

# EVANHISTORICA

#5





# THE AGOLYTE



Alva ROGERS



# FanHistorica #5

November, 1996

*FanHistorica* comes to you from Joe Siclari & Edie Stern, 4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33431-4601. Email: jsiclari@icanect.net ©1996  
*FanHistorica* is available for contributions of articles and art, trade, substantial or printed letters of comment, \$4.00, and *especially for old fanzines*.  
I am always looking for old fanzines.

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## FanHistorically Speaking

— Joe Siclari

With this issue *FanHistorica* reaches its majority. This would be the 21st Annish if I had kept publishing. This issue was scheduled to appear before LAcon — LAcon II in 1984. I have had to revise the contents a bit. Originally, Rob Hansen's first version of his *History of British Fandom* was included. It has since been published in a much longer version.

So, this is my foray back to doing a regularly published fanzine. The main focus thish is on Laney to get some of that material out of the way. And the next issue will be as well — with the rest of *ASI* and some commentary from others. I've been enjoying this; #6 is almost ready to go, so I don't think another decade will pass before it sees print. Following that, the focus will be on Walt Willis and Irish Fandom. A lot of the material for that issue is ready too. I have complete indices of *Slant*, *Hyphen*, *Toto* and related zines to publish as well as some reprints and new material.

For the first time in nearly 20 years, I

don't have a major Worldcon project in front of me. I am looking forward to researching and making available more fanhistorical material. I have #3 of the *Complete Quandry* almost ready to go if there is enough interest. Let me know if you would be interested. This was easy to pick — it will be the 100 page Quannish.

Edie says I always have to be starting new things, so I am working with a lot of good fen in putting a bunch of Fanhistorical material on the internet. Look for us at

<http://fanac.org>

on the world wide web. We have photos from the past, some fanzines, fan art and there's a lot more to be added. This project is just starting. Help and helpful suggestions are very much needed.

The content thish of *Fanhi* requires some comment. On the Timebinders list recently, there were several discussions *re* what makes a good fanzine. Laney's "Syllabus For a Fanzine" was suggested as required reading. I put it on-line at the Fanhistory site and I am

presenting it here as well. Laney provides a lot of good advice, often pointing out that he did not follow it himself as he was doing his major fanzine, *The Acolyte*. "Syllabus" was published two years after *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* so you can see that although he might have been critical of fandom, he had not completely disassociated himself.

I don't think that Laney really believed all the negative comments he made about how he handled the *Acolyte*. *The Acolyte* was a very good, if sometimes pretentious, fanzine. FTL was a very sercon fan whether it was about the literature or jazz or S-F fandom. He was both critical and highly involved in all he was interested in. He couldn't do anything half-way. It wasn't his style. (Maybe that's why I like him.) Remember, this was the man who professed that anything worth typing was worth putting on stencil.

When you read the "Syllabus", consider how anyone who had declared his split with fandom in a 130 page document could really leave a field that had been a major part of his life.

*Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* probably needs no introduction to the readers of this fanzine. After all, it is the single most notorious fan publication. For those of you who got rid of past issues of FanHistorica (trufannish shame on you!) and for those who never got the back issues, I hope to get it all back in print eventually. This installment and the last comprise the most vitriolic half of the publication. However, it is fairly obvious that despite his acid pen, FTL held a fairly high respect for early LASFans like MoRoJo, Yerke, and especially Freehafer — even 4sj. He just couldn't abide anyone disagreeing with Himself. He often depicts his own mistakes, showing the logic that led him to his errors, but he never seems to understand that a different opinion could logically come from another's point of view.

Also, this installment contains much on Laney's opinion of Paul Freehafer. Laney obviously felt very close to Freehafer. He felt that Yerke's memorial letter to fandom was the Outsiders' finest effort. It is reprinted here exactly as it appeared. Despite Laney's disparagement of the LASFS memorial efforts, other LA fans must have also thought very highly of him because years later part of the LASFS clubhouse became Freehafer Hall.

The last piece this time around has noth-

ing to do with Los Angeles. David Kyle's Fan Guest of Honor speech at the 1983 Worldcon in Baltimore was revised at the last minute. Dave felt that he, as the Fan GoH, had become only a token display toward our fannish heritage while the rest of the worldcon was given over to commercial interests — not only authors and artists but films and other commercial exhibits.

Instead of allowing him to give his speech in a prime program with pro guest of honor John Brunner, Dave's speech was relegated to a small room in the corner of the fan program area on the third floor of the convention center. To add to the perceived insult, his speech was not highlighted as a special item in the program and other major programs were scheduled opposite his speech. This assured poor attendance.

Dave was understandably upset. He told me he rewrote his speech the night before so that he could present some of his objections. There is no specific condemnation of the situation in the speech. It is largely a criticism of the commercially cynical way in which many of today's worldcons are run.

I don't agree with *all* of Dave's comments in the speech but I think it needed to be said. His opinions may be overly idealistic. But idealism and a positive "far look" are part of the Sense of Wonder and what first attracts us to S-F. And a positive view of fandom is the main thing that keeps us involved.

I've worked on over 200 conventions and I think that those who run them have to consider not only what they like nor even the success of the con; they need to look at its purpose and why a guest is selected.

Why select a Guest of Honor if he or she is going to be relegated to a token position? Why waste the money? Guests should be honored and programs built to showcase why they were selected.

Dave's speech needed to be given and it deserves a wider audience than he got at Constellation. He was one of the Guests of Honor and was basically ignored because the Fan GoH was not deemed important to the goals of the worldcon committee.

Convention workers particularly should read his speech. The original printing of the speech was by Kerry O'Quinn and *Starlog*, one of those commercial SF enterprises that might be subject to some of its criticism.

— Joe Siclari, 10/12/96

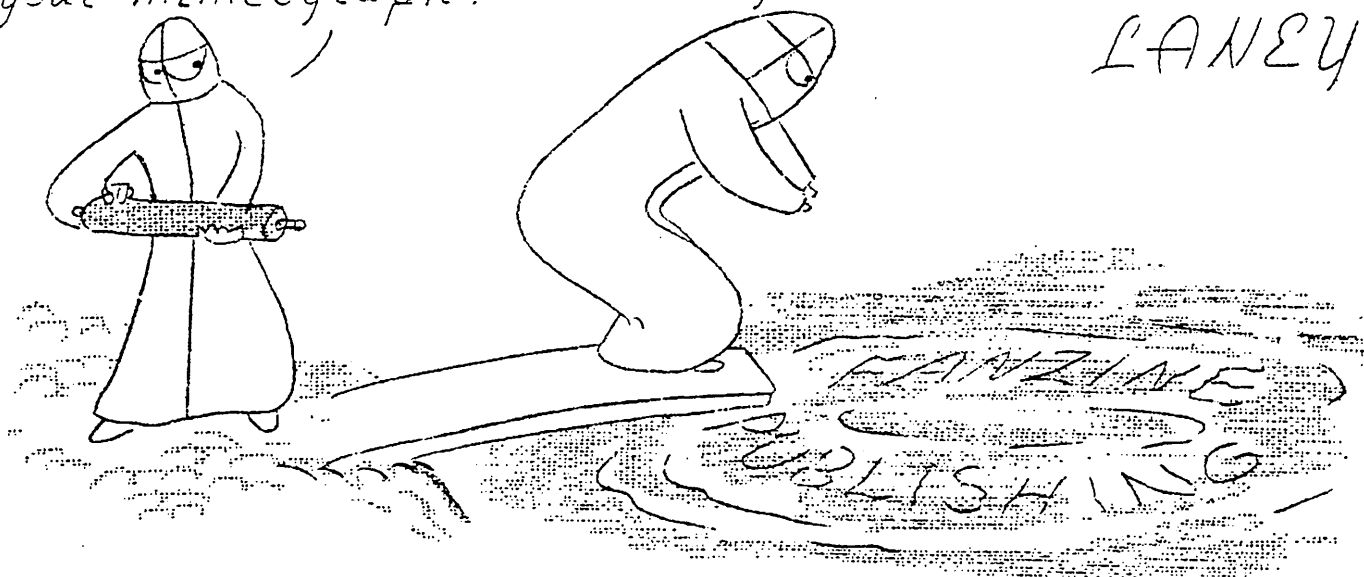


# SYLLABUS FOR A FANZINE

here's the roller for  
your mimeograph!

by

F. TOWNER  
LANEY



I've seen one putrid fanzine too many. Why is it, I wonder, that the critical person can take the fanzine output of twenty years and count the truly first-class titles on his fingers? I don't know how many fanzines there've been, but surely no fewer than 500 different items, some running for one issue and some for several dozen. I do know for a solid fact that my own fanzine accumulation crams a standard four drawer filing cabinet plus two apple boxes; yet I could easily span with one hand the little stack of genuinely high quality issues.

Of course, when one considers the people that have written and produced some of these fanzines it is easy to see why their product is so putrid. The juvenile who can produce anything of mature worth is obviously a phenomenon--for one Willie Watson there are bound to be a score of Kentucky Dreamers! The majority of fanzine titles have been created by teenagers, most of whom will in all likelihood be the most perfervid detractors of this stuff when they themselves reach maturity.

When we examine some of our oldsters, too, we have slight cause to wonder at the ineptness of their publications and writings. Since it has always been one of the cornerstones of the Lanez fanzine persona never to indulge in personalities, I of course will not mention the names of Evans, Dunkelberger, Moskowitz, and others of the older characters whose productions have so often been unacceptable. It might hurt some of their feelings.

But I believe that there are many publishers and would-be publishers of fanzines who are falling short chiefly because they have no clear idea how to go about producing a fanzine to end all fanzines.

I do not hold myself up as a paragon. My own subscription fanzine, THE ACOLYTE, set something of a record for unrelieved stuffiness, tedium, and sheer boresome stupidity. It took a fascinating subject, fantasy, and treated of it in as musty and insipid a fashion as could be imagined. Nor have my publishings apart from THE ACOLYTE indicated any great



prowess on my part. There have been occasional flashes in the dark; now and then I toss off a paragraph which seems to show faint promise. But for the most part, I'm either bumbling along wordily about nothing or blazing forth in frenetic attacks on something or someone not worth attacking.

Regardless of how far short my own stuff may fall, I've got many very definite ideas as to what a fanzine should or should not be.

The format and other physical aspects of a fanzine are unimportant. As long as the text is clearly reproduced with a minimum of typographical and other errors, the magazine is OK with me. It is nice to break up solid expanses of text, I suppose, but I never heard of anyone objecting to a book because it consisted of page after page of solid type. If the text is any good we'll read it anyway. The format can by no stretch of the imagination be made to compensate for unsatisfactory written material. You can fill an ornate candy box with little pellets of goat dung, and it is still goat dung. It does not ever become candy.

Justification is the most profound waste of time I have ever heard of. A printed magazine will of course be even-edged, but no matter what you do, the mimeograph will still turn out mimeography and the ditto ditto-graphy. Neither of these gadgets can turn out a product that even remotely resembles printing, so why try to make it look other than the typing which it is? An occasional genius comes along who can justify as he goes, but the average fanzine editor has to type a dummy to work from. This is simply one extra typing of all the contents of a fanzine, sheer useless drudgery. It is all very well to retype something if you are revising and improving it as you go along, but why just copy it? And if there is anything worse looking than an attempt at even-edging which didn't quite jell, I don't know what it is.

Most other format improvements do not repay the effort they take. Redd Boggs explained to me once that he was restencilling and rerunning an article of mine which had been slated for the ill-fated second issue of CHRONOSCOPE, because the running heads did not match. Y'know, until he told me that, I didn't even know his mags had running heads. I got down the Boggs file and looked, and sure enough--running heads on every page.

Multi-color work is nice, I suppose. All it indicates to me is another press run for some poor mimeographer--chewing up as much time and energy as it would have taken to run off an additional page of text.

Some people worry about "balance", whatever that is. What earthly difference does it make? If the material is good enough, you can carry six consecutive articles about the same subject one right after the other, and the reader will be annoyed only when he comes to the end and finds out there is no more. If the material isn't that good, you are just filling up space to no avail anyway.

The matter of artwork is something else. Now and then, a piece of artwork comes along which is worth publishing. The vast majority of fan artwork, however, is amateur imitations of pulp magazine illustrative work. As bad as the professional product usually is, there can be no justifications for half-baked imitations of it. Fandom has an occasional artist who knows how to draw--Stibbard, Rotsler, Watson, perhaps Hunt, maybe a couple of others. All the rest are doodlers. If you like doodlings, fine and dandy, but I don't. I don't even like them when they are signed "Finlay".

A big exception to all this about artwork is cartoons. Several otherwise unartistic fans are



quite competent cartoonists--notably Widner and Kennedy. And for that matter a good enough punchline can carry a pretty sad-sack picture. A lot of seriously intended fan illustrative work would be quite worthwhile if it carried snappy captions. I can think of a couple of lithographed ACOLYTE covers I'd give anything if I'd put snappers on them.

Getting constructive for a moment, here is the hap-hazard fuggheaded F. Towner Laney fanzine-throwing-together technique which has worked for 14 issues of ACOLYTE, 25 issues of FAN-DANGO, and about a dozen miscellaneous items.

If the magazine is pretty formal, with a set number of pages and a table of contents, I make a dummy. It consists of a sheet of typing paper folded once lengthwise with a number for each page in a vertical row down one edge. I assign the first 2 or 3 pages to editorials, ToC, etc., skip them for a bit, and start on page 3 or 4 with what I consider to be the best item I have. I stencil it as it comes, revising as I go if needbe. As each page is stencilled, I note on my dummy what is on it. According to fanoy, I fill up the balance of any unfilled page as I go. If I have most of a page left, I may start another article right then and there. More often, I'll try to pick a filler item that will just fit. In the case of ACOLYTE, I used poetry, most of which was rancid but it filled up the page. A good magazine would have a sheaf of specially written filler items of various lengths in the back-log. If I have a continuation of not more than 10 or 15 lines, I sometimes save it with the hope that some subsequent page will have a left-over space adequate for it. This system usually ends up with an unused blank space, so when I write the editorial (which is left to last) I just jam with myself that many lines further. The dummy is used in making the table of contents page, which of course is the last page of all to do. This system sounds (and is) hap-hazard, but I've never had to do a page over, and a magazine tossed together just as I've described was the number one fanzine for two years running. So I guess it works.

FAN-DANGO is totally informal. Preconceptions of each issue are invariably wrong. I've had 30 page projected issues that ended up with six, and one 8 page issue ran to 22 before I finally got it choked off. Most of FAN-DANGO is composed on the master-set, but the better items have usually been written and re-written as many as three or four times. The FAN-DANGO technique consists of putting articles on stencil or master-set as long as four months before the issue is due. When I wind an issue up, I put the pages in order, number them, and fill in the chinks if any. Pagination serves no purpose except to keep the issue from being fouled up in the run-off.

In connection with FAN-DANGO, perhaps I should mention my mailing comment technique. As I read the mailing, I mark anything that I think I may wish to comment on, and make a check on the cover of that magazine. I then go through the checked magazines, and make a list of references by subjects. Since I lost one of these lists, I've taken to making them on the envelope the mailing came in. When I make my actual comments, I skip a lot of the stuff I marked, but the stuff I do comment on I try to keep segregated by subject, so as to say all on the subject in one place. Of course I have the stuff before me as I write--no commenting from memory. For some reason, if I wait longer than a month after I've read the mailing, the odds are I'll skip it altogether.

Well, I've talked about format and given my own techniques--I guess I can't duck talking about the sort of stuff that should go in a fanzine.



It is a tough subject to verbalise about. Since we all have differing tastes, a lot of stuff that Matchette will love I will hate, and vice versa. Naturally, what I say about it will be colored by my own opinions. And there is the further difficulty that this is not a subject easily raised to the verbal level. Assaying the worth of a piece of prose is not dissimilar to criticising music. If it is "right", you know it, but you cannot always say why it is "right".

Perhaps a good place to start would be to discuss the editorial persona. By this I mean the extensionalisation of the editor himself--i. e. what kind of a guy do we think he is judging only by reading his fanzine. Up to a point, I think that the best editorial persona is built up when the editor permits free reign in his fanzine to all facets of his personality. If you are a fugghead, you'll have a better magazine if you suppress your fuggheadedness, but this is pretty hard to do. In other words, the more pleasing, or colorful, or striking your personality, the more of it you should show in your fanzine. And vice versa.

Almost without exception, the best fanzines show this tendency to a marked degree. Burbee shows in his publishings as a light-hearted, joking, witty character who reveres nothing and takes little seriously. He's even more so in the flesh. Widner's publishings betray an idealist with a sense of humor, a guy who takes seriously the task of making a better world and who at the same time can bust down the rafters with a jovian belly laugh. I read Widner's various fanzines for three years before I met him, and they turned out to be a thoroughly unblemished portrait of their producer. I don't think it coincidental that they rated so invariably high in the polls. Jack Speer's publishings indicate a deep interest in nearly everything, a preoccupation with accuracy which often leads to hairsplitting, a puckish sense of humor, an impatience with mediocrity, a rather strong sense of his own destiny, and a few other things. These are also notable traits in Speer as I've met him. I've not had the pleasure of meeting Harry Warner, but he has one of the best fanzine personas of anyone. His stuff reflects a deep and informed interest in music, sound critical judgement, a reflective interest in the foibles of humanity, and a marvelous, almost pepysian, ability to tell of the minutiae of his own life with elan and readability. His fanzines are so good that he must be remarkably like them.

It is also possible to put the finger on fanzines which fall short because they do not reflect the personality of their editor. Take my own ACOLYTE. Due to some ridiculous notion that fans were interested only in fantasy, coupled with a weird idea that humor was out of place in a magazine devoted to the literary side of fantasy and the weird; I produced a despicably stodgy and uninteresting fanzine. It is significant that the LASFS, who had known me only through ACOLYTE, were deeply disappointed when I moved to Los Angeles and they found that I cussed, played records, drank, liked football, and even went out with women. I guess that most of them had thought I was a fairy because I was so interested in weird fiction. Another fanzine failure through a suppression of the editor's personality is that of Forrest J Ackerman. Here is a man who believed very deeply in the importance of both fandom and science-fiction, a generally dignified character with strong convictions. So he filled his fanzines with froth, fake spelling, weird typing, and outre mannerisms generally; rarely getting serious and straightforward about anything unless he was mad at someone. If he'd let his personality loose in his magazines, he'd have published a blend of FANTASITE and FANTASY COMMENTATOR. Instead he contented himself with "mirroring" fandom in 50 issues of VOM (which old-timers will fondly



remember as a poor man's FAPA), and publishing a great spate of ephemeral rubbish which was by no means worthy of print. VOM was pretty good, in spots extremely fine, but it depended solely on the whims that led top contributors to send in occasional letters or let themselves be drawn into some discussion. It seems strange indeed that the man who has probably devoted more time and thought to fandom than any other ten people has never published a subscription type fanzine.

This matter of personality reflecting is of course a two-edged sword. If you have a personality that makes people shun you, it is doubtful that its display in a fanzine will go over either. You don't need to be a wishy-washy Pollyanna, but you must be likeable to some people, no matter how virulently others may hate you. If I wanted to moralise, I could point out that improving your personality to the extent that its full demonstration in a fanzine was successful would very likely redound to your success as a person.

I don't know why exactly it should be so important for a fanzine to reflect the editor accurately and comprehensively, but I imagine verisimilitude and sincerity (with the consequent sock possessed by writings so qualified) is best obtained thereby. No matter how hard you try to conceal it, if you think your readers are a bunch of goons, it will creep out between the lines. If you are a dumbell, you can be intellectual to a fare-ye-well and impress your readers only as a dope who knows not what he says. If you possess unwarranted self-esteem, your attempts at self-depredation or even simple modesty will be as false as Daugherty's smile.

What a tangent this is growing into! Why don't I just say that you've probably got to be improving yourself all the time in all sorts of different ways if you hope to publish an acceptable and improving fanzine, and let it go at that.

One reason I keep yapping about the editorial persona is that it has been my bitter experience that the only sure way for any fanzine editor to get an adequate flow of really top-flight material is to write most of it himself. Since we are all of us imperfect and faltering, this is no easy chore. The will to write top-flight stuff is the least of the desiderata for so doing. Usually it just won't jell.

But you yourself, as editor, are the one guy in the world who knows just what you want in the way of material, and who can write it better than you? Burbee very likely can write a far funnier satire than you can, but he won't use your pet punch-line. Searles or SDRussell can back you off the map as a solid reviewer and critic, but the odds are slight that they'll tee off on the book you want reviewed, and it's dollars to doughnuts that they'll react to it far differently than you did. Rotsler can draw better in a minute than you can in a year, but try to get Willie to draw your cartoon idea. And so it goes.

And what if your stuff isn't as good as theirs? Maybe if you look at enough of their stuff analytically and critically and apply what you learn to your own writing, you'll improve. If you plug hard enough at your own writing, maybe an individual style of your own will develope. And if you get to wondering what's the use, when you compare your stuff with theirs, you can comfort yourself with the thought that they too have models and ideals they look up to and compare themselves with disparagantly.

My, what a preachment!

Even though you want a lot of stuff self-written--and a really good fanzine will depend largely on its own editor's writings--you will need plenty

of items created by others. The getting of such stuff requires plenty of finesse.

In the first place, lay off the pro authors. If your butcher happens to be a pal of yours you don't expect him to keep you in free T-bones, any more than you expect your carpenter crony to build you a free house or your radio store buddy to give you a free Ampex Tape Recorder (list price \$3800). The pro authors make their living writing, or try to. It is a gross impertinence to ask them to give you some of their work. If you know a pro, and he insists on writing for you, it is a little different,

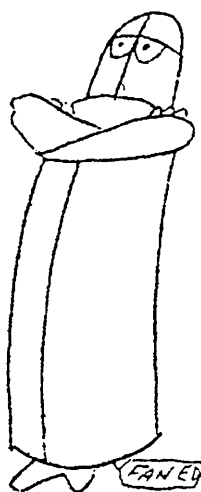
provided he writes something which is obviously for his own recreation. R. P. Graham, for instance, had the time of his life at the second Wild Hair session. And there have been other similar cases, such as the articles E. Hoffman Price did for Willie Watson on high class liquor and how to recognise it. But don't importune them. And NEVER accept a pro's rejected story, no matter how good it seems to you in your blue haze of awe and excitement when he gives it to you. If it really is worth anything, he'll eventually sell it, and your publishing of it may foul up his copyright. If he can't sell it, there is no earthly reason for you to waste time and money publishing it. The only thing it can possibly do is to tear down the reputation of both author and fanzine. (I say these things with full knowledge of the vast amount of pro stuff I solicited and used in ACOLYTE. I'm heartily ashamed of myself.)

In the second place, lay off the established fan writers. They have outlets for far more stuff than they'll ever write, and your bombarding them with request for material is waste effort. This is particularly true if you are a beginning editor. The old-timer has been nipped too often by aspiring new editors who fall by the wayside before they publish the material they've begged so hard for, or who do publish it so poorly that he wishes he'd never written it. After you have your fanzine well and solidly established, with an earned reputation for accurate neatness in reproduction and reliable promptness in distribution, you'll find the established fans sending you high quality stuff out of a clear blue sky.

In the third place, lay off the NFFF manuscript bureau and other similar groups. With all due respect to several guys who have performed a whole lot of selfless work, no mss bureau is likely to have any material that is worth a whoop. Most of the stuff you'll get from such a source will

turn out to be rejects from SPACE-WARP (see Rapp's monthly masthead if you don't believe me) and other quality fanzines. If it isn't good enough for a quality fanzine, it isn't good enough for you, either.

You can examine almost any major fanzine, past or present, and you will find that two or three regular contributors whose stuff rarely appears elsewhere



I NEVER ACCEPT  
PRO REJECTS?





create the material which really constitutes its backbone. FANTASY COMMENTATOR has Thyril Ladd and Matt Onderdonck. ACOLYTE had Baldwin, Rimel, Wakefield, and Hoffman. SPACEWARP has Watkins, Conner, Sneary, Metchette, and others. And so it goes. Build up your own stable of writers, write a lot yourself, and your worries about material will be negligible.

A gimmick that works with notable success is to spot people who can write well and feed them stencils. Pick people who are capable of writing stuff that need not be edited, and who at the same time are not very active. Burbee used this technique a lot. So do I. Couple this stunt with frequent publication, and watch the material pour in. There is something about a couple of free blank stencils coupled with the knowledge that anything written on them will appear in but a few weeks that practically forces a guy to the typewriter. Of course you have to have a certain amount of judgement in knowing who can be trusted to write interesting stuff at all times, but if you haven't this much acumen the odds are you can't publish a passable fanzine anyway.

Another gimmick is to have a small (or maybe not so small) local group from which to draw material. With luck, you may even get them to finance your magazine. Don't expect any help on mechanical details. The gang very likely will gather while you are working and help make the time go faster for you, but anything beyond this is like droppings from a cloud.

You can also use the "one-shot session" technique, but this is not advised unless you really know what you are doing. Burbee and I have sponsored around eight such bashes since January 1945, and we learned the hard way that a passable result will occur only if certain strict rules are observed. The artistry of the one-shot fanzine is an article in itself--in fact I wrote such an article in 1946 and Burbee published it. I'd plagiarise myself and give out with it once again, except that the LASFS reprinted an emasculated version about a year ago in SHANGRI LA. So take down your copy of the SHANGRI LA all-star reprint issue, and in the early portion of the article add to Burbee's sales talk for the one shot session, "WHY IT WILL BE JUST LIKE A DAUGHERTY PROJECT EXCEPT THAT IT WILL ACTUALLY HAPPEN." You will then hold in your hands the complete article and will be all set to have a one-shot fanzine session, maybe.

Another excellent source for fanzine material (and strangely enough it has been little exploited) is the public library. If your library has any number of foreign periodicals, a certain amount of browsing will uncover very lovely stuff which scarcely any fanzine reader will see unless you publish it. Unless you are a stickler for formality, you need not even get permission to reprint, since what the furriners don't know won't hurt 'em. (ACOLYTE reprinted several items from foreign periodicals, including a French article on the influence of Poe on Baudelaire which Harry Warner translated for fanzine purposes.) I would not suggest any great dependence on such sources, but if you are in a bind for a good, solid article dealing with some phase of fantasy in its literary aspects, the library may be your solution.

If you are willing to give away 68 copies of each issue of your fanzine by circulating it through FAPA, another sterling source of material is uncovered to you. Each of FAPA's 65 members must produce through the mailings an annual minimum of 8 pages 8½x11 or its equivalent. Since only about half of the members publish regularly, it follows that if you furnish FAPA circulation you can snag a prodigious amount of material from the non-publishing members. All you need is a modicum of judgement--after all, general fandom has no monopoly on inept writers.)

(You must of course be a member of FAPA to have access to the mailings. Information on joining may be had from Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland.)

I might remark in passing that your goal should be a back-log containing enough usable material to make no less than a full issue at all times. Most successful fanzines reach this point after the first year or so. It is something of a drawback to your contributors, since a fat backlog means slower publication, but what a godsend it is to the harried editor.

After all this gum-beating, I see I've still not given any indication of what kind of material you should strive for. Of course, all these remarks about the editorial persona imply that the magazine should reflect yourself, which of course will affect its scope.

Personally, I am unable to stand fanzine fiction. I never read any fiction in a fanzine unless it was written by E. Everett Evans. (I read that only for the laughs.) With full and abashed knowledge of the many pages of fiction I myself published, I will state flatly that any serious story that is worth a faint damn will be published somewhere professionally. This is all the more true now that the fantasy/stf field is glutted with prozines. And as utterly unreadable as the typical pulp magazine is at its best, life is just too short to read its rejects, to say nothing of sweating out the stencilling and mimeographing of them.

Please note that I said serious story. Satire is quite another dish. I still remember with great relish some of the innumerable take-offs on "World of Null-A", particularly Paul Spencer's. There was Burton Crane, with "Free Seeds from Congress" and other gems. A lot of Burbee's best work is satirical fiction, including the item he considers his best, even if Rotsler did butch it up on publication. ("Big Name Fan", if you must know.) Nor should I forget "Shadow Over North Weymouth 91" by Art Widner, a snappy double take-off on Lovecraft and George O. Smith. Stuff like this is wonderful. Any fanzine editor who can publish its equivalent is doing his readers a favor.

What I do object to is material written for professional publication and rejected, or else merely written in slavish imitation of hack fiction. For that matter, it need not be hack the guy is imitating. Who wants to read an inept, watered-down imitation of M. R. James when he can get the real thing? It's fully as sensible as chewing up and swallowing the pictures out of a cookbook instead of eating a seven-course dinner.

Plenty of other fanzine readers object to fiction. I don't know their reasons. But to me, in addition to being unreadable, fiction in a fanzine indicates that the editor was out of material and too lazy or too dull or both to write anything to fill up his pages.

Another dislike of mine is poetry. I used to use it for fillers. I even wrote three or four poems (serious, weird ones, too!) which were published in various fanzines. The word you are groping for, son, is fugghead. I'm not even groping for it.

The objections to fiction do not apply to poetry at all. Nearly all verse is semi-amateur, so far as making a living out of it is concerned, and most of it by far is published in semi-professional magazines. The fanzine editor who wants to waste space with it can fill his magazine with an array of "name" poets and can compete on fairly even terms with the semi-pro poetry magazines, particularly the "vanity" ones. I could tell you how to go about it, but I won't do it. It weighs too heavily on my conscience when I think of the amount of



this sort of crud I published myself for me to do anything to encourage someone else to try it. If you want to publish poetry, go into that field, and let fanzine publishing remain the medium for "literate self-expression" that some of us try to kid ourselves it sometimes is.

I can see some of you beginning to ask yourselves if this Terrible Tower likes anything. Yes, I do. Any time anyone has something to say, and can do a passable job of saying it, he is my boy. I'll read what he says, very likely reread it. I'll show it to my friends and brag on it. I'll try to get him to write something for FAN-DANGO, and very likely I'll become a contributor to his fanzine, if he has one.

Any time someone really has something to say, I'll read it with pleasure even if he doesn't do a very good job of saying it. After all, who am I to gripe if someone can't write any better than I can?

By "something" to say" I don't mean that the guy need be serious. He may be ribbing the socks off someone or something. Maybe not. Perhaps he is wrought up over some book he's discovered and wants others to read (or not read). Maybe he is wound up about one of my own pet interests. Or maybe he's going to town about something I neither knew nor cared much about.

The subject matter is immaterial. He can even be talking about science-fiction if he does a good enough job, has something original to say. His stuff may be original only in that it deals with something I never happened to know much about. Maybe he's been thinking overtime and has some original or quasi-original notions or syntheses of other peoples' notions. Maybe he's walking on someone for being such a fugghead and has some glorious new concept for satirization.

ORIGINALITY. Let's put that in caps. It is certainly a prime requisite of any fanzine material.

The subject matter of a fanzine article should be a matter of complete indifference. Having myself largely lost interest in stf and fantasy, I don't care so much for a lot of the stuff in fanzines. If my own FAN-DANGO has anything on the subject as often as once a year I feel I'm slipping badly. This is just me. Hell with it. But it does strike me as a hell of a commentary on some people that they insist that a fanzine contain stuff relating only to stf, fantasy, or fandom. Such narrowness seems incredible. (Those of you who read any issues of my own ACOLYTE are no doubt rolling on the floor by now.) Here is this great teeming world of ours, loaded with fascinating stuff to think about and talk about and do something about maybe, and yet there are articulate persons who want to swaddle themselves in a stagnant puddle in a backwater of escapist writing and think of nothing else.

No matter what subject is dealt with, some fanzine readers somewhere will probably be interested in it. Even if they aren't, if you keep plugging at it well enough, you may probably create converts. Naturally you will have more stuff dealing with stf and fantasy than with other subjects. This is to be expected. But there is certainly no need to stick with this same old rut. Babies who want to keep playing with their rattles after they are chronological adults usually end up in institutions.

From bitter experience in reading page after page of blather from fuggheads, I'd suggest that it is often better to make a clean break from stf, rather than try to do much with the subjects "growing out of scientifiotion". There is something about scientifiotion, particularly in its more so-

ciological facets, which seems to act as a lodestone to crackpots. If there is anything duller than serious constructive articles of crackpot theorizings, I can't imagine what it may be.

Articles of extrapolation can be wonderful, entertaining, stimulating, thought-productive reading; IF their writers indicate at least a nodding acquaintance with known facts. Good articles of this nature are among the best material any fanzine can feature. All too many fannish attempts along these lines betray incredible ignorance of "reality", probability, or anything else save the daydreaming of psychopaths. Of clinical interest only, they have no place other than in case histories.

Now of course no amateur writer can be expected to have the savant's grasp of any subject. Certainly, though, he should have an inkling of what he is talking about, the knowledge of an informed layman. And his knowledge should be the authentic kind--not the tripe dredged from the Rosicrucians, Theosophists, Forteanes, Korzybskiphiles, Dianeticians, Shaverites, and their ilk. If a guy doesn't have this knowledge, the least he can do is to keep his mouth shut in company, and the least you, as editor of a fanzine, can do is to refuse him a sounding board.

**AUTHENTICITY.** There is another prime requisite for a fanzine article. A safe rule for any editor is to reject any article whose authenticity he doubts, unless it is plainly a satire or other humorous piece.

Not all original and authentic articles are acceptable either. We are all of us rank amateurs at this art of stringing words together, and one of us is as likely to toss out a truly first-class piece of writing as a sandlot baseball player is to break into the New York Yankees' batting order. It's been done, in both cases, but not very often.

Amateurs or no, somewhere we must draw a line. How poorly written an article can a good fanzine stand? This leads into the question of revision. Should an editor revise material submitted to him? I'm not thinking so much of misspellings and obvious errors of grammar. You usually do your contributor a favor when you correct these for him, and I believe this practise is pretty much taken for granted.

Should the editor abridge prolix articles? Should he rewrite where he thinks it proper? In a probably unjustified assumption of bland omnipotence, I've always juggled stuff around to suit my fancy. If I revise very much, however, the end-result reads more and more like a Laney article. A time or so, long-winded characters have become furious at my condensing their submissions. One time, Sam Moskowitz actually made me apologise for cutting a 12-14 page article on Weinbaum down to 6 pages. The fact that the revised version was readable and the original was not is beside the point.

This revision question is one that each editor must decide for himself. If I had my publishing to do over, I believe I'd revise far less than I did, and reject far more. It is doubtful if any article that requires a major re-write is worth fooling with. It might also be noted that the editor who attempts to revise the work of someone who is a markedly better writer than himself is not likely to get a second chance.

In no case, however, should any fanzine editor publish anything which is not eminently READABLE. Another prime requisite.

So if your material is original, authentic, and readable--you've got a wonderful fanzine.

Another fanzine publishing



problem that seems worth discussing is the question of subscription fanzines versus give-aways. There are advantages and drawbacks in both cases.

Of all the publishers of subscription fanzines since the very beginning, you can just about count on your fingers the ones who performed in a reasonably ethical fashion. If you are going to sell your fanzine, your very offering it for a price implies a contract. If you take money for your fanzine you owe your publishers regularity of publication, full refund of any unused subscription moneys, and of course a magazine of the general size and quality you have led them to expect.

The editor of a subscription fanzine enjoys the advantage of making somebody else pay for his fun. If properly administered, a subscription fanzine can be made to break even or perhaps show a slight profit. The amount of work it will take will be staggering, but it can be done. If you get good at it, you can net as much as  $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per hour in clear profit from your publishing labors.

(I can cite my own ACOLYTE. It was published quarterly in an edition of 200 copies of 30 to 34 pages each, mimeographed, and almost invariably carried a lithographed cover costing an average of \$5.50 to \$6.00. For its last two years it not only paid for itself 100% including cover and postage, but defrayed most of the expense of the quarterly FAN-DANGO, a mimeographed 10 to 12 pager of 75 copies. It paid off simply because I got plugs for it everywhere I could: prozines, other fanzines, poetry magazines, even in the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE; and because I adamantly refused to carry deadheads except in a few instances where they were contributing material or might reasonably be expected to do so.)

To my mind, the advantage of a fanzine paying its own way is far counterbalanced by the way it ties its editor down. A subscription fanzine, if published with any degree of regularity, quickly becomes an almost unsupportable burden. You find yourself pounding away on it whether you want to or not. An enjoyable hobby turns into an incubus.

If you publish a giveaway, you have to finance it yourself. Even a simple issue can quickly eat up six or eight dollars. But you can publish as often or as seldom as you like, you can say anything you wish without wondering if some thin-skinned fool will cancel his subscription, you can pick and choose your mailing list, and you can hold your circulation as low as you want. If something else comes up you want to do, you can forget your fanzine for months on end, and resume where you left off without painstakingly building up from scratch again. If you publish through FAPA you needn't even bother with a mailing list or distributing individual copies, and you moreover get in exchange once every quarter a fat envelope containing 200 or 300 pages of fanzines from other members.

All in all, I think the giveaway beats the subscription fanzine all hollow. This may be because I got my fill and more of the latter. But if fanzining is truly a hobby for you and not a full-time unprofitable chore, the give-away is your meat.

Make no mistake about it, either. The publishing of a fanzine is one of the very best hobbies I have ever encountered, and I who say this have followed literally dozens of hobbies at one time or another. It is participative rather than passive, and it moreover depends far more on ability than money. You can be mighty broke, and still maintain an enviable position in the fanzine world. Your own little stack of stuff is something you'll read with great interest, and show to your friends with pride. And look at all the fun it is. Try it, lad.

# AH! SWEET IDIOCY!

by  
Francis Towner Laney  
(part 4 of 5)

## Chapter 7

### On the Outside Looking In

The mass resignation from the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society took place so suddenly that we were not prepared for them. Though another organization had been discussed, it was the club-within-a-club idea, and nothing had come of it. Yerke gathered with several of us the Saturday following the resignations, we went out to dinner *en masse*, and empowered Bruce to write a letter to fandom on the subject of the resignations.

At this time, Mel Brown's apartment was a scene of heavy publishing activity; the *Knanves* having moved Bronson's mimeograph there and being busily engaged in turning out the #2 *Knanve* and what developed to be the last issue of Bronson's *Fantasite*, then the #1 fanzine. So we retired to the top floor of 628, and Yerke turned out a rough draft which we all approved and signed; most of us then went about our affairs leaving Yerke, Fern, Brown and one or two others to turn it out and mail it in an edition of about 80 copies. (An amusing sidelight to this letter is Chamberlain's signature; he at first refused to sign it, then changed his mind after it was all mimeographed, and had to sign each copy with a pen.)

During the next couple of weeks, most of us were resting from fanning and feuding, though we came to discuss the formation of a club at greater and greater length. Since Yerke at the time was working nights for North American Aviation in the photographic department, one of our first acts was to set aside each Saturday evening as a dinner meeting of the as yet unnamed new club, this being the one evening that Yerke could meet with us. These dinner meetings were held at Freed's Coffee Shop at 6th and St. Paul, and continued regularly until Yerke resigned from the group.

My old title for the club-within-the-club seemed

peculiarly appropriate for our new group, since we all felt very strongly that we had been turned away from the LASFS for daring to question the mores of the group and of Forrest J Ackerman. The Outsiders. It was not long before fandom began to hear about us.

Our original roster consisted of the three surviving *Knanves*: T. Bruce Yerke, Philip P. Bronson, and Edwin Chamberlain (Benson was never an Outsider); two members of the LASFS: Paul Freehafer and Samuel D. Russell; and those of us who had resigned from the club: Francis T. Laney, Pogo, Merlin W. Brown, C. J. Fern Jr., and Jules Lazar—with a former member of the LASFS, Jack Rhodes, very shortly joining us on the recommendation of Bronson and Yerke.

I suppose a vignette is in order for Rhodes. He was older than most of us, about 38, I imagine; was married, had four children, and might best be described as a chronically dissatisfied person. His earnest adoption of Alfred Nock and other promulgators of vitriol and pessimism made him a singularly depressing companion much of the time, though he was otherwise widely read, and was gifted with occasional bits of puckish humor. Very quiet, very serious, Jack had little interest in fantasy or fandom, and did not stay with us long, particularly after The Outsiders became committed to a large publishing program.

Just before my big sick spell and thinking session in the latter part of February, The Outsiders had its first full-scale business meeting which, in common with almost all our serious meetings, was held at Fran Shack on a Thursday night. (Our first decision of policy had been to make our meetings conflict with those of the LASFS so as to force local fans as well as visitors to make a choice between the two groups.)

All of us except Yerke attended this first meeting, and the contrast between it and any LASFS meeting I've ever seen still astounds me every



time I think of it. Though this meeting set up all of the group's policies and most of the means of implementing them, with some very sharp differences of opinion arising from time to time, there was no gavel, no chairman, no formality. We were a group of friends sitting around talking things over; we did not have any Daugherties to assuage and to give egoboo to, nor did we have any Ackermans to coddle and cater to. Everyone spoke his mind freely, everything that was brought up got discussed enough but not too much, and when a given item seemed worked out Phil or I would write it up in a few terse sentences, read them, and inquire if this suited the pleasure of all present.

In addition to setting up our constructive policy, the group had just received an almost unforgivable letter from Ackerman, and it resulted in our dropping our original intention of letting the LASFS alone and deciding to attack the club as much as possible. (The letter summed up the affairs of the past month or so, bandied around the word "treason", implied that the writer intended to run all of us out of fandom, and closed with the utterly gratuitous remark that our only activity would probably consist of "getting drunk and taking turns in publicly copulating with Pogo". Needless to say, several tempers got lost over that remark, and it was decided that those of us with any amount of correspondence would undertake a poison pen campaign against the LASFS, in which we would simply tell the truth about Ackerman and the club; that we would make a point of trying to get national newzine coverage of our activity and thus try to overshadow the LASFS, and that we would continue the *Knanve* as a satirical political fanzine.

The Outsiders decided that the focus of the group was to be half social and half serious; that the social portion of our activities should consist of gradually larger dinner meetings which eventually would feature stimulating outside speakers and of Fran Shack soirees patterned frankly after those out at Craig Rice's; and that the serious portion of our activities would revolve around writing and publishing.

Our great *raison d'être* was to be "Project M", a sinister sounding designation which once caused the handful of remaining LASFSers to waste a gob of time in fruitless speculations. It had occurred to Bronson and myself that all of the worthwhile Los Angeles publishers and writers with the exception of Ackerman were members of our group. This of course was before the rise of Charles Edward Burbee, and during one of Kepner's frequent interludes during which he had quit publishing. We figured out the amounts of work that was being lavished on our separate magazines: *Fan Slants*, *Fantasite*, and *Acolyte*; examined our

backlogs of material and our potentialities for getting more good material; and realised that if we were willing to assess ourselves \$5.00 a month apiece, we would have enough money to try a semi-pro printed fanzine.

This was Project M. We gave it this cryptic designation, and bound ourselves to secrecy, because we did not want any inkling of our intentions to leak out. If it fell through, we did not wish to be accused of fostering a Daugherty project. And if it succeeded, we felt that the presenting of a concrete accomplishment would pretty much 'make' the Outsiders, and that the element of surprise would do much to make the magazine successful. One grows tired of reading glowing advertisements that never pan out.

To make certain that Project M would have the best available material and editing, we agreed to abandon all fanzines other than limited editions circulating exclusively in FAPA (with the proviso that each editor might finish the issue on which he was working at the time), and that all writings of any Outsider be submitted first to Project M.

Project M was to be a somewhat glorified *Acolyte*, but was to include scientifiction, and a limited amount of the better type of stefnistic material featured by *Fantasite*. Bronson and I were to be co-editors, and Sam Russell was to be literary editor, but with powers which virtually made him editor-in-chief so far as selection of material was concerned.

Project M occupied most of our time for the first month. It took several evenings to work out the details of the publishing agreement, to decide on policies, and to go through some of the material we then had on hand (most of it out of *Acolyte*'s backlog). Mike Fern was appointed business manager, and spent many hours canvassing backstreet print shops, finally coming up with a fantastically low bid from a rather large shop which was willing to do the work at cost if we could get the paper, since the management was having difficulty finding enough paper to keep even a skeleton crew occupied and feared that its business might fall by the wayside altogether. The paper of course required a priority, so Mike promptly stunned us all by wangling an allocation for several times as much paper as we would have needed. By the middle of March, we had Project M well under control, with the first issue pretty much figured out.

But at this point we found ourselves confronted with a FAPA mailing. And since we had originally decided to permit ourselves to keep up FAPA activity, Project M was temporarily shelved in order that we might put some stuff into FAPA.

The last, and in some ways the most important, facet of our publishing program was to be the *Knanve*. We designed it as our organ to fandom, and intended it to carry out its original policy of exposing and attacking stefnistic abuses, satirizing the foibles of fandom, and serving as an organ for the occasional venting of spleen.

So there we were, the fan club that was the new hope of Los Angeles. Humph!

The Outsiders as a group carried the seeds of its own demise from the very beginning. In the first place, the majority of us were for one reason or another heartily sick of fandom and all fandom implies. Secondly, there was no common bond of interest among all of us. Brown, Russell, Freehafer, and I were still quite deeply interested in classical music. Yerke, Russell, Freehafer, Rhodes, Fern, and I were interested in various cultural subjects; all of those named knew enough about some of these subjects to talk about them; others professed an interest, but regrettably their knowledge did not compare with their volubility. Lazar, Pogo, and I liked to go out socially with members of the opposite sex - some of the others talked a lot about it. And so on. There was no clear-cut, positive interest which bound all of us together. This is one of the chief factors which has hampered the LASFS for as long as I have known the group—lack of a common focus. And we, being LASFS alumni, carried this lack right into the Outsiders with us. We were bound together by a common motive—anger at Ackerman, Daugherty, and the LASFS—but this was bound to evaporate in a short time. Third, the strong attitude held against newer fans by Yerke, Bronson, Russell, and to a lesser extent myself kept us from making any sustained or successful effort to attract the younger new arrivals away from the LASFS as fast as they showed up—something we could very easily have done had we made up our minds to.

But we didn't do so badly in the short time we were functioning. Our first social event was a house-warming of Fran Shack, held on my 30th birthday, March 11, 1944. It was nothing more than a drunken riot, but it definitely was the most rousing party I ever saw in fandom. The invitations were worded urging attenders to bring "bottles and babes; neither is required though both are requested", and resulted in a full-strength gathering of Outsiders, most of them with bottles and several with women. As the drinks began to take effect, more and more of the misfits began to forget how introverted they were—first thing you knew people were dancing, necking, going in twosomes to be alone for a while, and generally cutting up. Through the entire brawl, Yerke remained relatively sober, and took a series of photographs which can only be described as classic.

Some things took place which showed that The Outsiders, alas, were not much better than the despised LASFS. Brown spent the evening pouting in a corner reading Stapledon. Fern started the same way, but shortly found himself tending the phonograph. Lazar got too much to drink and shoved some of the people around, called me a foul name when someone jogged my elbow and made me spatter a drink on him; I threw the whole glass at him and a fight was prevented only by some remarkably quick action on the part of others. Bronson passed out with a cigarette burning in his mouth, crumpled it into the davenport and nearly asphyxiated from the strangling fumes when the upholstery started to smoulder. But all in all it was quite a party - all good clean fun; thank god I don't have to have that much good clean fun every night!

Also in March, either just before or just after the housewarming, the ubiquitous Mike Fern promoted us an arrangement with the Carolina Pines, a swank eatery in Hollywood, whereby we could hold dinner meetings there and at the same time have free use of a most attractive two room upstairs meeting place. We held several meetings there, after some of which we adjourned to Jack Rhodes' nearby home for a party.

But at about the time of the Fran Shack Warming, I myself was forced to strike the first blow at the Outsiders. Evening after evening passed, but every evening at least one fan would come straggling in, and often-times not want to leave even when I pointed out that I had a date or was otherwise not at home. I found it necessary to promulgate a rule—no visiting except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except by special arrangement. This did not sit very well with some of the group, even though Fran Shack was my own place, and I was supporting it entirely with my own money.

The next rift in The Outsiders came when Jimmy Kepner made another of his famous reversals of opinion, and expressed a wish to become an Outsider. I opposed his being admitted, because I felt him to be untrustworthy; on being voted down, I made it a point to treat him as cordially as though nothing had happened. Not so Lazar, who resigned from the Outsiders in a huff.

Lazar's resignation, however, was not to be wondered at. He had already gotten the group into a pack of trouble with a very ill-timed and poorly considered letter in which he told of the blowup in the LASFS, and cited as one of the chief reasons the fact that overt homosexuality was running rife in the club, and that Kepner was one of the chief homosexuals. This letter he mailed to Julius Unger, editor of Fantasy Fiction Field; Unger sent the letter on to Walt Dunkelberger, who was publishing FFF for him; Dunkelberger stencilled

the letter verbatim and published it without deletions, an act of stupidity which soured me for all time on both Unger and Dunkelberger, who after all are grown men chronologically and should have known better. Kepner and the LASFS were outraged. We in *The Outsiders* were beside ourselves. Regardless of the truth in the Lazar letter, it put us on an awful spot, and moreover gave *The Outsiders* a black eye which we never quite lived down. We promptly disavowed the letter, read the riot act to Unger and Dunkelberger and got a profuse public apology from all concerned. It was right at this time that Kepner expressed a wish to join *The Outsiders*, and Yerke, that astute politician, saw that by taking Kepner as a member we could really implement our disavowal of Lazar. So we admitted D O K to our ranks.

Paul Freehafer had been a doomed man almost from birth, suffering from a chronic heart condition which could never be cured. We all knew that Paul was in poor health, but few of us realised how poor, since Freehafer had resolutely set out to make the most of what life he had, and had done so well that it was difficult to think of him as an invalid. Paul caught a bad cold in the same rain-hail outbreak that put me out of circulation for three days. He found himself unable to throw it off, and took a leave of absence from his job with the idea of going home to Idaho to rest for a few months. The Saturday night following the housewarming, Paul met with us for the last time. A week later, he passed away quietly in his sleep, having lived just long enough to get home.

When we heard of Paul's death we were both stunned and crushed. In the first place, Paul Freehafer was at all odds the best beloved of the entire local group; friendly, cheerful, tolerant—totally above all rifts and quarrels; a well-integrated and brilliant adult who was almost entirely free of the maladjustments and adolescencies so characteristic of most of the other localites. And secondly, none of us were quite able to adjust to the fact that Paul was gone.

It was indeed in a sober mood that we brought out Yerke's eulogy for Paul, an essay which I believe is one of the finest pieces of writing fandom has ever produced. We mailed it to nearly all the fans on our mailing list.

But it was with bitter fury that we learned of the LASFS' reaction to Paul's death. The club mourned his passing sincerely; I did not believe it at the time but have since come to realize it. But it came to us very, very straight that the first action of Daugherty and Ackerman, upon receiving the telegram from Idaho, was to go right up to Paul's apartment and try to talk his roommate out of Paul's collection, for the then nebulous Founda-

tion. When I heard of this I went completely berserk—ghouls and vultures were the mildest epithets I could turn out—I started walking the half-mile to the club with the intention of beating Ackerman into a red mush. Somewhere along the way, the realization struck me, for the first time, that Paul was really dead. I burst into uncontrollable tears, and somewhere along Bixel between 8th and 9th had one of the darnedest cries you can imagine; finally allowing myself, spent and trembling, to be taken back home by *The Outsiders* who were with me, and who had been trotting along with me trying in vain to calm me down (so they told me; I'd not even known they were there).

Perhaps some of you are smiling because FTL sounds like such an emotional dope. Well, perhaps he is. But I thought the world of Paul, and his death was one of the hardest things I've ever had to take.

*The Outsiders* did not feel happy about the memorial brochure put out by the LASFS, holding it to be cheap, tawdry, and in utter violation of nearly every precept of good taste. I just reread it, and now, three years later, it looks even worse to me than it did then, particularly Ackerman's side-tracking himself into what is almost a defense of atheism.

The memorial edition of *Shangri L'Affaires* made us even angrier. It bore a lithographed portrait of Paul, which was fine—but on the back of the picture, the pettiness of the LASFS could not bear to see all that blank space, so they had smeared on three of the most atrociously horrible poems in the history of fandom. Purportedly memorials to Freehafer, they were written by people like Cunningham and Daniels (the latter of whom had never even seen Paul), and moreover were grotesquely lacking in both taste and literary merit. We weren't the only ones who were annoyed; Art Joquel, who had been one of the mainstays of the post-Outsider LASFS, had been editor of this issue of *Shaggy*. Both the picture and poems were inserted without his knowledge, and he quit both the editorship and the club as a result.

Paul's death could, conceivably have brought the warring factions together. As it was, it alienated *The Outsiders* still further from the LASFS.

Early in *The Outsiders*' career, an aftermath of the last bitter fighting in the club brought us one of the funniest letters I have ever seen. When Ackerman commenced his collection of proxies, I at first tried to match it. Among others I approached was the same John M. Cunningham whose proxy Ackerman had actually voted at the meeting where we all resigned. Cunningham made a lightning-fast reversal of form, wrote to the club cancelling his proxy and raising the devil



with Ackerman for asking for it in the first place, and sent a new proxy to me. Someone around the LASFS evidently didn't like this, for just about the time we'd forgotten all about the proxies came a most official sounding letter in duplicate to LASFS and Outsiders from Cunningham. He used official army forms, official army-style rhetoric, and made with a beautiful gob of unintended humor. Cussing both Laney, Ackerman, Outsiders, and LASFS with God-like abandon in his well-known incoherent style, Cunningham outdid himself with the punch-line: "I am therefore of my own free will resigning my life membership in the LASFS at the request of Walter J. Daugherty."

In mid-March I had a spat with Pogo, whom I had been buzzing quite consistently for a while, taking her dancing and what-not; and we quit dating each other. Rather to our surprise, Pogo quit the Outsiders almost at once. She has since gotten her divorce, remarried, and apparently gotten into a satisfactory life-groove which has no reference to fandom. More fans should do the same.

Also in mid-March, Yerke startled us by asking us if we would be willing to publish his memoirs for him. He had for some reason started reminiscing to himself of his seven years in the LASFS, had actually written down portions of the first section, and felt an urge to continue if publication would be guaranteed in advance. Not only did we know that Yerke's memoirs would be one of fandom's best pieces of folk-lore, but we also realised that if Yerke told the truth about the LASFS it would damn the group with anyone who read them. So our answer was obvious. It was decided that Yerke would stencil the memoirs, that the group would run them off, and that they would be submitted to FAPA under the franks of Bronson, Brown, and myself. He promised four booklets of approximately 30 pages, but only the first was ever completed, since Bruce dropped the project a couple of months later when he finally quit fandom entirely.

The responsibility of getting these produced, and of trying to get some of our other proposed publishing completed, weighed rather heavily on me. I suggested to the group that we suspend work on Project M for the nonce—it had about reached a stasis anyway—and institute a month-long program of publishing, during the course of which we would not only bring out the first volume of *Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan*, but a third issue of the *Knanve*, and as much FAPA material as possible. This was quickly agreed to.

Our equipment was meager as compared to that of the LASFS, but we did have the manpower to make the most of it. My old LC Smith was the only typewriter regularly at our disposal; although Brown's rented Underwood occasionally made the

trek to 1104 and Phil's portable was there about half the time. So most of the stencils were cut away from Fran Shack, though of course a good deal was done on publishing nights. Among us we found we had four lettering guides, though we sorely missed the LASFS Speedoscope. And there were two mimeographs—junk heaps in comparison with the glossy automatic machine at the club—but in good enough working order: my old original machine from Clarkston, a 1906 model Dick; and Phil Bronson's little Sears Roebuck job from Minneapolis and the MFS. Both were hand-crank, hand-feed models, and required two persons for most efficient operation, one turning the crank and the other slip-sheeting.

It was evident almost immediately that these sessions would have to be organised, so I took matters into my own hands and put a stop to the old LASFS custom of everyone doing his own work. We went cooperative altogether; stencils to be run off were turned over to me, and I not only doled them out to the mimeographers, but pretty much bossed the whole show, suggesting needful tasks to unoccupied Outsiders and taking steps to assure, as much as possible, an even flow of stencils. It worked like a charm. Most of the time there were four people actually mimeographing, one person de-slipping, one or two cutting stencils, and one or two lending moral support by talking, playing records, or what not. We changed off often enough as not to get tired of the same old drudgery, and we still found enough fun in each other's company that we found the same evening of fun we had always had was turning out an imposing stack of completed pages that we scarcely realised we had done, so busily were we talking and joking and cutting up.

The #3 *Knanve* was the first item put out under the new program. Most of it was written, stencilled, and run off on a Sunday and the following Saturday night. When the bunch left about midnight, two pages had yet to be run off, and Mike Fern and I, having a midnight snack, suddenly decided to go back to Fran Shack and finish it off. We worked on the fool thing until 4:00 in the morning. But that was the only one of the publishing sessions which went to any extreme; as a rule they were confined to Tuesday and Thursday evenings; commencing about 7:00 and lasting until 11:30 or 12:00. And these sessions certainly paid off; from them came not only this one issue of the *Knanve*, but over 130 pages of FAPA material, and nearly all of the #7 *Acolyte*. Since they lasted only a couple of months in all, one has only to compare these results with the average two months output of the LASFS in order to find another of the many things wrong with the club. Publishing is usually drudgery, but group publishing is fun—no matter what you are putting out; and any group wishing to establish a common

focus can be by adopting a group publishing program not only accomplish this aim but in addition add mightily to both the quantity and quality of contemporary fan publishing.

In the latter part of March, the feuding factions were treated to a protracted visit from a Chicago fan, Frankie Robinson. Frank is chiefly notable for the possession of the most fantastic eyebrows in the world. At the time of his visit here he was just short of 18, had never been away from home very much, and found the strain of the two factions vying with each other to attract him a bit too much for his poise. He ended up rather sadly disillusioned with fandom, having stayed with Yerke, that master of intrigue and innuendo, that fountain head of devastating gossip. Frank's experiences with the LASFS were not happy; he met them all at their worst the night he was in town fresh off the train when Yerke and I in a moment of madness invited the LASFS to come out to Bronson's with the Outsiders and have a joint welcoming party. Ackerman sat on the davenport and pouted, saying scarcely a dozen words all evening; and Daugherty got into a three way verbal battle with Bronson and me which surpassed even the epic row Daugherty and I had had that night in the club. Needless to say, Frankie was revolted; and his subsequent experiences with some of us went far to sour him on the Outsiders as well.

It might be of passing interest to back-track at this point, and say a few words about the LASFS during the spring of 1944. In the first place, the feud utterly shattered the club. Despite Daugherty's and Ackerman's valiant efforts to get fandom to think all was well with the LASFS, a moment's glance at the dark window would have told the true story. Before the feud, the room was packed every night, with various members working and publishing, some reading, and a half dozen others dropping in and out during the evening. On meeting nights, 25 to 30 people usually showed up; though many were visitors. After the inception of The Outsiders, the club was almost invariably dark except on Thursdays; for a time Ackerman tried to hold the fort alone, but between the echoing silences of the deserted room and the frequent heckling from Outsiders as they walked past the club on their way from the street-car to my place, Forry very shortly took to doing his fanning in a more secluded spot. And the meetings had dropped off to nearly nothing. Daugherty was director, the newcomer Burbee had been saddled with both the secretaryship and the editorship of *Shaggy*, Morojo was treasurer, and Ackerman was chief mourner. Crozetti came to most of the meetings with her five year old daughter who also joined the club as the old guard strove valiantly to increase the roster. And there was one new member who stuck, Glen Daniels, a

friend of Kepner's who shortly became coeditor of Crozetti's *Venus*. Kepner pulled out of the club a month after the feud, utterly fed up with Daugherty. And, rumor has it, there were a few casual dropper-inners, who came once or twice, saw the LASFS was moribund, and moved to greener pastures.

After Kepner had joined the Outsiders, he quickly became one of the most active of the group, particularly in the publishing sessions. He was not at all quiet about comparing our activity with the inanities of the dying club, so very shortly both Daniels and Crozetti expressed a wish to join the Outsiders. Yerke, Bronson, and others opposed the membership of both of these individuals—which of course was perfectly within their rights—but made the mistake of peremptorily telling me not to allow these two at Fran Shack. Well, now. I promptly announced that the Tuesday night sessions were open to everyone, LASFS and Outsiders alike, and only the Thursday night sessions were limited strictly to the Outsiders. This considerably weakened our homogenousness.

At about this time, Burbee became quite friendly with the Outsiders, spending as much time with us as at the LASFS, and even having all of us to dinner at his house to celebrate Yerke's birthday in mid-April. This last furnished me with my favorite S. Davenport Russell anecdote. Yerke, always a brilliant conversationalist, was outdoing himself that day, and a terrific discussion was in full cry. I kept noticing Sam, sitting across the room from me. He at first tried to read, but Burbee's two-year-old daughter kept pestering him so finally he gave up and lifted the little girl into his lap; where he held her, talking quietly to her and very obviously making a terrific hit. She lay back in his arms, looking up at him with her heart in her eyes, hanging on every word. Sam in turn was looking down on her most affectionately, talking to her, talking... Suddenly a silence fell on the other conversation, and Sam's flat voice cut through it: "Cthulhu. Yog-Sothoth. Nyarlathotep..." (!!)

Burbee never joined the Outsiders, though we considered him as a member. (Our organization was so completely informal and nebulous at all times that this sort of thing could happen with the greatest of ease.)

But the brave little group was foundering. Mike Fern, one of our mainstays, left us early in April to go to New York, where he managed to make himself quite unpopular with his lack of tact and his inquisitiveness and his free comments on different ones. (A rumor came back to me a year or so later that I had financed his trip in order to spy on the Futurians. If anyone has positive informa-

tion on the origin of this idea, he will confer a great favor on me by dropping me a note about it; something tells me that the inside story on this one would make priceless reading). Jack Rhodes left us about the same time, tired of us as most of us were of him. Yerke was obviously approaching a crisis—he had broken loose from one fan club only to find himself floundering in the same kind of morass he had tried to escape—and his irritability and obvious dissatisfaction with the group had repercussions with Bronson, who fell into a sort of listlessness, characterised by an Ashley-like unwillingness to do anything more drastic than just sitting around talking. And Eddie Chamberlain had gone into the United States Navy by the end of April.

By May 1st, the Outsiders consisted of Yerke, Bronson, Laney, Russell, Brown, Kepner, and the anomolous Charles Edward Burbee Jr. Though this was not the strong group with which we had started, it still possessed a certain amount of potential. Yerke, Russell, and I wanted to recommence work on Project M. Kepner and Brown had gotten off onto a socially-conscious tangent which eventually culminated in their joining the communist party; Burbee at this time was just feeling his way into the editorship of *Shangri L'Affaires* and had no time for other commitments.

A number of factors came up that had to be handled at once. In its six issues up to that time, the *Acolyte* had been prompt as clockwork, and its contacts with the pro world seemed to me largely to depend on this promptness and regularity. An issue was due June 15; either it had to start by May 5, or Project M had to get far enough along so that I could depend on it to take *Acolyte's* place. We had the material for Project M, but it was all *Acolyte* material except for a short story Yerke had written for us. Bronson both failed to turn over his back log and refused to do any work. "Aw, let's just sit back and blow smoke rings," he used to say when we'd suggest doing something. I had no intention of publishing an ambitious magazine single-handed, and in fact in the 6th issue had announced a curtailed circulation and a decreased number of issues per year.

A week or so of Bronsonian lotus eating, led me to approach Sam Russell, and ask him if he would be co-editor of *Acolyte*, with a 50-50 split on both work and finances. (This last meant nothing, since the magazine had been slightly more than breaking even since its 4th issue.) "I am committed to Project M," said Russell.

"Suppose *Acolyte* withdraws from Project M?"

"Since Project M, basically, is the *Acolyte*, in that case I'd be only too pleased to step in and help it out."

That tore it. I gave Project M to Bronson, with my compliments, and SDR and I picked out the material for the #7 *Acolyte* that very night.

When Yerke, still working on his night shift, heard of this development he had a fit. Under date of May 16, 1944, he wrote The Outsiders a letter of resignation. In it, he assailed us savagely for our shortcomings, particularly berating Bronson. Phil was crushed, for he had always maintained a semi-hero worship for Bruce, and Yerke had in this letter flayed him unmercifully. This letter was the end of both Yerke and Bronson in fandom. Yerke had some spasmodic dealings with Bill Watson that summer, and Bronson, more from habit than anything else, kept coming around for a couple of weeks—but neither of them ever again did anything of a fan nature. An amusing sidelight on Yerke's letter of resignation and renunciation was that he called our roll, so as to speak, describing to each of us his personal habits and peculiarities which made him impossible to associate with. Only SDRussell got a clean bill of health. But, oddly, with the exception of Bruce's remarks about Mel Browns' unkemptness, every single one of these accusations applied to Yerke with as great force as it did to the person he was condemning for it.

But the Outsiders no longer existed, except as a name. Mid-May of 1944 saw the LASFS with four or five members and The Outsiders with about the same. Neither group had any longer sufficient momentum to expand itself. If Los Angeles was to have a fan club, it was pretty evident to me that the two factions would have to combine, and fast.

A certain amount of intermingling was already in evidence. Crozetti and Daniels did a good deal of work on *Venus* at Fran Shack with Outsider equipment, and since Daniels had also become co-editor of Brown's *Fan Slants* and Kepner's *Toward Tomorrow*, a good deal of work on these two Outsider fanzines was performed in the LASFS clubroom. Ackerman still refused to speak to me, and there was considerable resentment between various Outsiders and Walter J. Daugherty, but by and large the groups seemed drifting towards a merger.

I commenced angling around, trying to work out some sort of truce with Ackerman. Walter J. Daugherty stepped into a role of peacemaker, telling us how implacable Ackerman was towards us and telling Ackerman how these overtures of friendship merely presaged some sort of Trojan horse deal. I dated Myrtle a time or so, and in the course of talking things over with her saw that she would eventually cause the hatchet to be buried.



Matters could have drifted on, except that Lora Crozetti, the very evening after Brown, Kepner, and I had spent a couple of hours helping her run off *Venus*, took the floor in the LASFS, told the club that the room had been so full of Outsiders she couldn't work, and demanded that the club ban all Outsiders from its premises, under pain of having them thrown in the pokey for trespassing. Director Walter J. Daugherty allowed such a motion to pass, appointed Burbee to come down and tell us about it, then came down himself and did not allow Burbee to more than say hello as the Great Daugherty read the riot act. I tried to talk to the fellow in a conciliatory fashion, despite some rough remarks from a rather intoxicated Bronson, who quit fandom completely when it became evident that Brown, Kepner, and I were and had been dickering with the LASFS.

This last week of May was devoted mostly to negotiations of one sort and another. The reconciliation was finally implemented by Morojo, who talked Ackerman around into seeing both the need for a merger and the advisability of letting bygones be bygones. The feud was closed despite Walter J. Daugherty's efforts as a peacemaker, when one Sunday morning, a nervously doubtful Forrest J. Ackerman tapped diffidently on Fran Shack's door until a dumbfounded Francis T. Laney opened it and peered sleepily out at him.

But that, and the happenings that led from this surprise visit, belong in the next chapter.

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### Chapter 8

## On the Inside Looking Out

Such had been the power of the Shangri-La propaganda, the Russell J. Hodgkins hush-hush publicity policy, which gave a cover-up to the manifold failings of the LASFS and its members, that fandom generally had not completely adjusted to the idea that there was a rift when lo! all was peace once more. Or was it?

In any event, nearly all established fans maintained a strict neutrality. Larry Shaw, Raymond Washington, and Claude Degler publically sided with Ackerman and the club. Shaw especially ran the matter into the ground. He was publishing a newzine called *Nebulah* with an occasional supplement called *Beulah's Scrapbook* in which he ran editorials, feature stories, and other material which was not suitable for the terse, factual news sheet that *Nebulah* tried to be. In *Beulah's Scrapbook*, Shaw ran a long and biased letter from

Ackerman, giving his side of the feud. This was of course all right, but Shaw, removed from us geographically by more than 2000 miles and speaking from the depths of a profound ignorance of the situation, wrote an equally long editorial taking sides with Ackerman. Fern and I promptly wrote semi-official letters to Shaw, taking issue with his lack of neutrality, and I wrote an official account of The Outsiders up to that time and sent it to him for publication. Through some sort of odd coincidence, Shaw quit the newzine field almost at once—blaming a variety of factors for it, but we always felt that it was because he was unwilling to be impartial. The Futurians, notably Wollheim, took sides with us privately, but maintained public neutrality. The rest of fandom wrote letters of inquiry, raised an occasional eyebrow, but were otherwise unaffected.

Jack Speer happened to take a poll of the top 15 fans in the spring of 1944, with the idea of seeing how what he called expert opinion correlated with that of the general fan public as reflected in Widner's compilation. Since Bronson and I were both in this list, we decided it would be fun to omit Ackerman from our top ten voting, and both vote for him as the worst fan of the year. This of course ruined Forry's standing in Speer's poll. So in some distorted poll figures, the feud was reflected nationally.

But apart from what I've just mentioned, the only effects of the Big Fuss were strictly local.

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One of the first things the LASFS did after we resigned was to write and adopt a new constitution. It was written largely by Walter J. Daugherty, and was chiefly aimed at keeping the Outsiders out, and preventing a recurrence of the feud. Since much had been made of the fact that I had been in the club only a couple of months before I started criticising it (as if one had to eat an entire egg to know that it was rotten) the Daugherty constitution provided a three month probationary period for new members, during which time they were required to attend 75% of all club meetings and were not permitted to vote. (Ackerman, I am told, had wanted a special clause requiring six months of this probation for any former member of the club who wished to rejoin, but Freehafer talked him out of this.) The Daugherty constitution otherwise pretty much continued the old organization—rent payers' committee, executive committee, and so on—except it added one of the most pernicious dictatorial arrangements I have ever seen in an organization, the Governing Body. This group was a self-perpetuating, self-elected committee of up to five members, serving for life. Their control over the club was absolute. They could set aside any vote of

the club, even a unanimous vote; they could set aside any election of officers, they could suspend or depose any officer elected or otherwise, they could expel any member. Any of these actions could be taken; nothing could be done about them. As originally constituted, the Governing Body was not quite so bad, since it had the well-liked and balanced Freehafer on it, and a couple of others having enough emotional stability to give a certain amount of assurance that these extraordinary powers would not be called upon except in time of great emergency. (Original membership of the Governing Body: Forrest J Ackerman, Walter J. Daugherty, Myrtle R. Douglas, Arthur Louis Joquel II, and Paul Freehafer.)

But Freehafer died only a week or so after the committee was set up. And at about the same time, Joquel quit the club in a huff over the mishandling of Freehafer's picture in *Shangri L'Affaires*, leaving a three-man governing body: Ackerman, Douglas, and Daugherty. Myrtle was OK. She is level headed and kind-hearted enough so that she can be trusted with this kind of extreme power. But all that Daugherty needed to do to rule the club to suit his whim was to sway Ackerman (and Ackerman is not, shall we say, unswayable) and there he was. The minute I heard of this setup I smelled a rat, and when he explained to me that the GB lay quiescent unless it was needed, something still smelled bad.

So the earlier part of our negotiations with the LASFS were largely confined to trying to work around the Governing Body setup. It must be remembered that Ackerman was still not speaking to me, and that it looked probable that we would have to be admitted over 4e's objection. At the same time, we were unwilling to come back if there was any hint of surrender about our action—it merely seemed desirable that Los Angeles continue to have a fan club, and obvious that ten members in one club might conceivably have a chance of accomplishing something while two separate clubs of four or five were certain to founder for good, and soon. It had been arranged that Myrtle, in her capacity as a member of the Governing Body, would favor our readmittance under some sort of peace treaty which would demand no apologies or retractions from either side, and which would waive either the requirement of attending meetings or the requirement of the three month probationary period. In his role as Peacemaker, Daugherty had gone so far playing both ends against the middle that we felt he would have considerable difficulty in voting against our readmittance — though then as now, Daugherty was unpredictable.

Forry's early morning visit to Fran Shack changed the entire picture. Myrtle finally talked him into coming down and discussing the matter person-

ally. I had had a very rough Saturday night, and when the first Sunday in June 1944 was heralded by a light but persistent tapping on Fran Shack door my first thought was to kick someone's tail clear across the street for waking me up at 9:00 AM. When I saw it was Ackerman, I nearly swooned with surprise, but I invited him in and excused myself while I doused my face with cold water and lit a cigarette in an attempt to get partially awake. When I came back into the front room, Forry was browsing along my bookshelves with every air of surprise—he had reiterated so often that I was a fake fan that he had come to believe it himself and walking into what was at that time a first class fantasy and stf collection upset his notions considerably.

We sat down and commenced talking, asking each other about various things that had happened in the past few months, occasionally trying to explain our motivations to each other. In the course of a two hour conversation we got onto a more friendly basis than we had ever been before — particularly when it came home to both of us that we had each separately been trying to carry a club on our shoulders. I reassured him that there was nothing political about returning to the LASFS; he reassured me that we need not fear the Governing Body.

So the following Thursday, Brown, Kepner, and I rejoined the LASFS—not without a considerable amount of balking from Mel Brown, who is almost unable to back down on anything he has ever said, or do anything that looks as though he might be backing down. However, he had already agreed to rejoin the LASFS under terms which Kepner and I were willing to accept, so he came along. But the end of the Outsiders really ended Mel Brown in fandom. He took an active part in the LASFS through most of the time following, but dropped all his publishing and most of his collecting.

My chief motivation in rejoining the club has not as yet been touched on. I had finally established what looked to be an *entente cordiale* with my wife, and it was evident that Fran Shack's days were numbered. This being the case I was faced with the problem of either joining the club, or folding the *Acolyte*, since it was very unlikely that I'd much longer have room for a mimeograph of my own. My increasing contacts with the better class of fantasy lovers and the surprising amount of first class materials continually being submitted to *Acolyte* by Leiber and others made me very reluctant to suspend the magazine, particularly now that I had Russell for a co-editor. And, despite my resolutions of a few weeks previously, I was having great difficulty in quitting fandom in the face of all this good material, a fast growing interest in FAPA, and a still unsatisfactory job coupled with a considerable amount of pathologi-

cal self-doubting.

I had finally gotten Jackie to see that perhaps the housing shortage really existed, that I had not just made it up as an excuse not to send for her, and she had agreed to come to Los Angeles without Sandy and Quiggie, leaving them with my mother in Idaho, stay at Fran Shack for a while, and hunt for housing on a full-time basis. I agreed to go back up North if she was unsuccessful; she had agreed to do a whole-hearted job of looking. She still seemed to think we could get a rental.

But her trip needed money, and it seemed highly desirable to me that I spend as much time around the club and away from money-spending temptations as I could. So, once back into the LASFS, I moved my typewriter and trunk of immediately needed papers to the club, and shortly fell back into the habit of spending a good part of my spare time there.

Ackerman came in with me, and it was not long before the LASFS had an approximation of its pre-fred hey-day, with a number of people in the place every evening. Alva Rogers had just come back to LA from San Diego, Daugherty was feverishly active at the time, and Brown, Kepner, Daniels, and to a lesser extent Crozetti spent a good deal of time around the club on non-meeting nights.

A vignette of Glenn Daniels is in order. He was short, slender, ugly, and vivacious—definitely a boon companion type of person despite the oddity of his sexual tastes. His chief motivation apparently was sexual, but he was an interested and uninhibited conversationalist, and was almost as great a doer of fanzine and other drudgery for people as Mike Fern. From the national point of view, his activity in fandom was reflected only in a pile of mimeography and stencil-cutting for *Venus*, *Toward Tomorrow*, and *Fan Slants* but locally he was one of the most active members of the LASFS from about March until August 1944.

The new entente cordiale with Ackerman was implemented by both of us in various ways. I commenced writing a good deal for VOM and even mimeographed one issue for Forry; I invited him to my place as an “accidental” dropper-inner the night Fritz Leiber came over to see my collection and talk fantasy (an evening which Ackerman reported for me in an article for *Fan-Dango*); and I was enabled to see a revival of *Metropolis* as 4e's guest.

The Leiber visit occurred just before Fritz left town to take over a good editorial job in Chicago, and was just another of those big bullfests that is stimulating at the time, but of which little stays with one as specific impressions of that specific event. I remember how I kept trying to keep the

conversation steered into fantastic channels because I had noticed how completely lost Forry seemed to be if anything outside this one narrow field was mentioned; and how nature took its course, and Fritz and I got wound up on literature generally. And I especially remember seeing Leiber to his bus, and how we loped back and forth for over an hour between 8th and Olympic, just missing a bus on each street, until finally we subsided, panting, on Olympic and talked far into the wee small hours until an owl bus came bumbling along. I've not seen Leiber since.

The showing of *Metropolis* was held at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' little theater located far up in an open-air arcade which opens off Hollywood Blvd. just east of the Pickwick Bookshop. It was part of their regularly scheduled program, to which they sold season tickets at \$15.00 each. I would not have been able to go, except that Myrtle had already seen the picture a couple of times, and she and Forry asked me to use her ticket. The picture itself was mediocre, if interesting. It is replete with very brilliantly conceived sets and special effects, but the overdone hamminess of the acting proved such a major drawback that the picture as a whole was stupid. Individual scenes, however, made it worthwhile, and then of course the big attraction was Fritz Lang himself, who took the floor after the showing and talked for well over an hour. At first he stayed pretty close to *Metropolis*, but before long was talking about his experiences in leaving Germany, and eventually was discussing the broad field of cinematic art from the point of view of the director. Good listening indeed! An amusing sidelight was the country bumpkin awe with which I regarded Lang's monocle, and the way it stayed in place despite the extreme animation of its wearer's features.

About the chief social activity of the LASFS during the spring and summer of 1944 was miniature golf. There was a course located two blocks from the club at 5th and Beaudry, and nearly all the members except Ackerman, Myrtle, Crozetti, and Burbee spent at least five evenings a week there. Particularly after Brown began clashing again with the club, the golf course proved an invaluable place to work off his steam, though playing 36 holes with Mel required a mighty degree of fortitude. His always great nervousness became hugely intensified, and he would rage, swear, prance up and down, throw his club, chew his finger, and in general behave like a maniac. I still think half the golfers on the course that summer went more to see Mel's performance, than to play golf themselves.

Two or three weeks after we rejoined the club, Ackerman received a letter from Donald A. Wollheim which utterly soured me on the



Futurians in general and Wollheim in particular. It wasn't very long, but it attacked me pretty strongly personally, told Ackerman that my only purpose in rejoining the LASFS was to destroy the club utterly, and belaboring him in no uncertain terms for letting me back in, closed by urging him to throw me out. What precise purpose Wollheim might have had in mind escapes me entirely; he is known to have been bitterly inimical to Los Angeles fandom and particularly Ackerman, and perhaps he may have thought that by stirring up the feud once again he could destroy the LASFS. As it turned out, Ackerman showed me the letter, and nothing came of it except to turn me very bitterly against the Futurians, whom I had previously known scarcely at all.

Though I was heartily sick of feuding and club politics, it was not long before I was once more embroiled up to my ears in a row with Walter J. Daugherty. The club was in sorry straits financially, and various plans were being discussed to increase the revenue without turning the club into an insupportable burden for its handful of members. Since this discussion was taking place on a non-meeting night, I did not see any reason why my being disenfranchised should prevent my taking part in it; particularly since my chief reason for rejoining had been to use the mimeograph, something I obviously could not conveniently do if we found ourselves unable to support the clubroom. 4e, Myrtle, and others liked some of my ideas — particularly one aimed directly at the people who kept personal property in the club for their own personal use — and asked me to incorporate them in a bylaw amendment for them to bring up at the ensuing meeting. I did so; the bylaw passed in the absence of Walter J. Daugherty, who just didn't happen to be there; and from then on the three individuals who maintained personal property for their own use in the club had to pay a minimum of \$3.00 a month key rent rather than the former rate of \$1.00. Ackerman, Daugherty, and I were the only ones who came under this heading.

It so fell out that on the ensuing Sunday, Daugherty called the club to see if anyone was there, and I happened to answer the phone. He wanted someone to help him bring in a large buffet, which his landlady had given him, and which he wanted to store his supplies in. Sure, I was willing to help him, but in passing, I mentioned that it would cost him \$3 a month rent if he kept it in the club, due to this new bylaw. I told him this, and the fellow practically walked through the phone. Five minutes later he was in the clubroom, shaking with rage, and foaming at the mouth about my having insulted him, having seized control of the club, having conspired to make his membership impossible, and god knows what else. It was not long before I had enough of

this, and I told him off but good, and we were off. Bellowing something about the governing body, he dashed off after Myrtle and Forry, and wasted nearly their entire day trying to have the Outsiders evicted from the club. I went on half-heartedly cranking out *Acolyte* with Mel's help, expecting any minute that we would be expelled, for having incurred Lord Walter's displeasure. Ackerman and Morojo, however, refused to act against me. After all, I'd only told him of an action of the club—of an action on which I couldn't even vote—and it is difficult to see how Daugherty could justify his reaction. After some three hours of Governing Body deliberations, Myrtle came over and told me of her desire to keep the peace in the club, and that Walter would be willing to forgive and forget if I would write out an apology to him. What an apology that was!

The old LCSmith virtually smoked as I expressed myself in blazing sentences studded with four-letter words of Anglo-Saxon derivation, none of which were used in a masochistic fashion. "There's my apology to that bastard," I snarled, and thrust the paper on Myrtle.

She read it, and turned faintly pink. "Oh, but this will never do. It will just make him angrier."

"He can shove it up his — if he doesn't like it in his face," I remarked. "That's my last word on the subject. Do you want my resignation from the club?"

"Oh, no."

She left the room, and about 6:00 o'clock reappeared with Ackerman, having pacified Walter J. Daugherty in something like seven hours.

When I next saw this mercurial gentleman, he seemed to have forgotten the whole thing, and was happy as a lark as he bubbled with plans for the next Daugherty Project, a portfolio of caricatures of fans drawn by Virgil Partch.

But I realised that in order to stay in the club at all, I was going to have to take part in politics. As the group was constituted under that pernicious Governing Body setup, the only way one could get along with Daugherty was to keep a wedge driven between him and Ackerman. I expounded this idea strongly for the next few weeks, and pointed out that if we once caught Ackerman right after Daugherty had made him angry (something that happened from time to time) we'd not only fix Mr. D's cookie, but would be able to toss out the entire governing body idea in toto. (We did, too.)

The FAPA election for the 1944-45 fiscal year took place at about this time, and Al Ashley, that caffeine soaked politico, had in appointing the

ballot counting committee blithely ignored the feud, and appointed a non-partisan board with Daugherty as chairman, and Brown and Bronson as assistants. This led directly to another mess. In the first place, Daugherty did not read of his appointment, and Ashley, unable to imagine another fan who would not read breathlessly every word in the official organ, had not notified him by mail. In the second place, Brown and Daugherty on a committee worked together about as well as Molotov and Senator Taft. And worst of all, Bronson not only lived 18 miles from the club neighborhood, but had no phone and had definitely quit fandom. Poor old Walter J. Daugherty had a hell of a time, which was not especially helped by his native inclination to procrastinate. Before the ballot counting delays were over, a feud had sprung up between Daugherty and Larry Shaw (that's one I loved; no matter who got the worst of it, I liked it fine.) and FAPA had ground almost to a full halt. I finally wrote to Ashley about it. I'd struck up quite a correspondence with Sultan, arising out of the letter he wrote me about the drunken *Fan-Dango* of a few months before. I'd been impressed by his extreme fairness and courtesy, particularly as contrasted by the reception that issue got from FAPA as a whole, and very shortly he had me highly interested in FAPA, both from the point of view of the contents of the mailings, and as an arena for the practising of organizational politics, something I tend to enjoy as an end in themselves. I happened to mention, with the idea of knifing Daugherty a little, that he had totally disregarded the secrecy of the ballot, and had made a tabulation of who had voted and how. Al was overjoyed, made a few anti-Futurian remarks which of course fell on fertile soil, and asked me to get these results for him. So I did. I mention this episode, since it was the first stirring of the abortive group later to be known as the O O D, Order of Dagon.

Due to the three-month's probationary period before persons joining the LASFS were permitted to vote, and the extremely small size of the club at this time, it was not long before the futility of all LASFS meetings was starkly underlined. The typical LASFS meeting in June and July 1944 was attended by from 8 to 12 people, of whom sometimes as many as four were eligible to vote. But traditionalist Ackerman, reigning as director for a three month term, never thought to try turning the club away from its habitual bumbling rut of business meetings, and some rare scenes arose from this. It made no difference if a person were eligible to vote; if he had something to say and sufficient aggressiveness to get up and say it he could hold the floor for hours. But when the time came to vote on whatever was at hand, only a very few could or would exercise a franchise. I'll give two examples which illustrate the two types of things that habitually happened to club business

during this madcap summer. I might add that virtually everything that came up was disposed of in one of these two ways.

One night, in connection with a discussion on improving club finances, we discovered that the club was holding the sack for over \$50.00 worth of mimeographing supplies which had been used by different members who had subsequently left the club without paying their bills. I got the floor, suggested that the club drop its requirement of using club materials on the club mimeograph, allow any member to use any supplies he wished as long as he paid the club a commission on their value to pay for the use of the mimeograph, that all club supplies be locked in the closet, and that they be issued under a cash only arrangement on whatever nights Ackerman might choose to be there and act as stock clerk. I dilated on the advantages of this scheme until I began to run out of breath, pointed out that I was unable to vote, and consequently could not put this into the form of a motion, and would someone else please do so. There was a prolonged silence as the notorious apathy inherent in the LASFS rose to new heights. I sat down mildly disgusted, and after a long and embarrassed delay, director Ackerman carried the meeting on to something else. The payoff came about two weeks later when I discovered to my utter amazement that the club was operating under my scheme and had been doing so ever since I had mentioned it. "What the hell...?" I asked Ackerman. "Well, it was brought up in a club meeting," he said. "———????———", I replied with my chin hanging down on my chest. "Well, no one seemed to say anything about it," said Forry, "so I presumed it had been passed." Comment by me at this late date would be superfluous.

The other way business was disposed of was even worse. Not only was Morajo on the threshold of her permanent split-up with Ackerman, but she was in very poor health; came only to the early portion of the meeting long enough to collect any money she could and read her treasurer's report, and then left for the evening. Walter J. Daugherty, as ever (even when director) only came to about two meetings in five. Daniels and Rogers were both in arrears with their dues, and hence could not vote. This left the regular voting members limited to director Ackerman, Burbee, and Crozetti. Since the latter two did not like each other very well, they habitually voted on opposite sides of whatever came up, regardless of the topic's intrinsic merits. The height of this folly came up one sultry July night when 13 persons, including visiting San Franciscans Ebey and Watson, spent nearly two hours wrangling over some now forgotten topic, finally got it to a vote, and (yes!) Crozetti voted yes, Burbee voted no, and Ackerman, characteristically, refused to cast the

deciding vote, although it was his clear duty as chairman to do so. The net result, of course, was to waste the entire evening.

My wife, Jackie, had arrived in Los Angeles early in July, and spent most of that month on a full-time house-hunt. Giving up on rentals, she finally consented to our buying, and very shortly we had a house. During this month, she naturally saw a good deal of the LASFS, and this added another source of trouble for our already tottering marriage, since there were few of the local misfits whom she could tolerate. I'd been around them so long that I'd gotten used to them, scarcely realising myself how bad most of them were. Had her manner of attack been less dictatorial and less "You do my way or else..." I undoubtedly would have quit fandom completely in late 1944; the things she said about the club and its members were only too true, but I could see no future in permitting myself to be led around by the nose.

The chief worthwhile Los Angeles activity in mid-1944 was the publication of Jack Speer's mammoth *Fancyclopedia*, a scholarly and entertaining encyclopedia which not only gave definitions and background for all terms and words with fannish connotations, but in passing gave a considerable glimpse into stefnistic history. Jack had spent over two years writing and revising and sending the manuscript around to various elder fans, had then stencilled it and turned it over to Phil Bronson to publish for him. Phil went all out for lotus-eating, but did turn publishing permission over to the Outsiders, who even went so far as to buy some of the paper for it just before the final disbanding and resumption of LASFS membership. In the meantime, Speer, understandably miffed over the protracted delay in publication, had gotten after the NFFF, under whose auspices Bronson was supposed to have been working, and Evans had reassigned the job to Walter J. Daugherty, who amazingly allowed the LASFS to take it over. So we spent a full month mimeographing, using three machines: the club's old automatic ABDick, my old *Acolyte* machine, and Walter J. Daugherty's flossy new Niagara. The NFFF is given a lot of undeserved ego-boo by being shown as publisher; Forrest J. Ackerman published it, furnishing 95% of the incentive and well over half the actual work. He worked pretty much along the lines of an Outsider publishing session, and the finished results show that even the LASFS can do something worthwhile if a certain modicum of intelligent direction and channelling is given to the club's potential.

Walter J. Daugherty had an acute outbreak of projectomania in June and July 1944, starting new magazines and brochures by the dozen. Most never got beyond the talk stage, and all were so delayed in publication that their eventual publica-

tion was greeted only by amused surprise on the part of local fandom. The second edition of Daugherty's *Directory of Fandom* came out first; he compiled a vast array of names and addresses, stencilled them, and ran them off like a house afire. For over three months, the completed directory gathered dust and obsolescence around the club because Walter J. Daugherty could not figure out a cover that suited him. No wonder it was so out of date when he finally sent it out. Stray pages turned out at this time for various other short-lived projects appeared in *Fan* at various times during the next year and a half; some of the stuff, I believe, never did get published.

In her column in *Shangri L'Affaires*, Lora Crozetti very aptly took to describing the rooming house at 628 South Bixel as the "Bixel Fairy Palace". (From November 1943 until now (April 1947) this building has always had at least one, and sometimes as many as four, members of the LASFS who were also actively overt homosexuals.) Anyway, this was too much for some of the alate ones, who frantically rushed into print with a new name for their house of assignation: Tendril Towers. Burbee and I took great glee in making up new alliterative take-offs on this euphemism—most are now forgotten or unprintable—but I still remember Goosey-butt Grotto with a certain amount of relish. (Lest I seem to be casting slurs, perhaps I should point out that the Bixel Fairy Palace has always had heterosexual LASFS members living there too.)

As the summer of 1944 wore along, I received a letter from Mick McComas that went far to thrust me back into fandom. This note mentioned that the Random House *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural* had just topped the 30,000 mark in sales, that McComas and a friend had been commissioned to compile a companion volume of science-fiction, and could I help them any? This led to a big session with McComas and his co-editor, Ray Heally, as an upshot of which I agreed to do a vast amount of preliminary scouting and story recommending. The first thing I did was to monopolise a club meeting, asking the members to suggest suitable stories, look them up in the club library, and tell me where they could be found. I sat there typing like mad and ending up with two single-spaced pages of story recommendations. During the next year and a half, I must have had at least ten long sessions with McComas and Heally, some of which I will describe in their chronological place in these memoirs.

Jackie returned to the North in early August, to sweat out the eviction time granted the tenants of our new house; I sat tight in Fran Shack, trying to avoid spending money and as a result becoming more deeply involved in the club for a while,



bringing out gobs of crud — *Acolyte*, *Fan-Dango*, and independent writings. It saved money, since I was doing no collecting to speak of, but getting deeply enmeshed in the LASFS was a very bad thing for me otherwise, and I've often regretted it. But in addition to the immensely exciting collaboration with Heally and McComas, and the ever increasing flow of good material for the *Acolyte*, Tony Boucher stunned me with the first of two highly enthusiastic reviews of the *Acolyte* in his book column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. This one squib brought *Acolyte* no less than 23 cash subscriptions, and the ego-boo involved was a bit more than my equilibrium could stand. I began to have visions of building *Acolyte* into a genuine semi-pro, and going on from there into professional editing—a harmless enough will-o-the-wisp to chase if one does not take it too seriously. I'm afraid I took it too seriously for a while though—never stopping to think that I was making more money on my job than I could hope to get as one of the lesser editors, and that I am temperamentally unsuited to tackle publishing except as a hobby. (I.e. why take the fun out of a hobby by making a job out of it?)

Early August saw a major political upheaval in the LASFS. It had once more become time for a new director to be elected. Morojo announced that she would positively refuse to be treasurer again (having served continuously since mid-1937), and a wave of consternation ran through the two or three voting members who took the club seriously as they realised that they had no one available to take over the job. Finally (and I've always thought it was at Morojo's suggestion) Ackerman and Daugherty came to me and asked if I were willing to be treasurer of the LASFS.

"Can't," I said. "I'm not eligible either to vote or to hold office, and won't be for another month."

"Well," said Daugherty, "we can waive that about holding office."

"You mean you are willing to waive the rest of my probationary period?"

"Oh no," said Walt, "you won't be able to vote, but you can have the job if you take it, and of course you can keep the job after your probationary period is over."

"What the hell do you think I am? If I can be trusted with the club's money I can be trusted with the other privileges of membership. And furthermore, Brown and Kepner came back into the club with me, and I'll consider no special consideration that does not apply to them as well."

"We can't do that."

"Well, I don't want the job anyway. I told you when I came back in the club that I was through with club politics. What's the matter; can't you find some public spirited fan like Ackerman and Daugherty who is willing to sacrifice the tiny amount of time the treasurer's job requires?"

"No."

"If you need a treasurer bad enough to restore all of us Outsiders to full membership now, I'm willing to take the job just to do you and the club a favor."

The result of all this was a forgone conclusion; while Walter J. Daugherty had a few minor fits, the Governing Body gave the executive committee permission to waive the three-months probationary period for Brown, Kepner, and myself—this after only seven weeks of novitiate. And it is noteworthy that this three-months probation was thereafter honored only in the breach—until I became director again and chose to apply it in one or two instances in a political move. (The best way to kill a bad law is to enforce it rigidly.)

So Morojo found herself elected director, Alva Rogers was secretary, and I was treasurer. Something about the idea of the arch-Outsider in control of the LASFS funds seven weeks after his return to the club, and moreover by the request of Walter J. Daugherty, has always struck me as being rather funny.

Morojo's term of office was short, and anything but sweet. Walter J. Daugherty had taken to collecting mimeographs—I think he had some idea of using the clubroom as an office for a commercial mimeographing service—anyway he very shortly owned two late-model, fully automatic Niagaras, a post card machine, some sort of broken down standard mimeograph which I never saw out of its box, the Phil Bronson machine, \$30.00 worth of stylii and lettering guides, and the cabinet from an old table radio. (I never did figure out what that last was for.)

Anyway, in light of Daugherty's mimeographical resources, it was not odd that the executive committee shortly got in the mood to buy one of the Niagaras, particularly when the club machine broke down. We voted to do so, against Myrtle's protest. She went ahead the next day and had \$25.00 worth of work done to the old machine. We decided to sell it to Daugherty anyway, and turn it in on a reconditioned Niagara, with automatic paper feed, inking, and slipsheet. Myrtle chose to take this as a personal affront and resigned her gavel, after serving for only about a week. (I've always thought she was just looking for an out anyway, since she very shortly made her final break with Ackerman, quit being Morojo, and

became, as now, Myrtle B. Douglas, an extremely inactive member of the club.)

This resignation elevated Alva Rogers to the post of director, and he replaced himself as secretary by appointing Walter J. Daugherty. About the only piece of business transacted during Alva's term was to elect Myrtle an honorary member of the society. Otherwise the group bumbled along, held a few entertaining discussions, and that was about all.

Sometime during the latter part of the summer, Bob Hoffman came to town to spend a protracted furlough. Paul Freehafer had left his entire collection to Bob, with the proviso that Bob pass on any of it he did not personally want in any way he wished. Bob decided to give all this stuff to me; including a number of prozines, a fat bundle of fan photos, and a very fine collection of fanzines. The bulk of Paul's collection turned out to have been in Idaho; and I'll never forget the amazement with which we unpacked the gigantic boxes of stuff which his sister sent to us. Paul's collection was the nucleus of my collection of fanzines, and since 1944 I have kept constantly expanding it until it is, in my opinion, one of the four or five best such collections in captivity—containing as it does almost all major fanzines from 1930 through 1946 in complete files, and large quantities of the lesser items. It is the one portion of my fan/fantasy collection that I have not discarded or weeded out; so far as I know now, I will probably keep it always—partly because I enjoy browsing in old fanzines, partly because fanzines tend to bring back to me memories of the more pleasant part of my fanning, and not a little because the collection, started as it was, is in a sense a memorial to Paul Freehafer.

Considerably publicised by the club in 1944 was the acquisition, on a loan basis, of Donald Warren Bratton's fantasy file and bibliography. Don Bratton is a pleasant but quiet young chap in his early twenties, notable for rosy cheeks and a deep, if not vociferous, interest in the bibliographical side of fantasy. The file, contained in a large oak card case of some fifty or sixty drawers is an attempt at a complete cross-indexed file of all fantasy everywhere, is nowhere near complete, but even so contains thousands of cards, and has proven highly useful to many of us. The file, and its making and augmenting, is Don's chief interest in fandom.

Another character who came on the scene in 1944 and was for a time the club librarian was Leonard Golding Pruyn. He was a peculiar person, unknowable to the nth degree, and was of so hyper-refined a nature that the casual conversations of the more virile members shortly caused him to drift away.

Of a more sturdy nature among 1944's members was Captain Vern Glasser, USA—a glib and handsome New York lawyer who found himself on the coast for a few months, who had read stf for many years, and who heard of the club through Rae Sischo, a girl who happened to work for Reed's Litho Company (the concern which turns out most LASFS lithography). Vern was in his element when it came to bullfesting; he had the actual experience as well as the background of reading to back him up; and sessions with him were among the chief highlights of the latter part of the year. He faded out of the picture when the army transferred him elsewhere.

And in the early fall of 1944, I got a letter from Art Saha, announcing that he felt he had done his bit in the war after having served over a year in the US Maritime Service (after all, the guy was 4-F), had retired from the sea, and was undecided what to do next, except that his hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota no longer appealed. So I tossed him off a note telling him that he'd just as well come to LA for a while and get a bellyfull of the LASFS. He did and he did. The Saha who arrived in October 1944 was a far cry from the gawking bumpkin I'd met in Frisco the year before; the rough edges were knocked off, and here was a poised and personable guy who very shortly was one of the more desirable members of the club.

The latter part of 1944 saw me get into a most deplorable feud with A. Langley Searles of New York City, publisher of the scholarly and erudite *Fantasy Commentator*. This was just one of those things. I had a certain amount of desultory correspondence with Searles—wherein nearly every thing he said to me was couched in such words as to make me furious, and apparently my own remarks to him acted much the same. But nothing came of this definite antagonism between us until he got the idea my friends and I intended to steal his bibliography of fantastic books, which at the time was running spasmodically as a supplement to FFF. This misunderstanding arose when, arising out of a suggestion by Tony Boucher in the *Shaggy* letter section, a short-lived "Great Bib" movement arose, in the course of which some of us volunteered to help Searles with his existing bibliography. Searles apparently felt that he was doing all right on his own hook, with a coincident wonder as to where all this proffered help was during the earlier stages of his research; he refused the offer in such way as to make me mad; some of us decided to put out a bibliography of our own and announced this intention in the *Acolyte*; Searles threatened to sue for infringement; I blew up editorially in *Acolyte*; Searles demanded a withdrawal of the editorial under threat of suing me for libel; I found on second glance that I would

not be able to prove some of my allegations (under California law the truth is a defense against libel); and eventually made a rather grudging apology. Sam Russell acted as peacemaker, and actually got a short-lived, friendly correspondence going between Searles and myself—but a plan for Searles and I to swap contributions for each other's magazines fell through when Searles failed to write an article for the *Acolyte* (I did two for Searles, both of which he published.)

The fuss with Searles was considerably augmented by the stand he took in FAPA over the inclusion of certain matter which he considered to be obscene—Langley having stated point-blank that he was tired of the wrangling of the members over this matter, and the next time he saw something he did not like he was going to turn it over to the post office department. While I usually admire direct action, on the other hand I have always been one to over-react towards anything which smacks of a restriction on personal liberties. And by the time the LASFS FAPA members had gotten done kicking Searles' threat around, nearly all were ready to boil him in oil—Forrest J Ackerman going so far as to write a really nasty personal attack, in which he referred to Searles as a "white Jap"; the FAPA publication of which led to a permanent rift between Searles and Ackerman.

The FAPA election of 1944 had seen the 75% triumph of a Futurian slate of officers, riding high in an attempt to regain their former prestige in fandom (or for some reason I don't know)—anyway, Futurian Doc Lowndes was elected president, and Futurian yes-men Suddsy Schwartz and Larry Shaw were elected secretary-treasurer and official editor respectively. The old Futurian leader, Donald A. Wollheim, was nosed out of the vice-presidency by Al Ashley—a circumstance which shortly led to trouble in FAPA. The first act of the Futurians was to jam through, without warning, an election of constitutional amendments—some of which made sense, and some of which seemed to cover or be capable of covering something else. I didn't like the suddenness of the election, which effectively prevented discussion, nor did I have any reason to love the Futurians personally; so I drew up a petition of protest, got it signed by nearly all local Faps, and mailed it to the membership. The petition discussed each proposed amendment in detail, usually disfavorably, chided the Futurian administration for its railroadish tactics, and urged the members to reject all amendments. (All amendments were passed except for one which proposed to prohibit discussion of racial prejudice.)

But though the petition did not appreciably affect the election, it led directly to two results of major importance as they affected my subsequent fan

career.

Jimmy Kepner was one of the signers, and almost immediately he was subjected to a strong barrage of letters from Wollheim and perhaps others, urging him to change his mind. He actually wanted to put out another local letter to fandom, or rather FAPA, withdrawing his signature from the petition and urging the adoption of the amendments. I talked him out of this, but it was not long before the Tendril Towers bunch had swung en masse to the Futurian camp, a move which considerably complicated the political situation both in the LASFS and in FAPA.

Of more importance, it led directly into a political hookup between myself and Al Ashley—who by then was up to his ears in waging internecine warfare with the Futurians, a warfare which for the most part was unpublic, but which bore fruit in such leaflets as *These Amazing Amendments* and *The Precipitent*.

I'd already interested myself in FAPA politics. At the time I arrived in Los Angeles, Clod Degler was still a member of FAPA, and it seemed to several of us that it would be highly expedient to expel him. Our first attempt came out as a signed petition dated in December 1943, urging the officers of FAPA to take some action. Al Ashley, in his typical let-somebody-else-do-the-dirty-work fashion, fluffed this off; mentioning, however, a constitutional expedient which might be used for the expulsion. Bronson and I promptly took this up, filed the necessary piece of legislation, and were gratified to see it passed in the 1944 FAPA election, although by a very narrow margin.

I was, however, highly disgusted with the shilly-shallying attitude manifested by so many members of FAPA, and by the actual antagonism which this ouster aroused in certain quarters. Discussing the matter with Bill Watson, we gradually got the idea of forming a FAPA political party (which never received a name more dignified than "potty"); aiming it directly at the conservatives in FAPA. Watson was to file for Official Editor, and I for secretary-treasurer. We got Bob Tucker talked into running for vice-president, and asked D. B. Thompson to file for president; however, Don shied off fast, explaining that he wanted no part of organizational politics. As second choice, we approached Norm Stanley, and he accepted the bid, though later he withdrew.

We had a number of ideas we wished to try out. At that time, FAPA was stifled by non-productive members, yet boasted an imposing waiting list—we wanted to tighten up membership requirements both quantitatively and qualitatively so as to get rid of the dead wood and get the new prospects admitted to membership before they got

tired of waiting and lost interest altogether. Most of our proposed legislation centered around this one aim, though we did have other proposals which I have by now forgotten.

The political rapprochement with Al Ashley led to complications, since by the time it happened Watson had definitely aligned himself with the Futurians and Al had reached the point of almost open feuding with them. But in October 1944, the point at which this chapter is supposed to break off, the potty consisted of candidates Stanley, Tucker, Laney and Watson—with loyal supporters Thompson and Ashley.

In connection with my attacks on Degler, I got into a rather amusing fracas with Raymond Washington, the one reputable fan who continued to support Degler after all the rest of established fandom had turned against him. Being right on the spot and knowing what Degler was, I felt rather strongly about Washington's misguided loyalty in sticking to Degler, and demanded in one of my anti-Degler petitions to FAPA that Raym be directed either to sever connections with Degler or resign from FAPA. This did not sit well with most fans, including many of Degler's strongest opponents, nor did it sit well with Washington. But Raymond wouldn't fight back, and it rather annoyed me that my blood-and-guts facet had grown so anemic that I couldn't get a rise out of someone with it. (!!!) So I proceeded to snipe at Raymond every time I got the chance, trying the rather Hearstian tactic of discrediting him by coupling him in the public mind with something distasteful. Since Raymond was a year or so younger than the general run of fandom, I commenced referring to him as "Young Washington", dismissing everything he said as being too puerile to be worthy of attention. (It wasn't of course, but it made an amusing line to take, particularly as I imagined at the time with a certain amount of justification that this psychology was working with quite a few fans.) So this sort of thing went on for months, in VOM, in FAPA, and in my correspondence. And never a peep from RW.

Then, like a veritable bombshell, Raymond Washington blew up in my face, sending an open letter about me to the LASFS. Oh it was a honey—took me around and around—and incidentally was the most effective piece of attack work I saw in half a decade of fanning and feuding. The other members of the club had already read it when I arrived and were sitting around in pleased anticipation waiting for me to explode. I read it, was disappointed to find Raymond going all out for a form of idealistic unreality that I have always deplored as being impractical, and sorry to see that he had a number of totally erroneous ideas about me (as for example that I bore him malice, when all I was doing was having fun sniping); but at the same

time was delighted to get a rise out of him. The LASFS was audibly disappointed as I sat down and wrote Raymond a long conciliatory letter which eventually led to a protracted correspondence that I at least found highly pleasurable.

But my big time in fandom was about over. My family was to arrive around November 1, and we were to move out away from the club neighborhood to the house at 1005 West 35th Place. Fran Shack was about to fold up and vanish; I offered it to the LASFS for the same \$30.00 a month I was paying, it being about three times as big as the clubroom, and fitted up with a toilet and cooking facilities to boot—but it was too far away for the timid provincials of Bixel Street who after all, being emissaries of the future and supermen one and all could hardly be expected to wander seven blocks out of their habitual orbit—even to get a nice new clubroom.

My plans had not contemplated making my family live in the store, but a delay in getting the tenants out of the house dumped us all right there. It was a horrible place for the kids—no yard, no nothing—and as a result Jackie and I took them away as much as we could. It seemed natural to gravitate toward the LASFS, and the children made such a hit with local fandom that it proved a hard habit to break. I had rather expected the LASFS to object to Sandy and Quiggie, but instead the whole membership fussed over the little girls something scandalous. Sandy, who was then 4 1/2, very shortly found herself cranking the mimeograph from time to time, running errands for the members, going out to play miniature golf with them, and in general fitting in like she was one of them. Quiggie had her choice of a half-dozen laps to sit in, people to carry her piggy-back. And both of them had a big time looking at the pictures in the club's magazines, drawing and doodling on the crud sheets lying around, going out to dinner with local fandom, or what have you. I did not regard the relationship as particularly wholesome for the children, but for the two weeks it didn't hurt them, and it was amazing to see how reputed child-haters like Forry allowed Sandy and Quiggie to lead them around by the nose.

I was still treasurer of the LASFS; I intended to serve out my term and then cease activity in the LASFS—dropping in maybe once a month—and confining my fan activity to a decreasing output of *Acolyte* and *Fan-Dango*—with an eventual cessation of activity altogether—probably by the end of 1945

We moved out of Fran Shack in early November of 1944, and off I went, not without a nostalgic letter to Tucker about the end of an era as it were, to what I thought would be the beginning of the end.

Concluded next issue



# the AGOLYTE



1223 Gordon Street  
Hollywood 38, Calif.  
April 8, 1944

Fellow Fans:

The death of Paul Robinson Freehafer at his home in Payette, Idaho, Sunday morning, March 26, came to his many friends as a grievous loss, but, unfortunately, not an entirely unexpected one. Many of us had been watching with increasing anxiety these past few months as Paul's state of well-being declined slowly; for he had always been bothered with his heart. But the knowledge of this organic defect, which precluded for him a long lifetime, did not deter him in the slightest from his endless pursuit of knowledge, culture, and wisdom. Rather than abandon himself to a morbid and trenchant attitude toward a fate which was hardly generous, Paul Freehafer strove to make the most of the short time allotted him. In this respect he was fortunate in being able to surround himself with the books, records, and friends which he so earnestly desired.

The profundity of Paul's mind was truly remarkable, and it is here that the true loss lies. To eulogise Paul Freehafer as firstly a science fiction and fantasy fan is tantamount to remembering and recognising George Washington as only a good horseman, or venerating the memory of Thomas Alva Edison solely on the fact that as a newsboy in his youth he stopped a fire in a baggage car and saved a railroad train. Paul was most certainly a scientification and fantasy enthusiast, but there was nothing in his pursuit to resemble a mad escape from reality, a shying away from the tribulations of a mundane world. Paul was a scientification fan because he was a pursuer of all literature, because scientification furnished the garnish to an ever expanding cosmopolitan taste for the thoughts of other men and other times. And his interest in this particular phase of literature was augmented by a professional scientist's approach to the problem of space travel. At the time of his death, he was supervising a laboratory for a firm engaged in confidential government research. To Paul, scientification and fantasy were but one room, albeit a highly fascinating one, of a vast house; a house to which Paul held most of the keys.

The apartment which he shared with his room-mate, Adrian Mosser, and in which many of us spent endless enjoyable hours, was a storeroom of knowledge, a stimulus for constructive thinking. Two walls were lined with books, the lower sections with record albums. The number of volumes on any one given subject were sufficient to satisfy the appetite of a specialised researcher. Here were the classics: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, the Greek and Roman drama, Louys, and voluminous contemporary works on Hellenic and Roman civilization. Another section was bulging with the great novels: fairly complete files of Hugo, Proust, Balzac, Rabalais, Voltaire; from a later period, Twain, Dickens, Franco, Pushkin, Zola; and still more modern, Hemingway, Joyce, Dos Passos, O. Henry, London, Wells...a collection which would do credit to many a small town library. In philosophical works, the student could pull down at leisure Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Dewey, Spengler, Spinoza, Burton....is it small wonder that we can ill-afford to lose a mind that was familiar with all the foregoing and more, a mind which considered the problems of the day on the basis of this academic foundation?

To Paul Freehafer many of us owe the impetus which started our own pursuit of fine music, of literature, of science or sociology. From his endless musical albums and books we gained a perception of erudition quite soot-free. The quiet evenings in his apartment surrounded with Beethoven, Mahler, Mozart, Mendelssohn...a glass of wine or beer, and a lively discussion on some aspect of philosophy or history; these evenings are something one seldom can find, and something to be forever missed.

But Paul was hardly all recluse and intellectual. Hardly! Some of the most boisterous, Thorne-Smith-like antics I have experienced were spent in his company. Paul could also be whimsical, or silly, or even sarcastic in his own shy manner. There was the great man-hunt in his apartment building, with various adults groping down stygian corridors searching for Bronson and Russell who had absconded with a bottle; and with the tenants flooding down to the manager's, thinking an invasion had started. There were parties at Paul's, after which, like children, we ran down the long hill above Westlake Park, fighting like knights of old (slightly inebriated knights, perhaps) with long palm fronds on imaginary steeds. There was Paul vainly trying to break our habit of riding, not in the comfortable front seat of his 1939 Plymouth coupe, but piled four or five at a time into the open trunk compartment in the back of his car, dangling our feet in the exhaust and singing bawdy songs at passers-by,

There was Paul in the gas shortage, driving blocks and miles out of his way to enable a late stayer to get home without having to tangle with the city's unpredictable transportation system. There was his familiar blue coupe groaning down Sixth Street with five people in the front seat, Mike Fern stretched across the ledge on top, two persons on each running board, and a good six in the trunk compartment, the object to bid farewell to Dal Coger on his first visit to L. A.

Paul Freehafer was ever-ready to partake of any adventure, eager to do the unusual, the ridiculous, the out-of-way. He attended the Chicago and Denver Conventions. He made side excursions to visit Clark Ashton Smith, publish the weird fan magazine "Polaris", served for a time as Director of the LASFS, and contributed extensively to the maintenance of its facilities.

The schism which developed between the groups in the city toward the end of his life was a source of deep personal sorrow to him, but a token to his own personal tact and magnanimity is evidenced in the fact that he was a welcome comer to any and all factions---a member of the Outsiders, a fellow-traveler with the Knaves, and a member of the LASFS. I hope no one will try to say with which side lay his greater sympathies; I rather feel that different sympathies lay with the different groups. Each had an appeal to his erudite mind. Most certainly all sides mourn him equally, for his devotion to his friends was often far more than their reciprocation. For myself, he personally financed my trip to the Denvention, and later much of my photographic equipment. Paul was always ready to give and to lend, be it funds, books, records, or the throwing open of the doors of his apartment to an invasion of friends, often when he could have bettered his condition by remaining alone and resting.

There remain a few pertinent factual data to be added. Paul was born on July 16, 1916. His sojourn in California began when he came to this state as a student at the California Institute of Technology. As a skilful research chemist, he was able to land a well paying job after his graduation in June 1941. Later he assumed the position mentioned at the commencement of this obituary.

Early this year he contracted a cold during the protracted rainy season, and from then on, his fatal decline set in. He was obliged to cease working, and finally perceiving he was becoming no better, secured a two months' leave of absence from his employers, and left for Idaho on Wednesday, March 22. A few of his closest friends, including myself, received a card from him as he passed through Salt Lake City, whereat he was "very tired". To Beverly Bronson he wrote: "I think I can make it."

His death, which occurred early in the morning of March 26, was, we are assured by his sister in Payette, attendant with the very minimum of pain. He died of rheumatic heart fever. Subsequent autopsy indicates that his heart was considerably enlarged, and that it is doubtful if Paul ever would have been well again had he survived the palpitation which caused his passing.

Behind, he leaves no enemies, but a host of sorrowing friends, a recollection of many interesting, happy, constructive, and enjoyable hours, and a memory that though its possessor has departed, will remain fresh and alive, becoming rather more cherished and valuable than less, as our own years roll onwards. Paul will no longer be with us on our stag parties, our discussion groups, at the Hollywood Bowl, the Ballet, the Philharmonic; but the spirit in which he lived will always be there, and be with us when our activities turn to any of the myriad pastimes which Paul Freehafer shared with us.

As was remarked by one of our group when the shock was fresh, "I don't feel that Paul has passed....I'll always feel that he's up in Payette, resting." I think we all share the same feeling. Paul is still with us; he's up in Payette, just resting.

--Theodor Bruce Yerke

For the Outsiders and the Knaves:

Philip R. Bronson, Francis T. Laney,  
Arden R. Benson, Edwin Chamberlain, Merlin Brown, Pogo, C. J. Fern Jr.,  
James Kepner, Jack Rhodes, Jules Lazar, Charles Burbee Jr., Samuel  
D. Russell, Beverly Bronson



CONSTELLATION

The 41st World Science Fiction Convention

Baltimore

FAN GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH

by David A. Kyle

September 3, 1983

"WE LOVED THE FUTURE"

Once upon a time, a short half-century ago in another dimension far, far away, there was a science fiction convention. It was the first one, the very first one -- and it was attended exclusively by science fiction fans. We all knew each other. We all were very young. And we could have fitted into a couple of telephone booths (which was a popular diversion at the time). But we never would have done that because we were much too serious and constructive and arrogantly superior for something so gauche.

That long time ago I became a science fiction fan. It was an age when only science fiction took humanity to the moon or showed us the surface of Mars or gave us both the good and evil power of nucleonics.

Fandom and I have lived through fifty years of incredible scientific and technological development. And fandom has made me a Fan Guest of Honor at a science fiction convention.

What is a "fan" and, particularly, what and why is a "Fan Guest of Honor?"

To put it simply, a science fiction fan is a science fiction enthusiast. This convention is a gathering of thousands of enthusiasts and I am the symbol for the group. We all have the required sense of wonder, but not all of us here this weekend are fans.

The other thousands and thousands here today are interested more or less in science fiction and fantasy things, but they are not fans.

Let's consider this: something unpredictable has happened over the years to science fiction conventions. Something peculiar has happened to fandom.

Once, fandom was in the vanguard of science fiction. Fandom no longer is. Fandom, the activists as a group, has been inundated by the sci-fi-fanatics and the spectators.

I realize that my honor as the Fan Guest is tokenism -- that not many people really want to know what I have to say, let alone that it might be significant. I am a symbol. Fandom has been paid its respect by having my picture in the program book.

We, the fans, have been granted the back room, and we can talk to ourselves and leave the weekend schedule of entertainment undisturbed. At this moment, it's Indiana Jones and the movie business assigned the main hall, larger than a football field, somewhere down below us.

The situation here represents what has happened to fandom. Fandom has lost its power, and it has lost its voice in the instrument, the convention, which has become the power and voice of science fiction enthusiasts and the professional field.

Fandom is given the back rooms. Fandom is fun and games for the convention. It seems the serious and constructive thoughts are best left to the few fanzines which still deal in such stuff.

The right stuff was found this morning in Room 317 when The Right Stuff program was presented. There it was that I found, again, the idealism that science fiction and fandom once represented to me. This morning I found heroes. They are in real life now, not just in fantasy stories. And maybe that's what science fiction and science fiction fandom, working together, was destined to create.

Let's consider whether or not fandom's role is now merely to join the shouts of the crowd as orchestrated by the professionals who have taken over. The professionals are not just the writers -- although it was they who separated themselves from the fans when they became cliquish and began to hold their segregated parties in their unpublicized suites.

Maybe fandom still has some life -- and some reason for its existence.

Fandom created the first convention in 1936 in the Sunday-closed barroom which the father of Johnny Baltadonis gave us as a place to meet. Now, almost fifty years later, we're on our way back to smaller and smaller groups in smaller and smaller rooms. The fans worked to put our professionals up on pedestals for the world to see. We succeeded. And now, it appears, we are no longer needed. We are no longer part of the bigger game -- the game that is enjoyed by the sci-fi spectators.

Sure, we all have a Sense of Wonder. But there is an intrinsic element missing. Once upon a time we all had a special, vigorous characteristic. Few of us have it now.

What is it? It is the Sense of Mission. That's what makes a science fiction enthusiast more than just a reader. That's what, for me, makes a Trufan.

Fifty years ago, when I was a boy, science fiction was a term that was only four years old. And fandom was hardly any older.

Fandom's genesis began in the twenties, but it took years to form. Hugo Gernsback sowed the seeds in his magazine Science and Invention. He nurtured its growth with the establishment of the first science fiction magazine in 1926, Amazing Stories. Fandom evolved from readers, to enthusiasts, to fans.

Fifty years ago, we who had the Sense of Wonder also had the Sense of Mission. That second ingredient -- maybe it came to us spontaneously, or maybe Hugo Gernsback gave it to us. We can never know for sure.

I think this Sense of Mission is what is really behind the beginnings of science fiction conventions.

The first science fiction convention was 1936. In New York City, we were just a handful of young men, mostly teen-agers, and we believed in the future that science fiction offered us: dazzling cities, spaceships, time machines, robots, human and alien comrades from out of the past and future times and from other worlds. We saw Homo sapiens united in progress. We loved the future, and we loved the human race, bigger and better in mind and body. We were optimists. We believed our species was preparing to advance to the stars. We were idealists. Yes, we loved the future, and we had faith in the human race. And all of us, to a certain degree, were activists shaping the future.

We had a mission, a sense of purpose, we had found a form of literature which liberated us and which could liberate the rest of the world -- if only the rest of the world could know about it. To us, science fiction was a miraculous Aladin's lamp of hope. Our mission was simple: sing the praises of science fiction. We were proselytes for science fiction. We did not tell each other that we were missionaries, nor formally pledge ourselves to the cause of science fiction -- we simply knew we had certain roles to fulfill.

Because of our beliefs, filled with the power of our dreams and sure of the infallibility of science, we supported causes which had high purposes and benevolent and humanistic goals.

Our idealism was not limited to politics or social reforms. We all thought we knew how to improve the science fiction magazines. We believed with Hugo Gernsback that science fiction must necessarily support and advance science and scientific inquiry.

Inevitably, of course, we were interested in the creative arts. We believed in man the creator and we arrogantly knew that we had the power within us to be creators. So, we published fanzines, and we wrote prose and poetry for them; we were friendly to every form of sensible iconoclasm, and we had an instinctive distrust for the banal authorities of the establishment over us. We were idealists -- and we were individualists -- and we were superior in our belief that we knew more than we really did. We were metaphysicists -- and we scorned -- or, at least, ignored -- mysticism. We avoided theology. We dismissed the belief in ghosts and demons, witches and fairies -- although we may have enjoyed such primitive speculations. It's sort of like today's hard science fiction fan who does not believe in the UFO mythology while at the same time wishing much of it might be true. And as for God -- well, Martians were more real to us. Of course, Jesus Christ was real, because of his wisdom and the truths he taught, but Science -- now there was something which could save man in this world and lift him toward perfection and paradise. We optimistically felt man's nature was perfectible through his own efforts, without divine grace.

Such were the fans who, back in that autumn of 1936, gathered together as a group and called themselves a convention. We were intense -- filled with idealism, having boundless faith in science fiction. The title "convention" is a misnomer. Actually, it is just a pretentious name for a weekend party, a party that has been getting bigger and bigger every year.

Once we were all personal friends; no one was a stranger. Once we were all young males; now we are young and old, male and female, a mixture of some friends and many strangers. But these changes matter not. Science fiction fandom is sexless and ageless. There is



no barrier of age or sex in a human being's ability to think and dream. That ability is the hallmark of the science fiction fan.

Once we felt we were special elite. We were smug in our knowledge that we were onto a great, and unique, thing -- science fiction. We revelled in our exclusiveness. We felt it then -- and fans today have that same feeling.

Are we really an elite? In a way we are -- we're a choice group, definitely superior in the department of receptive minds -- imaginative, creative, distinctive, original. But we're not any smarter than our non-fan friends. We don't run the world better. We are, after all, ordinary humans with ordinary problems and flaws, but we have some exceptional interests.

There is one shining characteristic of which we are proud. We have a Sense of Wonder. It is our emotional responsiveness that points the way for our logical minds.

I think we also have another characteristic as science fiction fans: a fundamental Sense of Mission. At least, we should have. And there it is again. This is what I'm anxious to convey to you. Often, nowadays, the Sense of Mission is dormant, unlike the fervent and exciting days of early fandom. Boyohboy, didn't we beat the drums for science fiction, clamoring for it to be recognized as worthy of everyone's attention and admiration! This Sense of Mission is our logical mind demanding that our emotional responsiveness have and obtain some worthwhile goal. Wonder -- for the reaching out of the mind, unfettered, and joyously free. Mission -- for disciplining ourselves, harnessing the mind, serving goals for the good of humanity.

So, once we science fiction fans, who were filled with the Sense of Wonder, burned with a Sense of Mission. At every opportunity we exalted science fiction. Mind you, we had to exercise tact. Science fiction as a term was practically unknown -- and so was the literature it represented. Even worse, what was known of science fiction was disparaged. H.G. Wells and Jules Verne were given a certain amount of respect, but they were considered to be literary oddballs. As for the sf magazines, they were disreputable. Our Mission was to overcome these prejudices. And we worked hard at our self-imposed task -- by talking, by writing, by discussing and arguing, in and out of schools, among youth organizations, with news persons, with our firends and with our parents.

Our mission had a two-part goal: to get science fiction into the vocabulary and then to encourage respect for it. As the decades have moved on, science fiction has become known -- widely known, far beyond even my wildest dreams. As for respect, it has received that

too. (Not without qualifications and some reluctance.) But it is found as part of our educational system at all levels. And it is found as part of our commercial and business systems at all levels, too.

Actually, however, although the Sense of Wonder remains -- tempered, somewhat by our sophistication and blasé attitudes -- our Sense of Mission has been lost. After all, we have achieved our goals: to make science fiction known and acceptable to the general public.

But I strongly feel there is still a Mission for science fiction fans. We must become aware of it and believe it. We must seriously consider what that Sense of Mission is. We must feel it. And we must act on it. Our Sense of Wonder is an emotional response. Our Sense of Mission is an intellectual response. If we have both of them, we will be like the fan of fifty years ago. We will be filled with passion and excitement for science fiction. Our relationships, our clubs, our conventions -- small or large, regional or world conventions -- will have a spirit of dedication.

What can that Sense of Mission now be?

I feel that we have a new goal. The term and the substance of science fiction has been accepted world-wide among the literate. Now we must make the general public aware that we believe in good science fiction. We must let it be known that we deplore bad science fiction. It is time for us to take a stand about the fiction we love: it needs evaluation by us and we must be strong in our judgment.

I'm not talking about the ability of authors to tell their stories. I'm not talking about Hugo awards nor the Nebula awards nor any of the dozens of awards that have proliferated to honor craftsmanship and commercial success. I am talking about the expression of the essence of science fiction. It's not the superficial techniques I would like us to think about, as admirable as they might be. It's the message I would like us to think about.

Science fiction is a powerful type of entertainment. We all know its power to captivate. But what are our stories saying? Is science fiction on the same tracks that Verne and Wells helped build? Has science fiction the same magic, the same power now as it had 50 years ago when I was a boy? Well, some of it has -- but a great deal of it hasn't.

Now, having said what I have about science fiction and about fandom, and considering the past fifty years ago -- what are we talking about? What is science fiction?

There have been many definitions and a lot of dispute. How important is science in science fiction anyway? What does the word science mean? Do we mean general knowledge, or specialized knowledge,

or do we mean the scientific method? Is science fiction basically about human beings related to technology? Or is it about the human condition relating to natural and unnatural environments? Over and over again we couple the terms science fiction and fantasy. Can we really tell the difference?

The good Doctor Asimov thinks, "science fiction is a literary response to scientific change (which) could run the entire gamut of human experience." My own definition is more precise: science fiction is logical speculation about scientific possibilities presented as imaginative entertainment. I like my version because it emphasizes speculation and imagination as entertainment, with the qualification that it be logical and scientific. Without logical, scientific speculation we may have fantasy, but we don't have science fiction. In a general way, I don't think anyone can quarrel with my restrictive definition. Science fiction has limitations which fantasy does not have. Perhaps the dissents will come from interpretations of what is logical or what is scientific.

There is nothing in my definition about preaching or teaching. Nor is there any reference to reality or realism. So long as sf is imaginative and entertaining, it can teach and preach and reflect realism, or not.

Teaching and preaching are things all writers do to some extent in science fiction. Some clever writers do it so entertainingly that we don't notice it. Some clever writers are so obsessed with their visions and their messages that they smother the reader and harm their story.

Fantasy fiction has always existed in the culture of mankind. It took the 19th century and the explosion of science and technology to create the literary novelty now known as science fiction. As technological changes have become more and more commonplace, and expected, our literary focus has shifted from technology to sociology. The shift has taken us from scientific logic to intuitive logic. Science fiction has been fusing with fantasy, making differences difficult to distinguish.

In the 1800's mankind discovered the future and new horror came into our lives: our inability to predict tomorrow. We were swept with the fear of instability and of the unknown. Science fiction developed to consider these changes and to allay our fears.

If science fiction is actually so very old, dating back to Verne and Edgar Allen Poe before him, well over a hundred years ago -- if it's really so old, how come the garden of writers and stories and

magazines and books and movies and radio programs began to blossom in the 30's and 40's? Credit Hugo Gernsback with much of the answer. He planted the seeds with his magazines. Also credit the acceleration of technology. Then came the 50's and 60's when science fiction seemed to burst forth everywhere. Credit World War II, with its rocketry and radar and atomic bombs, for that. And credit the science fiction pioneers, the writers and the fans and the publishers. We fans had a mission, essentially the same as Gernsback's. We have done much to popularize science fiction.

Science fiction has a rainbow of types within the genre. And there is the less restrictive literature of fantasy with laws implicit rather than explicit, literarily experimental, stylistic, sometimes imitative of science fiction while denying science -- offering its own discipline in contrast to science fiction's.

Today we have the two extremes, science fiction and fantasy, being mistaken for each other. The result is confusion. No wonder the general public has a strange and varying ideas about what science fiction is. Even we who ought to know better confuse the categories.

But the confusion doesn't stop there. We have the bewildering fact that some fantasy fiction captures the essence of what makes science fiction so entertaining, so powerful and so worthwhile: it has that Sense of Wonder, that uplifting, breathtaking conviction that the good of life overbalances the pain and evil of it. On the other hand, some science fiction scorns morality and goodness and postulates that reality is essentially evil and that the evils of life overbalance the happiness life affords. It is simply optimism versus pessimism.

So we have some fantasy disguised as science fiction with its optimism. And we have some fantasy disguised as science fiction soaked with pessimism. And we have some so-called science fiction which is pure fantasy, actually non-scientific and actively anti-science, drenched in pessimism.

Be it science fiction or fantasy, the objective of the pseudo-science fiction is to entertain in the modern mode: to be callous, ruthless, and shocking -- to poke around in the darkness and scare the reader, deceiving him into thinking the author's thoughts are revelant, whether insipid and inane or reasonable and believable. Science fiction now appeals not only to the rational mind and spirit, but to the irrational as well.

Some science fiction writers and readers have grumbled for decades that we are in a ghetto. They said that science fiction should be part of mainstream literature, unlabeled. Because it is pigeon-holed, they



said, it is overlooked and lacks respectability. They finally got their way. Yet, are we any better off?

Is today's science fiction positively inspiring or is it negatively depressing?

Some science fiction authors have jumped into the mainstream of literature with a vengeance and they've come up drenched in naturalism, so-called realism. I easily detect a stench, however, which indicates that a lot of authors have mistaken the sewer for the mainstream. But don't blame those science fiction authors for misplaced originality -- they simply followed the current, long, Lemming-line of self-indulgent literary iconoclasts. Followed them right into the mainstreams, and into the stagnant ponds, and into the cesspools and septic tanks of life. All this is in the name of naturalism.

And what is this so-called naturalism? It's an unbalanced, cock-eyed view of the lives and loves of us as scruffy humans. This naturalism depicts ugliness, squalor, and vulgarity as the real thing, and we're tempted to believe that the beauty, the splendor, the magnificence of life is not the real thing, or, at best, unimportant. We know, in our heart: of hearts, that gutter language, sensationalized sex, and mindless violence serve no purpose except for barbaric thrills and pure prurience.

This stuff called naturalism is random, non-selective reality. The excuse for its existence is the old trite excuse: well, life is like this, call it as it is. But the real reason for its acceptance is for base titillation. This kind of writing is merely exploitative. It's the antithesis of the Sense of Wonder. It's pessimistic and I am convinced that it is anti-human and destructive.

Yes, science fiction has achieved the goals of the naturalists. They have taken away the naive Sense of Wonder and given us the hard stone in our stomach of depression and despair.

You've heard the arguments before over television violence, brainless behavior, and the ubiquitous and insidious pornography. The desensitization of men, women and children has never been more sustained and effective. The Vikings wrapped their young warriors in the bloody entrails of animals; these garments served to desensitize them against the horrors of future battles. The Nazis practised sadism for patriotic strengthening. The Communists brainwash away the non-conforming thoughts of their own citizens. Our own American cults attack standards of conduct which civilization has been perfecting for thousands of years. Why is our modern culture -- the mass market of literature, television and the movies -- discarding old values and offering new ones which degrade us instead of uplifting us?

I believe that humanity is currently riding a runaway roller-coaster. Our fiction -- all of our culture -- reflects our frantic need to release our emotions. We are desperate for enjoyment -- hedonism is our most important goal. That's our way out when our dreams are tarnished and our Sense of Wonder is jaded. The reckoning will be cynicism, sex, drugs and death.

To me the truly remarkable thing is the contrast between extreme sf and extreme fantasy. Science fiction has developed the symptoms of our discouragement, leading to self-doubt and self-destruction -- while our companion fiction, fantasy, offers complex, exciting, enjoyably simplistic escapism.

Consider my conclusion to all this. Science fiction today is schizophrenic. While it appears to be one distinctive kind of fiction, at its core it is actually two kinds. It is sometimes pro-science, sometimes anti-science. It is sometimes pro-humankind, sometimes anti-humankind. It is sometimes optimistic, sometimes pessimistic. Sometimes it is moral, sometimes immoral. And sometimes it is a blank, for nothing, against nothing -- amoral and vapid.

The spirit of my old Sense of Mission told me that all science fiction was good and worthwhile. Generally speaking, that was more or less right. But I have a new Sense of Mission, now, and I don't believe all science fiction deserves our respect. Science fiction should not gradually lower our goals nor our standards. Science fiction must not contribute to our de-humanization. It must not desensitize us. It must not turn our freedom into excessive liberty and abuse of freedom. Hedonism must be challenged. We must not let the serpent of materialism take away our garden of Eden.

Our writers must recognize their artistic responsibilities. They must not succumb to the contemporary decline of values. They must resist the siren call of undisciplined freedom. They must, in other words, return to the sound principles of science fiction -- of uplifting, inspiring, and enriching mankind. Science fiction should express humanity's goals, especially because science fiction is so attractive to our young people. Our youth -- each one of you here and for each of you a million others in this nation who are just readers -- all the youth of this world will mold the future of Earth -- and science fiction will mold our youth.

Our past has always been a conflict of Good and Evil. Good and Evil are still locked in combat. We will grow toward perfection if we keep our eyes on the stars, not on the slime. Our authors must constantly be made aware of the power of their writing. They are only storytellers, but they can change the world. Science fiction is all about change. We can encourage change for the better, rather than for the worse. This concerns me greatly -- science fiction is often the sheep's clothing which puts the wolf among our young. Too many librarians have no idea that this is so. This should concern us all.

Let our story tellers stress the positive values. Back in 1954, John Campbell in Analog said he was fed up with doom stories. But they'll always be with us, and they'll serve a purpose, just so long as they offer help. Ray Bradbury, who refuses to be seduced by science, proves a moralist can be an entertainer. He says he is "not a writer of futures, but a preventer of futures." Whether science fiction stories sing loudly or speak softly, they should sound optimistic melodies. They should always offer a positive vision of what can be. Bradbury is effective as a fantasy writer because he writes with poetry and subtlety -- he does not write with false realism, but honest unreality. Many writers have the warmth of goodness and the light of optimism. Consider the power of Leigh Brackett, C.L. Moore, Andre Norton, Anne McCaffrey, Zenna Henderson -- they are the greatest, and they do not shirk their artistic responsibilities. They have never lost their belief in their dreams nor allowed themselves to become self-indulgent. Pay attention to the moral philosophy in Robert Heinlein's remarkable early works which so influenced the field. What joys there are for us in the dreams of Cliff Simak, Arthur Clarke, Ed Hamilton, Poul Anderson, Lester del Rey, Issac Asimov.

The lure of expressing evilness, the dark side of us, is strong. Young readers, searching for experience, are most susceptible. It is harder to write of hope than it is to write of hopelessness, but these writers show us what talent and thoughtfulness can do. But writing with a strong sense of condemnation or a devastating sense of satire can be done without vulgarity. Fred Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth were doing that decades ago.

There is a Guest of Honor who has had the rare distinction of twice being a World Con Guest of Honor -- First in 1958 at the sixth World Con, and twenty-five years later in 1973. Additionally he has been Fan Guest of Honor and Master of Ceremonies at other gatherings. He is the most humorous and at the same time most serious fan who has ever existed in fandom. He is as much a hero to me as the inimitable Forrest J Ackerman, who brought me into fandom. And he is one of

the most successful professionals. I speak of Robert Bloch, of "Psycho" fame.

Bob Bloch was not typical of the teen-age, socializing, fannish fraternity. He entered fandom and lived in it for years just through his typewriter. He became a fanzine-fan. His entrance into convention-going fandom was late -- in 1940, living in the Chicago area, he didn't attend the Second World SF Con because his priorities were obviously misplaced -- he believed that first, before fandom, came his business and his family and the money required to keep them going. But for almost as long as I've been a fan, Bob Bloch has been using his typewriter for the benefit of fandoms.

No better man than Bob Bloch can be used by me to make a few points. He is a writer of dark fantasy and unpleasant reality, and he does so with taste. My quotes from him date back twenty-five years, when he saw the future of science fiction clearly. He said, "I'm tired of rebels without causes -- I'm tired of their continual attempt to hoist a new flag over American literature -- a national emblem in the shape of a dirty T-shirt."

Bloch deplores the fact that ugliness in science fiction is something that is tolerated, forgiven, and even admired. In his sarcastic way he referred to crude behavior, mooching, free-loading and drug-addiction as "refining touches to the catalogue of heroic activity."

Bob Bloch condemned the anti-hero as the natural enemy of science fiction. He decried the wedding of hedonism to futurism, with its sniggering contempt for high-minded standards, full of cynicism and suggesting that sensory gratification is our goal and fate. Bloch says, "a self-discipline is necessary to the integrity of the artist, in his role both as a creator and as a human being." This statement also applies to me and to you as readers and as fans. Bloch says, "any psychologist, anthropologist or sociologist can tell you the importance of the hero role in our folk-culture. It is not my intention to plead for censorship. True censorship can come only from the creative intelligence itself, and it must come now from the Deadbeat Generation of writers who have done their best to dethrone Tarzan and elevate the Ape."

Those quotes are over twenty-five years old, and they are more true now than ever.

We who have been Fan Guests of Honor stand up and give our talks because we are proud of our continuing involvement in fandom. Some of us are tired and reminisce about the good old days. Some of us still have that spark of the old proselyte. Mark me down as one of the latter. I want fandom to be as much fun as ever -- but I want fandom to have a cause.



I don't suggest that evil be ignored as a topic of sf. I do say that sf should not condone evil, nor be sympathetic to wickedness, nor support moral weakness. Our storytelling, whether light or serious, should be fun -- fun for everyone, young or old. Smut isn't only undesirable, it's unnecessary. Our sf should be for everyone without being offensive to good taste, and we should expect it that way. When it isn't, we must judge it for what it is, and we must speak up in warning and we must apologize for it.

I'm talking about freedom in science fiction. Freedom from pessimism, freedom from gloom and doom with no positive visions to encourage us. Freedom from the sense of the despair and emphasis on the Sense of Wonder.

Let us reawaken our Sense of Mission. Let's exercise our freedom to make thoughtful judgements. Let's be free in our criticism of anything in science fiction which doesn't measure up to high standards we impose on ourselves.

But first of all, fandom will have to become the equal of the prodom which it so long promoted. I speak of the true fans, the activists, the descendants of those fans of yore who started these conventions.

The symbol is with us. There is the Pro Guest of Honor and there is the Fan Guest of Honor. And just as the Pro Guest is chosen in expectation of saying something significant -- so must the Fan Guest of Honor be chosen.

Come on, fans! Pay attention, you editors -- you publishers!

We still love our future!

Science fiction shaped fandom, leading to fandom shaping science fiction. But does fandom still shape science fiction? Does science fiction really reflect our culture and our deepest beliefs?

We are thinking animals with machines for servants traveling toward an unknown destiny. We think, we feel, we love. We can do so simply or profoundly. How do we transcend ourselves? And why? What is the strange spark within us? What greater glory do we sense for ourselves? As fans we have always asked these questions -- and science fiction has tried to give us answers.

We have affection for our past. As for our present, it is merely a way station to the future. We want to love the future. The future to me -- to the grayheads of fandom for whom I speak -- the future isn't what it used to be. I loved that future that is now the past. More importantly, I love the future that is to be.

Science fiction must love the future as much as it once did. Fandom must not only have its old Sense of Wonder, it must have its new Sense of Mission. You and I are the fans of today and of tomorrow and we must hold to high standards. Fandom should reflect a brighter future -- and our literature should do the same. We are science fiction fans -- no others have more reason to reflect the best of the Homo sapiens.

We must recognize our new Sense of Mission, and as once we were in the vanguard of science fiction, so must we be there again. We must be activists, dedicated to the support of positive standards for science fiction and ourselves. Fun-and-games is one side of fandom, but it must not dominate fandom. We must strengthen our visionary hopes, asking our storytellers for significance and inspiration. We are science fiction fans, therefore we are idealists. We must be optimists, too, and we must have moral courage. We must not be rich in things and poor in soul. All this is up to us. Up to us, fandom, our special family of our galaxy of the Milky Way.

END

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Copies of this speech are being presented to members of First Fandom and to other serious science fiction fans as a courtesy of STARLOG magazine and publishers Norman Jacobs and Kerry O'Quinn.

We believe that David Kyle's thoughts are worth your consideration.



# THE ACOLYTE





# THE ACOLYTE



Alva Rogers

I am He who howls in the night  
I am He who moans in the snow  
I am He who has never seen light  
I am He who mounts from below

— H.P. Lovecraft