned. Lora Crozetti had several of us, including Brown, Kepner, and myself for a luscious home-cooked Thanksgiving dinner; and Morajo took a number of us to an exclusive Italian restaurant in Hollywood for Christmas Eve dinner, one of the few times that Ackerman has ever eaten out without going to Clifton's.

But I must veer away and pick up the political developments of November and December 1943 in Shangri-La. At that time, the club had only one elected officer, the director (actually president), who appointed the secretary and treasurer, plus any other officers he might wish, such as librarian. These, plus the chairman of the Rent Payers' Committee, formed an executive committee which under the constitution had almost unlimited powers, though at the time I came to LA they did not avail themselves of them to any great extent.

Freehafer's resignation as director necessitated the election of a pro tem director to fill out the balance of his one year term which was to expire December 31, 1943. Walter J. Daugherty, in one of his frequent political moods, spent a great deal of time outlining to all who would listen his proposed platform; oddly enough, no one would nominate him, so he was unable to run for the office. Jimmy Kepner and Buns Benson were nominated; when Kepner was elected, I was astounded when Buns and his supporters (Bronson, Chamberlin, Yerke, and one or two others) got up and walked out of the club. Kepner seemed stunned, but rallied enough to appoint Lora Crozetti as secretary (she did not attend a single meeting in that capacity; something of a record for an officer even in the LASFS) and continue Morajo as treasurer.

This walkout was followed in a very few days by some very bitterly worded resignations from Yerke, Bronson, and others. At the time I did not know enough about the club to realise how well founded their strictures were, so tended to oppose them. Another factor was my very slight acquaintance with the gentleman in question; this mass resignation occurring only three weeks after I arrived in town. So particularly when the first KNAIVE came out, with its poorly worked out Bronsonian attack on new fans, I was for a short time quite strongly anti-Knave. It must be remembered that the Knave resignation occurred but three weeks after my arrival in Los Angeles, and that I had but little chance to become well acquainted with the "genial knaves" during this time; also that my being around the club so much tended to give me for a short time the club's viewpoint.

One result of all this was my faux pas with Lionel Innman. At the time the #1 KNAIVE came out, I wrote a red-hot article attacking Bronson extravagantly, signed it as director of the LASFS, and submitted it to VULCAN (which Phil had particularly singled out for criticism) for publication. By the time the article appeared, the feud had broken wide open, I was an Outsider and on good terms with Bronson. So I sent Innman an equally red-hot retraction, attacking Ackerman and the LASFS as wildly as I'd previously attacked Bronson. At about this time, VULCAN went on an irregular basis and I gradually forgot all about this article, only to have it come out about two weeks after I was once more back in the LASFS. I believe that in this VULCAN/Bronson episode I did the most thorough job of making an ass of myself that I ever did anywhere. If I weren't trying to write a factual and realistic account, I'd be only too happy to suppress all mention of it.

A person standing on the outside might have jumped to the conclusion that the LASFS, after the resignation of the Knaves, would have been a pretty much united group. How wrong he would have been! There were at least three distinct cleavage lines, marked by extreme hostility, which divided the membership into overlapping groups

Most important was the strong anti-Daugherty feeling. Mel Brown spearheaded this, having conceived a violent hatred of WJD over the Affair of the Stolen Artwork, which was not in the least abated by Daugherty's being taken on the staff of FAN SLANTS as the only condition by which Daugherty would permit Brown to use any of Clyne's artwork. This situation came to a head in early December when Daugherty jumped Brown for running off a Clyne illustration on the wrong color of paper, and the resulting ruckus nearly brought the two to fisticuffs. I had to lead Mel outside and reason with him for nearly an hour to calm him down. Daugherty was also cordially despised by some of the members who resented his grabbing the floor for ego-boo purposes, was held in slight regard by most of the more intelligent members who resented his strident floorgrabbing tactics on the grounds that they detracted from the intellectuality of the club. At the time I was on good terms with Walt, and actually liked him a good deal, despite the fact that I tended to regard his tendency towards self-glorification as rather amusing.

Secondly, there was a marked anti-homosexual feeling held by several members. It must be remembered that the club had from two to four active homosexuals in its membership at all times, that one of the most active members of the club was also its most vocal homosexual, and that he was continually bringing other fags around the club.

The last cleavage line was that between Ackerman and the rest of the club. Ackerman was riding extremely high on his "fandom is all" philosophy, and was not only expressing strong opinions against various members who chose to vary their crifanac by music, the theater, sex, liquor, or anything else (usually behind their backs) but was developing a most exasperating habit of handing "delinquent" fans prim little notes of rebuke in which he chided them for going to the symphony, or shooting craps in the club room, or going dancing, or taking a drink.

Despite the swirling tides of antagonisms, the LASFS was rolling along quite merrily. Kepner, in his capacity of director, instituted a very successful series of discussion meetings, at which business was held at a minimum. His technique was excellent. He himself would prepare an introduction, and would proceed to lecture the club on the chosen topic, expressing himself as extremely as possible. The moment one of his outrageously unsupportable statements would set someone off, Kepner would subside, and would resume talking only as it was necessary to keep the discussion moving along. Right at the point when the bullfest was at its height, with two or three individuals clamoring at once for the right to be heard, he would adjourn the meeting, which would immediately break up into several violently arguing groups.

I got transferred to the day-shift in early December, and very quickly got a belly-ful of the club. In typical Laney fashion, I commenced shooting off my mouth as to what was wrong with the LASFS, and before I knew it had outmaneuvered myself into a position where I had to put up or shut up. Unfortunately for my own tranquility, I am not the shutting-up type.

Brown and Fern became angered at Kepner over some of the non-fan friends he kept bringing around the club, and came to me with the request that I run for director with their support. I turned this offer down, pointing out that I'd not been around the club long enough to get elected, and that I had enough to do without taking on a task which I knew regretfully I'd be sucker enough to take seriously. But they kept after me. Then one evening in mid-December, Walt Daugherty button-holed me on the way back to dinner, asked where we could go for a private talk. I led him to my car, where he told me that he thought my ideas would never take, that they were too close to his own ideas with which he had taken the directorship in 1940, but that he felt about the same way, and that if I'd accept, he intended to nominate me for director. We talked the matter over, counting noses and votes, and I came to the conclusion that I could probably run a pretty good race at that. Between my reluctance to back down on my severe strictures on the club and Walt's persuasive tongue I gave my consent.

This led to an idiotic contretemps. I immediately told Brown and Fern what I'd decided, only to have Brown blow his top and tell me that if I let Daugherty nominate me

he not only would not support me but he would fight me with all he had. Fern backed him up. This attitude really got up the Laney Irish, and led to a six weeks rupture between myself and Brown, since I told him off but good.

Kepner was nominated against me, but after talking over my platform with him he expressed a wish to withdraw. I tried to talk him out of it, but he did. Ackerman and Morajo talked him into reopening his nomination, and this action was the first thing that set me veering towards the side of the Knaves, since Yerke had bluntly pointed out that the Ackojo block, as he called it, stood entirely for neutrality, banality, and the status quo--I'd not believed it, but this action so clearly proved the truth of this one statement that it set me off reconsidering the entire Knaves matter, something one could not do objectively without being turned against the LASFS.

My platform might be of incidental interest: (1) Unite all Los Angeles fandom under the banner of the LASFS. (This was worded around the club in such wise as to lead Ackojo to believe I would oppose any further attempts at ousters (such as the Degler ruckus); actually meant that I intended to try to get the Knaves back into the club). (2) Continue Kepner's discussion meetings. (3) Clean up the club and its membership both physically and psychologically. (Yes I was naive, wasn't I? But I've always had a strong yen for improving myself and ironing out my own many mental kinks; my big error was in presuming others around the club had any similar motivation.) (4) Get out an issue of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES, which had been in a disgusting state of suspended animation for nearly six months.

In the course of my political maneuverings, I approached Kepner, and suggested that if he felt my ideas on uniting the LASFS and the Knaves were any good (he did) that it might help unite the club if he and I made a reciprocal agreement that whichever one was elected director would appoint the other secretary, which of course was the #2 officer of the club. The effect of this of course was to guarantee the club a reasonably non-partisan slate of officers, a coalition cabinet, so as to speak. Kepner accepted this deal.

On the night of the election I happened to sit next to Kepner. As the ballots were being passed around, he leaned over to me and said, "Are you going to be a gentleman and vote for me, or a heel and vote for yourself?" "Why, did you ever hear of a Laney being a gentleman?" I tossed back. Of course I voted for Kepner. The ballot was a tie. Walter J. Daugherty was extremely annoyed, since as teller he had to pass out a new set of ballots. We voted the second time, and it was still a tie. Walter J. Daugherty hit the ceiling, accused the club of making fun of him by deliberately tying up the vote, demanded that either Kepner or I withdraw from the race, and in general put on a typical Daugherty display, including the customary threat to resign from the club. Kepner leaned over to me and suggested that we break the tie by deciding between us which one was to be director. I said, "OK, I've been voting for you; I'll change and vote for myself." "My God," Jimmy screamed, "I've been voting for me too!" The club howled. It ended up that both Kepner and I voted for Laney, so I appointed him secretary, as previously agreed, continued Myrtle in office as treasurer, and adjourned the meeting. 1943 was over in Shangri-La.

I seem somehow to have missed the exhumation of Charles Edward Burbee Jr., so before closing this chapter, I'd better backtrack. Both Andy Anderson and I had corresponded at some length with Burbee in my pre-LASFS days; when he dropped into town during the Christmas holidays he suggested we look the guy up. The idea of a mystery man who wrote long letters to fan editors, subscribed to all fanzines, yet apparently had never been around the LASFS appealed to Kepner's imagination, so the three of us grabbed a streetmap, and drove out to Burbee's house. He was most friendly, made vastly with the beer and whiskey, and explained that he had gone to the club about eight months previously, had walked into a roomful of people who ignored him for half an hour, and had finally left in disgust. (This was and is the LASFS' most annoying feature--the rude way in which visitors are deliberately ignored and made to feel as unwelcome as possible unless they are either known fans or are sponsored by some aggressive member who will force the club

to recognise them.) We secured a promise from Burbee to try again, and left after a most lovely four or five hour bullfest.

So I guess it is time for a vignette of Burbee, the guy who for a long time was my best friend in fandom. Physically he is tall and slender, with a leonine head wobbling on a pipestem neck, bushy curly dark hair, swarthy features, and a pronouncedly Mexican cast of features (which no doubt stems from the fact that he is of English extraction.) He is very much married to a somewhat shrewish wife and an indeterminate number of children. Burbee is not worried about matters of child-raising--he counts noses at night, and if there are less than three he says, "Oh well," and starts another one that night. He is very easy-going, rather vain in some respects, and smooths his passageway through life with a sense of humor that can be called nothing less than unique. He is lots of fun, but never appears to take anything seriously, a factor which at times can be annoying. He is also the dirtiest talking man I have ever known. But he is a good egg, even if he is motivated only by a profound jealousy of Al Ashley's superior mind. (When I get to Ashley, I intend to say: Al is a good egg, even if he is motivated only by a profound jealousy of Chas. Burbee's superior mind. This may be a peculiar form of symbiosis.) At any rate, neither Al nor Chas can talk to me for ten minutes without commencing to run down the other, so I believe I am justified in presuming there is some sort of obscure attraction here. Burbee, despite his easy-going ways, can be a very difficult person, but is well worthy of cultivation, particularly if you are bawdy-minded, for the guy is the best off-color raconteur I have ever known. His interest in fandom and fantasy is reading without collecting and publishing without ego boo (except of course for Charles Edward Burbee). Alter-interests include beer, bawdy reminiscences, tinkering with radios and other sound equipment, and record collecting.

Another arrival on the December 1943 scene was Jules Lazar, a hefty young jewish boy from Boston and the Strangers' Club. He was tall, heavily built, and strong as a bull. He did not fit very well into the club, being prone to take offense where none was intended, and through being essentially uninterested in fandom, yet just enough introverted so that he found difficulty in staying away from the easy associations of the club. I always rather liked Jules until his tendency to shove people around after a couple of drinks became too pronounced. Since he was only 16 or 17 at the time he was in LA, I have little doubt but what he has grown into a pretty nice fellow. Certainly there was room for improvement.

Oh boy. The next chapter will be about the feud. Hold onto your hats, folks!

Chapter Six -oOo- Thunder Over Paradise

With my election to the directorship of the LASEC, the stormy affairs of the club became my own peculiar responsibility, or so I felt at the time. I had criticised the club savagely though constructively; here I had been given the driver's seat, and so it seemed up to me to try to do something about the conditions which I had deplored.

Trouble broke out almost at once.

- TO BE CONTINUED -

|||||

THE SF CON

By Karina Girsdansky and Joe D. Siclari; Tune: "Cabaret" from the same.

~~What good is sitting~~ alone in your room,
Come hear the authors ~~speak~~.
Life is an SF con, old friend,
Come to the SF con!

Put down the records, the books, and the tube,
It's time for a holiday.
Life is an SF con, old friend,
Come to the SF con!

Come taste the bheer;
Come meet the fans;
~~Come to the con~~; start celebrating,
Right this way, the party's waiting.

What good's permitting some Mundane affairs,
To wipe all your smiles away?
Life is an SF con, old friend,
Come to the SF con!

I used to know a trufan known as Roscoe,
With whom I shared a Single room at Boskone.
He wasn't looking much for fannish power,
As a matter-of-fact, he partyed by the hour.

The day he died the SMOF's all came to snicker;
Well, that's what comes from too much girls and liquor.
But when I talked to him last on the phone,
He was the happiest fan I'd ever known.

I think of Roscoe to this very day,
I remember how he'd turn to me and say:
What good is sitting all alone in your room?
Come, hear the authors speak.
Life is an SF con, old friend,
Come to the SF con!

And as for me,
And as for me,
I made my mind up back at Boskone,
When I go, I'm going like Roscoe.

Start by admitting from program to room,
This all will soon be gone.
Life is an SF Con, old friend;
It's only an SF con, old friend,
And I love an SF con!

YESTERDAY'S FANNISH HISTORY

Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Despite a fannish career which goes back 40 years I have never before read Laney's classic. I find it of much interest.

I'm sending you this material, particularly BONFLARE and FANDOM SPEAKS, because you seem to have inherited the mantle of fannish historical custodian. It is much better that the material be in the hands of someone actively interested in fannish history than to have it gathering dust in my file drawers. Laney mentions, en passant, the incidents which inspired BONFLARE. Perhaps you can find someone more familiar with the events than I am to do an article on the Ackerman-AMAZING STORIES feud. ((The zines you sent along with others I've been reading have given me a better perspective on the period - reading the BONFLARE that Tucker sent out gave a feeling of reality to the events mentioned thish on page 32. I may try to e-stencil that two page issue for the next Fanhi. I have been collecting fanzines and using them for research even xerox copies. I am interested in the material even more than having the original zines.))

We've been playing the numbered fandom game for years now. Let me offer a somewhat different point of view based not so much on "focal points" but on the interests of the people involved.

In 1926 when Gernsback brought out AMAZING STORIES he attracted a group of readers who were primarily science oriented. Not only were they loyal fans of AMAZING they also belonged to a variety of science clubs (amateur sceince for the most part) and conducted their own experiments in radio, rocketry, chemistry, etc. We might label this group as First Fandom.

Following them came the more politically oriented fans of the 1930s (a very political time in history) who looked to science fiction for the models of their utopias.

The 40s brought in a group who were more or less a blending of the two previous groups.

Following these, in the 1950s, there came those whose primary interest was fandom itself. They are the group usually labeled as "Sixth Fandom" although I think that label is erroneous. Incidentally, Walt Willis wasn't the first who thought fandom could be fun. Raym Washington had ideas along that line back in the early 40s. His fmz was called SCIENTIFUN.

The 60s began to bring the literary types into prominence with their interest in the stories as literature and the various types of experimental and non-traditional stories which came to be called the New Wave. One of their roots goes back to the late 40s/early 50s with the Elves', Gnomes' and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society which sprang up around UC, Berkeley and met regularly at the Garden Library.

Which brings us to the present and the wide variety of fans we have today. If there is anything primary here it is the academic interest in SF and fandom where the literature is being examined as far down as the grammar school level and fandom itself

is under the microscope of numerous would-be sociologists. There is also the ever growing convention mania to be considered.

I'll leave it to someone more knowledgeable than I to flesh out those bones should they so desire. It is, I think, a bit wider view than the usual numbered fandom commentary.

Robert Bloch, 2111 Sunset Crest Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90046

In this issue I was particularly pleased to see the start of the AH! SWEET IDIOCY! reprint - not an easy thing to turn up after all these years. And there's something about Ray Nelson's artwork which seems specially appropriate for your cover.

Since I lack an eidetic memory, I find your 'zine helps me to recall names and events long since forgotten, and I thank you for it.

Not that it's all forgotten: last summer, at the Rivercon, Tucker and I sat down with about a dozen fans and two bottles of memory-restorer, and reminisced about oldtime fandom for over five hours. And that was only the clean stuff! ((This is the most frustrating letter. Tell me what brand of memory restorer, please! JoeD))

Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place North, Seattle, WA 98103

AH, SWEET IDIOCY! is not so interesting as I remembered it, what with all the details about forgotten friends of Laney's, and all the details about THE ACOLYTE. And I think if Laney hadn't found fandom, he might have found something else to bury himself in, like jazz. His "Preamble" makes me think he never really grasped how deeply he was sucked into fandom. When he says, "And it always had seemed silly to me to write anything on paper when it is just as easy to put it on stencils," he is saying something only a fan could understand. Even the most revealing of autobiographic writers wouldn't think of putting their writings on stencil. ((I also think Laney was in fandom deeper than he would dare to believe, even after he "quit". He did almost an equal amount of printed fanac after ASI as he did before. As late as 1955 or '56 he wrote a LoC to PSYCHOTIC disparaging a claim that he had a profound influence on fans and fandom. To the last he enjoyed being the Cynic of fandom. JoeD))

The rest of the material was mildly interesting, most of it being on that academic subject, Numbered Fandoms. I noted Rich Brown's remarks about Arnie Katz with a grin (partially because those remarks were in Rich's own Hasty style (as opposed to the Genial style he uses in apazines)) because if Rich reacts so violently to Arnie's assessment of QUIP, how would he feel about Arnie's awarding to himself and Brooklyn Fandom an entire fannish era? Arnie explained to me once that he and Joyce Katz, Bill Kunkel, Charlene Komar, Ross Chamberlain, Chris Couch, Rich Brown (I think, Rich), Jay Kinney and a few others formed the focal point for (I think) Minth Fandom. Obviously this was a group with a common interest, and the fanzines they produced were of a "school" (though with great individual differences), but whether fandom as a whole thought of them as a "focal point" is questionable. (Of course, when a group of fans define mainstream fandom as, roughly, "that group of fans doing what we think of as fannish and worth doing," that limits things a good deal, and the claim becomes acceptable. All the fans they (or at least Arnie) cared about thought of Brooklyn Fandom as a focal point, so it was.))((If I had realized the Brooklyn Insurgents were a fannish era, I would have paid more attention. They just did not have a wide enough influence to be called a focal point even if they did have the fanzine. JoeD))

Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, PA 19037

I was fascinated to read part of AH! SWEET IDIOCY after having heard about it for so long. But my major & overwhelming question upon doing so is: Was Laney a nut case?

I get the distinct impression from all I read by and about fans of that era, that fans of the 1940's and earlier were a fanatical and narrow-minded lot (particularly if one takes the attitudes of THE IMMORTAL STORM as at all typical), but it seems to me that in swearing off fandom, Laney proved to be the most fanatical of all. The document certainly makes good reading, but I suspect the only real history in it comes between the lines, when Laney, in a calm moment, is talking about someone he didn't get upset about. Otherwise we may have a psychological case study of the writer -- even if the society was less tolerant about such things, his fanatical hatred of homosexuals probably tells us something about his insecurity, and his inability to make decisions or get a grip on his life -- or at least his conviction that this was what was going on -- and his need to blame it all on the evil, mind-dulling effects of ~~psycho~~ fandom may tell us more. It's interesting that he describes several sane and well-balanced fans like Rimel and Warner, all the while insisting that fandom is ruinous. In any case, I can't always take Laney at his word and wonder what was really going on. It would be interesting to see modern-day responses to the piece by those people mentioned in it who are still living.

As history, I suppose it contains a lot of valuable information, but has to be taken with a grain of salt, the way a modern historian of Rome must keep in mind that Tacitus hated emperors and dredged up anything he could against them. The events may have actually happened, but the character portraits and motivations are open to question.

I wonder if the concept of numbered fandoms doesn't fall apart because of its dependence on specific fanzines and fans rather than just the general mood of fandom at a given time. My experience over the past 12 years or so is that there are running controversies or foci of discussion which last a while, bring certain individuals and zines into the fore, then die down. I started in 1967. By then the New Wave/Old Wave thing had already started. J.J. Pierce had a crusade going. PSYCHOTIC/SFR was important. This died down about 1970, and the centers of interest changed. After a while, there was the fannish/sercon thing, apparently a recurring theme. I remember one time about 1973 or so noticing that there was virtually no place to publish a book review in fanzines, when there had been countless places a couple years earlier. (And a couple years later there were all-review zines, when serconism became respectable again, or, more likely, a new generation of fans had arisen who had never heard it wasn't.) After this fizzled out inconclusively, as fan controversies always do, there was nothing for a while, then a big to-do about Feminism, which is petering out now... (You may decide for yourself if there is an atrocious pun in the previous sentence.) Of course simultaneously we've had a fannish revival, and the emergence of professional sercon fanzines like the new series SFR and STARSHIP. (The equivalents of the past, like INSIDE, didn't pay for their material, but we'll never get back to such innocence. Once you start paying for something, it's hard to get it for free again.)

All of which goes to show that if we define periods of fandom this way, it is no more precise than any other. Real historical eras are fuzzy around the edges. When Romulus Augustus was deposed in 476, life in Italy remained about the same, and the people running things were pretty much the same. Those living in Gaul, Spain, and Britain didn't hear about the allegedly momentous event for years, and they could have cared less. But some 1½ millenia later some historian pronounces it The Fall of The Roman Empire. Only because they had to define it somehow and that was as good a boundary as any.

Getting back to fandom, we have to realize that the most important historical fact about the fandom of our own day is that maybe something like .05% of fans have any awareness of fandom's past or even that there is such a thing as a concept of numbered fandoms. And most of them may be only vaguely aware of the Controversies I mentioned earlier. For example, I was talking on the phone tonight to one of the Phila. SF Society officers who wanted the Hugo results to put on the meeting notice. She had not heard of Geis' SFR. She did not know who Rotsler is. And this is someone

closely involved in local fandom, who has attended many conventions and club meetings. ((One of the main reasons for this zine is to give fans a feeling for their past. Too often fans are inflated with the idea of fandom as an "in-group" without knowing its origins and traditions, the spirit of which is often antithetical to the type of fan that claims the relationship the loudest. JoeD))

So my theory is that we are living in the fandom of the Amorphous Mass. It hasn't got a number, or if it does, no one knows what it is.

Larry Farsace, Box 1101, Rochester, NY 14603

My GOLDEN ATOM, you may be interested to know, was one of the first centers to have access to Lovecraft's posthumous mss (courtesy of Barlow, Lovecraft's initial executor), the other two being Laney and of course, the only one well known, Arkham House.

With regard to the present status of the ATOM, I'm always planning a new issue, but never seem to get to completing it; however, there have been a dozen one-shot "Golden Atom Publications" through the years, for example, the first 7 Star Poems, published for the Providence Con - so the name is kept alive, anyway. It occurs to me, you probably never read the reviews of GA as "the most glamorous fmz" ever published - you could ask Ackerman and H. Warner on this. Ackerman was the one who nicknamed the mag "Lylda."

But I've always considered this work as oriented to firsts. For example, Ackerman reviewed the 1st Worldcon for Lylda. Moskowitz contributed the first Who's Who in Fandom. Any study of firsts in SF has to go back to the '55 article by Harold Hersey in the gala printed issue with acknowledgement of the Thrill Book as the first SF mag (which claim is still being blacklisted by Amazing Stories). Then there is Sprague deCamp's reference to the RECLUSE as the first fmz in the world, in his HPL biog; this only echoing my observation and claim in the GOLDEN ATOM.

Alexis A. Gilliland, 4030 8th St. South, Arlington, VA 22204

FANHISTORICA is a remarkable fanzine, although it perhaps ought to be called FANOSTALGIA. Susan Wood's cri de coeur "...I (am) now part of a legendary fannish past..." is one with which I empathize. What could be more historical than Laney's AH! SHEET IDIOCY! ? Remote, distant epochal (or dissonant epical?) events, right? Curious, I meet people I know. Makes one feel like an ant in quick-setting amber, it does. Russell Chauvenet, for instance. I met him in the DC Chess League in the late fifties. He played first or second board for the National Security Agency chess team, and two of his best players, Mitchell and Martin, defected to Russia, causing considerable embarrassment in the intelligence community. To my surprise I also encountered him at the '64 or '65 Disclave where he told me he had coined the word "fanzine". Or Bill Evans, who was in the Thermochemistry Section of the National Bureau of Standards when I went to work there in 1956, and who was the only person I knew at Discon I when I attended in 1963. Bill was treasurer for both Discon I and Discon II, as well as (eventually) Bob Pavlat's step-father-in-law.

How can you seriously pretend to history when you have to worry about your subjects suing you for libel? ((Libel? Ghod, has any tender-hearted fan ever said anything libelous about another fan -- the idea is horrifying! JoeD))

There is no WAHF list this time because in the two year interim between issues most of the letters have been laid to rest.

"Laney's A Liar"

by Sam Moskowitz

((This article was excerpted from a lengthy letter from Sam (other selections are in the letters). Although it has been edited to appear separately, the phrasing has been kept in its original informal style. Laney developed some bitter enemies through his outspoken condemnation of what to most was just a hobby. Most of them did not bother to reply or felt too intimidated to do so. To present another view of Laney, I'm using this piece and seeking out a few others. To those who object to this piece on the grounds that the accusations are unsupported and written long after Laney has any chance to reply, I can only point out that many of the people Laney portrays in an unfavorable light were long gone from the fanish scene and his accusations were also unsubstantiated. Sam's comments reflect his own opinions and not mine and for those who disagree with him I invite your comments. JoeD))

I do not think AM! SWEET IDIOCY! is worth reprinting. I read it in the original, then again when it was reprinted complete by Richard Eney in A SENSE OF FAPA in 1962. It is an incredible bore. It promises revelations that it never reveals. It is bloated with self-importance not justified by any of the facts. It pretends at preciseness (for example: "She left the room, and about 6:00 o'clock reappeared with Ackerman." Then, two paragraphs below will state: "The FAPA election for the 1944-45 fiscal year took place at about this time.").

Laney was an habitual liar, Therefore, little can be trusted in his statements. Psychologically, he was more screwed up than most of those he come down hard on. A failure in life, he never made it on any job; a failure in marriage with a series of them; a complete strikeout in human relationships and a failure with AM! SWEET IDIOCY!, which he later admitted.

He should be remembered for THE ACOLYTE which was a truly outstanding and literary fan magazine. Its policy was in tune with the times with its focus on H.P. Lovecraft and his school of writers at the same time that Arkham House was in the ascendancy. Here, he had the early guidance of Duane W. Rimel and Franklin Lee Baldwin, both deeply versed in the weird side of the field and they had even been in correspondence with Lovecraft. With a combination of fiction, poetry, essays and articles by outstanding figures in the field, appealing to the collectors who were also on the rise in the Forties with his reviews of old books, news developments in the field and receptivity to scholarly articles, he produced an excellent product.

His decision to quit the magazine in 1946 was due to his feeling that he had failed in his aim which was "the furtherance of a literate approach to fantastic literature. I do not feel that THE ACOLYTE, in its present form and under its present setup is able to advance this aim any further."

The real reason for his discouragement was the appearance of A. Langley Searles' FANTASY COMMENTATOR, composed entirely of non-fiction, and which set the highest

standards of criticism, research and reference ever seen in a fan magazine before or since. It was a completely different magazine than Laney's but Searles had a far higher intelligence, far better education, infinitely better knowledge of the fantasy field and one of the best book collections of his period. It made a sham of any pretense at intellect or knowledge on Laney's part. It was the kind of a magazine Laney would have liked to have produced but was incapable of. He refused to accept the fact that THE ACOLYTE was truly unique and worthwhile in its own right.

Contributing to Laney's self-immolation was his idea that he was the reincarnation of the critical side of Ambrose Bierce. He skewered hapless fans right and left in print for faults often more aggravated in his own personality than in theirs. Searles had begun a bibliography of fantasy books (incorporated later in Blieler's Checklist) which was distributed as a supplement to FANTASY FICTION FIELD. Laney offered to print and distribute the Checklist for Searles, but when Searles refused, Laney said he would produce his own. Searles threatened a lawsuit if Laney picked up the material which was already printed. Laney then devoted an editorial to calling Searles a "Dog in the manger." When Searles said he was prepared to bring suit for libel, Laney was forced to print a groveling retraction. It was almost like an adult (Searles) punishing a child (Laney) and it is my feeling that Laney never psychologically recovered. Laney had discovered that not all fans were emotionally insecure.

One of Laney's last public forays was an exchange between him and myself in 1952 when in quoting his own letters to me I proved him a multiple liar as well as a dispicable editor because he had reworked an article I had written for him on Weinbaum so that it would praise the stories of his preference instead of my criticizing them!

Laney was by nature a bully. He found in fandom many fans unable to protect themselves against the type of ammunition thrown by iconoclast 'Bran and Bitter' Bierce. Those fans not attacked enjoyed reading of someone else being gored and roasted in print as long as it was not themselves and most of them had more joy in the victim's discomfort than in justice or the truth. After itemizing the scores and scores of pages of material he had contributed to the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA), it was very funny to have a sincere, hardworking collector-fan like Walter Coslet receive this Laney comment: "Why Coslet's nothing but one big reproductive organ."

Like many bullies, Laney was great at dishing it out but he couldn't take it. Whenever he ran into a determined foe, his shameful collapse was almost embarrassing.

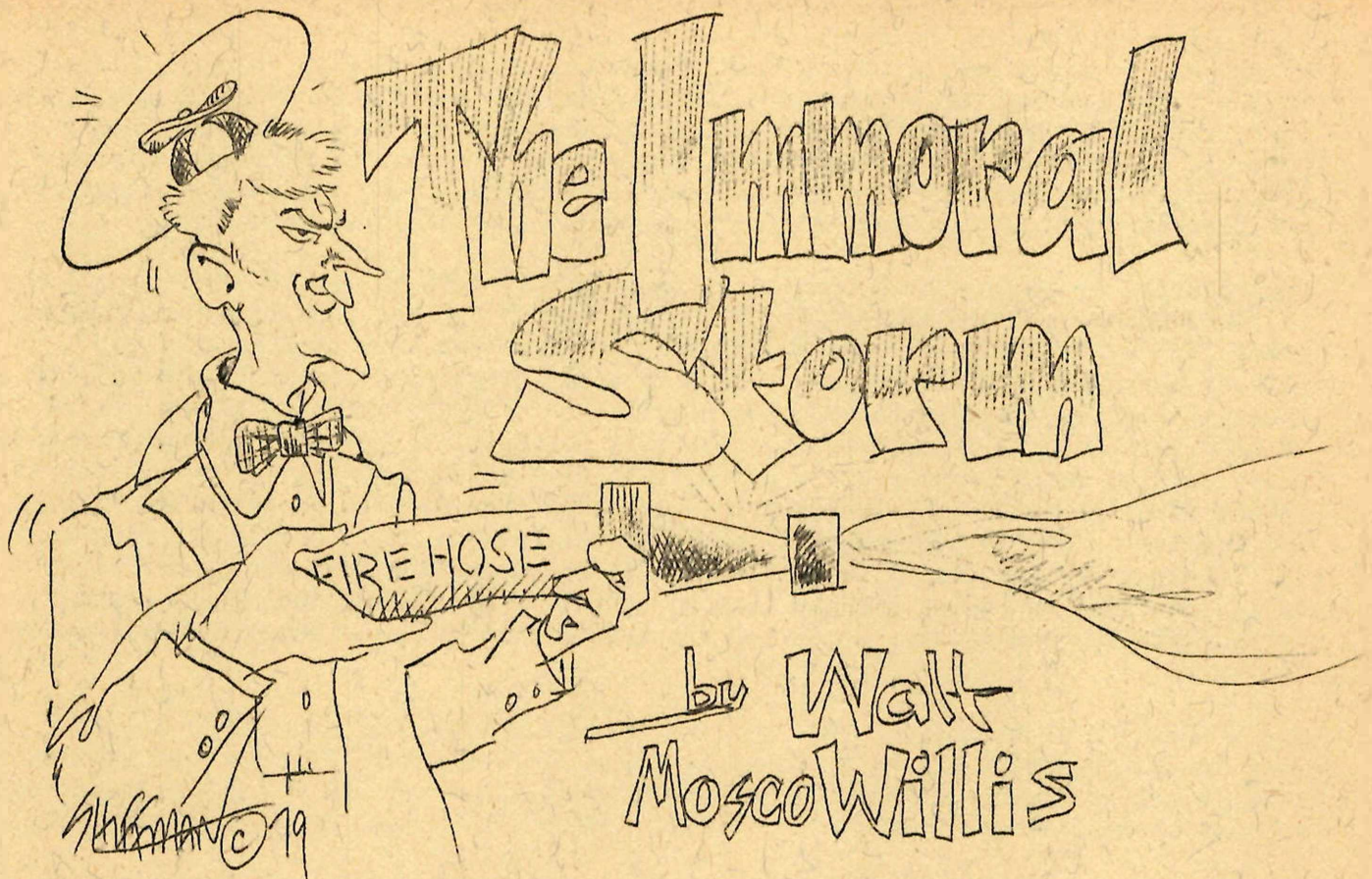
That is why he left fandom. The masquerade was over.

—Sam Moskowitz, 2/18/79

((Fanzine is the normal name for a magazine of the type you are now reading but it wasn't always so. Here from VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION #14, May, 1941, edited by Forrest J Ackerman & Morajo, is a short excerpt from a letter from Rajocz. That is the only name given and I find no other mention of this person in any of the zines or reference works I have. Can anyone tell me more about him/her? By the way, VOM was a letterzine which had 50 issues after it survived the death of the fanzine, IMAGINATION, of which it was originally the letter column. JoeD))

"I notice that you use fmz as the abbreviation for fan magazines. Now, as you know, I think I started it all with 'fanag' which was soon followed by someone else introducing 'fanzine' and someone else with 'fmz'. However 'fmz' is the abbreviation for fan magazine and 'fanzine' & 'fanag' are supposed to be words meaning fan magazine. Of the two words meaning fan magazine, 'fanzine' is the better...and will not be mistaken for a combination of fan and nag."

--Rajocz, 1941



Reprinted from OPUS #2, February, 1951, edited by W. Max Keasler.

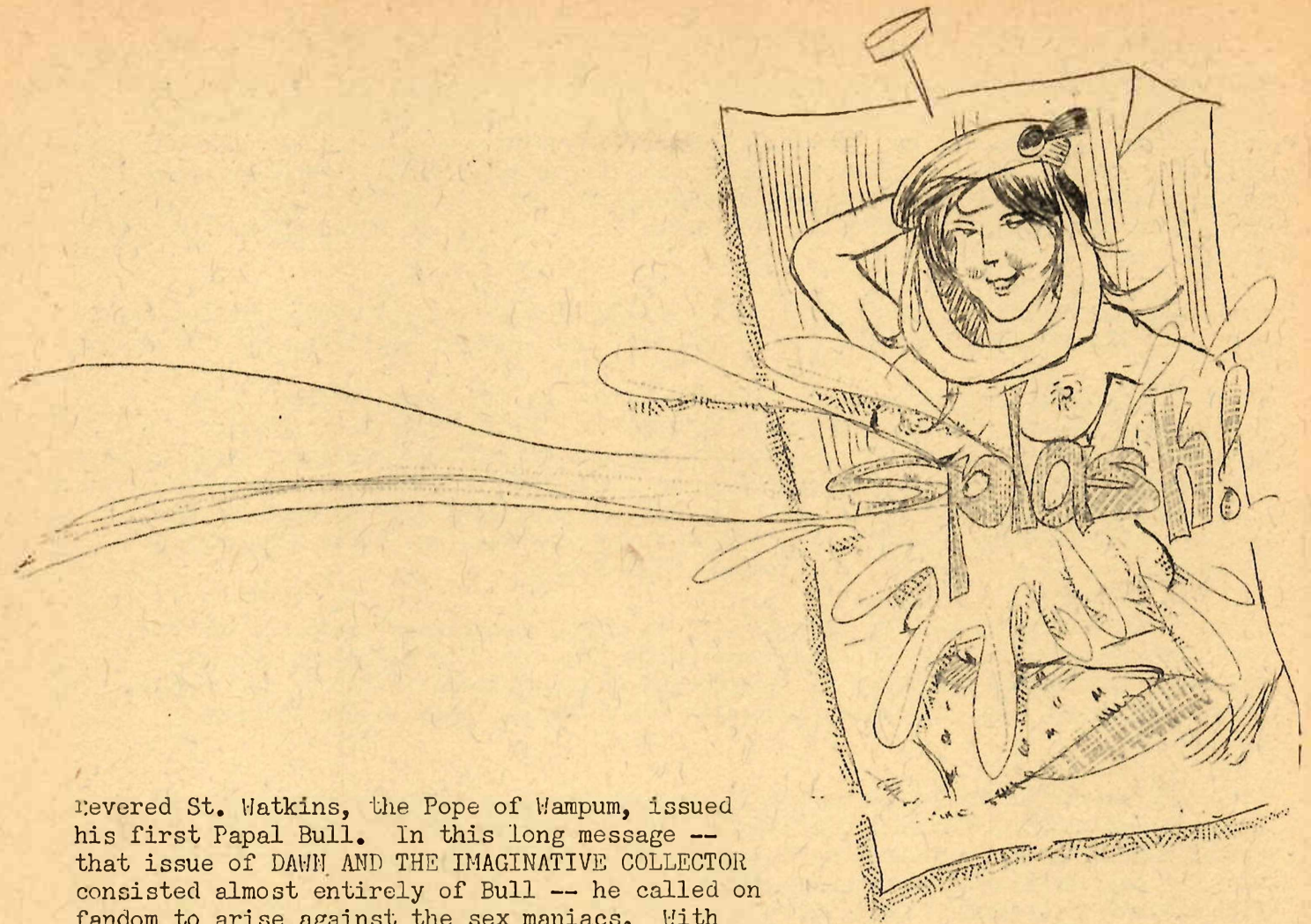
((The column that Willis is most famous for is "The Harp That Once or Twice. It is probably the most famous column ever to appear in a fanzine. It ran nearly 15 years in three famous fanzines, QUANDRY, OOPSLA, and WARHOON. And a good case could be made that it was the Harp columns that made these zines stand out so regularly. I was asked at a con recently if I was going to reprint any of the columns or the Harp trip reports. The answer is no, for two reasons. First, Richard Bergeron is supposed to be printing all the Harp material in one giant volume. Secondly, there is enough material of Walt's besides the Harps that is worth reprinting that I am satisfied to wait for Bergeron's publication as I hope you are. If I find some definite column that transcends all the others I'll probably be tempted but...

"The Immoral Storm" has a large number of topical references but my hope is that most readers will have read past issues of Fanhistorica (#1, 2, and now 3) and A WEALTH OF FABLE and be able to understand the references in this savage satire without being interrupted by footnotes. (And if you haven't read them, why not? See ad on bacover.)

Coming soon: the next Willis reprint will be the ten chapter pre-trip report WILLIS DISCOVERS AMERICA, as annotated by Walt for OMPA and illustrated by Stu Shiffman. JoeD))

To us in the 95½ Fandom, Era 17, Period 49, Stage 63 (knock Wollheim and ask Taurasi) the shattering events of the year 1952 seem as real as they did when they first took place -- perhaps even more real. Few of those who took part in the great battle to clean up the Filth Fandom can have realised that their efforts would have brought about the tidy little fandom of today, with its three antiseptically clean fanmags, SOPERATION SANITAS, SAINT, and FLUSHING NEWSLETTER, with their three high-minded subscribers, Kleen Slater, James 'Lily' White, and Larry Newsoap. A fandom without the slightest vestige of so-called 'humour', sober, responsible, and kept firmly in order by the paternal discipline of the prozines.

Ragnarok, 'The Twilight of the Bawds', opened quietly. Towards the end of 1951 our



Revered St. Watkins, the Pope of Wampum, issued his first Papal Bull. In this long message -- that issue of DAWN AND THE IMAGINATIVE COLLECTOR consisted almost entirely of Bull -- he called on fandom to arise against the sex maniacs. With admirable restraint and the better part of valour, he forebore to name these fans, but there can be little doubt that he was referring to F. E. G. Davis and his fanmag INSINUATIONS FROM F. E. G. and to the notorious Keasler of BANVARIETY. Fans of today will find this hard to believe, but these blackguards actually went so far as to publish anything they thought interesting or amusing, even when it dealt with s-x. Let us be thankful that nothing like this can happen today, now that fan-eds have realised that the only way to be sure of not giving offence is to avoid everything interesting or amusing and confine themselves to reprinting from DAWN AND THE IMAGINATIVE COLLECTOR.

Fandom's response was at first very galling to St. Watkins. Like many other prophets he was stoned by the unbelievers. But he braved the shower of gallstones and finally aid arrived from an unexpected quarter. He lifted his eyes towards the setting sun and to his side there strode that staunchest of allies, none other than our beloved St. Francis.

St. Francis de Laney had for many years been waging a lone war against certain aspects of s-x in fandom. Without fear or favour, he had spoken out on every occasion when it seemed appropriate, and on many when it did not. No considerations of personal friendship or enmity lay behind his disinterested campaign -- the principle was all. So, when St. Watkins made his clarion call for the suppression of all s-x in fandom, St. Francis, in the fabulous QUANDRY, invoked his help in putting down the particular form of s-x he had dedicated his life to eradicating. This was a considerable sacrifice for St. Francis, for he did not see eye to eye with St. Watkins on other matters, but he had not spared fandom in his unremitting propaganda, and now he did not spare himself.

But even now fandom was reluctant to turn from its evil ways. The voice of St. Francis had been heard daily throughout the land denouncing the evil practices of

certain fans, but since he never thought to tell fandom exactly who the offenders were, fandom was as a loss to know whom to cast out. They were eager to do so, if only so that St. Francis and themselves could have some peace, but although they carefully studied every fanzine for signs of a fundamental bias towards some base subject, the only ones they could find were edited by St. Francis and his fiends. The fan in the street was baffled. The march of CFF seemed to have ended in a cul de sac.

A miracle was called for. And then, like a sign from heaven, it came. Fandom was rocked to its foundation by the most startling disclosure of all time, the H3F Scandal.

It is interesting to speculate how long the infamy in the inner circles of H3F might have continued had they not been betrayed by one of their most trusted henchmen. The rest of the H3F Directorate had been fiendishly cunning. They had devoted just enough time to a mock attack on BANVARIETY to prevent fandom asking too loudly what they were doing, and they had taken special care to prevent any copies of the NATIONAL FANTASY FAN from reaching European fans whose keen perceptions they had, as it proved, good reason to dread.

It was doubly unfortunate for them that R. C. Higgs' conscience somte him at the very date when the October '51 issue was being prepared, for a strange accident had made it possible for Higgs to destroy the whole cesspool of H3F by the simple, if unprecedented, act of sending copies of the Official Organ to the European members.

During Christmas of that year copies of the October issue came into the hands of European H3F members Harris and Willis. From that moment the H3F Directorate was doomed. Both these fans would have perused their copies very carefully in any case, if only because they were apparently worth a dollar, but on this occasion they subjected the entire magazine to the closest semantic analysis. It was obvious to them that Higgs must have had some ulterior motive in sending them voting papers and literature for an election which had already taken place.

It was Harris who first noticed the all-revealing sentence that spelled the downfall of the vast sink of iniquity that was the H3F Directorate. Higgs had worded the sentence so cunningly that while it would escape the notice of the rest of the H3F Directors in their licentious stupor, it conveyed a message to clean living and keen minded fen like Harris and Willis that was unmistakeable in its stark and dreadful clarity. The fateful sentence read:

"Ed. note. In fairness to both members running for the office of president, I suggest that the winner of the office choose the looser to fill the office of secretary-treasurer."

With the revelation that the criterion of success in H3F was looseness, fandom rose up in arms against the H3F Directorate. The whole seething mass of dreadful corruption was dragged into the light. St. Francis exposed the real reason for Sneary's interest in Young Fandom, Ellsberry exposed the wild night life of Upton, Wyoming, Les and Es Cole revealed the hideously perverted mind that lay behind the lace frills and odd formats of G. M. Carr's APazines, and Jack Irwin exposed the White Slave traffic being carried on in the KAYMAR TRADER.

All these fiends were at once run out of fandom, along with Keasler, Rotsler, Nelson, Bloch, Burbee, Hoffatt, Tucker, and Ackerman. Shortly afterwards Harris and Willis voluntarily retired from fandom, closely followed by Hoffman, McCain, Vick, Burvell, Ellsberry, Boggs, Fabun, Venable, Ish, Pesetsky, the Coles, Riddle, Conner, Silverberg, Hickman, and several others. Laney, from force of habit, brought up the rear.

With nothing left in fandom but the very cream of the cream -- the very clots -- peace reigned supreme. The fanzines that remained were combined into the four best, in accordance with the Watkins Plan. But within a year a terrible catastrophe struck Watkins. The joint Editorial Board was enlarged to two, and DAWN AND THE IMAGINATIVE COLLECTOR was considered unworthy to be published. Rather than continue it as a hootchzine, Watkins took a short course from Bob Tucker and successfully committed suicide.

So at the present day only one of these great leaders remains in our midst. In a recent interview for FLUSHING NEWSLETTER, St. Francis announced, reflectively sticking pins into a wax doll, that he was at last going to retire from ex-fandom. "I may still insult a mere dozen or so fans every day," he explained, "but no more, I am getting old, and the strain of ex-fandom is becoming too much for me. I shall become an active fan like Duggie Fisher and have a little rest for a change. Besides I seem to have lost interest. It was all very well when I was fighting the good fight to rid fandom of perverts, but now all the homos have left fandom." He looked dazed. "I feel somehow as if the bottom had dropped out of my life."

--Walt Willis, 1950

((All of you have been reading Fanhistorica and A Wealth of Fable and other things about our great fannish past. And you believed it all, didn't you? Well it was all a hoax! Fandom doesn't exist at all. Here in the culprit's own words is what really happened: JoeD))

PROXYBOO Ltd. by Walt Willis (Reprinted from SLANT #4, Autumn, 1950)

Some time ago we began secretly to circularise new fans, getting their names from the prozine letter columns. 'You too can be a BHF!' we said. 'You want egoboo? We can supply it. For modest fees we will do your fanning for you. We undertake all the duties of an actifan, letters in your name to prozines, fanzines and fellowfans, and publication on your behalf of any type of fanzine. Why work your brain to the bone when you can make use of our specialised services? Write at once to PROXYBOO Ltd...'

The project was an immediate success, and the time has come for us to make a startling disclosure. WE ARE FANDOM! Daily for some ten years fleets of vans have brought us sacks of letters to be answered on our battery of typewriters, and taken away great stacks of FANSCIENCES, GORGONS, OPERATION FANTASTS, SLANTS, SPEARHEADS, etc. etc. for distribution by our customers, with countless letters, articles, columns, stories, poems, artwork, editorials, etc carrying the names of Ackerman, Boggs, Laney, Grossman, Sneary, Riddle, and dozens of others, each of whom thinks he is our only client.

But all this must stop. After today we regret to announce that there will be no more fandom, except for some poor wretches who were unable to keep up with their payments. We are sorry not to be able to finish off our various 'controversies', like Laney-Metchette and Banister-Boggs (especially when the bidding was getting so high) but pressure of work has forced us to close the fandom department. Our prozine commitments are getting far too heavy.

FANHISTORICA PRESS

A WEALTH OF FABLE

(THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM IN THE 1950'S)

BY

HARRY WARNER, JR.

★

INTRODUCTION BY WILSON TUCKER

ILLUSTRATED BY SOME OF THE BEST ARTISTS IN FANDOM

★

PRINT RUN: A LIMITED EDITION OF ONLY 1000 NUMBERED COPIES.

★

MAIL ORDERS: \$10.00 postpaid

Fanhistorica, edited with commentaries and indices by Joe Siclari
1.50 each; 5 for \$5.00 (back issues may be included)

- 1. With material by: Hoffman, Spear, Silverberg, Warner, Boggs, Buchanan, etc.
- 2. With material by: Laney, Willis, White, Tucker, Brown, etc. (temporarily o/p)
- 3. Special Laney issue with material by: Laney, Burbee, Warner, Willis, Moskowitz, and others.
- 4. With material by: Laney, Carr, Soper, Burbee, Rogers, etc.
- 5. With material by: Laney, Willis, Tucker, Rogers, etc.

WANTED (to buy or borrow for research): FANCYCLOPEDIA I; WHY IS A FAN; BANE 1,7;
FANBOY #1,11; FANHISTORY 1-4; ROSEBUD Vol. II #1; CHANTICLEER 4-6; OPUS 1-3;
JEREMIAH 1-6; and single issues or runs of QUANDRY, WARHOON, PSYCHOTIC, FANAC,
AFC, WYFLEN, RETRIBUTION, RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, VOID, VEGA, VAMPIRE, LIGHTHOUSE,
INFUSIO, COPIA, CONFUSION, ENTROPY, QUTP, XERO, GRUE, SPACEWARP, SPACESHIP,
LY ZOMBI, BLOOMINGTON NEWSLETTER, SCIENCE FANTASY REVIEW 14-17 (specify issues)

MAKE ALL CHECKS AND MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO:

JOE SICLARI

4599 N. W. 5th AVENUE
BOCA RATON, FL 33431