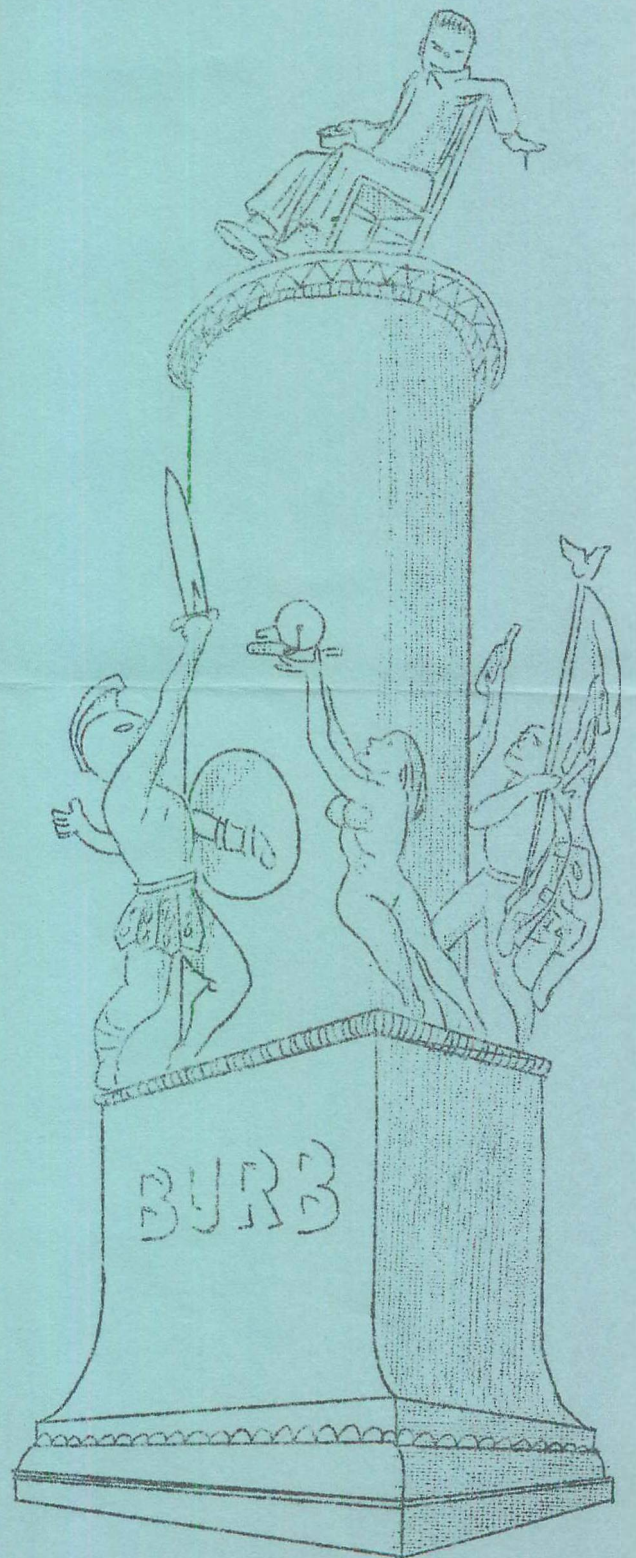


THE MIMICRY



HOMMAGE 4 BURBEE, Volume One, Number One, Whole Number One is published for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, The Friends of Charles Burbee (practically the same thing) and for the Escape Velocity Ego-boost of the aforementioned Chazz Burbee by William Rotsler, at Camarillo, Calif. Aided and assisted in a hundred ways by the Friends of Charles Burbee.

.....
Tell us the watermelon joke, Burbee...
.....

FANDOM IS JUST A GODDAMNED HOBBY

The words of Charles Edward Burbee II. Fandom has never had a better motto. In other pages of this unblushing monument you will read what Friends of Charles Burbee have to say about him. If you'd like to know how he influenced my life, read on.

"Why, that's fantastic!" I was sitting on a box, leaning against the plaster wall of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society Clubroom on Bixel street about ten years ago. E. Everett Evans and Forry Ackerman had written, they said, the two worse sf stories ever. They read them to the group for a vote on the most horrible and someone kept saying, "Why, that's fantastic!" when they spoke of such wild, improbable things as spacesuits and rockets and time machines. I couldn't see the man who was disconcerting the speakers but I soon realized there could only be one person around the LA area who could have said it. It was, I think, my first or second visit to a Half World meeting. Afterwards I introduced myself and with such legendary figures now lost in the veils of times as Al Ashley and Gus Wilnorth we had coffee.

That was the beginning.

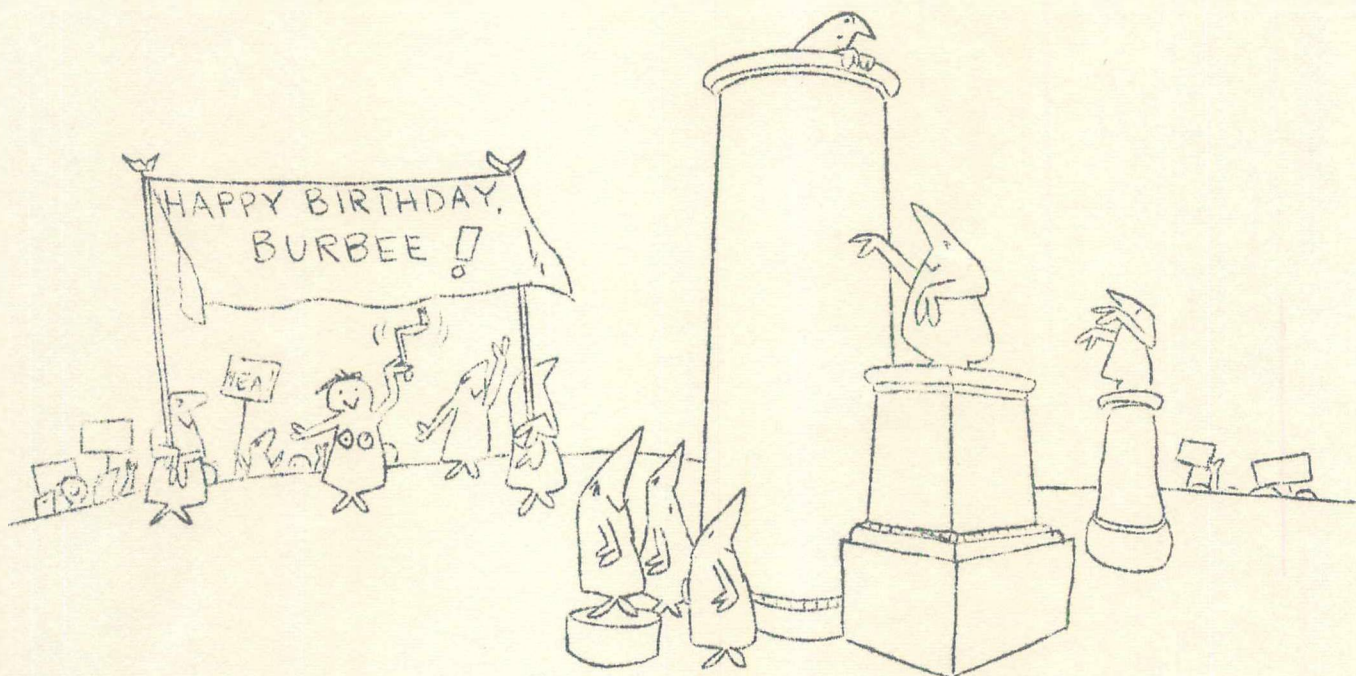
I believe I had been corresponding with Burb for a short time and may have had some covers on Shangri-l Affairs. With one or two exceptions I think I had the rest of the covers until, for allpractical purposes, Shaggy died when it passed from Burbee's hands. I started to art school in Los Angeles in the fall of 1947 and for months afterwards I spent many happy hours with Burbee at his old Normandie Street address, leaving in the small hours with my throat sore from laughing. As I began to know more people in Los Angeles I saw less and less of Burbee which was probably just as well. My throat could only take so much. Besides, he could have used the sleep, I'm sure. Isabel was a jewel. She's even a better cook now than she was then, and that's something.

Burbee invited me to join FAPA, promised material and ran off the first issues of MASQUE, the ~~gaily~~ gaudy fanzine, and other publications. With Burbee I happily skipped through the Insurgents, WILD HAIR sessions, tape recording sessions such as "Sneaky at Bay" and watched his kids grow up. It took an hour to leave his house, even after getting out the door. I always hated to leave, for I don't think I have even enjoyed visiting anyone as I did Burbee in those days. We'd walk downstairs and stand by the car door and he'd tell me Al Ashley stories and How To Win Friends in the Insurgent Manner. From his lips I heard the Watermelon story, about Chow and Cowboy and the man at work who showed pornographic movies on the cafeteria wall at lunch. I was there when he wrote "The Variable Existence of Hyperfan", some of the Ashley Myths and gave the title to "The Rise and Fall of the Fannish Empire." He introduced me to Fogo when he and A.E. van Vogt were talking about semantics. He gave me my first home brew (and to this day his beer is the only beer I can drink. I'm a bourbon man.) and I sat through his beardmutterings when I misspelled several words in that fannish classic BIG NAME FAN. In the pages of MASQUE I published "Al Ashley, Galactic Observer" and "A Coinage For Fandom" plus things by other people about Burbee. Burb gave me all patents and rights to his idea for the "Wish I Had Written That" series.

I've rarely been anywhere with Burbee. A few book store visits and trips to the markets or to pick up his children. Most of the time we were just sprawled in chairs, talking, while he brushed flaming sparks off his chest from his handrolled cigarettes. Actually, it was mostly Burbee that talked. And I wouldn't have it any other way. If there's anything I've done for Burb, it's to provide him with a damned interested and responsive audience.

This is to wish you a Happy Birthday, Burb! God knows which one but have many more of them. This is only a token payment for all the many hours of delight you have given me.

William Rotsler



THE FAPA CORRESPONDENT

Number Three

Charles Burbee should not have birthdays. If Burb had been born gradually, or by halves, or unnoticed, this embarrassing episode in my own life would never have come to reality. My fannish reputation would not undergo the mangling that this very stencil represents. The SheShaw would continue to bask in the belief that she had invented the intermittent fanzine. It is like this:

Friends of Burb—a category that is practically synonymous with all two-legged inhabitants of the West Coast—suggested that I should contribute a couple of pages to a birthday fanzine for the man who popularized the watermelon. I immediately began to cast about for a theme. Any other fan would have sat down and batted out a solo one-shot for the occasion. But I'm not constructed that way. I ponder for endless periods over such matters. And as I pondered, I remembered the fact that I had forced into the abscessed portion of my brain, a long while ago: An issue of one of my fanzines is badly overdue. The FAPA Correspondent had seen two issues, at four- or five-year interval, more than a decade ago, when I needed a title for a brief special publication to commemorate some particularly important occasion. I had promised that it would continue to appear at similar intervals, and even offered lifetime subscriptions at quite moderate rates, with the subscriber permitted to pay on the basis of either his life or mine, if he had gambling instincts. The falling of the atomic bombs had caused me to think of other things and interrupt my publishing schedule of The FAPA Correspondent. I didn't dare to try to rectify the situation without some particular occasion, in

view of the original tradition. Unfortunately I had not chosen so simple and easy a publishing impetus as Bob Tucker, who issued Le Zombie whenever a zombie awakened. Nothing sufficient in significance to inspire a new issue of The FAPA Correspondent has arisen, up to this public memorial to the only individual who still possesses unpublished anecdotes of F. Turner Laney.

And so it is, that the reputation for publishing fanzines on schedule is shattered. Don't be deluded by Horizons, which has appeared every third month for the past thirteen years. This sheet of paper, although bound with other remarkable testimonials to a remarkable person, represents the third issue of The FAPA Correspondent. Science Fiction Five Yearly no longer can claim to be a pioneer in its field. Anyone who bought a lifetime subscription to The FAPA Correspondent had better let me know, quick. I seem to have mislaid the subscription list. The best that I can do is to promise that I'll try to get back on schedule with the next issue.

Meanwhile, what is there to say about Burbee that is new and yet believable? What other fan could send me a three-inch tape that included (a) his first public performance on the ukulele, (b) the announcement that he had begun prospecting for gold, (c) a true, factual story about the former fan who helped to smash a Communist spy ring, (d) the dubbing of Laney's laughter from a wire recording, and (e) further details of the undercover plot to turn the FAPA into a worldwide means of cornering the piano roll market? From another standpoint, is there any other member in the FAPA today who has never had anything remotely resembling a spat with any other member of that organization? Move a few hundred feet to the south, and inspect Burbee from another angle: you will see the only known survivor of the old days in the LASFS who has retained complete sanity. What other fan has ever helped to fill up the mailings by instigating a discussion over the proper spelling of his wife's first name? Who, seriously, put out the 24-page fanzine that was so infectiously funny that I was jolted out of the worst fit of mental depression I've ever experienced, a dozen years ago? Who has had the fortitude to refrain from making puns about the city of Burbank? If anyone is entitled to have a birthday each year, it's Burbee.

That's why I'm kicking over all the traces, simultaneously. I always indent new paragraphs, but this is a special occasion. I never permit my fan publications to be illustrated, but this is the exception that proves the stupidity of the rule. It is the first occasion in memory that I am cutting stencils on any typewriter other than my own for fannish purposes, and I am chagrined to see that the Underwood at the office does remarkably clean work. Three lines higher, you will see the first typographical error that I have consciously allowed to go uncorrected in a Warner publication since the last time I spilled the correction fluid: it is intended to represent silent, eloquence-laden testimony of the uncertainty of my fingers under the strenuous emotions that the name of Burbee evokes. If this were Shakespeare, it would end with a complex peroration about no whit of a Whittier wit...but it's merely a simple happy birthday wish from

Harry Warner, Jr.

HAPPY BURBDAY

WALT
WILLIS

Dear Isabel,

What a pleasant surprise to hear from you! ...I admire him tremendously and I'm very pleased to be asked: it's nice to feel that if I'd been there I'd have been invited. And incidently I think it's a lovely and heartwarming idea. Bless you.



This morning, while I was eating breakfast and digesting my mail, I heard a familiar scrabbling sound at the front door. Putting down my crudzine and marmalade, I opened it. It was our old postman. He was holding a silver salver with a letter on it.

"But you've already delivered the morning's mail," I said kindly. Sometimes the man doesn't seem to know whether he's working for me or the Government.

"I know," he quavered, "but there was something about this letter...I felt somehow that it shouldn't be mixed up with the ordinary mail."

I reached for the letter and glanced at the return address on the back. I held on to the doorpost for support.

"You were right," I said presently. "It is from...Burbee. Go now, old man, and if you wish, retire from your employment. This is the culmination of our work together." He hobbled away, never to appear at our door again. I felt quite guilty, remembering the springtly young fellow he had been when I entered fandom.

"What is it?" cried Madeleine, rising in alarm at the expression on my face as I re-entered the kitchen. Even Bryan stopped his percussive solo on the tray of his high chair.

"It is a letter from Burbee," I said.

She sank back in her chair, awed. After a few moments she spoke again. "May... may I touch it?"

I handed it over. She looked at the return address. "Walter," she said, "in your eagerness you have made a mistake. It is not from Burbee himself. It is from his wife. What can this mean?"

I collapsed on a chair and buried my face in my hands. "It can mean only one thing," I sobbed. "Burbee is dead, and has left me some of his ashes to mix with my mimeo ink."

Silently Madeleine opened the envelope and read the letter. "Oh, joy!" she cried, "All is well. Burbee lives!"

I blinked through my tears.

"Yes," said Madeleine, "not only is he alive, but his friends are giving him a surprise birthday party and Isabel thought you might like to write a little something for a one-shot."

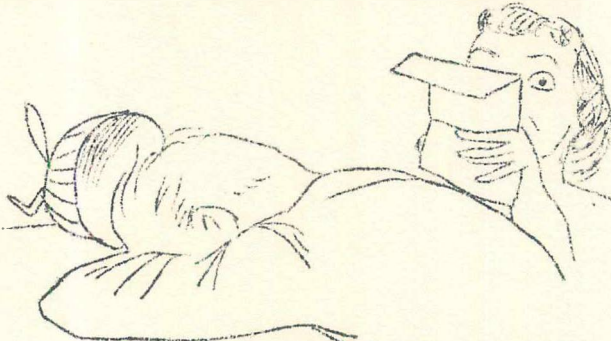
"I should be proud," I said, "and kind of humble."

"But what are you going to write?" asked Madeleine anxiously. "After all, you don't really know Burbee personally. Of course you admire his writing and all that, but this is an occasion more for friends than distant disciples."

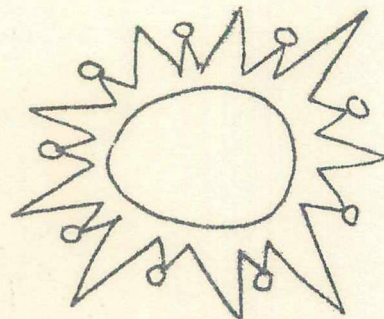
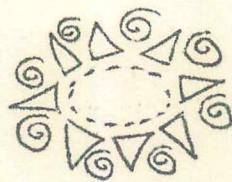
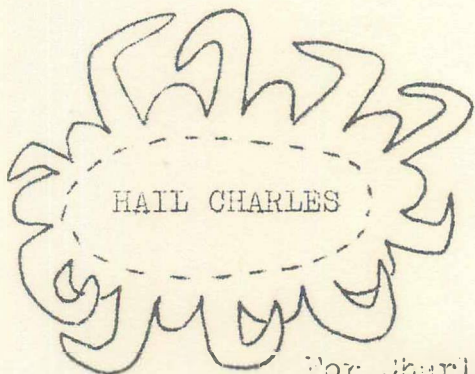
"Yes, I said, "I must admit that for a long time I was secretly a little relieved that I hadn't met Burbee when I was in Los Angeles. He seemed such a scaring fellow and it was hard to imagine him as a friend. But, you know, when you try to look round the fanzine ogre you discern dimly someone behind the saturnine genius, someone who can inspire friendship and affection."

"As with this party," said Madeleine.

"Yes," I said, "anyone whose friends get up a pleasant thing like this must really be a nice person to know. I would like to be there, and I'm not only proud but happy at having been invited to be present in spirit. I hope they'll drink a glass of home brew to this absent friend."



—Walt Willis



by A. E. van Vogt

For Charles Burbee, a birthday tribute such as we now enter upon, must have some puzzling aspects. For here we have a youngish man receiving, in effect, the equivalent of the gold watch that is usually bestowed upon grizzled graybeards after thirty years of service.

Such a tribute would--if they ever became aware of it --also puzzle the great majority of readers of science fiction magazines. Who--they might ask--is Charles Burbee? For what cosmic epic is he responsible? Did he ever get zapped in the third system of Arcturus? (a mighty dangerous sector of the universe)

The answer is no--to both questions. Charles has neither zapped, nor been zapped. And the nearest he ever got to writing a great epic of the spaceways was when he wrote a review of a non-existent novel, with so many colorful references to the story itself, that the editor of Famous Fantastic Mysteries became excited about the novel, and desired to publish it.

Alas, there was no novel. And perhaps it is just as well. I think it might have saddened me a little to see so untrammelled a spirit buckling down to a commercial treadmill.

What, and who, then, is Charles Burbee?

He is the most natural humorist ever to appear anywhere near the field of science fiction. His horizon was Los Angeles. His humor found its meaning in local personalities. At times, it sparkled so brightly that his friends ached to give it national distribution. They wanted to share him with the world.

Actually, this was never possible. The group itself lacked importance, or public interest. Had they been artists of the avant garde, or a famous circle such as exists from time to time in cultural centers of the world, then indeed the pen of Charles Burbee would have won international recognition.

But the Los Angeles Science Fantasy club was not the left bank of Paris. And so Charles Burbee for many years has been the special possession of a few hundred fortunate people.

The years have gentled Charles. He could be a poet now. He looks no older now than he seemed twelve years ago, when I first met him.

Hail Charles!--you are a good man to have met, to have known, and to know.

THE GREAT PLAYER PIANO PROGRAM CHASE, or

Why we never -- alas! -- sent another player-piano tape.....

Charles Burbee, you must think we are ungrateful slobs, unfit to even think of player pianos. We sent you a tape with a few bits of player-piano music from a local radio station on it, and you sent it back full of the sounds of the Fabulous Burbee Player Piano and the Fabulous Burbee Home-Brew and even the Fabulous Burbee, asking that we send more player-piano music, and then you never heard from us again. Well, it's not that we've lost interest in player pianos or that we failed to be delighted by your tape. No indeed. We still enjoy the sound of a player piano, and the Burbee Tape occupies a place of honor on a top bookshelf. It's just that keeping track of that player-piano program would be a full-time job for the GDA.

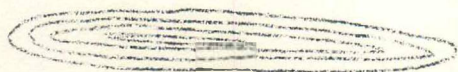
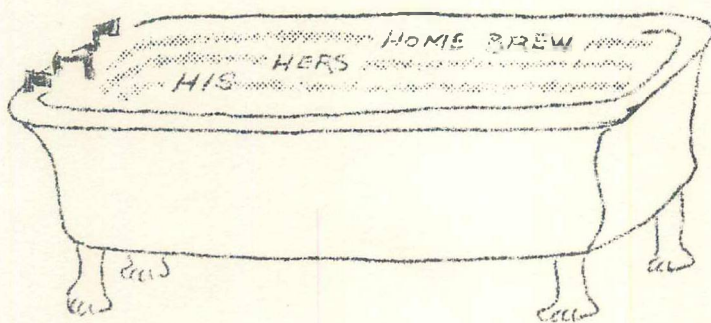
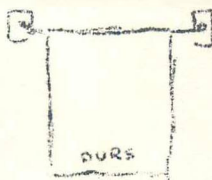


"It's a secret code!"

For months before we had a tape recorder, the program was on every Saturday night. But as soon as we got our taper, what happened? Why, it began to hide. We listened for a couple of disillusioned Saturdays and then started trying other days. After a few fruitless weeks, we decided to send a card to the station asking when the program was scheduled. More

wasted time went by. Finally we found the program by accident, and taped it for a couple of weeks. That was the tape we sent you. About the time we sent off the tape, we got a card from the station redundantly telling us when the thing was on. A week later the program disappeared from that spot, and we have never found it again. Obviously it is hopeless to try the postcard method again; as soon as the station is aware that we're listening, they switch the schedule around. A 24-hour search would be required to catch the thing again. This wouldn't be such a task, but the rest of the programs on

*Yummy
Andy*



this particular station are generally unbearable.....

A note appropriate to the times: "Informed sources close to former FAPA OE Charles Burbee" have let it be known that Burbee's birthday is being celebrated on April 6 this year. It may be significant that the birthday of A. Young (boy astronomer) is April 4 and that Susan's birthday is April 5. Harvard University, realizing that this festive season culminating on the 6th should be celebrated with abandon and gaiety, has set the entire week aside as a holiday.

AN OPEN LETTER TO CECIL B. DEMILLE

by Robert Bloch

Dear Mr. DeMille:

I imagine you must be pretty tired these days, after making THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, and I don't blame you: it took God and Moses forty years to get the Israelites out of the wilderness, and you did it in less than three.

But sooner or later I'm sure you're going to make another picture and I have a suggestion for you. The big deal these days is the biographical film. As I recall, you've tackled this sort of thing yourself; wasn't it called THE KING OF KINGS?

Well, here's another subject equally worthy of your efforts: the life of a man named Charles Burbee.

Burbree's career is too wellknown to recount here; it is rich in dramatic incidents, many of which could probably be cleaned up or glossed over. But it is the Burbree personality which would be the principal source of appeal; the man has more depths than the Grand Canyon, or is it the Carlsbad Caverns? Probably the latter is a more apt comparison, because it has bats, too.

I can see it now: THE BURBEE STORY, or perhaps, A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND. Screenplay by Ray Bradbury and Claude Degler, additional dialogue by Wilson and David Tucker, music by Scott Joplin. And what a cast you could line up!

Vincent Price as Forrest J Ackerman; the William Rotsler role by Rod Steiger; Marlon Brando as Frankie T. Lancy; perhaps Danny Kaye as Al Ashley and Lucille Ball as Abby-Lu. But of course you wouldn't want to stop there: not when you could use Karloff as E. E. Evans and Tab Hunter as Walt Liebscher and maybe drag Kay Kyser out of retirement to do Walt Daugherty.

As for the role of Burbree, obviously it was meant for James Dean. Now that he's gone to join The Great Producer Up Yonder, you may have to settle for Jimmy Stewart, Bill Holden, or whichever one of the Bowery Boys is presently available. You may want to do something experimental and revolutionary and not show Burbree at all, except as a burning bush (portrayed by Gabby Hayes with his beard on fire). Or handle it the way they did in FORBIDDEN PLANET, with just a final climatic shot, developed by Disney technicians.

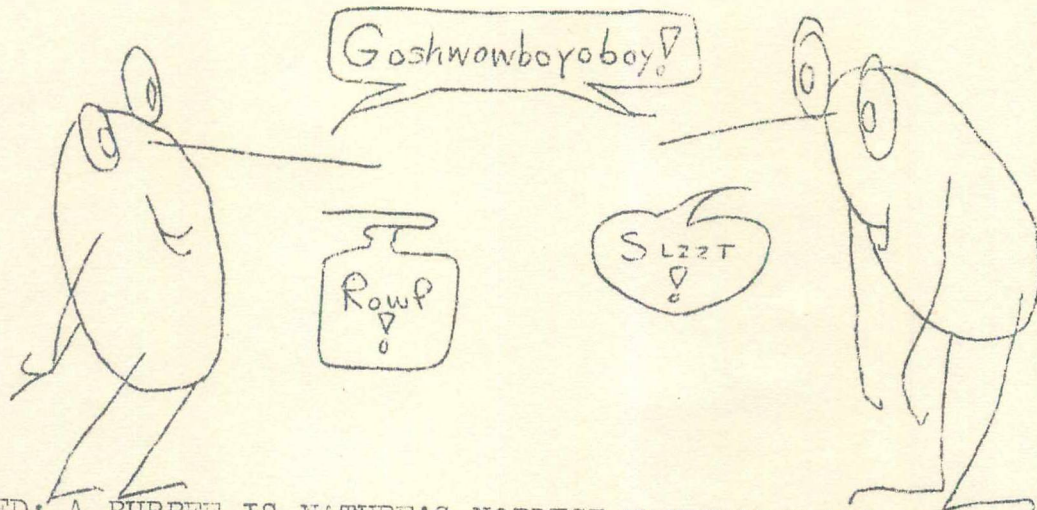
On second thought, this letter is being written to the wrong guy. Only Walt Disney could do justice to Burbree's life. Gosknows, there's been little enough justice in it so far.

Nevertheless I am certain that you, and every good American, will join me in wishing Burbree well in the future. The man should be preserved, like a National Park...except that I'd hate to see a lot of tourists running all over him and scattering their empty beer-cans on him. I'm sure Burbree wouldn't like that, either; he'd prefer they left filled ones.

Thoughtfully,

Robert Bloch

ADDENDA BY ROTSLER You forgot some others in your casting, Bob. I think Jane Wyman should play Isabel. Fred MacMurray as G. Gordon Dowey, Chick Chandler as Cy Condra and we could use old clips of the late Laird Cregar as Gus Wilmoth.



RESOLVED: A BURBEE IS NATURE'S NOBLEST HANDIWORK AND ALL THAT STUFF

Charles Edward Burbee, Jr., was born on the sixth day of April. As fannish birthdays go this is a thickly populated neighborhood. The fifth of April witnessed the nativity of Bloch--Vernon McCain would have us believe that one day people will exchange gifts to celebrate this occasion--and of Botte Farmer and of the Young-child, sometimes called Very or Egg Foo or even Susan Margaret. The second of April saw the arrival of Redd Boggs ("You're always late, aren't you?" a sarcastic teacher sneered when she learned this). Andy Young was born--it is simply not true that he is the offspring of an early, parthenogenetic predecessor to UNIVAC--on April 4th. It should be noted that all of these fortituous events took place in different years ((And in the case of Bloch, different centuries.)) also that the glibly furnished vital statistics are courtesy of Jean Grennoll, Girl Encyclopedia. People--and that includes faaans--born from March 21st to April 20th fall, according to the Astrologer's gobbledegook, under the influence of Aries, the Ram. A treatise at hand dealing at least in part with astrological matters (Bloch would inevitably say it was a half-astrological affair) says this about the Arians, among other things:

"Competition, action--these are the sign of the Ram. Red is our color, the diamond our birthstone. Astrologers tell us that Arian feelings are quick and impulsive. I agree. We are the pioneer types, the empire builders, and our ruling element is fire. (....)" ((Who wrote that? Al Ashley?))

Well, I guess you could say Our Burbee was a Pioneer type--or at least a South Pioneer Boulevard type--and the character sketch is not too terribly misfitting for a battle-scarred old Insurgent like Fighting Chuck Burbee, Happy Warrior and Glad Gladiator.

Burbee holds that only six subjects are worthy of serious discussion: player-pianos, Sex, Golden Treachery (or "Ohm-Brew"--so called because of Lee Jacobs' low resistance to it), Steam-cars, F. Towner Lancy and Pneumatic pistols. It is not strictly true that he would do anything to add a new roll to his collection of old ragtime player-piano rolls. He would not, for example, put poison or cultures of inimical bacillæ in a large city's reservoir; at least not unless it was a particularly choice item which he didn't have.

Most of us, however, would join Lancy himself in agreeing that there is yet a seventh subject--Burbee--worthy of anyone's discussing. Burbee, the recondite raconteur, the legendary figure from fandom's past, fount of interlineations beyond count, benevolent myth...aw, hell...Happy Birthday, Burb!

--dag

THE ULTIMATE DEFENSE

richard
eney

In the Palace of Power, center of the universe of the 369th Chorp Dimension, Llanvid Baxten raised his goblet of huche.

"To the Conquest!" was his toast. "In brief minutes our hypnotized Earthling slaves will rise to aid us as our thousand meter battlecraft pour through the interdimensional barrier to hurl their ravening, searing, indescribably destructive rays against Earth!"

The mighty concourse rose with him. "To The Conquest!"

+ + + + + + + + + +
"The trouble with this universal disarmament business," declared the Great Scientist, "is that you don't know where to get a few atom bombs when you need them quick."

"I know just how you feel," agreed the Battlewise Veteran. "Still, vibrators are enough for common o r household use." He patted the Rotsleresque shape of a supersonic resonator. "If only those mysterious battleships from the 369th Chorp Dimension didn't have engines that blew up and scattered long-half-life radioactives all over the place when you induced supersonic vibrations in them!" BV inhaled once more with a slightly choked sensation.

"Yes," agreed the Great Scientist, "it is a trifle difficult to deal with a horde of thousand-meter battlecraft equipped with all kinds weird rays when they blow up and poison everything for 2,544 miles (median) around. No percentage, I mean...d'you suppose," he suddenly digressed, "people used to wish for the Good Old Days before fiendish implements of war like sarissae and elephants had been developed? But that was a brilliant idea your G-2 had, that Colonel Rapp. Shifting the induced vibration down the scale till it became audible, and then keying words into it, was sheer genius --come to think of it, I should have gotten the inspiration to keep my reputation up." GS shrugged off spilt milk.

"The mere idea was a good one," endorsed the Battlewise Veteran, looking thoughtfully out the window to the field on which Llanvid Baxten's fleet, silent and empty, was ranged. "And you can take credit for the application of it, whatever the application was--I never can remember."

"Well," reminisced the Great Scientist, "Art--I mean Colonel Rapp--originally had the idea, but I saw its application as a weapon, yes. Realizing that one method could crush the hordes of the enemy without harming their equipment, I rapidly put it into operation...I got a tape recording of Burbee telling the Watermelon joke and played it over the modified vibrator beams. Had to keep our men from listening in, of course..." he paused as a messenger entered.

"The Supreme Autocrator commands your presence," this one declared, in firm resonant tones reminiscent of Lee Jacobs'.

GS and BV bowed their heads in reverence. "The next-to-humblest of his slaves hear and obey", they chorused. ("It was decent of the old goat to invent a special class for Lying George", conceded the Battlewise Veteran, sotto voce.)

"Yes," concluded GS as they hurried toward the Sublime Apartments, "that was one hell of an ingenious weapon, and it would have made the conquering hordes die laughing, every one. I wish we'd just found out ahead of time that they don't speak English in the 369th Chorp Dimension..."

...so his wife was drafted...

RICK SNEARY writes about

THAT FABULOUS BURBEE TYPE

When asked to submit something for the Burbee Memory Zine, my egoistic little soul started to think of all the things that that Living Legend, Charles Burbee had done for me. The list proved most amazing, and I believe reflects keenly the influence this man has had on fans and fandom. To begin with:

He is the First Fanzine Editor I ever contacted. (I would like to say, the first I ever wrote, but actually the letter was addressed to D-----y.)

He was editor of the First Fanzine I ever read--Shangri L'Affairs. Can any Fifth Fandomite boast a better beginning? (I believe I received Joe Kennedy's QX the Cardzine before, but it was only a newsboard.)

He was the First Editor, Fan or Pro, to publish one of my letters. (I remember how pleased I was, and how my whole family read it, from my Mother to Grandfather. If it had been written in Greek, in the SatEvePost they couldn't have been more pleased or understood it less.)

He gave me assistance and encouragement on my First Fanzine. It was titled The Fanzine Readers Review, and Burb said I could go down to the LASFS club room and copy material out of their fanzine file. (I would like to say he was the first fan I ever met, but he wasn't. It was Elmer Perdue, but I never let that bother me.)

He encouraged me to join FAPA the first time.

He published my First FAIA zine. (Which is long forgotten, except for a single off-hand line.)

He showed me my First Pogo Comicbook. (It was the session to put out the last Spacewarp, and everyone else talking nothing but pure Pogoese. I wasn't able to speak English for two days.) He gave me my First glass of home brew. Truly a way of life. (Actually I believe Isabel "gave" it to me, but it was his beer.)

All this he has done, yet in 12 years we have met only five times...though, excepting vacations, we have never been more than 20 miles apart in all that time. The first time was in 1946, at a LASFS meeting. The next time was in a magazine store, where we met by chance. Though speaking, neither of us fully recognized the other until later. The 3rd time was at the "Spacewarp" session. The 4th time was at Forry Ackerman's House Warming. And the 5th time was earlier this year in Whitaker. Yet with these few contacts, and a thin folder of letters and cards, the man Charles Burbee, L.L., has helped shape my life. In other words,

IT'S ALL BURBEE'S FAULT...

IS BURBEE AN ENIGMA?



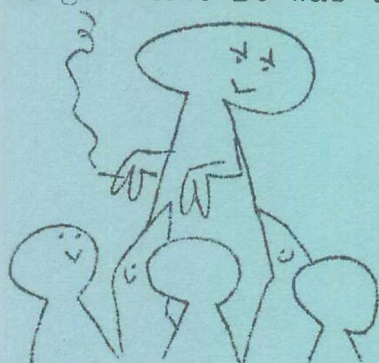
Recently the old question "Is Burbee an Enigma?" was raised from the oblivion it so justly deserves. While I am unable to cast any new light on this subject, I can dig into the murky past and throw some old dirt on it. After all, Burbee and I have had a long-standing friendship - we used to stand for hours at the counter of Sharkey's Bookshop, buying each other books. That was back in the good old days of the LASFS, during the exciting mid-forties, when Burbee's many talents were in full bloom. How well I remember...

At almost any time you could walk into the old Bixel Street club room (providing you had become accustomed to it) and find Burbee the center of a group of rapt, intelligent-appearing young fans, known as the Bandarlog. They would be waiting for him to get up so they could fight over the club room's only chair. However, Burbee always saved the day by outwaiting them, thus averting catastrophe.

One time, when things were slow, Burbee introduced his now-famous plan for constructive science-fiction fan activity, based on an astoundingly brilliant concept which he called "reading." That this plan was unsuccessful can be attributed only to our general illiteracy, which at the time was something like 128 per cent.

It was Burbee who wrote the renowned old club song, "Wie Geht's, Gate?". We never did understand the words, because he wrote them in German, but he did tell us that they helped to make the song a real, swinging anthem. We used to sing the song with great feeling, accompanied by the sound of shattering glass and the amused cries of the wounded.

Many of Burbee's admirers have forgotten that it was he who originated the classic witticism that caused such commotion in the club room on the Eve of St. Horrendous, 1946. The general laughter, good-natured breaking of furniture, etc., was so prolonged that everyone forgot what it was that Burbee said. Alas! this serves to point up



the complete intellectual inadequacy of Burbee's companions of the old days. Had Burbee been a less generous man, he would have sought the company of his peers and there is no telling how far his talents might have developed. Instead, he devoted himself to the Banderlog and helped guide us into the wretchedness of everyday life. Some say that his generosity was a myth, that he only fed us so often because the only way he could shut us up was to put food in our mouths, but who could believe that?

"His hands still clutched his Survival Kit..." Big Name Fan, MASQUE3

"Best Wishes, Charles. I recall many pleasant evenings with you and Isabel. Happy memories for me. Happy birthday to you."

...E. Mayne Hull

Stan Woolston

"...Yes, his colorful language has helped increase the lure of FAPA on both sides of the Atlantic. He has proved to the British that the Colonies are approaching a civilizedness that might permit intercommunication."

BURBEE and the SENSE OF WONDER

When I went into the air force early in world war 2, there was hardly anybody but Bob Tucker singing rollicking fannish songs within earshot. A few minor figures like Harry Schmarje (the antediluvial Peter Vorzimer) and a few major figures like Art Widner knew how to frolic on occasion, but there was nobody worthy to be called a humorist except the bird in Box 260.

When I came out of the air force at the end of the war, I heard somebody strumming away beguilingly by the California shore. His name was Charles Burbee, and he edited the LASFS club organ, Shangri-L'Affaires, a fanzine Sgt Saturn enjoyed inordinately. It was obvious right away that here was a fan who could be mentioned in the same breath with Tucker, but it was not quite so obvious that a new fannish epoch was dawning: the era of insurgentism and post-insurgentism.

I think the first issue of Shaggy I ever read was the one included in the Pacificon Combozine, and the first Burbee item was the Oxnard Hemmel piece in the same magazine. Soon afterward I became a steady reader of Shaggy and a collector of the issues I'd missed while I was in service. I used to chuckle aloud over the Burbee editorials on the ifc, just as I chuckled aloud over the Burbee article in Richard Eney's Century Note in the February 1957 FAPA mailing, a decade later.

This indicates that Burbee is a long-term phenomenon, like the half-life of radium. Of course the shape of the phenomenon has not remained constant over the years. Burbee is probably a born satirist, but for several years after he emerged from his private fandom to become a major figure in fanational fandom he was a very genial satirist, and his subject was almost a serious constructive one: the pretensions of science and scientists. In his Oxnard Hemmel days, Burbee was certainly no Swift or Voltaire: the satire of these pieces entered like the vaccine from these newfangled gadgets used by some physicians: no sharp hypodermic at all, but somehow the bite of it sneaks under the skin and smarts.

F. Towner Laney was probably responsible for the different sort of satire that slashed from Burbee's typewriter starting about 1947. According to ftl himself, Burbee taught Laney how to laugh and rescued him from sercondom. Apparently Laney returned the favor by showing Burbee the possibilities of satire about the microcosm. Burbee had always been a supremely acute observer of fannish foibles, as the ifc editorials in Shaggy attest, but it seems to have been the direct or indirect influence of Laney that led him to write such important fan satires as "Big Name Fan," "A Coinage for Fandom," "Fandom in the Headlines," "Al Ashley: Galactic Observer," and other insurgent blockbusters.

The importance of Charles Burbee as a fan writer is easy to see in the fact that nearly every would-be fan humorist tries to imitate the Burbee style, but perhaps Burbee's real importance lies in the fact that the present tradition of satire in fandom derives largely from his work.

In recent years Burbee himself has almost abandoned fannish satire. This was not for lack of targets, for not even the bladed Burbee satire could obliterate fuggheadedness from the microcosm. However, Burbee has virtually retired from fandom at large back to the private fandom whence he came, retaining only his membership in FAPA, and he has lost contact with the source of his best material. Some of Burbee's recent writings have taken on a nostalgic tint, as he reminisces about his youth, as in "Jesus in the Ditch." These fragmentary sketches are so good that

one hopes that Burbee writes a full-length autobiography, treating not only his fanciful adventures, but his boyhood in the days when the spaces now crowded with housing developments and freeways were still orange groves.

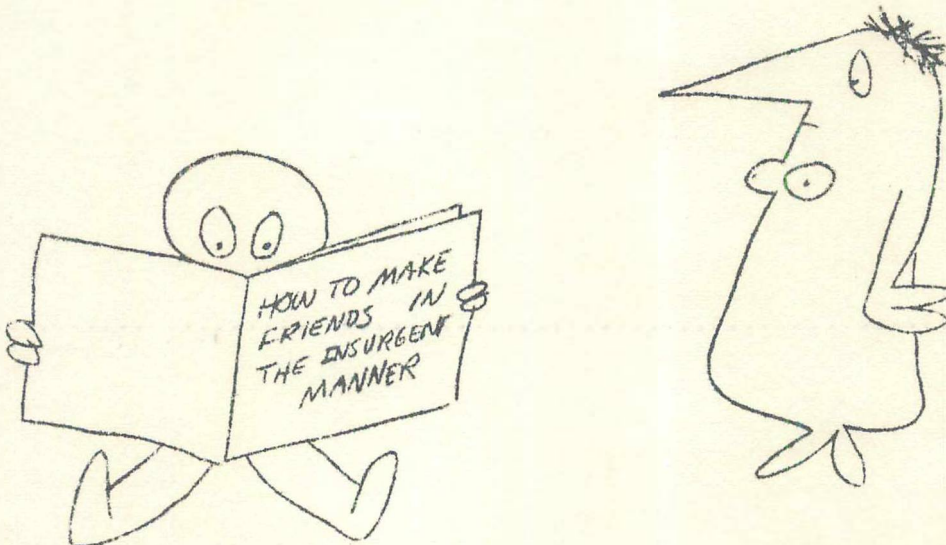
Some of Burbee's recent writings have been devoted to incidents that have happened within range of Burbee's far-seeing eyes, in the backyard or the shop. He finds it genuinely astonishing to learn that other people usually do not know any fabulous people: he himself is surrounded with fabulous people. He forgets that most persons are not equipped with eyes that see as much as his. The incidents chronicled in Burbee's "Tule Fog" might have happened anywhere, and probably did, but few observers besides Burbee himself could have seen them as he did. The source of his material, and his attitude toward his material, has changed since the days of Oxnard Hammel, but one thing remains the same: Burbee is still the same keen observer that he was a decade ago when he limned Sam Russell in a Shaggy ifc portrait and made us look at Al Ashley through Burbee's own eyes for all time, even if we have seen Ashley, before or since, with our own eyes.

Burbee sees with the eyes of a worldly innocent. He has, I think, seen everything in the world and rejected none of it as repulsive or beneath notice, yet he has never been bored with any of it. He has never lost a quality of amazement and amusement at every aspect of existence.

One might be able to analyze the illusive quality of Burbee's particular brand of humor if he were able to analyze the sense of wonder inherent in Burbee's query of an office worker in the machine shop where he works: "What color tie makes your brain work best?"

-- Redd Boggs

.....
Al Ashley sped through interstellar space. "I know I could do it if I put my mind
.....



.....
to it," he said. (From AL ASHLEY, GALACTIC OBSERVER, "Masque" #2, 1948)
.....

THE HOME BREW OF CHARLES BURBEE

BY P. H. HATECRAFT-WILSON



I have examined maps of the city with the greatest care, yet have never again found Pioneer Boulevard. These maps have not been modern maps alone, for I know that names change. I have, on the contrary, delved deeply into all the antiquities of the place, and have personally explored every region, of whatever name, which could possibly answer to the street I knew as Pioneer Boulevard. But despite all I have done, it remains a humiliating fact that I cannot find the house, the street, or even the locality, where, during the last months of my impoverished life as a student at Whittier College, I drank the home brew of Charles Burbee.

If my memory is broken, I do not wonder; for my mental health was gravely disturbed during my residence on Pioneer Boulevard. But I do not understand the fact that I cannot find it again. It was not far from the College, and was distinguished by peculiarities which could hardly be forgotten by anyone who had been there.

Pioneer Boulevard lay across the dark San Gabriel River, which was bordered by precipitous bleary-windowed warehouses and spanned by a ponderous, shoddily asphalted concrete bridge. The smog shut out the sun perpetually. The river itself was odorous with evil stench which I have never smelled elsewhere. Beyond the bridge the highway narrowed until it became a cobbled street with rails, and soon it entered a strange region of scabrous houses spotted with churches in the overgrown yards of which lurked strangely-vested priests and from whose patched towers cracked chimes tolled at the wrong hours. From the highway one went through a curious maze of alleys into a broad areaway hidden by trees, known only by the cryptic name "Saragossa." South of Saragossa, the way narrowed and became gradually steeper, finally becoming incredibly steep as it entered Pioneer Boulevard itself.

Pioneer Boulevard was almost a cliff, closed to all vehicles except an oddly-rusted 1949 Hudson which I glimpsed on occasion. In places it consisted of flights of smooth-worn steps. At the top, after a series of convolutions, it ended at a monstrous ivied wall which (although my sense of direction was always subtly disordered during my stay in the street) I fancied must look over into the broad expanse of Saragossa, to the north. Pioneer Boulevard's paving was sometimes of stone, sometimes of gravel, in places of dirt covered with phosphorescent slimy moss. Its houses were incredibly old, crazily leaning in all directions. The inhabitants of the street were even stranger, and impressed me with hideous fear as I listened to them argue over their boundary-lines and trade curiously stunted chickens over their evil-looking back fences. I was not myself when I moved into the garage-room of the house next to the last one on the street — one whose number I shall never forget: 7628.

My room was adjacent to the fence which separated my garage from 7628, a tall house built of ill-proportioned brownstone. On the first night I heard the crash of bottles and a strange gurgling in the house next door. I asked my landlady about it. She told me this last house on the street was inhabited by a strange and reticent brewer, who identified himself as Charles Burbee and who worked days for the big Pabst brewery far away to the west of the stinking river and the warehouses. She said Burbee had taken the tall house because of his desire to look over the ivied wall at the end of Pioneer Boulevard into the panorama beyond.

Thereafter I heard Burbee every night, and although he kept me awake, I was haunted by the weird sounds of splashing and clinking. Knowing little of the art of brewing myself, I was yet certain that none of the sounds had relation to beer as I knew it. I concluded that he was a craftsman of highly original genius.

The more I listened, the more I was fascinated, and after a week I resolved to make the man's acquaintance.

One night I intercepted Burbee in the street as he returned from work. He was a tall, skinny man, indifferently dressed, with a leonine head, covered with dense curly black hair, bobbing on a pipe-stem neck. An evil-smelling roll-your-own cigarette dangled from his lips. Bluish whiskers covered his face, which had an odd Spanish cast of features (doubtless derived from his English ancestry). On his feet were huge round shoes. At first he was close-lipped, answering my queries with grunts and nods; but my obvious friendliness finally persuaded him to motion me to follow him up his walk.

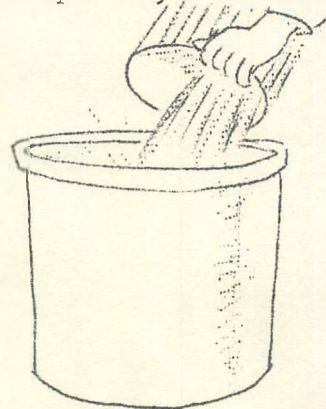


He opened his red front door. I entered. The first vision which burst on my frightened sight was a curiously-carven bookcase whose geometry seemed subtly wrong -- so that its high top shelves (which, I remember, were jammed with books on steam cars and novels by Max Brand) seemed to rush forward on me. I reeled to the rear and backed into the cold metal of an ink-smeared mimeograph which seemed the relic of another era; later I learned that all visitors to the place emerged with black ink on their trousers. Looking about, I saw that the living room was immense, but was furnished curiously. In one corner was a huge wooden box with a loudspeaker buried in its middle. On a creaky table sat a peculiar antique typewriter of abnormal design. In an alcove loomed a Cyclopean piano; I shuddered as I peered at it, for it seemed built for players not of this earth, and seemed to require the pumping of air for its functioning. I decided I should not care to hear the weird harmonies which must issue from that player-piano. One whole end of the room was occupied by an improbably immense earthenware crock, next to which sat a primitive capping machine and which was surrounded by score upon score of bottles, some empty, some full, of an incredible variety of age and manufacture. Framed on a wall was a yellowed and worm-eaten copy of a magazine on which was tied a black ribbon. I saw that it bore the curious inscription Shangri-L'Affaires. In a corner was a tin bucket under a dripping faucet.

Burbree motioned me to sit on an upended nail-keg, and then began to draw steaming water from the leaky, vibrating faucet in the corner above the bucket. He filled the bucket again and again, emptying it into the crock, until he had the huge earthen vessel half-filled. Then he stirred in a peculiar sticky substance from yellow-labelled tins which he kept stored under the mimeograph. He poured in a white powder -- Sugar? Quicklime? -- from uncountable paper sacks. He filled the crock to its brim, threw in the contents of a small package whose geometry contained curiously disturbing angles, and stirred the whole with a malodorous wooden paddle.

Six o'clock approached, and I conceived a desire to look out through the smog over the ivied wall into the city beyond. I would have drawn the nondescript curtains aside, but with a frightened rage, the brewer was upon me, this time motioning with his head toward the door and dragging me away from the window, grasping my arm with claws of incredible strength. Disgusted, I walked out and resolved not to see the inhospitable Burbee again. I even approached my landlady about another room, and persuaded her to give me one on the opposite side, under the garage.

Curiosity got the best of me in the end, however. After three weeks had passed I could not stand the feeling of not knowing. My studies at the College were being neglected, and nervous tension was overcoming me. Finally I crept out of my room and over to the fence, one Friday near to midnight. Sure



enough, there were gurgling and hissing sounds within Burbee's great living room. I stood in the muck, fascinated. At certain intervals the sounds impressed me as not being produced by a single brewmaster. Certainly, Charles Burbee was a genius of wild power.

Suddenly, the crash of bottles swelled into a chaotic babble of sound; a pandemonium which would have led me to doubt my own shaking sanity had there not come from beyond that high fence a piteous proof that the horror was real -- an awful inarticulate cry which can arise only in moments of the greatest fear or anguish. I ran around to Burbee's door and knocked frenziedly, but got no response. After a time I heard the poor brewer's feeble effort to rise from the floor. Believing him just conscious after a fainting fit, I renewed my knocking and called out. I heard Burbee stumble to the window to close the shutters and sash; then to the door, which he opened. This time, his delight and relief at seeing me were obvious. Shaking pathetically, he motioned me onto the nail-keg. For a time he seemed to listen oddly; then he seemed satisfied. He told me to wait until he had time to write up a full account of the mystery of himself and his activities. He even offered me a glass of his beer, which I sipped and found pleasing to the taste, though oddly-scented. Then he sat down at the ancient typewriter and commenced typing sheet after sheet with incredible speed.

After several hours, while I waited and the typed sheets piled up, I saw Burbee start with a violent shock. He looked up at the window and shuddered; and then I heard a sound from outside. It was not horrible -- just a distant gurgle, as of home brew being made in a house on the other side of the wall -- on Saragossa, I thought. But on Burbee the effect was hellish. Suddenly he rose, moved to the crock, took up a dipper and funnel and began filling bottles with incredible wildness. He crashed them together and splashed the brew and rattled the capper with furious vigor, as if he wished to drown out the -- other sound, whose nature I did not understand.

Louder and louder crashed the bottles and clanked the dipper. It became frenzied. Then I heard the other again -- a clank as of the lid of a crock being replaced, then a hiss as of a pressured bottle being opened, the click of a cap hitting a floor, and the unmistakable sound of drinking. At this juncture the shutter on the window began to rattle; it broke loose, swung wildly, and stove in the window. I looked at Burbee, and saw that he was beyond conscious understanding; his eyes bulged glassy and lifeless as his hands continued clanking the useless dipper against the sides of the now-empty crock, holding it over the bottles, now full to their brims. I touched him and drew back in horror; he was cold, cold.

A sudden gust of wind swirled the dozens of typewritten sheets toward the window. I grabbed wildly for them, but they blew out. I dashed after them to the window -- and then I looked out over the wall: not as I had thought over the roofs and trees of Saragossa and the city beyond, but into the blackness of space illimitable, wherein swirled, crashed and clanked an unnameable profusion of bottles, while over all sounded the unmistakable sound of drinking.

By some miracle I got past the mimeograph and found the door and fled shrieking down the walk and into the steeply-pitched stretch of Pioneer Boulevard. I continued running in a mad frenzy across the malodorous San Gabriel River and did not really stop until I was in the center of calm and quiet Whittier, wherein drinking is prohibited and friendly lights shine.

Many years have passed since that night of unnameable terror, but I still retain vivid impressions of clattering down steps and over cobbles past that 1949 Hudson, and through the peculiar alleys south of Saragossa toward that putrid river. And I recall that the moon was out and that lights shone in windows. Despite my most careful searches and investigations, I have never since been able to find Pioneer Boulevard. But I am not wholly sorry; either for this or for the loss in undreamable abysses of the closely-typed sheets which alone could have explained the home brew of Charles Burbee.

Sports and Sportsmen

SubHB 178 licenses fishing guides and makes other changes in the fish and game laws. HB 568 exempts some domesticated game fish from import regulations. (For juveniles fishing, see HB 296, page 1 hereof, and HB 556 on this page.) On game doing damage, see the bills under "Farming" on page 13 hereof.

Well, salvage is not robbery. This is a page by Jack Speer, written, per custom, at the last possible minute, 29 Mar 57.

I missed the last FAPA mailing, being included in it I mean, because the legislature was in session, and the eighteen-hour day they worked us left no time even for finishing off the previous mailing before the next one came along. However, I made my mark on the atomic energy law of this state. Yes indeed. The model law prepared by some interstate conference which prepares model laws had a long section made up of several paragraphs. Pointing out that our constitution requires that in a (sorry, no corflu at hand) amending any law we set out the section in full as amended, I recommended that each paragraph be numbered as a separate section to facilitate amendment in the future, and it was done. I also recommended that the title be changed from nuclear energy to atomic energy, since they mentioned several non-nuclear particles as within the scope of the act, but they didn't see fit to do this.

Well, what else has been going on in this corner of the universe? Alan Nourse, the s-f writer on whom I asked FAPA for some information, finally looked me up, at the instance of Milton Rothman. Milt is working for a college, the state university I believe, and has a betatron in his charge. He has two children. The older one, a boy, they were raising on principles learned from psychiatry, and he is a holy terror.

Nourse has completed his internship and is now licensed to practice medicine. But before taking on the obligations of a GP, he wants to see if he can support himself by writing, chiefly stuff. His wife has a job in some hospital, and Alan is devoting his full time at present to writing. Some of you might see him in April, when he and wife are going down to some conference back in the California hills.

Other intelligence he brings includes a note that Campbell reportedly admitted to De Camp that he was taken to a certain extent in connection with dianetics. Maybe this isn't news to you, but I've sort of been out of touch.

Burbee, you old reprobate, you have been out of circulation almost as much as I. I read the recent Burblings-Elmurmurings with the thought that I might find something in it to fill this page by commenting on, but I don't recall making a single marginal note in your part. Not that it wasn't enjoyable, but a larger volume of material would have provided more chance of something commentable. Rotsler's Tattooed Dragon I much enjoyed. It roused all kinds of queries. Was the treatment of the success-Grennell story inspired by the current song, "I love you, little yoyo"? Why was the lower window swearing? Was ViNo something about wine or something about volume and number? Is that cat a unicorn? --JFS

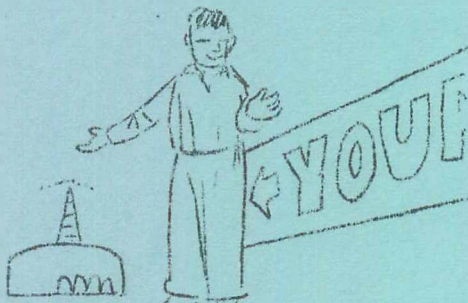
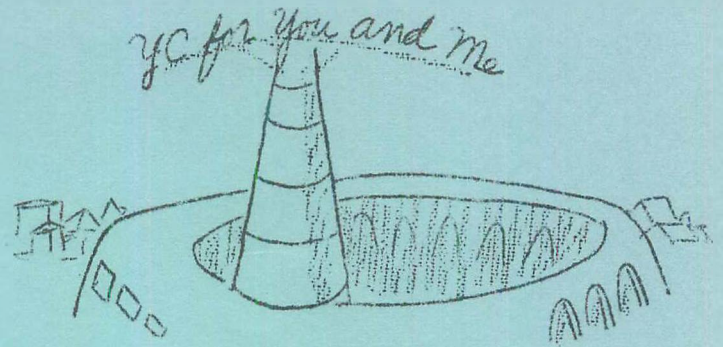
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to the beautiful new Whittier

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your sweetheart or your mistress,
or come alone, but COME!



Friendly Chas Burbee,
Sup't.

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