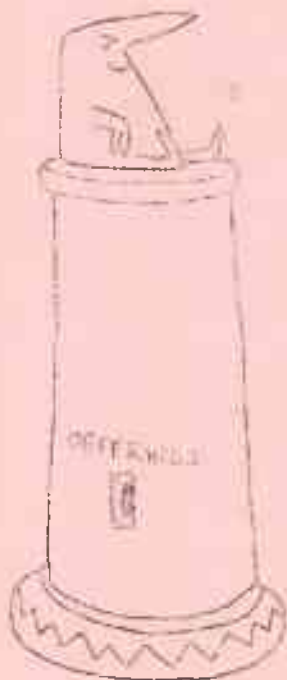


the  
incomplete  
burbree

MR





t h e   i n c o m p l e a t   b u r b e e

Produced in ten days of cooperative effort  
by Pete Graham, Ron Ellick, Terry Carr,  
Dave Rike, and Carl Brandon,

for the occasion of Charles Burbee's birth-  
day party, April 26, 1958,

and included in FAPA Mailing number 83.

Thanks go to William Rotsler, Forrest J  
Ackerman, and Bjo Wells, who contributed  
much-needed help and encouragement,

and to Isabel Burbee, who suggested it.

t h e i n c o m p l e a t b u r b e e

first edition published 26 April 1958 in 150 copies. 68 distributed through the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Remainder priced at 75¢, save for those presented with the compliments of the author.

second printing, 30 May 1959 in 100 copies, financed by Elmer Perdue. Produced from the original stencils with the following exceptions:

pg. 13 destroyed, retyped from first printing  
pg. 68 run twice in all copies of first printing,  
run only once in second printing.  
credit line for "You Bastard," Said Al Ashley  
typed in on table of contents.

This second printing is published by Ron Ellik, with the able assistance of Jim Caughran. All copies will be **priced** at 75¢, save for those presented with the compliments of the author.

third printing, 26 May 1974, in 200 copies. Produced from the second printing's stencils with the following exception:

At the request of Charles Burbee, a new punchline has been added to the end of "The Rise and Fall of the Fannish Empire. (ends on p. 76) The article originally ended "...suppose we leave him there."

This third printing is published by Barry Gold, with the assistance of Lee Gold, on the Polesotechnic press. All copies priced at one dollar with the exception of those presented with the compliments of the author or publisher.



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Cover by William Rotsler. Backcover by Dave Rike.

Illustrations by Rotsler, Rike, and Bjo Wells.

Headings mostly by Rike.

# Editorials FROM SHANGRI-L'AF- FAIRES

Another "supposed-to" was an article about and by Frank Robinson of Fanewscard fame who visited L. A. recently. Robinson says he's never been published except for the Fanewscard capsule stuff and a few Spaceways letters he'd like fandom to forget. He was asked early for copy, but his multitudinous and multifarious fan activities in Los Angeles and environs prevented him from even beginning this chore. The night before he left I dunned him for copy in the LASFS clubroom and a touching scene ensued.

"What article?" he wanted to know, after an unconvincing double-take. He shot a quick look behind him—yes, he was the one being addressed....."I haven't got it," said he at length, a fact which had already become apparent.

"Then can I have it?"

"Soon as I get home," he said. "Not a millisecond sooner. Don't let your viscera in a nova."

I put up an argument, wonderful in logic. It came to me later that all my perorations were wasted, since the deadline would be past anyway.

"Oh, all right," he said, with a magnanimous gesture, pocketing some money he had borrowed somewhere. "I'll write it on the train, a full page of Robinson drollery——"

"ONE page!" Must have raised the old voice here because the blonde in the apartment above pounded lustily but fruitlessly on the floor.

"Oh, two pages then....no, not triple-spaced." This last he delivered in a hurt tone. I'd touched a vital spot in his makeup, if he had one. A vital spot, that is.

"What's to be the title of this....uh....masterpiece?" he said, dropping his voice on the last word to indicate modesty.

"Through Shangri-La with Gun and Camera?" I offered.

"Silly."

"Cruise of the Eyebrow Special?"

"Doesn't apply."

"Goodbye, Mr. Quips?"

"They get worse by mathematical progression. Besides, I've got a title of my own. Shangri-La Safari."

"That's all right, safari zit goes," said Ackerman. Of course, he was there all the time, dummyming the new VOM, which seemingly has assumed a tri-weekly schedule. At this point Kepner came to the door, poked half a body in, and called to the Chifan, who at once bid us a tearful goodbye. As he went out the door I said that in writing his article he mustn't forget to describe the motives leading up to his



decision to visit L.A.

The last words he muttered as the door swung shut were these: "It would take a smarter man than I to say why I came to L.A."

And so he went, leaving town next morning on the rails instead of on a rail. (May 1944, #14)

.....

We are striking off a medal for Frank Robinson who publishes that gem of fanewscards, which, strangely enough, is titled Fanewscard. We feel that suitable awards should be made to fans who have contributed something to the art and science of fandom, or who have performed some doughty deed. Fwankie has done a very courageous thing, and to be more explicit, an unheard-of thing. It seems that some weeks ago we asked him for an article for this very issue. He promised one. He may have been coerced, but he promised. Eventually he rushed back to the comparative safety of Chicago 29, being only a visitor here in the first place. After a few notes telling of no progress, he finally admitted that he was unable to write anything longer than a Fanewscard. Said if he wrote a hundred words, 75 of them would be padding.

We were bowled over, of course. He's the first fan we've ever heard of who's actually come right out and flatly stated an inability to do anything. So---for him we are striking off a medal. The design has not yet been decided upon, but it will be something bizarre and shocking. Due to scarcity of noble metals, the thing will have to be made from something like yttrium. It will not be forthcoming in the near future, but it is being thought about seriously. Even if we don't strike it off this month, or this year, Fwankie can always turn toward L.A. with the warm, comfortable feeling that he's got a medal coming from here sometime. (June 1944, #15)

.....

By this time you've all forgotten that we were striking off a medal for Frank Robinson because of his bold, unabashed admission that he couldn't write an article for us longer than a FANEWSCARD. Well, now that you've remembered, prepare to let it slip your mind again, because he has come through with an item, a two-page affair, which, if I am not mistaken, is over there to your right (don't look now), and work on his medal has been stopped. Instead, we are sending him a check for one thousand four hundred and seventy-two dollars and no cents, which anyone can see is payment at the rate of ninety-four dollars and twenty-six cents per word. A not unsubstantial sum. As soon as the club treasury goes up another fourteen hundred and seventy-five dollars, and Walt Daugherty gets ten bucks for that movie he has been yammering about making (see S-L'A #14), we will send the check spanking along. We don't generally pay for material---in fact, we never do. Seems unfair to make an exception in Frank's case. I don't suppose the boulder expects any payment does he? It's pretty cocky of him if he does....

Just WHY should we lay aside hard and fast rules for a beastie like Frank with his name writ in his shirt? Of all the unhallowed brass,

I'm calmer now.

--Charles Burbee

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT! COMING NEXT MONTH---A TABLE OF CONTENTS!  
also selected short subjects (July 1944, #16)

.....

Last ish I said maybe two postcards would come in on Laney's article. I'd have said the same for the whole mag if I'd thought of it. To help me maintain my status as a prophet godawful, our vast army of readers deluged us with letters, cards, and telegrams. To be exact, five letters and six cards. Forty-eight telegrams came, too, but I'm not counting them; they came collect and I sent them back. (#16)

.....

Can't make any predictions about next issue. I have absolutely no material on hand at all, and no promises of any, unless you want to count Crozetti's column. I asked Ackerman for something and he said he'd be too busy on Speer's Fancyclopædia. I asked Mel Brown, but he stoutly declared he'd never, never, write anything for S-L'A. I asked Vic Clark (via mail) and have received no reply. Leonard Pruyn, when asked, said he wanted to do a heavy article on psychology. "Fine!" I beamed. "When can I have it?" "I'm not quite prepared to write it," he said. "Psychology is going to be my major in college and I haven't started yet." Kepner says he has no time whatever, working two hours a day and going to and from work an additional eleven hours. (It might just possibly be the other way around). Of course, he could whip up a lil pome while waiting for a street car, but we don't use poetry, having some pretty definite ideas on the subject. I asked some other people for stuff and got several kinds of evasive answers. I hope I won't be forced to write anything. I had to write five pages of #14 and didn't relish it much. Anyhow, from where I sit, #18 is nebulous....but it'll be out, regardless. This is not to be construed as a plea for material, so there's no use of your writing an article for us. It wouldn't be any good, and we'd use it anyway and lower the high standards of our magazine. (August 1944, #17)

.....

First off, might as well give Walt Daugherty some credit. Last time he defaulted on a color cover for us. This time he did some mimeoing for us on his extensive equipment. He's got a flock of mimeos, an automatic slip-sheeter, etc., but everybody knows all about that by this time. He has given the title of Shottle Bop Publications to the tons of stuff he says he's going to publish. As you may remember, the name "Shottle Bop" used to mean a story by Theodore Sturgeon (Unknown Feb. '41). Six months from now, the name "Shottle Bop" will mean a story by Theodore Sturgeon (Unknown Feb. '41).

This time the mailing list has undergone a slight revision. You people who are not reading this are the ones we left off. You people who are reading this for the first time are guys we're going to try for a couple of issues. All we ask is a letter of comment now and then --not each issue, necessarily. In return, you get this wonderful fmz each and every month except February which has 28.

We like letters for a couple of good reasons. First, we can fill up four pages each issue very easily. Second, we can point to them as concrete evidence of our huge circulation when we are plaguing somebody for material (which is all the time any anybody). And if they do come through with an article or something (except poetry) we can show them a huge pile of laudatory letters. "X", we can say, as we hand him a complimentary copy of the mag, "Seventeen people think your article is a powerful commentary. Thirty-nine thought it stank. Already,

284



two of the seventeen have written me about it."

It does something to those frustrated writers. (Sept. 1944, #18)

.....

I resigned this job last month. Like most of the resignations around here, it was strictly temporary. After accepting the job once more, I immediately resigned again. After a short time, during which Mel Brown decided to take over the post, I resumed editorship. It all seems stupid.

This flitting in and out, plus the holiday season, has caused this issue to be late. This gives me less time to get out #22, which is due almost at once. However, there is actually material on hand for next month's Shangri-etc....for example, James Hummel's science article, which I threw away once, lost once, and will now get rid of for all time by publishing. It will appear for sure because it's already in existence, and so will a stupendous item by F. Lee Baldwin. It's fiction, which is out of place because it's contrary to policy (whatever that is) but I have no doubt you'll see it in #22. It's a tale of stark terror, pulsating with action, élan, esprit de corps, verve, a character or two....."Crime Stalks The Fan World."

Do not wonder at my neglect in answering your letters. My time is now strictly rationed along with everything else and something has got to take a back seat. In fact, lack of time was my original plea for resignation. In effect, this has been an experimental issue, to demonstrate the feasibility of working long hours and doing a mag. The experiment has been successful to a certain extent---there will be a #22, mostly because I have simply got to publish that stupendous story of stark stuff which future fan generations, as well as the present one, will know as "Crime Stalks the Fan World."

I hope it doesn't raise our standards appreciably. Never spoil the customer.

We have a special, preferred list of names of people who have in some manner contributed to our pages. Ebey's on it, Willie's on it, and so is Crozetti. Frank Robinson, Laney, Ackie, Searles, Mel Brown, Don Bratton, Hoffman, Warth, REWright are others. We call it our skit list. How'd you like to be on Burbee's skit list? (December 1944, #21)

.....

The April issue of this fabulous fanzine will be out in April, as scheduled, but so far we have only 26 pages of stuff in our gigantic air-conditioned chrome and plastic files. This issue, in order to be properly presented to fandom's jaded eyes, has got to have at least 30 pages, so why don't some of you who are literate enough to write, write and send your puling efforts in here. You may think it stinks, all fandom, not to mention the First, Second and Third Fandoms, may think it stinks, but there are no literary standards in Shangri La and we'll use your stuff. A.E. van Vogt got a hyper novelette thrown right back in his face with the laconic comment, "Too good." John Campbell Jr. asked if he might write something to help but I haven't answered his letter and I don't intend to. The standards of this mag are not going to be raised while I have anything to say about the matter. Spoil the reader, as I will sometimes orate, and you have gotten yourself an Old Man Of The Sea. The readers begin to expect good stuff and you knock yourself out trying to supply it to them and who appreciates it? Your nurse might seem to, but then, she's supposed to be pleasant to everybody. (February 1945, #23)

The FANCYCLOPEDIA is done, finished and ready to mail. Actual pages were stencilled by: 4e, 37. Walt, 22. Morajo, 20. Lora, 8. Laney, 8. and Misc. 4 pages. We are uncertain who this guy Misc. is who mimeod 4 pages. If he or she will step forward and identify himself, we will strike off the medal originally intended for Frankie, and present it to him in an impressive ceremony held in the crud box of the LASFS. (#18)

.....

The LASFS is preparing a Time Capsule. Complete files of prozines and fanzines have already been collected for it. Fan recordings, letters, drawings, photographs, are also going into it. We are now taking votes on the final entry, which will make our Capsule different from all others. We are going to put a living fan inside. Enough concentrated food will be stored to supply the fan for the 500 years which will elapse. Then, instead of some stuffy old recording giving greetings to 2445, the fan will address the wondering throngs of the future in person.

We are still in need of material for our Capsule, so send in your most priceless fan possessions and all the money you can lay your hands on to finance the venture. Do it NOW! Act without thinking. Do it NOW! (March 1945, #24)

.....

Far as next month's issue goes, there are some items on hand that were crowded out this month. There will be a three-page item by Elmer Purdue, who takes an occasional glass of port before meals. This article threatens to revolutionize the entire pulp field, provided the proper people read it. The choicest parts had to be deleted, sad to say. There will also be a Hemmel's Scientific Sortie which explains in detail how to beat the races. This article alone will make the issue worth at least a thousand dollars, but you get it free. Just one of our services. There will also be a letter section consisting of some letters which were crowded out this time plus the enthusiastic letters you are going to write when you read this issue. Or perhaps you have already read this issue and have saved this page for the last as dessert.

I may as well let you in on my plans for this magazine. Beginning with the next issue, or possibly the one after that, there will be 100 pages, all lithographed. I am not speaking idly or blowing off about the project; in other words, it is not a blow job. 100 pages or perhaps fewer, lithographed or maybe mimeographed. At the end of five years I will publish a special Pentennial issue. It will be printed in Caslon Oldstyle type on cockle-shell crackle white and will run anywhere from 700 to 1600 pages. In the readers' section I intend to print every letter I have ever received except some letters from my mistress which my wife destroyed for some reason in a fit of temper.

One of these times I am going to have a poll. I intend to mark your ballots and send them to you and all you have to do is sign them and return them.

FOUND: Several copies of Shangri-L'Affaires #19, #20, #23 and #24. Cost, one 3c stamp (unused) per copy desired. Since it costs but 1½c per copy to mail, I make 100% profit. I wonder why anybody tolerates this situation. (April 1946, #29)



Laney mentioned in a recent publication (Five Fingers) that he hasn't slept with my wife. a typical Laney remark. I would never say a thing like that. I am too filled with the awe of God (who sometimes visits the club under the name of Walter J Daugherty) and a sense of innate decency. I also have fine sensibilities. So you will never hear me denying that I have slept with Laney's wife. (July '46, #31)

.....!.....

This is the story of Francis T. Laney, the fun-loving Laney, Laney the gay, the innocent, the heartless, filled with the sadness and sorrow and joy of the young, crammed with the ineffable lilt of youth.

Towner was not always like that. No, indeed. At one time he was wild, tempestuous, rising to towering rages at no provocation, a titan of irascibility. Maybe you remember him that way.

He's different now. A changed man. Not the same at all. He's just like I said in the first paragraph. I will explain the miracle.

I saw this character some years ago and said to myself that here was a fine upstanding hulk of a man who could be developed into such as described in paragraph one.

Now, after all these years, the subtle influences of my delightful personality have worked their wonders. Towner is no longer irascible, loud, ruthless, vindictive, and all those other things. He is as calm and normal and kind as anybody you'll see this side of the pale.

My subtle personality has wrought these changes in this man. I taught him to laugh. I taught his heart to wear wings. I weaned him away from fandom, lest he drown in its murky backwaters. I weaned him away from fantasy, lest he be lost in outer space. I gave (or lent) him a sense of humor. The things he says now are as funny as the things I say. They are often the same things.

It struck him all at once. He was plunging along, lost in thought, when he stopped short, as though he'd hit a wall. His eyes jerked wide and he turned to me and said, "You've made a man out of me, by God!"

I complimented him on his sharpness in perceiving it.

"My God," he said. "You came to my rescue. There I was, lost to the world, sinking deeper into fandom---it must have started when you caused me to drop Acolyte, without refunding the subscription money.... your subtle curative powers have traced lines of true power oh my brain...Here I am, free! Free! Do you hear? Free! And you were the cause of it all!"

I shrugged. "Oh, it was nothing."

"Oh, but it was!" cried F Towner Laney, the Free. "You saved me from a fate worse than death. You are my guru, my messiah, my savior!" His eyes were shining with worship.

"Oh hell, Laney," I said. "Come to your senses."

"But you saved me from fandom!" he cried. "Now I want to be just like you. You saved me from fandom and its horrors. You are my God."

"You may be right," I said, "but I hate this adulation. After all, I'm only human," I said. "Or am I?"

"Guru! Master!" Laney cried, in an ecstasy of realization and self abasement as he found himself in the Presence.

"God, Laney," I said. "Wake up. Come to your senses. Tell you what. I hate to see you with this mad mood on you. Run off to the desert somewhere and commune with the firmament---"

"Which You made!" he cried.

"---commune with nature and so forth until you have seen the Light of Infinite Power and Peace and Will. Go forth, my son."

"I will!" he cried. "I will!"

And he did. He went to Palm Springs the next day and took a woman with him. (August 1947, #37)

Some discussion has been raised here about charging something for this mag. Since it has become a general fanzine instead of a club publicity organ, somebody has argued, it should have a subscription price. It all seemed like a good idea at the time. So, with the idea of slapping a price on the mag, I wrote an editorial last night. But this morning I'd thought better of the whole thing. Too many disadvantages.

I'd have to keep books on the thing. And the letter department would suffer terribly. Nobody's bother to write any more if they were laying out good coin for the rag. Besides, I might suddenly have to acquire a sense of responsibility. That would be a blow to my character. You see, ever since I became sophisticated, I've assiduously avoided getting a sense of responsibility.

Then, too, the temptation would exercise an evil influence on my will power. Suppose we charged 5¢ a copy, 6 for 25¢. Suppose, then, that we got 4,000 25-cent subscriptions. That's \$1,000, which would guarantee me a good day at Hollywood park.

So, no subscription price this time.

I always chuckle a little when thinking about the contents of the next month's issue. As usual, nothing at all is scheduled. Brown has half-heartedly suggested doing another ego-boosting article like the one in #19. Kepner has outlined an article which will have to be used elsewhere as it violates this mag's Pollyanna policy. Crozetti isn't around any more. Ackerman groans when he thinks of doing a regular column. I have lost Hummel's science article. Willie Watson hasn't done anything about "Memoirs of a ///". Ewey's somewhere in the South Pacific.

Still, I don't see why I should be concerned about the next issue. What if the outlook is bad? No business of mine.

Not any more. Because, with this issue, I resign.

Don't forget those letters if you want #21. (November '44, #20)

.....

Al Ashley told me last night that LA fandom was going to hell and he wasn't a bit suprised about it. Somebody told him, he said, that LA fandom would go to hell after the Pacificon, and by God, Al said, that's just what it's doing.

Why look, he said, here you are late with S-L'A (a lie, by the way) and I am late with Nova and don't care if En Garde never comes out and Laney has dropped Acolyte and Liebscher is a book collector and God knows when we'll see another Vor. Joquel's stuff never was any good and now he's not publishing at all and if he is I'm not reading it anyhow. Right here I stopped listening to Al Ashley, and when I began listening again he was smugly concluding a titanic period---LA fandom, he said, is going to hell.

Somebody told me, he said, that LA fandom would go to hell right after the Pacificon.

Why Al, I said, how do you figure that?

I'll tell you, he said. It's like this. LA fandom is going to hell. And he went on and the general drift of his conversation was that LA fandom was going to hell.

It's going to hell, I tell you, he said again, shaking his head.

Well, I said, you may be right.

I know I'm right, he said. It came over me in a flash. I was playing a game of experimental chess the other night and using my other brain for random thoughts and it came to me like a flash. LA fandom is ---why the whole bunch of guys that all used to collect books have become book collectors and while this does not shock me it does not



surprise me either because I had my suspicions of this long ago. There was my other brain, the one with the high IQ, ruminating on this subject and that, and all of a sudden it struck me like a bolt from the blue.

These so-called fans are not interested in fandom any more, Al said. They are taken up with such mundane things as sex and beer and vodka and chess and other stupid things and thoughts of stencil-cutting never enter their heads. They're all going to hell, in short. The same might be said for the whole of LA fandom. It's all going to hell. And somebody told me it would, right after the Pacificon.

Who told you that, Al? I asked.

Oh, a fellow. Don't know his name. Speer, maybe, or Widner. Or you. Nobody important.

You agree with him, though?

Well, he said, I looked at it from all angles. I abjure the use of psychology in all my thought processes, you know. I looked at it from all angles without the use of psychology and I came to that conclusion.

That was with your other brain, I said.

Yes, my #2 brain, that is. And then to make sure I called in my #1 brain and had a consultation, and the consensus is that LA fandom is going to hell.

I am convinced Al Ashley is right. And this column is a good example of what he was talking about when he said it. (Sept. 1946, #32)

.....

This is the business department, usually conducted sub rosa, but I am going to bring it all out into the open. This is a rare chance for all of you to peer breathlessly into the secret and delicate machinery of a great fanzine and see everything that goes on but not why.

Now, the following people have subscriptions expiring this month. Tom Jewett, who sent me a dream for the Dream Department. Yes, I believe he did. Sam Moskowitz. Milton A. Rothman, who drank Elmer Perdue under the table during the Pacificon (which netted \$30). Elmer Perdue claims he hoisted his first vasty potion under the table to begin with, and claimed further that he felt more comfortable down there and so stayed there the balance of the evening. A. Langley Searles, who recently sent me a 400,000-word manuscript which went astray in the mails. Paul Spencer, who wrote World of V. I really should continue him a while on the strength of that. Yes, I will. Disregard this notice, Paul. It has been stricken from the records. C. Burton Stevenson, a first-timer here. Bill Weeks, who throws money around like money. Guy J. Wells.

For all you characters named above, this is the last issue you will get unless you fork over fresh money. And not foreign coin, either. This means, among others, Canadian dimes and quarters. In spite of the traditional friendship existing between Canada and the US, and no guns on the border patrol, Canada is still to be considered a foreign country since she has not yet seen the light and voted herself in as the 49th State, and her money is not legal tender here. I am going into all this because somebody sent me two Canadian quarters and I could not pass them. Four Canadian dimes I got rid of all right, but Canadian quarters, I fear, can be disposed of only in Canada. I finally took them to a bank where, after opening an account in excess of \$3,000 I exchanged the quarters for 42¢ American. I let them keep the 1/4 as lagniappe. (October 1946, #33)



E E Evans is our new director. We voted him in the other night. Gus Willmorth and Tigrina were on the ticket, too, but Evans won.

We sat there in the clubroom and the Xmas party was going on, and I turned to Elmer Perdue who sat there beside me on the inverted crud box and I said this is what the club has needed all this time, Meyer. A strong man with a strong back.

What about the mind? asked Elmer.

Let the mind go, I said.

We need a man like Evans, I said. A man who gets an idea a minute must of necessity get a good idea once in a while if the laws of chance are still in force.

Elmer looked up again from Exile of the Skies which he was re-reading for the fourth time and listened to me politely.

It is a fine thing, I said. We haven't had a good director since Kepner was director. Those were wonderful days, Meyer, I said. Every meeting was a thing of vital interest and divertissement. Each meeting had a program worth coming in from South Gate to see. They had spirit and verve and lift and---what is the word I want?

Zip, said Elmer.

Yes, zip. The meetings had zip then. They were tops. They reached an alltime high.

That was before my time, said Elmer.

Mine, too, I said.

Look at the series of directors we've had since then, I said. Larey, Ackerman, Lorojo, Rogers, Hodgkins and maybe some others, though not necessarily in that order. Fine people all, Myer. Fine people, to be sure. But they all lacked that certain---what is that words I want?

Zip, said Elmer.

Yes, zip. They all lacked zip.

Well, Meyer, said Elmer, do you think this character Evans has zip?

Well, no, Meyer, I said. He hasn't got zip.

But, I said, I think he'll be good for the club.

You're glad he's in, then, Meyer, said Elmer.

Yes, Meyer, I am, I said.

I suppose, Meyer, said Elmer, that in the months to come you'll be glad you voted for him.

Oh, I said, I didn't vote for him, Meyer. I voted for Gus Willmorth.

Perdue looked at me a moment and then went back to Exile of the Skies which he was re-reading for the fourth time. This is a good story, Meyer, he said. Please do not bother me further.

I do not know why he saw fit to change the subject. It is not like Elmer to forget his phoney old Southern courtesy pose. And it irked me.

It irked me because I wanted to talk about EEEvans, our new director. We voted him in the other night. (December 1946, #34)

.....

I was sitting here trying to sweat out another editorial in the Burbee manner when the phone rang.

It was from Slan Shack. The character on the other end identified himself as Joe Selinger of Philadelphia. He said he wanted his copy of Shangri-etc because he was a subscriber. This annoyed me somewhat. If I have to give copies to subscribers it means more work than I care to take on at this time.

Then Jonne (which she pronounces to rhyme with phone) Evans came on and asked me some question pertaining to fantasy and of course I could not answer it.

Then Al Ashley came on and mumbled something in a sort of half terrified voice. He said he expected the atomic bomb any day now. I asked him if he was worried and he said that wasn't the point. He said he didn't care how many bombs they dropped or where they dropped them. He said it was OK, so long as they didn't spill his coffee. If they did that, he wasn't going to be held responsible for any reprisals he might have to make. He was pretty worked up about the whole thing.

Liebscher was next, chuckling at something. He told me a joke which had him in stitches but I saw no point to it. Then he screamed about something a flitted away, and the next person on the phone was EEEvans.

He was fully garbed in his pose of saintly patience (this phrase somehow has the faculty or property of making him furious) and he said that since I was about to write the editorial he wished to be on record as making certain statements. Well, he spoke for a time but said nothing of importance, except that he referred once to the editorial in #32, in which the theme was that LA fandom is going to hell.

He said that now that he was director of the LASFS, LA fandom was no longer going to hell.

I said I'd quote him as saying that now that LA fandom has gone to hell he pledged himself to maintain the status quo. He said that wasn't what he'd had in mind.

Then Jack Wiedenbeck came on and said if I wanted a dirty cover for Shangri-etc he'd be glad to do me one like he did for Evans' Time-Binder. I said I would check with Speer to see what I thought.

Perdue came on. Said the April FAPA mailing would be late because he was getting married April 6, and I said that if he was going to let his honeymoon interfere with fan activity he should have his honeymoon now and get married April 6 as per schedule. He grew thoughtful and I suppose he is considering it.

.....

Al Ashley and Jack Wiedenbeck have developed a variation of fairy chess, and to hear Al Ashley talk about it you would think this is the first time anybody's ever done it.

We have invented, said Al, a new type of chess which we have christened fairy chess.

Some of the pieces: there is the Rabbit, which moves but once in the course of a game and then only four squares straight ahead, there to stop, spawn a row or rather a square of pawns around it, and vanish forever from the board. I suggested this piece be called the Salmon, since the salmon spawns and dies while the rabbit goes on and on and on without pause except for breath now and then. But Al Ashley, through some obscure process of thought, said the term Rabbit was more suitable.

The Blinker moves parallel to the sides of the board (which is 10x10 squares) any number of squares, and has the further faculty of "blinking" off the side, to reappear on any other side square.

The Plague can kill all the pieces in squares adjacent to it, including its own men (this is sometimes advisable).

The Joker can assume the identity of the king, with all the King's powers, and limitations, at any time.

The Kibitzer can get on the same square with any other piece, cutting the powers of that piece by 50%.

I suggested to Al that the center four squares be mounted on a turntable which would rotate at random impulses during the game, carrying with it any pieces which might be on it at the time. Also, some

pieces could be equipped with tiny lights that flashed on and off now and then, the powers of that piece being materially affected thereby. And I invented a piece called the Gleeper, which, being lighter than air, floats 15 inches off the board and observes the gauge of battle, dipping down to snatch off the best man of anybody who seems to be winning. And the Swike, which is a small time-traveller and can dart into the future or past of the game. Thus when you find yourself in a jam, you employ the Swike, causing it to enter the game 10 moves back, undo the damage at a critical poing, and swing you over to the track of an alternate future.

But Al Ashley claims these suggestions of mine are frivolous and not in keeping with the serious tone of the game. He will have nothing to do with them. Anyhow, he claims, the game is now perfected and has no need of any changes, now or ever. He also intimates that he devised the game by himself, although I know Jack 'Tiedenbeck dreamed up some of the more intriguing pieces.

I might mention here that if you don't know chess, be assured that it is almost exactly like checkers, which you used to play a little and were pretty good at. Be assured, too, that you understand this new game every bit as well as Al Ashley does.

I think this all indicates pretty clearly what sort of people we have running loose here in Los Angeles, so don't feel too badly about not being able to visit this Mecca of fandom. (June 1947, #36)

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#### A Letter to the Editor of "Venus"

From Charles Bvxbj

nin/thirtin  
fourtif4

Dere Crozzetti:

I have rec'd & red a cop8 of that mag of urine, namly, venis. Gosh, I thought it was god. Of corse I am onley 13 yers of ege, by mi eys are brite as enythig. I gess my gudgement isno't so god, but i thoght it was swel. I didnot rede eny of the storress in it yet becaus I cann' "t rerde so wel yet especial suvh bun tipint bāthe pñctors were swel xept the covur & sum of the oughters. i"am working in a defennce pkant rigt now I makeing \$100 dolers a wek but wil some get a rase and tan i wil send you a ten sent dime for venis which is gosh a god mag I think alto i2am onli thertin yers old of age.

Charles Bvxbj

yor pal



# NOT IN SIN

by Charles Burbee

"I hate to think of it," said Mrs. Qwerty. "My own little girl being violated by a sensual hound. The thought chills me, Herbert."

"Well," said her husband, "if you want Penny to have pups, how else can you manage?"

"I don't know yet, but I am not going to breed her till I am

sure we can find a high-principled male who can shut his mind to the sensual pleasure connected with the matter. I want him to think of the patter of tiny feet and the joyous squeals of pups dashing about."

Herbert grunted. "Well, that's pretty much to ask of a dog, don't you think, dear?"

"I don't see why it is. Why should dogs be so animal-like? They can be trained to walk tight-ropes and dance, so why shouldn't their minds open to moral teaching? You learned moral principles after you married me--was it so very hard to do?"

He shook his head. "No, of course not."

"You didn't understand at first that the sexual act was necessary only when one intended to have children. You were as sensually unthinking as any lower beast. But now you know better."

"Yes, of course."

"And I believe any dog can learn what a man can. Of course I don't mean it the way it sounds."

Mrs. Qwerty visited animal shelters the next several days, searching for a true mate for her Penny. The puppies must be of the best, conceived not in sin, but in the highest principles possible on earth. She had promised puppies to several of her friends, and she wanted these pups to remind their owners every day of the infallible Mrs. Qwerty. They could do that by the dignity of their bearing, the dignity that only animals conceived in purity could possess.

And so she searched the pounds. And one day her eyes met a pair of kindred eyes in the pens and Kimball Kinnison was redeemed from the gas chamber. Mrs. Qwerty knew at once that this was her Penny's future mate. Something magical had passed between the eyes of Mrs. Qwerty and Kimball instantly.

It was sort of psychic. Kimball had been born in an old apple box amid a pile of shaved science fiction magazines; it was indeed the first practical use ever discovered for old sf mags. His early weeks had been spent wallowing amid shredded pages of Gernsback, Campbell and Palmer publications. He had slept on Harchioni and Paul and had messed on Gallun and de Camp. He had tolled on Heinlein and sometimes burped on Bradbury. In some ways it was an ideal environment. It gave him broad mental horizons and a fine mind. It may also have caused him to need glasses and be underweight. It did give him shining inquiring eyes, and it was the enchanted look in those eyes that had attracted Mrs. Qwerty, for she, too, spent many hours reading sf mags.

She took Kimball Kinnison home and introduced him to Penny. It was not yet mating time. Mrs. Qwerty was merely being foresighted. She need time to prepare Kimball for the great moment.

She put him through a daily program. She played him sacred music on the phonograph and piano and read to him aloud from books on how to be a father. She read him books on child psychology and stories with morals. Of course, all these stories were directed at improving humans, not dogs, but she didn't think of this, and besides she wasn't clever enough to write her own material.

Anyhow, she knew she was getting through to him because he had such a sensitive doggyish face and besides, hadn't she named him after the Gray Lensman?

Kimball just lay there listening to her as she spoke or made music for him. He knew he'd have the hell whipped out of him if he didn't. Kimball wagged his tail for her, too, because he knew it was a good idea. But he really wagged his tail for Mr. Qwerty. In fact, Kimball often thought that he and Herbert had a lot in common.

At last came the time. Penny had been showing unmistakable signs and other dogs were spending altogether too much time around the house. Mr. Qwerty was at his chess club, where he went twice a week.

Mrs. Qwerty turned Penny and Kimball loose together in the yard and stood there watching. She told herself that it was not wrong to watch, that she felt like a great ecclesiastic watching her acolytes perform a sacred rite.

In the yard, Kimball first rushed toward this suddenly fascinating female. He hadn't thought much of her before but right now love burned madly inside him. But suddenly he checked his charge. The thought hit him that this act could have serious consequences. What price must be paid for a few minutes of fun? For the life of him he could not remember a marriage ceremony. And he was unemployed. What sort of man would he be, bringing nameless babies into the world, he, with no visible means of support? This was wrong, wrong!

Slowly he slumped to the grass and played over in his mind a recording of "When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder, I'll Be There," complete with needle scratch.

When Mrs. Qwerty saw that her plan had failed, she broke down. She collapsed on the sofa and wept herself sick, and that was the way Mr. Qwerty found her when he returned from his twice-weekly visit to the whorehouse.

# Stibbard & Ray

"Make me dashing, romantic and gay," said Stanley Stibbard.

I said that this was beyond the power of a mortal such as I, and I am a mortal even if I am a fan.

"I cannot work miracles," I said.

"But if you're going to write an article on me I insist that you make me dashing, handsome and gay," said Stibbard.

Stibbard is a colleague of Rotsler, as you may know. They go to art school together. He is not a fan. He is crazy about Albert and Pogo, though, so I will talk to him even if he isn't a fan. Rotsler can sometimes induce Stibbard to draw fantastic pictures, and these Willie latches onto quickly, for Stibbard being a true artistic soul, is wont to destroy his marvelous sketches as rapidly as he draws them. It is impossible to say how many sketches, each featuring his characteristic economy of line, he has channelled onto paper, only to liquidate a moment later.

But I must make him dashing and gay and romantic. I can't really



do it, of course, but maybe I can cause you to carry away with you the impression that Stibbard is all these things. If mere saying it here on paper will do it, I will say it here on paper. Stibbard is a dashing lad, romantic, handsome and gay. As a matter of fact, he looks a hell of a lot like Steve Canyon. Especially when he wears that leather flying jacket. With his crew haircut and downward slanting eyes--wup!--he does cut a swashbuckling figure at that. One expects to see either the flash of a rapier or the ugly snout of a Colt 45 somewhere about him. He smells impressively of doublemint chewing gum and Cuban tobacco and damp wool (this last from the flier's jacket which he wears everywhere except to bed and breakfast).



By now I hope you have a firm grip on the illusion of Stibbard that I have striven so manfully to build up.

As a matter of fact, it is not about Stibbard the gay that I wish to write. It is about Stibbard the

obsessed, Stibbard who acts as though under a geas, Stibbard who has one supreme desire, Stibbard who will never be completely happy in his sheep's-wool-lined flier's jacket until he has realized his paramount passion---"I want to fall downstairs," says Stibbard.

Or, more accurately, Stibbard wishes to master the prattfall. He wants to be able to fall instantly on anything, down anything, amid great crashings and thumpings and scatterings of books, pencils, papers and other impedimenta---always with the awestruck throng gazing on in horror. Then he wishes to rise unhurt, make some snappy remark which he thinks will occur to him during his spectacular descent, and make an unforgettable exit.

He and Rotsler were over the other night. Or maybe I was over at their place, a Bohemian (or is that word de trop now) lil place near the LA art center. They made a wonderful audience as I demonstrated the various thrusts, parries, lunges, ripostes, etc., of the art of fencing, at which I am adept. Change that to "used to be fairly good at"---after all, somebody in my reading audience might challenge me to a bout and show me up for a lying bastard. Anyhow, there I was in that seemingly awkward position (my leg was sore for two days afterward) and Stibbard (famed for dashing romanticism) and Rotsler (publisher of BIG NAME FAN) looked on in glee and well-simulated fascination. "I've never seen you move so fast," said Rotsler. All in all, they made an excellent audience.

So it was only natural that I act as audience (along with the unwilling Willie) when Stibbard rose from his chair in the heights of his passion as he described the crashing prattfalls he had planned. I was a good audience. I couldn't help it. I was fascinated, held in thrall, as he rose from his chair and shouted something like this: "And so I would say, 'Thank you, Mr. President,' bow, and turn and take a big step, and down the marble steps I would go, with all my books and papers flying about and the crowd shouting 'My God! He'll be killed!' And down I go, to the bottom. I get up, dust myself off, shake my fist at him and shouting 'God damn you, Harry!' I storm from the room, leaving everybody in utter consternation."

"He wants to do prattfalls," said Rotsler.

"He likes them elaborate," I said.

"Or another one," said Stibbard. "Here I am in a crowded theater. I'm at the top of the stairs leading to the balcony. The stairs are crowded. At the very top I shout 'I'm a goner!' and down I go crashing through the mob, knocking everybody down like ninopins, howling and shrieking and copping feels on the way. At the bottom I shout 'I'll sue for a million!' and stomp out."

"Without seeing the picture?" I asked.

"I've already seen the picture," he said.

"Good?"

"A stinker. Saw it twice to make sure."

"People might get hurt in that fall."

"No they won't. The stairs are carpeted."

"Oh," I said.

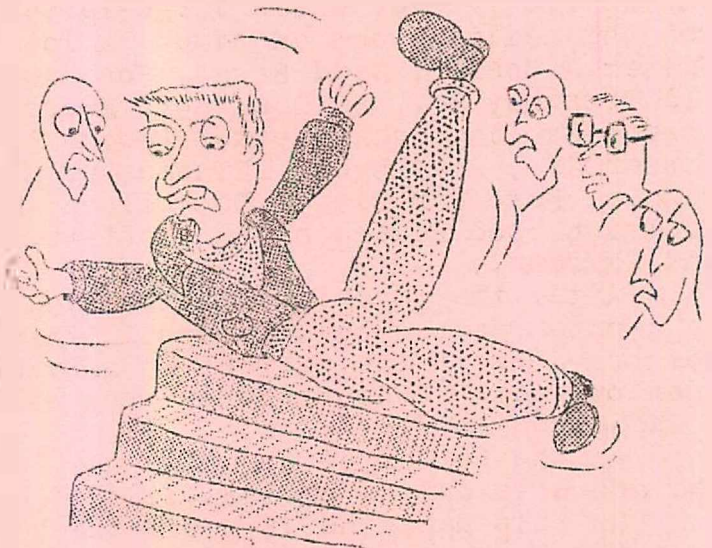
"Of course, the simpler kind of prattfall would be good for art school. Here I come in--I'm late, and the room is already full. I come charging in, suddenly slam on the brakes and skid---" he took a stiff crouch, head back, wild grin on his face, eyes dilated, "---a-cross the whole damned room, sweeping chairs, easels with work on them, people, everything, till I crash up against the opposite wall."

"And what's your punch line there?" I said.

"I haven't figured one out yet. It'll be something good."

"You've figured out the fall, though, and that's what counts."

"Right," said Stibbard.



.....

I THOUGHT I SAID last issue of Burblings that I was suspending Burblings. As a matter of fact, I have suspended Burblings. This is a brand new title I've got here. The original title was to have been Roratorium. I have written permission from the Official Editor, FTLaney, to use the title "Fantasy Amateur" in this instance. If you don't believe me and wish to check this story, write Laney about it. He guarantees to answer all letters of protest. Verbally, that is. So if you live out of earshot of Alhambra (a 500-mile radius in this case) don't bother to write Laney because you won't hear his reply. Which, come to think of it, is just as well, because Laney is the dirtiest talking man I have ever known. (Burblings c/w Fantasy Amateur #1, 1/49)

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I had no intention of publishing till November 1949. But along came a special one-shot, one-issue, one-copy magazine titled EGOBOO EXTRAORDINARY.

Many of you know about this magazine. For the benefit of those who don't I'll explain it a little. Jack Speer thought it all up. On his way home from the Philcon he came by my house one afternoon, shot the breeze a while, and left, after snapping a pic of me leaning (and looking for all the world like a fairy) against the door of his car.

He got this photo enlarged--it's in color--and set it around FAPA with a letter accompanying which went in part like this:

DON'T LET THIS TRACK DIE!



The enclosed article is going around the United States, I hope .....etc.

It was dated patriotically July 4.

The idea was to get nearly everybody in FAPA to sign it. On the inside front cover was a large-lettered heading: WE LOVE BURBEE...He got the mailings out on time. A lot of guys signed it: Jack Speer, Walter A Coslet, Redd Boggs, Bob Stein (plus doodle), Beak Taylor, Harold W Cheney Jr., Ed Cos, Boff Perry, Paul Spencer, Virginia Blish, Sam Moskowitz, Joe Schaumberger (doodle), Joe Kennedy, Milt Rothman, Harry Warner Jr., Andy Lyon, DBThompson, Stanley Mullen, Chuck Hansen, Art Widner, F Towner Laney, Don Wilson, Howard Miller, Rick Snear, Stan Woolston, Con Pederson, Len Loffatt, Gus Willmorth, Forrest J Ackerman and EEEvans.

After the word love in the heading was an asterisk, which referred to a note written by Ackerman: "This is purely platonic and with reservations on the part of". EEEvans remarked parenthetically: "Choose your own dirty connotations---you will anyway." (In reply I sent him a Christmas card).

At the bottom of the page was: "Due to the limitations of time, the above is only a partial list of Mr. Burbee's army of admirers."

So this magazine is a big thank-you letter to everybody concerned, even those who signed under duress.

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# FOR POSTERITY

I have just sent two copies (of the deluxe edition) each of Shangri-L'affaires #36 and #37 to the Library of Congress.

The more alert among you will remember that once I was editor of this once-upon-a-time fanzine.

The more astute among you will also remember that these two issues contained the Laney articles on homosexuality in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. You may also remember that it was because of the publication of these two articles that the fearless editor (me again) was booted out of the editorship of the magazine on some pretext or other.

Anyhow, I have sent these extra copies along to the Library of Congress, where I understand even fanzines are duly received, noted, cross-indexed, and stashed away somewhere so efficiently that they can be located in less than five minutes.

I want you to know that I did it from a science-fictional and fannish point of view. I can see in my fannish mind (though no hint of it may appear on my sensitive fannish face) giant-domed researchers of the Year 15,948 A.A. (After Ackerman) delving into the vaults containing the publications of this era, searching, perhaps, for material with which to turn out a scholarly report similar to some sort of Kinsey Report.

Too, time travellers might find this a good era to stay away from. LANEY PUTS OUT....

This mailing is a record one because of the stupendous and stupefying output of F Towner Laney, ex-fan.

Besides 77 pages of his memoirs, he did 6 pages in the Amateur, 12 pages of Fandango, 5 pages in Lasque and 2 pages in this restrained journal. Tote: 102 pp.

Suppose the other 64 of us would jump up and quit fandom the way he has done. If we followed further in his steps, we would each do 102 pp.



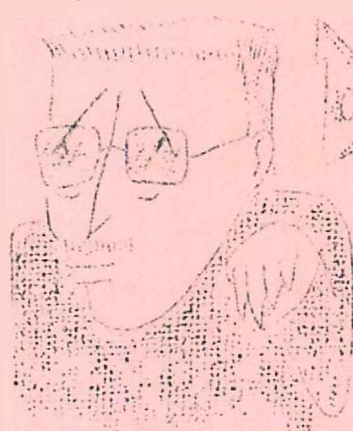
per mailing for a total of 6,630 pp. If this stuff were run off on 20-lb mimeo stock it would weigh (each mailing, that is) over 33 pounds. Plus the Amateur.

Each mailing would make a stack 17 inches high. Plus the Amateur.

To mail such a pile of crud would cost \$168 per quarter. By parcel post, that is. Freight would be cheaper, I believe. Will someone check this for me?

I don't know who would want to Official Editor in such a case.

But, since dues would be around \$50 a year, I imagine we could afford to hire a full-time editor.



## DOWNWARD SLANTING EYES

The baiting of EEEvans has taken up the combined talents of many fine people, who seem to derive great enjoyment from the practice. The impeccable fanzine Wild Hair was famous in this respect, as was also Shangri-L'Affaires (the Defunct Fanzine) and other publications edited by far-seeing and intelligent individuals.

On the appearance of Wild Hair, the Hirsute Fanzine, two boys in Banning, California, whose names are Don Wilson and Howard Miller, got so inspired by the lovely rhetoric contained therein that they became Evans-baiters of the first water.

For some reason, they thought that Laney and I would be interested in getting first glimpse of various anti-Evans or anti-Lasfs writings. They accordingly sent me much material along these lines. One of the items was a gigantic epic poem which had for its inspiration The Congo, by Lindsay. The poem was called The Bixel, and the first hundred and fifty cantos dealt with Evans. It had a vigorous chorus which used the terms "crew haircut" and "downward slanting eyes." This was supposed to refer to EEEvans. It got tiresome after forty cantos.

"After all," said Laney, "this baiting of Evans is scarcely in good taste."

"You're right," I agreed. "There are other things to write about. At least I think there are. Well, aren't there?"

"There must be," said Laney. "And what's wrong with those guys? 'Downward slanting eyes!' Why do they keep saying that? He hasn't got downward slanting eyes."

"I know," I said. "That makes it all the funnier. Here they're completely sour on the LASFS and EVans and they've never seen the LASFS or Evans. Somehow I envy them that. Somewhere they got this idea of downward slanting eyes and have been running it into the ground."

We went back to reading The Bixel. Laney began to bellow. "Downward slanting eyes! Here it is again. Oh Lord, this is rich. Those poor stupes ranting about EEEvans and his downward slanting eyes."

I began to laugh, too. "They've never even seen Evans," I said. "Like the troubadours of old, they have heard of his name and hate him from afar. They make little songs in his name."

For some weeks after that Laney and I could rouse each other to laughter by the mere mention of "downward slanting eyes." We'd laugh and shake our heads and think it all fine fun.

Last week Laney came to me, a dead serious look on his sensitive

fannish face. "You know," he said, "I was stacking and filing away my fanzines last night in my new shelves and I must have come across six or eight pictures of Evans in various magazines. Do you know, by God, he has got downward slanting eyes!"

After I had gotten through rolling on the floor in maniacal glee, he got down and rolled, too. We couldn't roll together for fear it would be thought that we were training for a return to the LASFS.

Now that it has been ascertained that Evans actually has d.s.e, we have accepted the epic poem. It will appear in booklet form in the next mailing.

.....

#### WHAT KIND OF KINGS

The other day I was playing poker with my three kids. Naturally I have taught them such fine American games as craps, blackjack and poker. I play with them now and then.

The other day was the first time I'd played with them for some weeks. The game was progressing with normal gusto when the deal came to my little girl Linda, age 12.

"This next game is going to be seven card stud," she said, "with the red fours the Buckeye Jacks and the Kings with axes wild."

She began to deal. The other two kids did not seem aware of anything out of the ordinary having been said. But her venerable teacher said, in a kind of deferential voice, "What kind of kings?"

"You know," she said, as though I knew. After a minute or two it sifted through to me that the face cards in the deck do represent people in different poses. It seemed obvious that two of the Kings could carry axes, while the other two might brandish short swords or daggers or some such weapon. This turned out to be true. At that very moment I was dealt the King of Diamonds, which, to you backward fold out there, is a King with an Ax.

I won that hand with four Eights, which goes to show that I am as adaptable as anybody.

.....

People laughed at me a few years ago when I suddenly discovered Max Brand.

People will again have a chance to laugh at me because I have just built two bookcases. Never built one before in my life. Me, with one million mags and half a million books that I've been collecting since 1926 or somewhere in there. (Actually I have only about 200 books and about 500 mags.)

It seems I have a power saw, lots of blades, a dado attachment, a lot of good lumber and a lot of books. To the ordinary person that would instantly mean bookcases. But I am not an ordinary person. I am a fan. That means that I have slow reactions, a bewildered outlook, and a total inability to conceive of anything that is not galactic in scope.

Eventually, though, in spite of my tremendous shortcomings (I am a Citizen of Tomorrow in the World of Today or something) I got the idea from some outside source. This outside source, as I now recall, was my wife. "Build a bookcase," she said. Or in very similar words. This concept burbled and bubbled in my fan-type head for a time. Suddenly it jelled and I was struck with a thought both original and remarkable. I would build a bookcase.

And it was so.

In more time than it takes to tell it, I built one. To my wife again goes a bit of credit. She started putting books in it. I regarded this (and still do) as an inspiration. So now it is full of



books.

Don Wilson can vouch for this. He saw it with his eyes over there by the door the other weekend when he came to help me put out the mailing. Or maybe it was Thanksgiving day. Check with him.

.....  
from

# gas jet annex

Next day at work I said to Francis T Laney, as I held out my hand, "Where is that article?"

"I haven't written anything," said Laney. "I'll write you that article one of these days, but I haven't got any time now."

"But I'm going to press!" I shouted, and the fellow on the lathe in front of me turned his eye upon me. "I'm going to press!" I shouted again.

"Hell with it," said Laney, grinning, and walked away.

I'd hollered the wrong thing. Those words would not bring the fanatic gleam I've so often seen in his eyes. I should have said: "Mint commemoratives! Plate blocks!" Then for sure his eyes would have lit up. Oh well. He is going to do me an article one of these days. I will publish it here, in this seldom-type mag.

There is a fellow in the shop who reads Astounding religiously. He rightly regards Laney as an intelligent person. But he also thinks that Laney ought to read science-fiction.

"Oh, I've read a little of the stuff," said Laney. "Along with my general reading. It's OK to spice a general reading diet with a bit of science-fiction; some of it is quite interesting. But though I find it pleasant to read at times, I can't say I care a great deal for it. And I certainly can't see anyone going strongly for the stuff."

Thus spake F T Laney, science-fiction fandom's living legend.

.....

# Jesus in the Ditch

"What you doing, guy?" Jesus asked me.

"Trying to get out of this trench," I answered.

It was a very deep trench that the Bureau of Power and Light had dug in the street by my house. I imagine it must have been at least eight feet deep. I was seven or eight years old at the time, so of course that was very deep.

The neighbor kids and I had a lot of fun running up and down the length of this trench. As I remember, it was about two blocks long---it even turned the corner in back of my house, and went on to the power station.

This particular evening I was playing alone. It was dark and the other kids had been called home. I was still playing because I lived on that corner and my house was but thirty feet away. At length I grew weary of lighting matches down there, or whatever devilment I had been up to, and began to climb out.



Climbing out required a chonking side-to-side motion up the sides---I believe mountain climbers call it "chimneying". I was using the side-to-side system instead of the back-on-one-side, feet-on-the-other-side technique. Anyhow, I got up far enough so that the street was at my chest level. And then I put my palms on the pavement and tried to push up and swing out, but I was just too darned tired.

So I just stood there, one shoe dug firmly into each side of the cut, palms on the pavement, waiting for my batteries to charge. Then upon the scene came a little boy my age. He lived over on the other street and evidently was now seeing the ditch for the first time. He was a Mexican and his name was Jesus.

"What you doing, guy?" he said to me.

"Trying to get out of this trench," I said.

"You mean you can't get out of there?" he asked, incredulously.

"Nope," I said. I tried another pushup--couldn't make it.

"Golly, guy!" exclaimed Jesus. "I can get out of there eeeasy as anything!" So saying, he leaped into the air and straight into the trench, and as he did I realized the mistake he was making. It was dark, as I have said, and the streetlight was a dim thing, over on the other corner. Its faint light slanted not more than a foot or two into the cut, and of course the bottom was invisible. So Jesus did not see the bottom. He thought I was standing on the bottom!

Down through the years I can still hear, echoing in my head, the rattle of that poor little kid's body as he hurtled into the unexpected abyss. I wonder what nameless fear shot through him as he did not touch bottom where he expected to but just went down and down?

He thumped on the bottom and crashed full length. For a moment he lay there silent, and then, in the extremity of his amazement and fright and pain, he lapsed into his mother tongue.

"Me matê!" he groaned. "I am killed!"

I chonked my way down to him and tried to lift him but he weighed half a ton and was not a bit cooperative. I knew I'd never be able to lift him out when I could barely get out myself. But I did manage to get out. I fetched my father and he got Jesus out of the ditch.

Jesus had no word of thanks. He limped away, sad-faced, touching himself gingerly and finding new abrasions as he went.

## .....

# Their Sensitive, Fannish Faces

It was perhaps early in 1944 or late in 1943 that I was sitting at home one Sunday afternoon minding my own business, never dreaming of fans or fanzines when the doorbell rang. Since I live upstairs, it involved quite a trip to go down to see who was there (the door buzzer-opener didn't work) but before I could leap to my feet my wife went to see who it was. She came back up with a quizzical look on her face. "There are three people down there," she said. "They have funny wild looks on their faces. I think they're fans."

Funny wild looks on their sensitive fannish faces.

I went down and could see through the door window a couple of sensitive fannish faces. How did I know what sensitive fannish faces looked like? I had never seen any. Neither had Isabelle, but she had seen a funny wild look there. I opened the door and the boldest of the trio introduced the bunch, none of whom I had seen before. I saw those faces often after that, but this was the first time. I gazed with awe on these genuine fan faces on genuine fan heads. I invited them in, opened the door wide, and up the stairs trooped, in shambling

unison, James Kepner, Andy Anderson, and F. Towner Laney.

James Kepner, later known as Dirty Old Kepner. Andy Anderson, described in a later article in Shangri-L'Affaires (the Defunct Fanzine) as "horse-faced." F. Towner Laney, known also as Francis T. Laney, whose letterhead proclaimed him a connoisseur of "unusual books, jot jazz". They all trooped up my stairs, gay smiles on their sensitive fannish faces.

We spent a reasonable time getting acquainted, sealing the bonds of our friendship by the use, eventually, of the four-letter word made famous wherever our troops were stationed. I loaded them with beer, whiskey and milk. They got high on all three.

They went through my fanzines, spoke in gentlemanly uncomfortable tones. In general they were nice and polite and considerate, not the least like fans. Now and again, various expressions came and went on their sensitive fannish faces.

They told me Mike Fern had come by some weeks before in search of me but had gotten lost somehow and had spoken in guarded tones of his mission to bring another fan into the fold. The fish-faced people he had spoken to had answered only in guttural grunts. Now the three of them had come and had succeeded where Mike had failed. They had found me.

This was a sad day for me, in a way, because I got from them the erroneous impression that all fans were that way. Intelligent, pleasant, friendly, with no sign of the stuffed-shirt. They got me to go to the LASFS, to publish fanzines, and in general become a Big Name Fan. But I never did go all-out fan. I stuck to my one unfannish trait--I kept on reading science-fiction.

When they'd gone, I said to my wife, "What do you mean, they had funny wild looks on their faces? They looked all right to me."

"Oh, I can't describe it," she said. "Go look at yourself in the mirror. You have the same sort of look. That's how I knew they were fans."



from

# BURBLINGS

In my ceaseless search for piano rolls I often fail to get irked at some outlandish act committed against me till some days have gone by, as some local fans discovered a short time ago. This delayed action is not without its humorous aspects; I told my wife the other day that I sometimes have the notion that I am a time-bomb and when my aging bones click or crack I am struck for a moment with the fantastic thought that I am ticking. (actually from Segment #2, March '55)

It has been a good term. Laney and I are smug as hell because we lived up to the wild promises made in the one-sheet Get The Mailings Out On Time which appeared four mailings ago. Speer doubted we could do it. We did it. It's been a fine term for the most part, with most officers functioning beautifully like some god-damned machine out of the future like you read in those crazy Buck Rogers magazines. (FA, Fapa 43, sum.'48)



# Watermelons & CABLE CARS

"I am not a fan," said Lee Jacobs.

He was talking to me over the phone at great expense to himself and Ed Cox. They live in Venice and I live in Whittier. The two are 25 miles apart. It is true that our voices were by a modern miracle being transported intelligibly over thin wires but we did not for a moment reflect on this miracle. We have grown heedless of such wonders.

Lee Jacobs is a member of FAPA, writes for fanzines, rooms with Ed Cox, fan, and will no doubt show up at the convention in San Francisco, but he is not a fan.

Or so he said. I think he was just trying to impress me with the desirability of knowing him or at least talking to him because somehow he had the idea that I hate fans or at the most dislike them intensely.

I am just wary of fans.

I've known too many of them.

I talked to Ed Cox, too. He made no outstanding statements. I asked them over for the afternoon, it being Sunday. I mentioned home brew.

"Come on over for the afternoon, it being Sunday, and we will drink home brew," was the way I put it.

They came. About the first thing Lee asked me was if I had written Hal Shapiro a postcard with nothing but the words "You S.O.B." and my signature. I said no. I am not that economical with words. Besides, Shapiro has done nothing to merit this title and I am darned if I am going to shoot away my epithets on strangers.

We drank beer for hours and gabbed for hours. Then Ed Cox mentioned that he played clarinet. Instantly we produced a clarinet. Jacobs mentioned he played piano. Instantly we got out our piano.

This piano, by the way, has had a rather interesting series of fan-type folks play it in the last seven or eight weeks, if I may drop a few names.

Elmer Perdue played it and sang some old Count Basie number that began: Don't the moon look lonely/Shining behind the trees?... Gordon Dewey played it, and Max Dancey, his collaborator, played it. Of course I played Chopsticks on it at various times. Not long ago David Grinnell did twenty choruses of Riverboat Shuffle on it...

At last Lee Jacobs sat at that 88, not realizing that the parade of stefnal characters who had preceded him had touched it with fantasy. Maybe that was why he couldn't play anything I recognized as belonging to this space-time continuum.

Ed Cox tootled away at the clarinet along with him. They made a fine picture, those two. Ed Cox would have looked peachy keen in a three-blade beanie but I couldn't find mine to lend him. Jacobs strongly resembled an unfrocked monk (unfrocked for collecting sexy pictures of the saints) and I kind of wished I had shaved for the occasion.

I recorded this session on wire. Both artists, on hearing the playback, howled in chagrin, rather nicely in tune, I thought, and demanded that I erase it instead of circulating it all over civilized fandom as I threatened to do.

"Erase it!" they moaned. "Erase it, do not send it out all over



civilized fandom as you threaten to do," was about the way they put it.

I may do that, too. I will bribe Lee Jacobs to write an article about their visit here. In return for this I will erase the wire.

After all, it is time somebody wrote an article about me. It seems that in a fanzine somewhere I found myself referred to as "the legendary Burbee." This theory has got to be shot full of holes. Even if I am the first fanzine editor who ever received a letter from Rick Sneary (now there, indeed, is a legendary one). Even Sneary at the time thought I was fabulous or something. (I have yet to see a fabulous fan). At least he thought so until the night he came to a LASFS meeting and saw me and was, in his own words, surprised to find that "you looked like everrythin elce."

Anyhow, I am not legendary and I trust that Lee Jacobs will clarify this matter in the article I am sure he will write, considering the bait. I've got to use bait because that is the easy way. I could have sat there nonchalantly smoking my legendary cigarettes and saying wonderful things which he could have taken down to send to Walt Willis (author of that fine article Sauce Bottle Fandom) for the back page of Hyphen. That is, I could have were not such a thing impossible for me.

Instead, I pointed out to him the books sitting cheek by jowl atop my bookcase. He glanced away idly. I read off the oddly assorted titles to him (Maori Symbolism, Don Quixote, Silvertip's Chase, Holy Bible, to name a few.) He didn't seem impressed.

I was trying to tell him how to write a Burbee-type article, but he would not listen.

Also on wire went THE WATERMELON STORY, which Tucker wrote about a while back. He didn't tell how this story obsessed me for months. I used to tell it dozens of times a day. I am sure the people about me must often have wished me on Mars where I would be out of earshot. This was very science-fictional of them, to be sure, since this was before the A-Bomb. Tucker didn't tell, because he didn't know, of the stab of dismay that went through me when he asked me for that story.

Matter of fact, the story isn't much good...the 45-minute buildup is far better. I tell my audience about the situations leading up to the telling of the story...the times I was forced to tell it to save a bucket of sweat for my fellow man. I tell how it obsessed me and all those unfortunate enough to be near me during my period of enchantment. After all this time my listeners are pretty wild to hear the story and so I tell it. They are always shocked that the story is so short. They shrug and begin to forget it.

But I don't. Too many thousands of pictures are flocking through my head. I see far-off places and forgotten things. I hear again the voices of people I once knew. I smell the winds of yesteryear. My mouth opens of its own accord--I tell THE WATERMELON STORY again. And again. And yet once again. The witchery of the past lays hold upon me and I tell the story again.

After a time the flood of words ebbs. The spell lifts. The thin veneer of civilization drops back on me.

But it will snatch me up again, that witchery of the watermelon. Because there are people in this world now who have heard of THE STORY. A lot of them will be in San Francisco later this year. And if I go up there (as in a weak moment I thought of doing) somebody will be



sure to ask me to tell THE WATERMELON STORY.

Would it be worth it? I was going up there to ride the cable cars again.

# IT WENT LIKE THIS

Sure, I got taken with a case of pneumonia, here in Sunny Southern California, where the sun is hot and the wind blows cold. I got taken by pneumonia. I was coccus-mad for a time. But now I am well and strong again and am able to drag myself around with a reasonable facsimile of youthful spring and bounce. I feel sure that by next mailing I will again be my old self (to the great disappointment of my friends and neighbors) and will as usual bump the mailing out on time.

My days of illness were considerably cheered by the frequent visits of Rotsler, who came by and forced me to talk till I grew hoarse, and by the visits of Cyrus B Condra (a false fan described elsewhere in this) who came around with his new mustache and a lean and hungry look. I suspect his motives. Once, when I'd dropped into a coma and thus brought the clever part of the conversation to an end for a time, I distinctly heard Condra ask Rotsler if I'd made a will yet. Since he is a law student I saw nothing odd in this question. Then he said, "Has he provided for the disposition of his file of Unknowns?" His voice broke slightly on the last word so I knew he was laboring under a terrible emotion. At that moment I began to suspect. Of course I may be unjust in this matter. After all, I was in the depths of coma at the time. I don't think he really wants those Unknowns because he hasn't yet offered to trade me his wife for them. So I know he's not a True Fan. Probably wouldn't appreciate them if he did get them.

At any rate, he left his new wire-recorder with me for several days and this electronic toy fascinated my electronic soul for many hours. It is not true that I am fascinated by the sound of my own voice being played back at me. I am not held spellbound. I am not enchanted. It's just that I'd rather listen to my own voice than anything I can think of.

When he at length came to take the recorder away, I thanked him in typical Burbee fashion, by carefully explaining to him in quasi-technical language (that I didn't understand very well) that it lacked all sorts of refinements and was, in short, a pretty poor specimen of its type. Greatly pleased by my obvious gratitude and lavish thanks, he sped away through the night with a merry song on his lips.

Next time he came over he found Rotsler and me creating Disturbing Element, the Brutish Fanzine. After watching us cynically and superciliously for a while, he got imbued with the publishing urge himself and got out a couple of paragraphs for the project. Just a few lines was all he could manage; he had such a terrific yen to read his own stuff that he couldn't wait any longer and had to bring his sketch to a quick close so he could sit back and read and re-read his sketch for 45 minutes, laughing appreciatively and calling our straying attentions back to some of the choicer phrases.

And the next time he came over, he found Moffatt, Woolston and



Burbee at work on Brownout (The Magazine Fans Believe In) and after a time wrote an item for it, too. But the item was crowded out of that mag because Hoffatt went hogwild and used up most of the space. For that matter, an item of mine was also crowded out. But this is all to the good, because I am using them both in this mag and therefore have saved myself a lot of time and trouble. I gather that Condra takes a dim view of a fan who will sell sf/fantasy items. He's got some old Weirds and Astoundings from me and while he is happy to find these items, he is not constituted to understand how anybody can live without them. It isn't that I don't like these old mags of mine--it's just that I like money more.

# phone call

"Do you know Ackerman?" I said.

"Never heard of him," said the voice.

While we were sitting around doing Brownout (The Magazine Fans Believe In) the phone rang and the voice at the other end said, "Hello Burbee." "Ah, hello," I said. "Is there a science-fiction club in town?" asked the man. "Well," I said, "that depends on the point of view."

"How do you mean?"

"Strictly speaking, there is no sf club in town but the nearest thing to it is the LASFS."

"Ah. And have they got a clubroom?"

"Well, that depends on the point of view. They've got a little room the landlord permits them to meet in once a week."

He asked for the address and I gave it to him. "You know," he said, "I've been reading the stuff for 30 years. I'm 61 now and I got to thinking the other day that there ought to be a place where we sf fans could get together."

"What's your name?" I asked. I'd been talking to him wondering who he was and since he seemed to know me it seemed silly to ask him who he was. So I asked him who he was.

"Oh, never mind," he said. "I saw your name in Amazing and thought I'd call and ask about the club. There ought to be a club for people like us. After all, we're a species apart, you know."

"Yes," I said, "I've noticed that." He asked about club meeting nights and I told him. He said he'd drop in some time. I warned him he'd get a cold reception since fans talk only to people they know and then only when spoken to first. "But," I added, "Ackerman will talk to you if you talk to him first. You'll soon find out whether or not the club holds anything for you."

"Ackerman? Who is that?"

"An old time fan. A big name. Everybody says he's a big name."

"Well," said the voice. "I may drop around there some Thursday."

"You can talk to Ackerman," I said. "He's a big name."

"I will, I will," said he. "Even if I don't know him."

I guess the guy doesn't know you, Ackerman.



# Facts In The Case Of F. Towner Laney

A Report to Stfandom

Being a man of piece-loving propensities, it is not often that I will stand up on my hind legs (as the saying goes) and lash out at some character, who, by various acts of one sort and another, earns himself a spot in a publication of this sort.

In effect, this is an open letter to fandom. It is possible that none of you will be surprised at this publication. Perhaps you have expected something like this from this quarter for some time. It is quite possible that no local fan wishes to come right out and say things that have been begging to be said all this time.

I first met F. Towner Laney (aka Francis T. Laney) via the US Mail system. I read his glowing ad for Acolyte in that once sterling fanzine Fantasite. (In this same issue I read of Sam Russell's Fantasy Critic, the adult fanzine that saw but one issue--now a collector's item--and lost the first quarter I lost in fandom on an unredeemed subscription). I sent Laney a subscription. He replied at once with a copy of his mag, and thereafter, I received succeeding issues as they appeared.

I suggested I might write him a story. A spirited correspondence ensued. I did not write him the story. Then he stopped writing. At the same time I also stopped writing. We seemed mutually pooped out on the matter.

Then he came to Los Angeles and I got to know him personally. He seemed, at first, to be a likeable chap, serious in his fanning, and possessed of a genuine hospitality. All right. Then I met his wife Jackie and admired her legs. So did Mel Brown. Now.

There was some sort of trouble in LA fandom afterward. I remained on good terms with F. Towner Laney. I was on excellent terms with him. This can be proved by various items in Shangri-L'Affaires (which I edited) for 1944 and early 1945, before the mag took a slump in the hands of another editor, here nameless.

When I left LA to go to war (if the war had come to California I'd have seen action) Laney and I were on fine terms. He even wrote me a letter one day. He wrote it on my own typewriter while he and Jackie (his wife, the one with the legs) were visiting my whisky and my wife. It was this very typewriter.

Now--I hadn't given him permission to use the typer. Perhaps my wife did, but that is of no moment. The typewriter is a precision machine, often tooled to tolerances of 1/32 of an inch. Did his using of this precision machine irk me? No. I never gave it a thought till this moment.

In the current Acolyte Laney has published a story of mine. I'd written this story (or sketch) in 1945 for a projected fm of Saha's and Brown's. (The same Mel Brown who admired Jackie's legs.) This unnamed mag never saw the light--maybe Saha and Brown did and that is why it didn't. All right.

I said nothing to Laney about editing this story heavily. I am known to be irked when people edit my stuff heavily. I naturally assumed that Laney, knowing this, would, if he edited it at all, first ask my permission and perhaps we could work something out on the matter satisfactory to both. That seems only logical and fair, doesn't it?

When I read the story in the current Acolyte I enjoyed it very much. Furthermore, it hadn't been changed at all. And if it had, I didn't notice it.

I came back from the wars, having served faithfully if fretfully through Fort MacArthur (where Ackerman once held sway), Camp Roberts, and Fort Ord. At Roberts, they'd boasted that they made killers out of men. Well, I heard somebody say it one day. Upon my discharge they failed to inform me that anywhere along the line they'd made a man out of a killer.

In this dangerous state I returned home. I thought I would find Laney the same tolerant, genial, ~~happy~~, intelligent, friendly, humorous fellow as when I left. You must all agree that I was completely justified in thinking so.

And that is precisely the way I found him. The wars hadn't changed him at all. He was still the same F. Towner Laney (or, if you prefer, Francis T. Laney). Time hadn't mellowed him a bit.

I can't say that I still admire Jackie's legs (now famous in the Malay Archipelago) as the last several times I've seen her she has worn slacks.

But F. Towner Laney is the same. The Laney of old.

## .....

# Big Peacetime Pay for FANS

I got to thinking the other night about huge incomes, a thought that plagues most people and fans at times. I know that whenever I go to the race-track I tell everybody, including myself, that I am just going for the fun of it, not that I care about money. Secretly I feel that this time I am going to sweep the card and parley a two-dollar investment into fifty-eight thousand five hundred.

Now, assuming that most fans are not so unworldly as to scorn mundane money, I am going to steer you into a cash-coining byway that will bring you untold sums, thus enabling you to spend hundreds of hours a month turning out fanzines. As soon as this plan goes into effect I expect a colossal fanzine boom. I expect 100 fanzines a day to pour gratuitously into my mailbox. Maybe 200 a day. 500 on Mondays. I am presenting this scheme solely to goose the fanzine field.

How'd you like to make \$10,000 a year for six hours' work per week? And not even every week? Work when you please? Go into business with a capital of maybe three or four dollars?

I thought so.

All right, then. Bend an ear to the page and listen.

It is agreed that fans are slans. To put it more simply, you're all supermen, all of you, regardless of popular opinion. Supermen, of course, have no trouble seeing right through subterfuge, riddles, puzzles, dissemblance, tricks, etc. Ideas flow from them like beer from a tap. And you're all supermen. All of you.

Certainly you can finish a sentence in twenty-five additional words or less? Or write the last line of a limerick? Or name a baby cow (calf). Well, all you've got to do is just that.

After all, now that the war is over, various companies are offering fantastic prizes for those simple little tasks. Generally, you have to enclose a box top or a label or a reasonable facsimile



thereof, and that is where your capital outlay comes in. Stamps are a small item, of course. You can always use the toothpaste, or soap, or eat the cereal that was behind or under the label or bc/-top, so there is some return for your outlay.

Naturally, since you're all supermen, all of you, your contributions will win the contests. And since duplicate prizes are awarded in case of ties, can't you see all fandom, each and every member, receiving duplicate first prizes--automobiles, trips to Hawaii, \$10,000 in cash, \$30 per week for life, an electronic washing machine in case you have any dirty electrons?

Gosh, it's all so simple it's a stupefying shame it hasn't been thought of before.

But now that it has, go on and get busy, fans.

I have faith in you.

You're all supermen, all of you.

I am going out to the garage this minute and make a new mailbox out of an old five-gallon can.

According to my figures, that should be about right for the hordes of fanzines that will start to flood the nation in a very short time.

Me? I want nothing. No reward. I've done this for fandom.

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## CYRUS B. CONDRA: AN APPRECIATION

It is about time you FAPANS learned a little something about Condra, or Cyrus B Condra, as he is known to the trade. After all, he is a member of FAPA and I think it only just and fair that we know all there is to know about this man. Yes, he is a man--"Four Square!" he shouts, when asked.

This, then, will be about Cyrus B. Condra, Man Four Square.

He is a hyper writer. He is a man of fine sensibilities, with a rare wit and a generous hand. He is far faster in his reactions than anybody you've ever known. He is smarter, better looking, more thrifty, more generous, than anybody you've ever seen.

That's about all I can say about Condra. These notes he wrote for me aren't very legible and I can't read the rest.

---

## Ethics If Electronics

This is going to be a serious discussion (I think it is going to be a serious discussion) on radio. I may not have room to talk about phonographs, high fidelity, etc. You people who don't care about these things are therefore warned.

I started mulling over the idea of writing something about the subject when Harry Warner talked a little about the record-player that was taking up his spare time (much as Al Ashley's yo-yo is taking up Al's time). He said things I forget now and I wrote him disputing a point I now cannot remember, and he answered, saying things I could remember if I hadn't lost his letter. You can now see what an erudite article this is going to be and what sort of



thing you can expect here. I did no research for this article, but will occasionally throw in a reference to something which will supply you perfectionists with something to sink your teeth into.

I have been interested in radios, phonographs, etc...For years I have been mildly obsessed by the subject. In my early days I bought a phono-combo with earnings from a paper route. I heard something better and later bought something better. I was pretty well satisfied till I heard something better, at which point I became dissatisfied. I have been dissatisfied ever since. Anyhow, I am now engrossed in the study of radio via a GI Bill of Rights financed course.

I thought, after about two lessons, that I was pretty good, so I built a radio from a diagram I saw in a magazine. It had three tubes. The text said: "It is an easy receiver to build; the hand-wound coils are easy to make, and the parts fit nicely into the chassis with plenty of room to spare."

I worked on this easy-to-build set for 12 hours and it may have been more. At length it was finished. I plugged it in. A loud crack snapped through the midnight air and I jumped 14 inches. I yanked the plug as smoke feathered upward from my creation. I squatted down and peered wisely at it. After a time I shook my head and said intelligently, "This shouldn't be."

I was right, too. A resistor had blown up. At the radio parts store they said maybe the wattage-rating was too low. It had been only a half-watt resistor. I bought a 10-watt resistor. It went. So did a 40-watt resistor. At last I put in a 75-watt resistor which held. But no sounds came. I discovered the filaments were incorrectly connected and a tube had gone. I replaced the tube. No sounds. I realized I should have used an output transformer for the speaker (the diagram did not show this) but when I got one the set didn't work. I stuck it away in the closet next to the skeleton and since then have looked at it only to salvage usable parts from it for my subsequent experiments.

I knew then that I must build something less complicated. All radio instruction articles tell you how simple to build this set is. I have learned that this is not necessarily true. So I chose a one-tube set. It used earphones and a battery. I built a power supply that rectified AC house current. (This actually works!) I built the one-tube set. I checked the connections twice and thrice and yet once again. I plugged in the power supply. The house lights went out. Fuse. I replaced the fuse (this is simple for a man of affairs). I plugged in the power supply and another fuse went. I reversed the plug and my troubles were over. I hadn't first tested to see which side of the line was grounded. It seems that even AC has one side of the line grounded and in a DC item like mine that contained no precautions against such eventualities, wrong insertion of the plug will blow a fuse. The full line voltage appears across the chassis. I know this now.

I said my troubles were over. They were, except that the radio didn't work. I fooled with it for a day or two, then shoved it into a safe place where I am sure I can find it any time I want it.

I decided then I was still attempting things too complicated. I found a diagram for a crystal radio. Nothing is more simple than that, I thought. "Anybody can build a crystal set," I said. "Even I can build a crystal set." So I built one. And it didn't work. "Oh well," I said. "I will put this aside with my other adventures into thinking and come back to it later when I know more about these things." So I put it aside.

Then I came across another diagram which told how to build a "simple" phono oscillator to play records through "any radio." I thought this a fine idea, since my phonograph is out of whack. Of course I can't fix it. I have decided, though, from careful observation of symptoms and correlation of known facts that it is suffering from parasitic oscillation. I don't know what to do about this. Do you suffer from parasitic oscillation? Get up nights? Feel old before your time? What do I do about parasitic oscillation?

I built the simple phono oscillator. It didn't work. I checked the circuit a dozen times. I took it apart, put it together, checked each part. I took it apart and put it together, successfully. Successfully, I say, because I didn't burn myself on the soldering iron. And the simple phono oscillator doesn't work.

I said to Rotsler the other night, "How is it that a man with a fine mind can be so stupid?" And he said, "I could answer that one but I am your guest."

When Rog Graham visited LA the other week I asked him if he knew anything about radio. He said he did, after first saying he didn't. I showed him the gadget and the diagram. He said I needed an iron-core IF oscillator coil. I had an air-core coil. I got an iron-core coil. I installed it. It doesn't work. Graham explained about the time-lag in an ironcore coil that permits the tube to oscillate. Well, it doesn't take advantage of the iron core. It doesn't oscillate.

Last night my mother said to me, "Our radio doesn't work. I'm sure you can fix it."

This has been an essay on mother love.

.....  
N. F. F. F.  
Ave Et Vale

Just before the last mailing I got a mimeographed form letter from K. Martin Carlson which informed me I had won a Laureate Award in the NFFF Poll. With the award went a Certificate of Merit suitable for framing, plus a year's free membership in the NFFF.

Surprised, I checked with Laney, who is a staunch NFFFer, and he told me that each year the NFFF has a poll and the winners of each classification get the aforementioned awards. He said they'd been doing it for years.

I wondered why I'd never won an award before, when I was really active. I'd been actively writing and publishing since 1944. In late '47 I fell away from the field when the subzine Shangri-L'Affaires was shot out from under me by irate LASFS members. I came here to EAPA to die. Then came the NFFF award. Why?

Shortly after the notice from K. Martin Carlson I got a letter from a NFFF member in Virginia, W. Leslie Hudson. A very nice guy, I thought. He welcomed me to the organization and said, among other things, that if I wrote articles or poetry or fiction, or if I was an artist, or if I cared to publish, I could receive aid from the organization. Gratifying. Yes. Actually, though, it was a great shock to me. Here I'd been active (as above) for years. 30 or more mags had seen my aegis, not to mention the others who published my stuff--but this man from Virginia had never heard of me!

I had imagined myself a Big Name Fan, but he had never heard of me. Odd, that a member of an organization which gave me an award



wouldn't know anything about me. All the sweat and blood and greasy tears of five years in fandom and I am unknown to the NFFF--unknown, and yet I manage to win some sort of award. An award which entitled me to a certificate suitable for framing. Which, by the way, I never did receive.

Next came a letter from a Zelda Mishler of Pennsylvania. (Aside to NFFF officers--your team is working as directed and the situation is well in hand.) Zelda rambled on for six pages and I confess I didn't read all six pages because Zelda never heard of me either--a great blow--and her remarks seemed to run in the general vein of welcoming me, not only to the NFFF, but to fandom!

Well, I'd heard of the NFFF but had never given it a thought till one day in 1944 Walter J Daugherty--a luminary of the LASFS at the time--(and also the man who owes the NFFF \$45.00 left over from the Pacificon)--started to give me an enthusiastic build-up about the NFFF. A great spate of words flowed as usual from his mouth, a spate in which was no logic, just words. I think I got prejudiced just listening to him and wondering if he would ever stop.

At any rate, due to WJD's campaign speech ("Los Angeles Fandom is 100% for the NFFF!" he shouted) I regarded the NFFF from that day as a loud-mouthed do-nothing organization. Perhaps I was wrong, but that is the impression I got from WJD, who was at that time a big wheel in the organization. I suppose I should have reasoned it out--there just couldn't be an organization consisting entirely of Daugherty's; the human race simply would not stand for that many Daugherty's in the world.

And at any rate, I didn't join the NFFF then, or ever. I went my way without it. Wearying of extra-mundane things I came here to FAPA to "die." And before my bones start to molder, along comes the NFFF. Go away, NFFF, and stop nuzzling my aged bones; it is not seemly.

I wrote and refused the membership. Hell with it. Leave me alone--I came here to die. Yes, I wrote and turned down the joyous bid to fraternize with a "National organization that everybody's got to join!" (WJD). I guess that's why I didn't get that Certificate of Merit, suitable for framing.

Will somebody tell me what the hell I won it for?

.....  
from

SOOPDALGEIF  
(note concluding a one-shot)

Five fine minds are convened. They have put out a fanzine. It was not the original intention of these five fine minds to put out a fanzine. Here were five brains going at top speed as we sat in my spacious apts dining lustily on fruit-cake (food for the True Fan) and gulping coffee (Wilson has a left-handed slurp technique peculiar to people from Panning, 88 miles away). We discussed the probability of nothing being true and also the probability of everything being true. Graham sketched out a plot of a sub-space mimeograph that printed different texts from the same stencil, and gave the plot a still more fantastic ending which I now forget. Personalities were kicked around. Some astounding, amazing, startling, thrilling and weird conclusions were reached. The conversation was of such a content that EEEvans, Ray Palmer, FJackerman, FTLaney and others would



gladly have paid \$4 each to listen to it. Five fine minds were whirling at top speed. And then somebody made a sad remark. "Let's put out a one-shot fanzine" this forgotten person said. The f.f.m's. went blank. No ideas emerged from the bony structure surrounding each fine mind. How did it happen that the words "Let's put out a one-shot fanzine" caused all these brains to short out? This is a mystery, but we agreed that no doubt something of lasting value would eventually fight its way into print in spite of our short-circuited minds, and when this conclusion had been reached, paralysis again set in and we all sat around look at each other's corporeal envelopes (on us they look good) blankly. Eventually something was written and stencilled and run off. This is it. An outstanding example of what can happen to five fine minds which are set a task. If we had let our fine minds cruise untrammelled and unhindered through the luminiferous ether, who knows what heights of perfection we would not have reached? Perhaps we could have solved something ultimate--like why people put out one-shot fanzines.

.....

# WINGS OVER Whittier

Though my head is at all times loaded with but three subjects, these being sex, home brew and magnetic recorders, I can at times speak of other things such as the wild geese over Whittier or the man I met who was still flushed with the excitement of having just seen a flying saucer (also over Whittier).

But why anybody wants to talk about flying saucers when there are things like player pianos in existence, I don't know.

This leads me rather conveniently into talking about the player piano I bought 21 April 1953.

The player part didn't work but it was a fine-sounding instrument. Besides, it cost but \$36.35 installed so I couldn't resist it. In fact, it is sitting silently behind me as I write.

When I took it apart I learned that it was a 65-note player. This became highly disconcerting to me when I checked with a player piano specialist and learned that such rolls have not been made for 25 years. The 88-note rolls are still being produced by the QRS Piano Roll Co., in San Francisco but nobody makes 65-note rolls. I have collected a box of 88-note rolls. They will come in handy when I have converted my player to a combination 65 and 88 note job. (I am still in the market for rolls of both sizes. You got some? I'll buy them all).

As I stood in the piano repairman's loaded garage---he conducts his business at his home---a trucker drove up to get a piano for delivery to a customer who'd been keeping the phone hot all day demanding delivery of his player. As the truck drove off, the "player piano specialist" said to me, "That customer has fifty pianos in his house but he has to have that one for tomorrow."

"Fifty pianos?" I said. "You mean he's a dealer?"

"No, he just collects them."

"You mean he has a private collection of fifty pianos?"

"Fifty or sixty."

"All players?"

"All players."

I mulled this over for a minute. "Well," I said. "Fifty pianos...that's not too many."

.....  
MORE FROM

# BURBLINGS

I am cutting this stencil with a great deal of noise going on. There are five children here watching a Western on TV. There is often more action and noise in the room than on the screen. Three of the kids are armed. This brings me to wonder, how many fanzines are in the realm of non-existence because of the preoccupation of their editors with TV? It is a great hindrance to me. I can seldom find any free time that the set is not on. I therefore get little free time to play records and wire.

Some weeks ago my little boy, age 9, came home from a Cub Scout meeting and said his Den had the amusement part of the next Pack meeting program. Pack meetings are once a month, and the Scouts and their friends show up for awarding ceremonies, etc. 8 kids in each Den. 5 Dens. So that's 40 kids plus parents and friends. This time it was Den 5's turn to do the program part. "Fine" I muttered in my cacciatore. "I'll be there cheering like crazy." I was, too, but not in the capacity I had first figured.

When the Den Mother knew she had to run off a program she told my wife and my wife said, "Oh, my husband will write you a play or something. He's always writing something." The Den Mother called a meeting of parents and some of us showed up. We threw ideas around and eventually came up with something we figured should be sure-fire. A lot of doctor skits. So, we figured that if each person present would write one or two scripts, we'd have a whole batch to choose from. But at the next meeting this was not the case. The thing wound up with me doing 80% of the writing.

The kids learned their lines with ease and ran the program off like veterans. I recorded it all on wire, which shows you another use for the wire recorder, a gadget I am always plugging in this fanzine.

Before I'd finished writing the script my wife asked me what sort of skits I'd written. I had suggested one at the meeting about a man with two jobs who was getting mixed up. So the doctor grafts another head on him. You cannot imagine with what coolness this idea was received. So my wife, with some anxiety, wanted to know what else I had written. I told her and she sighed with relief. "I thought you were going to get science-fictional," she said.

I might add here, though, that the two-head skit went over with a bang. The man next to me laughed himself right out of breath.

Elsewhere in this mag it is mentioned that my little boy wanted to see Destination Moon. Well, when it came around to the local theater he was hot to go see it. But I told him it was just a stupid story about some guys going to the moon and so what? No hostile selenites shooting poison darts or zap pistols...who cares for that sort of stuff? I talked him into another show with a double feature Western program, plus a serial. Unfortunately I talked myself into it, too, because I had to take him. I see that movies haven't improved a bit since 1938 which is when I stopped going out of sheer boredom with the trite.



# TWO SEPARATE PEOPLE

"Les and Es Cole are fifteen year old twin brothers," said F Towner Laney to me not long ago. I did not contradict him because I didn't know the facts then. At first I thought myself they were brothers who lived in Berkeley. They did not talk about sex. I thought this was odd because everybody talks about sex.

I first heard of them when they wrote requesting FAPA information. In my facet as Sec-Treas of FAPA I receive lots of similar letters. I replied to theirs as usual with an unnecessary explanatory letter accompanying the regular mimeographed and dittoed info sheets. They wrote back and said they'd like to join. I wrote telling them fine. I mentioned that one only could be a member; the other could look over his shoulder at the mailing.

They seemed to ignore this, as though they were not separate people, and sent along another letter, speaking of "we" when they spoke of joining. I told them again that they were two separate people and that the business of dual membership had been threshed out years ago in FAPA. So they sent me a check for \$1.50 and spoke of putting "us" on the membership list.

I wrote, telling them that one of them was a member, and since some dreadful symbiosis joined them so that they could not become single entities, I forcibly would unjoin them on a semantic basis and call Les Cole the member with Es Cole the shoulder-looker-over.

They made no complaint about that.

A few weeks passed and I got a card saying they'd be in Los Angeles over the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of April and if I cared to I could find them at a certain address. It happened that I also would be in LA on the 21st, Saturday, so I called the number they'd given me and spoke to a male voice which declared its owner was Les Cole. After some jabber I said I'd go over to see them. Their place was about 10 blocks away. I said I'd be there in 20 minutes. Soon as I hung up, the phone rang. It was my wife. She said she'd volunteered my services to fix somebody's TV set. They wanted to watch the baseball game and couldn't get a serviceman. They'd come right by and pick me up. I said OK. I did some rapid figuring, using my little formula card that tells how to solve all sorts of problems. 7 minutes to shave, 2 minutes to get there, four minutes to fix the TV set, 3 minutes to get to the Coles' place, a total of 16 minutes. But my wife didn't show up right away so I had to phone Cole and tell him to add 20 minutes to the schedule. When she did arrive, things went off per schedule. I fixed the TV set (tightened a loose connection with my finger-nail) and got to the Cole place where I was met outside by Les Cole, who looks a lot like Art Widner. If you have never seen Art Widner I can't imagine of what use that description is to you.

We discussed fans and fandom as we sat in my car and I told him his favorite stf author was a homosexual. Not that I go around telling everybody this stf author is a homo, but since the stf author talked about it in open meeting at the LASFS and Les Cole asked me, I told him.

Then came the magic moment. We went into the house and he called out "Hermie!" Only it seems that Hermie is a dog and Hermie is short for hermaphrodite which Les claims the dog is, since some tinkering was done with his sex organs. It looks like we're back to sex again. Even-



tually he called out "Es! You have a visitor. And shortly afterward a comely female came out and I realized that the Es half of the Coles was a woman. It turned out that they were married. They were not twin brothers, fifteen years old. Laney, I thought, had a shock coming.

We talked fan smalltalk and Les Cole suddenly asked me "Do you know Nameless J Nameless, that S.O.B.?" Instantly my feeling for Les Cole flamed into a blazing friendship and I knew that if he thought of NJD in this manner Les Cole and his twin brother or rather wife were my deepest friends throughout our span on this mortal coil. I amused them with a couple of amusing stories about local fans.

Les said he'd sent a story to Planet and Planet had rejected it. "They said it was intellectual." "Why," I said, "you must be stupid, to sent Planet an intellectual story. In fact you were stupid to write an intellectual story. Nobody but an idiot would write an intellectual story."

"Do you know William Rotsler?" they asked. "Fine fellow but lazy as hell," I said. It seems that Rotsler had sent them a drawing (to prove he could draw) big as "this and like this"--business with the hands--and had offered his fanish services. They didn't have his new address so I gave it to them.

About this time I apologized for being late again. I explained that my wife is constantly offering my services to the neighbors. In the past few months she has offered me to the neighbors to repair an automatic washer, a sewing machine, a vacuum cleaner, a stove. This comes under the heading of being neighborly. Also she offered my services as a skit writer for a Cub Scout program, the story of which appears in this fanzine if the deadline doesn't creep up on me. But, when the young lady across the street complained that she just couldn't get pregnant, did my wife make one attempt at being neighborly? Where were those magic words "Oh, my husband can fix that up for you in a jiffy?" Still, what else can one expect in this Judao-Christian society?

Time was pressing both me and the Coles who are still husband and wife though I had to split them semantically in Fapian interests, so we parted. In the next ten minutes of saying goodbye Les asked if I were going to the New Orleans convention. I scoffed at the idea of a fan convention in that city of jazz and the cat-house, but I said I was mulling the idea of going if I could hop a ride with somebody on a share-expenses basis. "But not for the Con," said. "I wouldn't go across the street to a fan convention. I didn't go to the Pacificon in Los Angeles. I want to go to hear that righteous jazz as played by Papa Celestin, Buglin' Sam, Sharkey Bonano, George Lewis, Armand Hug ....to hell with the convention."

Next day I wrote Rotsler telling him I'd met the Coles. He answered: "Who is Les and Es Cole? You say they had my address. Where did they get it? I have never, to my knowledge, heard of them. Fan type human beans, I suspect."

Kind of a mystery here, isn't there?

Then I saw Laney next I told him the Coles were nice people. "They're married," I said, "Though I admit they didn't have their marriage license framed on the wall."

"No-o-o-o-o..." said Laney slowly. "Les and Es Cole are fifteen year old twin brothers. If they are having sexual relations I am ashamed for them because they are fifteen year old twin brothers. That is the way I visualize them."

"Towner," I said, "they are husband and wife."

"They are fifteen year old twin brothers!" Laney shouted.

# HOW TO STOP WRITING FOR (part one) FANZINES

It breaks over you eventually--the realization that you are wasting too damned much time writing for fanzines, those ephemeral things read only by a few esoteric folk who believe only what they believe before they start reading your article. By God, if I were re-writing this I would change that sentence. I really would. If I were rewriting this article. But before I go any farther along this digression I'd better get back to my original clause or I'll find myself explaining how to write a fanzine article and this is meant to be an article on how to stop writing for fanzines except Masque.

It comes to you with compelling force that you are doing yourself little good banging out wordage for fanzines since your writings have little effect on the intelligentsia, though this may be explained perhaps by the lack of a fannish intelligentsia.

And so you stop writing for fanzines, except Masque. It is not easy to do, in a way, because once the brain is channeled to thinking along fan article lines, everything that happens is magically twisted and shaped into a fannish article. Whole paragraphs pop into your mind and you want to grab a typer or a pencil and jot them down before you forget them. And if you neglect to do this your trained mind goes right on developing the article, right down to supplying a solid punch line, something it usually doesn't do ahead of time. At a time like this the article writer is suffering the pangs of birth and simultaneous death. He longs both to bring his opus to print and the notice of a handful of esoteric eyes hidden for the most part behind lenses of varying thicknesses, and to slay the beastie before it gestates. This is the critical period. It is a towering monster of an impasse. The weapon to slay the dragon quight is to shrug and say, "Fugg it." Or, if you choose to lessen the shock of your capsule statement, you say, "The hell with it." And then you stride away, taking big steps, and leave the idea where you hatched it. If you're a big man, that is. If you're just an ordinary person such as I am, you just shove the idea aside and concentrate on something significant. This would depend on what sort of a person you are and what you consider significant. For example, when I was plagued by the urge to write an article on the various methods of masturbation bragged about by past members of the LASFS, I simply changed the subject and remembered the trouble a neighbor of mine had when his first-born learned to walk by watching flies and his parents had to pick him from the ceiling to keep him from eating the light bulbs because broken glass is dangerous in the hands of small children.

So after a while your brain will no longer turn out fannish ideas for articles and you are comparatively safe, unless you know somebody like William Rotsler who is such a fine fellow withal that it is difficult to refuse him when he asks for material. But you buckle right down and say, The hell with you, Willie, don't you know I've stopped writing for fanzines? And so, by God, you write an article for Masque to show that you can stop writing fanzine articles any time you choose.

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HOW TO STOP WRITING  
FOR FANZINES

(part two)

When I wrote, in the long ago, the first part of this article, I still was not sure of myself. I was telling you how to stop writing for fanzines without really knowing myself how to do it.

But now I know.

You just stop, that's all.

That's what I did. I think I did it in a kind of roundabout way, though. I promised a big article to Boggs about fandom in a satirical vein. Then I promised Lee Hoffman a huge article about F. Towner Laney. Well, it must have been the mere idea of having to do those articles that made me bog down for good. I wrote several pages of each. I think at last notice I had some 20-odd pages of the Laney item and some six or eight of the one for Boggs.

But the thought of finishing them, polishing them up for publication, was too much for my moribund fannish fancies, I suppose. I wrote scarcely a line for anybody after that. Boggs and Hoffman, wherever you are (in Minneapolis and Savannah, respectively?) I apologize for my inertia.

Oh, I am a beast.

For many moons I have lain here in this dark hole, both hibernating and estivating. But now I am crawling out of the hole.

And what do I find? Do I find my fannish interests dead as they deserve to be? I do not. Do I find that I look aghast at my past activity and vow no future such? Not so.

As a matter of fact, I am thinking quite seriously of finishing those titanic tasks I set myself to some time back, which means Boggs or Hoffman or somebody will soon receive these items I promised them so long ago. And if they don't want them, odds are I'll publish them myself. With Rotsler illustrations, by golly.

I am even thinking seriously of running for FAPA office next year. I am thinking of running for both Prexy and Official Editor. I see no reason why I can't hold both offices at the same time. The Constitution says nowt against it.

Actually, then, unless you are basically a fugghead, as I am, you can stop writing for fanzines any time you want to. Set yourself impossible or gigantic tasks and find yourself shrinking to inactivity in the face of such a monumental pile of work. You will fade away from the field and no one will ever remember you existed, except maybe Tucker, who will write a nostalgic paragraph about you in 1956.

But, if you are basically a fugghead, you are lost. You'll never leave fandom because fandom needs fuggheads.

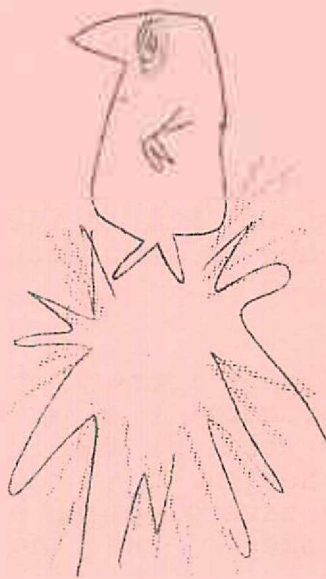
Fuggheads are the life-blood of a healthy fandom.

You'll never stop writing, then. You'll go on and on and on, writing stuff like this for other fuggheads or for Willie Rotsler.

Sometimes, you can leave a little space for the editor to doodle in, especially if he fancies himself to be something of an artist.

This is the second of a two-installment series on how to stop writing for fanzines. I can't write any more on this subject. It might interfere with my fanzine writing.





BIG  
NAME FAN  
A BOMBING (1961)

As soon as the bomb fell, Big Name Fan leaped to his feet, slung his typewriter under his arm, along with several reams of typing paper, and made for the door.

As he stepped out he slung over his shoulder Survival Kit BNF Model 48, his own design.

There was the beginning of chaos in the street he entered. People were standing there looking at the mushroom cloud that rose behind him and remarking that it looked just like in the newsreels. Other people were running around wild-eyed, wondering what they should do.

Big Name Fan didn't ask anybody. He knew what to do. He left his parents behind him since they naturally had no survival value. After all, his father was over 50 and therefore in the clutches of senility. His mother was just a woman.

Big Name Fan got into his father's car (being a Big Name Fan he naturally had no car of his own) and drove off in a direction he had decided on two years before, after reading about it in a fanzine. As he drove, he saw people staring behind him at the mushroom cloud. But Big Name didn't look at the cloud. That would mean lowering himself to their level of ignorance. Hell, he'd known about atomic bombs and spaceships and hyperspace way back in the late twenties, before they'd even heard of "n atom.

He left Los Angeles. He noticed a lot of other people doing the same thing. He frowned. How had his Master Plan #1: "Get away from the Target with all possible expedition"--how had this plan leaked out to the rabble?

At the outskirts of a little community the car stalled. It was out of gas, due to the lack of foresight possessed by his father (another example of senility). Big Name got out of the car. He adjusted his survival kit over his shoulder by its straps. He hefted his typewriter and paper and went on. He had no money to buy gasoline, since money would of course be useless in the new barbarianism that was descending on the world. He struck out from the car with the sure unhesitating step of one who has read science fiction steadily since 1926.

It soon grew dark. He was in a semi-desert area. There was a house or two nearby; their lights began to wink on in the darkness that falls swiftly in semi-desert country. He avoided the houses--the odds were that people lived there and none were fans. He strode on purposefully, taking big steps because he was a great big man 5'2" tall. He fell over a coil of wire once, and shortly afterward went headlong into a ditch he couldn't see. He lay in the ditch considering the situation. He was not hurt, but perhaps it was not well to go marching (however unfaltering his steps) in darkness when he couldn't see his way.

He thought about it a while and decided to lie there until morning.

"I will lie here until morning," said Big Name.

And he did, shivering in the chill air of the desert night. Survival Kit BNF 48 had no room for blankets. When morning came he crawled out of the ditch and carefully observed the terrain he was about to traverse. Later, from a volcanic ridge he saw the road, far away, packed with outgoing automobiles. People fleeing from the scene. Big Name tramped on eastward. After a time he thought about breakfast. In his Kit was a book which listed all edible plants in the nation. He stopped and set up the miniature projector which was needed to read the book. It was photo-micrographed and took up no more space than a dime. He set up the screen and soon was absorbed in the projected print of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. He had taken out the wrong film but it didn't matter. This was fascinating reading.

He came upon the word "gules" and found that it was a heraldic term meaning the tincture red, indicated in seals and engraved figures of escutcheons by parallel vertical lines:

His sev'n-fold targe a field of  
gules did stain  
In which two swords he bore; his  
word,  
"Divide and reign."  
P. Fletcher.

With man's blood paint the ground; gules, gules.

Shak.

Let's march to rest and set in gules, like suns.

Beau & Fl.

He learned about gyrons, impalements, gemels, gores and fusils: checky, chevrons and cottises came to his notice, and as he looked up other symbols he came across the words yapock and zenick. A yapock, he learned with matchless interest, was a South American aquatic opossum. A zenick, on the other hand, was a South African burrowing mammal, called also suricat.

There was nothing like knowledge, thought Big Name, as he regretfully shut off the projector. He had spent so much time acquiring this useful information from the dictionary that he'd used up his time allowance for breakfast. There was nothing to do but lean on into the east where safety lay. He went on the rest of the morning, resting only occasionally, for he had a valuable life--his own--in his keeping.

The sun was directly overhead when Big Name stopped for his noon meal. It was very hot here, and no houses were in sight. He was very dry. He dipped into Survival Kit Model 48 (his own design) and brought out a cellophane packet of tablets. Vitamin tablets, the nearest thing to food pellets that backward modern science had yet developed. He popped them into his mouth. From a plastic can he shook a white tablet. That was an invention of his own. Dehydrated water tablets.

Big name had developed them himself. He'd boiled away great quantities of water till nothing but a powder remained. This powder he carefully scraped up and compressed into tablet form. And there he was--dehydrated water! Dissolve a tablet in a glass of water and you had a glass of water!

But there was not water around to put the tablets into. Big Name was mighty thirsty. Luckily, he later found a sort of irrigation ditch with greenish water in it and by this time he was not squeamish. Then he went on.

He saw no more people, for he was in the Mojave Desert and the few inhabitants had left--at least the area he was in was deserted. Now and then he unwittingly faced in the direction of a distant Bomb hit---he swivelled away swiftly when he saw those mushroom clouds. Looking

at them did harm, he reasoned, while not looking at them did a lot of good.

By and by he settled down in a heavy clump of mesquite. A stupid tall cactus clump nearby furnished him a little shade. He sat there and wished for water. For a moment he almost regretted that Survival Kit BNF Model 48 contained no canteen. Only for a moment he regretted this ---he knew the regret was stupid, for he had carefully selected the items to go into the Kit, carefully and over a period of two years, so that he knew that every item in it was essential to the well-being and comfort of a fan. So obviously and logically, a canteen was strictly an unessential item which did nothing but add weight. He licked his lips and his tongue rasped harshly like a file on a rock.

This was Meeting Point #1. He'd reached it and now all he had to do was wait two months, which was as long as he figured civilization would take to throw off the shackles of convention and revert to complete barbarism. The survivors would then be ready for a Leader, and Big Name would be ready to step miraculously into their midst and restore order with a benificent wave of the hand and a soft conciliatory voice.

He heard footsteps approaching. Coming across the hard-packed earth was Small Town Fan. Though they lived by 20 miles apart, they saw each other only at conventions. Small Town too, was prepared. He also had a survival kit, not so completely equipped as Big Name's, but Survival Kit Model 1950. (It was a sore spot with Big Name that fans couldn't even agree on a standard terminology for Survival Kit--some used the number system and others, like Small Town Fan, used the date on which they'd conceived the idea of the kit).

Shrugging off his annoyance, Big Name stood up. "Hi, Small Town. Haven't seen you since the Malay Archipelagocon."

"You mean the Pelicon," said Small Town.

"Sit down, rest your weary bones."

Small Town sat down and rested his weary bones. He took a canteen from his kit and had a sip of water.

"It's a hell of a thing," said Small Town. "The darnedest thing ever."

"You mean about the next Convention being held in Panama? I don't see why. After all, there's a plenty active little group of fans down there. Been publishing regularly."

"I know, but it's getting so I sometimes don't think it's worth it to travel a thousand miles or more to go on a convention."

"Not---worth---it!" gasped Big Name. "Why, man, it's the event of the year. Absolutely everybody is there. Pro-authors, editors and fans galore, and they have a big auction and everything. Man I wouldn't miss one! I've never missed one."

"I've been to five," said Small Town. "But sometimes I wonder if it's worth it. I guess it is, at that, the way you put it. But I still wish the Convention was somewhere else--somewhere closer."

Big Name said nothing. He didn't care a lot for Small Town, even if Small Town was a fan and published the #4 fanzine, Paraspace, and was a dignitary in the NFFF and FAPA. They'd kept up for the last four years a tremendous correspondence; microfilms of their letters reposed in Big Name's Survival Kit.

"Say," said Big Name, "just before I left, I put microfilms of forty seven new books in my film. I've got some really choice stuff in there. Got some really nice titles. Got The Green Mouse..."

"I traded you that one a year ago," said Small Town. "I've got it in microfilm, too. That's a good title. I heard somebody say it wasn't fantasy, though."

"Sure it is!" said Big Name. "Why, I've had that copy a year and just got it microfilmed a week ago. How long did you have the book?"

"At least four years," said Small Town. "I know it's fantasy--don't get excited. I just mentioned I'd heard someone say it wasn't."



"I know darn well it's fantasy," said Big Name. "I saw a copy in Ackerman's collection a couple of years ago."

"Ackerman read the book?"

"No, he hadn't read it."

"You read it?"

"No."

"Well, I haven't read it either, but it must be fantasy, if Ackerman has a copy."

Small Town took another sip from his canteen while Big Name watched, his lips rasping drily over his blackening lips.

"You bring a mimeograph?" asked Big Name.

"No," said Small Town. "Designed one that fit into the kit, but never got it off the drafting table. Was a honey, too. Would've been a beauty. Why?"

"Oh, I just thought I'd like to publish a one-shot fanzine now. I brought my typer."

"So'd I. Soon's I rest a bit I'm going to write up this trip of mine and our meeting for my fapamag DOORWAY."

"Why, that's a new one, isn't it? Your regular magazine is Continuum, isn't it?"

"You know darn well it is. I got tired of that title. It had no significance. Continuum...just roll that around in your mouth. It doesn't mean anything, does it?"

"It must mean something," said Big Name. "It came out of somebody's head."

"I thought Doorway had a broader meaning. Doorway. That gives a picture of a gigantic brass-studded door opening into an azure sub-space fringed with dark striations, sort of, as though indicating the presence of a darker knowledge."

"Yeeeee...I see it, too," said Big Name. "Why, a title like that could carry a magazine all by itself without need for anything else. But a title like that is so good somebody's liable to steal it."

Small Town laughed derisively. "How can anybody steal it? I've got it registered with the NEFF Copyright Bureau."

"Smart boy," nodded Big Name. "I'm not so good on titles. I--" He had to stop talking for a moment. Fifteen giant jet planes flashed overhead at 3,000 feet and the noise was deafening. Black planes, they were, with a foreign device on their wings.

"I'm no good on titles," said Big Name. "I just sit around and think and think and nothing comes out, so I'm using the old one I've been using all this time. Coming into my 40th issue next month."

"That's no record," said Small Town fan.

"I'm not shooting for a record," said Big Name. "I've just been going along, minding my own business, and quietly publishing my magazine. Been doing it all this time and I guess it's sort of a habit with me now."

"It is a pretty remarkable magazine at that," mused Small Town. "You started the mag when you were only 17, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Big Name. "And here I'm 36 and I'm still publishing the same mag."

"Gosh, that is a record, far as I know. Publishing the same mag from boyhood to adulthood."

"I don't think of myself as an adult," said Big Name solemnly, "but rather--as a fan."

"Yeah, 'tis the mortal truth. The mortal truth. That's the way Giles Habibula would say it. The mortal truth."

"LEGION OF SPACE," said Big Name. "Damn good yarn. You read it?"

"No, but the current issue of my mag carries a review of the new book edition. I read the review. You read it?"

"You mean the story? Oh, no, but I have it on microfilm." He gestured toward his kit.

"How many titles you got there?"

"Oh, offhand, I'd say 3,900."

Small Town shook his head. "That is a lot. I've got only 2400. But, then, you've been collecting longer than I have. I started micro-filming sooner, though. Besides my books I've got all the important fanzines of the past ten years on film, too, and stills from stf movies, and a lot of my correspondence. And my projector and typer and paper, and stencils, of course. Besides that, I have a spool of wire containing the voices of over 200 fans."

"Say, that's something!" cried Small Town. "Play it! You got a recording of Harry Warner? I've always wondered what he sounded like."

"I never did get to see Harry Warner, not even when the Atlantis-con was held on that submarine off the coast of Maryland. I even swam ashore one night just to see him. Nobody was home and the neighbors said that Harry had gone to New York for a week. I couldn't believe that---not with a convention right off his own coast."

Shock waves rocked the earth. Far off, east and west, mushroom clouds rose. Much later, the rocking thud of the explosions reached them.

"I sure wish you'd brought a mimeograph," said Big Name. "This conversation of ours is of real fan significance. I could dash off a couple of stencils right now while the words are fresh in my mind and you could write something too and draw a cover and we'd have a fanzine."

"I sort of feel that way, too," said Small Town. "I'd have brought one, too, except that I didn't realize time was so short."

"It is later than you think," said Big Name, solemnly.

"That's the title of a Jack Williamson story, isn't it? No, that was Darker Than You Think. Werewolf stuff. Deftly handled."

"You read it?"

"No, did you?"

"No, but I've got it on microfilm."

"So've I."

They nodded smugly at each other.

"I wonder how Midwest Fan is making out," mused Small Town Fan.

"He was planning Survival Kit, too. When I saw him at the Jalapacon last year. Too bulky, though, to my mind. He had high-powered rifles, distress rockets, and didn't believe in microfilming. Said he'd take just one book along...the Bible."

Big Name's lip curled. "The Bible? What in Ghu's name does a fan want with that?"

"I don't know," said Small Town. "He just said it was the best fantasy anthology of them all. Said it was the source-book of all stf. I didn't press him for details. You can ask him when you see him at the Panvention."

"Or you can."

"I don't know that I'll go to the Panvention," said Small Town, eyes averted.

Big Name sat up abruptly. "Not---going?"

"Probably not. You know, I don't think a Con every year is a good idea. Happens too often. You save up all year to finance your trip, spend several days travelling, and often put in a few days before the Con and afterward running around being a visiting fireman, and then you go home and start saving up again because the first thing you know another Con is due."

A wild light shone for a moment in Big Name's usually complacent eyes. "You're kidding!"

"No, I'm not. Really. I've been thinking about it seriously for a long time. I've even written an article about it which will appear in Paraspace, out the 15th of next month. I'm trying to start a movement for a Con every three years. Then with them spaced so far apart,

you can really savor the Cons when they do come."

"Three years!" said Big Name, rolling out each word slowly, as though he were trying to taste them and couldn't believe they tasted like that. "Why, it would mean that we'd never get to see a lot of the fans. Some really fine fellows rise to prominence and fade out in that time. Why, between conventions there'd be any number of promising people who would never know fandom---never know it truly---if they didn't have the convention to open their eyes and inject them with new enthusiasm and interest."

"Just the same, my article points out in detail the benefits of the 3-year Con. I'm going all out for it. I've taken your advice before," said Small Town. "I've always considered your advice to be the best."

"Why?" said Big Name softly.

"Because you're the Number One Fan," said Small Town. "To me your word was LAW, if our little fangroup can be said to have laws."

Big Name smiled enigmatically. This same enigmatic smile had won friends for him all over the nation, even the world.

Small Town drew himself up. "But this time---" his voice faltered and then came in strong again. "This time I won't give in. You got me to give up going with girls because you said it took a fan's fanning time. I was even engaged---you coaxed me into taking back my ring. Remember that?"

Big Name nodded. Indeed he did remember. Small Town had sold the ring and with the proceeds had published a gala issue of Paraspaces, with lithographed cover and interiors, and articles by the biggest names in the fan field. Even two pro-authors had written articles for it! It had been 60 pages thick, and was spoken of even now as a paragon of publishing....Big Name shook himself from his reverie; Small Town had been talking.

"Not this time," he was saying. "I've given it serious thought. I even took off work one day and consulted a psychiatrist about it. He said it was a wonderful idea and he charged me only \$10 for telling me."

Big Name stood up.

"My eyes, perhaps more experienced than yours---you are rather a late-comer into the field you know---you entered the field in 1934---my eyes can peer past the confusion of the present to a lucid future... Shall I tell you what I see?"

Small Town, onglared by this rhetoric, so unusual from Big Name, could only nod wordlessly.

"I see dissension and strife and war. I see old fans, bowed by blows in the past, dropping to obscurity beneath this new onslaught. I hear the thin cries of dying fans, crying aloud for a savior, a leader, someone to point the way, and above all this, like the specter of Death on the battlefield, rides Chaos, laughing to hear the plaintive cries, roaring to see the dreadful scene of fandom dying, folding in on itself! And do you know who Chaos is? You are Chaos, Small Town!"

Small Town stared back defiantly.

"Look at you, Small Town," cried Big Name. "Your hands, bloody from the murder of Fandom! Can you, with those gory fingers, ever twitch a typer into gleaming sentience again, or spin the crank of a mimeograph? Can you ever operate a stapler without those grim thoughts and memories crowding out your very reason?"

"Frankly," said Small Town, "I think I can."

He stood. "Big Name," he said, "I guess there comes a time when every fan comes into maturity. It may be when he discovers his idol is clayfooted or when something breaks in on his somnolent smugness to awaken him to what a fool he's been all along. And while I sat there listening to you, it came to me. I grew up in a paragraph. Big Name," his words went more slowly, "do you realize that I'm a Big Name Fan?"



"This is awful," said Big Name. "This may well be---" The high roar of jets slapped down over the desert. The enemy jets were returning. In a few moments they were gone, but the roar persisted. One black plane lagged behind, dipping and rising, its jet motors barking intermittently. Part of the fuselage was blasted away. Evidently some lucky shot from an alert anti-aircraft gunner. The plane suddenly dipped and plunged into the earth not far from the two fans. Instantly there was an explosion as the fuel tanks let go. The two fans were knocked down by the concussion, and flaming fuel hissed about them like a rain from hell. Then all was silent.

Slowly Big Name Fan rose. Two wisps of smoke rose from his smoldering jacket and in the still air of the desert rose twining about his forehead so that they seemed to grow from his hair, like tendrils, giving him a positively Slan-like appearance. And the brilliant desert sun caught for a moment at the dial glass of his wristwatch, making it look for all the world like a lens!

Indeed, to Small Town's eyes, Big Name appeared wreathed in steffanistic glory. He looked like some swashbuckling hero from yet-to-be-written future history. His eyes were glinting with a hint of hell as he said:

"This may be the end of the world as you and I know it, Small Town. If you insist on having the conventions every three years or even on alternate years, I cannot go along with you. It will mean the end of our friendship—even our—correspondence." He whispered that last word brokenly.

"It isn't that serious!" said Small Town.

"Not serious! Man, this isn't just the end of---us, our fan relationship, but it may well be the opening wedge of revolt in fandom. Why, it's like rage in heaven! The two warring factions may well split fandom wide open, and there will be chaos in the fandom that I have known and rather enjoyed the past 24 years! I..." But his vocal chords could bear up no longer under the strain. Emotion had swept over him like blood over the scuppers of a pirate ship.

Quickly he sat down, jerked his typewriter open, slipped in a fresh sheet of paper. For many minutes only the sound of his rapid frantic typing disturbed the air. Then he rose, folded up the letter and put it in an envelope (with Small Town's address mimeographed on the front) and handed it to Small Town.

Picking up his Survival Kit, he slung it over his shoulder, along with his typewriter and several reams of typing paper, and stomped off.

They found him days later, dead of exposure and thirst. His hands still clutched his Survival Kit, as though to draw strength from it.

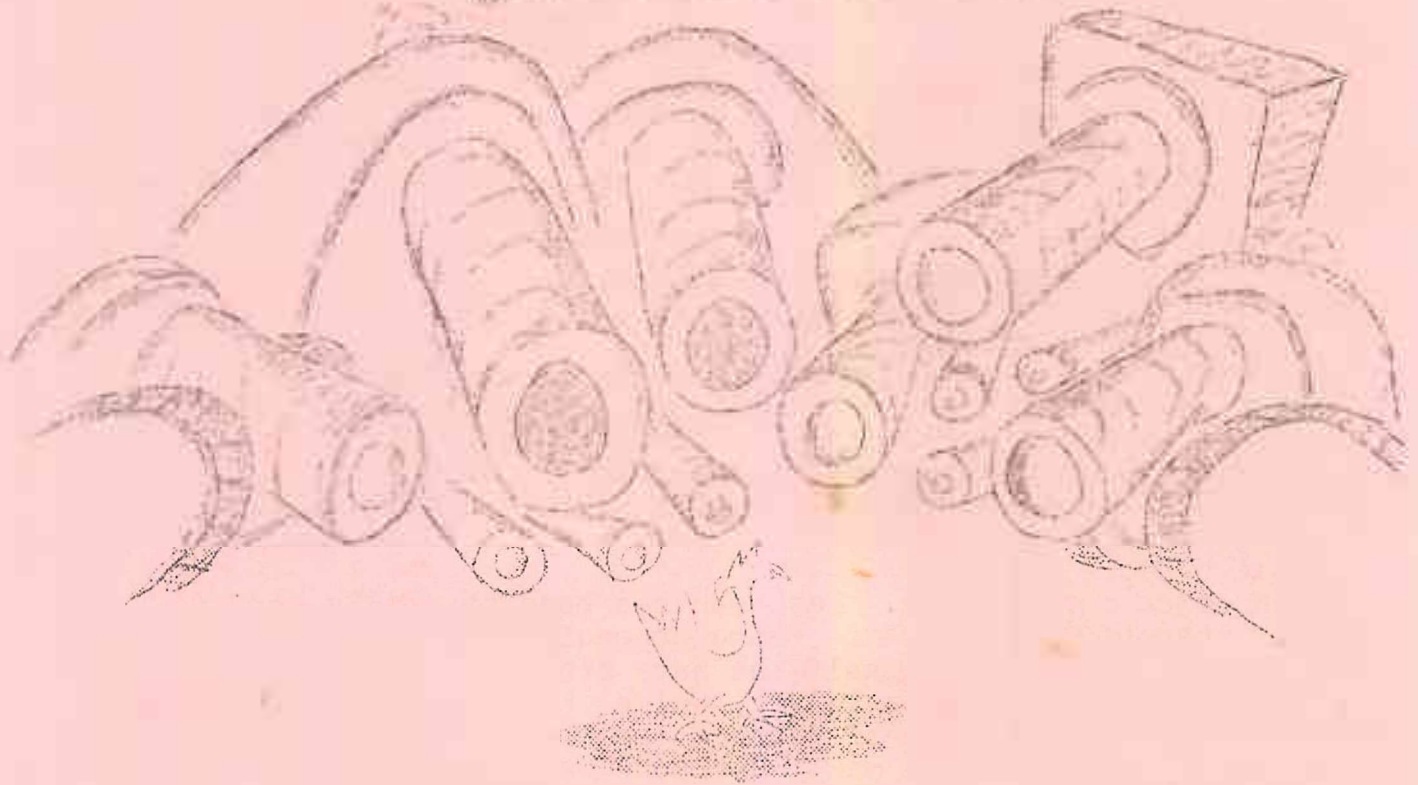
#### LETTER SEXSHUN

This isa fan letter to neopine & i demand it to be printed. Deer bill;; wel I red yor fanzine and thought it was exelent, especaly that story by Burbie which had me laghing like crazy. And boy the pkturs were god to. I tel you I have seldum red such a magazine that had ever- ything and I mean evertig. Gosh it had humor and laghter and gayity and solemnes and serusness and was full of dier predicttuns of things to cum of cours I meen Cyres Condros story abot the man with the big brane. Hell Cy, hes not dea, dont ever think so for a minit--hes just sleeping or fakeing if you ask me. Dont think hes not alive any more becaus that would be a fatell mistack of you ask me. I red somewhere about thees writers---they dont die they just sleep and o boy befor the yarn is over they wake up and there is hell to pay i meen really hell to pay. Dam rite.

uirb

(Masque, Fapa 45)

# The Wingless Rooster



So they began to study the wingless rooster carefully, from all angles. At first it was apparent that he had no wings and after four days of diligent analysis it became obvious that he had no wings.

The Findings Committee wrote up a 130-page report which in detail described the rooster. It gave 26 reasons or theories explaining his lack of wings. The report went on to say that he was just an ordinary rooster with the normal instincts of his species except that he was wingless.

As soon as the report was published, trickles of European scientists began to arrive. They wanted to see for themselves this oddment of nature. A number of tests were devised. None of them bothered the rooster. In fact he seemed to enjoy most of them, especially the ones which tested his food and sex drives. This left them more puzzled than before.

Knots of baffled scientists gathered day and night in the vast research labs. Amid odors of thousands of gallons of black coffee thousands of theories were brought forth. Were the birds developing into wingless beings preparatory to taking over earth? Mutating, as it were, into a higher type? Trading their wings for another organ? But close scrutiny had not uncovered any new organs. Therefore the trade must be an intellectual one. They set up IQ tests for him. He came out no better or worse than the rooster control group. This did not ease their minds. On the contrary, dismay and fear began to settle about them ...



perhaps the rooster was so smart he could hide his high intelligence from them. Hide it because of humans who would slay him and his kind before the chickens could revolt in force. Perhaps he was but the vanguard of fowldom.

They set up ESP tests and the rooster failed to show any trace of unusual perceptions. Now they began to fear for the existence of humanity. They had the prickly feeling that the rooster was studying them.

This rooster, to all intents and purposes, was an ordinary rooster except that he was wingless. This was almost irrefutable proof that he was not an ordinary rooster. It was sinister. Not only was he not an ordinary but he was so far above them in intelligence and perception that he could convince them, the most highly trained men in the land, that he was just an ordinary rooster.

The word went around --- Destroy this super being, this crafty entity. Destroy him now! Before he destroys us! But it must be done quickly. The very first blow must be fatal, lest he retaliate with unthinkable reprisals. A simple wring of the neck? Hardly. Starvation? No.

At the first tightening of a hand around his neck he might suddenly display incredible strength and make his escape. If they tried to starve or poison him he might refuse food and begin to draw energy by tapping the fabric of space.

Who would say what nameless forces he controlled?

They kept him in a chamber with lead walls 18 feet thick while they assembled the greatest panoply of death-dealing instruments in time of peace. Flame-throwers, anti-aircraft guns (he might soar unexpectedly on jets), poison gas, machine guns, rockets, artillery, guided missiles.

Came D-Day.

The armed forces came. Each man had been carefully screened for security reasons. Tight radio beams connected all branches of the service. In the nearby ocean half the navy stood by. One hundred fighter planes stood by, engines idling, while their pilots lounged nearby, cracking jokes in the face of death. The whole proving ground area was a mass of machines and men. Everyone was tight-lipped. Cigarettes were being thrown away half-smoked.

The rooster was placed in the target circle. He strutted about, pecking at the few blades of grass growing there. They were amazed at his courage.

In the sky a single plane circled overhead. No one knew, but it was whispered that it carried the Bomb, and if all else failed....

At the given word, all weapons were brought to bear on the rooster. He ignored them. Jaws were agape at his insouciance.

Suddenly he squawked, raced around a bit and dropped into the dirt, kicking a little. Not a weapon had been fired. Men, wearing asbestos suits, rushed recklessly to his twitching body. Examination showed that a small caliber projectile had entered his body where the left wing should have been and had not emerged from the other side.

He was dead.

Or so it seemed.

A small boy was brought over. Half-defiant, half-crying, he admitted he'd sneaked past the guards and had come in there to shoot go-phers as he often did. Seeing the rooster, he thought he'd try a long-range shot. Sonic detectors had picked up the sound of the rifle's discharge and sixteen tracer lines had been slapped on him instantly. Radar-equipped jeeps had run him down.

"Did I do anything wrong?" he whimpered. They told him no and let him go.



They let the rooster lie there for five days under constant surveillance of the F.B.I. Floodlights lit the scene at night. When it seemed apparent that he was really dead they threw him into a huge pit and dumped carloads of corrosives on him, then filled the pit with reinforced concrete and quarantined the territory for two years.

The world had been saved.

# DON WILSON

## HUMORIST

Some comments on the last EGO BEAST...

When one is speaking of the Banning segment of fandom, one first makes a decision. You, that is. You must hinge your remarks on one or the other choice. You must proceed with the assumption that Don Wilson and Howard Miller are one and the same, being but two facets of an odd entity, or you can assume that they are two separate entities, one odd, one even. This second assumption is the one I will make for the purpose of this article. In some future article I will make the other assumption, to prove that I am impartial as all getout.

Before I go further into the matter, let me nominate Don Wilson as the #1 Humorist of FAPA, even though many of my loyal followers will protest this. His nine ranting pages on the subject of his severing all links with fandom were a source of much mirth to me. What fine timing. That punch line of his "It is a matter of complete indifference to me" is a classic. And its constant repetition, in the form of variations on a theme, gave an overall sense of high humor that was worthy of a better medium than FAPA.

Wilson is Our Comedian. Ah, that disconnected article that started out telling us what to expect, then throwing in three pages of irrelevant matter that built the suspense up to killing pitch--and the big question was, Could he do it? Could he live up to the take-off point he had generated so skilfully? This was a matter of suspense within suspense; the first time I've seen it successfully done since Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen from Verona. It marked Wilson as a master of contrapuntal humor and places him high above my petty claim to being a humorist (not that I've ever claimed this). The man is priceless. "It is a matter of the utmost unimportance to me." I loved it all.

Let me also compliment Howard Miller on being an astute editor. By what black magic did he get Wilson to pen this masterpiece? I doubt if we could understand how cleverly he molded Wilson to his will, even if he chose to tell us. The seeds of greatness are in Howard Miller. Now, supposing that Wilson has withdrawn from the fan publishing picture, perhaps Miller can blossom forth in full glory, as he could have done long ago were it not that his inexplicable friendship for Wilson hindered him. Of course Wilson may not be finished, in spite of what he has said.

What a strange friendship. Wilson often writing both publicly and privately of the utter hopelessness of Miller as a fan, a friend, a human being. And Miller gravely accepting the words without ire.

Our boy Wilson, master of the meaningless snapper. "Any way you look at it, never get involved with these pro editors. They'll screw you every time." Silly, isn't it? At first glance it seems to be without sense. Further study proves the validity of the first glance. Wonderful? I think so. In the hands of the master those

words take on new connotations of stupidity. You aspirants after the #1 Humorist's crown can do worse than to study this masterpiece of fecklessness.

Perhaps now that Don Wilson has declared his freedom from the Serious, Constructive stage he will improve. Now, he, as Laney and Burbee, knows that fan publishing and fanning in general is just a hobby. He realizes now (or at least is desperately trying to convince himself) that fandom is not a way of life. He is at last taking the sensible or Aristotelian point of view that no part of fandom is important. And now that he, like ftl, has quit fandom (except that it took Laney 130 pages to tell everybody about it) perhaps he can now settle down to enjoying fandom as a pleasant diversion. I wonder if he can stand the pace.

Goodbye, Don, feckless fan. Hello, Don, how does it feel to be out?

# Sneary meets BURBEE... AGAIN!

Some of you more fortunate tykes may have read the enchanting article "Sneary Meets Burbee...and Fandom Stands Still." It appeared in Shangri-La Affaires (the Defunct Fanzine) in March 1947. For the benefit of those of you who did not read the article, I will reproduce it here through special permission of the editor.

## SNEARY MEETS BURBEE AND FANDOM STANDS STILL

The fabulous Rick Sneary visited the LASFS one Thursday night not long ago. The following is an excerpt from a letter he wrote me six weeks later. It took him that long to regain his poise.<sup>7</sup>

"By the way, your looks suprressed me no end. I pictured you as a nother Daugherty. (Stop screeming.) Really, that is the way you sounded. (I might add I nearly died wondering what you looked like that night. I didn't know you when you came in and when Gus said who you were, you were seting where I couldn't see you. So all evening I was left wondering what you would finaly look like.) You really long more the Tucker type. And a grate deel like what I thought fans should look like before I meet any and foudn the locked like ever-tthing elce."

I think you will all agree that this was history of the highest caliber. Two giant fans meeting, their agile tendrils locking. ("Agile tendrils locking" a phrase stolen by me from Cyrus B Condra, who stole the phrase in turn from Theodore Sturgeon's POKER FACE. And where did Sturgeon steal it from? Maybe he created it.)

This fey meeting occurred this one evening. We went over to Slan Shack and played a miserable game of chess. Then Sneary vanished in the direction of South Gate and I went home. We communicated spasmodically through the medium of the U. S. Mail in the intervening months before our next meeting occurred.

Saturday afternoon, the 11th of September, 1948, I was touring the city in search of Animal Comics (which contain Albert and Pogo adventures) and was in a book-magazine-record store at 24th and Vermont. I had my little boy with me, and we were both searching the comic-book files. I went to the back of the store to search further, and this character came up between the towering shelves. I looked at him. Sort of looks like Sneary, I thought. But of course it isn't



Sneary. I was about to say Hello Sneary when this character looked at me and through me--no slightest bit of recognition. I withdrew into my fannish shell and said nothing.

A little later, I noticed this same character pawing through a pile of comic books. Where did you get those? I asked. Up there, he answered, pointing to rows and stacks above our heads, accessible only by a nearby ladder. I mounted the ladder and searched through the stacks.

After a time I left the place, with my four books and six comic books. My little boy went with me with his 15 comic books (cut down from his original selection of 40 titles).

I drove on down to 62nd and Broadway and made a rich strike in Animal Comics. Got four titles I lacked. I glanced at the stack of stf--not much there except late stuff. The lady in charge (a genial character indeed) mentioned that a fellow had been in there earlier that day, looking at stf. Said he'd mentioned that he'd come in from South Gate. South Gate! I said. Sneary! Migod, I said, that must have been Sneary I saw back at 24th and Vermont.

Imagine this, I said to myself. I was face to face with the Sage of South Gate. That fabulous man Rick Sneary, who writes letters to Startling for 4¢ a word! I had him in my clutches and let him slip away. Further thought on the matter produced a sinister implication. Sneary, the President of FAPA, and Burbee, the Vice-President of FAPA, meeting each other and not speaking! Does this presage evil days for FAPA? If the Pres and VP will not speak to each other, what will happen to the organization? The two top men not on speaking terms! This is a horrifying revelation, is it not?

The reverberations of this fantastic meeting will resound down the murky halls of fandom for ten thousand years to come.

Instantly upon reaching home I wrote Sneary a card. A few days later I got his reply. Yes, it had been Sneary!

Boggs! Laney! Are you there? It is your duty to step into this terrible breach...bring us together again, make us say we're sorry and make us shake hands in true American fashion, so that this debacle will not smash FAPA and perhaps the rest of fandom with the exception of the NFFF (which is not a fan organization anyway).

## STFWAY OF LIFE?

I went to him with a question. After all, I thought, he's been reading science-fiction for fifteen or more years. He's never seen a fanzine, never written a letter to a magazine, and does not even know there is a fandom of the sacred writings. Further, he is intelligent, having risen to a place of importance in a hard job, and has usually been near the top in any task he has undertaken. Also, though it may not be to his credit, he has a high I.Q.

As I said, I went to him with a question, but first I gave him a build-up. "Art," I said, "you've been reading science-fiction for a good many years now, haven't you?"

"Yeah," he said.

"You've read a couple of thousand stories by this time."

"No doubt," he said.

"Well," I said, "do you think science-fiction has a Mission?"

He gave me an odd look. "What?" he asked, not unreasonably.



(I told you he didn't know about fans). I repeated my question. He gave me a down-the-nose look so I said, "God knows it's not a question I would ask, but there are people who'd be interested in your answer. How about it? Has science-fiction got a Mission?"

"Yes," he said. "To entertain."

"What do you think of it as a Force for Good?"

"Bullshit," he said.

"Do you think it will help us to build a Brave New World?"

"With a story?"

"Why, yes, don't you believe that science-fiction is significant?"

"Oh," he said, "it's entertaining sometimes."

"What do you think of this new branch of psychology?"

"Dianetics? I'm inclined to be suspicious of panaceas."

"Do you condemn it?"

"I haven't read the book, so I've got an open mind about it."

"In other words," I said, "you are not going to confuse an open mind with a hole in the head."

"Right," he said.

"Now," I said, "Do you believe that we readers of science-fiction are ready for the stars?"

"Come again?"

"Are we ready to reach the stars?"

"You mean in spaceships?"

"Yes."

"Well, we'll be ready soon as we have spaceships."

"I mean are we ready in a cosmic manner of speaking."

"Bullshit," he said.

.....  
EXCERPTS FROM

# FAPA FOR - EVER

She asked then if I liked poetry. I said no. So she said she would read me a poem I would like. I declined with thanks. So she said, "Oh, but you'd like this one." "No," I said, "I don't like poetry. Especially fan poetry, which practically always stinks."

"You'll like this one," she said.

"No, I'd rather not hear it. I don't like poetry."

"I'll read it to you."

She had a copy of one of Dale Hart's mags. When I saw that it was inevitable, I had to give in and enjoy it. I said I would read the poem myself, and took the mag and read this sonnet by Sidney Johnson. I said I didn't like it too well.

"What kind of fellow is Sidney Johnson?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said. "I've never heard of him before."

"How old is he?" she asked.

"I don't know. I don't even know the man. Never heard of him in my life."

"Do you think he has a fine mind?"

"Well, that's hard to say, from reading one sonnet and that not a very good one."

"What kind of fellow is he?"

"Who?"

"Sidney Johnson."

"Oh," I said, "you mean Sidney Johnson!"

"Yes," she said. "What kind of fellow is he?"

"Oh," I said, "he's not a bad fellow---now, I guess."

"How old is he?"

"Thirty-eight."

"How do you know?" asked Betty.

"His brother told me."

"Who's his brother?"

"Why, Johan P. Johnson. Teaches English at LACC. Used to be a great friend of mine."

"Are you sure he's 38?"

"Well, that's just a guess. He might be 42."

"Oh, no! He's not more than 40!"

"Well," I said, casting a sidelong glance at my host, busily cutting stencils a yard or so away, "I don't see why it matters."

"It matters a great deal," declared his bride. "I may want to marry him some day."

"Oh. Well, I guess he's around 42."

"You said 38."

"So I did."

"Come on, Burbee, give a girl a break. He's 38, isn't he?"

"Welllllllll, come to think of it, he is."

"That isn't too old, is it?"

"I guess not."

"Tell me about him---what is his philosophy?"

"He had a strange philosophy. I guess he was a black sheep. Of course all my information is 7 years old, so he might have changed and be entirely different now."

"What did he do?"

"Oh, the family educated him. Brought him up to be a dentist. Paid some \$2000 to teach him the dental profession; After graduation he went into the business and after three years of work he'd paid them back and saved up quite a sum of money. So he thought he'd take a little vacation. He went all over the world."

"Where did he go?"

"He wound up in India, where he ran out of money and he got a job of some sort. Maybe it was in Tibet---I never listened very well when Johan told me about it."

"Johan," murmured Betty, "who is that?"

"That's his brother who teaches English at LACC."

"Oh, and how did he know all this?"

"Well, after all, even black sheep write letters home now and then. He wasn't completely estranged, you know."

"And how long did he stay away?"

"Eight years."

"But how old is he now?"

"38."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, not positive. Let me see, I will figure it out. He got out of college at the age of 22, was a dentist for 3 years, was gone for 8 years, and that was 7 years ago---that makes him 40."

"Oh no!"

"Well," I said, "I happen to know he is 38, so my figures are wrong. They were only approximate, anyhow. Ah, yes," I added reflectively, "he thought he would take a little vacation and so he went to Paris." I drank a little beer.

"And how long was he gone?"

"8 years."

Betty laughed. "He sounds like quite a guy. What does he look like?"

"Well, I never saw him."

"Yes, but was he tall, dark, blond or what?"

"I don't know."

"He's tall, isn't he?"

"Well, yes, now that you mention it. I'd say he was about 73 inches tall, weighed about 170 pounds of lean, hard sinew."

"I thought so," said Betty.

"Had a lot of strange experiences in India. Once, while climbing up a rickety rope ladder while ascending Mount Kachima in southern India---right near Tibet, you know---he made the mistake of looking down. The lines of perspective pulled him down to the valley floor, three thousand feet straight down. He lost his head. He clung weakly to the rope and messed himself. Yes, he clung there, weaker than beer with ice in it and messed himself. Said he almost died there."

"Why," said Betty, "none of that shows in his poetry."

"Yes, that I must admire him for," I said. "A man like that, who knows at least fifteen native dialects, refrains from putting one word in a poem. That shows great restraint, which is the basis of artistry. Of course, there is a bit of Urdu philosophy in lines 8 and 9, but it is all to the good."

"I didn't notice that," said Betty. "I haven't read as much as you have." ...

"Burbie," said Betty. "How many children have you got?"

"He has five children," said my host.

"Is that right, Burbie?"

"Well," I said. "I guess that's right. Let's see, one each by two girls I should have married, and three by Isabelle."

"You're married to her, aren't you?"

"In the sight of God, yes."

"But what about those other girls? Why did you get them pregnant?"

"Oh, I don't know. I thought it would be a good joke, I guess."

"I can't understand a man who will do that."

"Well," I said, "women are pretty hard to understand, too. For example, when I brought home a girl I had got pregnant, Isabelle refused to take her in. I merely wanted to take care of the girl while she was that way, but Isabelle wouldn't hear of it. That seems like a very strange attitude for a woman to take against a member of her own sex."

"But why did you get her that way?"

"Oh, I was thinking of something else at the time. You know how it is. But hell, Sidney Johnson had fifteen children, so I'm a piker beside him."

"I thought you said he was single."

"Well, he was. He had five or six native wives. But you can't expect a native marriage to hold in the courts of this country."

"No," said Betty. "I suppose not."

# .....

## COUNTER = COCKWISE

You might, said the sage, compare the love life of a man with the business or profession of racing horses. The racing man has what is known in his and other fields as a string. He loves the business of racing. Even though racing horses should not strain or be forced to violent effort, he races all he can, compatible with his abilities in



that line. And naturally, Nature has endowed some men with the ability to maintain bigger and better strings than their neighbors. The racing man, then, loves the Game. To him it is the Prime Subject.

His string is usually divided into four classes, though we will discuss a hypothetically fifth class later on. First of all, he has a few platers. They are called variously, claiming horses, claimers, skates. The term "mount" is used almost exclusively by jockeys when they speak of the horses they ride, but you might expect to see the term used indiscriminately here. These platers are cheap horses, oftentimes mere spavined hacks. The sportsman picks them up out of the claiming race, where any qualified person may buy or "claim" a horse that is run. They are a sort of pickup. Casuals. They do not cost much. He has no great attachment for them. More often they are just fill-ins between the bigger events of his life. He may run them a few times in some of the numerous opportunities he has to choose from, and eventually loses them to somebody else via the claiming route. He expects to, in fact, and often hopes to. He is not particularly interested in them as individuals--too many just like them, no better or worse. Sometimes, though, these cheaper items not only pay their own way but help support his better class stuff.

He also has a few mounts of a somewhat higher grade. He does not risk these in the open market, viz., the claiming races. He watches them more closely, since they usually have more class than the general run of stuff and might easily develop into something better. They generally have been better bred or have by their own efforts raised themselves to the higher bracket. They are not run as often as the cheaper stuff, and their efforts can generally be depended upon to be better. Their style and technique is far above average.

The stake horse is the third classification. Generally the small operator will have only one or two of these. These are the ones that he goes all out for. The other ones are just buildups for these. If financial reverses force him to give up part of his string, he will usually attempt to hang onto these horses, giving them up only as a last resort. If he has something really choice, he is constantly fending off prospective buyers, who often eye his mount with greedy eyes and sometimes cause him no end of worry, since he feels that in a weak moment he might possibly part with this choice stuff. Oddly enough, for all his care and expense, he often gets little or no money out of the stake horses. It costs more to enter them in races, and, comparatively speaking, they often do not make as much as the cheaper stuff. But he thinks they are better and can seldom be convinced otherwise, even when poor performances should tell him the truth.

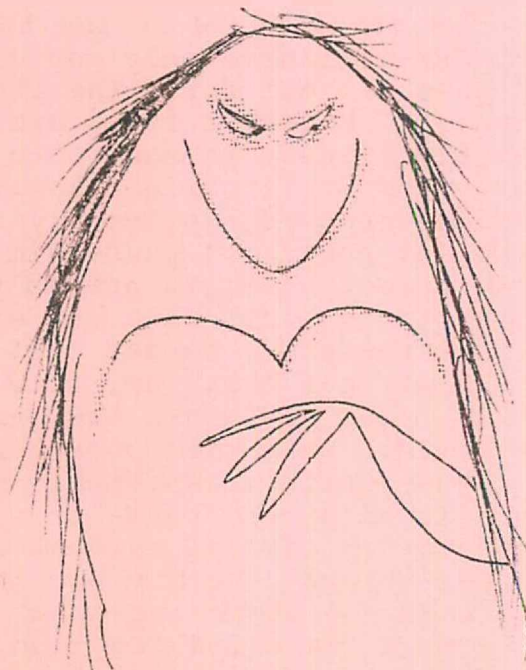
The fourth classification takes in the younger stuff--the stuff that is often too young to race or, being old enough, is being held in reserve for special reasons because the owners think it is capable of better things. He may own these himself and spend a lot of time grooming them and observing them, yet never throw a professional leg over them when the chips are down. Not until they are ripe. The time must be right or he will not bring them out. Sometimes he keeps them under wraps and dreams roseate dreams of what they will do when he eventually brings them out and runs them. Most of the time they do not deliver, but he is human and so he dreams about it.

So, it follows then, said the sage, that every man should have a string. And most of us do, even if only mentally. The day-dreamed strings are always of exceptionally high caliber, containing fillies in the lineup that would ordinarily never be found in any one string. But we should all have our strings. Good, strong, headily resilient flesh. A warning here, though. Do not become too attached to any of these mounts, no matter how well they ride for you at first, or how promising they may seem. Anything can happen, and usually does, in this mad business. At first they seem to bring great rewards for your outlay,

and have cute little mannerisms that endear them to your heart. Be callous to their blandishments, since to grow to fond of your mounts is not good for business. You are likely to squander your portion on them should they later take a turn for the worse.

And if that should happen, it is quite possible that in holding onto this seemingly choice item, you will lose, gradually, piece by piece, the rest of your string, and eventually lose your choice item and be left without a mount. For a time things will be desolate indeed, and you will probably not even care to rush after another string, though the makings lie in great plenty around and about you.

Now we speak of the fifth class. Here the analogy is not perfect. Here is proof that the horse-racing business is run more sensibly than life. Imagine, if you can, the racing commission giving a man a mount --at his request, mind you--and forcing him to enter it only, mounting but the one filly for the rest of his or its life. He is forced, brutally and without thought of deprivation, to forsake all others. In other words, he is not permitted to have a string. He must pin all his hopes on this one horse, which he thinks at first is a stake horse. He enters into a contract to keep this horse, feed it, care for it, placate it. For this he thinks he is entitled to certain considerations, which is why he signed the contract. But! These very same considerations are not specifically mentioned in this ambiguous and misleading document. He only imagines, fondly, that he will receive these considerations, and he later learns to his bitter sorrow that the mount itself is seldom in a mood to do other than abide by the written letter of this heinous contract. The mount moreover, but contractual right, can refuse to allow him to acquire other mounts, though the mount itself does not allow itself to be ridden more than once a week, and often much less. And literally never, after the signing of the contract, does this mount run other than a half-hearted and uninspiring race. Why, any green and untried filly out in the paddock can do much better. So, the poor man, who loves his racing more than anything, and considers it to be his prime subject, finds himself restricted and bound in and pent up until he feels veritably imprisoned in a cage of his own making.



Why it is a truly ghastly picture to contemplate, is it not? Can you imagine, anywhere else in the wide world, the existence of so unfair a system? But, thank

God, the racing commission imposes no such limitations on any of their fellow men. They are men of logic, governed by logic; men of high principals guided by the golden rule.

The glue factory won't take my horse. Do any of you guys want it?

.....



# the race of fugg-head is Legion

Our local boy G. Gordon Dewey answered his office phone the other day in his writer's agent capacity. The woman on the other end asked him if he would publish her book. He explained that he would read it and if he thought it salable would try to market it for 10% commission. She thought this over and said she would drive right over with her book manuscript. He told her it was about 5 o'clock and he was thinking of shutting up shop and going home but she insisted that she was coming right over so he waited for her to drive in from North Hollywood--8 miles. Upon her arrival, she asked him if he would publish her book. He explained that he would read it and if he judged it salable he would try to market it for a commission of 10%. She thought this over and seemed to think it satisfactory. All this time Dewey noticed that she had a thin manila envelope in her lap--hardly space for a book-length manuscript. "How long is your book?" he asked.

"Nine hundred words," she said.

"That isn't long enough to make a book," said Dewey.

"It isn't?"

"No, that would be a filler in a magazine."

"Well, if it's not long enough, I can add a couple of paragraphs. How long a book would that make?"

"Oh," said Dewey, "about four pages."

She appeared crestfallen about this. "How can I tell how many words my story has to have to make a book?"

"Go buy a book about the size you want yours to be," said Dewey, "and count the words."

She thanked him for his help and advice and went away.

The race of fugghead is legion.

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## A COINAGE FOR FANDOM

He slid a half ack across the counter, took his mimeo correction fluid and fifteen fops in change and went home to publish his fanzine. I want that scene to be a reality. I want it all to come true. I want a coinage for fandom.

After all, we read science-fiction. We have conquered space--in our daydreams. We understand that the fabric of time itself can be coiled, or overlapped, or branched, and can be traversed backward and forward if one has the properly shining, weirdly glowing machine and an old professor to run it from this end. No use going on for pages, as I could--you can think up a dozen likely reasons offhand yourself. We are without doubt an important group of citizens of tomorrow in a world of today.

Important people need a coinage of their own. So far we have condescended to use the coinage of the country. But there has always been a notable shortage of the country's coinage passing through our hands. In fact it has been the plaint of fans all over the nation that money is so terribly hard to come by, and even harder to hang



on to. With the plan I am about to set forth, this big stumbling block in the path of fan progress will be removed forever.

We will coin our own money.

First off, some responsible fan organization with responsible people at the helm will be entrusted with the coining of our money. Right away we think of the NFFF. And right away we reject the NFFF. But eventually we come back to the NFFF. We admit it stinks. We admit that the officers thereof are unable to decipher English as written and probably English as spoken, and that projects undertaken by one officer may be entirely unknown of by the other officers, even should the said officers live in the same city and often visit each other. But these and other objections are swept away before the overwhelmingly convincing argument: "The NFFF is a national organization!" This may seem like a senseless argument to you, especially if you have some sense, but it is all we need to convince us of the NFFF's fitness to coin our money.

The NFFF appoints a Mint Division, headed by some member skilled in recognizing various types of coins and currency. One who can, by feel alone, distinguish a cent from a nickel, and who is fully aware that dimes and other silver pieces have milled edges. This eminently qualified member can appoint as many helpers as he needs. He is empowered to print currency. Since we know he will be sadly equipped at the beginning (but only at the beginning!) the first money he prints will be mimeographed. He will mimeograph everything, from fractional currency on up to the largest denominations. He will, as honorarium, be permitted to keep one bill for every twenty he mimeos.

A large supply of this fan currency will be sent to each fanzine publisher registered with the NFFF. The fanzine publishers can aid in the distribution of the stuff by paying top rates for material written by fans. For each fan article they will pay a minimum of 200 units per page, and of course nothing but their own critical judgment will keep them from paying 1,000 or more units for a particularly pleasing contribution.

The NFFF will also distribute large sums to the winners and runners-up in all fan polls, and staggering amounts to each member of the NFFF. In this manner, most fans in due time will be possessed of quite large sums. And now it is time to make the federal government see the strict utility of our scheme. Prominent fan writers will be commissioned by the NFFF to write, at fat rates, letters to Congress informing them in a nice way that these citizens of tomorrow are printing their own money, and while it may be in defiance of certain existing federal laws, one must realize that fans are the star-begotten and should not be forced to live miserable existences such as other geniuses and great people have been forced to live throughout history.

You can be sure that Congress will quickly see the point and will speed bills through to further the happy plan, and before long fan money will be in circulation in the general public's hands, too. Private fans will not be permitted to print money, for this would have a tendency to ruin the national economy. Of course, any fan granted a license to mimeo money could do so, provided he sends, in bundles of 5,000 units, his entire production to the NFFF's Chief Mint Master. The bundles must be tightly wrapped, and bear the legend "FAN MONEY TO THE TUNE OF 5,000 ROCKS. POSTAGE FREE." You see, the fan is rewarded for his labor by getting a postal franking privilege besides one bill for every twenty he produces.

Since legal fan currency, being mimeographed, would be easy to counterfeit, each NFFF member, on being sworn in to his sacred status as a member, would solemnly promise not to mimeo any money but to earn it honestly by writing fan articles and/or winning a fan poll and/or

publishing a fanzine or just plain being a serious, constructive fan.

And you can be sure that all fans would be NFFF members, for "The NFFF is a national organization!"

When all this comes to pass, each and every fan will easily be able to keep himself in comfort, with all the finer things of life surrounding him, such as Niagara mimeographs, mint copies of all esoteric publications, membership cards from all the fan clubs, reams of fine typing paper, a silent typewriter, and sheet upon sheet of stamps. And all these things and more will come to him if he will now and then sit down to his typer and negligently toss off an intellectual article (titled maybe THERE IS NO GOD) for the harassed editor of some fanzine.

Never again will we be confronted with the spectacle of an impecunious fan. The NFFF will give 10,000 Acks to each new member, just for joining. No dues will be charged, for new money is easily mimeographed.

Later, coinage can begin, when enough money has been turned out so that mint machinery can be purchased.

Since fan money will be based purely on intellectuality, without the need of sordid silver or gold, bills can be produced in vast quantities, but some coins should be struck for the delight of coin collectors, of which there are many in fandom as well as the Outside World.

I suggest that the money be based on acks. An ack corresponds to the U. S. dollar. There will be half-acks, quarter acks, five-ack bills, 10-ack bills (also called timebinders), 50-ack notes (half-tendrils), 100-ack bills (called tendrils), all paper money, at first.

When coins are struck, there will be the fap, corresponding to the U. S. cent, 100 to the ack. There will be the five-fap piece, known as the burb, the ten-fap piece, known as the towner, and the half-ack or fifty-fap coin can bear the nickname evans.

The designs and patterns can be decided upon by the NFFF Mint Master and his cabinet, which he appoints subject to approval by FAPA, S.F.S., and V.A.P.A.

I leave design suggestions to the Chief, save one, which I suggest now. Listening, Higgs? The one-ack coin should bear the head in profile of our #1 fan on the obverse, on a field of fanzines, with the legend In Lens We Trust. The reverse, a mimeo operated by a phallic symbol, a motto From Stf to the Stars, and One Ack.

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(in WILD HAIR #3, Cyrus B. Condra wrote a series of sketches of the assembled one-shotters. When he came to himself, Burbee took over...)

This is Burbee taking over. Condra was just about to start writing about THE MAN CONDRAS, and I thought it would be better if I took over and said all the nice things myself. Coming from another person, they'd sound so much better. That's what I told Condra. He didn't believe me, or something, so I called our amiable bulldozer Rotsler over, and the amiable bulldozer dragged Condra away and at this very moment is offering to bet Condra that Condra's head is harder than an eggshell. "I'll bet a dollar," I can hear the amiable bulldozer saying, "that I can't no matter how hard I press, crush your head like an eggshell." "I'm not a betting man!" Condra is shouting.

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# Day After Victory

He woke that morning (it was nearer noon) with the definite feeling that some nauseating creature had slept all night in his mouth. He rose and his head hammered in a subtle rhythm that jarred him to his toes, etc. Anyhow, to put it briefly and to save space, he had a terrific hangover. A soft melody hummed in the air. Somebody's radio, he thought.

It seems that the day previous had been Victory Day, or some such thing and had been proclaimed a holiday by the President. In fact, if the President had had any foresight in such matters, he would have also declared the day after a holiday for such people as Joe, because Joe had partaken rather unwisely of liquor. Besides, he worked in a war plant and who the devil would be building war planes now?

He sat there, and perhaps we can forgive Joe if he did not notice the change that had been wrought. He reached down and braved the storm raging inside his skull. His slippers were generally to be found in this area. He couldn't find them. Suddenly he noticed they were on his feet. Oh well, he must have put them there absentmindedly. He got up and started for the bathroom. As he entered the room a soft melody started up from some unseen source. It had no recognizable tune, but was strangely soothing to his jangled nerves. As he picked the toothbrush off the rack he was somewhat jarred from his hangoverish aplomb by the way it twisted out of his hand and popped into his mouth. He stood there wondering just how drunk he might still be as the brush efficiently brushed away, using the stroke and the dentifrice recommended by 4 out of 5 dentists. He did not even start as a fine spray of water washed his mouth out, and after he'd gotten enough control to spit it out he got something of a shock to notice that a pleasing mouthwash was being delicately sprayed inside his mouth. His amazement was pretty well worn out by the time he noticed that the toothbrush was now a razor and was shaving him, applying shaving cream before and rinsing and applying scented lotion afterward.

"Oh, well..." said Joe. Which certainly showed that he could take it. He left the bathroom as soon as he could, only just evading the tentacles that reached out for him from the shower. Joe caught on quick and had the idea he might be given a cold shower whether or not he fancied it.

In the kitchen he smelled ham and eggs and fresh coffee and the stink revolted him. As he entered the door, his chair slid out and caught him. The extensible arms shoved a pick-me-up at him and then began feeding him properly seasoned ham and eggs and occasional swigs of coffee, black...

"This," said Joe, "is the acme, if not the pinnacle." He relaxed and enjoyed it.

Breakfast finished, the chair walked with him into the living room where the softly playing music that had played the whole time now became strongly accented and martial. A soothing voice (so pleasant it must have been a voder voice) began to give him directions for setting-up exercises. "The hell with it," he grunted, so his chair dumped him out. He lay there on the floor, his patience gone. Having gathered up



enough energy to get mad, he rose to do battle and the chair kicked him--not hard, but a stinger. "That does it!" growled Joe and waded in. Two minutes later, Joe, two bruises on his jaw and with shins decidedly dented, was doing setting-up exercises with the chair looking on complacently.

Now he was whisked into the bathroom and he went willingly. The cold shower jarred him out of his daydreaming mood and he began to observe things a little more clearly. It seems that the furnished, all of it, was endowed with a set of special functions. It seems also that they had minds of their own and his own feeble will was just that, feeble, against them.

He permitted himself to be rubbed down briskly--he did admit it made him feel better--and then he dressed. At the door he stopped, but was edged gently out and the door closed behind him. He almost thought he heard a feminine voice (he had no woman living with him at the time) say words of farewell, just before the door'd closed. His mouth was damp. The door kissed him dutifully.

All right, then. He was out of the house. He might as well get in the car and go down to work. Then he noticed that he was already at the garage. Looking down, he perceived that he'd been standing on a moving strip. Now the garage doors opened silently and his car backed out. Or was it a car? It was streamlined and glossy. But what was more, there seemed no way to get into it. Furthermore, it had no windows. It seemed a solid black egg. But with a soft click a door opened and he stepped in. He sank into soft deep cushions and fumbled for the wheel. This was not necessary, for the car was already moving down the boulevard with some speed, having backed out and gotten itself on the street the moment he stepped into it. "You're late, sir, we'll take to the air," said a soft voice at his elbow, interrupting the flow of soft music that was still somewhere about. So they took to the air. The city dropped away with alarming speed, only to come right back up again, and Joe noticed that he was parked neatly in the parking lot at work. Next to him another car had landed, folding its helicopter vanes and tucking them under the shell like a beetle.

The other man spoke first. "You too, eh?"

"Yep," said Joe. He noticed that the other's face sported bits of adhesive tape, as though he'd fought his toothbrush-atomizer-razor--- unsuccessfully, for his face was clean shaven.

Others were arriving every moment. Joe and his friend went toward the main plant building. A group of men and women was clustered there, chattering about their morning's experiences, all of which had a strange similarity. All sorts of theories were being advanced. Joe stood on the sidelines drinking it all in, not contributing to any of the arguments.

At length, the thing struck him with the suddenness of a slap. He saw it all now. It was clear and ridiculously simple, once you could accept the basis.

This was the day after Victory. The war was over. This was the Post-War period.

All right, then, this was the Post-War world the adwriters had been gloating about for years.

Somebody else might be able to explain the why and wherefore--- something about mass hypnotism, mass delusion---the combined forces of all minds of everyone everywhere, deluded into believing the adwriter's goddam lies about the post-war world---all these little pictures conjured up out of ad-writer's brains and printed day after day in the newspapers, the magazines and blatted out on the radio---they'd solidified now, brought into existence by the frantic desires of the people who'd believed in them thoroughly and wholeheartedly because they'd wanted to bad enough...

Joe, sticking a cigarette into his mouth, hardly noticed that it lit itself.

The Post-War period! All sorts of luxuries---but evidently work was still with us. He didn't suppose he could use his car to go anywhere now---during working hours. He also surmised (and correctly) that his house would forcibly eject him if he attempted to enter it before quitting time.

The others had found some satisfactory answer for themselves, too, and were now intent upon convincing themselves for all time that their reason was the real one---so they wouldn't go nuts, of course.

It didn't matter, Joe knew, all the stuff was there to stay and it had to be accepted, and would be, since humans were human.

He flicked his cigarette away (it went out before it hit the pavement) and entered the factory, wondering what his eyes would behold in there.

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# AL ASHLEY, GALACTIC OBSERVER

Al Ashley sped through interstellar space. He did not glance casually at the viewplate for signs of enemy craft. There was no viewplate. His keen, alert eyes did not scan the instrument panel with its blinking tiny lights. There was no instrument panel. His swift, sure fingers did not toy idly but expertly with the controls of the space ship. There were no controls. There wasn't even a space ship.

Alone, clad in street clothes, without so much as an oxygen tank, Al Ashley sped through interstellar blackness.

"I knew I could do it if I put my mind to it," he said.

He skimmed past star clusters without slowing. Galaxies appeared ahead, loomed closer, and whirled past, and still Al Ashley sped on.

Any watchers who might have noted this lone figure fleeing through intergalactic space would have said: "Here is an intelligent being---with a purpose.

On both counts they would have been wrong.

On he sped, for perhaps half a cycle, and then he paused, hanging motionless in space (with respect to the dead sun Glomor).

He paused there in the midst of nothingness. It was silent there. In fact it was so quiet he could hear his blood pumping through his

arteries. He listened to it with the cold detachment of the superior being. He noticed and checked the fact that the blood rumbled through the arteries, while through the veins it swished.

It sure was quiet. It was so quiet he could hear himself think. This marvelous phenomenon lasted him for a number of years of vast amusement and pleasure, during which time he had at least fifteen ideas.

To hear himself thinking! Had it ever happened to anyone before? He took pleasure in listening to his thoughts. His brain, he noticed, had a special rhythm to it. A slow rhythm of one thought every 72 days.

"That's not very fast," said Al Ashley. "Well---of course it isn't fast. It's majestic and solemn and good showmanship."

Time passed while he hung there in space and thought his ~~thunderous~~ thoughts. Then, little half-ideas began to drift in to him. He began to remember Earth. "otten place, with all sorts of unnatural people running about. And now that he's left, there wasn't a single sane soul in the whole place.

But the grubbing bipeds did have one wonderful product---coffee. Ah, coffee...coffee...coffee...heavenly drug. It made a man feel like a king. It made him want a ten-cent cigar and a pink-eyed bulldog.

He evoked the picture of a cup of the celestial brew, laced well with chicory, pale with cream and the cup rimmed with yesterday's sugar---it was like a glimpse of the Paradise of the Prophet.

He quivered.

"Oh hell!" he moaned. "I'm going back! I'm going back!"

But he did not know which direction lay Earth. If he turned directly back on his trail---a 180 degree turn, he could probably have gotten fairly close, but he scorned this expedient as being too direct and therefore not to be considered.

For a moment he regretted that he hadn't brought along his Genuine Scout Knife, Commando Type, which he had gotten at the special bargain rate of 98¢ during a Gigantic Three Day Sale at Thrifty Drug Stores. With that knife he could have blazed his trail by hacking out hunks of vagrant planets and thus would have been able to retrace his course.

"Ah well," he sighed. There was nothing to do about it. "It isn't that I need coffee," he said. "I don't have to have it. It isn't necessary to my existence. It's---it's just that I can't do without it."

He sped on.

After another cycle had gone by, he looked at his watch. It said half-past four. "That must mean something," he said. But he couldn't decide what it did mean. At last he decided that it meant nothing. He was right.

By and by he saw a nice-looking little planet. He braked and landed on it. He saw approaching him a party of four people, two men and two girls.

"Hello," they said.

"Hello," wriggled Al.

"Who are you?" they asked.

"I am Al Ashley. I have come to civilize you and make you normal, the way I am."

"Ah, and how will you do it?"

"Simple," Al shrugged. "I will give you the use of fire, which you will call Fire. I will teach you to make and use the bow and arrow with which you may kill enemies from a distance. And when your technology is advanced enough, I will invent and pass on to you a



mechanical device known as the wheel."

They looked at each other in what he took for astonishment and awe.

"Come with us," they said. "You must see our city."

He went with them a short distance. They entered a little oval vehicle. It rose silently and sped to a city of spired buildings. Aircraft filled the air. "Atomic power," said his hosts. "Everything is run by atomic power, and most services are automatic and foolproof, but of course we are not perfect."

"Of course not," agreed Al.

"Will you teach us the marvels you say you know of?" they asked, with broad grins. "We are very humble and wish to know all."

"No," said Al Ashley. "You're too far behind technologically to ever catch up. You're not ready for the scientific know-how I wanted to give you. You're all so weighed down with complexes, phobias and fixations that you think you're well-integrated. I don't want to have anything to do with such unnatural people."

He shot off into space and left them, all four bellowing with laughter. Yes, he shot off and left them, and now they would never know the use of fire, the mechanical device known as the wheel and how to kill enemies from a distance.

Strangely, their laughter seemed to ring in his ears for parsecs. He shook his head. "Surface-thinkers, that's all they are," he said. "Strictly the emotional type."

By and by he met a shining Being in space. Al Ashley stopped his headlong pace (one almost could believe he was trying to flee from something---silly thought) and said, ingratiatingly, "You look like some sort of godlike personality, too." He wriggled in affability. "Well, I guess the universe is big enough for two of us."

The Being turned its gaze on him. "Some creatures call me God," it answered.

"Yeab?" said Al. "What's your IQ?"

The Being looked at Al.

"Plain enough," said Al. "You've got a psychosis against intelligence." He sighed. "Why is everybody abnormal except me?"

He sped away from the Being. He'd gotten a parsec or two away when his majestically operating brain began to grind out a thought. Al listened to it carefully. "That's right!" he said. "If that thing really is God, he can make me a cup of coffee." He sped back.

"Busy?" asked Al as he came up to the Being again.

"Just resting," answered God. "This is a Seventh Day and I am resting from My labors."

Al Ashley brought out a deck of cards. Fumbling in his eagerness to appear expert, he fanned the cards out before God.

"Take a card," he said. "Any card."

God selected a card, wearily.

Al Ashley tapped the rest of the deck into a neat stack, riffled the deck noisily, listening carefully to the staccato rip. "Fifty-one," he said.

He took back his card. "I'll sell you that trick for two dollars. It cost me that and I'd like to get back the money I put out on it."

"Ah, no," said God. "Please go away. I'm resting."

"Is creating things a tiring job?" Al asked. "I don't see why it should be, if you approach it from the intellectual point of view."

God just looked at him.

"Why, I created my own private dream world, the one I've lived in most of my life. It's so secure and tight that nobody can bother me in it no matter what. That didn't make me tired."

"My rest period must be over now," said God, and flashed away. Al tried to follow after but quickly lost the Being in a maze of

galaxies.

"I wonder why he didn't make me a cup of coffee," mused Al.

"I certainly was indirect enough."

He went on.

"Where am I, I wonder?" Al mumbled. "Oh well," he said after a time. "It isn't fitting for an entity like me to worry about where he is. Let the rest of the Universe worry about where it is---in relation to me."

He landed on another planet. It was a pleasant place, populated by little furry creatures the size and shape of cats. No intelligent race lived there.

Al Ashley looked about him. "Shall I be a Creator?" he murmured.

"Let there be Light!" he commanded, pointing to where the sun was coming up.

He found a stream and on the banks of it fashioned two humanoid forms from mud. He stood back and gazed at his handiwork and found it good.

"Go, my children, and people the earth. Grow and multiply." He leaned forward and breathed into them the breath of life, turned and flew away into space without looking back. No need to look back. He knew what he was doing. They couldn't help but come to life---hadn't he breathed the breath of life into them?"

On he sped---and then, "My God!" he said. "I made both of those figures men! How are they going to reproduce? How can they obey my injunction to multiply?"

But he couldn't remember the way back, so he just kept on. He shrugged and said "What the hell I never had it easy. The world's always been against me."

After a cycle, he said, "I created them in my own image. They should be smart enough to solve the problem of reproduction in two or three generations."

Serenely he shot on; his incisive logic had again come to the rescue of this feckless little man.

After an interminable time, he said "What am I doing out here? Where am I going?" For trackless eons these questions assailed him but at last he had the answer. "I must be the Galactic Observer," said Al Ashley.

"Of course," he said. "I've got the highest I.Q. of anybody I've ever met. This could mean but one thing; I'm the Galactic Observer."

At this moment he felt a strong pull. He lost his power to steer. He was completely the victim of this new force. Swiftly he was pulled to a huge planet. He found himself in a giant plasticene office lined with wall-speakers. A force-beam pushed him up to a white line.

A powerful looking six-footer sat at a desk labeled "Sector Chief." He said, "Well?"

"Al Ashley, reporting in from Sol III."

"Who is this?" blatted a wall speaker. "No record of him."

"Strange," said Sector Chief. "No record of Sol III. Scan him."

The scanners went into action without the use of moving parts. They explored Al's brain electronically, building up a complete case history in sixteen seconds.

The auto-printer flipped out a thin pamphlet containing a complete analysis. Oh, it was cruel, cruel. The things that impersonal machine said about Al Ashley. How cruel, and how true.

Sector Chief read idly from the booklet. "I.Q. 65...vocabulary consisting mainly of high-sounding terms not comprehended by user... memory completely unreliable...loved to associate with intelligent people in the hope that some of their brilliance would rub off on him... so busy trying to act intelligent he never had time to say anything

intelligent...came on stray force beam and seems completely convinced that he was the source of that beam..." Sector Chief broke off.

"Enough," he said. "We've caught flotsam like you before---take him away."

"Can use in Spore Lab," said a wall speaker. "His clothes may have picked up rare specimens."

"Can use in primate lab," said another strident voice.

"I'm the Galactic Observer!" said Al Ashley a bit testily.

"Take him away," said Sector Chief. "Argue about him later."

"But I'm the Galactic Observer," Al said, beginning to lose his pose of saintly patience. "I don't want to work in your laboratories."

Sector Chief looked up sharply. "Work? You're a specimen, nothing more."

"But I'm---" Ashley began wailing.

Force-beams took him out. He tried to fly away but there was no response.

So Al Ashley became a specimen in the Primate Lab in Galactic Central.

He shared his cage space with a winged batman from some nameless place.

"What's your I.Q.?" shrilled the batman the day five force-beams threw Ashley into the cage.

"I have reason to believe you are a homosexual," said Ashley.

"Why would you go around asking people's I.Q.'s unless you were sexually haywire?"

Having more or less run out of dialog on their very first encounter, the batman and Al Ashley remained aloof from each other from then on.

One day they came and took Al away, removed half his brain and installed the brain of a healthy gopher in its place.

With this replacement in and hooked up, Al felt a surge of intellectual strength such as he had never known before.

He created a brand-new dreamworld and for a long time was very happy in it, until the gopher half of his brain took over the Ashley half. When that happened, the Ashley antics were mildly hilarious, but that is perhaps beyond the scope of this scientific revelation.

If you are wondering how the gopher brain could take over Al Ashley's brain, stop wondering.

After all, it was a healthy gopher.

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# AL ASHLEY ELFIN EDISON

Some of you may have heard of Al Ashley's hobby. As stated in a fan publication (which I published myself)--the Pacificon Combozine edition of Shangri-L'Affaires, Al Ashley's hobby, as stated by him, is "making things."

I believed this statement when I stencilled it from Sneary's manuscript. I believed it later on when Al Ashley told me the same thing with his mouth.

About 18 months ago this man told me of the mimeograph he had designed. In his head, of course. It was to have the best features of all the mimeographs that have ever been built, plus a few ideas he's added from his vast store of knowledge. All bad features were to be scientifically eliminated. In fact, said Al, it will be the god damndest mimeograph you ever saw. He wriggled with joy.



Will it have moving parts? I asked. A startled look came into his eyes and for a time his brain lumbered on in silence, and then he finally said, Yes, I guess it will. Why, sure it will.

Well, then, I said, what is so special about this mimeograph?

It will have nothing but good features, said Al, warming up again. Seems to me it could be portable. Fold up into a little square no larger than a portable typewriter. That's be a handy feature if you moved around a lot.

I looked at Al Ashley in amazement. I believed he meant it. I had faith in the man, much as you may have had---before you started reading this series.

Well, I said, I don't see how you're going to do that.

Al smiled tolerantly. Lots of technological developments have been made since before the war, he said. It's a simple matter of good engineering. I can design anything.

Yeah, I said, but will the finished machine work like the drawing says it should?

Why, sure, said Al.

But how, I said, are you going to iron out the bugs that crop up unless you build a model first?

All the bugs are taken out in the drafting stage, said Al. I once designed a gun that used dry ice as a propellant. That would've worked if I'd built it.

Perfectly, you mean, with no flaws anywhere? I asked.

That's right, said Al. Why not?

I doubt that, I said. (Some of my blind faith was ebbing away.) I doubt it like hell. Oh well. When are you going to build this mimeograph?

One of these days, said Al.  
Any time now.

That was 18 months ago, or longer.

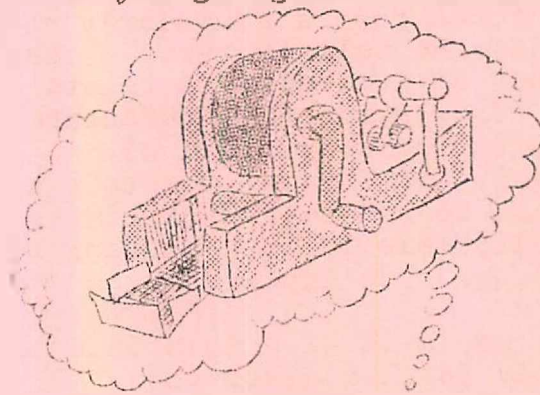
The other day he began to explain to me a complicated machine which had any number of gears, plus some relays. None of the gears seemed to mesh with any other gears (in the drawing he had made) and none of the relays had connections of any sort. The lettering was, though, was excellent. I naturally wanted to know what it was all about.

Well, said Al, it's a device I've designed to measure time.

You mean a clock. But that's been invented. By Joseph J Bulova, in 1703.

You bastard, said Al. Now look, don't be silly. This machine has a definite purpose, beyond that of a clock. You see, the subject sits here in front of it and I ask him a psychological question. Then he answers. Oh, something like a word association test. This machine measures the number of seconds and fractions of seconds that it takes him to answer. When he answers, I press the button and the machine records it.

God, Al, I said. You've got something stupendous here. I can see millions in it. In fact, somebody's already made the money. You've



invented a stop watch. Somebody has already done this, Al.

This isn't a stop watch, said Al, after some thought. This is a machine for measuring short intervals of time. By using this machine people can learn to think faster.

Oh, I said.

It beats a stop watch, said Al, because it teaches people to think faster.

Well, I said, your results are going to be somewhat off the beam because with you pushing the button, the time intervals will be far too long.

Besides, I said, I saw a machine in a psychology class many years ago. A little magnetized disc rotated above another little magnetized disc. The subject ordered to react to a given stimulus, pressed a button which stopped the discs. The stimulus, a light or sound, energized the discs, which began to rotate at a given speed. The pressing of the button stopped them instantly. By looking at the position in which they stopped, you could read the time in hundredths of a second off the scribed lines on the discs. A super stop watch. That seems better than your machine, with you pushing the button.

That machine you describe is no good, said Al. It just measures short intervals of time. My machine teaches people to think faster.

Yes, Al, I said.

I'll show you another machine I made, said Al.

You mean you actually made it?

I mean the drawing, said Al. And he showed me a drawing of a very long rod on the end of which was a turntable like on a phonograph. It seemed to be powered by friction drive off a roller who took its motive force from a singularly stupid looking gear. Of bearings.

What the hell is this? I asked.

This is a machine to rotate spiral disks for the purpose of hypnosis. I am going to manufacture them and sell them to all the hypnotists in the city, said Al.

Well, Al, I said, somebody has beat you to the gun again.

What do you mean by again? said Al.

Well, this is a phonograph turntable such as my be found on a phonograph. You lay a disc, or record, on it and it rotates at 78 rpm's.

Oh no, said Al. This is entirely different, because it is built specially to play discs on.

Al, I said. You have some of these spiral discs, haven't you?

Sure, sure, said Al.

And where do you play them?

On the phonograph, said Al.

Well, then, I said.

Sure, sure, said Al, but this machine is especially designed for the purpose.

You mean it goes round and round, I said. Is that it?

No, no, said Al. For one thing, this machine will run vertically as well as horizontally.

And what else?

Well, that's all, but that's an exclusive feature.

You may have something there, I said. But a large mirror over a phonograph turntable at an angle of 45 degrees will give you a vertical image of the turntable.

That's no good, said Al.

Why not?

Why, said Al, suppose you have a disc on which the spirals go inside out. In the mirror that would be reversed. They would be going outside in.

No they won't, I said.

Yes they will, said Al.

Al, I said. Al. Listen to me, Al. An inside-out spiral will also be inside out in the mirror. The only difference will be in the direction of rotation. The phonograph turntable will be going clockwise and its reflection will go counter-clockwise.

Oh no it won't, said Al.

Oh yes it will.

So he sat there and thought and thought. At last he shook his head. No, he said. I don't visualize that. You may be right. Let it go.

You can prove it with a mirror right now, I said.

I don't have to, said Al. Besides, this machine I've designed eliminates the use of mirror. You don't need mirrors with this machine because it's been specially built to operate vertically.

I said, What would happen if you were to turn a phonograph on its side? A small one, that is, like you have. You could turn a table model like that easy.

No, said Al. Their specifications do not call for that. What is needed is a special machine like the one I've designed.

Well, Al, I said. You may be right.

This has been a brief glimpse into the life and times of a busy inventor as he dredges up old and new laws of Nature and twists them expertly into novel and bizarre machines such as stop watches, mimeographs and turntables that go round and round.



## Al Ashley, distinguished novelist

It began when Jack Wiedenbeck started a novel. He began it some time ago and has been hammering away at it daily for a couple of months. He has piled up a tremendous stack of mss.

When I exclaimed at this example of industry and zeal, Al Ashley looked at me closely. He said, in a confidential sort of way: I'm write a novel too.

What kind of novel, I asked.

Oh, a novel.

Is it that one about the psychological invasion?

Oh, no, said Al.

Is it the one where all six murderers are exposed and it turns out in the end that they're all innocent?

Oh, no, said Al.

Well, what's it about?

It's something new, said Al.

But what's the plot? Is it a fantasy? A historical romance? A whodunit? A western?

No, no, said Al.

Hell, Al, I said. You're not writing a novel. You're just saying that because Jack Wiedenbeck is writing a novel. You're just trying to steal the spotlight from him, that's all.

No, said Al. I'm really writing a novel.

Well, if you are, I said, it's just because Jack Wiedenbeck is



writing a novel. It's just a case of monkey see monkey do.

Oh no, said Al. I had this idea a long time ago, long before Jack ever got the idea he would write a novel.

It's just a case of monkey see monkey do, Al, I said.

No, it isn't, said Al. I had this idea a long time ago.

It's a case of monkey see monkey do.

No, said Al, and perhaps there was a wee spark of ire in his eyes behind his bifocals as he said it. No, he said, it is an idea I had a long time ago. In fact, I've got it finished, which is more than you can say for Jack's novel.

Incredulous, I asked, You mean, it's all down on paper?

Oh, no, said Al. I mean I've got it all finished. Plotted. Written out. It's in my head. All I need to do is transfer it to paper.

Oh, I said. You've finished it. All the hard part is done. The rest is just a matter of copying.

Well, I might rewrite a little as P put it on paper, said Al.

So you are now claiming priority in this matter over Jack Wiedenbeck on these grounds.

Why sure, said Al. After all, I had this idea first. In fact, I might have mentioned it to Jack and that might have given him the idea.

I see, I said.

A few months later I asked him about the novel. I asked how it was coming along. There was a long pause while his brain got into gear on the subject. He made some sort of noncommittal answer that I can't remember now. It was obvious that the subject no longer held any interest for him. Having written the novel--in his head--he lost his enthusiasm for the matter. I imagine he went through the whole publishing process, also in his head. Yes, I guess he did.

Al Ashley, then, has written a novel. It is either in its third million or just rounding off its second million copies. It is being spiritedly bid for by five major motion picture companies and will soon sell to one of them for a sum in excess of a half million dollars. It has been translated into fifty-four languages, with special editions in Braille. This single novel has made Al Ashley rich, famous and distinguished. The literary world is at his feet.

But none of this has changed him a bit. He is still the same sweet simple fellow we all knew and loved.

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In the dim dawn cycles this scene repeats itself from even more shadowy vistas of the past, and will repeat itself again and again till the Bomb falls.

Forrest J Ackerman, no period, was approaching the vicinity of the fabulous Garage, fantastically loaded with fantastic magazines and books. With him was Tigrina--no period either--burdened with similar esoteric literature.

Due to the non-polarized lenses of his zoot-shaped glasses, this Dawn-Ackerman did not see a small obstruction in his path. He struck it with his foot, so displacing his center of gravity that he crashed to the pavement, scattering escape literature over a great area.

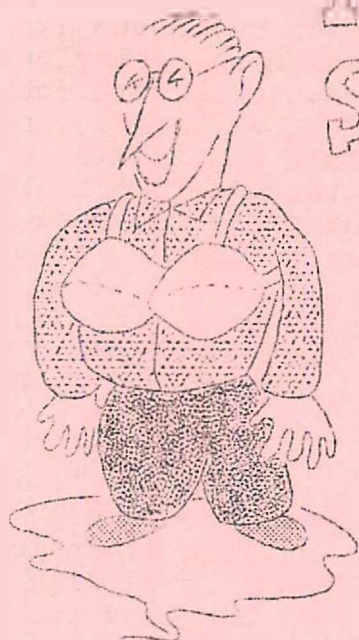
Tigrina, a worried look on her face, cried "Forry, are you hurt?"

FJA, using only two puns in his reply, answered that he's sustained not so much as a minor contusion.

"Oh, that's fine!" beamed T. "No skin off my Ack."

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# YOU BASTARD SAID Al Ashley



You bastard, said Al Ashley. These words of his, so much at variance with his generally genial attitude, ring in my head like a mad doorbell. At odd hours during the day I seem to hear his soft voice saying: You bastard. He says it with a smile because he has a sense of humor (in spite of what people may say) and often knows what is going on even if it sometimes seems that his brain is four measures behind. He is forced by the propriety of self-esteem to vocalize himself in this dreadful epithet.

He always has a distinct and excellent reason for expressing himself thus. It is not to be thought that Al Ashley greets people at his door with this expression or that he can be depended upon to repeat it at odd intervals in a normal conversation. I have merely stripped the phrase of its context. As such it cannot stand alone and have anything but an esoteric meaning. So in the following pages I will outline a few of the many situations and remarks that have caused Al Ashley to give rise to this epithet.

For a time it was a humorous thing from Al Ashley's point of view to bring out "falsies" and wear them around the house outside of his shirt while visitors were present. The falsies and Al's elfish smile would naturally, as he expected, rouse comment from the onlookers. My God, Al, someone would be sure to say, what the hell are those? And Al would answer smiling, say, Can't you see? And someone would say: Yeah, but whose are they? And Al would eagerly say: Oh, they belong to E-----. This was his punch line, because E-----'s homosexual tendencies are well known in the inner circle.

One evening, as Al Ashley was sporting these things around in view of a half dozen or more people, I said, Al, why are you wearing those crazy things--are they yours? Hell no, he said, they belong to E-----. Well, I said, I'm inclined to doubt that. You say they belong to him but I've never seen him wearing them. On the other hand I've seen you with them on a dozen times. You wear them so much, Al, I think they're yours.

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

Al Ashley's researches into the sex lives of the various fans he knows is something amounting to a passion. Al has a long list (in his head) of all the homos in local fandom and suspects at least 90% of the rest. With very little encouragement he can be brought out on the subject, declaiming this person and that person, and declaring others under a cloud of suspicion. His theme is that nearly everybody is queer and he's pretty disgusted with them all.

At one of these declamatory sessions somebody remarked that Al seemed pretty sure of his facts. They asked him how he could be so sure that nearly everybody was queer. I have definite proof, said Al. And then the redoubtable F. Tower Laney said, I think you say people are queer just out of spite. You're trying to get even with them because you can't get into their pants.

You bastard, said Al Ashley.



Al Ashley's attitude toward work is the usual one. He hates it. But instead of going ahead and working anyhow he simply does not work at all. Al Ashley has been out of work since November 1956. People are always discussing this, since it is obvious that he is not living on the income from a trust fund. Some people are even mad about it because there he is, sitting serenely in absolute idleness, yet plentifully supplied with the good things of life, which, to Al, are food, coffee, a roof over the head (under which to drink coffee), and plenty of restful, innocent slumber (such as comes to infants and saints) after which one may drink much coffee. In vain we recount to him the sad story of the grasshopper and the ant, out of our great smugness. Al Ashley likes to listen to the story because it is a fantasy, what with insects talking and all. But that is as far as it goes. Remarks on his idle state bring a pleasant smile to his genial face as he sits there like an idol carved from steak. But once F. Towner Laney said to him: Al, you've been out of work nine months--now either give birth to that baby or get a job.

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

Since he prides himself on his bargaining ability and his flair for finding bargains, it was not surprising to find him at his home one evening going around to each and every visitor, calling attention to his new brown sweater and telling them how he'd bought this high class piece of merchandise for only 98¢. The visitor, bound by the rigid rules of hospitality, would make some polite remark, Al would move to the next victim and repeat the spiel. When he came to me and went through his formula I looked closely at the sweater, felt the material, and said sagely: But Al, what did you do with the potatoes that came in it?

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

About ten minutes later he was telling a new victim about the wonderful Ashley flair for finding bargains. I insinuated myself into the conversation by remarking. Why, that's the very sweater I gave last week to the Salvation Army!

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

Once he was demonstrating how hard it was for two people to pull his clenched hands apart. Condra on one side and Wiedenbeck on the other were pulling with most of their strength, with no success. When they had given up, Condra remarked that Al Ashley, for his size, was deceptively strong. As Al swelled up I said: He ought to be strong, he's been saving his strength for the last nine months.

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

Another time, Al Ashley and others sat drearily contemplating each other in the LASFS clubroom just after the regular Thursday night meeting. It is always difficult to tell when a meeting is in session or not, since nothing happens in either circumstance. Laney, on his way out, turned at the door and said: Good night, people; and goodnight, Al. Though this is a standard phrase around the Half World, and often was used on Kepner, thus: Hello men, and you too, Kepner--Al Ashley was somehow moved to utter the now classic phrase: You bastard.

Perhaps the chief joy of Al Ashley's life is retelling the story of how he defended his battered honor against the unsubtle blandishments of his friend E----- (owner of the falsies). One evening he was, as usual, telling the story, and we were all listening, as usual, with great personal joy. So, said Al, he asked me to give it to him this way. When I said no, he asked if he could do it to me. Then he said he didn't like it this other way very much but would be willing to do it that way if I insisted. I said no. So he argued with me. He said it was glorious between two men and I certainly was missing a lot if I'd never tried it. He said I owed it to myself to give it



a try.

Al, I said, he used the wrong approach. He used the argumentative approach. The intellectual approach. He should have just quietly taken you into his arms and kissed all your fears away.

You bastard, said Al Ashley.

# I CAN HANDLE THEM

"I can handle them," said Al Ashley. "I can take care of that situation." He was referring to the threat made by the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and Dancing Academy (Walter J. Daugherty, Prop.) that they would eject him bodily from the club if he ever dared show up again at a meeting. It seems they removed him from membership some time ago, and since then he has shown up for meetings more regularly than before.

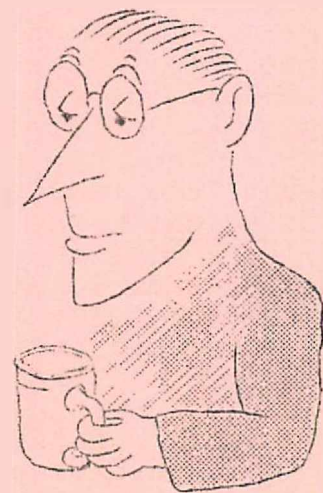
Hints that he was not welcome bounced off him. When Russell J Hodgkins, who prides himself on his dignity, so lost his dignity one night that he called Al in open meeting "You damned welsher," Al merely sat there and stared at Russ with the identical expression he uses for staring off into space. Every so often, too, EEEvans, that most patient of men (he says) loses his patience and addresses some sharp, impatient remark to Al, who doesn't seem to mind at all.

But the other night the executive committee decided that the next time their unwelcome visitor showed up they would, by main force, throw him bodily and with malice aforethought, right out the clubroom door. Ashley, when informed of this decision, made the statement as recorded in the first line of this factual account. He said that if Gus Willmorth (who weighs 220 on the hoof and virtually the same sitting down) were omitted from the Ejection Committee (one wonders why there is no Welcoming Committee) he could handle Cox, Evans, Hodgkins and Ackerman.

"Yes, Al," said a friend. "Perhaps there would be a mighty struggle, with you swinging Evans around like a blunt instrument (which is no doubt the mental picture you carry of him) but don't you think that eventually you would wind up in the street?"

"Nope," said Al calmly. He calmly picked up his coffee cup, placed it calmly to his lips and calmly drank the contents.

Trouble was, the cup was empty before he picked it up.



# the variable existence of hyperfan

Hyperfan was a moody boy who began reading stuff at an early age--even before he could read at all, which showed how bright he actually was, and how broad his mental horizons.

He grew up, wrote interminable letters to prozines each month and at length began a tremendous correspondence with fans all over the world. He wrote to German fans in German, French fans in French, Zulu fans in Bantu, Arabic fans in Arabic. He could not translate the answers since he wrote the languages but could not read them. This was just as well because it saved him the time of reading the letters and gave him more time to write more and more letters. He published four fanzines. One was a serious magazine, devoted to the heavier aspects of heavy fantasy and in it he titled himself a sincere acolyte. The second fanzine was composed of letters to the first fanzine. The third fanzine was a light frothy thing that caused jolliment wherever exhibited, for hyperfan was endowed with a great wide streak of humor which ran straight down the middle of his back. The fourth fanzine was made up of letters to fanzine #3 and their answers. He began a fifth fanzine for the sole purpose of conducting feuds, for he was at war with all fandom. In each of his fanzines he took a different stand, each stubborn as hell, and much of his time was spent writing scathing letters to his own fanzines in answer to his own previously published scathing letters.

At length, though he hid himself from the Outside World as best he could (he was a flagpole painter) he met a girl. She was charming, lovely and could type 65 words a minute. He became aware of her with every fiber of his being when she drifted close to him and he got an elusive whiff of her perfume--Essence of Mimeograph Ink. It had heady overtones. It was exhilarating, exciting. His head buzzed in ecstasy. Though he never spoke to people, he got up enough courage to grunt when she asked him the way to the postoffice. She was patient, though, and at length he accompanied her to the postoffice where he shyly presented her with a brand new airmail stamp, gum unlicked. The way her eyes glowed made him realize that this girl was--what was that word--oh yes...different! She laughed gaily and chatted with him like an old friend as he went to his forty-five postoffice boxes and got his daily mail, which came to him under four hundred and ninety two aliases. After that they were inseparable. In fact they never left each other. In fact they were together all the time. They even slept together. And rumors were flying that they liked each other more than somewhat.

One day hyperfan breathed words into her ear. I love you, he said. More than fanzines. More than prozines...even Stortounding Sagas. More than blank paper in a typer. I love you more than a mailbox stuffed with thick letters. We'd better get married so we can be together like we've been from now on and also forever.

She agreed. So they got married. Before long she presented him with a child(whose arrival was no shock since he had suspected something of the sort). The child soon learned to peck haltingly at the keys of a typewriter specially fitted to type babytalk. The child spoke only to its typewriter and a small model of a space ship, and only the space ship ever bothered to reply.

Then came the war. Hyperfan was not drafted because when they took away his glasses they found another pair of glasses underneath. This second pair of glasses, explained hyperfan, was in order to see as far as the first pair of glasses so he could see as far as his glasses.



But his wife was drafted. She went to a basic training camp and hyperfan kept busy writing her letters each hour. After three months hyperfan began to grow a bit uneasy. He began to ponder on the situation. What, now? How could she be drafted, a woman, and the mother of a child? He set inquiries in motion and at length was made to realize that a very serious thing had happened to him---he had been married to a man for four years! What a colossal deception, thought hyperfan. I feel like a fool, said hyperfan. Can such things be? asked hyperfan.

He put his fannish mind to work. How could this all have happened? He used all the sciences in which he was adept (concise courses, sugar-coated with fiction, had been pushed at him in thousands of magazines) and could arrive at no answer that satisfied all conditions, because there was the child.

There is the child, said hyperfan. Obviously that is the product of a man and a woman and I am not a woman. So my partner in this adventure into thinking must be a woman. But the U.S. Army, which is infallible, says she is a man. A man in the days of his strength, strength which I understand the army is tapping daily as though the supply were inexhaustible. Now, if she were a woman, some inquisitive non-com would have found it out long ago. And if she is a man then the army is right and I am wrong. And though this is as it should be, there still remains the child.

He was nonplussed. And then, out of the maze of fannish events and fantastic fiction that cluttered his broad mental horizons, he got the answer. She had tricked him by semantics. God, it was easy to see now. Much as the Emperor of Juno had been tricked by a wily space prospector in that deal involving the Platinum Planetoid. He began to extrapolate and the story came bit by bit. This man, madly in love with hyperfan since he(hyperfan) had published his first fanzine, wished to consummate this mad, mad love. This man, whom we will call now X or perhaps Y, under the stupefying influences of applied semantics and null-R logic, had blinded hyperfan's psychically perceptive senses for long enough to entangle him in a mess not to be outdone by the jam gotten into by the Three Men from Custodia when they got mixed up in Ganymedan politics.

Ah, but it had been so romantic! Hyperfan brushed away a tear as he recalled how the showers of shredded prozines had fallen lightly and warmly about him and his lambent-flame-beautied bride as they left the citadel of religion in which they had been wed. The first church hyperfan had ever entered under his own power, since he believed only in the power of the Infinite Will and natural selection. These beliefs had obviously been proven when he was born.

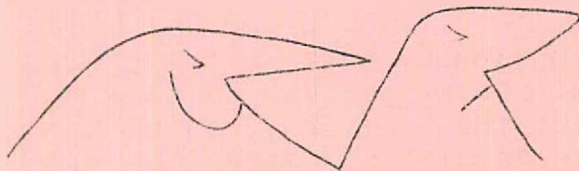
And there was the child. Say, said hyperfan, how did this all come about? How could this have happened? Semantics! he shouted at the child, who now turned its wobbly, slobbery, rubbery, wizened face (mirror image of his own) to him, eyes on fire. Hyperfan rattled off a formula which included mathematics he invented on the spur of the moment. "Cthulhu!" cried the child soundlessly (the sound passed through hyperfan's mind only) and did not vanish in a puff of green smoke.

Crushed, his last illusion gone, hyperfan plunged into fandom for escape and never came out. Not even when he died, for he refused to be buried, what with 18 deadlines to meet on 18 fanzines and 220 letters per day to be answered. My schedule won't permit me to be buried anyhow, said hyperfan. Not till spaceflight is achieved and my ashes can be scattered over a dead Martian sea-bottom, for such is my wish as declared in my will.

Besides, there was the child.



# the rise & fall of the fanish empire



It was in the year 1957 that atomic bombs began to fall on the cities of the world. Every nation worth mentioning had enough bombs on hand to blow all the rest of the nations off the face of the earth, so as soon as the first one was fired by some unknown and nameless

hero, the jet-propelled, self-guided missiles darted across the skies like a flight of passenger pigeons. One observer said they darkened the sun, and if they had been pigeons he would have been drenched white (like a statue in a public park) in a matter of seconds. But they weren't pigeons, just bombs, so his recently cleaned and pressed coat suffered no damage.

Before long there was absolutely no place of power left on the earth. Each nation had fired missiles at each of the other nations' supposed and suspected seats of government, secret and public, so that by trial and error, it was only to be expected that all politicians were finished off in sixty-eight minutes flat.

The world was left alone, to its own resources. There were plenty of people left, but nobody knew how to make atomic bombs, and nobody knew where any of the launching sites were and nobody knew where the government was. All these things had been wiped out in sixty-eight minutes. You might imagine that the people, rid, or free, of government, would have been appalled at this hopeless plight, but this did not seem true. People paused to read the headlines and wonder about it, but the movies kept going and the radio kept going and the drug-stores and used car lots kept going, so the obvious thing to do was to keep going. So everybody kept going.

But the terrific vacuum left by the sudden extinguishment of national government had to be filled somehow. After all, who would people pay taxes to? And who could declare emergencies? Who would close banks and ration food and tires and declare war and announce peace and tell the people to save fats and bomb the enemy one year and love them like brothers the next? Obviously, some sort of central government was urgently needed, so delegates of all nations were appointed and they held a gigantic congress which lasted for months, but they could reach no decision. Then somebody said (and it was instantly translated into 147 languages and flashed about the hall) that they needed somebody with broad mental horizons. The efficiently operating Kardex file system immediately brought up the names of all the science-fiction fans in the world. "There is our salvation," thought the delegates. "We will simply turn the job of unification over to them and get home and away from this noisy place, which is full of foreigners anyhow." So they appointed fans to be rulers of the earth in high council, and it was so.

First there was a screening. Fans were quizzed on the number of years they had read the stuff and how much of their daily life was consumed by fan activities. If, for example, they had read Skylark of Space

in the original Cornsback magazines they were immediately given low Party numbers and spacious quarters were assigned to them. If they had published a fanzine they were elevated to immediate power and sat in judgment on future candidates. If they believed (and could prove) that fandom was a way of life, no honor was too great. This mighty task was finally accomplished, and fans ruled the world. Using to the full their broad mental horizons they ruled so well that for the next 200 years there were only 45 wars, the usual number of rapes, murders, thefts, libel suits, and new automobiles. They levied exorbitant taxes which kept the peoples of the world happy, for now they had something to be discontented about. One day Emperor Bupertfan VI got a brilliant idea. "Let's give everybody broad mental horizons", he said, "and then everybody can be like us and be happy as anything, and people can rule themselves, each to each, and anarchy will result with everybody happy as hell. It will be Utopia for sure." Emperor Bupertfan VI was somewhat feckless, perhaps. He prized but one thing, his mint collection of fantasy which included all collector's items ever printed, even the ones printed for the express purpose of creating collector's items. He wished to spend more time musing over his collection and wondering what the stories would be like if he dared read them. This, of course, was a heretical thought, since True Fans never read their stuff or even spoke of reading it. They spoke freely of picking up copies of this and that here and there, and bandied bizarre titles about, but never did they let on that they might conceivably have even a random urge to read the stuff.

Emperor Bupertfan's plan was instantly carried out. By governmental decree all governmental printing presses were diverted from the printing of money, stamps, etc., and put to reprinting all the sfantasy classics ever written, and living authors were subsidized to write 24 hours a day. Each person in the world was given \$1500 worth of sfantasy books. Newspapers were cautioned to publish only book news and events of Fortean implications.

The plan worked. Inside of a generation the world was solid fan. There was not a single non-fan in the world, anywhere. Every man, woman and child in the world published a fanzine, belonged to at least one sf club, and bought and sold and traded books and wrote fantastic fiction in their own spare time.

And one day Emperor Bupertfan VI, now an old man, was deposed. He was no longer #1 Fan. Everybody in the world was #1 Fan and could prove it. Everybody had a broad mental horizon and was equipped to rule the earth wisely and well for the next 200 years. A gigantic election was held, in which each person in the world was entered on the ballot for Emperor. The ballot itself was twenty miles long. Each person received one vote. In the run-off, each person received one vote. So everybody was #1 Fan, Emperor Blankfan I. So each person, and rightly so, demanded a coronation and began issuing orders. Since they were all rather feckless (as one might say) nothing came of this for some years. By and by the commotion subsided. Fanzine production fell off. The book market experienced a depression, its first in 20 years. Something was up. Lights were burning in cellars--atomic bombs were being made again. Each home in the world had two or more bombs in the making. Each bomb was being made secretly, without anybody else being aware of it. Since each superfan lived in his own private dream world, he did not notice what his wife or neighbor or brother or friend was doing.

Came D-Day, and the first fan to finish his bomb announced, through the medium of his fanzine, that he would blow up---well, something---unless elected Emperor Filbertfan at once. Nobody replied, so he launched his bomb. At the same moment, all other bombs left their launching racks. Again, as in 1957, the sky was dark with flying bombs, none of which collided, of course. Within an hour, all bombs had found their



marks, and all targets were destroyed.

Only one man was left alive. He was alone in the world. The last man. How he had escaped he did not know. "Oh well," he said, "I am Emperor Brownfan the First." He shouted to the world "I am Emperor Brownfan the First and all must do my bidding! I am the only man on earth with broad mental horizons!" There he was. Emperor, with no subjects, no one to levy taxes on, no one to tremble before his wrath, no one to shoot atomic bombs at. There was nobody to see him, hear him, or answer him.

He looks kind of forlorn, so suppose we leave him there, jacking off on a picture of himself.

(On page 68 is an example of a series of anecdotes labelled "How It Began" which Burbee and Elmer Perdue wrote for BURBLINGS c/w ELMURMURINGS #1, July, 1947. This is Burbee's editorial from that issue...)

The "How It Began" sketches are Elmer's idea. An original idea which he sometimes admits stealing from some magazine that was published in the mid-twenties. Maybe he has improved on the germ idea, and maybe not. Maybe I have and maybe I haven't, too.

Since the sketches are his idea, he should have written the introduction, but since he just gave me four elite-typed stencils and I see no introductory paragraph anywhere, I suppose I will have to write the introduction.

It seems that according to the Elmurmurian Theory, all that has happened has already happened. That seems wrong, doesn't it? That is because it is wrong.

You get the idea, though. These sketches are the true stories of the origins of certain popular sayings now rampant in the language. We have all used these idiomatic expressions and perhaps wondered a little where they came from. Until now, no one could say for sure. And now Elmer and I have come along.

If you turn the page you will see the series staring you in the face. After Elmer's four pages I will take over with some sketches of my own. Maybe some of you have secret knowledge of how some sayings were started. If so, you ought to publish them in your own mags because if you send them to us we'll just lose them or throw them away.

The publishing of this series gives us an example of why it is more profitable to join fapa than to buy an Encyclopedia Britannica. Offhand, I can't think of any other examples.

No mailing comments this time. I had several pages of comments sketched out, but on re-reading them I find they stink. So I have rejected them.

I think there were some good remarks in there, though. Rotsler read the rough draft and laughed like crazy, then went off and stole 15 of my best lines for his mailing comments in Disturbing Element. He says he stole only 3 lines, but I hold out for 15. "I can prove it!" he shouts. "No," I say, "don't prove it, because if you do I'll be mad because I've got my mind made up that you stole 15 lines."

--Burblings #5, June 1948.



# THE NORMAL MANNER

"No, I've never met Laney but I hate him and everything he stands for!" Louise Leipiar roared at me.

I asked her if she'd read much material by him. It seems that people have dropped into the habit of psychoanalyzing Laney by his writings.

"No," she bellowed. "I refuse to read anything by him. I am against him and what he stands for and if I ever see him I'll tell him so to his face."

The time was ripe for me to say that Laney was against homosexuality and fan-type fools. Yes, the time was ripe for me to make an infuriating remark, but I remembered that my wife had said to me as we drove to the Ackerman house-warming, "I don't want you to act like a fan today. I want you to act like a normal person."

To act like a normal person at a fan gathering! What a handicap that was. It meant I couldn't say the things to people that they were begging for.

Odd that we should have been there at all. I had been so long removed from the fan scene that I still thought of Ackerman's wife as Tillie instead of Wendy. A whole new generation of fans had cropped up, and to them the name of Burbee was anathema, due to some fine publicity work on the part of surviving LASFS members.

It was odd, as I said, that we should have been there. But on the previous Thursday we had received a postcard which invited us to the Ackerman house-warming at their new place on Sherbourne Drive. I doubted the authenticity of this card because there was a typographical error on it and the message was not perfectly centered. For all I knew, the watermark might have been upside down too. But Sunday afternoon I called up Ackerman and from the gibberish in the background ("Spaceship! Spaceship!") and the gay voice of Forrest J himself I gathered that not only was there a housewarming but that Isabel and I were actually welcome!

At least that is what Ackerman said.

So we went.

The first person who caught my eye as we tried to squeeze through the narrow space between the porch wall and a car parked by a person with a fine mind was Rick Sneary. I said something to him, and to Poffatt who stood beside him and to Stan Woolston who was there, too. Woolston, a chunky well-scrubbed lad, said something obscure and immediately got down on his hands and knees and bumped his neatly groomed head against the concrete twice and said something about it being the proper way to greet a Burbee. Len Poffatt's wife was the only one to look at Woolston as though she thought this action a bit out of line.

I had to act like a normal person so I merely said, "Thank you, Woolston."

I met Mrs. van Vogt who seemed to have gained 13 pounds since I saw her last three years ago. And the largish Louise Leipiar was there too, as you may have noticed if you started reading this at the beginning.

There was a dianetic auditor there whose name has slipped my mind. He was displeased when I said that it took longer to learn to be a witch doctor than a dianetic auditor. "Not a good witch doctor!" he snapped as he zipped away with the speed of a witch doctor. I left Isabel outside talking to Mrs. VV and I went inside. I saw James Kepner, Elmer Perdue, and an attachment of ALV's whose name is Manning Mac-

Donald. MacDonald, when he saw me, cried: "Say something funny, Burbee! Say something amusing and clever and droll!" He clutched his belly in anticipatory laughter. "Turn on your sense of humor," I said.

Forrest J Ackerman was trying to show me the north wall of his living room. The whole wallpaper scheme was hidden by row upon row of bookshelves crammed with books, wall to wall, ceiling to floor. "Forry is proud of that display," said someone. "You mean he built the bookcases himself?" I said. "Golly," I went on, "All that reading matter and Ackerman hasn't read one book in the lot." "I'll have you know I've read every last word," said Ackerman.

I declined the gambit.

A voice behind me called my name. I saw Phil Bronson, of the forgotten Fantasite and the much-mourned Knanve standing there. Years of non-fan activity had aged him. I said the last time I'd heard of him he was working for a Minneapolis newspaper. "Yes," he said, "but I'm here now."

There wasn't any sensible answer to that.

I asked him if he'd seen much of Redd Boggs, the #1 Fan of Minneapolis.

"A bunch of us went up to his house one day," said Bronson. "His aunt, or somebody told us, 'Try to get him out of the house. He hasn't left the house for three days. He's been living behind that typewriter.'"

A ten or eleven year old kid went past, followed by another boy the same age. "Who are those kids?" I asked. "The first one is Wendy's boy and the other is his friend," said someone. "Oh," I said, "I thought I was looking at the LASTFS Director and Secretary."

"I want to learn to run a bulldozer," said a little old lady a moment later.

"A bulldozer?" I muttered, looking at her. She was about 65 years old and weighed no more than a jockey. I tried to visualize her stripping a hill or snaking logs down a mountain grade and just couldn't do it, though her eyes were shining brightly as anything.

"Yes!" she said. "One of those things with a big blade, a tractor sort of thing." Perhaps Reader's Digest does that to people.

"But what for?" I asked. "Why should you want to run one of those things?"

"Why, it'll be useful for clearing up the rubble of the city after they drop atomic bombs," she said pertly.

I went away.

Elmer Perdue and I had a vocal jam session as of old. He told me a little of the Baxter Street Irregulars, a group which can't stand the stuffiness of the LASTFS. Elmer was standing by when I spoke to James Lynn Kepner who once published a thin mimeographed pamphlet of poems titled Songs for Sorrow and Beauty. I wanted to say to Kepner, "Well, you odd boy, are you still a writer for the Daily Worker or have you come to your senses?" But I remembered I was there with a gear upon me. So I said, "Kepner, my boy, you look as intellectual as ever." He smiled half-heartedly and Perdue, who was standing nearby, laughed like crazy. Perdue sometimes has the strange faculty of hearing the unsaid things in my speech.

While I stood in a jam session with van Vogt, Moffatt, Leipiar and two or three others, a large adolescent with lenticular glasses and a thick-lipped mouth came and took hold of the chair I was leaning on. He looked at me with his over-magnified eyes peering at me and his heavy lips pouting like a suffocating fish. I moved and he took the chair and vanished into the front room where the bulk of the guests were gathered. "Member of the LASTFS?" I asked the group with me. "Yes," said someone. "He just sold a story for \$150."



Since we were standing in the doorway that separated the rooms, there was a goodly amount of traffic going by. I saw Everett Evans going by, always with a thriftily unlit cigar in his mouth which he mouthed like a friend he was saying goodby to. He never spoke to me. I didn't speak to him. He must have gotten his kicks there, as some young lady spoke to him with some awe. She later confided to us, "He's a professional author, you know." This was news to me.

All the time we were there, a slim dark fellow was sitting at the dining room table doing math homework and paying no attention to the thirty or forty people who were passing to and fro. When Ackerman, who was circulating like a first class host among us, came by again, I asked him who the fellow was. "Did he come with the house? Has he ever spoken enough to identify himself?" But Ackerman did not answer. He merely adjusted a publicity still for "Girl in the Moon" on a shelf and went on.

Later I spoke to the fellow. He seemed like a nice guy. Name Leland Sapiro, which I read off his copy of "Theory of Functions."

As I went by the Leipier woman I heard a fragment of her loud monolog (she has a baritone voice) that went something like this: "I straightened out Forry. I told him to come out of his shell and live! I feel I am 100% responsible for this party." As I went on I mused that this gathering was exactly like hundreds of other gatherings Ackerman had attended and been the host of. Later I was gathered in by someone and introduced to this Louise Leipier who may or may not believe in transmigration of souls. "I've heard of you," I said. "Nothing good," she said. "No," I said, "though I did hear you were easily excited." Her eyes flashed and her breath shortened. "I am not!" she bellowed like a great jungle beast. "I am always..." here she was quick to see she was being baited so she continued in a lower voice, even working in a smile..."why, I'm always calm and cool as a cucumber. I never get excited. I wouldn't hurt a fly."

"I guess not," I said. "Well, I'll have to tell Laney I met you. I'll describe you and say she's not a bad kid, except that she gets excited easily."

Her eyes blazed up on cue again and she thundered out something to the effect that she cut people's throats to their faces, never from behind, and she never hurt a fly and she frequently told people off for their own good.

I didn't laugh in her face. After all, this woman is a friend of the van Vogts and I like the van Vogts.

Later, Kepner drifted over and the talk drifted to FAPA. "Oh, yes," said Kepner, "I was on the waiting list two mailings ago but I never heard from them. I presume I've been dropped."

"Two mailings ago? You weren't on the list then."

"I beg your pardon," said the Communist loftily, "I happen to know that I was."

"But I know you weren't," said I.

"I am certain that I was," said Jike.

"Ah, but you weren't. For the past four mailings I have been secretary of FAPA in charge of the waiting list. If your name had appeared there I'd certainly know it."

Kepner kept his lofty air but said nothing. Hell, I thought these Communists had a Party quotation for everything.

I remember talking to Jean Cox. He wanted me to tell Laney that he objected to Laney's calling him a "garden variety crackpot."

I talked to Len Hoffatt a while. We talked about moving pictures. I couldn't hold up my end very well because I don't go to movies, but when we got to talking about the attitude of the public toward special shots like rocketships taking off, we went along



rather well.

I asked him: "Where is the poor idiot who is the editor of the LASFS magazine, Shangri-La?"

"You mean the next editor?" he said.

"Yes."

"I'm the next editor," he said.

I asked him if he could lend me the mailing list of the LASFS magazine but he said distribution of the magazine was taken care of by another department. He said that taking in the money was done by still another department. I remarked that it sounded like a Walter J Daugherty set-up, meaning that it was elaborate, complicated, and completely unworkable.

Actually, such a set-up prevents any single person from running the magazine. I once ran the club magazine and while I ran it it was the #1 club magazine and the #2 national magazine. They don't want that to happen any more. They want a stillborn magazine, dull as hell, for that is their hearts' desire. And they have attained it.

Moffatt told me he'd sold a story to Weird Tales for \$100.

"Fine," I said. "Too bad I'll never read it. I never read Weird Tales."

"Neither do I," said Len Moffatt.

Isabel and I left early. My gas was wearing off anyway and Isabel is bored by fans because so few of them have any sense. I wonder if there was a poker game later on? I'd sure have liked to sit in on a fannish poker game with E E Evans the way I did in 1945 when I first met him. At that time he'd just returned from serving 18 months in secret Navy work, he said. We had a short dialog at that game which has since rocked the minds of everyone I've told it to. I'd have given a lot to have repeated that deathless bit of dialog at Ackerman's housewarming, Section 2 of 3 sections, Sunday, October 21, 1951.

As we left, I remarked to Ackerman that since the sun had just gone down it was time to go down to the basement and release the guest of honor.

# ..... CALLING M R. FLUGEL

Was he pixie, gnome or elf? This I do not know. And I fear now that I will never know. I am speaking of Mr. Flugel.

It doesn't worry me. Strangely enough, though, the thought of Mr. Flugel (pixie, gnome or elf) pops into my mind. And though more than five years have gone by, the memory is still razor-sharp. My memory of Mr. Flugel, the man whose name I heard every day for nearly a year. I never saw the name written until I just now wrote it. I am wondering if I have spelled it correctly. It might be Flugle. But I seem to stick to the Flugel spelling. Isn't there a musical instrument with that name--or is it the German word for flute, maybe?

For nearly a year I worked at the El Segundo plant of Douglas Aircraft. This was during the war. Offhand, I'd say it was sometime in 1943 and possibly into 1944. It was a rather large place, sprawling over a fair amount of territory. One of the buildings took 10 minutes to traverse from one end to the other. That was the building in which the assembly line was. Every four hours they opened the huge doors at the far end, and two SBD's, completed, rolled out. This went on around

the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An SBD? That stood for Scout Bomber, Douglas. I couldn't tell you these things sooner for security reasons.

Yes, but where is Mr. Flugel now? Well, he's around, all right, but I was sketching in local color and forgot him for a moment. All right. They had a public address system in the plant. Scarcely a corner of the place was safe from that public address system. Not even the clatter of rivet-guns could drown out that insidious system. If the area was noisy, the system was noisier. If you were in some quiet office, the system spoke softly, but still insidiously.

They called it the "auto-call" but it was not that. They called people by their names rather than by signals of flashing lights and tooting horns in code. It went like this: "Mr. Flugel, call 286. Mr. Flugel, call 286." If Mr. Flugel did not call 286 inside of a reasonable time, it came on again.

Of course there were other names that were called frequently. Names called on the auto-call were those of shortage-chasers, heads of departments, Navy inspectors, and the like. Common laborers did not achieve this distinction of having their names blared forth all day long. Sure, there were other names. There was Lloyd Lightfoot, who was one of the first names to insinuate itself into my thoughts. I got to see Lloyd Lightfoot, though. I never did see Mr. Flugel. I got to see Frank Wright, and Jack Johnson, and Art Kelly.

They were all ordinary looking goops, about like you'd expect them to look. And I suppose Mr. Flugel would have looked the same.

Maybe I did see Mr. Flugel but didn't know it. After all, Douglas El Segundo at that time had 25,000 workers, and sooner or later I must have seen them all. I must have seen Mr. Flugel and not even recognized him.

"Mr. Flugel, call 571. Mr. Flugel, call 571." That name. Flugel. What sort of man would wear proudly a title like that? What sort of fellow was he, anyhow? Did he have a Heidelberg scar on his left cheek? Did he like beer? How was he in a crap game--could he talk to the dice? Did he have a crew haircut and downward slanting eyes? Did it show in his face? Did he have golfball eyes?

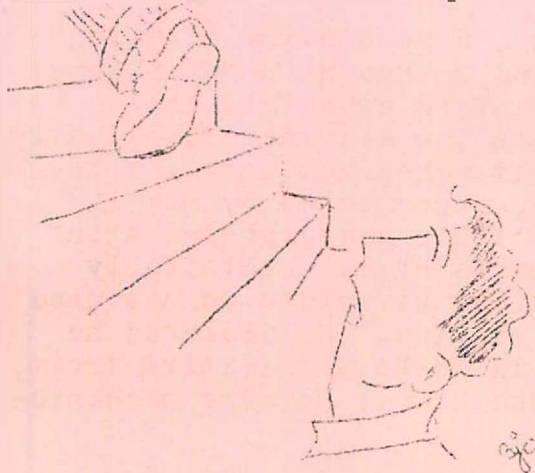
I don't know. But I came damned close to finding out the answers to some of these questions one day. I was in the cowlings fabrication section looking for a lost cowlings. I guess that is what I was there for. I remember I had an order in my hand. A shop order. It was buff-bordered. Of course that doesn't mean anything. I usually carried some kind of order when I went astray from my section. An order in the hand imparts a species of "this-man-is-on-business" impression. Anyhow, I was talking to a blonde inspector (she was looking at tubes) and she said something about: "I wonder where Mr. Flugel is? He was here a minute ago and was supposed to sign these orders out." An anticipatory thrill went through me. Here was a per-

son who knew Mr. Flugel! Had even spoken to him! And I had heard his name daily for months and months and had never seen him! I could scarcely control myself. The blonde went on talking and suddenly broke off with words that shook me to the core:

"Oh, there's Mr. Flugel now!" Then she shouted, "Mr. Flugel! MR. FLUGEL! MR. FLUGEL!"

I turned in the same direction. "There he goes up the stairs!" she said. "MR. FLUGEL!"

I looked at the stairs, just in



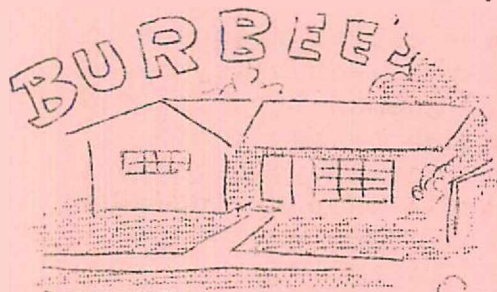


time to see a pair of legs disappearing from view upwards. As the blonde shouted again, I watched entranced. Surely he had heard this foghorn voice. This dainty feminine voice, calling to him from the wilderness of machinery. I expected the legs to appear again, clad in their pin-stripe pants, and descend majestically, as Flugel legs should, till the whole animal "flugel stood exposed to my gaze.

But the legs did not appear. "I'll go get him," I said. I ran to the stairs. At the top I saw a three-branch corridor, and the closed doors of a dozen or more offices. Only a giant female in a very tight sweater was visible. I looked at her awhile, till I decided that she wasn't Mr. Flugel.

I went away. After all, Mr. Flugel wasn't a way of life to me. I didn't have to see him. I had plenty of time. It wasn't urgent anyway. Or so I thought then.

Right now, I tell you, I'd give my soul to see Mr. Flugel.



# On The LINE ...with Warp

On Saturday, August 5, 1957, we held a one-shot session at my house. This session was designed to produce some...not all...pages for this monster Warp. Eleven pages were produced. Mostly I think we produced reams of fangab and a spool of wire.

All the invited came except Laney, who had illness in the family. He did call up, though, and talk to all present. This cost him 90¢ in toll charges, or, as the phone company coyly terms it, "message units."

First to arrive was Rick Sneary. I'd heard from everybody beforehand except the Sage of South Gate (site of the Convention in 1958). I got to wondering about this all-out fan, so I looked up his number in the phone directory and to my amazement found I could dial the Sage's number! South Gate, you must know, is 'way 'way out there on the edge and is never spoken of in metropolitan circles, but still it can be dialed from Los Angeles. Rick's mother answered and said the Sage had entrusted his fannish self to the public transportation system and she didn't know where he'd gone. Evidently the name of Burbee is tabu in the Sneary household, though I could not say why and I forgot to ask Rick.

As I hung up from this fruitless call, a resounding clanking of metal against wood came up the stairs and I thought perhaps some robot had gone astray but it was merely Sneary's sword striking things as it swung from his hip. Sneary, as you all know, habitually carries a sword around with him. He says it makes him more polite.

Shortly afterward, Gordon Dewey came, accompanied by his IBM electric typer, and for a time we just sat there and jabbered about fascinating things. Sneary examined all parts of my electrically operated mimeograph like he was imprinting its structure on his mind so he could go home and duplicate it some evening. He declared he was fascinated by machinery, but this I hold to be a primitive trait, for my mimeo has moving parts. I didn't ask him if he were mechanic-



ally inclined because he'd have leaped at the chance to say no, he was Rick Sneary.

Bye and by Rotsler came along and a more bemused eye never fell on my sensitive fannish face than the eye of that professional artist. He made stencils and laughed with the rest of us but you could see that his mind was across the world searching for some indefinable something. Sheeks, we had a whole house full of indefinable some-things; why did he look across the world?

Why did you, Rotsler?

Later, typers began thrumming and conversation slowed down, and for a while only esoteric cries of anguish or joy rose from the gathering, depending on whether a wrong key was struck or some wonderful remark passed somebody's lips.

I just wandered around being hospitable, I guess. This is my excuse for not turning anything out at the session. I started several articles, but never could finish any. They would not jell.

I remember one article I did part of. It was to have been called "Sneary and Burbee Face to Face" or something equally baroque. It seems that Sneary and I, often at loggerheads in the fan press, are oldtime correspondents. I am the oldest correspondent Sneary has. He does not prize me on this account, however. Also, I was the first fan to publish a Sneary letter in a fanzine (1944). Sneary does not look at me starry-eyed because of it. Why not?

Anyhow this article was to have commented, perhaps wittily, on the fact that Sneary and I have seen each other but 3 times in all these years! Once in 1946 we met at the LASFS and played a game of weird chess. Then in 1948 I saw him in a bookstore on South Vermont but didn't recognize him. This incident should have rocked fandom back on its heels but nobody paid any attention to it.

Then, this 3rd meeting. It was obvious that this meeting of two hardened old fans (one of whom is Director of Young Fandom!) should have been of fannish consequence. You would think an article like that would write itself. You would think I could bang out a page on the subject with the speed of an antelope. The punchline was to have been: "Don't you think we're seeing too much of each other?"

After a time Rotsler spoke. He said something about going out but coming back. At least that was the gist of it. He was talking pure owl so I didn't catch all of it. He came back and spoke fan again and everything went on as before. Then Isabelle served up food and we stoked the fannish furnaces.

I turned on my wire-recorder and got some key-clacking that was the one-shot being written. Actually, it was Dewey's IBM electric typer going. This is the typer on which L Ron Hubbard wrote "Type-writer in the Sky" (for which reason Ackerman is trying to buy it for the Foundation). Dewey was going like crazy on it just as though he had gotten inspired and was evolving a new science on the stencil.

After a time we all sat in a well-placed circle and began to toss words. We talked of space-suits, houses of ill-fame, space suits, flies with wings off, the decline of fandom, and the Outlanders. Before long we realized that Sneary, one of the four charter members of the Outlanders, didn't know what the Outlanders had been organized for. First thing we knew we were baiting Sneary and for this reason the wire now bears the title "Sneary at Bay" and is a cherished possession of mine. "Sneary at Bay" as it is listed on fan curiosa checklists, will not be sent to anybody as I said it would last Warp. I could ask for a bond of \$10 from those who wish to borrow it, and since no fan ever has had \$10 all at one time, this wire will stay safe with me.

At a very reasonable hour the session ended. A few days later Sneary sent me his part of the round-robin editorial and along with it

an article titled "An Outlander Visits the Insurgents". It was high-class Sneary stuff but he refused me permission to publish it. I insisted, so he said OK, and he would rewrite it but he warned me that the rewrite would "be more vitriolic." It does not appear here, but I will publish it in my FAPAZINE Burblings, very probably. You non-FAPA members can have a copy by dropping me a card requesting one. I can assure you that his version of the session is vastly different from mine. This is because Sneary and I are two separate people.

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# The Ideal Fanzine

"The ideal fanzine," I said the other day to Laney, "should not run more than two issues."

He immediately began to marshal forces for a tremendous argument, but I forestalled his preparations by launching into a monologue on the subject of fanzines, and he listened carefully to me, as people usually do when I display my fine mind and null-A reasoning to them, and when I was through he said, "By God, you're right!"

I told him that the first issue of a fanzine should follow certain clearly defined and infallible rules. As a prime requisite it should be hektographed, almost totally illegible, and the margins should run right into the stapled edges. Grammar and spelling should follow the characteristic if inconsistent methodology of the editor whose keen young brain is far too wary to be trapped into the unsemantic rules of Webster and Roget. And somewhere among the non-typed portion (I hesitated to call it artwork) there must be a lopsided slanted cylindrical thing blowing smoke out of one end against a backdrop of asteroids.

The lead article may have many titles in different first issues, but the gist of it is about the same. "Are Fans Human?" is one way of saying it, and the author will invariably conclude that while fans may be nuts they're still smarter than people because they are cognizant of the deeper significance of science fiction and knew about the atomic bomb and rockets and stuff like that long before people did. There should also be a piece of doggeral verse by an even more unknown character than the author of the article, whom no one ever heard of either, and the poem should preferably sigh for a lost Martian princess; though it is also permissible to lament nostalgically for the hell-roaring days of early spaceflight or to chronicle the plaint of a Martian for more water. Somewhere in the poorly scanning lines should appear the phrases "rockets' soaring blast" and "space-dive on Rigel III," and there should be some reference to a blind minnesinger "of the spaceways".

The editorial, which obviously was written before the rest of the ideal fanzine took form, should contain a glowing account of the editor's plans, listing an imposing lineup of fan talent, none of which shows up in the final result. There should be an impassioned plea for material, material, MATERIAL! No matter what it is, the editor begs you to enter something in his big prize contest. He can use everything, though he is somewhat overstocked on fiction because he's writing most of that himself. And whether or not it wins one



of the big free prizes, he'll be glad to send you a free copy of the issue your stuff appears in.

The editor also goes on to state that this is his first attempt at publishing. He didn't even know that there was this wonderful thing stf, which enabled sensitive young boys to view the past present and future as part of one continuous roll or scroll, until just one year ago when he discovered Startling Stories. (He bought the magazine on account of the naked woman on the cover, which he kept stashed in the bathroom until his mother found it the next week and burned it up.) He's been reading stf for almost a year now and thinks it is the most wonderful thing he's ever been privileged to share. It is one of the few hopes of an ill world. He brags archly that he has a collection of more than 60 mags now, and inquires if there was such a magazine as Unknown--he's heard it mentioned but has never seen a copy.

He says that HYPERSPACETUBE is going to appear on a monthly schedule. Already by the second line of the editorial, he has a nickname for the mag, calling it HY. And forever after, he refers to it simply as, HY.

In an obscure location near the back of the mag is a second editorial. This one is obviously written at the last, either to fill up a page, or to supply the editor with a space to blow off some accumulated phlegm. This one says that he realises the hektography is bad, especially on pages 6 and 7, but they were the first pages he ever ran off and he didn't realise that so much water would make it spot or that the pan had to stand 24 hours before putting on another master.

He apologises for such a scanty offering but says that next month's issue will show a real improvement. He is sick of hektography. It makes his hands purple. So next month's issue of HY will be mimeographed if he can get the use of the mimeograph at school. Or maybe he will buy one, though he is experiencing a great shortage of cash at the moment. Next issue will have a lithographed cover and he wonders if some lovers of fanzines would send in contributions towards paying for it. Once again he pleads frantically for material and bids us adieu till next month when HY will again appear before an eager world.

Well, HY does not come out next month. In fact it does not come out for six months. Since you haven't been waiting breathlessly for it, it seems no time at all before #2 is in your mailbox. The editorial, obviously written last of all this time, is both proud and apologetic. Proud because the magazine is mimeographed, apologetic because the mimeography is just about illegible. He explains that he is sorry about all the strike-overs but explains that he didn't know about correction fluid until he'd almost finished the magazine. And he asks the readers to bear with page 8; he didn't notice he'd forgotten to take off the ribbon until he'd gotten to line 37.

He proudly presents a long and weakly written story by David H. Keller. There is also a book review by Forrest J Ackerman, but internal evidence shows that it is well over a year old. In a less conspicuous spot is a story by the editor about a war in space. It stops in mid word at the bottom of the page and it takes an assiduous reader indeed to find the line and a half of continuation buried on a preceding page.

The editor of HY says that from now on he is going to feature his letter section, but he can't figure out what to call it. So he is going to have a big prize contest to select a name. (He makes no mention anywhere in #2 of the big prize contest for material mentioned in #1). Anyway this letter department is going to be a big thing so



won't you all sit down right now and write a letter to HY? He will personally answer each and every one. You turn to the letter department and find two long letters from two guys you never heard of, a post card from Charles Burbee, and a note from Coswal giving his wantlist of Weird Tales. None of these communications are readable because the editor has copiously annotated them with his own casual commentary, so you can make head or tails of none of it.

Towards the end of the editorial he remarks that there is no lithographed cover. He says he has got to start charging a subscription price for this mag because the cost of stencils and ink and paper has gone up. Besides, he isn't sure that it is all worthwhile because some of the pro mags do not seem to realise that Science Fiction has a Mission. For further remarks on this topic see page 8 or maybe page 12 for the article, "The Future of Science-Fiction."

He closes by explaining that what with going to school and having final exams he finds it impossible to publish monthly as first planned so he is setting up a bi-monthly schedule. He artlessly but boldly announces that he is helling around a lot too (coyly mentioning that there is a big beer stain on the top of this very stencil) and so he finds his time is limited to a great extent. But he wishes to thank those who have cooperated in his publishing efforts, and hopes that the next issue will bring about all the changes and improvements he is aching to see. And send him material, material, MATERIAL!

And that is the last you see of HYPERSPACETUBE, the Fanzine with a Future. The editor has discovered the thanklessness of slaving at typer and mimeo for the dubious reward of a few letters of praise. He has dropped out for good. He learns in only two issues what some of us aren't aware of even after our 30th fanzine. He learns that fan publishing is thankless and messy and worthless, and he spends his time and money henceforth on beer and the pursuit of complaisant girls.

"Do you see why that is the ideal fanzine?" I said to Laney. "This guy is normal. He passes through the fanzine stage, catches on in a flash, and rushes right out again. The mag he published was done by a normal man with normal reactions. Do you see why we need more of these fanzines, instead of the mags we have now that are run by emotional and psychiatric foulups who seek compensation for basic faults in fandom?"

"By God, you're right," said Laney.

So I wrote this article for him and he's going to publish it.

## I LOOK OVER A FEW NOTES

I made a lot of notes for this issue of Burblings. Some of the notes run two or three pages, and these we call articles. Let's see, here is an article titled THE SUPERSONIC COSLET, in which Coslet Gets Shot to Ribbons. It slams at Coslet, GAPA and Coslet's semantic confusion, etc. But it is all sort of dated. I'm not going to use it here. Not worth it, anyhow. I'll quote one sentence from it: "So I join GAPA, using the change from a 5-dollar bill to buy an airtight airfoam plug for the hole in my head." Well, anyhow, I am not going

to use the article. Then here, scribbled on a time ticket, is a note for a postcard to Coslet: "Does your bible study show where Christ was from the age of 12 to the time he was 30? Did he go to India to study mumbo-jumbo to impress the ignorant people who would call his trickery 'miracles'?"

Then there are a few mailing comments. Under Morpheus #2 I find some reference to Pederson's remark about calling his editorial department "Beer Mutterings." I made some mention of forming a society for the protection of people from 14-year-old roues. Also some slam at his "semantic" writing, which, the notes go on to say, "partake of biblical obscenity." Which brings to mind a remark I made to a neighbor yesterday. He was exclaiming about some people next door to him who were out working in their yard all day Sunday. He said he was rather surprised because they were such religious people and here they were working on the Lord's Day. I said: "You are taking the bigoted, or narrowminded, or intolerant, or Christian point of view." When he stared at me and chuckled, I repeated it and he laughed like crazy. This demonstrates the beauty of living next door to a FAPA member. Which takes me to another aside. This neighbor, Jack, got interested in the bunch of books I have. Mostly Max Brand stuff. He had a three-week vacation, so he managed to plow through a flock of books at the rate of two a day. One day he came back, eyes aghine. "You got any more books like this--this science fiction stuff?" He held out my copy of Space Cadet which I could not sell for \$1 to some local fan. "Oh, that," I said. "Well, you haven't read The Border Bandit, have you? There's a good yarn." "But that's another Max Brand, isn't it?" he said. "Why, sure," I said. "It's better than science fiction." "No, no!" he said. "I read science fiction a couple of times before in some magazine but it was strictly kid stuff, with beautiful girls in danger and a stalwart hero and spaceships like hot rods. But this stuff! It's real. It's adult! It's really good! I want more like it." "Well," I said, "I'll give you some stf if you insist on it, but you'd learn a lot more and be a lot better entertained reading a good solid Max Brand western. After all, one well-written Western is more significant than all the science-fiction ever written."

Later he came back with Adventures in Time and Space and told me he was going to write me an article for Burblings (a random copy of which he had seen). He said it would cover the initial problems of the men who conquered space. "You write it, and I'll publish it," I said. That was the right thing to say, because no more has been said about it.

And as I look farther from or rather through my notes I see an item labeled News Item: "FORREST J ACKERMAN TO HEAD AMAZING STORIES. In an exclusive interview last night Forrest J Ackerman admitted that he had been 'approached' by Z-D and they were 'dickering' (he rolled the word lusciously off his tongue).

"If FJA takes over the editorship of Amazing, one can look for a complete reversal of policy, the meteoric rise of LASFSers to pro-authordom, and an early demise of the magazine."

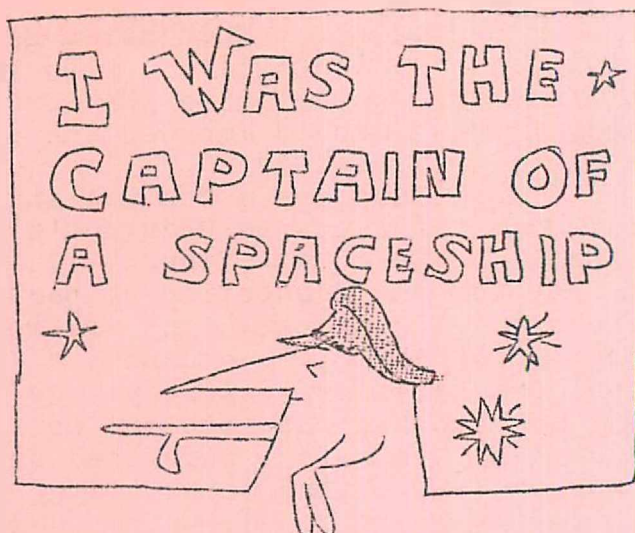
And then there was another note for a paragraph showing that SAPS is a proving ground for FAPA. "EYETRACKS" was the title of another projected article, and told or rather would tell of the danger of letting your mint books sit out where people could glance through them and get eyetracks on the mint pages.

But of course now none of these articles or sketches will ever be written. These are the notes I could find of the few notes I make



"Ever daydream of being a spaceship captain, you guys, or the leader of the first expedition to Centauri....?"

--Don Wilson in Primal #1



"Gunners alert," I said, and the word sped toward the sixty-nine gun stations in my craft.

Through the radarvisiscreen I saw Aldebaran IV swimming ominously up toward me and felt a surge of fear that I concealed from Lieutenant Fujima and Paymaster Jansen, who stood nearby, staring at the same screen.

This was it, the moment for which ten thousand million dollars had been spent and five thousand men had been expended.

"Fleet of spacecraft Green Zero Nine, Orange Zero Three," said the wall-speaker, which indicated that the lookout was ready and alert. If his voice wavered but a little, it was the reflection of the apprehension that stirred in all of us.

The screen shifted and now I could see them, too. There they were, six--no, seven large battleships of the Zudar type, emerging at the place of the ecliptic.

"Communication beam on," I said.

"C-beam on," said the control room speaker.

"Ahoy, flagship!" I said into the microphone, as the murky figure of an Aldebaran officer began to take shape in the screen. The image suddenly cleared into a razor-sharp picture as the compensators matched the beam.

"There is only one of you?" said the heavy-faced officer, his quick eyes taking in me and the two men who stood by my shoulder.

There was no way to avoid what was coming. I knew their scanners were out to the limit and I knew that they could detect the output of a radium-painted watch dial at two thousand parsecs. He knew damned well we were alone! One ship, against seven dreadnoughts! One cruiser with but sixty-nine guns against these two-hundred gun monsters!

"Come aboard for parley," said he. "Prepare for contact." He switched off. It had been a strictly unorthodox exchange, without any of the usual amenities or conventional trading of names, stations, missions.

"You can't go, sir," said Lieutenant Fujima.

"It's like walking naked into a dwarf star," said Jansen, his blue eyes alight with concern for his captain.

"Hell with it," I said. "This is what I've--"

"What does M-A-R-S spell, daddy?" said a childish voice.

Lieutenant Fujima's excitable Oriental face faded away for a moment. "Huh?" I mumbled. Then I said, "Break out the gig, Jansen, if you please."

"How do you say that word? What does M-A-R-S spell, daddy?" It was that voice again.

This time Lieutenant Fujima's concerned face faded away entirely.



The long sloping walls of my ship dimmed from sight, to be replaced by the angular lines of a living-room. I was lying on the couch, day-dreaming, and the voice was the voice of my little boy, laboriously spelling out a comic-book yarn.

"Huh?" I said again, looking up. Fujima and Jansen were gone now. So was the screen with those seven deadly battleships.

"Daddy!" his voice was impatient now. "I asked you something. Aren't you listening?"

"Sure, sure," I said. "What do you want?"

"What does M-A-R-S spell?"

"That spells Mars."

"What's that mean?"

"Mars is a planet. That is, it's like the Earth and it's several million miles away and the same sun shines there every day like it does here."

"Can you see it in the sky at night? Is it a star?"

"Well, not exactly a star. A star is really a sun, just like ours, only so far away that it's very small. But Mars shines in the sky at night just like a star, so I guess you could call it a star."

"Could we see it from the back porch?"

"Sure, it's out there plain enough."

"Will you show it to me? I mean tonight when it gets dark?"

"Sure," I said. "I'll show you Mars and Venus and the rest of them."

"OK," he said, and went back to his comic book. I went back to my couch.

Silly, being jerked back to the little solar system when I was venturing into the dimly known and dangerous areas of the outer galaxy -- on a dangerous mission. Mars! Ha! That stupid little planet. My God, there were millions of other worlds, many of them peopled with strange and treacherous humans and half-humans, and some things that were even worse. And Aldebaran IV was a hell-hole of space.

In fact I was damned close to it right now. Already I could hear sounding in my ears the voder-voice saying "Captain's gig, ready to launch. Stand by."

Lieutenant Fujima and Paymaster Jansen stood by as I entered the small craft. I turned to them before the ensign shut the screw-door. "If I'm not back in fifty minutes, you will please take command, Lieutenant Fujima, and perhaps Operation Six will be in order."

I stepped inside, their worried glances following me. They would not attempt further to dissuade me. They had served with me before, and knew my ways. They had utmost confidence in me... this time, though, their faith was being strained to the breaking point. After all, their eyes plainly said, when is a man of iron not a man of iron? The odds can't favor you all the time. You can't always win. I'd done it before enough times, but this seemed like THE time--the time that comes to all adventurers--the Last Time-- I gave them a tight-lipped smile as the screwdoor shut past their line of vision.

In a moment we had cast off and were headed toward the Aldebaran flagship which floated like some towering dinosaur dead ahead, blotting out, in its sheer immenseness, its home planet and occulting two of its escort.

I stood by the viewport. The ensign did not venture to speak. I stood alone and thought my own thoughts. This was it, certainly. If I could not convince the Aldebaran captain of my plan, my ship would be instantly annihilated and I would be tortured to death with infinite slowness with the royal family looking on and popping octopus eyes into their mouths like salted peanuts as they watched. As a refinement in torture, they'd eventually strap a perceptor on me so I could see without eyes and could observe them popping my own eyes into their

mouths, also like salted peanuts.

I had not much time for such thoughts, or any thoughts. We were in grapnel range now and I heard the metallic chunk of the magnetic tow-block strike our hull and then another and another, and we were being pulled in, power off. Into the gigantic airlock we went, and in a moment our screwdoor was being opened. I stepped out into the company of three sullen guards...frozenfaced as fish, they were--wait! The one in the middle! I knew that face! A gray memory flashed to me--that dismal storm on Longar VII, no water, no heaters, and that face that begged for both... I had saved this man's life. But! He'd been a prince, then! Now? A common soldier? I caught a fragment of thought from him--he and I had practiced Aldebaran thought-transference during the long long night before we'd built a tiny power drive out of our suit-radios and made good our escape to one of Longar's moons where a small humanoid settlement existed. I was the only Earthman ever to understand the Aldebaran thought-level, which was why I had been chosen for this mission--but no one knew that I could read Aldebaran minds. Not unless Rancik had told.

The fragment of thought was incomplete, almost incoherent, but evidently all he could provide me with at the moment: "The Blue One--do not speak of snakes."

This was all I had to go on. It was almost not enough, I thought, as I stepped into the giant control-room and faced, at last, the Aldebaran captain.

"Well?" he said, hooking his double thumbs into his ears in a gesture of bravado. "Does one seek out the snake in his lair?"

The key word! I must progress with caution of the infinite sort.

He was waiting. I must make a major decision at once. Instantly. "When the visor is fogged, polaroid glasses are of little avail," I answered, spitting at his feet.

He stood perplexed. I could see him think. He knew that I was more aware of Aldebaran customs than he had at first supposed. He could no longer kill me out of hand and beg forgiveness because of traditional usage. We must first eat together.

"Bring food!" he ordered. And another major crisis was at hand.

Food was brought and he faced me over the smelly stuff. "Will you have meat first?" He grinned. An evil grin, it was, for now he felt he had me. His lieutenants clustered about him grinned also, taking cue from their captain. Their hands stole toward their guns. In a moment I would perhaps be a smoking piece of meat myself, lying on their spotless floor.

I picked up a slab of meat and cast it haughtily at his feet.

Shock dribbled through his brain. This, he thought, was inconceivable! His dismay was reflected on the faces of his men!

Swiftly he drew a sword and handed it to me. And now dismay flooded me in turn. What did I do now? I did not know the next step! This was a custom I had not heard of! What must I do? The fate of the solar system lay in my grasp--what was I to do? I sought swiftly on the thought-level of Rancik. It was blank. Fear, yes, fear, swept over me now. I was in a spot. I could only guess at the next step. A bead of sweat stood out on my brow. I felt it there like a lump of ice.

"Daddy, where is my telescope?" a childish voice inquired.

The rapt faces of the Aldebarans dimmed out a moment, then came in strong once more.

"Do you know where my telescope is?" the voice went on.

The captain stepped forward. "Is the blade too heavy for Earthman's hands?" he seemed to say, but his voice was faint in my ears.

"Daddy, where is my telescope--do you remember where I put it?"

The captain, his men, the giant control-room, flared up and vanished, came on again briefly, then were gone. Again I lay on my couch in my living-room. My little boy was standing beside me, poking my arm.

"Uh, your telescope? Uh, where did you put it? Where is it?"

"That's what I'm asking you," said he. "Where is it? Are you lying on it?"

"No, no." I rolled over, and sure enough there was the telescope. He pounced on it. "Good! Now I can look for Mars when it gets dark. When will that be?"

I looked out the window. "Oh, maybe not for another half hour yet."

"OK, but as soon as it gets dark you're going to show me Mars, remember."

"Oh yes, yes, I'll show you Mars."

He went away. I leaned back, rubbing my back where the telescope had been poking me all this time. What a day. A lazy day. Sunday. Nothing to do and no energy to do it. This must be the ennui that creeps over the crew of spaceships beating the long long way to the stars. Like going to Alpha Centauri, for example. The first expedition would take years and years to get there. Boys would be men before the trip was over... People would be born...

"The trip'll be over soon, men," I said to the "gripe" party in my cabin, but it did not seem to impress them overmuch. They shuffled a bit and then one of them, a ferret-faced Texan, spoke up: "Sure, Admiral, we know it'll be over, but the big question is, are we going to stand for Captain Birdsell's high-handed ways any more?"

I chuckled heartily at them. But no answering smile appeared on their faces. This was serious. Always before, I'd been able to jolly them into a better mood. They'd go away mollified, to be tractable for a long time. Not this time. Plenty in the wind, if the signs were right.

I sighed. Being Admiral of the first expedition to Centaurus was not easy. I was not supposed to interfere with the running of the ship. That was the captain's job. I could not interfere unless it was absolutely necessary. Section 8 in the Space Code, Revised Edition 2089 A.A. set forth my powers explicitly. I knew Section 8 by heart. More to the point, so did Captain Birdsell. He and I had been at loggerheads since 3006, one year after the trip began. And here it was 3031, twenty six years out, and we were still at loggerheads. He hated interference from me and expressed himself on the subject frequently.

I had early divined that trouble would one day break out, and that our little spaceship world would be at war. I had set about recruiting passengers and crew to my side. I published a little magazine, of necessity on toilet-paper, and filled its pages with subtle propaganda. Out of a passenger and crew list of more than 2,000, I had 312 subscribers. Three people read each copy, which meant I could count on 936 people to go my way in case of trouble. This was not half (more it was not even 50%) of those on board, but a strong showing nonetheless.

But this immediate trouble must be tended to.

I sat back in my green leather chair. "At it, men. What's Old Birdballs done this time?"

"It's the women, Admiral. He won't portion them out according to lot number. Says it makes for random mating and the kids aren't according to specifications. That we don't like."

"I see," I said. "According to the sex sheet, 123 girls came of age this fiscal year and should be rapidly impregnated according to Paragraph 69 of our S. O. S. O. also states that they should be



apportioned to those men who carry the same number, as drawn from the Cat Pot. Since 109 young men are eligible, this means each man gets a girl and there will be 14 Free Agents Special Service, abbreviated Free---"

"Ya, and Birdsall wants to change that. Says only 12 men qualify and each gets 10 girls. He wants the remaining three. Migod, Admiral! That's hell!"

I wanted to keep peace. "Hien," I said heartily. "Who's the best mumbly-peg player in the bunch?"

The men shifted about and shot quick glances at each other.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but mumbly-peg just hasn't got the old savor any more."

"But how about your dart-game?" I inquired desperately.

"No, sir."

"And quoits?"

"No, sir. And badminton, that was all the rage six months ago, that's out, too. The games just don't seem to have any flavor any more. Like potatoes without meat."

"This is serious, men. How is it that healthy young males like you aren't interested in physical games any more?"

"We like physical games, all right," said one. A laugh went around the group.

"We were wondering, sir, if you'd talk to the Captain for us about this."

I nodded. It was all I could do. These young men, who had been born aboard the ship, had heard of Spring and mating season only from books, yet they felt the season running willing in their blood. I'd have to write a monograph on that. The Seasons in a Can. Mating season was not dependent on outside influences such as temperature or wind from a certain direction or the angle of the sunlight, but showed up even in men who had never set foot on earth and could not conceive of a change in temperature.

"Come back at 48, men," I said. "I'll have something for you then."

The Captain's blinker showed he would receive me. I strode into his cabin. He was sitting at his littered desk. "What?" he demanded shortly. Bad mood. No salute. No rising respectfully. He just sprawled there like a phallic symbol. Behind him lurked his furtive footman, Jike, who, rumor had it, served him beyond the call of footmen.

"Time for the portioning-out, Captain. How's it going?"

"You know, Admiral Tinhut. Don't look surprised. I know what's going on in my own ship."

"Sure, Captain." I boiled inwardly. I wanted to smash his grinning face. "I'd have told you. You just found out 15 minutes sooner."

"I know what you're going to ask--no is the answer. I'm giving out those girls my way. Here's the list."

"But all these men are Birdsalls."

"Right. Going to do anything about it, Tinhut?"

I stepped forward, cold anger growing in me. I should have seen this sooner. A gun appeared in his hand, and I said, "This is mutiny. Put down that gun."

He hesitated. He'd gone too far. He probably wanted to turn back, but now the die was cast. "I was going to do it sooner or later anyway," he mumbled, half to me, half to himself. He pressed the trigger.

Some people overestimate the speed of a bullet, or the finger that tightens on the trigger of a blaster. In my earlier days as a Tiger fighting for Abhault, I'd learned a lot of little things--like how fast a man can move when he goes in low, using gravity and the strength of his legs to propel him...Birdsall's beam cut the grav panel and his head smacked the plastifloor a moment later, his cracked skull leaking

his life away. I rose, whirling, to meet Jike's rush--true to his nature he was coming at me from behind. A quick blow and he was done in.

A sudden sound at the door--there stood the ship's officers, Bird-sall men all, each armed with a blaster. I had one second to live, unless--

"It's time! It's dark enough to see the stars," cried a child's voice in my ear. In a haze, I picked up the desk--it was strangely light--and threw it at the insubstantial men in the door. "Come on!" cried the child's voice. A hand shook my shoulder. The grim men in the doorway faded as the unreal desk ploughed into them. Then they were gone, the desk, the doorway, the cabin, all gone...

My little boy stood there, face eager and earnest. "Come on! You promised to show me Mars, and it's dark enough now to see the stars."

I sat up. "Oh," I mumbled. "Telescope--got your telescope?"

"Yes!" He shoved it at me. I got up slowly and followed him out to the back porch. The stars were out, not in force as yet since it was still early evening, but most of the brighter ones were visible.

"Is that Mars?"

"No," I said. "I don't think so." I looked up at the stars. They did not impress me. There they were, each a star, perhaps each with its own planets, each planet peopled with human or quasi-human intelligences..."Stow it," said the Birdman from Xanoth to the Lizard Man from Hoth, as the Chinthian Serpent Man served them drinks...the hell with it. I searched for Mars. Let's see, now. Mars was called the Red Planet. That simplified things. All I had to do was find a star with a reddish glow and that would be it. I peered intently at one. It assumed a reddish glow as I stared at it. I looked at another one. It also took on a reddish tinge as I stared at it. And so did all the others.

It finally came to me. It struck me--the staggering truth. I, who had in daydreams led the first expedition to Centaurus; I, who had captained a space ship; I, who had gone in--alone--where four Unattached Lensmen had failed; I, who had maneuvered a space ship through the Asteroid Belt with only the tip of my big toe--I, the man who had done all these marvelous things and a thousand more...I didn't know where Mars was!

I took the telescope, aimed it at a likely-looking star, adjusted the focus, and said to my little boy, "There you are, that's Mars."

"Is it really Mars?"

"Sure it's Mars. I know all the stars and planets. That's Mars. Now I'm going back in. You can look at Mars all you want."

I went back in, lay down on the couch. My God, it was pitiful how little I knew of science when put to the test. After reading science-fiction steadily since 1926 (you could tell by the way I walked) too!

Ah, well.

Why did they call Mars the Red Planet, anyhow? Stories I'd read always called the soil red. Some said "ochre turf" and others "red desert" and others "red sand"...I wondered what it really was? Might not be red at all...what was the origin of the red theory, I wondered. Well, the first men to arrive on Mars would know...

Mars loomed large on the screen--not in color for it was not a color screen. We had no portholes and could not know the actual color till we opened the doors--after suitable tests had been made--and saw with our own eyes. I turned to the navigator. "Congratulations, Mr. Davis, you've made an exact planetfall..."

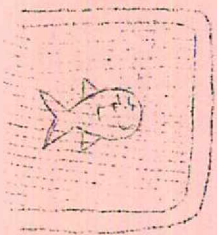
"Hell, Captain, you taught me all I know about astrogation," he said. "I didn't figure the course--you did it all."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Davis, it's going in the log that you did it."

"Thank you, sir."

I turned away as the control room door opened. Two oilers with blasters in hand entered. "What's this?" I bellowed.

"Mutiny, Captain, just mutiny," said one. His voice had a slight Teutonic accent. "We're claiming this planet for the Ninth Reich..."



LOVE AT  
80°

He had his back to me as I entered his house. He was sitting staring at an aquarium filled with brilliant fish. He greeted me quickly and turned back to his fish.

A dismayed feeling arose in me and did not abate all evening.

Here before my eyes was a Big Name Fan of a few years back, whose name was internationally known, who had written some of the fan field's finest sketches--though his output was small--and who had a gigantic collection of science-fiction and fantasy which lined one wall of his living room and two walls of his bedroom, ceiling to floor. plus a large shelf devoted to his specialty. The last time I had spoken to him he had not mentioned any particular craving for tropical fish, or for that matter any kind of fish. Well, that is not exactly true. He kept saying at decent intervals that he could sure cook a fine red snapper if he could only get a genuine red snapper and if he could ever locate a real honest-to-god red snapper he'd have us all over for dinner.

He has not yet found this red snapper.

Anyhow, as I entered his house this Sunday afternoon there he sat in front of his fifteen-gallon aquarium. He did not move from there except once, as will be explained later.

How can a man make such a switch, with no transitional period, from stiff to fish? I don't know. The answer has not yet come to me.

Of course I went over and sat down to stare at the fish too. I had to, because the erudite Elmer Perdue had informed me that it was sheer survival instinct to watch moving things, and these fish were moving, to be sure.

So there I sat, surviving like mad.

Much of the conversation consisted of very simple question and answer groups. "What kind of fish is that?" I would ask. "You mean the one with the red light on its tail and another on its nose?" "No, no." I would then point very carefully. And the answer would come: "Oh, that's a loach, or dojo."

"A loach, or dojo." That phrase ran in my head and there came to me a picture of a lofty, bespectacled youth who once stood before me in years gone by and recited an amusing verse, each stanza of which ended, "the chavender, or chub."

Besides the loach, or dojo, I viewed the various kinds of mollies he had there. Also a Betta, which I understand is a fighting fish but this Betta was evidently resting between rounds. I think there was a pair of Hatchets, too. And two flounders, not much bigger than a couple of dimes. They had chameleon tendencies, their owner proudly told me, in the same tone of voice he had once used to describe how he had latched onto an English edition of "Ship of Ishtar" for 30 cents.

"One of those flounders is lying on the gravel and is striving to



make itself gravel-toned, while the other one--see it?--is lying on top of that three-dollar plant and is getting greenish as all get-out."

"Better look cut," I said to the flounder who was trying to look gravelly. "That way lies madness."

"I've got some eels, too," said this fish fancier fellow, "but I can't see them now."

"I'll help you look," I said. "What do they look like? Small eels?"

"Oh, they're there, all right. I know they are."

Lest the suspense get unbearable, let me say that the eels did show up later from behind the rocks and plants.

I commented on the rocks in the tank. I learned that they were special rocks. You cannot put any ore-bearing or carbonaceous rocks in with these fastidious tropical fish because the rocks would taint the water and kill the little characters. These special rocks were quite high-priced, too.

"Got any clams?" I asked.

"Don't need em," said the former stf fancier. "Got a filter system. I also have an aerator and a thermostat."

"Golly," I said. "This display must have cost quite a bit, with some of those fish going at three and four dollars apiece, and even an old spinachy plant costing that much, not to mention the rocks and all the rest of the stuff."

These damned Americans, always talking money.

"I figure it all runs to about \$300," he said.

"Well," I said. "I suppose all these inspected rocks and special plants and thermostat and filter and aerator are all absolutely essential so that these fish might be pampered to the same extent that they were when they were wild in the Amazon Basin."

"That's right," he said, chuckling. He is one of the few fans who has a sense of humor.

I have known fans who would have risen to the bait with some sort of defense like: "Looking at fish is a cure for the unease we all feel as we wait for the Bomb to fall."

As a matter of fact, he said, a good deal of the equipment was not really necessary. Clams could serve as natural filters. And if you kept the tank in a room whose temperature was close to 78 degrees you could dispense with a thermostat. An aerator was not needed unless you wanted more fish per tank. The addition of one meant you could double the number of fish.

Suddenly his eyes grew hawk-like, vigilant. He looked like Sherlock Holmes when the game was afoot. "That's the matter with that whip-tailed catfish?" he said.

The whip-tailed catfish was lying on his side. He wobbled a bit and flopped on his back. The fish fancier stirred him slightly with a special 75-cent polysterene rod. He thought for a moment he would pick up the invalid with the special fish tongs. Then he thought perhaps the blunt jaws of the dollar plant-clipper would serve. In the end he used the tongs.

He brought the ailing fish closer. "Golly," he said, peering closely. "He hasn't got ich, or fungus, or rot. I wonder..." Here he got up from the chair and left the room as I told you he would in Paragraph Five. He returned with a load of books, booklets, brochures, pamphlets. All concerned themselves with tropical fish care. He handed me some and told me to look up the symptoms in the chapters on fish ailments. I searched carefully. Of course I got sidetracked.

I learned that some type of fish has to meet the female on the other side of a glass pane. Since he can't get at her this makes him want her all the more. In a frenzy of passion he builds a nest of bubbles, and then you remove the glass pane and he wraps himself around this lady fish and actually squeezes the eggs out of her. One at a time. He

takes them in his mouth and places them in the bubble nest. After he's gotten about 500 eggs out of her he beats the hell out of her. Sometimes he'll even kill his mate, never thinking that she might be good for another assignation sometime in the future. This fish obviously does not take sex very seriously.

I wonder who supplied the glass pane in the Amazon Basin?

Another type will mate only at 80 degrees, providing the pH of the water is correct. An inclined plane leading from the water is necessary, that the female may leap up, deposit the eggs, and the male may jump up there to fertilize them.

The vast array of remedies, de-chlorinators, tools, equipment, and the solemn manner in which the books described the joys of tropical fish collecting made me look up at length in some awe and say: "It's just like fandom. My god, it's just like fandom. I never thought there'd be anything as wacky as fandom, but this is."

The erstwhile fan laughed and agreed with me. It was a mere polite laugh; he was worried about his whip-tailed catfish, who had now sought a lonely spot behind a two-dollar rock near a four-dollar-and-fifty-cent plant and was lying with his two-dollar-and-twenty-five-cent body motionless.

At length the hawk-eyed fander mixed up a greenish potion that only needed an alchemical chant and eerie lighting effects to make it a terrifying sight. He poured this stuff into the tank. All the other fish got perky or excited, but the w-t.c. lay as though stone cold dead in the market.

And after a short consultation we two doctors decided that since the w-t.c. was an algae-eater and was too damned stubborn to eat anything else, and since this was a new tank without algae as yet, that therefore he was starving to death.

I left my friend after a while. He was still staring at his whip-tailed catfish who was dying of the dwindles. A look of ineffable sadness was on his face, a look comparable to the look of a stf collector who has just discovered that sixteen pages are missing from the middle of his first-edition Worm Ouroboros.

Later one of my kids got the yen for an aquarium. He had gotten some tiny fish from the nearby San Gabriel River. This was astonishing to me--I hadn't even known there was any water in it. He also had some goldfish he'd won at a school carnival. He had a birthday coming up so we got him an aquarium. We put the fish into it, and added snails, clams, plants, gravel. Then one day we put in three Black Mollies, two females and a male. They were the gift of my fish-loving friend.

One day I showed up at his house. Perhaps my face reflected a kind of concern as I said: "Say, that male Molly is listless. He won't eat. He hasn't got ich, rot or fungus. He just lies around motionless. What can I do for him?"

The fish fancier's wife laughed. At any other time I might have compared her laughter to the tinkling of silver bells or something no less original, but now my mind was elsewhere.

"Not you, too!" she exclaimed.

"What do you mean, me too?" I asked, nettled. "I just want to know how to cure this fish, that's all. Now, you've got a bunch of books, brochures and pamphlets. ."

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