

1954-04



MAY ISSUE FOR FAPA

MOONSHINE

April 30, 1954

by Stan Woolston

When I decided to print the cover on different stock at the last moment it meant I've another page to fill, or open with a blank. It's fairly easy to think of things I didn't do this time, from using correction fluid to commenting on mailings. The mailings are buried so far beneath my crudpile (new name for my room) that it's unfindable.

Since cutting the other stencils and running them without corrections (first time for me) I bought a half ounce of stuff for 50¢--too much, I vow. Maybe I'll invent a substitute--or a recent brainstorm, a method to "retread" stencils. I've several saved for months; there ought to be some use for them other than wallpaper or insulation...

Card from Len Moffatt arrived today (actually yesterday as this is 1:20 a.m.) saying Ed Cox guested at his place over Easter weekend, because of the crowded condition of his buddy's place in Canoga Park. Now he's living with Lee Jacobs in Venice," until further notice." As a FAP of years past this should be of interest to some of youall.

This stencil isn't cutting quite as sharp as the others; believe it's due to different "carbon sheet".

A couple weeks ago Mother visited a nephew stationed (I guess that's the word--he's been hospitalized) at Fort Pendleton or I guess it's Camp Pendleton. Anyway, recently there's been some publicity on civilian defense tightening of watches, and somebody experimentally hauled an object the size and shape of an atom-bomb in plain sight across the border between Mexico and its Northern neighbor--several times. There was no detection of the device; apparently nobody was put on guard for such an eventuality. And Mother noted it was quite easy to get into Pendleton, too. No identification was required...

A guy on waiting list of FAPA, John Magnus Jr., just sent me an issue of his fanzine VAMP with an article by me in it. It might not interest fans willing to die any time, but maybe the newer fans might like a look at THE A-B-C OF MAKING ENEMIES. I wonder if it makes sense.

On newsstand today picked up an issue of UNIVERSE S-F and note Rog Phillips, another boy once a FAP (in dictionary that's translated as "fuddled") is re-starting his fancolumn THE CLUB HOUSE. I believe I once bought an Amazing just to get a special column he wrote--oh, it had a writeup and pic of him inside front cover too.

I do wish there were more biters in the ranks of the fanoritics, procritics, etc. A few people aren't afraid to have their views published, but some seem to be mighty wishy-washy. Maybe some day I'll develop enough character to practice what I preach...

Perhaps I will see you at the SFcon around Labor Day. My intentions is to get there and take the count with maybe five hours to a night "out." And I don't mean intoxicated, either.

--Published at 12832 West Avenue, Garden Grove, Calif., U.S.A.

A B O U T F A N D O M *a few thoughts...* by Rick Sneary and Stan Woolston

Some time ago Rick Sneary rather quietly slipped out of fandom. This was quite unlike many a fan of years gone by. Was this an oversight?

Late last year I was talking to Rick on the subject. He said he had no regrets for the time he spent in fandom. "I don't think fandom hurt anybody, and it helped many," he said during the evening. From notes taken then, half-way with this article in mind, I'm going to run through some of his conclusions, with the understanding that it was a conversation and maybe in places I stick my wording into his mouth. If he disagrees with anything after he sees a published copy I'll let him refute it through these pages.

When Rick was a member of FAPA he tossed off the motto "Where old Fans Go to Die"--and shortly afterwards left the group and most of fandom lost sight of him. You might consider Rick's an ex-fan from this, and perhaps he is. He still attends Outlander meetings (when they're held--every month or so) and went to the last Westerncon. His activity-rate has diminished, surely; in the last few years he has had a job to consider, and it has naturally taken much of his time and attention.

Friends were the most interesting aspect of fandom, and they still are. Often fans don't make friends in their own area, and have to go outside their old group to find them. Often they think regular acquaintances are dull and unfeeling. That's how Rick put his finger on what he thought was the core of the matter. He said fans usually became active when isolated even from other readers. When they can discuss things with other readers who live near home they don't have the incentive to write, and thus the habit of putting words down isn't started.

Maybe fandom is deteriorating because fans don't have to write when they are found in large centers of fanactivity.

The easiest place to find fans is probably in large high school, college, or research group. Yet this very environment might limit activity. (Percentage-wise it might cause lowering of the drive to be an active fan.)

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That's some of the subjects we discussed. Really the most fanish discussion in years. We also discussed a "fan quotient"--that hypothetical examination to find the degree of fan a person is. Of course this might have been like discussing how high is up, but still we came to some sort of a conclusion: that the "undertone" of a person's thoughts determine if they are fantypes, not the way they answer main questions. The influence of fanpublishing (aj) as a factor, and the individual outlook and expression might go in here, too.

The trend towards more activity of females in the field was discussed. The cause? It may be partially due to emphasis on human problems and de-emphasis on science as an overpowering element of the story...

It used to be said that women liked fantasy over s-f, but there is evidence to counteract that view in the verbalized views of many women fan. Their present interest in science might indicate, on the surface, that the intelligence of women has increased in recent years.

Here's a semi-quote from Rick: "After the days of the depression women gained more equality. I think there is a factual basis to the view that women don't like straight science-fiction, when it lacks characters. Also I think the male fan has changed; more men bring in women to meetings because more fangroups are social and not exclusive like the old-fashioned barbershop was."

Rick did note there is some difference in outlook between men and women in fandom, but not much. That in the past few years more femfans have been successful as editor, writers.

The individual fan probably does not so much actual work as did the old-type fanatic fan, and takes less care--as a rule. A Redd Boggs is exception, we agreed. Fanzines cost more money, but are usually less well-organized (though some are elaborate). It's less the "little magazine" and now more for the fun of it. (Horizons is an in-between: it's serious, but doesn't take itself seriously.)

Yes, we did discuss more; the more I look at the notes the more I see we discussed. Sort of a one-evening, 2-man synopsis of fandom. Wish I had time to articulate this (that IS the word meaning to "make into article," isn't it?)

Anyway, personally speaking Rick thought fandom was a service to him because it had opportunity for bureaucrats. Rick considered himself that above all else--an officer-stock. He claimed I was a project-pusher, whatever that is. (It sounds an awful lot like a bureaucrat to me; it involves getting others interested and active in different ways.)

I had intended to write this up as an article from an interview, because I had asked quite a few questions with the idea of writing an article. When I put my preliminary draft on paper Rick demured, saying I had put my 3¢ into it too and we should call it a "discussion." Trouble is, a discussion has two heads and I'm not very good speaking out of both sides of my mouth, even when one voice is transcribed from notes. So I decided to write this on the stencil and hope. I've hoped it to the end, and now hope is done...

- fin -

Do you want to help the San Francisco Convention and Mrs. Poul Anderson? Karen Kruse Anderson is in charge of releasing reports to faneditors, and she needs list of willing editors to do her job rightly. If you have a fanmag and wish to get latest news on the con, write Karen at this address:

KAREN KRUSE ANDERSON, 1505 OXFORD STREET, BERKELEY 9, CALIF.

Or if you prefer, list her name as Mrs. Poul Anderson. It's still probably a novelty to get mail under that name.

Letter just informed me that Les Cole just returned from an extended trip to Salt Lake City. SFcon mail should be answered soon...

ONE FAN'S OUTLOOK

by Stan Woolston

Wild Talents

About a week ago I finished reading Wilson Tucker's WILD TALENTS, and after returning it to the library browsed through another book by another similarly-named lad (half of him) on hillbillies. Some of the thing about this up-country tome reminded me of some of my childhood surroundings in Illinois.

For the first twelve years of my life I lived in a small town in Illinois, a place almost completely on the level. The Wabash river "bottomlands" served as the border of the farming area some miles away. You might think this would make it very unlike the hill-country, but some of the customs were similar.

I suppose the shivarees and some of the burial customs were pretty prevalent through the east and midwest. In reading about the hill folk's habits, though, I was reminded of early childhood. The porches were something of an institution--ghost stories shortly after nightfall might extend into the night, with one person trying to outdo the other one with their yarns. And after dark there were, on occasion, the shivaree (which have been known to end up in "linchings"--the local version was to take the recalcitrant groom who wouldn't pay off and carry him to the local mill pond, drop 'im in), the night picnic, the moonlight "hunt" that usually (or often) resulted in leaving an unwary person alone in the middle of the woods...

I don't remember much moonshining back there, though. The first of that I recollect was a neighbor in California who had a chickenhouse remodeled (partially) for "wet mash." This was in '33, and the big earthquake came along and smelled up the whole end of town from the shattered still.

The Illinois town had only 400 people in it, and there were quite a few individualists around--characters in the grand tradition of the hill folk. One I especially remember was fond of dancing when he drank his apple-cider; his method of insuring the dance would be completed was to arch his arm around the partner's neck and hang on. (Maybe it wasn't "bootlegging," but Bill did make his own brew at times; he tossed apple-peelings, peach pits and the like in a crock in a back shed and let it moulder. If his other supply fell away he would stagger out, skim off the bugs and other drunken critters, and sample it.)

I remember a girl who was sent to school in an assortment of petticoats and neck-hugging dresses. Of course the poor thing was made fun of, some. The girl took her lunch into the coat-closet and shucked off several layers of clothing before she went into the classroom, and got them on again before her pa arrived with the wagon to haul her back to the farm.

Mostly I remember the old house--an ex-hotel (frame place, ten big rooms with one reserved for the spook of a suicide). On one side was the yard--ducks, chickens, and Togganberg goats in assorted buildings, including a barn that was very interesting to play in.

There was an "atmosphere" about that town. I believe not a single person could do anything, whether it was changing the arrangement of their furniture or something more "shocking", that half the town didn't know it in a few hours. The back-fence gossip was indulged in, but besides that people would walk across the fence, to the post-office or store to sit and gossip.

Out here in "sunny Califenia" it's said that people aren't as "friendly" as that. Maybe I've lived out here too long, but I'm rather pleased with it here; the difference between friendliness and gossip in a small town was sometimes impossible to tell. Feuding congregations of the two local churches back there were common occurrences. Even in that small town they found areas of difference, and seemed eager to widen the gap instead of the contrary.

Of course there's a good comeback to any advocates of small-town country life to make here: I'm speaking of a time almost a third of my life away. Maybe I disremember some of the "joys" of country life. I remember inhaling wind from dry, crinkly snow--and it cut like fire. I remember walking over newly-plowed furrows, and it caused my ankles to ache. I've enjoyed walks in the nearby wood, but did it very seldom; I liked laying on the banks of the "mill pond", even without a fishing pole to make it excusable.

But though I'm not planning to return to a place as small as that one, maybe someday I will. When? Why? If there is ever a political upheaval a la 1984--dictatorship not attached to war--I'll perhaps start an evasive trail back to the midwest or beyond, into the hill-country where individuality still exists despite trials of the revenooer period, the radio and probably now TV. Maybe I'd become a local character--with a hut full of books--avoiding many people (at least at home) and going occasionally to "the store" for some gossip, maybe something to read and eat. And the "bombs" might get me heading that way, too.

Evacuation Drill

Pulling people from the heart of a city in case of an alarm of unknown planes flying their way is the latest gimmic of the civilian defense folk. Today (April 26) the radio report of the successful drill up in Washington state seems to show that people aren't so complacent, or won't be if a program is shown for their use.

If Los Angeles is evacuated people will be spread all over the valley and perhaps beyond into the desert-regions. Garden Grove is far enough from the city that a bomber would have to overshoot the target several minutes to hit here--something of a waste, even though this region is growing faster than anywhere else in the U.S. for homes.

Um--I haven't offered anyone my invaluable plan to help evacuate Los Angeles. The place is swarming with car-driving people, much more than most other large cities, and the exits are limited in number. At this time the "Santa Ana Freeway" is almost completed, and it will help permit traffic from clogging the roads like it usually does in rush hours. But in case of need for evacuation minutes will be valuable; they'll be like arteries from an overcalcified body--clogged.

There are so many new houses that are built with about a third of the proper number of nails. In a few years these will be ready to

collapse--somewhat sooner than the 40-year loans some of them have on 'em. As they get fragile with time, I suggest they be removed and concrete poured in their place, making a wide area suitable for parking-lots with only temporary obstructions (fences) around them. Then, in about five years, a whole row of new homes will be taken out and the nice, block-wide driveway will be ready for emergency use. Charges of dynamite under any large buildings in the way will be ready to level any area that might not be reserved for homes...

Advantage of this plan: it'll provide a wide artery for exit in case of emergency, in a few years--and, most important, it will give the people a "show" in case they're disappointed and the drop of A or H-Bomb doesn't come off. You know, I'd like to see the Sears building go up, spouting Fourth-of-July skyrockets and Roman candles--

On the Airways

I believe it was on the airing of the life--Life, I mean--SERIES of science subjects that the inventor of the telescope was discussing the "nine planets"...

The life of Jules Verne, emphasizing how his inventions seemed to have a way to inspire adaption of them for war-use, was TVd the other month. Dunno how much was accurate, but one thing I doubt was that he used the phrase "science fiction". The writer put that term in the mouth of his publisher, I believe.

On Films

The last two programs at the local cin'ma were centered in the Amazon region; first and I believe the best was George Pal's opus of the soldier-ants, and the second The Thing in the Black Lagoon. I'm not sure of the title of either, so I guess you can see I'm not retentive. Both had characters who were dopes, but at least the Pal story was according to the motivation of the character. The Lagoon thing had loose ends swirling around all over--the scientist (guess who--he's been journeying to the stars, watching spaceships land in the desert, and lots of peachy-keen science fiction things recently) demands things be done his way, whether it's sensible or not. After capturing an amphibian "man" he insists they stay around to take pictures, then a few minutes later insists they leave at once after the prize is lost--escaping overboard. He insists his boss (and sidekick in exploring in skin-diving) not take dart because it might antagonise the monster, even though the monster has trapped the ship by hauling logs across the stream to cut off their exit. The "hero" wants to make a martyr of himself left and right--and ends up insisting twice that the shot monster not be shot again until it can escape to the water--I suppose because he doesn't believe in dissecting. My opinion of this: LA GOON...

Fighting soldier ants with fire, oil and flood is something that isn't just make-believe; mistakes done by the hero here is not stupidity anyway. I'd have oiled myself better to keep off the ants at one place, but otherwise it seems pretty close to sensible. I may even see this again.

I plan to see Disney's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA...

What's Wrong with This project?

No, this isn't a contest; it's an idea for a cooperative fan project. I'd like to hear your views on it; my address is somewhere in these pages, and if you want to write directly I'd appreciate it.

I've asked others their views in personal letters, so this isn't just an idea. It may be tried out soon.

The idea: for someone (me) to mimeo a form suitable for filling in with data from the prozine as it comes in to you every issue. The volunteer marks one form with the volume and number data of the issue, in one of the 12 blanks reserved for months of the year. Of course the top of the form has name of the zine you are checking--a separate sheet for each magazine. Title, number of pages, what size and other data might be included.

The idea is to have the complete run of U.S. and foreign s-f (and fantasy) magazines covered by volunteers--maybe with the same magazine being covered by more than one person to help prevent accidents or drop-out of volunteers bothering the project. Result would be data for an annual checklist. Useful for collectors.

Second form: list of current contents of each prozine covered, with length of item mentioned. Maybe also other material--artists, departments, articles. Perhaps all of this material would not be published, but the idea would be to make from it ANNUAL STORY-KEYS, like the Astounding Story-Key that Boggs and Hoffman worked up some time ago.

I've more ideas--and actual contacts--on this idea. If anyone is interested or even curious, write me and I can give more details.

Oh--of course the idea is to organize the material so as to have it stencilled and ready to run shortly after the last mag of the year is off. Later, perhaps, a rundown of past zines could be made, using the same general form.

I suppose any fan group would have a few members who collect, ones who are interested in such aids to organizing their collections into easier-to-use units. I know (because I've seen the records) that N3F has many members interested in such. That is why I've asked some of these their views--and have had a favorable response too. So a volunteer group like this would be possible. Even the publication might be organized on this order--at least the cutting of the stencils. The publishing might well be done by one or two people.

Getting volunteers who are enthusiastic might well be half the success of such a project. In the past some projects have been unsuccessful in part or whole because enthusiasm, or even knowledge of the details, were missing. I would think the strength of co-operation is mostly in the enthusiasm generated by the interchange.

If anyone has views on organization of a checkdex or a story-key, I'd like to hear about it. I'm almost ready to invite volunteers on the project itself. If you're interested write me at:

12832 West Ave., Garden Grove, Calif.

Two National S-F Groups--N3F and FAPA

I doubt if anyone will claim that N3F and FAPA compete, except possibly for time. However, hearing some of the talk some FAPAns have made about N3F makes me wonder, do they know what it's about?

FAPA has one main purpose: the production of a market and a product for AJ-minded folk. N3F doesn't have such a clear purpose. It's possible to generalize and say it's a conglomeration of fans with various fannish hobby-outlets, and organized so as to be useful to various kinds of fans, if they try.

N3F is somewhat complicated in makeup, and it constantly grows and changes. In some places it stagnates for a time; right now the library is in the process of reorganization, for example. Other parts work spasmodically. The production of leaflets, for example. Part of the reason for this is the expenses involved, and the fact that they are spread over a multiplicity of purposes.

In other areas the group works fairly steadily; the various writing groups (a Welcommittee; a Correspondence Bureau; overseas correspondence and organized round-robin letters; the Manuscript Bureau) holds the interest of many members, for example. The Trading Bureau works through a special tradezine (the Kaymar Trader). Various bureaus and committees are working to do various jobs at all times, too. Actually it's a bit complicated, and due to the election of new officers each year there's a tendency to have to inform new officers of their duties about as soon as they learn them well enough to work well.

N3F has another "bottleneck," too. Quite a few members are active, but more should be than are. In FAPA a member has at least to be semi-active to survive as a member; in N3F they might get by by paying dues and pretend they have full membership. Of course they're cheating themselves, and the club loses out too.

I've been less active in FAPA than I desired due to several reasons. One big one is that I've tossed lots of energy into N3F. As I said, I believe in activity as necessary for sustaining enthusiasm in a group; enthusiasm is a sort of catalyst that keeps the mind and hands busy with the result a sort of pleasant feeling. In fandom it's the partisipation that makes it worth-while. If a person were only a bystander it would lose much of its fascination--or at least that's how I'd react.

One reason I like N3F is that it has variety. When a fan (and I consider myself a fan) gets a little tired of one phase of fandom, he can turn to another. At this time I'm working with Neal Reynolds (director in charge of public relations for N3F) on arrangements for club partisipation at the SFcon. Rough plan is to have brief talks on various phases of fandom as N3F is involved in it, at an hour-long special session, maybe with questions and partisipation from members or the curious. I'd appreciate comments on this. Also ideas for a N3F table.

I believe N3F has a place in fandom--not one that all fans may consider is theirs, but still one worth pursuing.

Odds and Ends

Most of my letters yammer on the lack of time to do things, of late. Of course that's a usual fannish complaint. Perhaps if I could persuade my boss to give me my pay for playing around with fandom I'd catch up with things, but the prospect seems doubtful.

Since last Thanksgiving I've had another impedimentia haunting me, too--regular trips to the doctor's. For a couple months it's been a twice-a-week jaunt taking a few hours out of my non-work time. It's because of a backbone that got out of whack and caused my left-side of the face to become paralyzed. For a while I went to work with a grimace--the left side was so relaxed the muscles on the right side pulled my features over to much more than half way. There was a certain amount of headaches attached to it, too--but I'm used to them.

The doctor uses facial massage, osteopathic treatments, and a shock-machine that sends jolts through the muscles to exercise them. At first the muscles didn't react at all to this--but later they did, with a feeling like an overactive toothache. At this time I can frown on the left side again as well as smile--but I'm still shelling out time and money for a twice-a-week treatment.

There might be two good sides of this. One, I just got a tax refund (when I could use it best). Two, I believe that vision in my left eye is returning. Actually I could always see areas, colors and hues, but the muscles were so weak I didn't scan properly. So maybe this will be an advantage in disguise. Perhaps, if vision is increased, I'll get a driver's license--something I've never tried due to uncertainty about judging distances.

--and Putting it Off

I just about half promised myself, one year ago, to try for an issue of Moonshine in every mailing of the year. The idea of getting a bare minimum of activity doesn't appeal to me at all--but I've not done very much better than that. Perhaps it would be easier if I was organized into a confederacy with some other fans, something like the Insurgents were; they could heckle, challenge and get out a certain amount of material. Some of us may be "self-starters," but I'm one of those kind of slob who appreciate a nudge now and then from someone. And I'm apt to comment on different things that I am interested in--something I read, saw or dreamed. The interests of friends have a way of spreading and enriching the interests of their companions; in fandom and a-j this is just as healthy a reaction, I think.

The Challenge of Space?

A couple of magazines (Scientific American is one of them) have published advertisements of the Martin Aircraft concern asking for young engineers interested in "the opportunity to work with the finest mindpower and facilities in the whole new world of spaceborn systems." They talk like it's a full-blown space project. Its stock exchange value went way up recently, too...

It sure is friendly the way we broadcast such information. If I don't have a good idea on several such hush-hush projects my imagination is working overtime. We're explaining how we would hunt down invading planes--thus giving 'em chance to prepare evasions...

THE ART OF SUBVERTING A DEMOCRACY

Fictionally speaking, I've witnessed quite a few attempts to toss aside the present system of checks-and-balance for one kind of authoritarianism or another. I've read pulp magazine series in which armies battled on the soil of one part of the nation after another; I've "listened in" on the workings of The Red Napoleon, and found that It Can't Happen Here is no magic phrase to prevent it from happening. 1984 was a grim novel on futility and the ultimate authoritarianism--and in recent years the two are found together more and more.

As one of the prozine editors said a few months ago, history has a way of avoiding the traps we see and tripping us in others that seem to appear unexpectedly before us. The disruption in the wake of Prohibition and the resultant resistance to it was mentioned. Our futures will probably have other equally-unpredictable periods, and probably many of the things we see as next-to-inevitable will be forgotten.

In the Prohibition era lawfulness had a double appeal to some of the citizenry. There was the stubborn trait in people that insisted it didn't have to be babied--and if a law seemed wrong to them it was going to be resisted; this set up a demand for what was denied under the law. Perhaps this trait is more prevalent than we know; perhaps it will help avert any dictatorship in our country in the years to come. (The dollar sign--the other big appeal--might help, too.)

At one time an Alien and Sedition law was passed and it, too, was resisted; many citizens were jailed, but finally it was amended. Before the United States came into existence it was common practice to imprison a person for debts. This country resisted that idea, but --and here's a way the country might evolve into dictatorship--we now can be imprisoned or fined for "tax evasion".

Right now we've an odd situation where the individual has to keep records for the government showing how much dough we give them. The laws for this are so complicated that almost everyone makes mistakes in their filings, one year or another. If political capital were to be made of this it could lead to a system like the alien and sedition law: say I have a small business and complain of some practice by writing to some big-shot. In a few weeks my tax-records are opened for the view of a tax-examiner. Results: there's something wrong with my records because everyone makes mistakes here and there. If the businessman (and everyone else) feared this, it would be a very powerful weapon, locally or in a larger political subdivision, to get and hold power all out of keeping with the voting-power involved.

State lobbyists, power-groups inside various organizations or divisions of business, labor, etc. might find this use of squeeze an advantageous one, if they're out for power of that sort. The rationalizing of such an act is easy to visualize: their aim is to make the country better--not so weak, not so wasteful. Tied in with a system of thought-rationing through mottos and the like it'd be a deadly system to buck.

I'm in favor of wide discussion of public policies of all kinds, and also think most people favor keeping any potential enemy (Russia, I mean) away from our secrets. Doing this involves a sort of dance-step to keep from being jostled off the feet by the various influences. The future's challenges need flexibility of that sort too.///