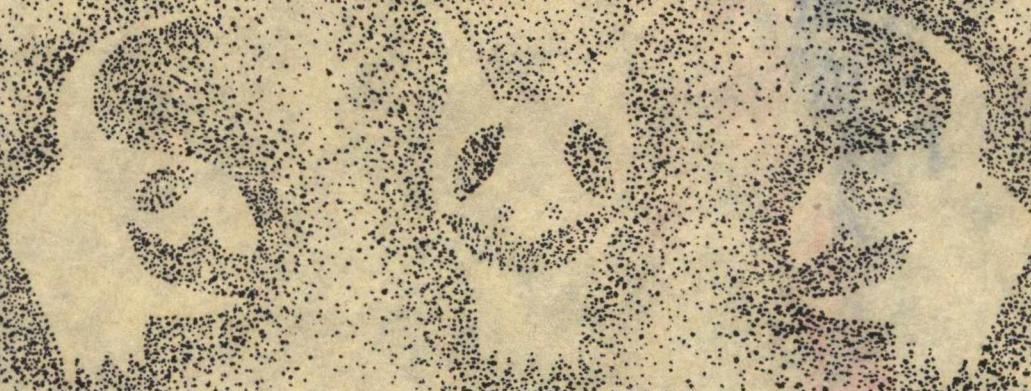


PHANTEUR



PACIFICON  
NUMBER

P H A N T E U R  
(phormerly phanny)  
p e r p e t r a t e d e s p e c i a l l y  
for the  
PACIFICON

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1527 Levin St., Alexandria 5, La. or  
hole No. 3

3021 N St., Lincoln, Nebraska  
July, 1946

Greetings, all+ This ish of PHANTEUR is intended for inclusion in the special PACIFICON superzine. It will also be circulated through the FAPA.

I probably won't be at the Pacificon. A month ago, I applied for transfer overseas, preferably to Japan, in my present status as draftsman in civil service. Ten days later, I was in New Orleans, being processed for transfer to the Phillipines. I was rejected on a physical defect I had listed--and which had been passed--on my original application. The Recruiting Officer said he thot the defect no longer disqualifying, but wasn't sure. Said he would let me know. Two weeks passed; no news. I gave up. Today (May 29) comes a telegram saying "you are reinstated as S -7 for transfer to Japan. Please fire acceptance. So I did, but asked for confirmation of presumption that I won't be disqualified again for the same defect. If OK, I'll probably be in Lincoln, visiting my folks, early in June. I'll be processed at Omaha, instead of New Orleans. Or I may be right here in Alexandria, cussing the v-garies of Red Tape.

The trip to New Orleans was enlivened by having the honky-tonk in which I got a room (hotel, did you say? Little you know!) shot up by a peeved customer at 5:00 A. M. . The nearest slug missed my room by 3 feet. Yea; I stayed there the next night, too. Also, there ensued a pleasant visit with Emile E. Greenleaf, 17-year-old fan with Fortean leanings (group 3; see article) who resides at the intriguing address of 1303 Mystery St. Don't ever ask Emile what time to start to a ball game. He said "7:30 for the grandstand." And the two of us got a nice place along the right field foul-line; nice green grass.

There may or may not be a regular issue of PHANTEUR in the July mailing. Depends on circumstances presently beyond our control.

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MaybeicanstopoffinL beforehoppingplaneforthefarpacific--thatisifidoanyhopping.

FANDOM AS A WAY OF LIFE\*

"Doc" Lowndes stated the essence of all this when he wrote that Fandom "is not a completely unorthodox and different way of life." It follows from that statement that fans must mix into non-fan affairs if anything resembling a complete way of life is to be achieved.

First, let us consider those elements in Fandom which contribute to a sane way of life. It seems to me that The Fantasy Sense, with whatever connotations you choose to impute to the term, may be accepted as the principal, and perhaps the only, factor which differentiates fans from non-fans. This Sense at its best serves as a very satisfactory sort of glass through which to observe the doings of that interesting majority whose members either never developed this special Sense, or else lost it with the approach of maturity. It also may serve as a useful guide in determining the direction of a fan's non-fan activities. It makes a more logical and liberal basis for making decisions than, for example, a State Church, or a major political party. It is sounder primarily because its possessors are enabled to perceive more clearly than most, many of "The Worlds of If," and to compare these Worlds with the one one in which we live, observing these other manifestations of multi-dimensional space-time with a critical eye, to the end that our own segment of the continuum may be improved and strengthened.

The advent of the atomic bomb has changed, in some degree, the acceptability of the arguments for and against the establishment of an expanded Slan Center, destined to serve as a sort of "arsenal of progress" while the rest of the world pursues a course of senseless self-destruction. The bomb has made the idea somewhat more attractive, since the means of self-destruction have been so greatly augmented. On the other hand, the same bomb has made the actual long-continued existence of such a project, practically an impossible dream, since such an establishment would be a prime target of any would-be aggressor--and with the bomb, it would be a comparatively easy matter to destroy the Center with a single blow.

However, neither of these arguments alters the fundamental weaknesses of the plan. The whole idea is one which any intelligent and thoughtful fan is unlikely to take seriously, if he devotes real thought to it. As an exercise in mental gymnastics, it is all to the good, of course. In any case, such a plan implies a degree of gloomy pessimism usually associated with such professional "viewers with alarm" as elderly dyspeptics whose milk-and-bread diet has gone sour on them. And if the bomb has augmented the bases for such fears, it has also opened the way to great advances.

The "Arsenal of Progress" idea also implies, that fans, and others with very similar qualities, are more level-headed, more progressive, more interested in human welfare as opposed to individual gain, and more willing to co-operate for the general welfare, than are other equally intelligent groups. It also implies a sensitivity to and an understanding of slight changes, before they become apparent to the general public. I will agree that fans possess more genuine altruistic interest in future human happiness than is common to similar groups with other interests, and that there is an unusual degree of sensitivity to social and cultural change. As to progress, fans can't even agree on a definition for that; and they have already demonstrated a rather highly developed opposition to efforts to promote genuine co-operation (through the writing of such articles as this, for example) the quasi-success of the NFFF notwithstanding. And I've never known any fan to make a serious claim of being level-headed, although I recall that one did once make the wholly meaningless statement that he was "more normal" than most others. I forget whether rum or gin was responsible. And, finally, alertness and sensitivity to change are prime requisites of a good soldier, of whom there were a very great many in the late War.

Just why fans are so prone to look on the dark side, and to moan over the lost opportunities of our time is hard to say. If anything is to be learned from history, it is this; that history is cyclic; that is, it tends to repeat itself within broad limits. Moreover, up to now, each crest in the historic cycle has represented some kind of an advance over those preceding it. In ear-

\*Revised from original version in PHANNY for the Spring, 1944 FAPA Mailing.

liest historical times, the most advanced peoples killed all prisoners of war; we regard such a practice with horror. Later, prisoners were enslaved for life; that was a genuine advancement of major importance. It made possible, for example, the Golden Age of Pericles, and much of the engineering achieved by the Egyptians and Romans. In the last war, we quartered and fed prisoners approximately the same as our own troops, and paid them for such non-military tasks as cutting sugar cane or picking cotton. After the war, we sent them home.

Progress from crest to crest shows up in other lines, too. The high point in Egyptian culture was superior in several ways to the preceding Babylonian culture, although not in all. The Greeks carried Egyptian developments to a new high, and produced much original work of their own, in the fields of philosophy, mathematics, and government. The Romans transformed Greek ideas into hard, practical roads and bridges and ways of government. The Middle Ages produced unsurpassed architectural triumphs, and carried the art of "logical" reasoning from a priori data to its ultimate (and, perhaps, ridiculous!) limit. During each of these broad crests, humanity advanced beyond an intervening period of retrogression; in some cases, as for example, the Middle Ages, the retrogression in many lines continued through the period of high development of specialties.

Perhaps there are some fans who consider the Age of Pericles superior to the Twentieth Century, but I doubt it. That Age was based on slave labor; so firmly based that such a practical invention as Hero's Engine was regarded, even by the inventor, as nothing but a toy. The Greeks, to be sure, achieved much with little; yet it has been said that they might have achieved far more, had it not been for certain glaring shortcomings of their culture; a culture which made of Geometry a sort of aggravated puzzle for the idle rich, and scorned its practical applications; which embroidered arithmetic with fanciful magical qualities which precluded its practical use; and produced Aristotle, a man of prodigious capabilities of whom it was long said that he knew everything worth knowing (a statement with which he would scarcely have agreed) and of whom it is now often said that he had a positive genius for finding the wrong answer to every problem, no matter how obvious. And incidentally, they had wars in those days, too.

Our own Age is often charged with excessive concentration on the "physical" as opposed to the "spiritual" values in life. Disregarding the obvious argument that the concept of independent existence of the "spiritual" and "physical" is the product of muddled thinking, have we not our Asierucians; our Aldous Huxley, and the many others who devote their energies, as did the "spiritual" leaders before them, not to seeking the truth, but seeking to prove that their preconceived notions of truth are indeed true?

The Greek, Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance periods were only a few of many crests in human development; crests which grew out of periods of cultural abasement compared to which our late depression was as nothing at all.

All of which leads to the proposition that the astonishing fan habit of assuming that we are heading for an oblivion from which only a miracle can save us, is completely out of keeping both with the teachings of history, and with the qualities which are assumed to go into the make-up of a fan. Granted, the bomb has greatly increased the possibility that the next war will throw humanity into a tailspin surpassing anything in the past, the fact still remains that war is not inevitable; and, barring a war in the immediate future, we can almost say that the first trip to the moon is inevitable within the foreseeable future. We are living in a period of rapid change, comparable on a vast scale to that immediately preceding the advent of The Golden Age. Unlike the Greeks, we have unlimited horizons before us, because we are independent of purely human and animal sources of energy, with control of atomic energy offering a dazzling prospect such as we but dreamed of a few short years ago. Where the Greeks had scores of brilliant men, we have hundreds of thousands; where they had achieved their ideals of human comfort, we have only begun to approach ours; where they had only the boundaries of the Mediterranean, we have a whole Solar System as a spur to our advancement; perhaps a whole Galaxy. And some fans have talked of retiring to an isolated Citadel, and preserving what we have!

The way to achieve fan ideals is to work for them here and now, with what

we have; not by trying for miracles, but by using every means possible to defeat the forces of reaction and defeatism; and in this we will be working with millions of people with fine ideals and confidence in our ability to solve the pressing problems of the immediate future.

The most important single element with which every progressive and idealistic individual can work effectively is through the ballot box. And lately, a second line of attack--really an extension of the first--has come into general use; that is the letter or telegram to the member of Congress who represents your district. There are, of course, theoretical arguments against using this last means in a republic; it interferes, 'tis said, with the privilege bestowed upon our representatives to interpret the will of the people in the light of their own exalted convictions and superior familiarity with and understandings of the problems in question; in other words, it is viewed with alarm as an attempt to superimpose something akin to true democracy upon our republican form of government. Quite so; and I'm all for that.

There is also the practical consideration that letters on every subject from every voter would swamp the mails and swamp the secretarial forces of the legislative bodies.

It may be pointed out that neither of these considerations have ever in the least interfered with the exercise of this right by organized groups with paid lobbyists. There is no particular reason why the rest of us should step aside and let these groups do all the work of "democratizing" our republican form of government.

Machine politics owes much of its power to the fact that millions of honest and idealistic people refuse to vote, because "one side is as bad as the other," or else throw away their votes by casting them for the candidates of some obscure party representing an ideal completely beyond the grasp and immediate aspirations of the rank and file voters. Be it noted that those who cast their ballots at the dictates of the highest bidder vote; those citizens who have an axe to grind vote; and because those who have no axe to grind, or who will not sell their rights as citizens to the highest bidder refuse to exercise those rights on their own account, the anti-social minorities are able to remain in power. And, in spite of all the efforts of the few intelligent, liberal crusaders who manage to get elected into the office, the reactionary elements remain in power, because they are willing to stoop to methods their more honest colleagues will not use.

The future is what we make it--and that includes atomic annihilation, for we will be responsible for that too, if it comes. Progress in the commonly accepted sense is not inevitable, certainly; but it is ours if we work for it. Such progress has never been fast enough for the young man who is out to reform the world, but there is some compensation in the thought that it is always far too fast for the confirmed reactionary.

Fans certainly look out of place among the calamity-howling worshippers of "The Good Old Days;" those bitter reactionaries to whom change means destruction; those persons who will not and cannot comprehend change except in a retrograde direction. They dwell lovingly on the merits of "The good five cent cigar" and the nickel stein of "suds," but say very little--at least for publication--about \$9.00-a-week tops for common labor.

---:oOo:---

"Sell Me A Ticket, Mister"

"Sell me a ticket, Mister.  
I'm tired of seeing  
A human being  
On every foot of space;  
I'm tired of the sight  
Of artificial light--  
I want to see the stars!

Sell me a ticket, Mister.  
I want to stand alone  
Where the thin winds moan  
Across the desert's face;  
I want no more of men--  
I want to live again--  
I'm going home--to Mars!"

---:oOo:---

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Gray Day

The sky is gray, and the rain.  
 The pines stand black and stark  
 Against the sky. Creatures  
 Of Madness, born of the Dark,  
 Mock and gibber malignly  
 Among the treetops. In vain  
 I strive not to see them. Eyes closed,  
 I turn away; but my fear  
 Will not leave me. Their night-mare features  
 Stay with me, sharp and clear,  
 Graven upon my brain.

---:ooOoo:---

Tryst

by James Russell Gray

I loved a woman once, when I was young,  
 Whose eyes were fire, whose hair was like the sky  
 On moonless nights; but something froze my tongue;  
 She never knew, unless she guessed, that I  
 Adored her so. She took long walks alone,  
 Always at night, and once I followed her  
 Into the darkness--for my doubts had grown  
 To monstrous size. I watched the shadows stir;  
 A man-like figure waited in a glade  
 Beside a marshy, shallow little creek;  
 The woman kissed her lover, and they made  
 A terrifying picture cheek to cheek;  
 And horror worked within my soul like yeast--  
 The creature had the muzzle of a beast!

---:ooOoo:---

Clairvoyance

I see the trails of rocket jets  
 Among the stars.  
 I see the trails but I cannot see  
 The cargo.  
 The rocket-trails are the same  
 Whether the cargo be Life  
 Or Death.

---:ooOoo:---

M e m o r y

Either that sound  
 Is the rustle of wind-driven leaves and cold rain hitting the window--  
 Or it is the murmur of swarms of monkey-feet  
 That run and leap through branches overhead,  
 That throng through swaying treetops  
 Ten million years ago.  
 Some part of me which is the ghost of them  
 Awakes,  
 Sees through their eyes and hears the sounds they heard,  
 Lives only for the swift sure swing of hand on branch, and leap, and hand and  
 foot on branch, and leap, and  
 Someday the ghost of me will walk  
 In something else's mind--  
 Some cold autumn day  
 When the wind drives the leaves and the rain.

---Chan Davis

---:ooOoo:---

### On Forteans

---Being a rambling dissertation based on random observations of no significance.

Forteanism apparently attracts several rather distinct types of people. First, but far from foremost, are those serious searchers after unvarnished truth, who see in Fort's methods and collected data, a worthwhile approach to the many unsolved problems of the Universe. Practically all Forteans claim to belong to this group, but it is obvious that relatively few--of the vocal and literate ones, at any rate--are numbered among the members of this select circle.

A very much larger group consists of those odd individuals who have already solved the major problems, at least to their own satisfaction, and seek in Forteanism a means of proving the supposed truth of their conclusions. Some of these really have something to offer in the way of hypotheses, but greatly weaken their position and the worth of their proposals, by their one-sided approach, seeking and utilizing, as they do, only positive evidence, and disregarding the negative.

A third group consists of those energetic and generally thoughtful individuals who enjoy collecting and collating Fortean material, and in developing therefrom various more-or-less fantastic theories to account for the seemingly inexplicable phenomena encountered in this screw-ball Universe of ours. Many of this group are on the fringe of the select circle mentioned above. Not infrequently they produce some excellent story-ideas. They tend, however, as do those of the second group, to disregard such principles as that which goes, approximately thus: "When a choice is to be made between two or more explanations of a given phenomenon, the simplest which is consistent with the facts shall be chosen."

The fourth, and apparently largest group, is made up of crackpots; neurotic individuals who attribute to Forteanism a religious aspect which is almost comically at odds with Fort's own expressed aims. These people tend to embrace astrology, theosophy, the Shaver "myths," and a plethora of other -isms and -ologies. Fort's collected data impress them little, if at all; they go instead, in all seriousness, for his humorous "explanations." Every new "theory" put forward by the third group is seized upon as the latest and greatest "truth" of all; and if this latest "discovery" is completely contrary to all those "truths" which preceded it, that is all the better; the old had lost its appeal anyway, through long familiarity.

People are mostly crackpots, anyway, aren't they? Why, otherwise, would they write stuff like this?

---;ooOoo;---

### Banquet On Black Bayou

#### I

All men shun Black Bayou at Midnight  
When the moon rides full and high;  
The strongest take fright at the ghastly sight  
That greets the passer-by.

#### II

The Darky rools his gleaming eyes;  
His face grows pale with fear;  
The awful cries  
As the victim dies  
Are horrible to hear.

#### III

The Cajin makes an ancient sign;  
Chants charms in French archaic;  
There are things that dine  
In the bright moon shine  
That make the bravest quake.

#### IV

The full moon rises in the East;  
Black Bayou is my goal.  
I am marked by the Beast; tonight I shall feast  
On a tasty snack--YOUR SOUL!

---;ooOoo;---