

Quincy

No. 30









this is the proxy issue of

# QUANDRY

## THE FANZINE THAT FADES AWAY

#30

a deadly publication

November, 1953

herein

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HEAR YE! HEAR YE! BLOCH CONFESSES ALL ON PAGE 22! HEAR YE! HEAR YE! PAGE 22! PAGE 22!

art by wells and rotsler

QUANDRY #30, the third annish and the last issue of this sterling (1/- to be exact) fanzine, has finally appered. Even with misspellings. NOTICE OF IMPORTANCE TO EVERYONE EXCEPT HARRY S TRUMAN: This being the last issue, all your subs will be ge-transferred to That magazine Fidnetta, ah, Fiendetta, published by Charles Wells, 405 E 62 St, Savannah, Ga. Individual conferences will be held with ye who sub to Q but already trade with fta. Those who sub to Q and fta both will have their fta subs extended to the proper amount. If there is a big X in the space at the right, your Q sub has expired with this issue and no transfer will be made. If there is a small X in the space at the right something is wrong and you should contact your local veteranarian at once.

editor in chief: Lee Hoffman 101 Wagner Savannah Ga  
associate editor and publisher of this issue: Charles Wells 405 E 62 Savannah, Ga  
associate editor: Walter A Willis 170 Upper Newtownards Rd Belfast Northern Ireland

Remember this important fact: BLOCH CONFESSES ALL ON PAGE 22!



# An Editorial — but not a Chaos —

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Then, there's Kehli, her horse. This shall go unexplained.

So, this, as a result, is the last issue of Q. Last Sunday (the third of October—historians please note) she turned over all stenciled material—she had stenciled all she had on hand—, a mess of paper, several thousand (well, it seemed like it anyway) bottles of colored inks, for which to her I am grateful, and the address list. I am to finish mimeographing it (private to the historians: she mimeoed the even numbered pages of the Cole article, except the last two of said even numbered pages), and to otherwise complete & mail this issue. A heart-bustin' task, eh?

All this means the end of Sixth Fandom. Let us pause and shed a tear. Nay, two; one for each eye. You who call yourselves Seventh Fandomers please take note. You can go ahead with all confidence now, and may you collapse quickly. I'm looking forward to Eighth Fandom; maybe I can enjoy my hobby again when it comes along.

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## THE DISENCHANTED

Les Cole

It strikes me that an awful lot of people have had a lot to say about what the Little Men did or did not do at Chicago; there have been far too many rumors stated as facts and far too many innuendos drawn from half-gleaned--and half-baked--second-hand statements. I'd like to give my observations and actions while at Chicago acting as a Little Man and a San Franciscan.

First, let it be understood that we are snobs. Snobs, you may call it, if we state and act upon the following: 1) We like to pick and choose our friends. 2) We refuse to take part in the foolish and overdone comradeship in fandom which insists that another fan can do no wrong. 3) We are intelligent. 4) We like to read science fiction; occasionally we even like to discuss it.

My disenchantment came earlier than Chicago; I think it hit all the members of the San Francisco Convention Committee sometime before. It started with a little exchange of letters with Judy May, the subject being the masquerade. We had previously informed Judy we were taking the penthouse. She wrote back that it would be nice to hold the masquerade there, since it would be a political plum and probably hand us the next convention. (Just for the record, I think everyone knew we were trying to get the bid; we'd announced our intentions as far back as Portland.) We agreed. There followed another interchange, the upshoot being that we were required to have a theme for the affair, and we had to have it in the Chicon Committee's hands the following day. (This was fairly typical, as those of you in attendance now know.) We wired our choice of theme, and from Chicago came a long, loud silence. About a month before the convention we received another little tid-bit: what kind of food and drink were we serving? Were we bringing an orchestra or did we want Chicago to hire one for us? LIFE and LOOK were going to be there; what were the prizes we had selected? Why didn't we ever write and let them know what was going on?

This threw us. In addition to being snobs, we are slobs. As far as money goes, anyway. While most of us do have the traditional pot, we don't have much more. As far as we knew, we were simply sponsoring the masque and having it in our quarters. So I wrote Judy, gently suggesting that maybe Chicago should help pay. As I remember, my words were something like, "What will Chicago give us?" Back came a telegram: "Chicago gives you its best wishes."

Judy had us over a barrel; we wanted the '53 con--how badly few outside of the immediate circle know. So we went along, but even then we had the definite feeling of being conned. (Let me state at this point something about Judy May. Up to here she hasn't looked too good. She'll look even worse as I continue. That's unfortunate; I happen to be very fond of her, even though I don't approve of many of her actions concerning Chicon II.)

The last two months before the convention were hectic. Things had to be done; those shows that the Little Men have put on at New Orleans and Chicago--and which will be missing this year from Philadelphia--required planning, lots of it. The latest issue of the Rd had to be printed and assembled. The brochure had to be laid-out, pasted up, and multi-lithed. Liquor had to be obtained. Contacts had to be made with the hotel we'd selected out here. We were having a convention



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committee meetings weekly; towards the end it was thrice weekly; the last week it was every night.

(I don't want this to sound too bad because it was nothing new. We have been planning for conventions, it seems, since before the memories of the oldest inhabitants in the Bay Area. Actually, it has been going on only for a little more than two years. I mean that it has been going on. A month hasn't passed when we haven't had at least one committee meeting. And like the man who kept hitting himself on the head because it felt so good when he stopped, we are trying for the '54 site.)

The Tuesday night before the doings we left Berkeley. There were four and a half of us--Es and I, Dave and June Koblick, and the Cole progeny, Dana aged four months--in a '50 Plymouth coupe. We drove. . .and drove. . .and drove. Friday afternoon we reached Chicago, with no stops en route. We were dead; only our nerves were alive, but they were jumping!

We picked up Gary Nelson at the train depot. Gary was then VP and the Little Man most responsible for the brochure. Pete Finigan, IM chairman, was already at the Morrison, so we stowed Gary with him. (We couldn't get possession of the penthouse until Saturday--unless, that is, we wanted to shell out another hundred bucks.) The rest of us retired to a small Loop hotel, shot.

During the day we'd had some very unsatisfactory phone conversations with Judy. They were mostly about the damned masquerade and the fact that it had been shifted. It was shifted from the penthouse to the Rose Room to the Blue Room to the penthouse to the Red Room to the Room Room to the penthouse and out again. Some of us--I can't remember who--were forced to speak a little sharply; we were not going to stand the cost of renting some other room for the masque.

Dave and I went to the Morrison that night. We caught up with Pete and Gary at the Chicon Committee's suite. They were already busy passing out the brochure and our stickers with our official motto: Little Men Stand Close.

I met a lot of people I've wanted to meet: the Minneapolis group--Cogswell, Dickson, and Poul Anderson--Joe Gibson, Jerry Bixby, Sturgeon, and others. I renewed old acquaintances of one year: Hoffman, Keasler, Briggs, etc. Peculiar ones turned up during the evening. (Peculiar, incidentally, as to locality and not personality.) Gertie Carr--with whom Es and I had been feuding by mail for some time--and Don Ford, Walt Willis, and Doc Barrett. In that one respect conventions are wonderful: they give you a chance to make new friends and spoof the old ones. In that one respect--and that one only--they should be continued.

Saturday morning we began to collect ourselves and baggage to try to get into the penthouse. Around eleven we unloaded the car. Stuff started piling up on the sidewalk, and it kept piling up. We had so much stuff in the car that we averaged, over 2300 miles, something like 11 miles to the gallon; about 6 miles less per gallon than what the car had been getting. And there was the stuff we'd shipped ahead. The pile sprawled out on the sidewalk like some amoeba, amorphous and witless.

The rest of the party went ahead; I was delegated to watch the luggage. I watched. About 11:30 Ben Kiefer came by; he watched while I went to find out what had happened to the bellboys. Like everyone else, I got no satisfaction from the management. I was assured help was coming, so I went back outside.



I don't want to drag this out: suffice it to say that I had arranged the luggage into every known simple geometric figure before the promised help arrived. It must have been in the 90's or better out there on that sidewalk. My temper wasn't improved any by the time I finally reached the penthouse. It was 1:20 in the afternoon.

Briggs and a few others were there. We discussed the party he wanted to have. I told him that he was welcome to throw the thing there, but to bring his own liquor; ours was strictly budgeted.

I guess it must have been around eight that things started happening, but it may have been ten. All I know is that all of a sudden there wasn't nearly as much room up there as there had been. We started stumbling over people. We broke out some of our horde; about half. It went too fast.

Sometime in that mess I received a call from Judy May. The conversation went along these lines:

Judy: "What the hell are you trying to do?"

Me: "I don't get you."

J: "I suppose you didn't know that the Committee is putting on an open house which no one is attending--they're all up there."

M: "Sorry, Judy, but if people prefer to attend our party--"

J: "Listen, we were planning to sell raffle tickets at the open house. We are running in the red and are trying to get out of it with those tickets. Send people down."

M: "Frankly, I'd just as soon. They're making too damn much noise here."

J: "If you don't send them down, we'll fix you good as far as the next con site is concerned."

I got a little annoyed at that and told her I'd do my best. Then I walked around the penthouse several times telling people that there was another party downstairs, and please go attend it. Somehow I didn't get any takers.

Along about 2 AM Es told me the liquor was gone. A few people had left, too, and I figured it was all over. I suddenly realized that I hadn't had a drink all evening! I had a terrible thirst, it was hot up there, so I slipped out in the hopes of getting a quiet drink in the bar downstairs. Unfortunately, the bar had closed a few minutes earlier.

This is all a bit confused, but I recall finding myself in Hank Burwell's rooms. Hank--thank God!--had the makings, and I relaxed for the first time that evening. We discussed the next site; Hank didn't think we'd get it. He seemed to think it was going east. I then made a prediction to him that may or may not have come true by the time Lee gets this into print; if it has, you'll have heard about it. Burwell played it close to the vest. What city he thought would get it, he didn't want to say.

Instead he most adroitly changed the subject. He wanted to know what the DM had done to get Chicago so mad at them. "There's someone high up on the committee



who's been going around saying that he'd back any city but San Francisco," he said. (It turned out that the "someone" was Mark Reinsberg; that we had figured pretty well by the next morning.) "Not only that," he added, "but you seem to have fouled up personally, Les. I hear you rushed by Ginny Saari, stepped on her toe and without apologizing, yelled, 'Don't forget to vote for San Francisco'" In passing, let me say that I was to set eyes on Ginny for the first time, 24 hours later.

Along about here some young hopeful burst into the suite, screaming at the top of his lungs, "Well, it's all set for Philadelphia!" There were several attempts at shushing him from others in the room, but the damage was done. I found amusing the sotto voice that whispered, "That's a Little Man."

I contend, however, that that little scene puts the lie to the frequently circulated story of Philadelphia's naivete. The story goes that Philly simply fell into the idea of bidding on Sunday or some such nonsense. As far back as December, 1951, I'd had a mail-order argument with Dave Hammond over whether or not Philly should bid.

It was about 3 AM when Es got down to Burwell's. She told me that the party was still going on; that several people were teed off with me, and that I'd better see if I couldn't do something.

Up we went, and when I took a look at the penthouse, all the aggression and frustration which had been building up came to a head. The place was a shambles. A chair had been broken; a leg was torn off. Apparently a few slob's had stood at the piano and thrown glasses across the room at the fireplace. Someone had dropped a lit cigarette on the living room rug and let it smolder. There was a lot more, too, but it was simply a repeat of breakage.

I blocked open the front door and announced that the party was over. A couple of youngsters were sitting in the vestibule, and they gave me a who-the-hell-are-you look. This improved my temper to a point where I moved towards them, a bit menacingly I'm afraid. They got. Some others were leaving then, and the combination seemed to start the ball rolling. Within 45 minutes we had the place empty of the 300 who'd been there.

We sat around discussing things afterwards. Phil Farmer and Jerry Bixby had remained. Phil came up about 1/2 hour or so before we sent everyone home. He came up, carrying a fifth of his own, and he eventually donated the fifth to our depleted reserves. He also tried to reach for his wallet when we estimated the damage. Of course, we wouldn't let him toss anything into the pot, but it illustrates the fact that there are a few considerate people still around. (I bumped into Phil in the elevator late the next day, and he again wanted to help pay. Both those gestures were not phony--the guy really wanted to help.)

I was informed of several things that happened that evening; it made me even more mad.

First of all, a group of pros--mostly--had secreted themselves in one of the bedrooms of the penthouse and refused admission to all but the inner hollies. What burns me is the fact that one of our people wanted to get some sleep in that bedroom and couldn't because of the barred door. Not only was this a slap



in the faces of all of us, but it was also a display of spoiled childishness. So when you say that I am disenchanted with fandom, add that I feel the same way about prodrom.

Sometime during the evening Eric Ely---who'd flown in about 7 PM---and Pete and Gary had been summoned by the Convention Committee. Seems they were met at the door by foul language from Reinsberg. There was a lot of arguing, but the result was that the LM would have to help sell the Committee's raffle tickets the next day because they claimed our party had interfered with their plans. Bear in mind, please, that we were still playing the part of pigeons. I wish I'd been along.

Sunday morning was gruesome. We woke to the wreckage. The weather was typical Chicago summer stuff: lousy. Right about then Ginny Sarri called. She told me I was being shifted on the program again. I told her to cancel my part, that I was damned if I was going to be a performing bear for swine, and if I never saw another fan again I'd be happy. She didn't argue too much; I guess the program was getting top heavy by then. In retrospect, I'm sorry I didn't give the speech on the Lunar Mining Claim. From what little I saw and heard of the program, I think it would have gone over quite well.

Fortunately for both Es' and my sanity, there lives at present a fellow in Chicago who's taking his doctorate at the University. He and I grew up together, and Es and I are very fond of him. Late Sunday morning he dropped by, and the three of us took in the sights of the city. (For those of you who were there and wondering, it wasn't worth it! But then, we were all native Californians.)

We returned to the hotel about 9 PM. Es went down to help with the masquerade. Al and I were up in the penthouse, and Jerry Bixby dropped up. Around 11 my conscience began to hurt. The other LM were down there working away, and while I didn't want to contact fans, I still didn't want to hurt the group. So I went down and washed dishes.

I'd just about finished when Es dragged me over to talk to Sam and Susan Mines. That was one of the moments of Chicago that I like to keep and mull over. The Mines' were doing their best to cheer me up, and while I acted the boor during the process, some of it filtered in. In any event, I felt more kindly disposed toward the world when I left them.

This is the progress of a rumor. Even though I was mad, I still found it interesting. Perhaps it was the anger that gave me the clinical aspect necessary to follow it out. I don't know how it started, and I don't know how it ended; it appeared to be one of those things that just grew.

Burwell had told me, Saturday night, that I was supposed to have stepped on Ginny Saari's toe. Sunday morning Hans Rusch, a fringe Little Man, asked me what I'd been drinking the night before. He'd heard I reeked past Ginny while in a high condition, that I'd slapped her on the back, and that I told her to vote for San Francisco. Sunday night after the masquerade I bumped into Poul Anderson, (Poul, incidentally, was real happy to see me; he'd heard I'd gone back home that morning!) and someone in the group around him gave me the topper to it all. His story was that I staggered up to Ginny blind drunk and pawed her mammaries---"quick feel" was part of the expression used---while shouting to vote for San Francisco.



The only thing that pleased me was that "Vote for San Francisco" seemed to be staying with the story. I don't know, maybe any publicity is good publicity is the right approach.

We gathered in the penthouse after the masquerade. There was just the eight of us and Al, who'd been baby-sitting for us while we were downstairs. We were discussing the bidding next day, what our chances were, and the party the night before. When we told Al about the damage, he coined a fine word. It ranks with such ita as egoboo, yed, the all pervading h, and crifanac. When we told him, Al snorted, "Fandalism!"

A little background here for a moment. Ever since we'd gotten into the penthouse, people had been wandering up. It was, frankly, annoying. Friends we wanted to see, but strangers? Anybody and everybody had come in; during that day some elderly couple--and this was only one instance of several--walked in, moved down the vestibule, perambulated through the living room, and finally stopped in the dining room, looking and pointing out the window. We asked what they wanted there. The man explained he'd been to Chicago on a convention some years before, and now that his wife was here with him, he wanted to show her the penthouse. We explained we were currently living there and didn't appreciate people poking about. The couple got quite angry with us for our inhospitable attitude.

So, we were having this talk-talk the morning after the masque. It was about 3 AM. We'd finally caught on to how to lock the door, and we'd done so. Suddenly the doorbell rang. Al was first up and answered it. We were all a little too tired to wonder who it was or to care. The conversation continued; a few minutes later Al called me over.

"There're some nuts outside that want in," he said. "I told them we weren't receiving, but they seem to think they have a God-given right to enter. They insist on talking to a Little Man."

I went to the door, and another fight with the Chicago Convention Committee was on its way. What had happened was this: Reinsberg, Hamling, and respective wives, slightly potted, had tried to push their way in. Al barred the door. Reinsberg said something phony like, "Stand aside, we're coming in." Al said, "Who the hell are you?" or words to that effect.

I told Reinsberg we were tired, it was late, and that nothing was going on. I don't think he believed me. He was sure we were having a party. Then he tried to stare me down; I stared back. Finally they left.

I shall never forget the little scene enacted as the door to the elevator opened. Reinsberg's wife stood there, in a theatrical pose, one hand stretched toward the elevator and the other towards Reinsberg. "Come, Mark," she said, "we shall go. We were going to tell these"-- I forget what noun she used--"how to get the convention site tomorrow, but now we'll let them stew in their own juices."

I told the others what had transpired, and with whom. I'm happy to say that all the strains and pressures which had developed cracks in our solidity seemed to ease up; again we were of one accord. I think that on the subject of Reinsberg, and that incident in particular, any one of us going to the door would have done the same thing.



Let's skip now to the voting on Monday. Nothing much of import happened till then, unless you count the bat. Es poked me awake about 7 AM Monday morn; something was fluttering around the room and she was afraid it would wake the baby. I opened an eye, thought it was the biggest damned moth I'd ever seen, and rolled over. Es poked me again. I finally got up. Chicago was having a summer storm. In the penthouse it was weird. Lightning crackled around us, and the water came down by the bucketsful. You had the sensation the ship was going to sink any minute. I was too sleepy to appreciate it. All I knew was that I was hunting a moth. I saw him flutter past the window and down below the bed. I remember thinking they sure grew strange looking moths in Chicago, with corrugated wings. And then I lost him and for all I know, he's there yet. I wonder if the Morrison is charging him a hundred a day.

But as I say, let's skip to the voting.

We entered the Casino with mixed emotions. Most of us felt we had a fighting chance, but there were too many factors to take into account. We couldn't tell which way the wind was blowing. We felt there was no other group that could touch us as far as preparation was concerned; however, we had not indulged in any political machinations, and we knew these had gone one. From that point of view we had an unspoken agreement: where we stood was no secret and who we were backing was no secret, and we wanted it that way. At least we can point to our background; call us snobs, slobs, or pigeons if you will, but remember the while that we've never pulled anything shady.

For example: Indianapolis approached us on the floor with the suggestion that we back her because we didn't have a chance. We disagreed. Then the idea was put forth that Indianapolis would back us if we would do the same when we got the bid. We had previously promised our support to Detroit, and we'd made that clear to anyone who'd asked, so again we had to veto their suggestion. It wasn't until later, when Detroit released us, that we were able to come to terms.

So the voting began. I don't know about the others, but I was nervous! Es, too. She finally began walking around the balcony, then drifted off, and eventually wound up sitting with the Mines". June Koblick shredded two programs that I know of. And I kept thinking: we've made a mistake. We forgot the 20 foot banner that read, "San Francisco Invites You." How could we have forgotten it?

The nervousness was due essentially to the following facts. Firstly, we'd spent, as a cumulative total over two years, slightly under \$3500 attempting to get the site. We'd spent well over 1,000 man-hours. We'd travelled on the order of 100,000 miles. We were betting that the shows we'd put on would make the fans forget their pocketbooks long enough to vote for us, to give us our chance, rather than for some city closer to Chicago. We were wrong.

It is something that must be taken into account, this business of voting for the closest available city. Because that is what wins the site. I have in mind the situation on the floor. There were several dummy bids put in and withdrawn in favor of Philadelphia. There was someone who stood up and assured everyone that the armed forces all favored Philadelphia. There was even Hank Burwell's voice from the back withdrawing Atlanta's bid in favor of Philadelphia even though Atlanta had not bid. This is what is known as a "steamroller." It is supposed to panic everyone into voting for the object doing the steamrolling.



They say Dave Kyle was responsible for it. That is a gross insult to Kyle, and I refuse to believe it. It was so crude, and so amateurish, that no one of Kyle's ability could have been responsible. The steamroller was quickly squelched, and it is my opinion it actually picked up votes for us.

But, and capitalize that "but", Philadelphia was the city close by. And, I suppose, for those who were new to s-f conventions, that was the logical vote.

We tried a show of force of our own, but it failed miserably. After the first ballot, when we were leading by one vote, we began accepting memberships. The theory was that the rumor would get around the hall and start a small sized snowball. For a while it worked--we got about 15 registrations--but it pooped out too soon. If I'd been smart, I could have walked around to various people, spreading the news in a hushed tone of voice. It might have started something. It was an action that any of us could and should have taken. Incidentally, the money was returned.

Guess it was about the third ballot or so when I noticed Es had wandered off. I spotted her sitting with Sam and Susan Mines, and I chased down. We were filling in the ballot cards, and I guess Susie saw my questioning look, for she said, "Sam has been wanting to vote for a different city each time, but I haven't let him."

I was dying of curiosity. "Look, I'd like to know. It won't go any farther than me, and there's no hard feelings if you're not voting for us, but could I take a peek?"

They showed me their cards. I was surprised at the city they'd chosen. Es, of course, was voting for San Francisco. She couldn't do any Les.

When it was all over, several people came up to us to express what amounted to indignation. Even Mel Korshak sympathized. I don't think Mel's heart was in it, but the year before he'd promised to support us, and he did. He showed us his ballot.

Minneapolis approached us en mass. Cogswell and Dickson and Anderson--and if I haven't said so before, I like those guys--all felt that we'd been given the shaft. There were others, too. People I couldn't recognize. People I'd never heard of. All more or less indignant.

It may be rationalization, but they were all more indignant than we. At the moment, we simply felt relieved. Maybe it was due to the lifting of pressure. Whatever the cause, our disappointment didn't set in till later.

We were sitting around the penthouse, muttering vituperation, feeling that the dolts had done us a bad turn. It was about an hour after the voting. And the idiot wandered in. A fan. Wearing a stupid expression and a camera. "Where is everybody?" he asked.

"This isn't the Philadelphia suite," someone said, "and there's no celebration going on here."

"I heard there was a party going on here."

We assured him there was no party going on and asked for whom he'd voted. "Indianapolis," he replied.



We asked him what group he felt could have put on the best convention. "Without a doubt, San Francisco," he answered.

Further questioning established that he'd finally voted for Philadelphia. On the basis that it was nearer to Chicago. What can you do?

It seemed to end the interview. We waited for him to leave. He didn't. We asked him what he was hanging around for. He replied that he wanted to get a picture of how we all looked. At that point we forcibly ejected him.

As much as a year before, we'd planned to have a party during the convention. At first it was going to be small. We wanted originally to take a few people out to dinner, the people we wanted to spend time with and knew we wouldn't have a chance to do so. After we got the penthouse, we decided to make it buffet there.

We'd gone to pains to bring with us some California wines. Our experience was that out-of-staters were barbarians when it came to wine, and we wanted things just right. We printed up the invitations, too. They were a stroke of genius. The invitations set the right mood; they showed this wasn't a haphazard affair.

We still had half a case of hooch; as things turned out it wasn't enough.

That first Friday night, Dave and I made contact with a small delicatessen. The owner--Cappy was his name--offered to cater the affair for us for a flat fifty dollars. It was one of the nicest things that happened to us in Chicago. Cappy came through in great style; we picked the stuff up Monday night and about ten began to set tables. There were six or seven card tables that we covered. There was several bureaus and sideboys used. We had so many flat surfaces to cover that we began to pull the sheets off the beds as table cloths. And every one of those surfaces was covered with food. There was pastrami, turkey, corned beef, salami, baloney, roast beef, and a few other meats; there was potato salad, cole slaw, pickles, olives, and other relishes. There was wine--some of it was in the refrigerator and some on the tables--and the bar was stocked. With all of us working--including Al who stuck around to help--we finished the preparation about 11:30. It was a feast fit for a king.

We set the time for 12, and I thought the party would break up around two or so. I'm naive. But when I bumped into some of the fellows in a drug store earlier that night, I invited them up about 2:30. They wanted to discuss the voting, and they'd bought us some liquor--which was a damn nice thing to do--so I figured we'd have an informal party after the formal one. The guys I remembered in that group were Rich Elsberry, Lee Bishop, Bob Briggs, and Frank Kerkhof. There may have been more, but at the time I was angry and disappointed, and I can't remember.

I invited a few more, too. People I ran into. If anyone who is a personal friend of any of the people in the group--and this specifically includes Walt Willis and Lee Hoffman--didn't get an invite, it was simply because they were not seen when the invitations were given out. There was quite a mass of humanity at Chicago.

For two reasons we made the party exclusive. The first was that we sank quite a bit of money into it--it was, after all, our party--and we wanted to enjoy ourselves. The other is that we wished to avoid the adolescents, the furniture



breakers, and the immature drinkers. In that respect we did a very nice job.

But having the right people there was harder. Some personalities, we knew, clashed, and we had to avoid that as much as possible.

In any event, I hope all the people who have been sitting around nursing incipient paranoia because they weren't invited will now understand and stop.

It was a hum-dinger. We finally had about 75 guests. Many, I'm afraid, thought they were expected to commiserate because we'd lost the voting. But before the party we'd all signed a suicide pact to do no moaning, and I can't remember much discussion about the loss. The only thing we did do to show our rancor was to invite Mark Reinsberg and then ignore him as much as possible. I think he was too thick to understand.

It was one of the nicest, if not the nicest, social evenings I've ever spent. Judy May and Jerry Bixby played the piano for a couple of hours. There was no rush and no tension. Little groups of people would gather, talking about the convention, telling dirty jokes, or arguing on a polite plane. Several people gathered around Campbell, and there was quite a discussion on dianetics--all politely done. I spotted Ray Palmer at one point and charged over to tell him how glad I was to meet him. I was, too. We've never gotten along too well, and I think both of us wanted to go at it hammer and tongs--at least I did--but we were both checked by the air of pleasant restraint.

They ate from 12:30 to 2:30. There was another upswing from 3 to 3:30, and another from 4:30 to 5. Es and I went to sleep at 6 and arose at 10. There were still some 8 people there, and they finished off the last of the food, just before going down to breakfast. It was one of those parties that you just don't want to leave. As evidence for that statement, the liquor ran out about 3:30, but the party didn't break up.

Tuesday afternoon some of us dropped down to the Chicago suite. It was here the business of the payment for the damages came up. In Walt Willis' report of the convention, he made some remarks that definitely need correction. He said: "At the end of the Convention. . . (the Little Men. . . were afraid to check out because they didn't have the money to pay for. . . (penthouse damage). Burwell . . . gave Les \$20 towards the bill. Ed Wood chipped in with another ten and so did one L.J. Grant of Chicago. They were all the names I was able to get, but in a few minutes Les had more than \$100 and just stood there with tears in his eyes."

To start with, we weren't afraid to check out, we simply didn't enjoy the thought of what the bill was coming to. Secondly, those were the only names Walt was able to get because they were the only people who'd kicked in. Thirdly, the total amount we received was \$35, part of which was returned. Finally, I haven't had tears in my eyes since 1937 when my brother spanked me in the Colonial Hotel in New York City.

As it turned out, the Morrison had damage insurance and we weren't billed at all.

That about does it. We spent the last few hours with Burwell in his rooms. We'd moved there from the Chicago suite, and by that time it was lunchtime. Although we were anxious to leave--we had a 2300 mile drive ahead--we decided to eat. Then we got to kicking things around and before we knew it, it was dinner time. We



did get away that night, about 8 PM. We were intending to drive straight through again, but we were so pooped that we got about 50 miles from Chicago and collapsed into the nearest motel.

Whether this report has cast any light on some of the strange stories floating around, I can't say. It is ten months later, and I don't recall accurately much of what happened. I feel, in some of the reports I've read, that we have been unjustly accused of some things, and some misconceptions needed clearing up.

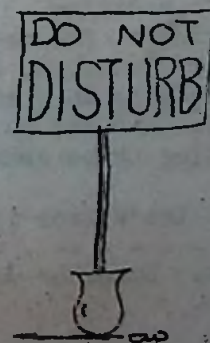
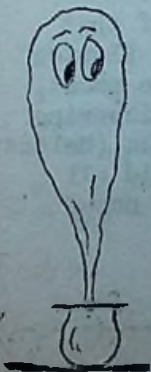
This much I can say definitely. Chicago was the end of an era. A short lived era, true, that extended only over two years. There will be no more San Francisco Convention Committee shows put on. We have learned our lesson, and we are broke. Those are two big deterrants.

We are saving our energies for that never-never time when the convention gets out here. Then we will put on a show.

But it will always be regretful to me that we couldn't have gotten the convention either in New Orleans or Chicago. Our Convention Committee has changed. Older members are gone. Those of us left are cynical--a lot more so now than before--and disenchanted. I'll never stop wondering what things would have been like if--

--Les Colé

-----  
...and Anna, the King of Siam....  
-----





# II Remember II Hoffman

by J. Thaddeus Sweetbreath

Ex-editor's note: When this mss was submitted to me by my official palbearer, Charles Wells, for my approval before publication, I read it thoroughly. I realized immediately that it was unfit for publication in any decent American fanzine, and therefore I immediately put my stamp of approval on it for Quandry and returned it by airmail to Charles.. Thus the blame lies with the author who prefers to remain nameless, behind the false facade of a pseudonym or nom-de-guerre as the case may be. This lack of proper nomenclature may or may not be significant of something sinister down in the bar, if you know what I mean. . . . . lh

Oh, I remember Lee Hoffman all right; it would be most difficult to forget her. She has a dimple and her eyes are brown. These facts were brought to my attention on that unforgettable dreamy night in Savannah when we were parked by the side of some river\*, watching a ship sail by enroute to some romantic foreign port. Perhaps Belfast. The best-grade Georgia moon was shining and the hum of the city was a distant backdrop. "Lee," I whispered with soft admiration, "you have the most beautiful blue eyes."

She said to knowk that stuff off, and her eyes were brown. I looked by the flickering light of a match, and they were. "It must have been the blonde at the convention," was my weak suggestion. She merely snorted. We watched the ship sail away. The next day her mother fed me catfish and hushpuppies.

My initial introduction to Hoffman was neither auspicious nor cloaked in glory, but it is one I hold close to my heart and will tell my grandchildren about as they dawdle on my knee. Sometime during the late summer of 1950 I became aware that "he" existed upon the receipt of an early issue of QUANDRY. Following that we agreed to exchange fanzines and then swapped a few casual letters; the only outstanding matter of discussion that I now recall from those letters was finances, and the possibility of "his" attending the New Orleans convention the next year. Me, the big mouth, promptly gave advice on the best and cheapest methods of attendance—by rooming with another chap, by always letting someone else pick up the meal tickets, and by fawning on the gullible pros. I even offered to do my share by purchasing a meal or two, Because I had already made other arrangements, I could not assist by sharing my room, but at least would take "him" out to dinner.

This horrible blunder was soon compounded by another. In November of that same year I attended the Philadelphia Conference and then drove south to Florida for a vacation. I had chosen a seaside route and moved leisurely down the coast, looking at the ocean and passing through any number of charming towns: Whispering Pines, New Bern, Charleston, Seeded Berm, Savannah, Ocala, and Indian Rocks (Belfast was not on this route.) As usual, I was making a determined effort to avoid all known fans and so I sped through Savannah as fast as the law would allow, not wanting to be seen and caught by the kid who published QUANDRY.

Let's face it, I'm a jerk.

-----  
\*Tsk. Remember you are married now, Thad.



So the following year she walked into my hotel room in New Orleans and stared at me. I was stripped down and shaving, but I stared back. I don't know which of us suffered the greater shock. Rapidly recovering my poise some days later, I bought her the promised dinner and then went on to several other meals as well. ((HAH! lh)) I once took her to breakfast in the hotel dining room but later she was tactless enough to point out that I did nothing but stare at Bea Mahaffey. My last glimpse of her that year was through the glass door of the bar—I was inside, sipping, and she was outside, staring in wistfully. Gallantly, I motioned her in for a drink but she threw up her hands in horror. I realized then she would never be a fake fan.

I must admit I've never recovered from the lost opportunity of sharing my room, and too I've often wondered what beautiful music we might have made together had I not avoided the QUANDRY kid when passing through Savannah.

On succeeding trips to Florida, rest assured that I have never missed an opportunity to stop over in Savannah and sometimes I would go out of my way to visit there. As on the occasion when I drove to the Chicago Convention last year—a mere 130 miles away. I detoured by way of Savannah coming home, a detour of a couple thousand miles more or less. I just couldn't bear the thought of Hoffman being thrown on the Chicago dole, after spending all her money on hard liquor. (Please note the change in habits, as compared to New Orleans.) Hoffman and her parents were always wonderful hosts, although I would advise that no other fans follow my footsteps in hopes of dodging a free meal or a night's lodging. Boorish fellow that I am, I've ruined that. (A traveller from Belfast once followed my trail and stayed overnight there. Unfortunately the memory of my last visit hadn't quite worn away. He took to the swamps the next day.)

It would please me if I could take some small credit for having advanced her fannish education. With pride, I want to point out that I first explained to her the lore of roadside signs and what actually lay behind such mysterious messages as "seeded shoulders"; and that I taught her to swear like a trooper after Dave Ish fumbles the job. Together we explored the murky interior of a Carolina "tavern" and I demonstrated the fine art of cadging bootleg whiskey while posing as out-of-state tourists. She learned at my knee, viz, the ability to face charging dogs and suspicious desk clerks with dignity and aplomb. I taught her to read ancient Egyptian script and how to distinguish genuine mummies from dummies; how to wait in a railroad station for a bus to arrive; how newspapers were read in Lindberg's day; why casters (rollers) are put on bedposts; and above all I showed her how and why to avoid fans.

- So now she is folding QUANDRY and packing away the presses. So now she rides a horse by name of Kehli in stead of fandom as a hobby. I think she has made a wise move. At least, in this new pursuit, she is associating with both ends of the horse.

—bt

Kehli has pica teeth—



TRY THE OTHER TWO SAVANNAH FANZINES — — —

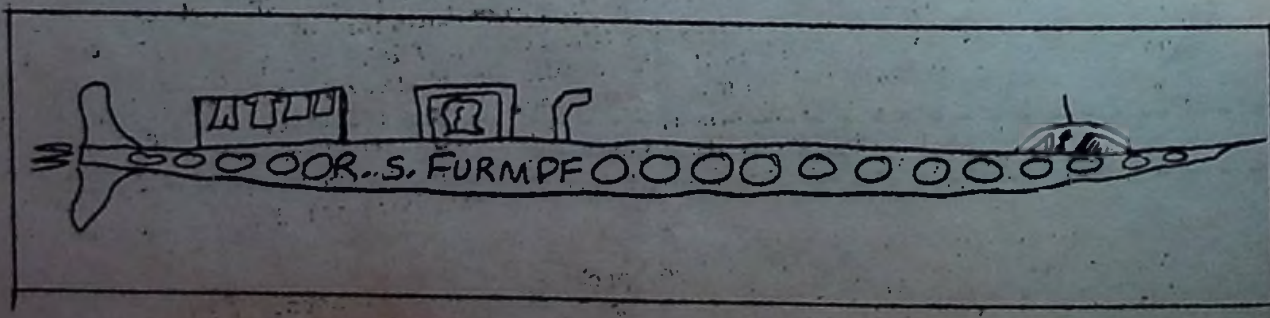
Dawn

published by Russell K. Watkins  
110 Brady, Savannah, Ga.  
dittoed in color—19th ish out now  
available upon receipt of a  
letter of comment—will trade

Fiendetta

published by Charles Wells  
405 E 62 St, Savannah, Ga.  
mimeographed—annish soon  
price—15¢, 8/\$1.00—will trade

The huckster-type ads on this page are fully paid and  
are inserted merely to fill an unexpected hole. Praise be!





# London Communiqué

-Jesse Floyd

(Introducing the author: Jesse Floyd is a fairly recent arrival in the Fandomain, who spends his time between issues of prozines, sailing about the sea for money. By chance his ship happened into England in time for the London, thusly.....)

At Sea  
May 25, 1953

Dear Lee,

But for you I might have missed one of the outstanding experiences of my life, therefore consider myself indebted to you for my next three lives. I'm referring of course to your giving me the address of the White Horse Tavern in London where the STF group meets. And yet I could easily cancel out the above obligation for your not reminding me that the Coronvention was due, which fact I only learned on attending the usual Thursday Nite gathering just two days before its official start. But since I made the con after all, I won't hold it against you.

Honestly, one would think the damthing was a Leevention the way your name was bandied about between sessions. I'm quite sure no one believed me when I repeatedly said I'd only met and talked with you for five minutes before sailing, because they would beam at me knowingly and say, "Really? That's odd. Tell me, is she still training for that Godiva thing?" And when I assumed my normal expression, which is blank, they would mumble something about a white horse and be off again. Suppose you tell me, do you really have a white horse?)

One colossal faux pas rankles exceedingly. The whole lot of us had just been kicked out of the White Horse on Thursday nite with the inevitable nerve-grating "Time please, Gentlemen!" (You'd have to see it to fully appreciate that word "Gentlemen") and were progressing (Hah!) toward the next pub, which still had a half hour to remain open. As we walked along Bill Temple expounded to me on the less obvious qualities inherent in his particular type of genius. I'm truly grateful to him, since such a low-brow as I could never have observed these intangibles on my own. But as he explained these facts of life to me, he mentioned that Campbell had just printed "Mind within Mind" in his latest ish. He asked had I read it. Now ~~that~~ the fact is, ~~ix~~ I read every issue of ASF and Campbell is my ideal as an ed. Only the day before I had read the latest ASF, and was quite sure that no such story appeared in it. Being ~~the~~ paragon of tact that I am, I promptly told Bill all this, and he, Ghod bless his soul, only glanced at me once, rather pityingly I thought, and changed the subject. Howinell was I supposed to know that he was talking about Bert Campbell and his mag AUTHENTIC S\*F? Anyway, as I say, Bill changed the subject completely. We then started talking about ~~us~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Four Sided Triangle, and he informed me that it was being made into a movie, or had just been. Now that I had read, and assured him of it, mentioning the fact that I had just seen a large double billboard on my way to the White Horse advertising the movie. At last I'm



(Floyd -2)

pleased him! He beamed at me. He glowed in the dark! "Yes, " I said, "it must be a wonderful movie. I see Clark Gable has the lead. " This time his glance had some quality other than pity as he said rather shortly, I thought, and quite distinctly, "Clark - Gable - is - playing - in - the - other - feature. "

With that we entered the pub and I sought another group, hoping fervently that I could get the conversation onto sex or some other safe subject.

Fortunately, Ron Buckmaster obliged us with some choice tales (shaggy dog, that is) before we broke up for the night and ended our way homewards-- me with the help of Vince Clark and a friend of Ted Tubb's, Brian Burgess.

Actually the Con proper was the start Saturday morning at 11 o'clock, but it started unofficially on Bea Mahaffey's arrival at the White Horse Tavern Friday evening. Unfortunately Walt Willis and his party were forced to leave early after depositing Bea with the London Group, and consequently missed the resounding send-off a few of us gave the Coronvention. Somehow (it's rather vague) the party ended and before I had time to get sound asleep, someone was knocking on my door. I tried to ignore it, but have you ever tried to ignore Bert Campbell? When I let him in I accused him of having stood outside my door until I got in bed just so he could get me up again, but he insisted it was nine o'clock and time to go. (How do these people remain so disgustingly cheerful?) I remember wondering how in the world I could possibly be alive, and when I looked in the mirror I added, why?

But I must hand it to Bert. He went thru the day with colors flying high (in fact, he was slightly that way himself.) And that afternoon I learned why the British take so many tea times. At four when the programme called for a pause to refresh ourselves, I mentioned tea and those in the know promptly headed for Room 518--the unofficial bar. ((A sort of 770?)) Everyone made it that time...

A little later during another break I asked Ted Carnell if he would like some tea and on being assured he would, we headed upstairs. I turned into the tea lounge while Ted kept on walking. When he missed me, he came back and said, "Are you serious?" He had obviously headed for 518.

At 11 pm when the day's proceedings ended, Bert came to me rubbing his hands together gleefully and said that now the Convention could start! I wondered what in the world he could mean, since it had been going on all day. It didn't take long to find out. We continued where we had left off that morning around 4 am --- except moreso. Later Ted Tubb, Fred Robinson and I recalled twenty persons who were jammed into a 10 by 10 room. We took turns breathing, all except Ted Tubb---he had the entire window to himself. (And James, what in the world were you doing under the bed?)

But alas! Such a short life this little intellectual gathering had. We were all kicked out at midnight. It seems the very foundations of the hotel were crumbling ((but not half so much as the foundations of staid British fandom, I'll wager)) due to vibrations set up by the very steady hum of our conversations. We offered to change the pitch and even have Bill Temple carry on his monologue in alto, but to no avail. The management was adamant!

So we left.

It looked like the Great Exodus as we filed thru the lobby under the suspicious eyes of the Staff. Outside we split up, due to the running feud between Bert



Floyd-3

Campbell and Tod Tubb over the affections (or at least the company) of Bea Mahaffey, we managed to kidnap her from the vile clutches of the Liverpool group.



They refused to relinquish Walter and Madeleine, however, so we were forced to have a midnight snack without them. But when we returned an hour later to pick up the stragglers we found their group standing outside the hotel---they too had been evicted!

It was unanimously decided that since the night was still so young and we were so rosy, we would continue our weighty discussions ((about rain of Venus?)) at Ron and Laphne Buckmaster's flat in Woolwich, much, no doubt, to their annoyance, since we didn't consult them. However, they were very gracious about the whole thing and we were only asked to leave twice during what ensued. Of course we knew they were joking so we stayed.

Some of the things that happened that Saturday night dispelled forevermore anything that was left of the already abused legend about "conservative" Englishmen! Reserved? That London bunch makes a Rotary stag party resemble a Campfire Girls meeting! What with Bert in the fireplace (actually!) ((with or without a fire?)) and the lights out most of the time, and Ted protecting Bea (from whom, might I ask?) and the learned conversations (electronics, semantics, chemistry, "Not another word about this Convention!! Do you hear me?", art, sex, politics, sex, Kinsey, Havelock Ellis, and sex, so help me!), I'm afraid I'll never get it all in order, or remember even half of it.

Thanks again, and Good Luck on your next Convention. May it be bigger and better than even this one! (Utterly impossible!)

Jesse Floyd

-----  
"Which way is the biscuit factory?"  
-----

One British fan says:

"It was actually an extraordinary affair---Britain's first attempt at a US style convention, and a full-blooded one at that."

We say:

"Judging from Jesse's report, it was disgustingly Americanish. Some of the more libelous portions have been deleted. Jesse's Philcon II report should be a dilly."

Our reporter says:

(this has little, if anything to do with the above)

'SEVENTH FANDOM'

"King Charles the First was walking about and talking half an hour after his head was cut off."

.....But no one called him Charles the Second

=====  
"The ol' ark is a moverin' !"  
=====



# The Last SEZ YOU

Jesse Floyd  
Avonmouth, England

Dearlee,

For the past two years American Fandom has had a representative of British Fandom come to our conventions. I see no reason why this practice shouldn't be continued. You know that it means very little outlay in cash from individuals if spread all over Fandom, and it forges a real bond between England and America. You'd be surprised to know how often Ted Carnell and Walt are asked their opinions of things Connish simply because they have been to one of ours. Anyway, my nomination for this year is Bert Campbell. I suppose you know Bert, or of him at least. He edits AUTHENTIC and sort of holds the post occupied by John Campbell in the States. He's done an awful lot for promoting British Fandom, and if anybody deserves a trip over, he does.

When I suggested it to him, he wouldn't believe it at first. Then on learning I was serious, became quite eager. We discussed ways and means, and it was Walt (pure genius!) who suggested having Bert's publishers send him over on a business angle: getting subs for AUTHENTIC. Its like this, if Bert can get as many as 60 subs in the States, than the Publishers would be repair for their outlay. Bert feels they will only go for the trip across, that they would balk at the full expense. That's where we (Fandom) comes in. If I could get enough pledges to take subscriptions at the Philcon, and raise enough for his return passage, then nothing stands in our way.

Admittedly, I know very little about this sort of thing, but should it backfire, I'll take full responsibility for getting Bert back home. All I ask is some help to get it rolling.

Yrs.

[Jesse]

((For more information on this contact Charles Wells at Charles Wells at 405 E. 62nd St. Savannah, Ga. or Jesse Floyd at 410-A Garden Homes, Savannah, Ga. Jesse may be at sea at the time of this publication, so if you get no reply from him, write Charles, whose fnz FIENDETTA will no doubt carry up-to-the-minute reports. ))

.....  
Now introducing Bert Campbell (who will no doubt be aghast to find this letter in print).....

24th March 1953  
London S.E. 18, England

Dear Lee (ever been addressed so conventionally before?)

You can blame me if you like, but if you had to edit a magazine in your spare time (!) and spend most hours trying to clear up the Egyptian situation and arranging seats in the Abby and telling the truce talkers in Korea to get on with it and investigating shutdown planes in Germany and smashing windows at the U.S. Embassy-



(Campbell -2)

you wouldn't be able to write letter after letter to any old Southern peach blossom that took your fancy. ((I didn't take your fancy. Look under the sofa cushions.)) Isn't it true? Wake up! Isn't it true? Of course it is. Hence I let weeks go by and don't even send you a postcard. But I was thinking of you. Oh, yes, I was, so there! Every now and then I said to myself I must write to my Lee. But as soon as I'd spent a morning writing a novel I had to go to the War Department and test a few submarines, or slip down to the Admiralty and take a look at some new jet planes, or have a chat with the Queen about who to invite. (Anyone ever given you this kind of line before?) So you can see I've been busy. Forgive me?

That's the way it is with me, I'm afraid (negligent yawn). You can't have all of me. Two or three letters a year, that's all I can spare (ruffling papers). Maybe four, not more. Between whiles you just have to sit at your casement and stare out at the mint trees and dream of me. Do I give you nightmares? ((Nightmares.))

All right. Enough of that.

That last Quandry. Nice pictures. Too much Willis. Oh, he's a great guy, writes well, nice style, plenty of humour. But I just couldn't work up any enthusiasm for his subject--especially as I don't believe a word he says about the Chicon. Still, to be fair, Arthur Clarke was raving about the piece. Reckoned it was rib-tickling in the extreme. I always knew there was something off about Arthur. Maybe it's me.

What I specially liked about that last Quandry was the pictures of Bea Mahaffey. They tell me she's coming to our Convention, and Forry Ackerman's told her to buss me for him when she sees me. Judging from your pictures that'll be great.

At this point in my letters to you I never know what to say. It's no use my telling you all about fandom in Britain because thousands of louts do that regularly so I hear. I could tell you about my family, but I guess that would only bore you. Though if you were here beside my nearly-two son at the moment, you wouldn't be a bit bored. Unless with a screw driver or a nail. Stephen has a way of turning all dull moments into blazing ones - usually with the assistance of matches and firelighters. He says "bit warm" when the things are scorching his hair off. Still you don't want to hear all that, do you?

How do you like the new AUTHENTIC? Seems to me it's improved a bit, thought there's a good bit more I want to do before I'll be satisfied. Still, you don't want to hear about that, do you?

What the hell do you want to hear about? Here you are cursing me for not writing and then as soon as I do not started you keep telling me you don't want to hear about it. Fickle!

It'll be six months before you hear from me again if it's a day - and it certainly won't be a day! I'm not going to be insulted by any old-fanzine editress that likes to take a poke at me just because I happen to be a bit silly. I'm the kind that has to be nurtured, given tender ministration else I just lie on the floor and kick. You want to learn how to get along with people and that don't include keep on telling them that you don't want to hear what they're talking about. Now you've hurt me, deeply. Like you did before. You're cruel and heartless and unsympathetic and I never want to speak to you again. If you'd given me a ring I'd give it back to you right now. Write now and pacify me else I'll let the Egyptians do anything they want and I won't let anybody into the Abbey, so there!

[Bart]



The Last

# SEZ YOU

Jesse Floyd  
Avonmouth, England

Dearlee,

For the past two years American Fandom has had a representative of British Fandom come to our conventions. I see no reason why this practice shouldn't be continued. You know that it means very little outlay in cash from individuals if spread all over Fandom, and it forges a real bond between England and America. You'd be surprised to know how often Ted Carnell and Walt are asked their opinions of things Connish simply because they have been to one of ours. Anyway, my nomination for this year is Bert Campbell. I suppose you know Bert, or of him at least. He edits AUTHENTIC and sort of holds the post occupied by John Campbell in the States. He's done an awful lot for promoting British Fandom, and if anybody deserves a trip over, he does.

When I suggested it to him, he wouldn't believe it at first. Then on learning I was serious, became quite eager. We discussed ways and means, and it was Walt (pure genius!) who suggested having Bert's publishers send him over on a business angle: getting subs for AUTHENTIC. Its like this, if Bert can get as many as 60 subs in the States, than the Publishers would be repair for their outlay. Bert feels they will only go for the trip across, that they would balk at the full expense. That's where we (Fandom) comes in. If I could get enough pledges to take subscriptions at the Philcon, and raise enough for his return passage, then nothing stands in our way.

Admittedly, I know very little about this sort of thing, but should it backfire, I'll take full responsibility for getting Bert back home. All I ask is some help to get it rolling.

Yrs.

[Jess]

((For more information on this contact Charles Wells at Charles Wells at 405 E. 62nd St. Savannah, Ga. or Jesse Floyd at 410-A Garden Homes, Savannah, Ga. Jesse may be at sea at the time of this publication, so if you get no reply from him, write Charles, whose fmz FIENDETTA will no doubt carry up-to-the-minute reports. ))

.....  
Now introducing Bert Campbell (who will no doubt be aghast to find this letter in print).....

24th March 1953  
London S.E. 18, England

Dear Lee (ever been addressed so conventionally before?)

You can blame me if you like, but if you had to edit a magazine in your spare time (!) and spend most hours trying to clear up the Egyptian situation and arranging seats in the Abby and telling the truce talkers in Horea to get on with it and investigating shutdown planes in Germany and smashing windoes at the U.S. Embassy-



(Campbell -2)

you wouldn't be able to write letter after letter to any old Southern peach blossom that took your fancy. ((I didn't take your fancy. Look under the sofa cushions.)) Isn't it true? Wake up! Isn't it true? Of course it is, Hence I let weeks go by and don't even send you a postcard. But I was thinking of you. Oh, yes, I was, so there! Every now and then I said to myself I must write to my Lee. But as soon as I'd spent a morning writing a novel I had to go to the War Department and test a few submarines, or slip down to the Admiralty and take a look at some new jet planes, or have a chat with the Queen about who to invite. (Anyone ever given you this kind of line before?) So you can see I've been busy. Forgive me?

That's the way it is with me, I'm afraid (negligent yawn). You can't have all of me. Two or three letters a year, that's all I can spare (ruffling papers). Maybe four, not more. Between whiles you just have to sit at your casement and stare out at the mint trees and dream of me. Do I give you nightmares? ((Nightmares.))

All right. Enough of that.

That last Quandry. Nice pictures. Too much Willis. Oh, he's a great guy, writes well, nice style, plenty of humour. But I just couldn't work up any enthusiasm for his subject--especially as I don't believe a word he says about the Chicon. Still, to be fair, Arthur Clarke was raving about the piece. Reckoned it was rib-tickling in the extreme. I always knew there was something off about Arthur. Maybe it's me.

What I specially liked about that last Quandry was the pictures of Bea Mahaffey. They tell me she's coming to our Convention, and Forry Ackerman's told her to buss me for him when she sees me. Judging from your pictures that'll be great.

At this point in my letters to you I never know what to say. It's no use my telling you all about fandom in Britain because thousands of louts do that regularly so I hear. I could tell you about my family, but I guess that would only bore you. Though if you were here beside my nearly-two son at the moment, you wouldn't be a bit bored. Unless with a screw driver or a nail. Stephen has a way of turning all dull moments into blazing ones - usually with the assistance of matches and firelighters. He says "bit warm" when the things are scorching his hair off. Still you don't want to hear all that, do you?

How do you like the new AUTHENTIC? Seems to me it's improved a bit, thought there's a good bit more I want to do before I'll be satisfied. Still, you don't want to hear about that, do you?

What the hell do you want to hear about? Here you are cursing me for not writing and then as soon as I do not started you keep telling me you don't want to hear about it. Fickle!

It'll be six months before you hear from me again if it's a day - and it certainly won't be a day! I'm not going to be insulted by any old-fanzine editress that likes to take a poke at me just because I happen to be a bit silly. I'm the kind that has to be nurtured, given tender ministration else I just lie on the floor and kick. You want to learn how to get along with people and that don't include keep on telling them that you don't want to hear what they're talking about. Now you've hurt me, deeply. Like you did before. You're cruel and heartless and unsympathetic and I never want to speak to you again. If you'd given me a ring I'd give it back to you right now. Write now and pacify me else I'll let the Egyptians do anything they want and I won't let anybody into the Abbey, so there!

[Bert]



HERE IT IS !!

The

# BLOCH LETTER

wherein he CONFESSES ALL!

Dear Lee:

All right. I might as well confess. You caught me with my pants down. Red-handed.

So I'm ready to tell all. Everything. Everything, do you hear? Just turn those lights off and give me a drink of water. There, you see the state you've got me in? I'll even drink water!

Let's put the cards on the table. All of them, including the ten of clubs. I might as well talk now. Sixth Fandom is dead anyway. (Seventh Fandom is dead, too, but it's afraid to lie down.) There's no use trying to conceal the truth any longer...

I was born in 1809, the son of an actor named Poe. The facts of my life are readily available up to the year 1849, at which time I disappeared into a voting booth in Baltimore, Maryland.

A man resembling me emerged from that booth, in a state of intoxication, and was taken to the hospital where he died several days later and was buried under my name -- Edgar Allen Poe.

But I lived.

You see, it wasn't a voting booth at all. As you must already suspect, it was really a time-machine.

I emerged in 1865, not really knowing where I'd been in the interim. Time machines are like that; all I can tell you is that I found myself in Ford's Theatre in Washington, with a gun in my hand. They were playing AN AMERICAN COUSIN, as lousy a production as ever disgraced a convention program, and I took a shot at the actress on the stage but missed and hit a prominent Republican. Fleeing, I broke my leg and headed for Maryland, where I hoped to take refuge on a terrapin farm. But I was cornered in a barn (apparently my new identity was that of a barn-storming actor) and the barn was burned. A body was dragged out and identified as John Wilkes Booth (a distant ancestor of Bob Tucker, strangely enough; his uncle was named Projection W. Booth) and once more I was supposedly dead. But -- here it comes again -- the barn was also a time-machine and I emerged in 1889, somewhere in London. Armed only with a surgeon's knife, I carved out a brief career for myself on the bodies of 9 women, and then fled to America leaving behind the legend of Jack, the Ripper. In America I settled down, sans knife, to a different occupation.

This occupation too bore fruit. In the shape of mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers for such and sundry people as Bob Tucker, Walt Willis, Shelby Vick, David Kyle, Max Keasler, yourself, and others too humorous to mention.



Then somebody named Grego Barnhuck or something like that went to work and invented science-fiction, and my downfall began.

Instead of sticking to alcohol, murder, assassination, rape and other amusements, I took the fatal and degrading plunge and entered science-fiction. From there it was only a step to THE SCARF (a partial autobiography, as you surmise) and from thence I went all the way and became a fakefan.

But that's a rough life indeed. I've never solved the reason why Fate kept sending me into time-machines and bringing me back again at later dates in new incarnations. All I knew was that each reincarnation seemed worse. And this fan business was the worst of all.

I began to yearn for the opportunity to step into another time-machine and escape from Fourth, Fifth, Sixth Fandom or whatever wave was inundating me at the time. Trouble was, I never knew HOW the time-machine might be disguised. Voting booths, barns, what next?

I spent years investigating strange privies, but no luck. I was still a fan.

Then, finally, some lucky day in 1939, I fell into an open manhole and broke my neck. Somebody (not me) was hauled out dead. But it wasn't another time machine deal, and I escaped fandom. Lucky, lucky, me!

I thought. Until I emerged from a sewer as a writer of comic books and detective fiction named -- I cannot even bring myself to put the hideous cognomen on paper!

So now you know. I am HE, and Poe and the Ripper and your ancestor, and a fake-fan and a boat-sawyer from way back. But it's not my fault. Somebody keeps putting me into time-machines and each time I emerge in a lower, viler role.

This last one is, of course, the worst. I can't stand it much longer. I keep hanging around fans and pros trying to find another time-machine so I can disappear and emerge in a higher incarnation, such as an anteater.

But it had better be soon. I can't take much more of this.

- Apparently there's no other way out except to find the machine, because I'm immortal. I found that out last week.

I shot myself in the belly.

It was easy.

But I kept right on living, if you can call it that. So there's only one way. Keep on looking for the machine. It might ~~be~~ very easily turn out to be a steam calliope or a bird-bath. All I can do is look.

Anyhow, confession is good for the soul and I feel much better now. And someday I'll succeed on my quest. I'll find the machine and emerge as at least an aardvarrk.

Hoping you are the same,

[Robert Bloch]



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*Richard Bergeron*

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