Dedication

I originally planned to dedicate this omnibus to the man who had actually written it, ie, Harry Warner Jr.

When I asked him about this dedication, he declined, and in turn suggested it be dedicated to me for actually compiling and printing it. It was then my turn to decline the offer.

We finally came to a compromise, and that was to dedicate this omnibus to you, the reader, on the understanding that if just one of you out there reading this enjoys it as much as either Harry did when writing it, or as much as I did when gathering the pieces and printing them off, then we will both consider this project a total success.

Contents

AOY-21	AL ASHLEY	(from Void #24 — May 1961)
AOY-22	AH! SWEET IDIOCY!	(from Void #26 — August 1961)
AOY-23	F. TOWNER LANEY — A SURVEY	(from Stormy Petrel #1 — May 1959)
AOY-24	JACK CHAPMAN MISKE	(from Void #29 — January 1969)
AOY-25	CHANTICLEER	(from Quip #8 — May 1968)
AOY-26	TUMBRILS	(from Quip #9 — July 1968)
AOY-27	THE COSMIC CIRCLE	(from Quip #10 — Oct. 1968)
AOY-28	FANTASY ADVERTISER	(from Quip #11 — January 1969)
AOY-29	THE MOON	(from Quip #12 — August 1969)
AOY-30	ROCKET TO THE MORGUE	(from Quip #13 — Oct. 1969 - also appeared in Focal Point #5 May 1970)
AOY-31	SPACESHIP	(from Focal Point #8 — July 1970)
AOY-32	LIGHT	(from Focal Point #11 — August 1970)
AOY-33	STARDUST	(from Focal Point #17 — Nov. 1970)
AOY-34	THE DAMN THING	(from Focal Point #28 — April 1971)
AOY-35	FANZINE INDEXES	(from Focal Point #30 — May 1971)
AOY-36	SOUTHERN STAR	(from Focal Point v3 #2 - Aug. 1971)
AOY-37	HORIZONS	(from Tandom #1 — February 1973)
AOY-38	HYPHEN	(from Random #6 — February 1975)
AOY-39	TAPES	(from Swoon v2 #1 — April 1976)
AOY-40	FIDO WAS A GAY DOG	(from Horizons #144 — Nov. 1975)

Take Heed

Please note that these articles were written many years ago and as such the use of the present tense in them should be taken in conjunction with the age of the pieces themselves.

 Electronic Production by Colossus & Sammy Scanner -- Electric Fan Publication #1

Available from Chuck Connor, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF, ENGLAND

Introduction To The Disc Version

This is the second incarnation of the fanzine version of ***All Our Yesterdays*** — the 40 reprinted articles that I finally managed to publish on 26th January 1991.

A beta-test edition of this was completed some six years later, just prior to ***ATTITUDE The Convention*** (Tuesday 11th February 1997.) That highlighted the fragile nature of the viewer in use at the time, and also the limitations of working on a single platform (Windows 95.)

In order to allow a much broader user access, both Adobe Acrobat and the ETPS programmes have been employed in order to both compact the text, add colour, automate the display, and make the access to ***AOY*** more user-friendly – ETPS is a stand-alone system, and Acrobat PDF file readers are available, free of charge, for PC, Mac, Unix and Linux platforms.

The final-final edition was released in the UK at ***SECCON*** (28th – 30th May 1999.)

One person who deserves a special mention is Bill Bowers – not only for prodding me on a regular basis via e-mails, but re-injecting enthusiasm into the project. This is all your fault, Bill.

The original paper account of ***AOY***'s history (and how both Harry Warner and I viewed the project) is recounted below, mainly for those coming to this collection for the first time. The question, I suppose, is why go through all the typing again? Two things — one I know and the other I suspect.

Firstly, the original paper edition hit many criticisms (some justified, some nit-picky, and some just pointless) but has slowly sold itself down to the last handful of copies. Feedback also seems to indicate that people are using the paper copies as reference tools as well as for the nostalgia contained within them. This "Electric" version should make referencing and annotation easier.

And, lastly, because the intervening years have seen not only an advancement in readily available technology — along with a new breed of fan who isn't afraid to use it in the same way I used to use a manual typewriter and stencils — I felt it was time to cater for them as well.

As to whether this is the first *true* electric fan production? I know not — and care less. I would hazard a guess to say that it is the first fanthology on a coloured 3½-inch HD disc to be produced with a wraparound colour cover, disc label and its own little clear perspex box. And you don't get those kind of goodies when you download from the Web.

My final comment before going into the original intro is more of a request:— That these files not be duplicated (except for personal backup purposes), uploaded onto a BBS or Website without requesting first, and that any quotes taken from this edition be credited to this edition.

Now, let me take you back to 1986, via 1991, to tell you how the Beast was born….

Notes for bastard reviewers of this fanzine art…..

(Sorry!)

Notes for fanzine reviewers of this bastard art…..

I suppose it depends on what and how you would view such an undertaking as this omnibus.

Personally I don't particularly consider it specifically a work of fanhistory as there was no intention of such when I took on the project. Nor does it set itself out to be the definitive collection of articles penned by Harry – such was never the case (a task, it must be said, which would prove impossible before it even got started).

No, if this should be viewed as anything other than a collection of fanzine articles, then the point has been missed because that is what I have tried to do here – setting the pieces out on their own, giving each a title illustration, the endings,

where they required it, have artwork, and where the articles end on a right-hand page they are backed with a full page illustration so that (a) each new section starts as it should, on the right-hand page (which makes it easier to read) and (b) no fanzine editors like blank pages in their fanzines, do they?

One of the biggest comments (complaints?) will be the lack of page numbers to this collection. What can I say, except that, during my eleven years of fanzine production (at the time of typing this, that is) I have almost never put a page count in any of my fanzines. This attitude is nothing new (see the section about Harry's own HORIZONS}and I doubt I would have completed this project if I had had some running record of just how many pages I had turned out or, more importantly, how many pages were left to type.

There may also be comments about certain sections and their history seeming fuzzy. For that I can but lay down this brief history of the project.

In 1986 I was involved in a 9-month circumnavigation of the globe. Towards the end of that deployment I received a package from home which contained a pile of photocopied 'pages'. These, it turned out, came from Paul "Skel" Skelton, who, in turn, had received eighty stencils from Richard Bergeron, and a list of articles that Harry had written under his umbrella title of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. Both of us had expressed an interest in the original project, started by Richard {who was unable to finish it), but that Skel believed that there was too much work involved in getting the thing into print (there were, at that particular time, 10 articles to be found, and the eighty stencils needed retyping into an A4 – or Quarto – format as the margins were American sized and unsalvageable.}

Whatever, Skel kindly passed everything onto me (including some very helpful notes concerning inconsistencies in the text) and I decided that although I would take it on, it would also be something a little different from a run-of -the mill fanzine.

Dave Collins was contacted for the article headers, a job which he almost managed to complete before he was fafiated, Shep Kirkbride and Kevin Clark thankfully stepped in to help finish the job.

Chris Suslowicz was contacted for the colour duplication, which proved to be more difficult and time delaying than any of us thought possible (problems with stencils, duplicators, and ink, being amongst them} which is why you will find several headers in black following each other. The moving of 24 odd reams of paper across half of the British Isles by train (engineering delays, re-routings, etc) was a fun-filled exercise on its own.

Chasing down the missing articles was admirably aided by both Vincent Clarke and Walt Willis here in the UK, and Rich Brown (who dug up a couple more pieces into the bargain) over in the USA.

Richard Bergeron and Shep Kirkbride supplied the covers, which were then passed onto John D. Owen and his Crystal Shipyard Press. Things started to look like the omnibus wouldn't take long to be completed. That was when things started to take a turn in the opposite direction.

First, the original electrostencil cutter I had decided to go defective on me, and funds had to be diverted to getting another one. Next, the ink pump on my Gestetner 300 decided to play up, giving heart palpitations any time when ink-intensive duplication was required. This was later rectified, after I had gotten another duplicator. Between then and now I also lost two typewriters (the (in)famous Typo Twins) which is why you may see some differences in the typeface when you read the main body of this fanzine and one electric typewriter (another stately veteran of fanning, now put out to grass due to mounting repairs). Then, several days (and stencils) away from completion, the faithful Roneo Electroscan scanned its last stencil, and I have had to rely on Vincent Clarke for the final couple of electrostencils.

And of course, somewhere between 1986 and today (Sunday, December 30th, 1990), work stuck its spanner in. So, if you take into account that I get about 50 to 52 days leave per year then it could be said that this omnibus has really only taken 156-ish days. But to say that would be to belittle the work of many others, without whom this omnibus would never have seen the light of day.

So, in no particular order, I would like to say Thank You to:

Richard Bergeron,
Shep Kirkbride,
Vincent Clarke,
Skel,
Walt Willis,
Chris Suslowicz,

Dave Collins (wherever he may be),
Ron Soule,
Paul Ward,
John Kostick,
Pete Crump,
John D. Owen,
Rich Brown,
Mic Rogers,
Kevin Clark,
Taral,
Iain Byers,
Steve & Jenny Smy (PD artwork),
Mrian H leinbergen
Marc Holmes
Dick Parker
and above all Harry Warner Jr, for writing it all in the first place.

The final few stencils (ie, these ones you're reading now) were processed using Rhadamanthus, a DIY IBM AT compatible running PFS FIRST PUBLISHER v3, and were cut using Madam Syn – The 24-Pin dot matrix (yes, direct cut, no ribbon and no clogging of the printer head either, using normal and also daisywheel-specific stencils).

Whatever, enough of all this. If you flip over the page you'll get to read the list of contents – but remember, this is not designed to be read in one sitting. Think of it more as a relaxed gathering around a nice warm fire while your favourite old Uncle Harry tells you what it used to be like way back when.....

MARCONETTE, SPEER AND CHAUVENET

It happens like this. Joe Fann puts out an excellent fan magazine. He digs up material which other fans have laboured to write, and a hundred or so persons receive copies of the issue. The magazine is read, it becomes the topic of letters to the editor, and that's the end of it. The years pass, fans come and go, new fandoms spring up, thousands of people pass through the field for long or short periods. And those future years, only a tiny proportion of the new fans see or read that particular fanzine and its contents. It seems to me a dreadful waste of good reading matter, that only the present group of fans should read an article whose timeliness doesn't stale with the passing of years. In lieu of what we really need — a printed annual collection of the best fanzine material — here are a few samples of what has been said in the past.

I'm taking all three items from the early 1940's, for no particular reason other than it happens to be just a decade ago. This was the time when the World War Two crop of fanzines were just about at their peak. A little later, the draft became so strenuous that many of the most capable fans went into the service, and a little earlier, fandom still hadn't fully recovered from the era-ending collapse of Fantasy Magazine.

Scienti-Snaps was one of the finest of the fanzines of those days. Walter E. Marconette of Dayton, Ohio, published it for a year or more as an exquisitely hectographed one-man production. A little later, he switched to miemographing, and took on an assistant editor, J. Chapman Miske. The Second Anniversary Issue, dated February, 1940, contains an amazing line-up of excellent material by the big names in science fiction. Here are some excerpts from an article about writing by John W. Campbell, Jr., published under his pseudonym of Don A. Stuart:

> "How much of writing is an art — that is, a more or less unplanned, unthoughtout result of a sort of instinct — and how much of it is a development of the science of plotting, I don't know. It seems that all of the part that makes the story effective, the actual wording and expression, is as completely unscientific and unanalysable as walking. Walking robots walk scientifically, based on accurate and detailed analyses of the mechanics of walking, and stalk with the stiff gracelessness of a forced story.
>
> "The story 'Forgetfulness', which seems to have been one of the best-liked stories I've done, was rejected the first time I submitted it to Mr. Tremaine. I had laboured on that work. I wrote it out, then rewrote it, section by section, building up the characters necessary in precisely the way I felt they must go to explain my story. Some parts were rewritten five and six times before I submitted it.
>
> "When it came back, I stuck it on the shelf for nearly a year. Then, having had better than ten months to forget the self-pleasing phrases and the pleasure they had evoked, I was a little better able to read it from 'outside' the story.
>
> "It was all there — everything of plot and idea that appeared in the final version. It wasn't bad, because the plot and idea were fairly sound. But it was, too, not good. I walked with the precision, tile scientifically exact placement of words and phrases and incident that five or six carefully studied rewritings had built into it, word by word.
>
> "A story is a vehicle for expressing an idea. That one was, but the mechanism of the vehicle was there for any who looked to see. I rewrote it, from beginning to end, without reference to the original copy. That time, knowing what I was going to tell, it told itself smoothly,"

Jack F. Speer was in Washington in those days, and spent part of his time writing things like the following random notes from the Spring, 1940, issue of Sustaining Programme for FAPA:

> "What this country needs is more synonyms for badly-worn preposition,
>
> "Here's an experiment you can try. You've heard that one can't do any complicated thinking without using words for symbols. Sit down to a typewriter and copy some easy piece, or if no typewriter's handy, just count steadily 1-2-3-4 etc, (the typewriter is better, because you will know if you cease doing it unconsciously) . Either of these methods will, I believe, block or rather keep busy, that part of your brain which handles words. Then see how much original thinking you can do. I find myself able to run over in my mind thoughts already phrased, but not to synthesise anything new, under these conditions.

"Idle thought with which to occupy your mind while writing for the soup to cool: What would you do if left in charge of a class of third-graders for a couple of hours or so, to keep them occupied and out of mischief, and perhaps just on the side slip in a little mental improvement?"

Louis Russell Chauvenet might be an unfamiliar name to the present generation. The old-timers should remember him with pleasure, though. Totally deaf, he nevertheless succeeded in becoming one of the best-liked fans as a. writer and as a person. Oddly enough, in our one meeting, I found less trouble in keeping up a conversation than I did with most fans whose hearing was intact. He had something interesting to say in reply to anything the other fellow might say, a rare gift, unfortunately. For the September, 1941, issue of Phil Bronson's The Fantasite, Chauvenet wrote a sum-up of the more popular ideas about alien races. Since he didn't pretend to do a complete job, it shouldn't do any harm if I present his article in abridged form.

"For obvious reasons, .the aliens have usually been inimical. Perhaps Wells may be said to have set the pattern in his 'War of the Worlds'; his Martians are however, in every way less interesting than his Selenites in 'First Men on the Moon', since it is the civilisation of the latter which receive far the most attention. The Selenites were an insect-like race which bred and developed individuals for the performance of specific functions; they illustrate specialism carried to an extreme. It is interesting to compare them with the Chloran of 'Skylark of Valeron', the difference is that the Chlorans' specialisation was a temporary matter only, thanks to their amorphous nature, and any Chloran individual could apparently develop any required organic structure for the performance of whatever task devolved on him. Such races are obviously non-human, as well as inimical. Friendly non-humans are not quite as common, but are nevertheless plentiful. For instance, we have Weinbaum's 'Loonies' on Io, creatures apparently of a fairly low order of intelligence, and then again Tweel and his race upon Mars. Tweel was a success because he illustrated what others before Weinbaum had chosen to ignore: namely, the possibility, that alien minds may function in a radically different manner from ours, so that communication becomes difficult or impossible. It would be a blunder to omit mention of Weinbaum's famous 'Oscars' on the dark side of Venus. These vegetable-like creatures had minds capable of deducing the structure of the universe from any given fact, yet were philosophically resigned to destruction at the hands of howling savages, or the Venusian equivalent thereof. Speaking of vegetable-types brings to mind Stapledon's mention of such beings: a mixture — vegetable by day, animal by night — with intelligence, but not sufficient intelligence to avoid disastrous experiments with extreme attempts to become first wholly animal and then wholly vegetable.

"In general, the humanoid races have been pictured as friendly, a trend which is markedly evident in the writings of Jack Williamson and E. E, Smith, among others.

"The race of ancient reptiles in Williamson's 'Xanadulu' is not only amicable but also thoroughly pacificstic. It is interesting to speculate on whether or not a race must necessarily lose belligerency as it grows older; in this connection we must return again to 'Star Maker' where Stapledon sets forth the notion of conquering the universe. The analysis of how they get to be that way is quite interesting; it is one of the few faults of Dr. Smith that ***his*** evil races, the Fenachrone and 'Boskone' are supposed to be somehow "innately" wrong-headed, a rather too mystical doctrine to appeal to me, although reasonably acceptable for the purpose of the stories.

"The question of 'Life as we do not know it' has naturally come in for much consideration. A story I recall vaguely told of a type of radioactive mineral life which, upon encountering human beings, failed to recognise them as living creatures, while the humans also failed to discern the presence of radically alien life. The time rate was the basis of a tale of interplanetary voyagers who travelled out to Neptune to meet friendly race of non-humans, but found nothing. On returning a second time, they located gaseous beings whose movements took up days of earth-time.

"The notion of living worlds has occurred on several occasions. There was another tale, 'The Planet Entity' by C. A. Smith, in which the entity was vegetable in nature, and covered the whole surface of the sun in a Schachner opus, while E. E. Smith has given us the similar to our iron, in the 'Spacehounds'.

"If we except Van Lorne's 'Marinerre', most of the few examples of intelligent aquatic life are those taken from the Smith epics.

"The microcosmos and the macrocosmos have both, on occasion, been claimed to be the residences of life, and curiously enough, the electron and the supra-universe have been 'found', usually, to possess strictly human life. Characteristic are Cummings' 'Golden Atom' tales, Meek's 'Awlo of Ulm', and

Raymond's 'Into the Infinities'. Raymond's hero at Least takes his heroine with him, and does not pick her up during his travels, a fault committed by all the others cited. Any student of biology knows that cross breeding between humanities of diverse origin would be impossible, or at least produce monstrosities. Burroughs' naive crossing of an oviparous Martian princess with John Carter of earth's viviparous, stock is the classic blunder in this field.

"Stapledon is the only author I am familiar with who discussed the problem of evolution of symbiotic races; such a concept has many fascinating angles. The 'Star Maker' himself is an interesting form of extraterrestrial life, but on the whole not as convincingly portrayed as the less pretentious forms of life. Finally, we have Stapledon's suggestion that the suns of space are themselves living animals — an idea for which some support can certainly be found in the fact that suns are born, grow old, and die; take in energy, and emit it, and seem to be in a continuous state of controlled change. While it has naturally been thought that the temperature and pressures involved make any stable grouping of atoms impossible, and hence make life impossible, this conclusion cannot be said necessarily to follow upon the premise, since it is doubtful whether energy beings, such as the stars may be, could be said to require such a thing as a 'Stable grouping of atoms'."

H.C. Koenig, Claude Degler

Most of us collect fantasy books, in a big or little way. But I don't think that anyone active in the field today collects them as H. C. Koenig of New York used to do. He hunted the best editions or the oldest editions of the fantasy classics. Then he proceeded to tell about these books in THE READER AND COLLECTOR, a publication which he issued through FAPA. Koenig has dropped out of sight lately, and never was really active in fandom, being twice and three times the age of most fans. Here are some of the things that made a lot of collectors drool, excerpted from the December, 1941, issue of his publication:

> "No collector of books on the weird and fantastic could lay claim to a complete library if he did not possess at least one copy of "Frankenstein". My special bookcase holds a very nice copy of this book, issued some years ago by the Limited Editions Club. The book is printed in a new typeface, cut by Goudy. The side of the book is covered with linen, the back binding is a rich red morocco. The illustrations are unique and unusual, in that the illustrator, Everett Henry, attempts to capture all the horror of the story, without ever showing the monster.
>
> "We come to a copy of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". One of the best-known and best loved nonsense books, it nevertheless belongs in every fantasy collection. My copy is small size, 5 by 8 inches and runs a little over 200 pages. The book is completely bound in full French levant morocco, stained deep wine in colour. Stamped on the front and back covers and on the backbone are designs made from type ornaments. The one on the backbone is made up of intertwinings of drawings of Alice, The Mad Hatter, and the White Rabbit. The designs, incidentally, are stamped in genuine gold. My copy bears the signature of Mrs. Hargrears, the original Alice.
>
> "That brings me to an interesting book made in Japan, Kwaidan, by Iafcadio Hearn. . This book is completely Japanese; the paper is Japanese linen; the binding is Japanese brocade; the illustrations are by a Japanese, Yoshimura Fouljita, and the book was printed by Shimbi Shoin in Tokyo. The book contains about twenty illustrations in colour. I understand that the opening illustration required fifty-one impressions. The outer case for this edition is a wrap-case. It is made of heavy Japanese silk and is wrapped around the book itself and fastened by two ivory tabs. The book is not bound the way we do it in this country. The front and back boards (covered with a golden brocade) are laid on the top and bottom of the stack of sheets and the whole sewed together with blue silk."

Incidentally, Koenig was the only person to my knowledge ever to produce fanzines as most of us dream of producing them. He wrote the stuff, then turned it over to his secretary for stencilling, duplicating, and assembling.

The days of the costume ball at science fiction conventions seem to be dying away. Here's how Milt Rothman described in the December, 1941, issue of the Southern Star, the getup worn at the Convention that night:

> "Mr. Heinlein, Adam Stink, the world's most lifelike robot. In other words, no costume at all. Mrs. Heinlein, Queen Niphar from "Figures of Earth", by Cabel. She wore a sort of semi-oriental dress with much costume jewellery. Walt Daugherty: A Galactic Roamer. His costume was put together out of plastic material which he obtained as remnants from the aeroplane factory in which he works. The stuff actually cost $500 to make, counting the experimental work involved in obtaining the particular shape.
>
> "E. Everett Evans: Bug-Eyed Monster from Rhea. Completely hand made. A blue and yellow suit with a helmet made of dozens of feathers pasted on one by one. Horribly hot to wear.
>
> "Art Widner: He obtained a frightful rubber mask and came as Granny from "Slan" with speech and all.
>
> "damon knight: A sloppy looking sort of John Star complete with Junior G Man Medal.
>
> "Ackerman: A most horrible looking rubber mask. Indescribable. The same for Morojo.
>
> "William Deutch of New York put on a little beard and a French accent and handed out Life Line prophecies.

> "Chet Chosen grew a Christ-like beard and cane as a prophet; Cyril Kornbluth looked natural and came as a mad scientist; and Doc Lowndes put a mercurochrome cut around his neck, powder on his face, and eyebrow pencil on his eyes and was a lovely zombie. The three of then did not put on the act which they were supposed to.
>
> "Elrner Meukel , of Washington (state of) appeared in fancy blue shirt end orange bathing trunks to represent the Probable Man."

The Southern Star was the official organ of the Dixie Fantasy Federation. The people who were back of it have vanished completely. I think a virus must have gotten them, although the draft was blamed for a while. Joseph Gilbert, Harry Jenkins, Lee Eastman, Fred Fischer, Art Sennert, and others — where are they now?

Claude Degler and his Cosmic Circle were going strong in 1943, with plans for starting a colony of fans in the Ozarks, mimeographed publications in incredible profusion, and Degler himself hitchhiking from coast to coast on a "good will tour of fandom' that caused a spectacular set of fusses and feuds. He even planned a competitor for the PAPA as one of the minor facets or the Cosmic Circle, and issued a bunch of stuff reprinting one mailing of the Cosmic Amateur Publishers Alliance. Much of this mailing was devoted to Degler's complaints against T. Bruce Yerke, who had gone so far as to suggest that the Cosmic Circle might not be all that it was cracked up to be. Typical of Degler's pacification methods is the following excerpt from Cosmic Circle Commentator #4:

> "War of Nerves. For several days all manner of furious activity, intended speeches, heated debates and arguments, which at times reach alarming proportions, have been taking place.
>
> "A circular was sent out by Bruce Yerke, and the articles in the Analyzer & Raym's "Bulletin" by the other side. Various factions took sides, one way or the other. Many persons and things having no connection with the original argument or matter however, came to be involved & dragged into the melee; Should this matter have continued even one very small, little step further, no one, and nothing on earth could have kept this Society & all Fandom from having become involved in fanwide controversy that would have certainly resulted in the most gosh-awful mess any of us can possibly imagine. HOW NEAR this actually came to happening, no one but the few key persons directly concerned will EVER KNOW. After much controversy, heated discussions, "Strategy of terror", by "measures & counter-measures" - & long and serious discussions with everyone involved…. the so-called "War of Nerves" has now been relieved."

I make no effort to reproduce the more mysterious aspects of Degler's punctuation, and I resist the temptation to quote about eight pages of this magazine that sound suspiciously like a war of nerves in themselves. Instead, here are a few "***Headlines***" quoted from the same issue:

> "J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM ENGLISH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COSMIC CIRCLE PLANET FANTASY FEDERATION, if this is acceptable to him. Word has not yet had time to be received from him.
>
> "MISS HELEN BRADLEIGH MADE 'PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER', a position higher than that of the Psychological Ministry. The new position is connected with the 'OFFICE COSMIC EDUCATION (OCE)……..'
>
> "HELEN CONDUCTS SUMMER SCHOOL FOR THE 'COSMIC' CHILDREN WORLDS 1st STF. COSMIC SCHOOL. Sometime we will have our own schools for Cosmen. We of the COUNCIL PLEDGE that we will never <u>give up the</u> 4 year-long WAR we have fought with the 'Powers of Darkness' (Unenlightenment & Ignorance) until this is so."

Bob Tucker

Someone suggested that I should run something by Bob Tucker. I can't think of anything that would be more fun to do, and have devoted the whole kit and caboodle to him this time.

Tucker's beginnings, like that of the Grand Canyon, is lost in the mists of antiquity to most present-day fans. I can assure you that his fan career actually did begin; not that I was around as an active fan at the time, but there were many survivors of his earliest days when I appeared on the scene. Tucker first came into prominence as a contributor to prozines letter columns around 1936, promptly involving fandom in the First Staple War. This affair, starting as a big joke, actually produced some bitterness in its later stages, and when someone sent a fake obituary notice to Astounding, Tucker quietly withdrew from the field. He lay dormant until 1938, when he resumed activities, this time in fandom itself, rather than through the prozines. For almost a decade he and Ackerman alternated winning polls to determine the number one fan, but the latter part of the 1940's saw Tucker gradually drop many of his activities and gain the ability to sell mystery novels for big sums of money. Now he's joined FAPA again, and shows signs of coming to full vigour.

Tucker is one of the most prolific writers that fandom has ever known. He turned out articles by the dozen each year for his own magazines and the publications of others. I don't think he ever turned down a request for material from an unknown fan, and probably his good nature in this respect is responsible for the existence of a lot of fanzines that just had to come out, after getting a Tucker manuscript. His publishing has included some one-shotters and indexes, but has centred mostly around three titles. First was d'Jourhal, the propaganda organ of the anti-staple faction, which was as mythical as most of the staple events until long after the conflict was forgotten. When Tucker re-entered fandom in the late 1930's, he decided to publish , and actually produced some issues of a magazine to go with that title. Don't ask me how he got that title; I doubt whether Bob remembers himself. LeZombie started to wag the dog, and for five years LeZ was tops of its kind in fandom. Science Fiction News Letter also started in a very small way, and grew to meet the demand. SFNL is expertly done, but I'd prefer to be receiving LeZombie these days. I'd also be willing to wager that it would be the severest of all tests for the fantasy collector. To assemble a complete file of it these days would be a wonderful test of patience, skill and luck.

LeZombie started out as a personal opinion and humour magazine for Tucker and his pseudonym, Hoy Ping Pong. (HPP was incarnated as a Chinese philosopher, but soon became a pen-name for almost any type of material.) Later it expanded from a single-sheeter to a fanzine of generous proportions, with much material by other writers. Contents were generally restricted to two types of stuff: humour and personal opinions; frequently combined. However, you never knew what to expect next, and Tucker was always creating new mediums. For instance, his Lez-ettes, a fine art form which has been neglected since the demise of the magazine. Lez-ettes were science fiction stories, each in three chapters containing not more than two words. For instance, from the July, 1942 issue: Chapter 1: Planet. Chapter 2: Ice-age. Chapter 3: "Brrr!". Sometimes there was an unhappy ending to these Lez-ettes, like this from the same issue: Chapter 1: Superman. Chapter 2: Superwoman. Chapter 3: Runt. Or they could be horror stories: Chapter 1: Amoeba. Chapter 2: No fission. Chapter 3: Grue-some.

Tucker's regular style of humour is cumulative in its effect: no single sentence or paragraph is funny, but a couple of pages of these sentences or paragraphs will provide an enormous belly-laugh. That makes it hard to select items for excerpting: they lose their flavour in the process. The March-April, 1943, issue for instance carried an article by Squire Pong on "How to Raze Babies". The best paragraph is probably this one:

> "Let us consider the tiny rocketship for example. It should be a reasonable facsimile of the real thing, down to a hollow rocket tube, in which little Eustace can poke his finger. If he can't get it out again, this is the lesson one. Also, in order to lend an appearance of reality and acquaint the little fellow with the true facts of the case, we suggest you stuff the tube with inflammable material — flashlight powder will do nicely. Then hand the darling genius a lighted match and sit back to see what happens. Chances are, the child will know all about rocketry before his classmates and never, never ask such foolish questions as: "But, daddy, how can it push against the ***nothing*** in space?"

I also liked the delicate way in which Tucker announced the ending of my fanzine, Spaceways, in his January, 1943, issue of Le Zombie: "We announce that you aren't likely to find any reprints from Nova in Spaceways' pages because Nova won't allow reprinting and Spaceways hasn't any pages anymore."

Getting away from humour for a moment, Tucker did some reminiscing in the November, 1942 issue, about how fleeting fame in fandom can be. He looked back on a poll that had been taken in 1938, and commented that some of the big shots were forgotten already. A little less than a decade later, I have to joggle my own memory over a couple of names and titles. See how many of these you can pin down:

> "For a good session of tongue-clacking, let's take a look at this list of 'famous fans' as reported in July, 1938. In first place is to be found Wollheim; Ackerman is second; Johnny Baltadonis is third; Wiggins is fourth;

Sam Moskowitz is fifth, Bob Madle is sixth; Johnny B. Michel seventh; James Taurasi eighth; Ted Carnell of England ninth and 'WHG' tenth — Walter Gillings of England, probably.

"The five leading fanzines of the same period were, Science Fiction Fan, Science Fiction Collector, Science Fiction Critic, Cosmic Tales and Nova Terrae. Who made the crack about the snow of yesteryear? The circulation of the leading fanzine was (hold your breath) slightly above 40.

Finally, here's a somewhat condensed example of an extended piece of Tuckeriana. It's taken from the 'September, 1942 issue of Le Zombie, and entitled "A Fan at Large"

"Dear Mom:

"Gosh, it's swell ! I never dreamed a science fiction convention could be so much fun. here I am away out in space for the first time. As you know, Mom, this is the first time the fans have ever had a convention in space, Our club - NFFF - has chartered this ship for a week's cruise, out around Pluto and back. There are about 300 of us and except for the crew we have the entire ship to ourselves!

"Gee, Mom, I have the swellest little room2 It's built Snug. It's built right under one of the rocket tubes. I can put my hand right up on the ceiling and feel how hot it is. Of course, the room is kinda small. I can hear the rockets all the time. Gosh!

"We cleared port at noon. The Captain was mad about something; I don't know what. A bunch of us stood around an open hatch in the keel and dropped sandbags, trying to hit some little black dots moving below us. There certainly is a swell bunch of fans onboard. One of them (I think it was Widner or something) took me aside later and told me there really wasn't sand in those bags. He said they held powdered oxygen. Maybe that was why the captain was mad.

"The moon is a funny place, Mom. Just like in my school books. 'There ain't no air here at all. The captain warned us we couldn't stay out long without suits, and after about an hour the talking died down and some of the fans began to get blue in the face so he made us come inside.

"Right after we left the moon an old fella from Michigan name of Evans or something, took me aside and asked if I had heard rumours about him. I said no. Then he said that people were starting, rumours that he was out to buy control of fandom, but I shouldn't listen to them. I said I wouldn't — and then guess what, Mom? He asked me if I would like to publish a fanzine?

"Gee, would I! So he gave me ten dollars for the first issue and told me to get busy on it as soon as I got home. He's a funny duck. I caught him two or three times when he didn't know anybody was around. He would stand by a porthole up at the front end and blow cigar smoke out in space. Then he would rush like the dickens to .the rear port window and watch it float by, with a pleased look on his face.

"Gosh, this trip is exciting, Mom! We had to make a stop a few hours ago and pick up a fan who had fallen overboard. A fellow named Rothman had opened a skylight in the roof and was taking pictures of the stars. A sudden gust of wind blew him out the skylight into space and it was a good thing somebody saw it happen. Rothman wasn't wearing anything but a light suit and he might have caught cold.

"Some of the fans got out their costumes this evening, altho the masquerade is a week away. A swell fella named Speer had a complete Buck Rogers outfit. He slipped outside the ship, went topside and walked along the hull until he came to the forward port window. Then, tying a rope around his middle to hold him, he hung head-downwards in front of the window and shot his ray gun at the navigator and pilot. The navigator fainted but the pilot got pretty mad.

"A couple of swell guys from New York named Studley and Knight have asked me if I know how to play jungle dominoes, and would I like to get in on a little game? I told them I didn't know how to play but they said they would be glad to teach me. We are going to have a game in my stateroom this afternoon. I said that I didn't have any of those kind of dominoes, but Knight said for me not to mind, he would bring his. He says his set are "educated", whatever that means,

"Well, I guess that's all this time, Mom. I'11 write you again as soon as I get a chance. Gosh, but this is a swell bunch!

Yours truly,

Joe Fann

FUTURIA FANTASIA

Most of us know that Ray Bradbury was once a pure and simple fan, before he discovered the way to sell stories. But how many fans in the field today realise that he was also a fanzine publisher? Bradbury put out a little fanzine named Futuria Fantasia during his Los Angeles days. I find four issues of it in my Los Angeles file, which appeared during late 1939 and early 1940. There may have been a copy or two after these four — it would take a person with a better memory than mine to be sure.

Futuria Fantasia had little to distinguish it from a hundred other fanzines of about the same period. Its standard of material may have been just a trifle higher than the average. The general appearance is quite neat, but that was a characteristic of Los Angeles magazines of those days, and there were many fanzines coming out of LA during those years. Futuria Fantasia contains the green ink which nourished the LA mimeographs in those days and each issue contained up to 20 standard letter sized pages, with a variety of stories, poems and articles. Each of the four issues contains a book cover, three of them mimeoed, the other reproduced by a halftone.

One sure thing, you'd never guess that it was Bradbury writing the editorial for the first issue: "The best laid plans of me, it seems, are destined for detours or permanent and disappointing annihilation upon the road to accomplishment." It goes on in this murky, forced, style for a full page, explaining why the fanzine appeared a year later than originally scheduled. It also reveals that even though Bradbury lived at 1841 South Manhattan Place, he couldn't spell Manhattan without the use of an e.

If Bradbury ever should become a really important writer, these publications of his youngest youth are going to be studied by the research men and the biographers. So it's really a shame that it's almost impossible to determine whether Bradbury wrote certain items which are credited to other people. Guy Amory, listed as the writer of a biography of Kuttner, may have existed. However, Ron Reynolds appears to be Bradbury in disguise, and as a result, a couple of the stories in Futuria Fantasia become important.

Best of them is probably "The Piper", which may be the very first of the Bradbury stories about Mars to see print. If it is really Bradbury's fiction, it is surprisingly good, in comparison with the majority of the sophomoric stuff he was writing in those days. It isn't too far from the atmosphere of the published stories about Mars, either, although it doesn't quite fit into the future history pattern of The Martian Chronicles, "The Piper" brings in a man from Venus: "He's crazy, that's what. Stands up there piping on his music from sunset until dawn." The Piper plays on a world – Mars — which has been conquered and brutified by earth men. A little boy who is the "last pure Martian alive" learns that millions of these degraded Martians have their residence "out there, beyond the mountains, in the caves, far back in the subterrance." The man from Venus has also been ill-treated by the earthmen. The concluding paragraph's meaning probably was more clear to Bradbury than to the reader of the story, but it appears that the Piper's music one night causes these brutalised Martians to revolt against the earthmen. It's *an* interesting combination of Bradbury's present style and the work of a boy obsessed by adjectives, these final paragraphs:

> "Swirling, jumping, running, leaping, gambolling, crying — the new humanity surged to man's cities, his rocket, his mines. The Piper's song! Stars shuddered. Winds stilled. Nightbirds sang no songs. Echoes murmured only the voices of the ones who advanced, bringing new understanding. The old man, caught in the whirlpool of ebon, was swept down, screaming. Then up the road, by the awful thousands, vomiting out of hills, sprawling from caves, curling, huge fingers of beasts, around and about and down to the Man Cities. Sighing, leaping up, voices and destruction!
>
> "Rockets across the sky!
>
> "Guns. Death.
>
> "And finally, in the placid advancement of dawn, the memory, the echoing of the old man's song. And the little boy arose to start afresh *a* new world with a new mate.
>
> "Echoing, the old man's voice:
>
> "Piper, pipe that song again! So he piped, I wept to hear!"

A new day dawned. Compare this with "The Pendulum" in another issue, probably by Bradbury since it isn't credited to anyone. This is the somewhat gruelling account of a man who invents time travel, accidentally kills a lot of famous scientists while trying to demonstrate it, in revenge he is imprisoned in a transparent pendulum connected to his time machine, lives through the centuries in this imprisonment until robots take over and earth and humans vanish, and finally is found dead by visitors to earth from another planet. To get this series of events into fewer than 2,000 words is quite a feat, but that's about all that can be said in favour of the story. One paragraph will be enough:

> "He hadn't minded it so much at first, that first night. He couldn't sleep, but it was not uncomfortable. The lights of the city were comets with tails that pelted from right to left like foaming fireworks. But as the night wore on he felt a gnawing in his stomach, that grew worse. He got very sick and vomited. The next day he couldn't eat anything."

Bradbury didn't make any claims to be a great writer in those days, In the third issue's editorial, for instance, he wrote: "Un1ike Finlay, who draws pictures from poems, we procure pictures from Bok and write poems about them. In fact, I blushingly admit, I even wrote a ten thousand word novelette around that little creature on the cover of the first Futuria Fantasia...which, no doubt, wil1 have its share of rejections very soon, in which case I will foist on my poor unsuspecting public, both of them, this story now titled "Lorelei"."

In this same issue appeared "The Syphomic Abduction", and apparently another Bradbury yarn. This one shows him completely under the spell of the dictionary. It's a story about the effect that music had on a fellow who liked to turn it up loud and stick his ear against the loudspeaker. I think that this single paragraph will suffice:

> "Beneath me was a. limitless tract of grey slime which rose and fell torpidly as with the breathing of a somnolent subterranean thing. The moonlight burned brightly on it, and crawling across it from some remote place came – trees snaky-rooted things whose prehensile branches bore, instead of leaves, flexible lenses...They left behind them red trails on the slime, and excrementory ribbons of thin blue vapour streamed from their topmost appendages. Occasionally they paused to feed, focusing their lenses upon the gelatinous ground, which became luminously white under the concentrated light. The sucking mouths of the serpentine roots absorbed this matter, and red viscosity seeped into the eaten places, greying rapidly under the moon's effulgence, chemically affected by it."

Taken as a whole Futuria Fantasia could hardly be a clue to the fact that Bradbury would go out and sell stories at a great rate in the next couple of years. It was slightly higher than average fanzine, but part of its quality could be laid to the fact that it was produced in Los Angeles, where any fanzine had the advantage of expert help and assistance from more experienced fellows. Bradbury did manage to get quite a bit of stuff by professional writers and the semi-pros. His friendship with Bok was responsible for the covers and interior illustrations, of course. But there was also material by Kuttner, Emil Petaja, Robert A. Heinlein, J. Harvey Haggard, and some lesser lights. The moral would seem to be that even the most inconspicuous fan writer today may be living off his typewriter in the next decade. But it's also well to remember that there have been hundreds of other guys who started off exactly the same way as Bradbury — and didn't end up the same way.

Incidentally, as far as I know, these issues of Futuria Fantasia have not yet acquired any real market value. But if you happen to have the publication in your collection, I'd recommend hanging onto it. About thirty years from *now*, there's, going to be a Bradbury surge, like the ones that hit Lovecraft and Keller, and the collectors will be greedy for these items, or any of the many fanzines published around the same time containing contributions by Bradbury.

EARLY FAPA

The rarest thing from the fantasy collector's standpoint is a complete file of FAPA mailings. My guess would be that there aren't more than three or four of the critters in existence. Only two or three people have held membership in the organisation since its formation, and it isn't likely that many other fans have managed to get hold of all the mailings. I lack the first half-dozen myself, but if any philanthropic soul would like to cause another complete file of the FAPA to come into existence, he can do so quite easily, simply by sending me those first six mailings.

The first couple of years of the FAPA weren't productive of such large mailings. But the publications compensated for the lack of bulk by means of extreme energy. There were half a dozen violent disputes going at all times about organisational matters, most of them purely theoretical disputes about what might happen if the constitution were interpreted in such a fashion. There were a couple of dozen publications in the June, 1939 mailing, half of them one or two-sheeters, and out of all the editorial credits in these fanzines, I find only two names of people who are still active today. James V. Taurasi was listed on the masthead of The Fantasy Amateur, because he was secretary treasurer of the organisation, and Bob Tucker was represented with a couple of publications.

This mailing contained the third issue of the SF check list. I think that this was the most herculean research job in the history of
fandom. R. D. Swisher, a New Englander who had never shown any other wild tendencies, conceived the bright ides that it would be nice to publish a list of all fanzines that had ever been published. He had a good collection of them, he got some other prominent fans to help him, and setting up a card index file, he went to work. If memory serves me, he went through the alphabet twice in five years of publishing the SF check-list. Then he found to his horror that his indexing was slipping behind the onslaught of fanzines in the 40's. He struggled feebly for a time, then quietly gave up. There have been so many fanzines since Swisher's activity that it's hard to imagine the prospect ever being brought up to date again.

The SF check-list listed the titles, editors, size, nature of reproduction, and dates of issue of every fanzine. It even included fanzines which were announced but never appeared. It ferreted out three different fan publications which had used the same title Science Fiction Review - up to early 1939. Some idea of the difficulties that confront you when you try to do some indexing like this can be found on the quotation under Supermundane Stories:

> "Probably one of the most unusual fan magazines ever issued was the first issue of Supermundane Stories...No two copies of the magazine were identical. Each and every one contained different illustrations, articles, ads, set up of stories. Cover and illustrations done in hand, therefore, no two copies of this issue are identical. Some pages titled Oct, some Dec-Jan."

This particular publication was issued by a Canadian fan, Nils H. Frome, and the best Swisher could do was to publish two separate descriptions of it, from varying descriptions given by Dick Wilson and Don Wollheim.

In case anyone in the audience feel Swisher left off, let me give some indication about the size of the job. This issue in 1939 required 16 pages to go from Science Fantasy Movie Review, to Unusual Stories. Remember that fanzines didn't begin until the early 30's and that they never reached the numbers in the 30's that the attained in the 40's.

Ackerman had a little publication in this mailing which contained an advertisement to sell some books. The price and titles give a good idea of how inflation has hit the fantasy book market in recent years. For 15 cents, Forry was offering "The Hamphenshire Wonder or The Diamond Lens". Two bits would bring you one of the Not at Night series, Haggard's rather scarce "Witch's Head", or a couple of Marie Corelli novels. Listed at 35 cents apiece were such tit1es as "Woman Alive", "Sugar in the Air", and "The Green Man of Kilsona". Wells' "The Croquet Player" and "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" were each
offered at 40 cents.

The long line of evolution that has ended in the creation of Laney and Burbee began back in the late 30's when Sweetness And Light exploded in this FAPA mailing. On the editorial board were Russ Hodgkins, Fred Shroyer, Jim Monney, Art Barnes, and, of all people, Henry Kuttner. Debunking, satirising, and shocking were their principal aims. Much of their material seems mild today, but a decade ago this sort of approach to fandom was like a bucket of cold water in the face. Here are some excerpts from "That Odour in the Back of the Book", Don Ellis' dissertation on the fellow who writes letters to the prozines.

> "You have read his letters hundreds of times. He takes himself with fantastic seriousness, self-righteously blasting every story in an issue as utterly unfit to print.... Occasionally he deigns, with pontifical condescension, to praise highly. "Wellman", he says loftily, "shows some promise of developing into a fairish writer. Keep up the good work." This kindly pat on the back by the Great Critic, to a professional author who has spent days or weeks, is enough to make anyone seethe.
>
> "Harsh and ruthless criticism has its place. Voltaire's pen was a scalpel. But Voltaire served a higher purpose because he knew what he was talking about; he was merely an exhibitionist. The pipsqueak scarcely ever knows anything about literature. 'Gee,' he is apt to observe, 'that's swell. The hero tears down the Empire State Building and kills all the Martians. What a brain.' Of course, of the principles of good writing he knows nothing; he will brashly condemn a piece of literature (which he does not understand) and tout to the skies a bit of lousy hack work. But he will never admit he's wrong. How could he? To do so would wreck the lovely psychological structure of ego he had built up. He visualised himself as the Supreme Critic, the discriminating reader who prefers High-Class Stuff (meaning science fiction) to stories published in Cowboy Stories, Argosy, Sateve Post, or American Mercury. The pipsqueak throws himself headfirst into stf, and in his absorption he loses sight of the fact that he's just a dumb kid in so many cases. Naturally there are exceptions, but this article is not written about the exceptions. It's the typical fat-headed pipsqueak I wish to excoriate. He's a child attempting to sit judgement."

Each issue of Sweetness And Light contained several "Meet the Gang" features, The drawings of these typical people were an important part, but the description can stand alone. For instance:

This is Horation M. Thirkwoddy
He is slightly lacking in musculature
His gluteus maximus is callused
By long hours spent sitting
Reading Science Fiction
And thoughtful Books on Fictionized Science
Naturally he feels the Literary Life
Is Ultima Thul
To be attained only by the Brainy Few
His magnificent cranium
Contains
A large soggy mass
Of Suppressed Desires
The existence of which, however,
He will not admit even to himself
He is protected by strong armour of
Self-esteem
And his strength is as the strength
Of ten because his heart is pure.

Jack F. Spear distributed the first and probably the last linoleum block fanzine through this mailing. It was Z. Z. Zug's Gazette. It was simply one sentence written - or carved - on a, linoleum block, created in an effort to get last place on Swisher's Check-List.

If he reads this, it may make him feel as old as the hills, because in that 1939 mailing was a publication celebrating Tucker's tenth anniversary in science fiction. It was entitled "Invisible Stories", and most of the contents were closely akin to that famous book, "What I know about Women". However, there was wordage on the covers. Tucker explained:

> "In 1929, Argosy published a Ray Cummings yarn entitled "The Brand New World". Tucker read it. Tucker fell. Since that time he has been labelled by the handle s-f fan."

On the back cover was a description of the front cover:

> "Our cover subject this issue (reproduced on the front hereof) is reminiscent of the old Wonder Stories of the Charlie Hornig and Hugo dynasty. Ah, for those good old days. The covers were usually by Paul. Not that that mattered any, for you usually couldn't see them anyway. Hugo had the cover so cluttered up with his name, his signs, his disguises and such that very little of a brilliant yellow Paul sky could be seen.

> “We chose the second October issue, 1934, as representing the best cover of this dynasty. That is it which you see reproduced (or a reasonable facsimile) on the front of this publication. Notice the glaring yellow sky, typical of Paul, and the particular era. In the background can be seen purple coated figures, running for a green spaceship, pursued by red and orange monsters from the stone age. The only colour Paul and Wonder did not use in those days was black.
>
> “We didn’t have room to crowd in, across the top, that streamer that Hugo plastered up there, announcing his magazine to be “The Cream in Your Coffee” or words and music to that affect.”

Needless to say, Invisible Stories did not possess any drawing at all on the front cover.

Finally, here are some facts about the famous Frank Reade stf, dime novels, from H. C. Koenig’s The Reader and Collector:

> “To the best of my knowledge, the Frank Reade stories are among the rarer dine novels. They are tremendously in demand and are collected not only by dime novelists and science fiction enthusiasts, but also by those who collect aeronautical items, Thirty years ago they sold for one to five cents a copy and it was easy to get hold of them. But, due to the cheap grade of paper used and the flimsy covers, very few copies are still existent. As a result, the prices of copies of these stories have soared to fantastic prices - prices far beyond the reach of the average pocketbook.
>
> “The first Frank Reade stories, about twenty-two of them, appeared in Wide Awake. A complete set of this group runs between $300 and $400. Those twenty-two stories were later reprinted in the Frank Reade Weekly, covers coloured. I understand a set of these, 96 of them, are valued at $400. I suspect that hundreds of copies of the Weekly passed through my hands in those “dime novel” days of mine; the days of Young Wild West, Old King Brady, Frank Merriwell in Tip-Top Weekly, and Fred Fearnot in Work and Win. And now copies are worth from $3 to $10 per copy. Oh, how I wish I were a boy again - and know what I know now.”

SNIDE

This fanzine was like most of the fanzines in history — its first issue had a cover containing a space ship blasting onward and upward. But unlike other fanzines this one also had on its cover a worried-looking little man in a business suit, lugging a briefcase, rushing toward the vessel which was just blasting off from earth, and yelling: "Hey, wait!" That was fandom's introduction to Snide.

I mentioned last time the new note that Sweetness AND Light had struck in fandom. Fans had taken themselves rather seriously before the 40's, having a good time at conventions, occasionally cracking jokes in the fanzines, but rarely taking the attitude that science fiction might not be the most important thing in life. But Sweetness And Light, the return of Tucker, Bruce Yerke's "The Damn Thing", and Snide, all came along within a couple of years, less successful imitators sprang up, and nothing was sacred in fandom from then on.

Damon Knight was responsible for Snide. (He still used capital letters on his name in those days.) He resided in an alleged place called Hood River, Ore., which no one had ever heard of before, and which has probably vanished from the face of the earth since he moved to New York. Why Damon didn't go on to make his living by his pen is one of fandom's unsolved mysteries. In those days, he seemed to have at least as much talent as Tucker, and definitely more than Bradbury. A little later he did sell an occasional yarn to the prozines, particularly to those edited by the New York Futurians group after he became closely associated with the Futurians in fan activities. He has also done some professional editing and agenting, I believe, but has turned out nothing to fulfil the promise of those issues of Snide.

One thing more about Damon, before we turn to Snide itself. Hardly a fan who is alive remembers that he is the guy who is responsible for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Probably Damon himself has a whole chain of guilt complexes, caused by the outcome of his innocent suggestion. He wrote an article called "Unite for Fie" and submitted it to me while I was publishing Spaceways. It urged the creation of a national fan body. I rejected it, because I thought it would start a lot of discussion over the need for such a group, and didn't want to devote much space to such an abstract quality. Damon then sent it to Art Whiner, Jr., who published it in Fanfare. I was wrong. Fandom rallied around the idea without prodding, and the NFFF was created. Damon himself never took much of a part in the organisation, smart fellow. It's hard to tell what fandom would have been without that article. No doubt, a national group would have been successfully proposed by someone else, but it might have been a national group with different purposes and methods.

Snide began to appear in 1940 and lasted for a year or two. Bill Evans, then living near Damon, was a co-editor after the first issue, but I think he'll agree that the vital spark was furnished by Damon. The best material was written by Knight under pen names, and Knight did the illustrations that contributed so much to the magazine's flavour. It was one of the few fanzines, in those days with really free format — ie one in which a heading could be any prescribed size or shape, a format which permitted the page in the middle of an article to be broken by an illustration. Damon ranks in my books as the best cartoonist ever produced by fandom. Not the best artist, he didn't have the finest sense of humour, but he had the ability to weld a joke idea and a drawing inseparably together. Best of all, his cartoons were genuine stf jokes, not something borrowed from a magazine and twisted around into fantasy. They were inspired by situations, that could only occur in stf., like the most famous cartoon of all, the man in the space suit, trying to get rid of the fly perched on the tip of his nose. Or the breathtaking silkscreen cover for the second Snide — silver, deep blue, and blazing red, on a pale blue background, depicting a spaceman shooting his futuristic gun, receiving the full effects of the blast in his posterior and saying: "Damn Einstein!"

Snide wasn't altogether humorous. Serious stuff was published, although you never knew how long it was going to stay serious, like the remark in the middle of a prozine review column: "Free life subscriptions to any of the publications listed here may be obtained by writing to their respective editors, enclosing a one-and-a-half-cent stamp."

However, satire, light-hearted fiction, and nosethumbing at prozines were the lifeblood of the magazine. The fiction was typified by *a* Ray Bradbury story, "Tale of the Mangledomvritch". This was only two pages long (Snide was a half size publication, with 8½ by 11 pages folded down the short axis).

But I think the best thing in the first issues was "Via Totem Pole" and "Via Sweepstakes", a couple of parodies. It's an old thing, how a good parody can remain enjoyable, long after the thing it burlesques has been forgotten. Lewis Carroll's "You are Old, Father William", is a satire on a now forgotten poem, which lives in its own right. Similarly, Damon's parody is as fresh and delightful as ever, even though the inspiring stories are permanently buried in the files of Thrilling Wonder Stories. Around 1939 or 1940, TWS was publishing a series of connected short stories, each of which had a title beginning with "Via", and all of which consisted of radio messages received from a pioneer space expedition. The author was listed as

Gordon A. Giles, generally considered a pseudonym for someone, and while the adventures of these earth men on other planets were better than the average TWS fiction, the series grew ridiculous, stretched out to such length.

In the first of the Knight parodies, Jupiter Expedition Number One is in a bad shape. The gravity on Jupiter is so strong that the metal in tin cans has been compressed, and so the cans can't be opened with the ice pick, and everyone is starving. The expedition has found life on Jupiter, although the natives are not considered very intelligent, because none of them has been seen to move yet, except for one that got knocked down a hill by a rolling stone. However, on the 2,348½th day of the expedition:

> "As I said yesterday, our food problem was solved. It happened this way. Ginerton was looking in a pile of trash for the ace of spades, when suddenly he came up with a small metallic object in his hand. It was a can opener. "Ginerton", said Captain Batwell, summing it up, "you have found a car-opener." And that's the way we all felt about it. We drank a piece of toast in honour of Ginerton's quick-witted act, (Toast is liquid on Jupiter, Ugh.)
>
> "Barnay and Paren have gone off together and are learning how to read. Barnay is cross-eyed, which complicates matters, Captain Batwell, Ginerton, and myself have done a little scouting around. Heavily loaded, we have staggered part *way* into the jungle. The pink elephants and alligators charged now and then, but we found a simple way to stop them. We quickly form a circle and feed each other seltzer tablets. Then they go away. Stilson is working out a new way to peel an orange from inside. He says the world of science will be astounded.
>
> "A little later, the men decided to explore a totem pole that was standing just outside the ship. Snarletti was anxious to get inside and look for records and things, so we walked all around it, looking for ladders. We found none. "Strange", mused Captain Batwell, impressively, as always. We gathered around him, shushing each other, while the great man thought. Finally he looked up, his face alight. "I have it!" he said, "There must be some other means of entrance!" We cheered. The captain had again saved the day. And sure enough, when we had looked unsuccessfully for elevators and fire escapes we found a door at the base of the huge monument. It was a triumph for human reason."

The expedition then tries to figure out why totem poles have bean found on all the planets. The members decide that it was because the inhabitants liked to build totem poles.

On the long voyage home, the ship is polluted with Jovian bedbugs, so Captain Batwell sprayed everything with kerosene and lights a match. "For six years, on Jupiter, we had not known a temperature above a hundred," the narrator points out. Then the creeping cold of space sets in, while Parker calculates every half minute, with the space duodecant, because "The slightest error would land us inches and inches from our destination."

The narrator sums it all up by saying of the return trip:

> "I can't describe how we felt. Anyway why should I?"

Fancyclopedia I

The dreams of fantasy readers include such things as a really complete bibliography of fantasy books, microfilmed reference files to preserve and spread the comments of the rarest publications, an index to the articles of lasting merit in fanzines, and an encyclopaedia that would explain all the terms and lore of fandom. The first three remain to be accomplished, but the last has been done, one of the biggest fan projects in history.

Jack Speer got the idea during World War Two that he would like to do some preliminary work on an encyclopaedia for fandom. The project grew in scope as he worked on it, until he decided to go through with the job. The leading fans of the day read his manuscript and made corrections and additions. Forest J Ackerman, abetted by a number of Los Angeles fans, took charge of the gigantic mimeographing task. The result was one of the finest things fandom has ever produced — a 100 page reference book, bound with attractive heavy covers. It's edition was limited to 250 copies. The only reason it isn't eagerly sought today, as far as I can see, is that few fans know about it. It appeared when the Third Fandom was coming towards it's end. In the readjustment of the months following VJ Day, so many old fans dropped out, and so many new ones arrived. The volume had sold out so promptly that extensive advertising wasn't necessary, and a great demand for it didn't come into being until
after it was out of print.

But even today, the Fancyclopedia is valuable. Originally, it was both a reference work and entertaining reading. Now it has taken on a third value, because it treats of fandom as it was just before the Atom Bomb started falling and new prozines began appearing; the final years of fandom's privacy, when the whole world wasn't interested in stories about the future.

> "The purpose of the Fancyclopedia", Speer wrote, "…is to define all expressions, except nonce-words, which have an esoteric meaning in fantasy fandom, and to supply other information, such as that on Esperanto, which may be needed to understand what fans say, write, and do."

A quick glance at the contents will indicate how rapidly these terms have skidded from fandom's vocabulary. Take page 40, for instance. Who remembers today the Frontier Society, Fubar Pubs, der Fuhrer of the Newark Swamps, the Futile Press, or the Futilitarians? (For the benefit of the curious, they are: a group that was organised as a sort of fannish equivalent of the Fortean Society; something Ackerman called his publications for a while; Moskowitz; the house name for an old-time fan, Claire Beck; and what the Michelists called their opponents.) There have been great shifts in interest and importance. Hectoring gets twice as much space as dittoing, because in those days a lot of fans still pulled their fanzines laboriously off gelatine-filled pans, and only a few pioneers owned the mimeo-like duplicating machines. You'll look in vain for definitions of egoboo and crifanac; those, and a hundred other terms, hadn't been popularised or invented by fandom in 1941.

Speer made no effort to assume an impersonal, serious tone in his publication. His style was charming, with hints of Dr. Samuel Johnson, and became serious only when treating of light-weight subjects. For instance, here is his definition of the Sacred Order of FooFoo:

> "A glorious foolosofy which saves it's adherents from the purple doomination of ghughu, and guarantees their footure bliss. While ghughuism's set-up is roughly that of an Episcopal church, FooFooism's more resembles a militant monarchy. The western branch centres around the court of the Hi Priestess of ALL Foo, Pogo; Forest J Ackerman is the Right-Hand Man, Morojo, her Handi-Maiden, ktp. In the east is Her Sacred Highness's Left-Hand Man, the royal General of FooFoo. F. Speer, who bears this title, countersigns and issues to neofytes such tags as Chief Scientist, Poetess Lauerate, Vanday Oon, Grand Vizier, Nen Nen, Baron Yobber, and others. Permanent membership cards are not given until the persons are proven through long adversity. In addition to these officers, the Order counts as rank and file members all persons wheresoever who are moved to go around reciting Foo proverbs. FooFooism began early 1938, when the FooFoo implanted in the mind of Pogo, and about the same time, of Speer, called to form the Sacred Order to oppose Ghughuism in all its forms, however monstrous. Since that time the ranks of Foomen have grown by leaps and bounds (and shuffles). Victory is assured, for FooFoo has promised it. Like Tom Paine says, "ghughuism, like tyranny, is not easily conquered, but the fight is a glorious one." A mighty weapon that has been given us by All-Blessed Foo is the Poo; far mightier is it than the yobber. FooFooism has a number of highly inspirational songs. One of these the entire Chicon (even the accursed ghughu and guggle, who were there) joined in singing."

It might be advisable to point out that the Pogo mentioned here is not the comic strip character, but the Esperanto nickname for a fan, Mrs Russell M. Wood.

I put the Fancyclopedia in a desk drawer after reading it, on the theory that it would prove useful for research and reference purposes. This didn't turn out to be right. I don't think I used it in this manner oftener than once a year. But I've found myself drawing it out, skimming over its pages, and chuckling over either the phraseology or the memories it recalls, quite regularly in odd moments

The memories are mostly personal and wouldn't appeal to others. But the merits of Speer's writing are as high as ever. For instance, the definition for gleap:

> "I never knew a virdous gleap, that did not snortle in its sleep."

Or the explanation of little Jarvenon:

> "A science-fiction house inhabited in mid-1943 by Suddsy Schwartz and Larry Shaw, and such visitors as they couldn't get rid of."

Under psychoanalysis:

> "The Futurians say that various of their number have visited professional psychiatrists at times, and caused the psychiatrists to seek long vacations."

Modern fans are often puzzled when they find in mid-40's fanzines much reference to the word "rose-bud", so it wouldn't be amiss to repeat Speer's explanation of how it became a printable version of unprintable words:

> "Originally the name of a boy's sled, and Citizen Kane's last word. It came into fandom when a character in Doc Lowndes' 'Trigger Talk at Green Guna' murmured that, just before kicking the bucket, The cry was repeated to Liebscher by Tucker, under circumstances which gave it it's special fannish meaning."

That last definition is a good example of how the Fancyclopedia has gone out of date, however. Every reference book must assume a certain amount of fundamental knowledge on the part of its readers. Speer didn't bother to explain the special fannish meaning of rosebud. Everyone was familiar with the word in those days. He also assumed that his readers would have read some of the endless instalments of 'Trigger Talk at Green Guna', a spasmodic serial in Futurian publications, and there was no need to mention that Liebscher was a male fan in the Chicago area. But the fan of 1951 who wasn't around in 1944, doesn't know those things. He may not even link up Doc Lowndes with the R. L. Lowndes who is still editing STF magazines. And he may not be aware that Citizen Kane was the leading character of a controversial Orson Welles movie, which was devoted to showing why that character uttered that as his last word.

So the time would seem to be ripe for a 1951 edition of the Fancyclopedia. Much of the work has already been done. Spear's definitions of fundamental things – like those for dummy, mailing, Marxism, and scores of others — could be used unchanged, or brought up to date with a few extra sentences. Many of the items, completely forgotten nicknames or fan slang expressions, could be deleted altogether. The principal task of the compiler of the new edition would be to turn out articles on the new words, concepts, and incidents of the last seven years, to modernise the histories of the fan organisations that are still existent. And to rewrite spots which are fundamentally sound, but obscure to the present day fan. If the smaller fandom of 1944 bought all available copies of an edition of 250 I think today's fandom could make an edition of 500 or more, practical. Maybe even justify photo-offset reproduction. A warning, however, if anyone has enough spare time and energy to tackle the task: Speer's volume is copyrighted, and you'd need his permission to put out a new edition.

Pluto

Occasionally an archaeologist digs up a handful of pottery fragments or a few weapons, in a place where no civilisation was known to have existed. The tribe or race that produced the artefacts reached a fine cultural level, then died out or moved away, leaving only these enigmatic fragments of its existence for the future.

I get that kind, of a feeling when I glance over the half-dozen copies of Plato in my collection. Far out on the windy prairies of Indiana, near the little town of Decker, there used to stand in lonely splendour a clubhouse. Around the beginning of 1940, they suddenly became interested in science fiction fan activities, and startled the fan world with Pluto, the first fanzine to exploit colour mimeographing in a big way. A year later they had vanished from fandom as rapidly as they had appeared, the whole kit and caboodle of them.

I don't think fandom has ever known anything quite like it — so many active fans springing up simultaneously in a tiny town, and being so active for so short a period of time. The only thing in the world's history that can compare with it is the sudden appearance of prominent thinkers in Athens around the time of Plato. But Athena was a much bigger city than Decker, and besides, the Greek thinkers never succeeded in publishing fanzines, probably due to the lack of mimeographs in Athens at the time.

The first issue of Pluto isn't particularly remarkable, except for the fact it was written and published by a bunch of people who had been completely unknown a few months earlier — Marvis Manning, Vincent Manning, Claude Davis, Jr., Maurice Paul, and William Sisson. It was a thin, hectographed publication with no apparent policy except to treat everything with a light touch. That was apparent in the choice of fillers at the end of columns, like: "Do you read Pluto? We do. — The staff." The editorial said that Pluto was "inaugurated mainly to add to the confusion already existing in the science and fantastic fiction fan world."

But by the time the second issue appeared, the Decker Dillies, as Tucker promptly named them, had acquired a mimeograph. They dazzled 1940's fandom by turning out a three-colour cover for this second issue. This one isn't too difficult, because it consisted of a blue picture, topped by the magazine's title in red above, followed by a few lines in green at the bottom. The real feats of colour mimeography showed up a bit later. The fourth issue had a double cover, each part of it mimeographed in four colours. Now, you may have noticed that the Sunday comic sections in your newspaper frequently have the colours out of register, the red bleeding over into the blue. This happens, despite the use of colour press equipment costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, and the precision methods made possible by the rigidity of metal plates. Consider, then, the achievement of a half-dozen amateurs in a little Mid-western town who achieved perfect four-colour register on an amateur publication using mimeograph stencils, which are not manufactured with attention to this type of accuracy, and which stretch and slither around on the drum in the course of a run. The later issues of Pluto had its distinctive illustrations or heading of articles and departments in at least two colours. They solved the most complicated type of multi-colour mimeographing problems, including the use of one colour against a background provided by another colour, and a green, red and blue spaceship plowing into a black meteor. Use of different colours for the main body of the text added to the Christmas-tree effects. The effect on other fanzines showed up like lightning. Within a few months it was hard to find a fanzine mimeoed in only one colour. The lazier souls simply printed one page in red ink, and the next page in blue ink, changing ink pads from time to time. Some semi-lazy people experimented with smearing one colour of ink over part of a stencil, and another colour for the rest of it, producing two colours on a single page without too much work. But a surprisingly large number of fans were willing to go to the trouble of cutting two or three stencils for each page, and running each page through the mimeograph two or three times, to achieve the complicated, multi-colour effects.

The contents of Pluto were more notable for their colour than for what they said. The editors never adopted a specific policy, except to keep a light touch on everything. They had no first-rate humorists or deep thinkers in Decker, and it was only occasionally that an outstanding article appeared. One of the genuinely interesting ones was contributed by Forest J Ackerman, a description of his meeting with H. G. Wells. Wells spoke in Los Angeles. A few excerpts:

> "The first acquaintance with his voice was quite a shock. It is high, falsetto, frequently cracks; but one suspects it to be quite naturally the nature of his voice, rather than an attribute of age, for tho Wells is now seventy four, he appears more the reverse, like 47... The plea which he put before his audience was that of paramount importance, the control of the air, the formation of an Airman's Federation. World peace by a world police of Wings Over the World. We must be ready to put this plan into effect, he declared, directly the armistice comes... If the world should turn to me and say, Mr. Wells, you have written about these Utopias now for many years. We believe you. We'll back you. Here we are. What do

> we do now? Show us the way. Why, I should be muchly embarrassed. I should say, Why thank you very much; but we aren't quite ready yet – we need time."

Pluto, I presume, finally died under the sheer momentum of its progress. It was a case of making every issue better than the last – more colourful, fatter, more ingenious in makeup methods that were then new to fandom. The sixth issue was prophetic without realising it, because the editorial writers didn't intend at the time to quit, merely wanted to paint an amusing picture:

> "It is a sad, sad story; don't stop us if you've heard it before — we want to tell it. The tragic story of a club which sponsored a fan mag, mimeographed in five or six different colours. They just didn't have time to do anything but put out the mag. Only time to eat one meal every three days; no time to read the promags, no time to see the latest fantasy movies; no time to listen to radio fantasy programmes; no time to shave; no time to empty the ash trays or sweep the floors, or haul away the empty bottles; 'tis pitiful — look at that huge pile of pro mags of science and fantasy – we know that there are some beautiful stories and things in them, but alas, we can never read them. Look at that file of unanswered correspondence; you know some of them guys would 1ike an answer. Spivis needs a haircut; Paul is a tottering wreck; P.G. needs a wheelchair; Davis needs Spiritus Frumenti; Sisson needs to be salvaged; Faye needs to spend a month in the soothing calm atmosphere of a boiler factory. 'Tis sad, sad, sad.

The Decker Dillies went to the Chicon, had a wonderful time, taking along the skeleton which the club had somehow acquired, and ending the blasphemous suspicion held by some that only one person was doing all the work under pen names. But the Chicon was the climax of the part that Decker, Ind., p1ayed in fandom's history. The draft got a couple of the members of the Literature, Science, and Hobbies Club. A few more members found their interest declining or their time running short. Pluto stopped appearing. Bereft of its shining example, fandom within a year or two was back to the black ink for fanzines as a normal thing. By now, only a few of us Methuselahs can recall the days of Pluto, so one fine day soon, an obscure fanzine will suddenly discover that it can make a sensation with multi-colour mimeographing, and the same fad will hit fandom again. (Note to interested editors: Pluto's circulation hit better than one hundred paid at one time, a figure which was almost miraculous for the smaller fandom of a decade ago, indicating that colours pay off.)

If anyone should ever be driving through Indiana, and come close to Decker, it might be a good idea to look up the club. It would be nice to know whether the winds of the prairie still beat around. that little building, whether the files of exchange fanzines have mouldered into dust, and whether in a corner of the building dozens of stiff, dusty inkpads still retain a suggestion of the colours that delighted fandom.

The Fantast

Occasionally a fanzine appears which attracts much favourable comment but doesn't make a sensation. It bobs up for issue after issue, vanishes after a couple of years, and only then, its true worth is recognised. Something like this happened in the case of The Fantast. It was the most literate fanzine of its day but it had the misfortune to exist at a time when American fanzines were big, splashy, controversial, and noisy. Soon after C. S. Youd finally decided that he was taking time for The Fantast which could be applied better to more serious things, the finest serious fanzine before Langley Searles' went out of existence.

The Fantast was published in England during the first couple of years of World War Two. Youd was a young fellow who combined a quiet sense of humour with the intelligence and vast stores of information about everything which so many upper middle class Britishers possess. The Fantast appealed to me in particular because of its staid format. Pictures were scarce, margins were narrow, white space was almost non existent, in defiance of all the rules of eye-temptation. This austere format not only conserved the priceless mimeograph paper that was so scarce in war-time England; it also fitted ideally the subject matter of The Fantast. The magazine wasn't stuffy, and it didn't require specialised knowledge in any field to enjoy its contents, but you were forced to pay attention while you read, and distracting pictures or fancy headings would have been unsuitable. I know that I kept wishing I had the courage to make Spaceways a little more bare in this fashion.

I find a dozen issues of The Fantast in a large manila envelope in my att1c, and there were probably a few more that I didn't sort into this file. They look very much alike. They all arrived in the same shade of brown wrappers, folded once, usually stamped by the Baltimore customs house. A person who had never known the personality and delights of The Fantast would never have the heart to look through such a file. Fortunately, there are still some people around who remember its merits; witness the reprinting of "The Road to Fame" in the FAPA at the present time.

Superficially, much of the material seemed at first glance to be as dull as the wrappers. Witness the first sentence of D. R. Smith's little story, "It's a Devil", from the sixth issue: "The two men plodded over the moor towards the rocky hills might, from their ancient and tattered garments, have been tramps, but the rope slung from the shoulders of the first, and the rucksack on the back of the second, proclaimed their true status as rock-climbers." That reads like a murky, 19th century opening of a novel. But Smith managed to retain that style, and yet complete his story in a single page – a sardonic account of how the dead souls who used to leave slippery things lying around on mountainsides are forced to spend their time in hell making mountains steeper and rougher for the living. Smith was one of Fantast's most prolific contributors. He usually turned out just about one page of concentrated fact or fiction. From the third issue, here are some of his thoughts on the use of words in science fiction
stories:

> "Words are crude tools for the writer of fantasy to work with because words are so essentially common-place. Most of them have been invented to describe the more-or-less ordinary article or action, and words that in themselves appeal to the imagination are limited. In fact the films and the sensational press have so woefully misused our stock of rich, flamboyant adjectives that they have become almost meaningless. Some writers surmount this difficulty by digging out abstruse and half-obsolete words, with fatal results in the hands of the poorly skilled. The fair way out is to use common-place words skilfully, which is called style. Style consists of the meticulous selection of the right words to fit accurately and with the right rhythm the scene, action or emotion described... Magazine fiction...is a sort of soporific for the eyes, which might otherwise be unacceptable while eating or travelling or listening to the wireless. It must not make any demands on the mind, since this is otherwise engaged and must not be distracted, and so the style adopted is that of a ten-year old child describing the last film it saw. At the moment editors are hampered by the lack of authors capable of writing down to this standard, and so even Amazing occasionally features a collection of words that approximates to a story."

Don't get the impression that Fantast was so literate that it was stuffy. It had the sense of proportion and humour that is essential for any fan publication. Even the mighty-minded Smith occasionally descended to the level of idle speculation, dropping for brief intervals his weighty pronouncements. Witness, from the sixth issue, his defence of tea-leaf fortune-telling:

> "The untouched tea-leaves in the bottom of a person's cup obviously owe their arrangement to the manner in which he has drained the cup, which in turn depends on the character of the man, the size of his

mouth, and other variables. From his character and his position in life — which later will also influence the disposition of the tea-leaves, as, for example, a person of the lower class will try to eat them, a person of my class will leave them well-placed for throwing in the fire, and a well-brought-up gentleman will leave them carelessly-placed ready for the slop basin – from these two influences his probable future is determined. The rules used in fortune telling by this means naturally give the fortune straight away, the process of inductive reasoning being incorporated in those rules so that the most unintelligent person can apply them."

The Fantast is the only fanzine in my memory to review a book that treats of the Life of Christ in a worlds-of-if fashion. This is Bernard Newman's "Hosanna." Charles Rowlands reviewed this little-known book, which shows what might have happened if Christ had taken the wrong course and turned his powers to military and political purposes. In "Hosanna", Christ's personality leads the Jews to drive the Romans from the land for a time, but the Romans re-conquer Jerusalem, Christ is crucified – and centuries 1ater, the world has been converted to the Mohammedan religion.

The Fantast also contained some of the best poetry published in fanzines around this time. Not great poetry; most of it was experimental stuff by people like John Michel and Eric Hopkins, who were imitating other experimental stuff, or glowingly romantic lyrics by Youd himself, which had nothing to say in a pleasant sort of way. Typical of the quality of Fantast's poetry might be this short one by Harold Gottliffe:

No more we'll sing—
for who could fill with praise
Or joy, or gladness the resounding air?
All this belongs to the unselfish days
Of savage hearts and nights untouched by care.
Those days are gone, and in their place we find
— Selfish and civilised and racked with pain —
The Era of the Ruled and Ordered Mind;
And long within her grave has Saki lain,
A long succession of uneasy days,
Mechanical and Useful, form a ring
Round which we march in timeless prison way
The rhythm of our steps? No more we'll sing.

Now a very odd thing happened, about two-thirds of the way through Fantast's existence. It changed editors, and no one would have realised it, without the information that was put down in black and white in the publication. Douglas Webster took over, when Youd went into the armed forces. Youd proceeded to produce some of the best writing about the war that I've seen anywhere, and Webster continued to grind out fascinatingly plain-looking Fantasts, just as Youd had done. The magazine had taken on such a personality of its own that it maintained its circle of writers and readers under the older, less enthusiastic Webster's direction.

Youd has had a few stories published in the prozines since the war, and won a prize for a novel. I don't know where he is now or what ha is doing. John Burke's biographical notes in the 12th issue of The Fantast might sum him up: "With a great deal of talent, Mr Youd may never become the writer he deserves to be because of his lack of application and his inability to make up his mind as to what to do with his life; he is less likely to succeed than many of his acquaintances with inferior taste and few talents, but more determination....When Sam decides what the purpose of living is, he will bring to bear an acute mind and a wide general knowledge acquired through his manifold activities that will insure his success."

Golden Atom

Larry B. Farscai of Rochester, New York, was as close as they come to being the unalloyed, all-out collector. He wasn't simply a fellow with pack-rat instincts, attempting to see how big a pile of fantasy magazines he could build in the attic. Nor did he go for profiteering on his hobby; when he offered something for sale, his prices were usually around the cover cost for a magazine and possibly one third of the original cost for a book. He was a creative collector, if that isn't a contradiction in terms – he actually read the stories in the publications that he acquired, compared them, traced their history, found out things about the authors, got the opinions of other people on the same yarn.

Larry didn't have the best tastes in literature. He had an appalling love of sentimental platitudes in poetry, and published some fanzines devoted to the worst verse I've seen in my fan experience. He also had a few extra-favourite fantasy stories that couldn't be called very good from accepted literary standards. But he liked them tremendously, probably for personal quirks in his make-up that corresponded to some thing in these stories, or because they were among the first examples of science fiction that he encountered. One of these stories was Ray Cummings' "The Girl in the Golden Atom". It disillusioned a whole generation of fantasy lovers, as a fabulously rare yarn for many years, which turned out to be unexceptional melodrama when we finally got around to reading it in the first issue of Famous Fantastic Mysteries. But Larry was never disillusioned by it. He named his fanzine after it, and Golden Atom, the fanzine, developed into one of the nicest collector's magazines ever published.

Golden Atom's nine issues are still fun to skim through, even if you no longer like to collect prozines, and have forgotten many of the authors who are topics for dissertations. It's so pleasant to see the obvious sincerity with which Farscai and his helpers wrote that you can forgive the obsession with Ray Cummings. Obsession it was. The fanzine published a six-part series on this story and the Cumnings tales which used similar plots. Several fans described other angles of this original Golden Atom story. Poems were written to it. Artwork based on it. The cover of the magazine was always a golden red-yellow in honour of the tale. Typical is the panegyric with which Larry opened the first instalment of his long series: "The Girl in the Golden Atom appeared first as the novelette of the issue in All-Story for March 15, 1919, It enjoyed a huge success. A success, which the editor, Bob Davis, (also the discoverer of George Allan England and A. Merrit) was able to foresee; he introduced Ray Cummings in a way quite unusual in the introduction of new writers.

> "In this first story, the author has not only revealed a power of vivid imagery and weird conception worthy of Edgar Allan Poe, himself, but has also woven through it a delicate and fascinating romance — a thing Poe was never able to achieve. Mr Cummings' connections with the Edison Company may be said also to give his scientific deductions an authority that will add materially to the interest of the story."

Larry even compared the original published version and the reprint in FFM word for word, and discovered that FFM changed "Don't be an ass" to "Don't be silly".

Golden Atom's first appearance was in late l939, and the ninth and final issue was dated December, 1940. Collecting ran through all nine issues like an unbroken thread — which assures the magazine a universal appeal, because almost every fan can look back on the years when he went through the collecting stage. Fred Fischer wrote about his early days with fantasy stories in the ninth issue. His experiences are different from yours, no doubt, but something of this sort has happened to us all:

> "...From that moment on, I began to dream about the Argosy. I would go to bed at night and have the wildest nightmares about Argosies, the dreams exemplifying wish-fulfilment with a vengeance, for I would invariably find myself groping around in some dusty attic where all of a sudden I would find pile after pile of ancient Argosies. Unhappily, I always woke just as I reached out to pick up the closest one, or just as I turned the cover to read the name of the first story. Some kids dreamed of candy and became conscious just before the first, delicious bite. Some kids dreamed of money and felt it slipping from their grasp with their awakening. I always dreamed of Argosies.
>
> "...When I was twelve, I met a gentleman, a friend of my grandmother, who had a complete collection of Munsey magazines back to 1905. I need not mention the ecstasy with which I literally wallowed in his magazines from that moment on, until – alas! he left town. He did, however, will me his collection, but it was no benefit to me, because I had become impatient and in 1930 bought from him as many magazines as remained in his once perfect collection. His wife I will always consider the most

> understanding of women, because years and years ago when I would visit their home and luxuriate in thousands of magazines — as a miser would count pieces of gold – she would thereafter leave me strictly alone, except for occasional sandwiches which she would bring in to me, to prevent a death from starvation right there on the premises."

Larry loved to think up departments and continued features for Golden Atom, stuffing them in at the end of articles or in special supplements. "The Fantasy Record" consisted of synopses of weird Tales, from the first issue onwards. Summarising the plot of each story is something like a one-man effort to count the Chinese. They get born faster that you can count. He listed in one spot all the results of Astounding's Analytical Laboratory to date, the favourite stories of this or that fan, a check-list of fanzines published in Rochester, huge quantities of pen names from prozines and fanzines. Much of this material appeared in a special magazine-within-the-magazine, on a different coloured paper, called The Fantasy Record. He published comparative lists of titles used by authors which were changed for publication, and there was an amusing, little department entitled "Squawks!" which provided a free chance for anyone to air grievances. Examples: "Isn't there something you said about replacing "The Polyphemes"? Or better yet, some word from you before the usual 6 months." "My five cents for 'Fantasia' and while you're at it, you might as well return Alex Osheroff's too."

Sam Moskovitz devoted an article in the fifth issue to showing what a difficult job it was to build up a complete fanzine collection, because of the bewildering array of hectographed and even carbon-copied publications that appeared in the late 1930's. Speaking of those years, he wrote: "Promags were none too good; fan magazines, while profuse, were not very dependable, and published in exceedingly limited editions. Fans used to hold onto those fan magazines with unbelievable tenacity. Few fans were ever reduced to the position of poverty where they were willing to dispose of their fan-magazine collection.

> "Every fan magazine, even such items as never-to-be-included pages, postal announcements, etc. were avidly sought after. Those were the days when you strove to have a larger number of fan magazines than anyone else.
>
> "In a delirium of delight you would dash over to Jim's house and with a superior expression carefully withdraw from cellophane protectors, a rare issue of the 'Science Fiction Digest'....."

Particularly rare items were the lone issue of 'Astonishing Stories', a small, hectographed mag published by Shepherd and Wollheim; the first five issues of 'The Science Fiction Critic'; the early, carbon-copied numbers of McPhail's 'Science Fiction News' and 'Imaginative Fiction'; 'Curious Stories' and 'Curious Stories Quarterly'which Ackcrman was prepared to pay ridiculous prices for (they are only tiny, four-page carbon-copied sheets with pencilled covers). Even then, incidentally, Moskowitz was bewailing the manner in which fanzine collecting was losing its popularity. I read just the same complaint in a fanzine a couple of months ago.

Larry Farsaci even liked the stories of Edmond Hamilton. He was as happy as a kitten in catnip when he discovered that for four straight years, Hamilton had had stories listed in the honourable mentions of O'Brien's Year Book of the American Short Story. The eighth issue of Golden Atom contained a mild protest from Hamilton at those who bewailed his continual world-saving:

> "If you'll scrutinise my yarns published since 1931, and check those of them with a world-saving motif – I mean yarns in which the hero saves earth from physical destruction – I believe you'll be surprised. You'll find about six or seven stories of that kind out of a hundred and twenty (that includes a number of detective stories). Nearly every other SF writer has used that plot as often or oftener, in those eight years. How did it get pinned on me then? Well, when I started writing, I began with weird yarns like 'The Monster God of Mamurth'. Then I wrote a story in which the hero saved the world. Readers liked it and editors asked for more. For four or five years editors bought every story based on that plot, and when I tried to send in something different they complained of the lack of "punch".

I don't know where Larry is now. He gave up Golden Atom because of the lack of time, went into the services and dropped out of fandom. His is probably one of the largest collections of fantasy materia1 in the nation, unless he has quietly disposed of it in recent years.

N3F

It would be hard to find a fan organisation with a more turbulent history than the National Fantasy Fan Federation. It has been afflicted from it's earliest days with every manner of wild schemes, fizzled prospects, resigning officers, attempts to gain control by cliques, criticism from other sections of fandom, and similar turbulence. The turnover in membership has been so great that barely any present members can remember what went on in the NFFF's earliest days — Ackerman and Evans are the only people who have really been active in it right straight through, from beginning to the present time.

The NFFF was organised in 1941, and the first year's issues of its official organ provide rather odd, reading matter these lays. The official organ was called Bonfire in those days. The word had no significance, but someone adopted it because it had a vague resemblance to the initials in the official title: Bulletin Of The National Fantasy Fan Federation. The third issue included the first constitution of the NFFF. Here's what the constitution said that a prospective member was required to do before joining the NFFF:

> 1- Give proof of activity in the fan field, such as literary, artistic, or other journalistic work, attendance of conventions, active membership in fan organisations recognised by the NFFF etc. Further definition of activity shall be left to the discretion of the Advisory Board.
>
> 2- Secure the recommendation in writing of three incumbent members, residing in any three states.
>
> 3- Pass an examination testing the prospective member's knowledge of science or fantasy fiction, and fandom. The grading of these tests and determination of the passing mark shall be left to the Advisory Board.

Probably the oddest thing about the early NFFF concepts was the plan to finance the organisation by a tax. It's the only time to my knowledge in fandom's history that a tax on activities was proposed. The more active you were, the more you were supposed to pay to the NFFF. Jack Speer, as chairman of the finance committee, explained the method in the fourth issue of Bonfire:

> "It should be realised that somebody must pay, and the most active fans are the logical ones to do so. Fans are not in Fandom to help the other fellow: each one gets a great deal out of it personally, and has to pay something for his fun as it is. The Federation merely hikes the ante a bit, and it is supposed that it will in return increase the benefits derived from the hobby... Publishers of fan publications which sell for a price (gratis pubs, including purely FAPA, ones excepted) will each pay a given amount for each issue of their publication, regardless of size or price. Authors (including artists etc.) will pay in proportion to the quantity of fan material by them published within the period, regardless of what fan publication it appeared in (FAPA, subscription, or otherwise)."

Oddly enough, the officers of the NIFF were all opposed to this idea, but the membership itself, had voted for it, rather than a simple dues. Somewhere along the line it got forgotten.

When the organisation was approaching its first birthday, it had acquired a staggering amount of complexities. There must have been three committees for each member, and the job of keeping membership status straight was enough to require nearly the full energies of the organisation. The sixth issue of the official organ lists exactly 13 different membership categories, in each of which, one or more members fell, depending on how much assessment-paying, voting, and other things they had done. Just to keep an eye open for the future, there were also 23 other possible membership categories available for the future.

The NFFF had begun in the form of a brief article by damon knight – "Unite or Fie!" which was printed in Art Widner's Fanfare. It picked up interest fairly fast. By the time of the second issue of Bonfire, the organisation had 29 members, among them several big names like Ross Rocklynne and E.E. Smith. By the time of that second issue, the organisation was even trying to determine where the next convention should be staged. Somehow or other, 39 votes were cast by the 29 members, and it can't be said that posterity paid much attention to them. All but five of the votes were in favour of holding the next convention in cities which have never yet had a convention, a decade later – Washington, San Francisco, and Baltimore. The five remaining votes were in favour of a convention in Los Angeles.

Another of the original NFFF plans which has been lost in the shuffle of the years, called for setting up regional organisations, connected more or less loosely with the parent organisation.

When the NFFF was one year old, it had bogged down so completely that E.E. Evans named its new head to be himself, and no one had any particular objections to such an unorthodox procedure. Writing at this time, Evans declared:

> "One of the things your President most wishes to see accomplished during the coming year of his administration is the more complete organisation of Fandom, in all its many branches and ramifications...He wants to see more local clubs started all over the country; that all of the states possible be organised into state federations; and the six main sections of the country fully organised into sectional federations. These sections are: The New England (already started in the Boscone); The Western, to be comprised of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and such other adjacent states as may wish to join them; further development of the Dixie and the Mid-West; the Western, which would include the states between the Rockies and the Mississippi, and the Pacific including Washington, Oregon, and California, which might also take in Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona."

All during the first month of the NFFF's life, projects for the future were invented as easily as Gold thinks up new nasty things to say about Campbell. Here are a few samples gleaned at random from the first year's issue of Bonfire:

> Send two copies, free, of all fanzines, to all fans in the armed forces, one for his buddies to read, the other to be sent to his home for collecting purposes. A welcoming committee to study all letters to the editors in the pro-zines, and invite into fandom any letter writers who seem worthy of such high honour. "A concerted effort" to raise the circulation of the prozines. Take charge of all the polls. Form a Reader's Bureau to tell members which stories they should read in the prozines, and which they should skip. Set up a method of determining the site for the next convention. Compile a history of the future, based on the most frequently occurring predictions in the prozine stories. Establish a psychological research programme to find out why fans do the things they do. Publication of a yearbook of Fandom. Incorporate NFFF.

This last idea was the only one that was deemed too fantastic to be considered. It would have cost $23.

Incidentally, the NFFF may have set an all-time publishing record for mortality among official editors. I published the first issue of Bonfire. Bob Studley did the second. Art Widner produced the third. Harry Jenkins Jr. set a precedent by putting out three issues in a row. E.E. Evans became the publisher with the seventh issue. The seventh issue came out just about ten years ago, but let's not go into what happened to the NFFF during the ten years that have followed.

Fantasy Magazine

This time, children, we are going 'way back', close to the very beginning of time, back to the days when hardly anyone existed except Forest J Ackerman. In other words, this is going to be about the most famous of all fanzines, Fantasy Magazine.

Fantasy Magazine began in the depths of the nation's depression years early in the 1930's and it continued existence until late in 1936.

Those were the days when a complete collection of all fanzines ever issued could be fitted into a dresser drawer neatly, and all the prozines that had ever appeared would take up only two or three feet of shelf space.

Most of the people who put out Fantasy Magazine benefited by their training to become important in the prozine field. Julius Schwartz, long its managing editor, became one of the top-notch agents in the field. Ray Palmer was its literary editor. Mort Weisinger, former TWS editor, an associate editor, and Forest J Ackerman, now agenting as madly as Schwartz, was movie editor.

There were thirty eight issues of Fantasy magazine, if my calculations are more accurate than they were for Golden Atom, printed on paper nearly the size of today's average pulp magazine, and ranging up to sixty pages in size.

There has never been a fanzine since which came so close to representing the combined attention and interests of all fandom. It wasn't a one man publication like all the best fanzines since. It was the corporate expression of the leading fans of the day, the average of their ideals. And when it finally collapsed, its disintegration became the official point at which First Fandom ended.

Fandom has never been the same since, despite varying attitudes from year to year, there has never been the same attention to the professional magazines and authors on the part of fans. Never quite as much dignity, earnestness and freshness of attitude.

Other big, special issues of fanzines have contained more material, better material, than the fourth anniversary issue of Fantasy Magazine.

But even today it's hard to imagine a single fanzine containing a line-up like this: Eando Binder, Jack Williamson, Edmond Hamilton, Raymond Z. Gallun, John Russell Fearn, H.G. Wells, Walter H. Gillings, Festus Pragnell, Stanley G. Weinbaum, Raymond A. Palmer, H.P. Lovecraft, George Allan England, and most of the leading fans of the day.

More than 2,000 copies of the fourth anniversary issue were mailed out, giving it perhaps the biggest circulation of any fan publication in history. It's still worth hunting today, for such tidings as the Weinbaum story, a short-short which isn't fantasy but probably hasn't been anthologised anywhere, "Graph", Lovecraft's long obituary for Robert E. Howard, and "The Great Illusion", a story written by six of the top notch authors of the day, put together by writing the last section first, then sending it to the next author who wrote something to lead up to the last section, a process that was repeated five times.

The earlier issues are rarer but more typical of Fantasy Magazine. For instance, in the June 1934 issue, Ray Palmer gives a biography of himself that contains hints of the ambition that he almost fulfilled, and the mysticism that eventually emerged as Shaverism:

> "At the age of seven...I jousted with a truck in the middle of the street. The truck won; and landing on my head, folded me up to a permanent height of 4' 8". I'm still folded. Followed years and years in hospitals. Passed the time reading thousands of books. Acquired a vocabulary thereby, and the deed was done. All I needed. was a typewriter. Santa Claus brought that. Wrote "The Time Ray of Jandra" and went to the sanatorium for another year. That brought 1932... Sharpest memories of this period were: the ghastly face of a dead room-mate staring up into the full moon from where he had fallen on the floor in a flood of blood, the 1800 fish I caught in a lake where "there were no fish", and the rendezvous with a dream I actually kept — to my horror upon realisation of the truth. Intentions: to make my living by writing, and by writing a1one. (Editors please note) And to ferociously endeavour to turn out fiction worthy of comparison with the best."

The April 1935 issue of Fantasy Magazine was dedicated to Weird Tales. Naturally, it had to include a biographical sketch of H.P. Lovecraft, still alive. F. Lee Baldwin wrote it. Some nuggets of information from this sketch. HPL's first story was written when he was seven, entitled "The Noble Eavesdropper", about a cave of robbers. He liked, of his fiction, "The Colour Out Of Space" better than anything else. HPL preferred Merritt, Price, Moore, Howard, Smith, and Frank Long, Jr. among his contemporaries in the fantasy writing field.

Oddly enough, he liked the realist school in non-fantasy fiction, naming Balzac, Maupassant, and Zola, but believed that the French are best equipped to do this realism. His musical preferences: Victor Herbert, and old Negro cakewalk ditties. It took an average of three days for him to write a story.

Julius Schwartz wrote a monthly column, "The Science Fiction Eye" in those days, devoted mostly to the chatter about stories that were and were not coming out in the prozines in the near future. (In those days, the authors gave him lists of stories they had sold, and also lists of stories which had bean rejected by each magazine, which he cheerfully printed.) And any of those columns is enough to make a completist collector go wild. For instance, the May 1935 issue's column tells of a science fiction series of novels in a magazine called True Gang Life, each of them written by Ralph Milne Farley in collaboration with some other stf writer like Palmer or E. Hoffmann Price. Weinbaum was supposed to be the collaborator in the Oct. 1935 issue. British SF of those days included S. Fowler Wright's "War of 1938" in the Sunday Dispatch, and "Boys of 2035" by Carl Hagen in the Sunday Pictorial. And a woman's magazine called Home, was publishing an SF serial by Geo. Worts, entitled "The Last Man On Earth".

For a bit of prophetic defining, you can turn to the April 1935 issue, and read what Donald A. Wollhcim had to say about the "third class" of impossible stories which are neither SF or weird in nature. He was writing this a couple of years before John W. Campbell, Jr. got together the first issue of Unknown. Remember:

> "Pure fantasy is known to everyone in its juvenile version as fairy tales. But it does not stop at the juvenile. Unknown, apparently, to most people, it extends into adult fiction in an almost pure form in a few infrequent books and authors. While it is true that science fiction and weird fiction are also derived from tie juvenile fairy tale, it is equally true that their form and style have changed greatly. This is not so with pure fantasy. Pure fantasy is that branch of fantasy which, dealing with subjects recognisable as non-existent and entirely imaginary, is rendered plausible by the reader's desire to consider it as such during the period of reading."

Even back in those days, some science-fiction items came high. An advertisement in the June 1934 issue, offered Black Cat magazines at $1 per copy. On the other hand, Clark Ashton Smith was trying to get rid of new copies of "Ebony and Crystal", a collection of his writings for $1, half the original price.

Incidentally, a true, all-out fan must have originally owned most of my copies of Fantasy Magazine. I got them second-hand, and the margins are liberally bedecked with comments like "true, true", and even a subscription expiration notice in one copy has been faithfully preserved.

Imagination

Fans have always been fussing and feuding in Los Angeles, but there was a time when the outside world didn't know much about civil warfare. Before the long succession of split-ups got public airing, Los Angeles fandom co-operated briefly to produce one of the finest club publications of all time. It was Imagination, whose title W. Lawrence Hamling has since borrowed for a prozine.

Imagination is now less remembered than the magazine which succeeded it, Voice of the Imagination, nicknamed VOM. VOM came into being after Imagination folded. Originally, the title had been the name of the letter section in Imagination, so the letter section simply shed the rest of the magazine and became popular as the first, important, all-letter fanzine. It lasted longer than Imagination had survived, thanks to the hard work of Ackerman and Morojo. But VOM was the reflection of Ackerman's current preoccupations, while Imagination had something to do with the whole Los Angeles Science-Fiction League chapter. (For the sake of purists, it was LASFL in those days, not LASFS. And technically, Imagination as a title, should have an exclamation point after it, but it's too much work to insert exclamation points on a hot summer day.)

Imagination began in 1937, lasted a couple of years before metamorphosing into VOM, and hardly was spectacular in appearance. It was standard size, usually containing a couple of dozen of mimeoed pages, with a rather conservative format that was remarkable only for the all-out Ackermanese which Forrest J wrote in those days, and for the use of three different typefaces, to compensate for the lack of interior illustrations. Some idea of the inconsistencies and extremes which Ackerman inflicted upon his prose may be found in a brief excerpt like this:

> "The chief character was money-mad, a miser. He had accumulated a large fortune by lending to those in desperate strits, by usery. The Scrooge lived in a large old mansion. In the basemnt was a medium size rm & there he kept his gold."

For some unfathomable reason, Ackerman's "fenetic" spelling dropped more vocalised letters than silent letters.

In the April, 1938 issue, Russ Hodgekins told how a bunch of the Los Angeles boys went to Tarzana to meet Edgar Rice Burroughs in person. Everything went fine, except for the fact that Burroughs was not there. Here's the way Hodgekins described the Burroughs office:

> "Imagine yourself in a long, low-ceilinged room, a great, open fireplace in the corner, spread before it an enormous polar bear robe — head, claws and all. On the walls are the original illustrations of many of the memorable scenes from the Tarzan and Martian stories. And at both sides of the room, built-in book shelves, filled to overflowing. A great many of these are reference books and representative volumes of every type of literature, and the works of Burroughs, himself. The sight fairly made my hands itch to get hold of them -- and I did, as many as time allowed...Not only were there first editions of American printings, but the English, also. And that was at only one end of the room; at the other, were copies of all the foreign versions -- and when you realise Burroughs works have been published in 58 different languages and dialects (plus Braille for the blind) well you have something there....."

The contents of Imagination were a merry hodgepodge of everything imaginable. Biographies of LASFL members, synopses of fantasy movies, and radio shows which Ackerman had found, translations of fantasy interest from Esperanto (another Ackerman crusade in those days) news notes on happenings in Los Angeles, and lots of letters from readers, were regular features. Almost everything was kept short, with two or three items usually crowding onto a page, and poems set up as prose to save space. Rather interesting at this late date is the biography of Ray Bradbury which appeared in the June 1938 issue:

> 'Ray Bradbury is the funny man of the Los Angeles League. In other words, he is the Big Joke. Wears glasses, but doesn't wear a look of intelligence. At times, when you crack wise, he will rise from his stupor — momentarily. Has been reading STF irregularly since he was nine. His favourite magazine is Astounding (without a doubt). Favourite theme, time travelling; Authors, Burroughs and Kline. Names Dold top illustrator. And boy, if he's the top, Binder's the bottom! Was born in small town of Waukegan, Illinois (Jack Benny's hone town); of Swedish-English descent; came to Los Angeles in 1934 and intends staying. Plays the violin poorly and is terrible at all mathematics and figures except those of blondes. Plans being an author of science fiction (is still trying to live down 'Hollerbochen's Dilemna'

> which, he states was a true dilemna for him.) Likes act and direct. Prays for the day when movie producers will make good science-fiction films. His favourites have been Things To Come and King Kong. A pet peeve is 'how Tarzan is being ruined on the screen by inefficient acting and directing. I think they should follow the books chapter by chapter and not the pocketbooks dollar by dollar.' Would like a limited Dictatorship. Is a prepared pacifist, an atheist, and an extrovert. Would like to touch a match to the famous Ackerman language!'

Since Ackerman has drifted away from fandom, lots of us forget that he never liked to have a period placed after his middle initial. In the July, 1938 Imagination, he told something about his middle initial troubles in this respect:

> "FJA was born Forrest James Ackerman. The Sacramento records will reveal it. But he doesn't feel it. He has an uncle named A; just A, no punctuation because it's not an abbreviation for another name -- tho they always called him Ed. So A's name seems to've become Ed instead of what it originally was. Vice versa, Ack has altered his to J (no dot.) Oddly enough, it might've been 4E's lot to be known as Forrest C. Ackerman, for the first half of his life -- and early years of his stf career (if such it can be called) -- he is now appalled at the fact that he never knew...he thought his middle name was Clark! Everybody called him Clark. He scribbled his name that way at school. Explanation: he was named after a friend of the family, James Clarke."

Ten years before Walt Kelly started his comic strip, here's how Imagination described Pogo:

> "Sensitive, moody, unsettled, yet with placid, calm demeanour; genuine. A person strangely settled in composure to be so unsettled of mind. An outward air of tranquillity; reserved and shy."

If it doesn't seem to fit the possum too well, that's because it refers to the original Pogo, Patti Gray, then a member of the LASFL.

Then there was a brief paragraph of interest from A. Merritt, apparently a quote from a letter which he had written to someone in Los Angeles:

> "I have often thought of writing a sequel to the 'Dragon Glass' -- but I find sequels terribly difficult to write. I hate the labour of rehashing the old story as a starting point for the new. Maybe I will get around to it someday. I keep getting letters asking for a sequel to 'The Moon Pool'. Oddly enough, there are parts of it I like, but parts of it — reading it — now after the years, seem to me to be pretty uninteresting. However, it is queer what a long life that book has had. It was the first I ever wrote, and when I wrote it I really had not much idea of keeping up writing."

Does Joseph William Skidmore ring a bell in your memory? Most stf readers of today have never beard of him, and couldn't guess that his death in 1938 caused nearly as much turmoil as the other deaths of important writers around that period, like Robert Howard and H. P. Lovecraft. Skidmore wasn't a very good writer, but his fiction had a certain naive charm of its own, it was pioneer work, and he appeared frequently in the prozines from 1931 until his death.

Imagination's tribute to him, written by Ackerman and Rob Olsen:

> "Joe Skidmore undoubtedly will remain best known for his 'Posi & Nega' series published in Amazing Stories, unique 'electron narratives' that rank high among the most original and outstanding contributions to the literature of pseudo-science, To build a set of instructive and interesting stories around the adventures of two super-intelligent electrons, required more ingenuity, if not real genius and this task Joe Skidmore accomplished with admirable skill."

Someday, I think we should have a different kind of science-fiction anthology, a book whose stories would be chosen not for merit, not for theme, but because they are completely typical of the pre-World War Two magazine science-fiction. At least two or three of the placid, little stories about the talking electrons would deserve a place in such a book.

O Pioneers

(This article, written especially for Quandry, is based upon the author's article of the same title in HORIZONS in the Spring '52 FAPA mailing.)

We've had fan histories, fancyclopedias, fan directories, fan dictionaries, even photo albums of fans. But the other day it occurred to me that no one has created the fannish equivalent of the baseball hall of fame. We've never tried to decide who our most important characters have been.

I'm referring now to the fans who have left the greatest influence on fandom. I'm not interested in the fans who did some particular thing first, or those who did that same thing in the most skilful fashion. The historian can dig out facts about the first group, and, the polls take care of the latter category. The topic for today's sermon is the fellows whose activities in specific ways caused a lasting change in fandom, exerting an influence which is still felt today.

My list contains two extreme old-timers, one who is fairly recent in fan history, and the remainder are from fandom's middle ages. Originally I wanted to figure out the ten most important fan pioneers, but I couldn't recall anyone else of the same calibre as these eight.

The mastodons are Forrest J Ackerman and Jack Darrow. R.D. Swisher, Bob Tucker, Ray Bradbury, Claude Degler, and Jimmy Taurasi date from the middle ages. Francis T. Laney is the closest thing to a modern figure, for his fandom-shaking activities are centred around the last five or six years, despite his presence in fandom quite a bit earlier.

Ackerman isn't on this list simply because he was voted number one fan so often. His interest in Esperanto never acted contagiously on fandom, his collection wasn't unique for size, and for so famous a fan, he did remarkably little publishing and writing. But he's one of fandom's pioneers because he was the fellow who proved that you can make a full-time hobby out of science fiction without ending up in the booby hatch. You're liable to starve, your friends will think you've gone off the deep end, and you'll lose your sense of proportion, if you spend the time on fandom that Ackerman did, year after year. But no lasting harm will come to you, the police will let yon alone and eventually you'll snap out of it. If Ackerman's reason had snapped at some dramatic moment, in the midst of a feud or convention, parents all over the nation would have snatched their adolescents away from hecto pads and staplers.

Jack Darrow is probably the least familiar name on the list to the current generation of fans. He was never an active fan, for that matter. He simply wrote letters to editors of the pro-zones with machine-gun regularity, letters that set down his likes and dislikes in non-spectacular fashion. Such letters would seldom be published by the prozines these days. But they proved that you can get a lot of ego-boo and fannish fame, simply by writing to the prozines. Ever since, the prozine letter columns have been the main recruiting ground for new fans. Jack didn't have anything remotely resembling a brain. He published no fan-zines and has now disappeared. He attended only one convention, the Chicon, I believe. There was quite a bit of preliminary publicity about the manner in which fandom's two elders, Ackermm and Darrow, would come face to face for the first time at this convention. When they die, they said: "Hello." history does not record that Darrow said anytning else during the entire convention.

It's hard to put a finger on the single individual who is responsible for today's bibliography. Catalogues and listings had been published from time to time in the earliest fanzines. But I think R.D. Swisher's is the important bibliophile. Before he came along, such work was tentative, clumsy and aimless. His checklist of fanzine titles was a model of accuracy and conciseness. He showed, too, that a really mature individual can do this sort of thing in spare time without alarming his whole community or alienating his wife. Furthermore, Swisher gave a graceful example of how to forget the whole thing when your research has become too much for you. I suspect that the monumental fan research projects of recent years were partly inspired by the huge pile of S-F Checklists: the Checklists showed that it
can be done, even if it is a job.

Bob Tucker did the simplest, most obvious thing. He displayed a sense of humour in fandom. But that's enough to insert him into this hall of fame. Before he came along, no one had consistently kept any eye open for the ridiculous side of science fiction and fandom. Humorous articles in the fanzines were well compartmentalised: you didn't find bright remarks except in the items that were supposed to be funny from beginning to end. Tucker was older than the average fan, even fifteen years ago. He was more of a man of the world than most of us, and he realised that the average fan regarded himself and his hobby with too much intentness, too great a sense of mission. But it took real genius for Tucker to jab steadily at

fandom's most sacred cows, without getting himself hated. He succeeded so well in injecting humour into fandom even the most serious young fans today lack the monumentally grim qualities of their ancestors.

This list must include Ray Bradbury. Other fans had sold stories to the prozines before he came along, usually because they were friendly with the prozine's editor. Ray, after a brief and undistinguished stretch of time as a fanzine publisher and dipper into Los Angeles fan politics, set a whole generation of fans writing fiction persistently. He proved that even though you can't become number one fan, you might have talents in other directions. He wouldn't have made such am impression if he had been an obvious genius in his fanning, but he wasn't spectacular as a fanzine publisher or contributor to other fanzines. If he can become famous, I can, too, was the reaction that his success caused. in the thoughts of a hundred or a thousand other obscure fans.

The list must also include Francis T. Laney. He introduced realism into non-fiction fan writing. Before he came along, policy had been to hint darkly at scandals, drunken brawls, sexual deviations, and other unpleasant characteristics of fans. Laney made it a point to describe in detail these things. It made unpleasant reading for some. But it drove some of these unpleasant people away from fanning, it snapped some adolescents into realising just how their actions seemed to others, and I think fandom is the better for it.

In a left-handed way, Claude Degler is among the most influential fans in history. He was the ideal horrible example who put fandom onto its guard against all-out screwballs. His sponging resulted in complete revision of the unwritten laws of fan hospitality. His Cosmic Circle was an unintentional parody on all fan organisations, showing by exaggeration the ways in which they are ridiculous. His insistence that fans are star-begotten and misunderstood but destined leaders of mankind was so startling that we no longer hear the old half-serious cry, "Fans are Slans!"

Jimmy Taurasi is probably the fellow who has done the best work in liaison between fandom and the professional division of science-fiction. His knack of getting along well with almost all people came in very handy during the muckraking and all-out feuding in New York from ten to fifteen years ago. While mightier minds than his turned out childish mud-slinging, his journalism and reasonably calm conduct was a valuable force. Without his activities, I suspect that New York's professional editors and writers might have given up altogether on fandom and that would have been hard on conventions, municipal fan groups and recruiting. Fantasy News under Taurasi broke every rule of journalism, but it did give a fairly accurate picture of the day's fandom.

People like Wollheim and Lowndes completely upset fandom in the days of their activity. But they can't go onto the list. They were household names wherever fans lived at one time, but today's fandom is as if they had never touched a typewriter or said anything nasty about Sykora. They didn't leave any lasting imprint. Fandom today ignores the implications of the vombis, and looks blank at the word "Futurian".

It's hard to be sure which of today's prominent fans will eventually end up in the hall of fannish fame. Rotsler might, if he could convert fanzine editors to the principles of good makeup and unmuddied art. Lee Hoffman is the first all-out girl fan who isn't hanging onto the coattails of a brother, husband, or boyfriend, and she might be the start of a matriarch fandom for the future. Unfortunately, hindsight is the only kind of 20-20 vision that does any good in viewing this type of a situation.

Spaceways

Just before World War Two started, some optimists may have felt that mankind would travel through space to other worlds by the 1950's. They were partly right, partly wrong. He hasn't travelled through space to other worlds in 1957. But during the past two decades, his trip through the years has brought him into another world, a world that is radically different from that of the 1930's. But this world has been explored in such a gradual way that some people don't realise that it has arrived. Perhaps the story of how I went about publishing a fanzine two decades ago will point out a few typical features of the old world that is irrevocably gone.

It was the middle of 1938 when a correspondent, Jim Avery, suggested to me in a letter: "Let's put out a fan magazine," "Sounds great," I wrote back to him immediately. "I'm all for it. Let's start as soon as we can. What is a fan magazine, by the way?" Right here, if you are a brilliantly astute reader, you will realise that we are in another world. What pair of young science fiction readers in 1957 would waste time writing "fan magazine" when the term "fanzine" is so much quicker, more sophisticated, and exotic? But fanzine was a word that probably hadn't been invented, certainly hadn't been popularised, back in the days when I began publishing Spaceways,

I had been reading science fiction since 1935; my ten year old self had succumbed to a Paul cover on a large-size Wonder Stories in that year, and in 1936 I had written to Astounding Stories, asking for correspondents. Jim Avery, of Skowhegan, Maine, immediately became my favourite correspondent. One thing which has not changed in the past 20 years has been the inordinate enthusiasm with which young fans enter into correspondence. Avery and I wrote to one another letters of astounding length and thoroughness; two dozen typed pages were not uncommon in one envelope, and replies usually went out within three or four days. There is no telling how many millions of words might have exchanged hands between us, if this fan magazine idea hadn't come up. When he suggested a publication, I knew vaguely that there were amateur magazines which contained articles about science fiction, because I had read about them in the letter sections of professional science fiction magazines. (Not prozines, please; that was another term that lay in the realm of the future.) But 1 hadn't sent away for any fan magazines. I found it much more entertaining to re-read a dozen times my favourite stories from the professional magazines, and I couldn't believe that there could be any equivalent pleasure in reading things that mere mortals had written about these tremendous feats of imagination.

There isn't a great deal of difference between the months that followed in 1938 and the occurrences in 1957 when a young fan decides to put out a fanzine. To go over the story in detail would be boresome; you would recognise all too well the search for enough capital to buy publishing supplies, the soul-searching to decide on the best title, the staggering impossibility of finding enough material to fill a first issue, the swaggering confidence with which we awaited an avalanche of subscriptions as soon as our plans were announced in the fan press. Human nature hasn't changed either. After two or three months of preparatory work, Avery and I began to realise for the first time that we had different personalities. He was a fellow with quick enthusiasms, ready to leap at any chance to do something new and different, and capable of expending effort on a plane that I couldn't approach. However, his interests didn't remain focused on one subject very long; they began to centre on something or other connected with school after a few months. On the other hand, I was a person who didn't get intrigued by new ideas very readily, rarely proposed them myself, and was slow to pick up enthusiasm; but when the interest did get a firm grip on me, I gripped back with a death-hold and my attention clung tenaciously to the object for years and years. So it went with the fan magazine. I marvelled at Avery's inspiration in picking a brand new title, Spaceways; at the bold way he went ahead and invested more than our total capital in a hectograph; at the indefatigable way in which he immediately turned out vast quantities of dummied pages and began running them off. And a few months later, he was marvelling at the way I continued to harp on the necessity for putting out a fanzine, now that we had started it, despite his lagging interest,

The world in which we planned to publish a fanzine was purple. Use of a hectograph was virtually automatic for fanzines, useless you happened to be in the miraculous position of possessing access to a printing press. I remember mentioning the word mimeograph to Jim Avery, and he demolished this wild idea immediate1y. Mimographs cost ten times as much as hectographs, he pointed out, as much as thirty dollars for the really de luxe models. And imagine the waste involved in buying a brand new stencil for every page of your magazine. You've got to pay six or seven cents for really good stencils. Besides, nobody in fandom uses a mimeograph. Fans would laugh at us.

That fan world of 1938 was also a very cliquish world. Despite the complaints about cliques at the 1956 convention in New York, I don't believe that anything remotely similar prevails today. Every person entering fandom felt a bit like the babies in the song from "Iolanthe". He was immediately identified — not as a little libera1 or little conservative, but as an adherent of the Taurasi-Sykora faction, or the Wollheim-Michel faction, or the little body of independents who were gasping out a miserable existence between the pressure of those two mighty masses. Avery and I shocked the fan world by turning down all efforts to enrol Spaceways in one of the "press" groups that existed then. For it was the custom to ask a fan magazine to be a member of the Cosmic Press or the Futurian Press or some other group before it came into existence, using the title as a public declaration of where sympathies lay.

And although fans have never been noted for prosperity, you must remember that 1938 was still depression time. It was quite possible to publish a hundred copies of a good-sized fanzine for five dollars, including all materials and postage. But it was also quite possible to envy the fellow who had a good job paying twenty-five dollars per week, and to hunt for months for a job paying considerably less. Mimeograph paper cost 60 cents per ream for really opaque, luxurious 20-pound stock that didn't betray a trace of offset or throwthrough. I paid as little as one dollar twenty-five for a quire of stencils on a number of occasions, and standard brands weren't much more than that. Postage costs were approximately half the present figure. The heavy covers that long distinguished Spaceways were made from construction paper which could be bought in the five and ten for a piddling figure, and cut down to the proper dimensions. So in theory, it didn't look as if it would cost us anything to issue Spaceways. We counted on taking the fan world by storm and outselling most fan publications, with estimates of paid circulation ranging as high as fifty copies per issue. That, we thought, coupled with a small amount of revenue from advertising, should see us through, at a dime per copy or three for two bits.

As I have already hinted, trouble arose. The original plan had called for hectographing Spaceways. Jim purchased the hecto and offered to do the mechanical work of running off the pages, if I could dredge up enough material to keep the new craft airborne and typed the dummies. When he was half way through the first issue, a fungus went to work on the gelatine, school reopened, and money started to run low, simultaneously, in Skowhegan. I began to grow alarmed at weeks of inaction, and felt small amounts of panic when my prodding failed to cause a reaction for the first time in the course of our correspondence. There was money trickling in from subscriptions, several gods in the form of prozine authors had sent literary contributions, and items about the new magazine were appearing in the fan press. I couldn't conceive of failing to carry through the half-started project. There is no telling what might have happened, if the First Christian Church of Hagerstown had not decided that its minister deserved the very best. The congregation showed its affection for him by purchasing a brand now mimeograph for the church. The machine which this gift replaced was offered for sale for five dollars. I plunged probably deeper into debt than I'd ever been and bought the thing. It weighs about sixty pounds, it's so old that the little buttons which hook onto the stencils are spaced differently from all contemporary stencils, the automatic ink feed has never worked, and it throws squirts of ink into the next block if operated at too fast a pace. But it's been faithful; as the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph, it has seen me through twenty years of publishing without suffering a comp1ete breakdown and without needing any replacement of parts. They built mimeo-graphs like battleships but intended them for lifetime service, back in those days. Some fan historians, including Moskowitz, have declared that Spaceways helped to bring the era of mimeography into fandom. It is interesting to speculate on the course of fandom over the past two decades, if that congregation hadn't loved its minister.

Jim wasn't very pleased about my action in purchasing a mimeograph, especially when he discovered that I was already beginning to crank out pages for a new first issue of Spaceways. In a fairly po1ite way, he hinted that I could go ahead and do all of the work, for all he cared. So I did. That ur-Spaceways in hectographed form doesn't really count as the first issue. It was never completed, and only a few dozen copies exist. Most of its contents were repeated in the mimeographed issue that was officially volume one, number one. I kept Avery's name on the masthead for Spaceways throughout the four years of the magazine's life, mainly because I was afraid that he would lay title to the title of the magazine if he weren't listed as an associate editor. But I'm responsible for everything concerned with the editorial policy of the magazine, starting from the first mimeographed issue. The Skowhegan-Hagerstown correspondence withered on the vine; letters dropped off to two or three pages, and their rate of exchange slackened gradually. So in a sense, fandom did me a service. It gave me more spare time. Without exaggeration, it took less time to publish Spaceways than it did to carry on that correspondence. Fortunately, Jim and I never got around to having a fuss. I finally met him, years later, and found him to be an even nicer fellow in person than in correspondence. He's now working for a newspaper in Norfolk, and we still exchange Christmas cards.

The most radical thing about Spaceways was the policy that I laid down for its first issue: no controversy. The squawk that this caused among New York's Futurian population was agonised, loud and prolonged. Cyril Kornbluth wrote a little poem about me that was so diabolically to the point that it still hurts to remember it. Other fans needled me more subtly, until I wasn't sure whether Speer was serious or jesting when he c1aimed that I'd broken my own rule by publishing a little story with a setting in Spain, a land which had recently been made controversial by the civil war. The odd thing about this policy is that its cause was quite different from that which most persons have assumed. I was praised in some quarter for setting up such a policy, as an injection of much needed fresh air into a fandom that was too concerned with its petty arguments and juvenile efforts to settle the problems of the world. In some degree, this policy did cause other fanzines to ease up on the feuding and political colouring, I believe. But I promulgated that policy with no intention of rescuing fandom from introspection and backbiting. I made that ruling simply because I didn't feel capable, of handling touchy subjects. I had been acquainted with fandom for only a few months; at the age of 15, I didn't pay much attention to world affairs; I simply didn't want to dabble in stuff that I didn't understand. Fortunately, it was about this time that the professional science fiction field began to grow. With this increase in the number of prozines came many new fans who were just as ignorant of the Moskowitz-Wiggens feud as I was, and who were just as puzzled by the manner in which the Futurians considered the Exclusion Act of the first New York convention to be more important to mankind than the Dreyfuss case. Other fanzines began to appear which aped Space-ways' policy. Today, if a new fanzine appears with no controversial material, nobody pays attention to that aspect of the new publication. Oddly enough, I gradually eased this policy in Spaceways, as the years

passed. I didn't accept material dealing with international or national affairs, and I refused the vitriolic writings about fandom, but I gave a reasonably free rein to a couple of columnists and occasionally spoke rather firmly in my own editorials, as I grew more confident about my judgement on fannish matters. By the time the magazine ended its career, I don't believe that any readers remembered that original declaration of neutrality.

One of today's best-known fans recently got hold of a complete file of Spaceways. He read the magazines for hours, then wrote to me in puzzlement. Why did that magazine take first place in most fan polls for two or three years? he wanted to know. "It's just like any other fanzine, as far as I can see." I found it hard to think of a logical explanation. Its pioneering influences didn't make themselves felt immediately. It wasn't the biggest fanzine of the time. Compared with the recently defunct Fantasy Magazine, its material was amateurish, its format sloppy, and its policy dishwatery. As far as I can determine at this late date, Spaceways won the polls because it expressed the spirit of the age. And it is interesting to note that Quandry, which won polls more recently as consistently as Spaceways had, is now becoming the subject of one debunking article after another. A person would almost suspect that putting out the top fanzine is a conjuring trick: after the magician and his product have left the stage, the audience turns to one another, rubs their eyes, and wants to know what they could have seen that they liked so much. The spirit of the age is the only logical explanation. A fanzine sums up completely the general frame of mind of its fandom, through some mental quirk of the editor; because fandom finds in it just what fandom happens to be at that moment, it gets voted into first p1ace. When fandom's atmosphere and thinking and manners change, it seems inconceivable that that particular fanzine could have ever been so popular.

However, there were several contributing factors. Regularity of appearance, for instance. Spaceways came out with the precision of clockwork, every seven weeks or so. I was doing all of the work myself, so I had no need to worry about sickness or gafia on the part of assistants. One of my columnists got lazy on one occasion, and didn't bring his stuff into being on schedule, so I immediately wrote a column of my own to take the place of the missing one and refused to publish the late arrival. Unexpectedly, he didn't get angry; this was such an unprecedentedly stern action on the part of a fanzine editor that he was commendably prompt from then on. Real spadework in digging up material may have helped Spaceways, too. By dint of much letter-writing, I built up a pretty good backlog of material. Then stories and articles began to arrive faster than I could use them. So I was probably the first fanzine editor in history to reject material for reasons other than feuds and prejudices. A few fans were grievously insulted, but not many. The quality of the writing in the magazine was aided immensely by the fact that I could be a bit selective.

On the debit side, it is quite annoying to realise the many things that I did wrong. I accepted some material from the prozine writers which I should have sent back by return-mail — rejected stories aimed at prozines, mainly. The pressure to run pictures in Spaceways was so great that I yielded, to my eternal regret. I have no artistic ability of my own, asking the artists to put pictures on stencils involved the danger of missed deadlines, and my efforts to stencil the work of other persons was not happy. I got involved in a deal with a second-rate rocket society which brought in extra revenue as publishing prices began to rise, but had no other advantages and many drawbacks. For use of one page in every other issue, the rocket group bought a really big quantity of copies of Spaceways. But the fact that I had no say over the contents of just one page in every other issue rankled me inordinately. Circulation, even without counting the issues for rocketeers, reached levels which I hadn't dreamed possible. In its prime, Spaceways actually sold better than a hundred copies per issue, undoubtedly a higher figure than any non-printed fanzine up to that time. But the freeloaders list grew right along with paid circulation as the years passed. I couldn't sleep nights if I cut off the free list the guys who had been so helpful and generous at the start, but many of them did nothing after that first year, and more generous, helpful persons kept bobbing up. Pretty soon, the task of keeping track of subscriptions, addressing wrappers, and noting address changes was requiring almost as much time as the publication work.

It's all to the best that I decided to discontinue Spaceways in late 1942, abruptly and cleanly. It would have lasted longer, possibly for several more years, if there hadn't been sickness in the home that made the noise of the typewriter undesirable, and if my belief that I was about to be drafted hadn't been so firm. But the old energy and thrill of publishing a fanzine had withered for me, just as it has withered eventually for every person who has ever entered the field. Fandom was changing rapidly, and I would have been forced either to give Spaceways an entirely new personality or to become a quaint old survivor of a day that was already gone. The informality of Le Zombie and the FAPA publications attracted me more than the stiffer formality that prevailed in Spaceways, but I didn't feel capable of trying to keep up with the times. So, after thirty issues over a four-year period, Spaceways was suddenly no more. Al Ashley agreed to fill out unexpired subscriptions with his fine new fanzine. Unfortunately, that magazine saw only one issue after the end of Spaceways, and quite a few fans as a result are still my creditors. I didn't have enough money at the time to make it up in cash. So I decided that most of them had received more than their money's worth in Spaceways over the years; and even now, I say an occasional prayer that I shall not be attacked by qualms of conscience thirty yeas from now which will force me to devote my last days to trying to track down the rightful heirs of the people to whom I owe ten or twenty cents apiece.

Again, The Fantast

It always came in a plain brown wrapper, and when it was shoved by the mailman through the letterslot, it looked like a poor, bedraggled sparrow, beside the gaudy and alluring heavy envelopes or brightly coloured covers that contained other fanzines. But it was Third Fandom's equivalent of Hyphen or Slant, its name was The Fantast, and it may quite possibly have been the most consistently, enduringly excellent fanzine ever published from the literary standpoint.

The Fantast began publication just before the outbreak of World War Two. C.S. Youd wasn't ashamed to use his own name as its editor and publisher since he was publishing an honest fanzine; later, he began adopting all sorts of pen names for his appearances in rankly commercial publications like The Saturday Evening Post. Midway through its career, The Fantast passed into the hands of Douglas Webster, who never made a lot of money out of writing as Sam did later, but had equal talents. Until the vicissitudes of wartime publishing in England became too great, The Fantast was the best illustrated, most literate, funniest and deepest thinking publication to emerge from the British Isles. Willis publications have surpassed it in recent years in letterpress, in a different kind of humour, and in sheer bulk, but even WAW has been unable to unearth a stable of such uniformly gifted writers as those who surrounded the publishers of The Fantast.

In those days, Sam Youd could afford to write non-fiction, and that was one of the best things that ever happened to fandom. From the November, 1941, issue of The Fantast, here's an example of his incomparable talents as an essayist, in the form of extracts from his pen portrait and semi-biography of John Frederick Burke:

> "The perverseness of John is his salient feature (always excluding his Jaw), and the only point of similarity between him and Eric Russell. Both have reverted to Roman Catholic science, and constructed the universe about the Betelgeuse of their egos, both have grown so used to sneering at the face of authority that they dare no longer look in a mirror. But John, being younger, is more intolerant, more completely self-centred, more determined that he will answer only to the delphic oracle of his own conscience. And like a true Sybil his conscience is ambidextrous, proffering a right-hand answer with its left tightly closed on what is at least an alternative.
>
> "No one without an interest in writing could survive John's company for long. By this, I do not mean that his best friends have been too reticent, nor that he is himself boring. The reverse is the case. It is merely that although he can bring himself to discuss other things it is always from a writer's standpoint, and the conversation always gets back to writing in the end. A mention of the Spanish War is an introduction for Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls" (which I agree with John, is possibly the best novel of the last ten years), and a mention of contemplation drags in Charles Morgan. Attack him on writing, or swing if you have enough guns, and he will smash you conclusively; attack him on politics, ethics, and especially his own shortcomings as a citizen, and he will wriggle feebly in a chair and smile inanely as you cut him to pieces. He is an example of specialised evolution: the crustacean writer.
>
> "The sight of John and Joan together would wring the heartstrings of any Tin Pan Alley lyric writer. John tells the world to go to hell while he gets on with his writing, and Joan ignored it altogether while she looks after John. John says something particularly Johnesque and, if she is near enough, she will put up a tender hand and pat his face--just--like--that. If she isn't near enough they exchange those glances so well-calculated to penetrate the ersatz armour of semi-hardened cynics like myself. This is young love par excellence. You feel that only a couple of Disney doves are needed to complete the effect."

I might explain that Burke at this time had just recently given up most fannish pursuits in favour of writing, and the paragraphs I have quoted above are actually asides in a review of his first novel. His fanzine, The Satellite, was incorporated into The Fantast.

Evidence that the fanciful strain in the Belfast fandom of today is a direct descendant of the British Isles fandom of 15 years ago might be drawn from a little item in the September, 1939 issue. Youd quotes a letter from a "sturdy iconoclast" fan of the time, D.R. Smith:

> "I think it would be possible to defend the tea-leaf method of fortune-telling as easily, or almost as easily, as palmistry. The untouched tea-leaves in the bottom of a person's cup obviously owe their arrangement to the manner in which he has drained. the cup, which in turn depends on the character of the man, the

size of his mouth, and other variables. From his character and his position in life – which later will also influence the disposition of the tea-leaves, as, for example, a person of the lower class will try and eat them, a person of my class will leave them well-placed for throwing in the fire, and a well-brought-up gentleman will leave them carelessly-placed ready for the slop basin — from these two influences the probable future is determined. The rules used in fortune telling by this means naturally give the fortune straight away, the process of inductive reasoning being incorporated in those rules so that the most unintelligent person can apply them.

"I think this sort of thing would make a good game, one you might play in Fantast. You could nominate a series of ridiculous hypotheses, give each to some separate fan to defend as best he could, and let your readers vote on the winner. The Moon is made of green cheese – Clarke could do that one. Or you could. challenge the readers to produce anything that your staff of experts could not "prove" was correct."

By December, 1941, John Burke was writing for The Fantast a pen portrait of C.S. Youd. Some of it is rather embarrassing as a prediction, but sections of it are quite interesting as description:

"I cannot see that square pegs should take running jumps at round holes, and Sam's terrific efforts to like his fellow human beings are all wrong. He should accept his character and not try to twist it to suit the world.... (His) fluency in verse is equalled only by fluency as a letter-writer; unfortunately, this ease and grace does not appear in such fiction as Sam has tackled, and although he has toyed with the idea of becoming a professional writer, his dissatisfaction with his efforts to date and his present mood of intolerance towards intellectual pastimes tend to turn him away from the path of literature. His dislike of "intellectuals" – a class which includes a surprisingly varied assortment of people – has led him to become an inverted highbrow, praising the tastes of the general public and treating the less popular forms of art and entertainment with scorn. He experiences great difficulty in reconciling this attitude with a liking for good music, in which he is beginning to take an interest. "I dislike emotion," he says, and tries to explain away the fact that he cannot resist Wagner.

"With a great deal of talent, Mr. Youd may never become the writer he deserves to be because of his lack of application and his inability to make up his mind as to what to do with his life; he is less likely to succeed than many of his acquaintances with inferior tastes and few talents, but more determination.

"He is well-built, having filled out surprisingly in two years. He accuses me of not taking enough exercise, but complains that I walk too much. He has a cherubic countenance, spectacles, and once had wavy hair. As I write this he is in hospital, minus the hair. His voice is mellow, ideal for reading melancholy poetry. He affects a cynical smile which deceives nobody....While he was in Liverpool, we saw him change his mind – a process that has much in common with an earthquake."

One of the finest things about Fantast was its poetry. Occasionally, when a filler was needed, it quoted such non-fans as the unknown lance corporal in Sutton who wrote:

I wish I was a woolly worm and had a woolly tummy—
I'd jump into a pot of glue and make my tummy, gummy.

But most of the time, The Fantast published extremely serious, romanticised poetry that stands up quite well today. Youd, J.P. Rathbone, William Harris, and many others of the day contributed much the same sort of writing, and even Americans got into the act. I quote "Conclusion" by Louis Russell Chauvenet, which had also appeared in two American fanzines of the day:

If, in imaginary visions, you
Have come in secret through the shadow's grey
To where the tower's battlemented view
Etches a fragment of the nascent day,
And if at moments I have heard you say,
As though you were no phantom, you could see
In that bright etching one transcendent way
Bridging the chasms of eternity,
Forgive the vain delusion. I have known
At heart how much it angered you that I
Built one strong tower in your sweep of sky

And I will build no more. When viewed alone
The tower seems less strong. Let stone on stone
Dissolve, and let the bright illusion die.

I noticed a recent review of a volume by August Derleth, whose contents are allegedly a sort of collaboration between Lovecraft and him. It is, more probably, a case of flaying a dead horse, a sacrilegious prodding of story material which Lovecraft abandoned as not worth the completion and forgot to destroy. Because as long ago as the very first issue of The Fantast, published in April 1939, a full two decades ago, intelligent people were getting fed up with the practice of capitalising on Lovecraft's reputation by publishers who were trying to make money out of his bad stories. Here's John Burke again:

> "Howard Phillips Lovecraft was, to my mind, the peer of fantasy authors; yet when I see a Lovecraft story in Weird Tales these days I feel disgusted, and reading the story only confirms my belief that it is worthless. Stories that Lovecraft never submitted – or stories that were rejected when he was alive – have suddenly been rooted out and printed, regardless of merit. Odd fragments of his youth, experiments, are given to the public as though they were high class material of the sort only HPL could write. "The Shunned House" was twice rejected by Weird – and rightly so – but upon Lovecraft's death they printed it. Hardly a fitting memorial to the memory of a great man.
>
> "And those dreadful short stories we have been getting lately are beyond endurance. True, every now and then something good turns up – "The Quest of Iranon" for example – but on the whole, stories such as "The Nameless City", "The Truce", and so on, should never be printed — and would never have been printed but for his death."

In the second issue of his fanzine, Youd was the dedicatee of an article by David McIlwain, "How To Write Weird Poetry" Some samples:

> "Now the easiest kind of poetry to write is the modern style — "Vers Libre". It may best be described as prose-poetry, since there is no intricate meter to be adhered to, and no rhymes to be painfully sought or concocted. Instead one just writes down whatever comes into one's head, always remembering to vary the length of the lines a little in order to make it seem as though there is some subtle purpose in them. Be as vague as possible – circumlocution is highly to be commended – as this will gain you fame as a philosopher and thinker. Thus, instead of saying "The sun set", you would say:
> Far in the west,
> Embedded in a sky of deepening purple
> And fanned by fleecy clouds,
> Sank the sun in crimson glory
> Towards the beckoning ebony
> Of Timbuktu.....or words to that effect.
>
> "Notice "sank the sun" is used instead of "the sun sank" because such inversions often make critics raise their hats and henceforth link your name with Shakespeare.
>
> "You must be familiar with mythology...and be able to spout strange and unusual names like an over-energetic drain-pipe. E.g.,
> Down in the forest something stirred. He
> Listened in pain to the hurdy-gurdy.
> sorry, wrong poem, but you get what I mean, don't you? Names such as "Shoggoth", "Naiad", "Baalam", "Wollheim" – horrible though they may be at first sight, have been the fortune of their respective sponsors. If you can write a line of poetry like this —
> The evil Palooka, son of Kaeva-kaeva, the rat,
> Came up from Spraagnor's fiery pit, the brat!
> then your fortune is practically made. Always use a double A in weird names, as this is a custom which it is faataal – sorry – fatal to ignore."

A little later, in the May, 1940 issue, Julian F. Parr published an analogous article on "Hints on How To Write Science Fiction". Under the topic of wording, he said:

> "This is very important. If a system of circumloction is used to such an extent that readers are forced to produce dictionaries to understand one, one will inevitably be proclaimed an anachronistic genius. Such

authors as Smith and Williamson, verbose as they are, could go still further. For instance, the following passage is taken from a mediocre and very short serial printed in the Dark Ages of science fiction:

'"Ten minutes should be enough," he remarked, "but we are in no hurry. It would be just as well to keep them under observation, however, as I want to note the reaction of our scarlet foes to our ministrations." And he signed to the labourer to make another hole about five feet from the ground.'

"You can see from the above how naive the stories of the Dark Days were, as the narrator only used one word of any intricasy in his narration of the event, viz., ministrations. But see the amended passage:

'"Fourteen durogs and two feques should be sufficient," he observed, utilising the duration-meter of the Graks, wherein a curtig is the length of time taken...etc... "But we are not excessively precipitant. It would be extremely espediate to subject them to a critical scrutiny as I require the experience of watching their reactory process to our torvously lethal ministrations." And he motioned to the attendant laborer to construct another perforation approximately five feet above the level of the passageway.'

"This kind of thing not only makes your manuscript look scientific but also dazes the reader and, since writers are paid at the disgustingly commercial rate of so much (and how little it is!) per word, brings in more cash."

I don't want to give the impression that this set of excerpts Tell All the excellencies of The Fantast. I haven't quoted a word of Doug Webster's own wonderful writings, for example. The letter section, Fantast's Follies, was always lengthy, lively, and densely packed with ideas, but it doesn't lend itself to excerpting out of the context. Harry Turner was the cover artist, most of the time, creating mimeographed drawings that look as much like printed linocuts as you're likely to find anywhere. Then there were the several series of satirical nature that went on and on. One of them was reprinted several years ago, intact, "The Road to Fame", and distributed via FAPA. I think that any ambitious fan of 1958 who wants to make people very happy and himself very popular could do worse than to take his mimeograph in hand, borrow a typical issue of The Fantast, and proceed to reprint the whole shebang intact.

Scienti-Snaps

When you read "The Immortal Storm", you get a firm impression that immediately after the collapse of Fantasy Magazine, fandom entered a period during which nothing emerged from the hectographs and mimeographs but invective, broadsides, propaganda, and feud-fare. It was pretty nasty, in truth, at the end of the 1930's, but there were a few fanzines that sailed through fandom's stormy seas with as much regard for the high-breaking waves of feuding and politicking as an ocean line pays to the disturbance that a motorboat kicks up in the surrounding waters, One such publication was Walter Earl Marconette's Scienti-Snaps.

It thrived during the last years of this century's fourth decade, and it was one of the rare instances in which a fanzine really expressed the actual personality of its editor. Walt was as calm, good-natured, and friendly a fan as has ever existed, well-built physically in sharp contrast to the two-dimensional proportions of so many of us, and slow and steady in his motions. He plunged into the troubled waters of fandom from time to time, having no fear of getting his feet wet in these agitated pools, but the waters magically calmed, as a rule, when his presence was felt. He doesn't loom really large as a driving force in the fandom of his day, but it's quite possible that he did more for the field than is generally supposed, simply because he was there, living proof that an intelligent individual could find pleasure in fandom and could contribute to it without sharing in the silly fusses that were shaking up New York City, British fandom, and a variety of other areas.

Scienti-Snaps first consisted of a half-page format, hectographed publication, which was distinctive for the overlapping protective covers of construction paper that were stapled around the fanzine itself. The inevitable handicaps of the hectograph apparently disturbed Walt's desire for neatness and precision, so he converted to a full-page, mimeographed format after the first half dozen issues. The mimeographed issues are quite beautifully done, with a startling resemblance to Skyhook in the general appearance, but they lost the wonderful advantage of Walt's hectographed art work. There has never been anyone like him in fandom, for the ability to create distinctive, self-sufficient decorative illustrations with hectograph pencils. I don't think anyone else ever learned how to get quite the pastel shades that he managed from this intractable medium.

In fact, the hectograph process was the joy and despair of most fans in those days when money was so scarce and fandom so small. Jack Speer was considerably wider-eyed in those clays, and described in the fourth issue of Scienti-Snaps the wonderful things that he had seen when be explored the Washington office of Ditto Duplicators:

> "I was amazed at the extent to which the hectograph of my childhood had developed. There was one mechanism that looked and worked like a mimeograph: turn the crank and out came copies (I understand that the rotary duplicator isn't as hard on the hecto compound as flat reproducing). The jelly for use with these rotary machines was a thin film on a heavy sheet of paper that is supposed to be just as good as the much deeper layers in the pan hecto, This paper hecto ($1 per sheet) can also be used flat; I was shown a $4 film-o-graph which makes the flat duplicating job as simple as possible. However, what was called a "portable" unit (40 some-odd dollars each!) made it even simpler to operate: A housetop-shaped thing fits over the hecto sheet, one side holding the supply of paper. In the other side you insert a paper, turn the crank, which runs a roller across the paper (which meanwhile has mysteriously been laid out on the hecto) to get it flat, then pulls it up and hands it to you.....Ditto still had tray hectos in which the gelatin is a beautiful amber (when new) rather than the traditional green, at $2.75."

The first issue of Scienti-Snaps, incidentally, may mark the only time in the history of fandom that a fanzine also attempted to boost a postage stamp business. "Scienti-Stamp Collectors, Attention!" an advertisement declared. "To all interested in looking over a selection of my fine approvals I will send a nice packet for a dime. Contains big set of 1937 Fr. Equatorial Africa, plus many others." WEM apparently was a philatelist and fan simultaneously, a combined avocation that not even Laney could achieve.

It should not be assumed that Scienti-Snaps was entirely sweetness and light. Dick Wilson had a fanzine review column in the third issue which did not pull punches:

> "Ho, Moskowitz! Have at you! Of all the poorly printed, messy, badly illustrated, hard-to-read ungrammatical, etcetera, ad. infinitum fan journals, Helios is it. .... Cosmic Tales is in a class, and about on a par with Helios, Its format is of the sloppiest. It's illustrations... are, altogether without sufficient exception, quit awful. ... Good articles and stories at times find their way into time magazine, tho the

errors that are typographed into them are enough to cause the tears to stream from the author's eyes. We know from experience."

The late Henry Kuttner, even then among the best prozine authors, still took time to write quite delightful items. "Idle Thoughts on Spinach" in volume 2, number 4 of Scienti-Snaps, was devoted. to spoofing the articles discussing the purpose of science fiction that turned up in every other fanzine in those days. Henry wrote:

> "This business of groping for a purpose, and finding, perhaps, the wrong one, has frightening implications. I remember the distressing case of Belshazzar Weet, a promising intelligent young man of seventeen. "The War of the Worlds" proved his downfall. After finishing that novel he remained for some time in a semi-comatose state, brooding; and eventually decided, to his own satisfaction, what the purpose of "The War of the Worlds" was. As a result, he captured a termite (which he named Daisybelle) and fell passionately in love with the creature. Neglecting his studies, he lavished expensive presents upon the termite, and. spent hours composing odes in her honour. This went on interminably, but Daisybelle was unmoved. She had become infatuated smith a rascally wood-louse named. Edward, who did not return her affections. As a result of this triangle, Daisybelle fell into a decline and died; Mr. Weet committed suicide by precipitating himself from a fearful height on to an ant-hill; and the wood-louse, Edward, went to New York and thereafter vanished. I cannot help but feel that Weet took life somewhat too seriously."

Jack Chapman Miske, one of the most fabulous of all older-generation fans, wrote a two-part biography of Merritt. Some quotations from volume 2, number 6, might be of interest today. Miske is quoting the remarks of Merritt:

> "Argosy paid me probably the highest rate they ever paid any writer, but that is to be expected of one whose mere name is magic. However, let it be made clear; Merritt is willing to write and sell his work to the fantasy publications. There are minor considerations, but they are perfectly reasonable: it was not the later price, however, that made me send my stories to the Argosy, Possibly, unfortunately, I do not have to write for a living. I write solely to please myself, and for those who like to read what I write. The Argosy realised this, and printed my stories without change of a single word, I had, and have, a certain sentimental interest in Argosy. Bob Davis, when he worked as its editor, bought my first yarns. The stories built up an interesting audience, young and old and of all kinds. This response interested me greatly – was a real reward for the labour of writing, for to me it is a labour. I write slowly – or in fits and starts. Sometimes a hundred words in a week; sometimes five thousand. words between ten at night and four in the morning. Sometimes a month will go by without my writing a word. I gave my stories to Argosy solely because of this freedom to write what I wanted to write and because of this audience, which, oddly enough, seems still to be appreciative."

The first anniversary issue of Scienti-Snaps, in February, 1939, contained a queer combination of good and bad prophecy, in the form of an article by James Avery on the burning question of the day, how in the world the nation's science fiction readers could support the flood of new prozines, which had brought eight titles to the news-stands, in comparison with the former three titles:

> "For all this flooding of fantasy it is my own belief that, by the end of 1939, the field will be once more as clear as it was at the beginning of 1937, with perhaps a few improvements in the then existing magazines. And now a prediction that will no doubt startle some, and cause a number of others to shake their heads sagely! If things keep on as they have for the past three months, it wouldn't surprise me a bit if the Honourable Hugo Gernsback will again publish a science fiction magazine as he promised in his editorial in The Science Fiction Critic for June, 1936. Mark my words, if there is the remotest possibility of a dime being made in the fantasy field, Gernsback will re-enter science fiction once more!

Charles R. Tanner, another fellow who was commuting between prodom and fandom in those days, published in volume 2, number 5, a rather ingenious parlay of a parody. It began:

> "You are old, Author William," the Young Fan said.,
> "And your cheques are uncommonly fat,
> "Yet your tales grow more infantile, month after month.
> "Pray what is the reason for that?"
> "In my youth," said the old man, "I wrote pretty tales,
> "Nor gave much attention to slants
> "But they always came back marked rejected, so now
> "I write what the editor wants,"

And if you think that those were the good old days when it was safe to do anything you pleased., as long as it didn't conflict with a written law, we find in the same issue Robert W. Lownes, decrying the fact that freedom to advocate unpopular causes in this country wasn't combined with freedom to take action to back up that advocacy:

> "Advocation will not be too difficult – (although, for example, many people have found themselves very much behind the eight-ball for the simple advocation of birth control. Vested interests concerned.) – but when advocation becomes action (the first step of which is thorough explanation of all points) then you will find censorship and suppression raising their hydra heads in total disregard for our Bill of Rights, Constitution, and. any and every other right the American people are supposed to possess."

Frontier

There's one thing that can be said for the fanzines of the early 1940's: you didn't run much danger of mixing them up in your mind because of their similarities. First issues contained the inevitable apologies for bad reproduction and there was the common factor of the big push for a giant anniversary issue every now and then. But for the most part, the fanzines had distinct personalities, intents and subject matter. For instance, there was a fanzine called Frontier.

My file of the publication contains seven issues, from July 1940 through January 1942. There could have been another issue or two after that which I failed to stash away in the proper place, but I don't think there were many more, because it wasn't long after Pearl Harbour that the editor, Donn Brazier, entered the armed services. He never did reappear in fandom after his hitch in the service, and I don't think that his name has bobbed up in a fanzine for a decade.

Donn was one of the most intently serious fans in history. I recall one perfectly typical instance from our correspondence. This was after he'd entered the armed forces, had been selected for officers' candidate school, and had just won his rank of second lieutenant upon graduating. I certainly hope that this new status of yours won't mean an end to our friendship, I wrote in what I intended to be a joshing tone. Donn wrote back at some length to the effect that he realised the changes in his position in life that had occurred, but he had every intention of still remaining friends with many of the persons that he had known while he was still an enlisted man. From anyone else, it would have been insufferable egotism over a promotion that service men were receiving for no particular reason except the need for commissioned officers to fight the war. From Donn, it was merely an example of the intensity with which he viewed everything that happened to him, as well as everything that he happened to do.

So it was with the first issue of Frontier, which emerged from Donn's Milwaukee home in a rather faintly hectographed format. It announced the formation of the Frontier Society in this heroic manner:

> "The Frontier Society...is composed...of science-fiction and fantasy fans who are interested in science and philosophy, and who have the desire to probe the unknown frontiers of these fields in so far as they are able... The frontiers of science are changing at an accelerated rate. We feel that the time is ripe for a group of fans to devote their energies to the better understanding of this eternal change.
>
> "The Frontier Society is that group, and Frontier is the bulletin dedicated to the dissemination of the society's research into this eternal change in science and philosophy.
>
> "This, then, is our relation to science; and we are not 'just another fan club.' We believe we are a unique effort in the science-fiction world; and there is no tried and true path which we must follow. We have a clear, exciting field ahead of us. We travel through virgin territory.
>
> "Watch us!"

Elsewhere in this first issue, the readers learned how the Frontier Society had its origin. The director was Paul H. Klingbiel, West Bend, Wis., another completely forgotten fan by this time. Paul described at great length in one article his changing opinions about science through high school, and his difficulties when he attempted to discover the identity of the things which science does not know. I would probably have asked my science teacher for a brief outline of this, but Paul did it differently:

> "The answer suddenly emerged in complete detail. I whooped with joy! Why hadn't I thought of it before? Had I not collected a few quotations from books I had read, and did not those quotations, in the final analysis, show what science did not know? Obviously the thing to do was to was to expand this idea. What I needed was not a passive recognition of thought-provoking material, but an active search for such material. Since there was no one book I had found that could tell me what science did not yet know, I would attempt to make such a book myself.
>
> "One year later I proudly pointed to 25 typewritten pages of quotations, all of which told what science did not know about as yet. This collection, which I titled "Think It Over", Volume 1, settled the question completely to my satisfaction. There was still much that science did not know; in fact, it sometimes appeared as though science had only begun. I had not been born too late!"

Paul got a new idea then. For the next year, he collected quotations which cast doubt on the topic of whether science knew anything. He finally decided that "Science may demonstrate, it is true, that absolute truth and reality do exist, but science itself is not that reality and that truth." Finally he and Donn decided to form the Frontier Society, sent letters to the prozines, got publicity in Wonder and Amazing, and. were baffled when Astounding refused to publish anything about their project. They got 13 members in this manner, enough to inspire them to produce the first issue of Frontier.

From this beginning, you can probably understand, might have emerged anything between the level of a Darwin theory and a Degler fan group. With the enthusiasm and seriousness of Brazier and Klingbiel, something important might have come of the organisation, if it hadn't been engaged so completely with science fiction fandom from its start. Some indication of the way science fiction fandom was beginning to ensnare the high-sounding project can be guessed from the first paragraph of the editorial in the second issue. Fans didn't want to buy Frontier; they wanted to trade their own fanzines for it. Donn wrestled mightily with this temptation:

> "It might be suggested that the club would not lose any money if magazines were accepted and passed to all the members. That sounds like a swell co-operation; but if the society ever put such a proposition to the vote, I would be the first to vote against it! Why? 1. Every fan should boost science-fiction and the fans who make it live by supporting them in the fullest extent possible. 2. In my mind's eye I can see other clubs buying one copy of Frontier and letting it satisfy twenty potential subscribers....."

Fannish influences were already creeping into the material for this second issue. A quiz on H.P. Lovecraft, mainly devoted to asking the reader to determine from which stories came brief quotations, could hardly form a part of the high purpose of the publication. But the second issue did contain some items that were more in line with the purpose of the frontier Society. Morris A. Wolf wrestled with several eternal verities in his review of Omar Khayyam's philosophy. Ackerman, writing under the name of Weaver Wright, tried to talk himself out of his own non-belief in life after death by rehashing an old anecdote that his grandmother used to tell him:

> "We assume, for the purpose of the proposition, that frogs are not amphibious but can live only on land. OK. There was a pool of tadpoles. Every so often a tadpole turned up missing. Some there were who said that they were not dead but only had altered form, been reborn in a world beyond the water-top. But that was patently absurd, because how could any t.p. continue to exist without water?
>
> "Time after time tadpoles swore that should the phenomenon of "froghood" ever happen to them they would surely come back to tell the curious other tadpoles all about it. But every t.p. who underwent the metamorphosis found it was cut off completely from its fellows. To return to reveal all was impossible. It was an air-breather now. It no longer could live in its old medium. I suppose we even could admit that frogs could return to their brothers in the puddle, and then – what tad ever would recognise its future self in a frog?"

By the time the third issue had appeared at the end of 1940, the Frontier Society was rejoicing in its possession of 18 members. Aside from the founders, only a few of them are likely to be even vaguely known to today's fandom: Art Widner, Tom Wright, D.B. Thompson, Paul Freehafer, and Rajocz, the fellow in Scranton who took pity on his correspondents by not using his interminable full name. There was a brief article, unsigned, entitled "Deadly Prophesy", which went like this:

> "From the book called "Outwitting Tomorrow" by Harry J. Gardener comes a very unusual coincidence, or is it? In the year l840 it seems that the planets Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction for the first time in the history of the United States. This conjunction in an earth sign (what does that mean?) occurs at 20 year intervals. Starting with 1840, let's see what has happened to the presidents elected in those periods: 1840 — Harrison died in office; 1860 — Lincoln died in office; 1880 — Garfield died in office; 1900 — McKinley died in office; 1920 — Harding died in office; 1940 — ...."

The poor guy didn't fill in the blank because he didn't know what was going to happen.

There was an article by Brazier about the most famous of non-existent books, the Necronomicon, which ended with a quotation from a correspondent that may possess some interest:

> "I have a Catholic boy-friend who is studying for the priesthood. Last summer I showed him the stories which referred to the Necronomicon, etc., and he became just as interested in them as I was. Moreover, he thought he could do something about it. He thought be could find at least a clue to the works at the large religious library at the seminary. Then he happened to think of Dr. Zor, one of the teachers who had travelled in Arabia and could read Arabic, and was the kind to stick his fingers into this type of thing. He wrote to him. The doctor wrote back that he was "pre-emptorily advising him to desist from such

unprofitable browsings". After my friend returned to the seminary he learned that Dr. Zor had died shortly after sending him that letter! Another priest questioned him about this, and soon became sick and was expected not to live!"

By its fourth issue, Frontier had passed from such pious inquiry into the existence of non-existent curses and was a completely mixed up combination of scientific inquiry and fanzine. On the strict fanzine side were such things as an article about Lovecraft by Derleth, an explanation by Clifford Simak of how he writes a science fiction story, and an utterly silly short-short by George Tullis about a guy who spends his whole day looking forward to the great event that will happen that evening: it turns out to be attending a new Boris Karloff movie. However, there were still reports on the progress of the Frontier Society, and an article by Ackerman on the need for an earthwide adoption of Esperanto, and accounts by Hazel I. Shull of Pennsylvania Dutch beliefs. I don't know what to make of an article by our old friend, George Wetzel, who describes and then extrapolates from an alleged "shaft of purest light" that "astonished New Yorkers by extending into the infinite reaches of the heavens from atop the piercing, steel spire of the Chrysler building." He apparently thinks there was such a thing, and goes on to describe how some day we may be able to darken our rooms by plugging in the right kind of lamp. Ackerman predicted that Esperanto would become the auxiliary language of the World State within 50 years, so we don't have too long to wait, considering that about one-third of that temporal distance has already been crossed.

Philip Schumann of Milwaukee had assumed editorship of Frontier in its fifth issue, with Brazier dropping back to the post of associate editor because of lack of time. I think the prize of this issue was a remarkably well-written account of an air raid by Britisher Ron Holmes, entitled "Fritz and His Blitz". It made no pretension at fantasy or frontierism or anything except how one man reacted to a feature of World War Two that we never knew in this country:

"Leisurely and very horribly it came on, nearer and nearer, every moment it was about to touch the ground, but it never did. Then it hit. A blast of air came shrieking along the road, striking me with breathtaking force, then passing on. The ground vibrated from the shock of the explosion - which had taken place about three hundred yards away. A blinding flash had accompanied it, but my forehead was rested on my bent arm as I lay prone with my eyes tightly closed. I never saw the flash, but my harassed nerves knew of its existence. The awareness of the flash seemed to centre about the base of the skull - where it joins the spinal column.

"It was over, a bomb was spent, the plane had passed on and the guns had stopped again. I was unharmed but slightly dazed, avidly listening to the dead silence which followed in the wake of the bomb. The first piece of shrapnel fell upon a distant roof with a crack! which awakened me from my stupor. I leaped to my feet, and....ran for the railway bridge. Succeeding in reaching the safety of its steel top and concrete walls before the worst of the falling pieces began, here I remained until it abated, then ran across the few yards which separated me from my goal. The door opened at my touch.

"When my eyes were accustomed to the bright lights, I found myself confronted by the janitor, and several girls ascending the stairs.

"Hello, Bill," I said, forcing a smile.

"I see he knew you were coming," he replied with a wry grin. I shook my head sadly, and called back as I began to mount the stairs:

"You know, Bill, I don't believe Jerry likes me."

For the third straight issue, frontier got a new editor when Klingbiel took over with the sixth issue. He finally succeeded in getting into print "Some Experiences of a Professional Seeress", an article which had been heralded issue after issue. This was written by Loretta A. Beaslay, who, a footnote explains, is known professionally as Madame Loretta. Madame Loretta seemed to feel about fortune telling approximately the same way that some Christians feel about their religion; there's nothing to all this nonsense but I'd better go to church occasionally, just in case. A few samples:

"In Abilene, Texas, several years ago while telling the fortune of a young Mexican, I suddenly had a very strange hunch that trouble was dogging his footsteps and peering over his shoulder. So I told him, without knowing whether or not he was married or asking a single question, to be very careful over the weekend and not to quarrel with any friends or relatives – especially in-laws, because I could see a fight, jail, lawmen, money spent, and a relative or in-law concerned. I told him the disagreement might be through a dark, middle-aged woman with beautiful eyes and a lot of hair. My client just laughed at me and went out.

> "I thought no more about it until Monday evening, when two more Mexicans came to have readings. They were my first client's friends. He was languishing in Abilene's jail after knifing a man at a dance for talking scandalously about his sister-in-law, who had large beautiful eyes, more hair than most women, and was forty-three years old.
>
> "I built up a nice Mexican trade on the strength of this episode.
>
> "Sometimes I do get strong urgings like this, and what I say at those times invariably comes true, though not always so promptly and drastically.

I'm not quite sure who was editor of the magazine when this seventh and probably last issue appeared. There was a new address on the contents page, and announcement that "Frontier is the bulletin of the Frontier Society and of the recently formed Windy City Wampire Club", but there wasn't any signature or other identification of the writer of the long editorial. Most of the issue was taken up by a lengthy story by one Jack Brandon, entitled "The Devil's Prayerbook" and accompanied by a completely superfluous note that "all rights, including those of quotation, adaptation, translation, cinema, foreign, are reserved by Frontier". There was a brief article about ships that disappear at sea, a review of "The Encyclopaedia of Occult Sciences", a page about Paul Verlaine, and a brief letter column. Quite pathetically buried away as a filler item was a note from one William Hess, who had been one of the members of the Frontier Society:

> "During past months I have steadily lost interest in fictive science. At the present time I am at college, majoring in biological sciences. So you see I get my science, but don't have time to read fiction. I feel that, to prevent my being a dead-weight encumbrance in your society, that I should withdraw from it now. Please accept this as evidence of my withdrawal. Yours sincerely, William Hess.

The poor guy had completely forgotten the original purpose of the Frontier Society and apparently thought it was intended to persuade people to real science fiction. However, he wasn't any more astray from the original intent than the editors. There's no other evidence in this seventh issue that there had ever been a purpose like that outlined in the first few issues. And another fanzine slipped quietly into the oblivion that is disturbed only when an occasional historian or index-compiler unearths fresh evidence that fans rarely keep their mind on what they set out to do.

The Immortal Storm

This instalment of the column will be different. Instead of poking at the corpse of a deceased fanzine, I intend to jab lightly at a publication that in itself is a sort of sarcophagus for ten years of fandom. It's "The Immortal Storm", Sam Moskowitz's history of the first years of fandom.

There are several reasons for the temporary change in subject matter. One reason is imperial decree from the boss of this particular fanzine. Another is the desire to point out the need for more history-writing, as the years pass in such swift profusion. Finally I'd like to suggest changes in the approach to this hypothetical continuation of fandom's history.

"The Immortal Storm" is so unique in fandom that we're apt to forget the fact that it covers only one-third of the history of fandom, from the chronological standpoint. All remarks that follow are based on the 1954 edition of the Atlanta Science Fiction Organisation Press. The history was so long in the writing and so slow in making book form incarnation that it's easy to overlook the giant gap between this final form and the end of the period it covers; a full fifteen years. After a passing glance at the pre-history of fandom, through a sketch of the early professional publications that contained science fiction, "The Immortal Storm" really begins extended coverage of events as fanzine fandom began to emerge in the early 1930's. It concludes at the outbreak of World War Two.

So it's obvious that someone somewhere should start to do something immediately about the chronicles of fandom in the 1940's and 1950's. I respectfully submit the opinion that there is nobody who can do for either decade the accomplishment that Sam achieved for fandom's first ten years. I can think of nobody who was constantly active through either the 40's or 50's, possesses the time and patience to write the history of those years, and has retained, in good order the fifty foot stack of fanzines that would be required for reference purposes. It is true that Sam wasn't active in the first years of the period that he covers; but fandom was so small and its events were so thoroughly reported in the early fanzines that this did not prove to be too serious a handicap. By 1940, fandom was so large and varied that the person who would write its history should have a good memory of conversations and large boxes filled with letters and the patience to ask for information from other survivors of the period, instead of relying on the contents of fanzines. I think that the only way we shall ever obtain a continuation of "The Immortal Storm" with this book's thoroughness and accuracy is by assigning specific aspects of fandom to various people, with an overall editor to compile and align these historians.

Fortunately, fandom seems to be entering into another period of reference work publishing. There are the new edition of the Fancyclopedia, Tucker's revision of The Neofan's Guide, and several bibliographical projects concerned with professional publications. It isn't inconceivable that someone will get ambitious enough to take up the historian's pen where Moskowitz dropped it, either as a determined do-it-yourself writer, or as the co-ordinator whom I've suggested. In that event, I hope that the respect which "The Immortal Storm" has won for many fine qualities doesn't cause the next history to become too slavish an imitation of attitude and principles.

From now on, this article may seem more and more like an attack on Sam Moskowitz as a fan, as a writer, and as a historian. I don't mean it as an attack, but I can see no way of achieving my purpose, other than by concentrating on the flaws of "The Immortal Storm" in some detail, after briefly summarising its excellencies. To my knowledge, nobody has proved that it contains a single inaccuracy of any importance, and that is a claim that few historians could make. Moskowitz is reputed to have the necessary documents to back up every sentence in the book, and his goal of a history of fandom at a time when he was obviously losing more and more of the old-time fannish enthusiasm is a miracle in itself. The old antipathies and feuds from his personal experiences in fandom can be sensed in the book, but they do not cause serious harm to his obvious efforts at impartiality in describing these events. Over and above all its other merits, "The Immortal Storm" is important because it preserves for all time many facts that could have been lost altogether to fandom, as the earliest people in the field drifted out of sight and the tiny circulation publications of the 1930's became more and more difficult to locate.

Please keep all that in mind, while I try to explain my reasons for believing that the next history of fandom should differ completely from "The Immortal Storm". The basic flaw in Sam's idea of history is that it is almost entirely political in a field where politics are frequently evident but always absurd. Partly as an out — growth of this concept of fandom as a power struggle is a subsidiary difficulty: the preconception of the book with certain types of fanning and specific geographical areas of fandom to the neglect of equally important activities and cities.

Obviously, the easiest way to write a history of fandom is to use the same method that is normally adopted to write a history

of a nation or the world: describe the struggles for supremacy, the activities of those who won out, the tactics of those who were defeated. However, I don't believe that it's the right way, because of the basic nature of fans and fandom. To paraphrase
one of Chesterton's remarks, it is quite accurate to consider a fan as a biped, as long as you don't fall into the error of considering fifty fans as a centipede. All through the history of fandom, there have been individuals who formed organisations, sought to run them, helped to break them up, and in general acted in the microcosm of fandom like the politicians of a nation. But here the parallel between fandom and a nation ends. These power-minded people really had no power to achieve. Fans are individualists. They won't be ruled, dictated to, or stamped. They might join organisations, but they continue to act in the same manner after joining as they did before; their characters and habits do not alter. The fans who achieve the presidencies and directorates accomplish the same success as the celebrated flies who conquer the fly — paper. They have spent many hours, raised their blood pressures, and made enemies to achieve an accomplishment that is nothing but a list of titles and entombment in a work like "The Immortal Storm". The whole history of fandom from the International Scientific Association to the World Science Fiction Society proves it. The only organisations that have more concrete existence than a campaign platform are those which have been created to relieve an existing need: a central distribution point for fanzines, like FAPA, or someone to accept contributions for bringing a fan across the ocean, like TAFF. Fans refuse to be governed. The politicians of fandom may be getting valuable practice for later activities in the great outside world. That's the best that can be said for their investment in time and energy.

Let's take New Fandom as an example. It is mentioned on page 54 of the 252 pages of this book. It does not bob up until page 174, which means that it appears on more than half of the final pages of the volume. Whole chapters are devoted to it. Moskowitz obviously worked hard on New Fandom, took a great interest in it. But if I were given the task of assessing the amount of space that this organisation should receive in a 252 page history of fandom in the 1930's, I would award it two medium-sized paragraphs, no more. It was purely a political organisation, whatever its noble purposes. Fandom in the 1940s was the same as it would have been if New Fandom had never existed; fandom of the 1930's had no evidence of its passing aside from a small stack of fanzines and much bitter wrangling.

I think that it is the essentially political viewpoint of the book that caused its dramatic, super — charged style of writing to receive so much criticism. Take a paragraph like this one:

> "Upon reading such words Donald Wollheim probably felt them to be stirrings of a credo similar to Michelism but stated in more cautious terms. He felt, too, it would seem, that this British periodical did not represent merely fertile ground, but a crop soon ready to be harvested; so, in one of the most daring, self — indicting and honest articles of his career, Wollheim pulled the cloak away from the body of Michelism and revealed it in completely positive terms....."

This kind of description might be justified if it were applied to the real struggles that went on in fandom. Jack Speer's attempt to remain active in fandom after he annihilated a telephone pole in Connecticut with his automobile or Ray Bradbury's dogged persistence to pull himself up from a fanzine writer to a serious professional writer were typical things that might merit the treatment. But John B. Michel was a sickly teenage boy who had read a few books and had emitted a philosophy that was as hopelessly unrealistic as that of Claude Degler. I admire Degler more than I do Michel, because the former had enough belief in himself to go out and personally campaign for his ideas, crazy as they may have been. To dignify at this late date Michel with such a serious attitude is to be more royalist than the king.

There is another difficulty with the political viewpoint on fandom. Almost inevitably, it causes the writer to magnify the events in which he had personal connection, and to skim lightly over the power struggles in which he had less involvement. The index to "The Immortal Storm" gives damning evidence of the situation. Entries for New York City and for the organisations of its various boroughs occupy perhaps eight times the space required to list the references to Los Angeles. Yet by any stand– point that I have been able to imagine, Los Angeles meant more to fandom at the time of these events and had a more lasting influence on the fandom that followed. Even in the late 1930's, Cincinnati had an active fandom, but in "The Immortal Storm" you will find only one reference to the Ohio city in the index. That reference is there because a Cincinnati fan attended a meeting in New York. A complete non — entity, Mario Racic, receives twice the attention given to either Bob Bloch or Henry Kuttner. He lives in New York; they didn't.

Or consider the early years of FAPA. Even in 1945, when "The Immortal Storm" began its serialisation in The Fantasy Commentator, it must have been evident that FAPA's first years were important for two things. The organisation quickly became something that distributed magazines that were specifically produced for it, rather than fulfilling Wollheim's dream of a mechanism for avoiding the fuss and bother of mailing lists for all general fanzines. And FAPA members promptly discovered that they liked to talk in their publications about things that were not directly associated, with science fiction and fandom. But you will look in vain in "The Immortal Storm" for summaries of the discussions that sprang up in the organisation's publications and the special innovations that were found in its bundles. Instead, you will read endless accounts that sound like a famous Lewis Carroll poem, such as:

> "The opening gun was Madle's small FAPA periodical The Meteor. This carried 'A Reply to Donald A. Wollheim' in whose first paragraph Madle labelled Wollheim 'a liar'. He denied authorship of the 'Panparade' burlesque he had been accused of writing. He indicted Wollheim for using the 'Fascist club' against Speer after he had stated at the campaign's 'opening that 'political views of the candidates have no right to be taken into consideration', and intimated that this pronouncement had been designed by Wollheim to prevent charges of being a communist levelled at him. Madle then revealed that in the penultimate election, English fan J. Michael Rosenblum had never voted. Further, he claimed that the one who had cast the deciding vote for vice — president was Harry Dockweiler, a friend of Wollheim's, who was not qualified to take part in the election at that time."

It's a great temptation to suggest that this history should have taken into consideration the events that followed the time at which it cuts off. Sam's readers were not living in a vacuum. They knew that Ray Bradbury became the most spectacular fan for his climb to professional writing. Ray did not justify any more space than he did on the basis of what he did up to 1939; but I don't think it would have complicated materially the task of verifying this book to pay more attention to him for what came after 1939, both for his own sake and for the manner in which he typified the entire great fan-to-pro movement of the 1940's.

At this point, we have come to the task of deciding what to emphasise if more fan history volumes are to be produced.

For one thing, it would be desirable to make it easier for a non — participant in the years involved to read the history. The participants in fandom appear in "The Immortal Storm" pretty much as they did in fandom itself: gradually, at first receiving a bare mention here and there, slowly working their way to prominence. Only in the case of a few particularly titanic personalities are we given a direct, concentrated, look at the individual. It seems to me that much more attention should be paid in the next histories to describing the individuals who form the cast: something of their family and environment, vocation and education, economic status when relevant, and what happened to them after they left fandom. Occasionally, Moskowitz does it, like this:

> "Sykora first appeared on the scene during the latter days of the Scienceers. Indeed, after the dissolution of this group he approached Glasser and Unger early in 1934 in an unsuccessful attempt to bring about its revival. To understand him best, it must be realised that William Sykora was an old-time science fictionist. He epitomised the Gernsback ideal that all readers of the genre should consider the advancement of science their serious aim. He had amassed a solid scientific background, and his cellar boasted a well-equipped laboratory. Beside an excellent science fiction collection rested an imposing assemblage of scientific tombs. Several short articles by him had appeared in Science and Mechanics, including 'A Scientific Paradox', a prize-winning entry in a contest sponsored by this magazine. He garnered yet another prize in a similar contest published in Mechanics and Handicraft. Undoubtedly he was a person of intelligence and capability."

But too often, a person who wasn't active in fandom of the 1930's cannot even guess at the age of this or that person referred to in the book.

"The Immortal Storm" deals almost exclusively with fanzine fandom, a defect which must be remedied if more histories are to be written. It does not contain a mention of such an important venture as Richard Frank's booklet series, which put into professionally printed form such fantasies as "Three Lines of Old French" and "The Thing in the Cellar". The semi-success of this was a clear forerunner of more ambitious ventures in the 1940's when fans went into the book-publishing field. R. Swisher is mentioned three times in "The Immortal Storm" but without reference to his importance as one of fandom's first indexing giants; he was the first to produce a thorough fanzine index, the ancestor of the one that Bob Pavlat is continuing today. Similarly, "The immortal Storm" ignores almost all bibliographical work that was being done by fans, although the same fans may bob up because they were involved in power politics. Collecting fandom receives short shrift, even though the changing habits of fans as collectors and the different methods that they adopted to acquire their treasures as the years progressed could fill many interesting chapters. Necessarily, "The Immortal Storm" contained the success story of Charles D. Hornig. But the line between fandom and professionaldom in the 1930's was not as great as we may think today. Sam was obviously aware of this. At one point he writes:

> "Operating behind the scenes during these times were private literary organisations of whose existence fandom at large was scarcely aware. One such group was the Calem Club of New York City, whose members included H.C. Koenig, H.P. Lovecraft, Frank Bellmap Long, Jr., F. Morton, Samuel Loveman and others, all drawn together through a mutual interest in fantasy. This was actually the nucleus of the Lovecraft circle with an ever-widening number of adherents throughout the country in the persons of such

men as E. Hoffmann Price, Farnsworth Wright, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner and. August Derleth, becoming intimates who knew Lovecraft best. For a long time this circle held its meetings, somewhat aloof from fandom at large, and yet, possessing common cause with it, working in much the same manner. It was not until 1939, in fact, that its existence was expressly revealed. A similar organisation calling itself The Outsiders Club was subsequently discovered to have been operating in Washington, D.C."

The fact that people like Koenig and Kuttner were not fans in Sam's circle should be no reason for slighting them.

Finally, the most difficult thing of all might be to remember to put into the histories the things that are so self — evident that the historian may not think of them. I don't think that "The Immortal Storm" lists anywhere the facts about the economies of fanzine production in the 1930's. But to understand why early fanzines were small and hectographed, it is necessary to know
how much hectograph goo and mimeograph stencils and different types of paper cost before World War Two, and how much money the majority of fans received in their pay cheque each week. How did fans wander into fandom during the first decade of fandom? Through letter columns, conferences, or local club meetings? How many letters would a leading fan of the period receive and write in a week? These things sound trivial, if you lived through the period. But the fan world has changed so much since 1939 that today's younger fans might be quite startled at who facts that such inquiries would produce.

A guide to pronunciation of fannish terms and proper names is a must for future histories. Look at some of the names that are found in the index of "The Immortal Storm", and try to pronounce them with certainty that you have the long and short vowels at the proper spot and the accents on the proper syllables: Goudket, Jacobi, Kosow, Rimel, Anger and Boosel.

There is a subsidiary question of what to leave out. There are things in "The Immortal Storm" that could be quite damaging to wives and children of certain fans of the time, because of the political organisations in which the fans were active. Here again I think that the political approach to fandom has been injurious to the history; a more rounded look at fandom would bring forth so much new material that there wouldn't be room to tell too much about these subsidiary indiscretions of the fans. The problem will increase as the 1940's are chronicled; fans weren't as fond of the Communist organisations in that decade, but more of them got sent to jail for various crimes.

I just wish that "The Immortal Storm" were written in such a manner as to make the Fancyclopedia and the need of an old-time fan to answer your questions, unnecessary.

Fancyclopedia I (revisited)

All fandom was plunged into war in a very real sense in 1944, when scores of prominent fans were in the services, many others were too busy with high-paying jobs to do much fanning, and nobody could be sure that the end of the conflict was only a year in the future. It was the least likely of all times for the biggest fannish research project up to then to come into existence: the Fancyclopedia, in its original version.

The Fancyclopedia II has received much attention during the nine months since its release. But few fans who are active today possess copies of that original Fancyclopedia. It might be instructive to recall some of the facts about the publication.

The vital statistics, first of all, because the Fancycle II does not define itself and it's hard to dig up the facts about the original volume without owning a copy. It contained 97 pages of definitions, not counting the title page, the introductory page, a final page that was devoted to errata and credits, or the covers. The covers consisted of one wraparound sheet of some type of heavy, pebbled and quite flexible substance. Mine was red, with silver stamping bearing a startling combination of names: John Bristol (Speer's first two names), NFFF, LASFS, and Forrest J Ackerman. The pages in my copy are a dark buff hue, and those to the front of the book have either faded into a strangulation blue tinge or didn't match the rest of the pages to begin with.

The people who put out the first Fancyclopedia were so impressed by the magnitude of their own accomplishment that they put down all sorts of little statistics. It took 30 days to produce the publication, only ten days less than God required to drown the world, but that doesn't count the two years that Speer put into research and writing. It was estimated that it would have taken one tireless fan five days of uninterrupted 24-hour work to do the mimeographing, slipsheeting, deslipping and assembling. This doesn't count the stencilling job, which Speer did by himself. Those who speak lightly of Daugherty projects may have forgotten that he put in the third highest total of time on the production job, topped only by Ackerman and Morojo, nearly three times as much time as Laney devoted to the work. Another group that often receives less than solemn emotions, the NFFF, had a hand in the job. The introduction explains:

> "This was originally planned as Full Length Articles Number Three: Some Beginnings on an Encyclopedic Dictionary of Fandom. In its present form it was an NFFF project, the editor and publisher being brought together through the agency of the NFFF. The manuscript was prepared by John A. Bristol, and submitted to the Futurians, Ackerman, Rothman and Tucker for corrections and additions; it was then returned to Bristol who stencilled it, incorporating many of the suggested changes, and bringing the information down to the end of 1943."

The original Fancyclopedia had an edition of 250 copies, compared with the 450 copies that are cited on the first page of Eney's later work. And it had justified margins throughout, the only challenge that Eney ran away from when putting out his modern version of the work.

I've always felt that the finest thing that happened to the original Fancyclopedia was Speer's decision to make it a Johnsonian type of reference volume, one that frankly and deliberately sets out to reflect the writer's own outlook on life instead of pretending to be a publication that has just rolled down the mountain after being completed by some impartial deity with his head in the clouds. The prejudices and interests that the Speer personality manifests are there without apology or efforts to represent some kind of cosmically significant statements. Better yet, Speer has always been a much finer humorist than he's given credit for being. This first Fancycle is boobytrapped with wonderful remarks that the casual or careless reader often runs right past without realising how brilliant they are. Under correspondence, for instance, we read: "Unless be is a regular correspondent and knows that you take longer to reply, a fan's letter should be answered or at least acknowledged by postcard within two months." A dutiful but humourless approach to the Fancyclopedia could have resulted in a volume so dry and grim that nobody would have remembered it long enough to update it fifteen years later.

And it's a curious thing about this distinctive Fancyclopedia style. Speer said somewhere recently that he doesn't believe himself capable of doing that particular type of writing nowadays. But by some empathy that reached out over the years, aided no doubt by frequent reference to the Speer volume, Eney caught the knack of writing in exactly this vein. As a result, it's remarkably hard to be sure where Speer stops and Eney starts in the second edition. In the definition of drinking, for instance, it's almost all Speer in the second edition, yet the single sentence that Eney added fits imperceptibly into the rhythm and general style: "Central states fen favour the amber nectar of the grain, such as Grain Belt premium, the official brew of the old MFS; inhabitants of the decadent cities of the coast also favour the grape." Occasionally, I think that Eney

has done a better job of choosing the mot juste. In the aforementioned article on correspondence, the use of Splfrsk as a complimentary close to a letter was termed by Juffus an amazing goodbye; Eney altered that for the better to exotic goodbye. However, I imagine that the score is just about even. Many of Speer's delightful sentences were so perfect that Eney didn't disturb them. The definition of quibbling remains unchanged, as "What you accuse your opponent of doing when it's you that's doing it."

Elsewhere, in an article intended for publication by Lynn Hickman, I have pointed out the regret that I feel because some things in the original Fancyc1opedia were dropped in the Eney volume, to keep the latter down to a workable size. So I won't go into that again, except to point out that there is a small never-never land between the two volumes covered by neither. The Knanves, for instance, will be found in neither the first nor second Fancycle. I think they came too late for Speer, and Eney was producing the second edition by the time that I informed him how the absentmindedness of a fan using a lettering guide caused the name to come into being.

There was one major deficiency in the Speer volume which Eney couldn't have been expected to rectify in the second edition of the Fancycle, without Speer's own research notes. I think that Juffus could have made his project more valuable in several ways, by listing source materials. A few lines after each major entry, to tell where you can read more about that matter, would have served several purposes. It would have enabled future historians to locate the publications from which much of Speer's own information must have come, for amplification or verification of more extended writings about these phases of fandom. It might have encouraged the very slow market for old fanzines. There's comparatively little buying and selling in the back-issue fanzine mart, and this may be caused to some extent by the fact that no reference works show which issues of what fanzines contain material of permanent worth. And it would have enabled us today to distinguish between the statements in the Fancycle which came to Juffus through conversation or correspondence, and those that he took from printed sources. I don't imagine that much can be done about the situation at this late date. Speer is hardly likely to have retained his notes, nobody has been that brave enough to try to index fanzines by subject matter, and since 1944 it has become almost impossible to find someone who has a fairly complete set of really early fanzines for sale.

One other apparent defect of the Fancyclopedia's original form was undoubtedly intentional on Speer's part, to prevent it from turning into a dictionary instead of a reference book. It failed to contain the full listings of pseudonyms, pet names, and nicknames that the ideal fan reference volume should posses. It did a more thorough job with pet names and pseudonyms than the second edition, partly I imagine because its two-column format encouraged the inclusion of extremely brief entries. But fandom is badly in need of such a compilation. Determining who wrote what in the older fanzines is increasingly difficult; leafing through old issues of Spaceways recently, I found myself unable to remember the identity of the real author of several items which I was certain were not printed under the true author's name. Some fan with a bit of spare time could do worse than go through the original Fancyclopodia and cull out all the listings of this sort that were omitted from the second edition, and perhaps publish them after asking politely for permission from Speer, since the thing is still covered by copyright. It would be a start, although much work would remain. Neither Speer nor Eney has a listing under Main-iac, for instance, although this is a title which has descended from one fan to another, from Avery, through Cox, to Hamlin.

The most curious thing about the Fancyclopedia and its success, in my opinion, is this: Nobody seems to have even thought about doing the logical thing, and issuing a Procyclopedia. Speer occasionally inserted an item with next to no relation to fandom, such as a definition of Golden Atom tales, for no apparent reason. It's going to be another decade at least before we need a completely new edition of the Fancyclopedia. Anyone who wants to share the glory of the egoboo that went to Speer as a pioneer research publisher could do worse than to produce a reference book about the prozines and related types of commercial fantasy and science fiction. If someone tries to do something about the idea, I hope that the result is as amusing, literate and well-balanced as the Fancyclopedia.

Al Ashley

Sometimes it's hard to remember that the great names of the world at one time may have been quite different. For all we know, Paul Revere may have fallen regularly from his horse and lost his way down vague New England roads before he became sufficiently experienced to make that notorious night-time gallop to warn citizens that those people from across the Atlantic weren't all TAFF winners. Doctor Faustus probably went through a certain stage of life when he didn't need to raise the devil to seduce a blonde German girl. Even Paul Bunyan must have been a little boy at one time. Keeping this in mind, maybe you'll take my word for the fact that there was an Al Ashley before Charles Burbee made him famous.

Burbee's chronicles in various insurgent publications have made Al Ashley a legend. Burbee portrayed Al as an individual with unjustified egotism, given to stupid remarks. But was this the ***real*** Al Ashley? For all I know, in person Al may have been the incomplete individual who appears in the Burbee anecdotes. My knowledge of him is based solely on one telephone conversation, a number of letters and postal cards, and a thick stack of Ashley's publications, plus an imposing assortment of fanzines of the day that contained Ashley contributions. But fandom as a whole may have been blinded by the brilliance of Burb's characterisation. The real Al Ashley, at least on paper, was one of the most intelligent, fun-to-read, and talented people who has ever been in fandom.

Al Ashley didn't even always live in Los Angeles. The best years of Al's fan life were spent in Battle Creek, Mich. It is now a ghost city, as far as fandom is concerned, but during World War Two, it was one of the biggest fan cities in the world. Al was then married to Abby Lu, who was also active in fandom. Also living there were Walt Liebscher, E. Everett Evans, and Jack Wiedenbeck, plus several fringe fans and professionals. Battle Creek even had a house devoted solely to science fiction fans, known as the Slan Shack, which Al purchased in the summer of 1943. They lived there until most of them moved to Los Angeles. The Battle Creek fans were the core of ASP, the Associated Slan Press, which appeared on many of the best fanzines of the day. The emblem depicted an asp, sitting on what might be mistaken for a sunny rock, but was actually intended to be an outstanding part of Cleopatra's anatomy.

It's pretty hard to think of anything that could be done in the fandom of the 1940's that Al didn't do. He was a leader in FAPA's first glorious period, turning up in every mailing for years with En Garde, holding all four offices, and setting an activity record that few persons excelled until later years. He was a major part of Nova, a general fanzine that didn't last too long but was spectacular while it survived. He bobbed up at most of the conferences and conclaves that were staged in the Midwestern and Eastern parts of the nation during the war years, had a fuss with Claude Degler, contributed to almost every fanzine of any repute, collected books and magazines in the old-fashioned way, and I seem to recall that he even dabbled in business as a fantasy book dealer for a while. And in all those activities, there were no evidences of the absurdities that Burbee has related, with two possible exceptions.

One exception was the fact that this highly intelligent person, a leader in fandom, seemingly capable of achieving anything to which he set himself, earned his living in the most unexpected fashion; he drove a taxi cab. I was told by someone or other, not Ashley, that he chose this vocation deliberately, as one that would require no mental exertion on the routine task of earning a living, in order to spare his thinking processes for the more interesting things in life.

The other exception was Al's pet project, Slan Centre. This was supposed to be something like a lot of Slan Shacks, but bearing the same relationship to a Slan Shack as a small town does to a single country house. There were two unfortunate things about the proposal which may have caused many fans to consider the project a preview of the qualities in Ashley that Burb later immortalised. The use of slan in the title caused some persons to think that Ashley was seriously convinced that fans were slans. And it was just about this time that Degler was talking about his wilderness settlement in the Ozarks where fans would make love and rise above humanity. It may have been difficult to determine whether the Ashley or the Degler proposal was the parody of the other. But the misconceptions were the fault of fans who read hurriedly or incompletely. Al once wrote on the fans-are-slans topic a statement much like the relevant paragraph by Speer in the Fancyclopedia. Al said:

> "We have never entertained any notion that fen are the cream of this planet's intellectual crop. The average fan enjoys intellectual superiority over the average man. But that only means that as a select group we excel the human average. No effort would be needed to find other select groups which surpass the fen intellectually."

The half-serious use of slan, Al continued, was "a looser and more general sense" than the original meaning. He intended it to refer to such fannish characteristics as interest in fantasy, time-binding ability, interest in many things, ability

to express oneself in print, and the strong feeling of kinship between fans.

Speer, I might add, had written from his testing observations

> "Practically all fans fell into the upper one-quarter of the population in intelligence, and the average is within the top ten percent. Fen in the Army went up quickly."

A lengthy article on the Slan Centre project that Al wrote in 1943 convinces me that the idea is not inherently foolish. Fans can get along well with one another in such instances as Berkeley, and there is no intrinsic reason why fans should not make up the population of a city block, if they can run a household. Ashley suggested a location on the outskirts of a large city which would contain "a collection of adjacent individual dwellings sprinkled with a few apartment structures and with a large communal building." Choice of the site would be made with an eye to the city's current fan population, to permit some of the city's current fan population, to permit some of the centre's inhabitants to avoid a drastic break with familiar surroundings. And it should be understood that this proposal was taken very seriously by level-headed fans, at the time it was made. Art Widner, for instance, wanted immediate appointment of a treasurer who would bank weekly or monthly deposits by prospective inhabitants, as a starter towards construction which couldn't start until after the war. One other point: the proposal to erect a city block of buildings did not sound as crazy in 1943 as it does in 1959. It was just at this time that war jobs were producing inflated salaries, two or three times as much as they had ever earned before the war, and soldier fans who had no outlet for their salaries except liquor and women could visualise construction operations that would be paid for after a few years' scrimping.

What kind of a man was Al Ashley in the pre-Burbee era? He once admitted in print that he possessed three physical quirks. He was quite interested in his toe-nails on the little toe of each foot, because they were so vestigial that they could hardly be found by the closest examination. He had four nipples, instead of the normal masculine quota; the second set were smaller but surrounded by the characteristic tuft of hair, and were located about four inches below the standard pair. Finally, he said

> "My skin is loose, very thick, and very elastic. Almost anyplace on my arms, legs, or torso, I can pinch onto it and pull it out at right angles for two to four inches. It is also very resistant to abrasions."

Politically, Al once described himself as a rugged individualist, detailing at considerable length the basis for his statement. He possessed the dissatisfaction so common to fans even today with the general national craving for security at all costs:

> "I look askance at exhortations to relinquish some of my individual liberty and co-operation for the general good of all mankind....When asked to give up personal freedom in return for dazzling promises of security and increased comfort, I recall the old saying; 'All that glitters....' I sit down and reason things out, and I come to realise that the only real security comes from within the individual, and is governed by his ability, and capacity to adapt himself to his environment. Yet that individual ability is worthless without freedom to exercise it. Nature gave us an urge, and set each of us on our own road to its satisfaction. That need for satisfaction is tied with our whole psychology, and at least some measure of its attainment is necessary to happiness. Are we then to stand idly by and applaud the fireworks which a few of our fellows blow up the road before us? Are we to stupidly give up our own chances and become one of the submissive multitude harnessed to the more speedy attachment of satisfaction by a few?... Suppose we demand a government that is truly devoted to guaranteeing each of us an equal chance, and the maximum freedom to make the most of it. Wouldn't that be better than letting ourselves be blinded by the razzle-dazzle smile of so-called 'Progressivism'? Wouldn't that be better than 'progressing' right away from individual liberty into a nice little tight compartment with lots and lots of security — security from ever having to worry about doing anything except what we're told? I still believe that the least governed are the best governed. I want to remain free to spend my life making the most of it; not in the frustration of a tight little cell thoughtfully provided by some brand of 'managed society.'"

Al is today a completely staid and conservative person, I understand. Evidence of this can be found in preview form in his fanzine writings. For instance, he was strongly moved to comment whenever unions were the topic. He said he would support any union that "is devoted solely to preventing industry or capital from exploiting labour, and not doing so merely so it can do the exploiting itself", but he gave the strong impression that he didn't believe such a critter existed.

He was half-scornful, half-fearful of drink, I suspect. In any event, he claimed that he rarely drank. He didn't even like the extremity implicit in the philosophy of optimism. Once he told E. Everett Evans:

> "There are some who aren't afraid to look right into the face of reality. There are some who endeavour to

> form their judgements and opinions from as careful an analysis as possible of the available data. They prefer to make their observations with eyes unclouded by rainbow spectacles. And, strangely to the faith-ridden optimists of the world, they discover that the observable data indicates that many things do not happen for the best. Facts happen to be what they are - not what they might appear to obscured vision."

The excerpts that I've quoted might serve as evidence on the merits of Ashley's style of writing. The best way to describe it might be as an anonymous style. It is the same kind of prose that you might expect to find on the editorial page of a newspaper or in a magazine designed to simplify complex subjects for semi-informed readers. It isn't an individual kind of writing, and it would be impossible to identify an Ashley article or letter solely by the quirks of style that make distinctive the prose of many fans. On the other hand, Ashley had the ability to write concisely, he used good grammar, spelled correctly, and he was notoriously free from bad habits of syntax.

In fact, the one thing that make Al's magazines instantly identifiable was the front cover. It is hard to determine how the responsibility for those covers was divided between him and Jack Wiedenback. Jack was the artist in Slan Shack, but on one occasion when he wasn't available, Al did the cover, and it is almost indistinguishable in general appearance from Jack's work, aside from confinement to a single colour. The cover process was a kind of silk-screening that has not reappeared in fandom since Al stopped publishing. The colours were by accident or design just a trifle varied from pure greens, blues, reds and greys, giving quite distinctive an appearance.

It's hard to say how well an Ashley anthology would be received, after all these years and after the transmogrification of his character. Almost all his work for FAPA was ephemeral in theme, depending for full understanding on knowledge of what had gone before and what surrounded it in the mailings. However, a scattered item or two might be worth publication again at this late state. Al once made an impassioned plea for the substitution of tem for fan as the general description of us critters. It's worth reading for the thoroughness with which he worked out its possibilities, even if you don't like its derivation: from the Latin tempus, as a symbol of the time-binding ability of science fiction enthusiasts. Also suitable for reprinting would be "The Little Man Who Wasn't There", because of its epitomising quality, its faithful explanation of the plight that most of us have suffered at one time or another, when a fan comes calling and shown no signs of saying goodbye. This was the chronicle of Degler's attempt to attend the 1943 Michicon at Slan Shack.

As an artist, Al had no particular personality, either. He did exhibit a firmness of line and a peculiar preference for tiny drawings that consumed just a small area and occupied that square completely; his work was good in contrast to the extremely low level of fan art that prevailed at the time. I don't remember that he did much poetry. His fiction was probably his weakest point, usually consisting of a very brief story that existed solely for some kind of jolting surprise in the last line. A sample was the one-pager in Walt Liebscher's Chanticlear; which ended: "Disgustedly, at last, with her lack of faith, the other toadstool got up and slowly walked away." Al was very skilful at plucking from the dullest-appearing volumes or ancient magazines passages that appealed for their quaintness or unexpected appositeness to the current situation or times.

I imagine that any reasonably objective fan would have ranked Al Ashley among the top 25 fans of the time during a period of at least three years in the early 1940's. He had few real enemies while he was in Battle Creek, and at a distance, he imparted a quality of capability at handling any situation, a take-charge ability, and clear-headed sanity that were quite rate in fandom during those hectic days, when maturity was mostly gone to war. I don't pretend to know what caused him to drop out of fandom after the move to Los Angeles, and I don't know if Al Ashley — the Al Ashley that Burbee describes — is a man who has changed character or whose true character has come to light or a figment of the Burb imagination. But I wish there were more people in fandom today who possess the qualities in letters and fanzines that Al Ashley had during those halcyon years.

Ah! Sweet Idiocy!

Very often, today's fan is badly disappointed when he finally holds in his hands at last a copy of some famous fan publication o the past. I've heard about the disillusionment with Spaceways from contemporary fans who can't figure out why it used to win first place in polls during World War Two. Quandry was recently pooh-poohed as a badly overrated fanzine, by a fan who hadn't been active during its existence. Undoubtedly, every new fan who sees for the first time a copy of "The Enchanted Duplicator" must fight to conceal to himself or others the disappointment that he experiences to find this scrawny and slightly inky thin booklet is the famed Willis production. There must be several causes for such reactions. In fandom as in other phases of life, too big a build-up is damaging to the topic; in imagination the unknown and desired object takes on proportions and qualities it couldn't hope to possess in actuality. Then there's the zeitgeist factor. Today's fan can't see the famous publication of the past through yesterday's eyes. There is also a certain amount of general upgrading in the average appearance and literary quality of fan publications as the years pass. The publication that was outstanding of a couple of decades ago is closer to the average of excellence today.

All this leads up to the fact that you had better resign yourself to this chilling fact: you're going to be disappointed, if you have never seen "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!", have heard much about it, and are destined someday to put your very own eyetracks on the famed Laney memoirs. This disappointment won't last very long, once you begin to read. But you'd better be prepared for a letdown, if you have thought of this one-shot as something glittering and sublime in appearance. There is nothing in it but typing — no illustrations, no lettering guides or hand drawn headings. It is mimeographed in legible but erratic style on a poor grade paper that is turning brown from the edges inwards, even though my copy has been kept in a light-tight envelope down through the years. There are no covers and there are some typing errors and badly corrected strikeovers. But all those dreary details are forgotten, after you've ploughed through the rather tiresome four-page preamble, and immerse yourself in the account of what Laney did in fandom.

"Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" got its major distribution through FAPA. The first 72 of its 129 pages were distributed in the spring of 1958 mailing, and the remainder in the summer mailing of the same year. Later, Laney sold some additional copies to non-FAPA members. I don't know if there's any truth to the legend that he never possessed a stapled copy of his fan memoirs.

If your knowledge of fan history from this era shortly after the first atom bombs is shaky, you might assume some wrong things about "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" It is now the final summing up of Laney's fan activities. He remained on the fringes of fandom for a half-dozen years after writing it, kept in contact with a few individuals for another year or two after that. Some of his most exciting FAPA hassles, for instance, occurred after the memoirs appeared. Neither is this something startlingly new and original that Laney introduced to fandom. He was following a hallowed tradition which most fans obeyed at this particular time: when you think you've had it in fandom, do something spectacular to call attention to your gafiation. Often this took the form of a cynical and bitter letter to this or that fanzine, or an article blasting all fandom as a useless or dangerous institution. But there was a more direct and specific predecessor to Laney's mammoth article. This was "Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan" which T. Bruce Yerke had begun to distribute in FAPA in 1944. It was never completed, but it resembled strikingly the attitudes and general purposes of "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" Laney undoubtedly had this as an either conscious or subconscious influence, when he sat down to cut stencils in the same city, writing about many of the same individuals whom Yerke had been concerned with.

Laney's stated reason for his magnum opus can be found in the preamble:

> "It occurred to me that if I here to start setting down my recollections it might help my self-analysis, would certainly give me something to keep me at home and away from money-spending temptations.... And it always had seemed silly to me to write anything on paper when it is just as easy to put it in stencils."

This may seem to be the first use of a philosophy that has been reiterated endlessly in fanzines since then: when in doubt, use a stencil. Originally, Laney and Ackerman planned to publish the memoirs with Fantasy Foundation money, putting the profits from the sale of copies back into that organisation. a series of personality clashes in Los Angeles kept this from occurring. In the end, with symbolism of frightening complexity, Laney traded his copy of "The Outsider and Others" for Al Ashley's mimeograph, and Laney and Burbee became the publishers.

Despite the volume's fame, no fan has seriously toyed with the idea of reprinting it. It is so long that even with elite type, it would be an enormous amount of work. Moreover, Laney possessed a magical immunity from libel action, and it

isn't likely that any reprinter would fare so well. Laney names names in many narrations about matters which would undoubtedly have caused lawsuits to rain on the head of any fan who had less ability at striking back at enemies with the typewriter. In other places, he does not identify his topic but gives enough detail for anyone to deduce who was meant, and such circumstances are normally meant for the courts too. Even so, "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" is packed tightly with long sections which are sheer delight to read and absolutely safe to reprint. I would guess that it could be boiled down to a 50-page reprint version that would be much milder but still agreeable, by skipping the actionable portions and the duller blow-by-blow accounts of fan politics in Los Angeles.

Particularly valuable are the little word sketches of almost everyone who did anything in Los Angeles fandom during the 1940's. You'll find nothing like them anywhere else. Typical is the one about Morojo:

> "She is very short, and in my opinion, very pretty. Since she has listed it publicly, I'll mention in passing that she is much older than most of the club members, having been born in 1904. She has led a fairly tough life, has been married and divorced twice, and the scrabble of raising a strapping son and supporting herself has left her singularly without the ability to enjoy herself freely and casually, though others enjoy her company tremendously. Her chief interest in the club was her interest with Forrest J Ackerman, with whom she kept company for several years, and I hope he fully recognises the extent of her services to him — keeping the club on a smooth financial keel throughout most of her membership, doing most of the drudgery of VOM and other Ackerman projects, and keeping the wolves from yapping about his heels in a score of other ways. Myrtle has an inquiring mind which is somewhat hampered by a too-conventional education, and thus is sometimes a sucker for something the least bit on the crackpot side. She is, however, an accomplished and stimulating conversationalist, and is well worth knowing from the intellectual point of view. And beneath that occasionally austere facade, there is one of the most kind hearted persons in Los Angeles, as plenty of club members past and present could testify. She is the first person most of the older members think of when they are in trouble, and in this selfish civilisation people like that are rare."

Don't be astonished that this contains no awful disclosures about some nastiness. The person whom "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" criticises most severely is Francis T. Laney. He is very frank at describing the faults of others, but obviously was fond of most of them, makes it very clear that he liked Ackerman immensely after all the fusses, and he seems mainly sorry that these fine people have been led to do stupid things in fandom. The preamble even tries to bind up some of the wounds that E. Everett Evans receives from the pages in which Laney knocks him down and tramples on him. The preamble was written after the rest of the book, at a time when FTL had just learned about some extenuating circumstances involving EEE. But he is absolutely merciless towards his own failings, imagined or real. Sometimes he can look at them with amusement, such as what happened when he first discovered Merritt novels in the Munsey reprint magazines:

> "I started reading them. Meanwhile, nature called me, and I carried the darned magazines into the bathroom with me. Utterly oblivious to where I was and what I was doing, I sat there on that WC nearly all night, utterly lost in Grayson's weird adventures. When I finally finished 'Snake Mother', the spell broke, I tried to stand up, and was so cramped and cold that my legs would not support me. I collapsed into a heap, and lay there on the floor laughing at myself for being such a damned fool."

Some of his other anecdotes are less amusing, when he clinically describes how he rigged a FAPA election to make certain that his candidates would win, or the bad light he casts on himself in his version of his trouble with his wife.

There is one more caution that I would like to leave with anyone who had come into fandom since the mid-40's and reads the Laney memoirs. Even though "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" is a superbly fascinating work, which had an incredible influence on the whole course of fanzine publishing, it was written by a human being. Therefore it is not perfect. Some of the things it describes have been told better by other fans. Alva Rogers' account in Innuendo #11 of the famous night when Ackerman made his public debut as a drinking man is far superior to the references to this event in Laney's work. Laney did not possess Burbee's unique ability to make his readers burst into uncontrollable fits of laughter over the more remarkable actions of an Elmer Perdue or Al Ashley. Certain sections of "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" indicate that Laney wasn't quite as free of the fannish dross as he believed himself to be after having purged himself in the fire and heat of the Los Angeles fusses. There is one incredible section dealing with a project that sounds as if it had emerged from the Cosmic Circle in a particularly hectic moment: Someone had proposed a Los Angeles science fiction organisation complete with large club house which would actually be a secret hideaway for movie stars who would join it as a means of escaping from their public. The Laney who was so quick to see through the illusions that others set up for themselves thought that this was a marvellous scheme and was deeply hurt when other fans in the city failed to be respectful to the individuals who wanted to promote the deal. Laney could be very wrong about things, too. In one chapter, he tells of the delight that he found when he paid regular visits to the home of a quite prominent writer of murder mysteries. He contrasts by implication the ability of the habitués of

this writer to handle liquor with the juvenilities of the LASFS. Only a year or two after Laney's work was published, this writer was in an asylum for chronic alcoholism. Laney repeats that old error about Al Ashley's IQ of 194. It wasn't an IQ of 194; it was a score of 194 on a test that Speer was giving to various fans.

"Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" is in the public domain. I would dearly love to see the printable kernel of it reprinted in a volume that might also contain sections from the numerous other autobiographical articles that Laney published here and there. They would give a very accurate estimate of the writing ability and the character of the only fan who has ever been compared with Dean Swift without creating a storm of laughter.

F. Towner Laney — A Survey

The death recently of Francis T. Laney has brought home to me the fact that few fans today realise the multiple talents, inexhaustible interests, and top-notch ranking that Laney possessed during his peak of fannish activity. The fan who has wandered into the field during the past half-dozen years probably knows that Laney was a pioneer in the field of realism in fan writings, left active fandom with unequalled élan through production of "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" and figures as a central character in the Burbee mythos. This mental picture of FTL is accurate but too fractional. I suspect that even we old-timers in fandom have tended to forget the extent of Laney's activities, his leading place in fandom, his fecundity as a publisher and writer, and the sercon Aspects of his fanning. If someone were to take a poll to determine the ten most important fans of all time, I would unhesitatingly put FTL in this list, and he wouldn't go into the tenth slot, either.

It is impossible to review even in an article of this length all the facets of Laney the fan with any great detail. If the excerpts that follow sound choppy, it is the fault of the Boswell, not the Johnson.

Laney's reputation as an iconoclast, as a debunker of the less savoury things about Los Angeles fandom, and as a stamp collector in his last years may have helped to cause fandom to forget exactly what he did in fandom. As a fanzine publisher, his creativity can be largely lumped into three divisions: The Acolyte, his subscription fanzine that was largely sercon in nature and for four years a leading example of the fact that fanzines can be literate; Fan-Dango, largely confined to FAPA, which was still appearing as the 1950's began, years after the suspension of The Acolyte; and the one-shot Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, a volume of fannish memories that was unparalleled at the time as a revelation of things that were more often said than written about fans. I would guess that this publishing activity must have contained a thousand pages, more or less. Add to that the several hundred articles by Laney that appeared in almost every important fanzine of the late 1940's and early 1950's, and a career as a letterhack for fanzine letter sections that must have run to several hundred thousand words in published form. The total is enough to give the shivers to any fan who might undertake the job of choosing the materials for a memorial anthology.

I don't believe that Laney's type of realistic fan writing is quite understood, even today. It was not the realism that is obtained by peering through a dirty windowpane and applying an ear to a door and describing what has been seen and heard through the eavesdropping tactics. It was instead the realism that you obtain from a very expensive, high quality mirror set in full view in a fully lighted room, a mirror which magnifies slightly the things that it reflects, bringing into prominence every quirk and small detail that the normal eye might overlook. In a word, it is frankness, as an observer and as a writer. Laney was as scrupulously frank and candid as any person who has ever been in fandom. He said what he thought, sparing neither himself nor his friends nor his enemies in the process. He wasn't to blame for the poor imitations of this kind of realism that resulted: the articles that contain a puke to the paragraph when describing a convention, or the character defamations that are written in an effort to gain the spotlight that a feud casts upon the participants. The obvious way to illustrate the real Laney method would consist of long quotations from "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" However, I'm going to quote from a less accessible, earlier document of less scope, the "Pacificon Diary" that appeared in the 13th issue of Fan-Dango. This was distributed with the Fall, 1946, FAPA mailing, in the wake of the first real post-war fan convention. In the quotations that follow, I shall not indicate omissions from the original by means of dots, asterisks, or any other signals. These abridgement symbols are distracting to the reader, and unnecessary when the reader understands that condensation is in progress:

> Monday, July 1. At the Clinic I discussed at some length with one of the surgeons the matter of sterilisation. I don't want any more children (two are enough for me, at least) and I thought it might be interesting to lay some of the old wives' tales on the subject. I learned one thing that is new to me: that the operation is not necessarily irrevocable, and that in 50% of the cases it is possible to rejoin the cords in the event of the patient changing his mind. Otherwise the facts are as I have understood: local anaesthetic, five minute operation, no loss of working time, no effect on one's sexual powers except for a slight strengthening if anything, and so on. Due to some stupid law, co-operative clinics are not permitted to do the operation except in cases of proven necessity, but private urologists do the operation all the time. I'm toying with the idea, but so far have made no definite decision.
>
> Tuesday, July 2. The balance of the day, unfortunately, was wasted much in the same way as all days of the week were wasted for most convention attendees. On the way from Central Avenue to Hollywood I dropped by Slan Shack for a moment, showed the records to a Perdue who was too drunk to be appreciative, and then supinely allowed myself to be inveigled into sitting waiting for Tucker and Mari Beth. The people finally showed up and I finally got away, but not without making a solemn vow I'd be

drawn into no more fannish foolishness of this nature. Fans seem to have a great deal of difficulty figuring out anything to do with or to each other; at least the amount of time various individuals spent awkwardly sitting around waiting for something to turn up could not be imagined by one who did not actually observe it himself. Here they were, all these footloose and fancyfree people; and here was LA, beckoning and waiting their onslaught. 0 what did they do? Sat around for a week and waited for something to happen. Sonstein, Lucas and a few of the others spent most of their days rummaging around the used books stores. When some of the more braintrusty people got together - Speer, Widner, Rothman, Ashley - there were some very good bullfests. But so far as I could observe personally, the typical convention attendee was largely incapable of doing anything on his own initiative apart from sitting on his pratt looking shy and embarrassed.

Thursday, July 4. The presentation of the Fantasy Foundation was pretty badly muffed, but in retrospect this is quite understandable since Ackerman was, at the time he was talking, only a half-hour from the collapse which knocked him out of the convention he had worked so hard to present. All went as scheduled until I turned the meeting back to Ackernan for the punchline and windup, but it trailed off into mere nothingness. I was frantic, tried to get Ashley (who as local board member was the logical man to do this) to take the meeting over and try to salvage it, but he wouldn't do it. I scared the living jasus out of Widner by asking him to fill in then, forgetting that he'd not been in enough of the discussions to handle it, but ended up grabbing it off myself. Then I discovered that Ackerman was sprawled out on a table in a semi-faint. It was believed at the time that the man had suffered a nervous breakdown but it fortunately turned out to be no more than a prostration brought on by overwork and head and nervous excitement and tension. It still kept Forry from the remainder of the convention; something I regretted very much since he was one of the few persons about to whom the convention meant so much that his missing it was a definite loss.

Friday, July 5. Not much need be said about the Friday afternoon session. Though Daugherty was ostensibly in charge, he did not wish to speak from the chair, and consequently turned the gavel over to Russ Hodgkins. Now Russ is a good guy, but he is also one of the more incompetent gavel-wielders of fandom, and the meeting ran clear away from him, while he looked about him helplessly. Most fans are willing to say what they have to say in a reasonably business-like way and sit down, but every gathering manages to have one or two relative outsiders who know nothing whatsoever of what is going on but who insist on latching on to the floor, and a quibbler or two. Such people should be resolutely squelched, and people prone to chronic paralysis of the gavel are for this reason unsuitable for the chair. (Take a hint, Milty, and have a chairman at Philly who (1) knows parliamentary law and (2) isn't afraid to assert himself to keep a meeting from bogging down into a mess of futile assininities.) In the course of this session I lost my temper at arch-quibbler Elmer Perdue and called him an a--hole in a voice which carried over at least half the hall. This is the first equally public opportunity I've had to apologise to Elmer, and I'd like to do so. l have no apology to make to the convention, since an adequate chairman would have kept things well enough in hand so that the temper-raising quibbling would not have happened.

Saturday, July 6. I went out to dinner with the sticky gentleman from Portland and Sandy Kadet. The dinner conversation was enjoyable enough, but it was spoiled for both Sandy and myself when the said sticky gentleman made a pass at Sandy on the way out to the convention hall. He was repulsed, of course, but it was an ugly incident, any way you look at it. Sandy is one of the most likeable people I met at the Pacificon, and. I am very sorry that he was exposed to such an experience in my car. (Future conventions should warn us little innocents about hitherto unidentified homosexuals. The sticky gentleman from Portland makes it ten. Yes, fellow FAPs, he is the tenth active homosexual who has made his appearance on the local fan scene. Fans are slans.)

Sunday, July 7. The afternoon session didn't amount to much. Some character named Donald Day apparently had nothing better to do with his time than to tabulate the number of stories written for the pulp stfzines by each author, his findings meant little or nothing from even a statistical point of view, and it was very difficult for me to see the point in his reading and discussing his findings for what seemed like a month, but was probably only about an hour and a half. Had this talk contained anything of criticism, or even a mere review, it would. have been worthwhile, maybe; but as it was it would take a better man than I to attempt to justify its inclusion on the programme. I shan't discuss the banquet, except to say that I felt robbed and starved. When I cough up $2.50 a plate for a meal, I expect something moderately edible, and this was one of the worst meals I've had in LA. I had been jokingly threatening to try to round up a congenial group, give the banquet a miss and go out to dinner at a certain Italian eatery I'm very fond of. I wish now I'd tried it. Taken by and large, the convention was enjoyable. Good as the

convention was, though, I doubt if I'll ever attend another one. Quite frankly, I don't believe that it is worth it.

The original of this article runs to ten tightly packed pages. However, Laney was perfectly capable of terseness, when there was any need to be succinct. Joe Kennedy published. an enormous 1946-1947 Fantasy Review, which covered the entire fan and professional science fiction field for a dozen months. Laney got the job of writing a page about the LASFS. I quote from it briefly:

> Fan clubs come and fan clubs go, but the LASFS seems to go on forever, bumbling along in the same old rut and never quite getting into the groove. 1946 was a typical year, marked by an average number of quarrels and ruckuses, an occasionally stimulating meeting, and highlighted by the club's arriving on a solid financial basis for the first time in several years. The club maintained an average attendance of 25 to 30 at its weekly meetings, most of which were of a trivial nature. Following the convention, nearly everyone succumbed to an overdose of crifanac and fans. Some of us have still not recovered. But as the club settled back into its pedestrian routine, it was momentarily resurrected by what was for many of us the outstanding event of the year, Samuel D. Russell's July 25 talk on constitutional psychology. It was just an ordinary meeting presented ably. Also about this time occurred the ill-starred picnic known as Liebscher's Folly, which has been so ably and completely written up by Tucker that I don't feel like trying to describe the indescribable. E. Everett Evans found himself elevated to the directorship. Everett's calibre as an organiser and executive is well-known to all fans and the LASFS may be expected to follow in the footsteps of the nfff.

Then later Laney turned more and more to the kind of writing that was deadly for its brevity and directness. Early in 1950, he was deeply immersed in a fuss with Ackerman. The 24th issue of Fan-Dango, distributed in the first FAPA mailing of 1950, contained such musings as:

> The Rig Pond Fund was a collection started by Anglophiliac Ackerman to import a sample British fan for one of the conventions for what outré purpose God and Forrey alone know. For Christmas of 1947, FJA gave me a dollar. He knew better than to give it to me directly, so he put it in the Big Pond Fund under my name. The next anti-LASFS article I write, I'm going to sign Ackerman's name to it, and then we'll be even.

> The current FAN-TODS gave an interesting parallel quotation arrangement proving while fan and pro-author of splendid stories, Henry Andrew Ackerman; was a plagiarist. Ah yes. In the summer, 1944, ACOLYTE, I too exposed this boy Ackerman, showering that two of his fannishly published stories were lifted, stolen, plagiarised. For over a year, I was kept busy assuring people that this was NOT Forrest J Ackerman. A few, I am afraid, never did clear 4e in their innermost hearts, and one cannot blame them. After all, he is a man who will do ANYTHING for fandom!

Let me. hasten to assure you that Laney's typewriter ribbon was dipped in acid only occasionally. Some day, when a fan university exists, the most popular theme for theses may be the influence of Laney on Burbee and vice versa, as a writer of fannish humour and satire. "Spawn of the Blue Tiger" by FTL appeared in a tremendous issue of Bill Rotsler's "Masque" late in 1949 or early in 1950, whose issue number I have been unable to find. Laney is describing a telephone call from the 13-year-old Con Pederson:

> "But don't you see?" Burbee was getting wrought up. "Don't you see? In five or six years Buddy will be old enough to be a fan."
> "You mean Charles Edward Burbee III, don't you?"
> "That's just it!" Burbee shouted. "In five short years that clean-limbed, intelligent, oldest son of mine will be dabbling in advanced semantics, publishing fanzines, going to the LASFS, joining FAPA. And don't laugh, damn you - how old is Sandra?"
> I tried to tell him that girls don't become fans - while the ghosts of Myrtle, Marijane, Trudy, and Pogo and others paraded past my mind's eye.
> Our children, sweet, loveable, demure, fetching - just like their fathers. These precious innocents of ours, who have indubitably inherited our broad mental horizons and keen analytical brains. What ghastly retribution it would be for them to become fans! Our kids, our sweet loveable kids, would turn out to be serious constructive fans! I tried to tell Burbee something of all this.
> "Naw, it won't be like that, Towner."
> We sat and looked at each other for a time.
> "I'll tell you how it will be," said Burbee. "There will be this thirteen year-old boy-wonder, a real brain truster at 12, a dabbler in advanced semantics at 13, and a good friend of mine. He will be coming over

to my house all the time. And, of course, Buddy will be 13 or 14 then, too. And his friends will ask him, 'Who is that goofy looking kid that keeps coming to your house all the time?' And Buddy will say 'Hell, he doesn't come to see me; that's one of my old man's fuggheaded fan friends!' And apart from wondering, in their innocent way, what an old man like me can see in a young boy like that, that's all there will be to it."
I hope he is right.

The 21st issue of Fan-Dango, which circulated through the Spring, 1949, mailing of FAPA, contained more philosophising about fans in general, fizzing up as the result of a visit that Laney, his wife Cele, and his mother paid to Ackerman on February 13. Ho was entertaining Eph Konigsberg, Jean Cox and. Con Pederson when Laney arrived.:

> The whole experience terrified me, terrified me and set me to thinking. I believe that all of us have a certain inner fuggheadedness, more or less latent, which lies fallow and does not arise very much unless especially brought into the open. We live our little lives and do our little deeds and die our little deaths, and only rarely do we ascend to any great heights of fuggheadedness.
>
> One of the chief things that brings out our own latent fuggheadedness is protracted association with fuggheads en mass. Let me hasten to say that none of the four gentlemen who were at 4e's are basically fuggheads. No, indeed. And that they said many fuggheaded things must emphatically not be held against them, for they are in a sense unwitting victims of their environment. Surely few will fail to agree that the LASFS, the matrix of these four, is one of the twentieth century's great citadels of fuggheadedness.
>
> If we consider a woman apart from her social matrix, we are apt to look somewhat askance at her habit of plastering her hair with fresh cow dung. We might even be a bit dubious about her manure coated skull, hesitate perhaps before we took her to the Palladium. But if we realised that she was a Ubangi woman, that all women of her tribe made cow dung coiffures, we would understand and accept and think no more about it. In an analogous way, any fuggheaded remarks made by these four gentlemen can be explained and forgiven as part of their matrix. Where fuggheadedness is the norm, no one can be blamed for falling into occasional fuggheaded lapses. But constant association with fuggheads inures us. Our threshold of receptivity for fuggheadedness becomes dangerously high. It takes a titanic and overwhelming piece of assininity to rise above the background and strike us. The typical fugghead and his typical fuggheaded remarks just slide right by; we accept him and them; in fact we even top them with fuggheadedness of our own. I'd been away from fans too long, I guess. My fuggheadedness threshold was extremely low – too low to protect me - and I am still quivering inside from the impact. I'll bet that if any one of them were to stay around non-fans exclusively for eight or ten months, then go back and talk with the other three, their reaction would be the same as mine.

So far, I have dealt mainly with the Menkenish Laney, the side of Laney that was to be found in his personalzine for FAPA, Fan-Dingo, and in many of his contributions to other people's fanzines. But the sercon side of Laney appeared in The Acolyte, which was devoted to weird and fantasy literature in general, with much emphasis on H. P. Lovecraft. Towards the end of his fannish career, Laney undoubtedly wished that some specialised kind of catastrophe could wipe out most of this phase of his creativity from fanzine collections throughout the world. But it was a good sort of devoted fannish fervour, which was always literate and grew dull less often than most serious-minded fan writers. "Criteria for Criticism: The Preliminary to a Survey" was the lead article by FTL in the Summer, 1945, issue of The Acolyte. It typifies the sober-minded side of Laney. Not one fan in a hundred would guess that he was the author of this typical quotation from his six-page article:

> Of perhaps lower artistic stature than genuine satire is unadorned humour. Humour in fantasy, to my mind, is well-nigh the least acceptable of any secondary motivations. This is not to deny the very genuine place in general literature of humour; it is merely to state that so-called fantastic humour seems of questionable value except, perhaps, for occasional bits worked now and then into serious stories. At this moment, no piece of all-out fantastic humour comes to mind which approaches the quality of stories cited as examples elsewhere in this article. Perhaps this is partly clue to definition. Thorne Smith, for example, is satiric fantasy throughout, with frequent interludes of all-out slapstick. L. Sprague de Camp is frequently admired as a writer of humorous fantasy, but an analytical reading of such masterpieces as "The Land of Unreason" or "The Incomplete Enchanter" leaves little justification for listing them as other than serious fantasy. It is true that each of these writers has an exquisite knack of limning fantastically absurd and amusing incidents which abounds in all their stories, but those are incidents rather than being the chief components of the stories themselves. John Kendrick Bangs wrote many volumes of humour, both fantastic and mundane, in the 1890's, but the writing style unfortunately dates

these tales badly. A.M. Phillip's "The Mislaid Charm" is the host available example of fantasy humour, and it suffers exceedingly by comparison with Thorne Smith's fantastic plots and mundane slapstick incidents, subtle and delightful satire, and it seems rather emasculated in this light. A whole article might well be devoted to the place of humour in fantasy; perhaps I am dismissing it too curtly. But it seems to me that in a branch of literature devoted to soaring ideals, brilliant imagination, powerful mood creation, prophesy of the future, and similar lofty topics more laughter for laughter's sake is out of place. Furthermore, it is well-nigh impossible to find any humour, even in fantastic settings, which does not owe its power of amusement solely to mundane factors. For those reasons, I tend to object to fantasy humours always differentiating between mere humour and genuine satire.

However, The Acolyte normally was easier going than that article, which must have been written too soon after perusal of HPL's famous essay on weird fiction. Most of The Acolyte was devoted to contributions from other writers, but the intense Laney bobbed up in the editorials quite frequently. Hardly a fan who is now alive remembers the vendetta that sprang up between Laney and the only other, fan who was publishing a really literary fanzine at the time, A. Langley Searles. The Spring, 1945, issue of The Acolyte devoted most of its editorial to an astonishing "retraction" of which the following is typical:

We deeply regret the necessity of devoting further space to the rather futile antagonism existing between co-editor Laney and A. Langley Searles. Searles has complained that Laney's brief account of it in the last Acolyte is incomplete, inaccurate, and gives an improper impression to readers who may not be fully cognisant with the full facts of the matter. Searles, in fact, has demanded an amplification and/or retraction on penalty of his bringing suit against us for libel. As stated in the previous editorial, Laney's family obligations preclude his participation in the always expensive folderol of court proceedings. To put it bluntly, Laney does not feel it worthwhile to jeopardise the possible future of his two infant daughters by taking any chances whatever on making big donations to lawyers and their works. If this be cowardice, make the most of it.

Searles points out that Laney did not answer his letter dealing with the possible collaboration on the biblio, and that Laney attacked him in his Fantasy Apa magazine, Fan-Dango. These facts are true. The editorial was incomplete however, in that it did not mention that the chief point of difference between Laney and Searles arose over Searles' statement in his FAPA publication to the effect that he would submit to the Postmaster General any FAPA magazine in future mailings which seemed to him illegally pornographic, and therefore unmailable according to P.0. regulations. Searles agrees that a previous official FAPA decision had set up machinery to cope with submissions of this nature, but states that he felt it had been disregarded and that prompt action, rather than words, was therefore demanded.

Laney, in addition to being completely opposed to any censorship other than that imposed by the good taste of individual FAPA members, felt that Searles' proposed action could be construed in no way other than as that of a would-be informer. The page of his magazine which carried this threat was included in the same envelope as the letter which was wrongly referred to as arrogant and supercilious. Laney admits freely that his extreme anger at this statement caused him to ignore the letter from Searles, caused the attack on Searles in Fan-Dango, and caused him to announce that he would boycott Searles altogether. Laney wished to point out that the chief bone of contention, this ruckus in FAPA, was left out of the original statement, and, thus toned down, the editorial in #9 Acolyte was not a complete statement of fact.

The 14th issue of The Acolyte, published in Spring, 1946, led off its editorial in this fashion:

This, dear reader, is the last issue of The Acolyte as you have known it. It is not, I hope, the end of our association with one another.

I have been considering seriously for more than two years the termination of this magazine. The amount of sheer drudgery connected with its production in a quarterly issue of 200 copies cannot be imagined by one who has not himself undertaken something similar. Each issue involves at least 6400 pages through the mimeograph, at least twelve hours of assembling and wrapping, and at least twelve hours of clerical details in connection with the mailing list. If one has anything else whatever to do, a chore such as publishing The Acolyte quickly becomes unsupportable.

Things have gotten to the point where I have time to solicit the material for a good magazine, or I have time to publish a magazine. I do not have time to do both. And with The Acolyte's two-and-a-half year old momentum gradually petering out, it is evident that something must be done about it.

So, friends, this is the last Acolyte.

I have mentioned Laney's extreme prominence in fandom in those years. This might be a good time to pause and look at documentation of that remark. The 1946-1947 Fantasy Review, to which I had recourse earlier in this article, included poll results. Laney received 489 points to lead the poll in which "voters were asked to picks the best fan writers and publishers of 1946 - to be judged on a basis of quality, not activity." He was described in this manner in that poll report, probably by Joe Kennedy:

> Laney retained his crown as the leading fan journalist. Though his excellent literary fanzine, The Acolyte, folded during the course of the year, Laney continued to maintain a reputation as a forceful and convincing fan writer, with critical articles in Fantasy Commentator and a regular column, "The Fanzine Scope", in Vampire. He carried on his FAPAzine, Fan-Dango, and devoting himself to more stfnistic activity, held for a time the post of publications director for Fantasv Foundation.

Moskowitz finished second to him, Searles was third, and Speer fourth. Although The Acolyte was discontinued before the year under consideration was half finished, it finished fifth in the fanzine division of the poll. And this popularity was
no flash in the pan for Laney. As late as the February, 1950, issue of The Fantasy Amateur, FAPA's official organ, we find Laney finishing among the leaders in a bewildering array of classifications. Fan-Dango was rated third best publication in FAPA for the preceding year - and was rated among the best five FAPA publications by more persons than the publications that finished first and second. Laney was rated fourth among the best fiction writers, third among the article writers, seventh for mailing comments, first for poetry, second for humour, and second as the best FAPAn. In addition, the summary showed that Laney had contributed 141 pages to FAPA during the preceding year, by far the greatest output for any member, and only seven fewer pages than the second and third placers put together.

Laney as a letter-writer deserves an article all to himself. He claimed in print that he had purposefully developed his prose style from terrible beginnings through hard work. However, I never detected major differences between Laney's formal essay style and his letter-writing style, where the differences between an instinctive and an acquired writing technique normally
appears. While I am tempted to quote extensively from his letters to me, to prove my point, it will be more consistent with the nature of this article to limit myself to letters that appeared in fanzines. The following extracts from Laney epistles that appeared in various issues of Voice Of The Imagi-Nation, in the mid-1940's, are not breathtaking for the depth of their thought. But they provide an excellent clue to the ease with which Laney wrote taut, clean prose in first-draft form:

> It seems to me that Raym's twin desires to "gain as much knowledge as possible....about just what had gone before, and what is happening in the present" and reading the "classics of literature" are rather incompatible. While such works as Pepys' Diary or Cellini's Autobiography will do their bit towards gratifying both aims together, I cannot see the point of reading "classic" American history by Washington Irving or George Bancroft in preference to the modern works of such historians as the Beards, nor the need of wading through the theology of Milton or the musty tediousness of Pope when one can read George Sterling. Or why bother with the chauvinism and archaic social viewpoints of Kipling when there are books around like Strange Fruit or Ulysses, or the Studs Lonigan stuff? Mankind is bound to change, one way or the other, and too many fictional works reflect a momentary state of society that is either gone or on the way out.
>
> If Joel, as he claims, has this "genuine appreciation of fandom", he would do well to consider underlying motives before he rushes into print to attack a person who has always acted towards him with friendliness. My defence of him may have been "utterly vulgar" - I do not presume to state if it was or not - but at least it was sincere. He states that he does not need any defence...well? I trust readers of VOM are familiar with the average Vulcan publication. About all that can be said for the best of them is their burning sincerity; the material as a rule is definitely second-rate, and the presentation is very poor. I felt all along, and still feel, that each of these magazines and editors shows sufficient promise to be worth encouraging, I felt moreover that outbursts such as the Bronson article would tend to drive new editors out of the field, so I felt that it was desirable for some fairly prominent fan editor to take up cudgels in the lad's behalf. For my pains I get torn apart in print.

FTL left most of fandom with the impression that Los Angeles was Sodom which was trying to live up to the reputation of Gomorra. However, as long as Burb edited Shangri-L'Affaires, the golden vein of Burbee material was turned into a precious alloy by the silver of Fran's more benignant writing moods. Burb described how this happened once:

> Laney, that old of the fanzines, was the main attraction and elemental force behind this astonishing occurrence at 637 1/2 Burbee Street; he dashed around like an amiable lapdog and addressed us in his gently bellowing voice telling everyone just what he could do. Finally he decided there was something he could do, too. As the full comprehension struck him with all its dazing force, he was forced to sit down and slowly assimilate the stupidindous facts. Then, with a brave shrug and a shuddering inhalation, he sat down and went to work, too.....

Here is Laney himself, filling a page on what might have been, but probably wasn't, that very occasion:

> This is one of those things! Someone conceived the quaint idea of having a gala publishing night here at Shangri La, a night when the clubroom would be sacred to the holy rites of publishing an issue of that once sterling fanzine, SLA. Well, I'm working. On my immediate left is that doughty fellow, Prince of Pockerannas, ye olde fooie, Tripoli. He has a harassed expression on his usually benign pan, for he is attempting to use my 1915 model LCSmith. Also he is one of the very few people in this room who is actually working. Across from me catty-corner is that newest arrival, Tigrina. She too is working. You can tell that neither EEE nor TNT have been here for long. Me, I have to work. I'm the director and have to set a good example.
>
> Any scientifictionist this week is undoubtedly filled with thoughts of atomic power. It is as I write this some three days since the first atom bomb dropped on the Nips. I suppose that this discovery was inevitable, but somehow I'd been hoping that it would be deferred for another couple of centuries. The implications of atomic power do not leave me particularly happy.
>
> In the first place, from the releasing of atomic power it is but a comparatively short step to harnessing it. Many difficulties remain to be solved - true enough but it seems reasonably probable that 25 years from now will see this mighty power available for general use. Will we get the benefit of it? I doubt it. Probably some powerful group will use it to make themselves more powerful; the rest of us can go to hell.
>
> And consider the fun we will have some two decades hence when these bombs start dropping on our cities?
>
> We have a civilisation, so-called, which has shown itself to be incapable of even making an equitable distribution and use of steam power. A civilisation which curtails its food production while a large proportion of its population is enduring sub-standard conditions of nutriment. A civilisation which has its sawmills running three days a week in 1938 while half its populace is living in antiquated hovels and warrens. A civilisation which cannot even make suitable use of so relatively simple a thing as an internal combustion engine, as witnessed by the thousands killed and mained thereby annually.
>
> And now we have atomic power.
>
> Children playing with matches. Cthulhu help us!

This criminally brief summary of Laney-ana has left untouched a major area of his output: the writing that had nothing to do with fantasy or fandom. Most of the writing on mundane subjects that reached fandom appeared via FAPA. It is startling to look over old Fan-Dangos, and find in them definitive articles on subjects which were allegedly new when they bobbed up in this or that FAPA publication just the other day. Dailing ships, for instance: nine years ago, FTL published in "Larboard Your Helm, Burbee!" a three-page article that provides more information about sailing ships than you would normally find by reading a couple of reference works. Naval history was one of Laney's endless collection of interests. It's easy to see that he was writing from knowledge, not from the pages of this or that encyclopaedia, when he goes on like this:

> I also see I neglected to mention yards, the transverse timbers on which the sails are spread. Each yard takes the name of its sail. And at the tops of the masters proper (i.e. just below the joint between the masts and the top-masts) are the tops, large platforms on which we station the Marines to fire muskets at the enemy's decks.

It has been a hot summer in Hagerstown. I spent a couple of hours in a stifling attic in my home, getting myself smudged on every accessible surface with the grime and dust of two decades, while hunting through disordered fanzines for the raw material of this article. The repression that was required to prevent this searching period from stretching into dozens of hours must have left permanent scars on my subconscious, because the temptation was almost unbearable, to halt the hunt time and time again in order to read this or that long-forgotten fanzine or to go through the contents of letters from people

who were once favourite correspondents. I strained my back once, trying to lift out a pile of fanzines without moving other piles far enough to got a proper grip on the bundle that I wanted. While dancing on one leg in an effort to relieve the ache, I suddenly realised how marvellously my undertaking was fulfilling Laney's convictions about the incurable gyrations of fans. Two wasps that had squeezed into the attic buzzed around me, and as I raced them to the safety of the lower regions of the house, I suspected that the spirit of Laney might be chortling somewhere. If so, I'm thankful that I've made him happy.

Jack Chapman Miske

Jack Chapman Miske might be a good nominee as the forgotten man of fandom's iconoclasts. We are just emerging from a thorough Burbee-memory spree, featured by the publication of The Incomplete Burbee. The Laney bull market is still strong, if we may judge by such trustworthy signs as the willingness of two fans to reprint the huge "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" We have had several articles in recent fanzines crediting T. Bruce Yerke as an important predecessor of Laney. Willis has not been as successful as these three in creating enemies, and his criticism is accomplished with such a deft application of the scalpel that blood doesn't spurt all over everything, but the epidemic of WAW reprints and memory-joggings prove that he might qualify to the iconoclast ranking.

Miske came into prominence before three of those four. He was contemporary with Yerke, but less of a local phenomenon than T. Bruce, whose acid dripped mainly over the fans with whom he had been in personal contact. Miske was almost totally a fanzine fan in a day when that term had not been invented. He had little contact with fans except through his typewriter, and it was a traumatic experience at a convention that eventually resulted in his disappearance from the fannish landscape. After hard thinking, I can remember only one fan who visited him in his home in Cleveland. Elmer Perdue. There was even considerable speculation throughout fandom for a while over the prolems of what this person could possibly look like, since he didn't send out pictures of himself. Miske finally ended that by investing in one of this postage-stamp-imitation sheets of reproductions of his portrait, pasting them on all the letters he wrote for a month or two.

Miske was an exceptionally interesting correspondent, and wrote longer letter than any other fan with whom I was in contact around the years when the 1930's were turning into the 1940's. He was active for a while in FAPA and persuaded me to get into that organisation. He sold a poem or two to Amazing Stories in the Slone age, and he bobbed up in serious articles in most of the major fanzines during the early stages of World War Two. But I think of him most as a writer of a column from Spaceways, my old subscription fanzine. Stardust, signed as the writing of The Star-Treader, appeared first in the March, 1939, issue, the fourth issue of the magazine. Miske didn't miss a deadline for two years, hitting 15 consecutive issues until he decided to stop writing the column with the instalment in the January, 1941, issue. I plan to confine my sampling of Miske to this column, although it demonstrates only Miske the critic, and Miske the creator also deserves some space someday.

Stardust began as a column whose writer was a mystery to everyone but the creator and the editor. Internal evidence caused the identity of Miske to leak before many issues had appeared, but this made no apparent difference to his frankness. It should be understood that the fanzine traditions of those days were quite different from today. In the column's first edition, Miske used most of his two pages to give news notes, but he also wrote some remarks that were sensationally candid for those sercon, guarded days. A paragraph like the following would be quite ordinary today, but it was sensational when written:

> "Has anyone else noticed the obvious 'resemblance' between Edmond Hamilton's "Child of the Winds" and "Bride of the Lightning"? The stories are so similar as to be identical, Editor of WT Farnsworth Wright must not even bother to read Hamilton's 'stories' any more."

For his second column, Miske really had something exciting to write about. But both he and I were chicken and we decided not to be specific. So Spaceways' readers gasped at the smashing illusions about the ethics of those gods, the pros:

> "A most startling piece of information has come my way the other day via a Spaceways reader who will go unnamed for the present. Also, I wish to ask that he tell no one of his discovery till more information is available. A very well known and well-liked fantasy artist had in a recent issue of one of the fantasy magazines a drawing which was an absolute copy of one appearing in the Saturday Evening Post last year. There are two slight changes, otherwise the drawings are precisely the same. In fact, since they are the same size, they might have been traced! Coincidence is impossible. I shall look further into the affair, and report any further developments."

As I remember the comparison, the changes were slightly more than Miske's description. John Hollis Mason, a long-vanished Canadian fan, was the individual who spotted the borrowing, if my memory banks haven't gone into liquidation.

By its fifth instalment, The Star-Treader had broken away from the policy of news notes combined with brief comments and editorial-ising. He was getting into the swing of frankness that made his column the most popular regular

column in the fandom of those years. He was a particularly brilliant pioneer at the art of baiting Palmer, which was not widely practiced until the Shaver stories began appearing five years later. For instance:

> "I think it is worth noting that though the October Amazing ostensibly features five different artists, Julian Krupa is obviously the creator of all the artwork. What Palmer expects to gain by having Krupa sign five names to his drawings is a bit obscure, but it does serve to show once more that Palmer is the most blatantly commercial, not to mention contemptible, editor in contemporary fantasy fiction."

His column had grown from two to three pages, giving him room for an occasional outburst of poetry such as:

> "Down with Richard Seaton,
> And Campbell's heroes, too.
> It's Hamilton you're after
> When a Man from Mars says 'Boo!'"

Miske was also in a brawling fuss at this time through the letter column over the improbable topic of whether Lovecraft was a communist. But even more remarkable, in view of the prices that "The Outsider and Others" has brought in the past few years, is the revelation that Miske gave about this first Arkham House publication in the January, 1940, Spaceways:

> "The fan world has let them down (-Derleth and Wandrei-) down in a most disappointing manner. Perhaps I do wrong in disclosing these figures, but I feel that perhaps only thus may the need for each of you to buy be fully impressed upon you. Messers. Derleth and Wandrei spent $2,500 to present this volume to the fans whom HPL never refused to aid whenever possible. No fan publisher was ever refused material by HPL, and now the fans are spoiling the significance of his memorial. Less than 200 — yes, 200! — orders have been received to date, and Derleth and Wandrei are out about $1,750 of the $2,500 they've invested — with no thought of profit.... If this first volume fails to break even, plans for two further volumes....will necessarily have to be dropped."

There is a disturbingly familiar ring about some portions of an open letter to Campbell which Miske included in a column later in 1940, so it's no wonder that JWC doesn't quiver too noticeably when he reads remarks in 1962:

> "The same thing menaces your success that brought about the downfall of Tremaine. You're getting typed, in a rut. Everything: stories, letters, captions, they're all Campbell. While you're probably a swell fellow, even you can get monotonous.... Changes have been made in Astounding, and the readers and I liked most of them, however, good or bad, the changes were made to the complete exclusion of the desires of your readers. You've taken the attitude that 'I think you'll like it, so you will.' Only where your views paralleled theirs were the fans' wants observed. Astounding is still the top s-f publication, but that's principally because the others are so incredibly bad."

The April, 1940, column was particularly bold, written at a time when all fandom was feeling sorry for Farnsworth Wright, just kicked out of the editorial office of Weird Tales. Miske acknowledged that Wright had done good work to maintain the magazine's literary standards, but shook up Spaceways' readership by detailing

> "one of his less commendable actions. There was his shabby treatment of H. P. Lovecraft. For no good reason he rejected, as fast as HPL could send them in, many of Lovecraft's finest stories. For example, he rejected "The Shunned House" twice — then accepted it after HPL's death and tagged it 'one of his best stories!' And it ranked first in the issue in which it appeared. Also, Lovecraft, WT's most popular author, never got a cover illustration! His "At the Mountains of Madness" was rejected by Wright at a time when he knew Lovecraft needed money badly. You know how good the story is, And then there's the matter of Wright's accepting stories (to be paid for on publication) and holding them for one or two years — while the authors starved, presumably."

My younger self got thoroughly scared in the spring of 1940. It was a time when the rustle of legal papers had not yet been heard in fandom. But I woke in the early hours from nightmares of lawyers descending upon me. I didn't want to stop publication of my most popular feature. So "Stardust" in the June issue was preceded by an editorial note in which I screamed loudly that Miske's statements "are based solely upon conjecture and must not be taken in any way as fact." I also got Mark Reinsberg to write three worshipful pages about Palmer and put them near the front of the magazine, because of the detonation that Miske was unloosing at RAP and Ziff-Davis in this column. Then I used editorial scissors drastically on the column, and proved it by inserting parenthetical remarks about censorship at one or two places. I didn't get sued, and some

day I want to try to find the original manuscript and see if it is printable now. Miske mainly predicted the imminent disintegration of most of the prozines because of a glutted market and bad writing. A sample:

> "I trust no one is so juvenile as to believe Fantastic Adventures went small-size and bimonthly because the large size was driving away buyers, as Palmer would have one think. It got into trouble because it published the worst bastard 'science fiction' I've ever seen. You won't see it around much longer, I'll venture to predict. Also, you might ask Palmer how Amazing's circulation is coming along. It isn't large size — but I'll bet you Palmer isn't sleeping well these nights."

Miske was right, of course: there were 17 titles on the prozine market that year, the boom continued another year, but there were only 14 titles by 1942 and only 8 left in 1944. And in his next column, Miske explained that he didn't expect the boom to bust for another year longer. That July instalment, incidentally, continued information that led readers to believe that the Lovecraft letters would be published Real Soon Now. He said that Wandrei and Derleth had 3,000 single-spaced typewritten pages of material on hand for that volume.

Later in 1940, Miske devoted a column to a Chicon report that indicates that he had a splendid time. He had had a two-hour argument with E.E. Smith over the merits of "The New Adam", had come to realise that Palmer was a slave of Ziff-Davis policy, and thought Kornbluth told boring stories and behaved like a child with his palm-shocker.

The last Stardust column in Spaceways deserves reprinting in full. Bizarre, the luxury-type printed fanzine with which he had been working, had crashed and burned, Miske was cutting out most fanzine reading and letter-writing, the world situation was oppressing him, and most startling revelation of all, Miske had just gone wild over boogie woogie music. His King James peroration included such things as:

> "Fantasy magazines shall fall right and left, the havoc a wonderful thing to see, and something to inspire any intelligent person. The wholesale white slavery into which this form of literature has been delivered by mongering editors, authors, and publishers in recent years will die of its own vileness, and fantasy will survive the rape to rise to new heights... I refuse to worry about the world. For me — for though I rise above all others, I shall still go down..... Louis Chauvenet thinks I'm a poet after all. Now I can die. I think Ackerman is a nut. I know of no fan who ranks as 'intensely active' who is not some sort of disgusting character. I rank among them, so save the weeping and wailing. Goodbye, we meet here no more."

Chanticleer

On the second night of Nycon, I met a wiry, lively, and happy fan who impressed me as an exact replica of the to-the-point, merry, and intriguing fanzine that he had published a quarter-century ago. He is Walt Liebscher; it was Chanticleer. After I got back to Hagerstown, I dug out all the copies I could find of that legendary fanzine. They made as fine reading in this ancient, disillusioned world as they did when I was very young and was preparing to enter an idyllic world that the end of World War Two was sure to produce.

You sometimes read about a composer's composer or a writer's writer, the sort of creative person who is appreciated and liked by his peers almost more than by the lay people. I suspect that Chanticleer is the closest approach we've hed to the fanzine publisher's fanzine. It isn't sought out today as ardently by collectors as Le Zombie, Acolyte, and some other famous titles of the 1940's and it didn't quite reach first place when polls of favourite fanzines were taken during its lifetime. But I know that I wondered when I read it why I hadn't been able to publish a subscription fanzine that was as tightly packed with interesting and funny things in such a small number of pages, and I suspect that most of the other fanzine publishers in that day found in it excellences that weren't fully recognised by those who had never tried to do the same things.

What was Chanticleer like? If this were a question in an examination for a fannish doctorate, the student would list certain distinguishing things about the Liebscher fanzine. Everything was kept as short as possible: only rarely did you find an article or story that exceeded two pages, a book review was more likely to end in a dozen lines than to cover half a page, and in the poetry, not only was the number of lines kept low, but the length of each line was sometimes startlingly abridged. But there was no sensation of choppiness. Most of the big name fans of the day wrote for Channy, and they seemed to write tightly out of a spirit of emulation.

Then there were the incredible things Liebscher did with typewriter art. He specialised in little faces with subtle expressions which no fan to my knowledge has imitated since Ted Pauls used them in Kipple a few years back. The contents page was frequently a dazzling display of inventive borders and separating lines. Variety was imparted to some pages simply by running down one margin a repeated motif created from various characters.

A third distinctive matter was the consistent emphasis on books. The typical issue might have one-third of its pages devoted to book reviews and related writing about fantasy and science fiction between covers. Remember that this was before the great paperback explosion hit the United States, before hardcover reprints from the prozines had appeared in any quantity. It took some doing to find reviewers who would review books that hadn't already been reviewed in every other fanzine for the past six months; that's how seldom a new hardcover with fantasy as its theme came out.

Most of the issues of Chanticleer were published from Slan Shack in Battle Creek, although Liebscher moved to Los Angeles before the fanzine folded. The Battle Creek influence was obvious in several ways. It guaranteed a fannish element to alleviate any kind of sercon impressions all this talk of books might have given. It also gave access to ample supplies of first rate artwork. There vere beautiful airbrush covers by Jack Wiedenbeck, such as the first issue's black, red, and yellow rooster in an attitude that expresses frank exhaustion, or the impressionistic pair of spaceships spiralling over the cover of the second issue, in green with purple shadow areas. Examples of the fannish aspect can be drawn from the first issue. There is, for instance, a page of definitions. Some are jokes and others are puns, but a few are apparently genuine examples of fantalk that somehow failed to catch on as fanzine and bem did. "Foogie", for example, would be a useful word more specific than "mistake" and more inclusive than specialised terms like "Typographical error". Liebscher defines it: "A grammatical error, a word jumbling. One can also foogie with the ears, i.e., misunderstand someone. Originated by the Slan Shackers." Here are some more:

> Glerbins — the gremlins of fandom. They cause you to lose articles, make mistakes while cutting stencils, hide your correction fluid, tear magazines, etc, originated by Liebscher. Wudgy — long and fuzzy, hence 'Wudgy Tales' means long and fuzzy tales.

Ah, and the Michigan report, which should be reprinted complete some day as a prime example of the old school of hysterical exaggeration of improbable real events.

> "Now if you, by any chance, think that we slept, you're crazy," [Liebscher wrote] "Ollie, Speer, and Ashley pounced into Wiedenbeck's room, pounding bumps on each others' heads, arguing vehemently over some social problem, probably imaginary. Tucker, Connor, Robinson, and I began perusing 'Drawn and Quartered', a book of cartoons, and soon were cackling merrily. Frutches Robinson laid an egg.

> Over the cacophony, one could hear a feeble voice bellering, 'Will you mugs get to hell out of here so I can get some sleep?' This voice, we later learned, was 'Wiedenbeck's, who, at the time, was having another of his convulsions, to which everyone seemed unmindful. This hurt Jackie's feelings as it was a trick that usually worked, when he wanted something his own way."

One of the regular features in Chanticleer was a listing in each issue by some fan or other of his favourites in prodom and fandom: a few words on why he preferred above all others one novel, one short story, one fanzine, and so forth. Most contributors seasoned their favourites well with disclaimers to the effect that they really liked other things almost as well or even better when in certain moods. But, I'm sure that some mature fans today would feel dismay at their literary tastes way back then. The safest way to write about this without embarrassing anyone is to cite my own example. I don't feel too badly about choosing as favourite science fiction novel "The Time Machine", or the seance near the end of Thomas Mann's "The Magic Mountain", as the best brief piece of weird fiction. But how could I have ever plumped for "The Circle of Zero" as my favourite science fiction short, or "The Blind Spot" as my favourite booklength fantasy? And why can't I remember at all today the story I chose as favourite fantasy short? It was Blackwood's "The Pikestaff Case".

Poetry in Chanticleer was never serious on the surface. Liebscher wrote most of it and sometimes said serious things behind a dazzling facade of wordplay, nonsense rhymes, and neologisms. However I think I'll quote a poem by Charles Tanner, the old prozine writer who turned into a fan in Cincinnati. It strikes me as a masterpiece of some sort, although I wouldn't care to try to define the sort:

how fantile is the cruden cry be so be so and make it done the scrubal
answers i and i a lone alone all one alone
your round is square my fat is
flat
your red is white my greenish
blue
you seek nor see my simpen
that
and so I say to hell with you!

Anyone who is interested in fantasy books over and above what you can find in the paperback racks should try to buy up all the issues of Chanticleer as soon as possible. The book sections are treasure troves of information about volumes I've never seen mentioned in any other fanzine. Real quick now, can you name the fantasy writer for pulp magazines who never did much fiction between hardcovers but did get his autobiography published in hardbound form? It's Arthur J. Burks. Do you think that fans got interested in children's fantasy only a few years ago when Los Angeles fans started to write about it? Not so. Liebscher published reviews of such items as Harry Collingwood's "The Log of the Flying Fish", which Michael Rosenblum defines as "reminiscent of Jules Verne without the involved scientific explanations" or "The Princess and Curdie" by George MacDonald whose "sophistication both of vocabulary and attitude, makes this really more suitable for adult than for juvenile fare" according to Chan Davis. Francis T. Laney appeared quite frequently in a special book section called "Those Gay Deceivers": brief descriptions of books whose titles or blurbs or other manifestations gave a mistaken impression that they ware fantasy instead of their real mundane selves. Rosenblum's "What They Are About" reviews were transplanted to Chanticleer from my defunct Spaceways. Liebscher did a lot of reviewing himself, and he even had a professional reviewer in his stable, someone who did work for East Coast newspapers, wrote for Channy under the name "Autolycus" and was apparently never unmasked.

Seemingly there were only seven independent issues of Chanticleer. (The Fanzine Index doesn't even know much about that seventh issue, which is undated, but arrived at my home on September 24, 1946.) The editorial, written from storied South Bixel Street, Los Angeles 14, unwittingly may explain why the eighth issue never appeared: "I've tried to put out the whole issue in too short a time. I've gone the last four days with only two or three hours of sleep a night. Besides the magazine I have Tucker and Wheeler on my hands to enjoy myself as I always do when they're around, and I forget the mag. Right now there are about 35 fans running around the house; fanning, gabbing, playing poker, and rushing out every hour or so to meet some new celebrity. Then the next four hours are spent in introducing the newy to lots of other celebrities." It's a particular shame that the eighth issue hasn't been published yet, because Liebscher had for it Tanner's list of favourite stories, a column by Bob Bloch, and the start of a new series in which prominent fans would list the ten fantasy characters they'd
like to meet at a party.

All through Chanticleer's career, Liebscher kept reminding us to remember the rooster that wore red pants. I wish he'd remember the eighth issue and publish it, then many more after that.

Tumbrils

Jim Blish has suddenly become a fanzine editor. A few extremely old fans who received the first Blish-edited issues of Kalki must have dug feebly into shaky old memory cells and produced eventually remembrance that this wasn't the first time that Blish had published a fanzine. His first was The Planeteer, issued during the middle 1930's. The majority of the fans who have emerged in the last decade or two must have wondered at the ease with which a filthy pro had suddenly assumed the fannish capacity. Hardly a fan now alive fits into a third group of reactors - those who remembered Jim Blish's most important fanzine, Tumbrils.

It must be the most obscure important fanzine. I haven't seen a reference to it in print for at least a dozen years, nobody ever reprints from it, and it's hardly known to the Fannish Index. Only one of its twenty-four issues is listed there. No conspiracy or other mysterious circumstances caused this forgetfulness to envelope Tumbrils. It had the misfortune to appear throughout its career in the Vanguard Amateur Press Association mailings. VAPA rarely had more than a couple of dozen participants, many of whom weren't fans in the usual sense, there seems to have been little distribution of Tumbrils outside the mailings, and even when it existed, Tumbrils was almost unknown to general fandom. But it would be indispensable reading for anyone who attempted a large-scale essay on Blish as a writer, some of its contents throw interesting sidelights on Blush's fiction because of the common subject matter, and Tumbrils provides the only large-scale look at Blish's mature non-critical non-fiction.

Understand, this was not a fundamentalist, sercon fanzine. Blish would certainly have disdained to call it a fanzine when it was appearing from 1945 through 1950, and I've been afraid to ask him what he would call it today. It dealt occasionally with science fiction, more often with matters vaguely related to science fiction, sometimes with completely mundane things. In a file of Tumbrils, you would find only a couple of pieces of very brief fiction, a large quantity of poetry, mailing comments in its earlier issues, and imposing essays of every length. Blush usually wrote most or all of the contents, but occasionally published contributions by outsiders. Illustrations were rarities, and an issue might run from a half-dozen to more than 30 pages. If it had one typical attribute, it was the way it demanded the reader's closest attention. Blish didn't write down to his audience and obviously considered his readers as highly intelligent people capable of understanding big words and possessed of considerable basic knowledge in a wide variety of fields. His style in Tumbrils was not obscure or crabbed, but it had nothing in common with the sort of essays you found in your first grade reader.

This time I'll stick to Tumbrils as the sermon topic, but I should point out that this was not the only fanzine productivity from Blish of the 1940's. He published several issues of (...), devoted to mailing comments. I can't find it at all in the Fanzine Index, but maybe that's because I don't know where they put the publications whose titles consist solely of punctuation marks. He also published occasional official VAPA publications and a few other less important apa titles.

One of the remarkable things about Tumbrils is the similarity of many topics in it to the matters that concern so many fans today. Do you think that Ayn Rand is a writer who has attracted fannish attention only within the past decade? You'd be dead wrong. Disguised as a letter to Chandler Davis, a long review of "The Fountainhead" appeared in the 11th issue, distributed in February 1947, with the 11th VAPA mailing. Blish said, in part:

> "It's not a great book, of course. By the nature of its thesis, it could not have been, because the great book on that thesis has already been written, and nobody in this stage of our culture can hope to do it again better than it was done in "Also Sprach Zarathustra".....Ayn Rand may be a victim of a sort of philosophical Gernsback delusion, but she has sugar-coated one of the bitterest pills people like you will have to swallow in the comming years, which is a sort of service. If you like, you can see in "The Fountainhead" one of the great precepts made available to you by Goothe, Spengler, Korzybski, and a number of others. If you don't like it, you can blame Nietzsche, who has earned it; of course, if you do, credit Rand, who hasn't... It is "The Fountainhead"s thesis - not Ayn Rand's - that only the people who are good at doing certain things are good at doing them. Not everybody. Only those who are competent are competent. Psychology, as opposed to educational psychology, philosophy as opposed to sentimental economic theory; General Semantics, as opposed to maxims; these fields make of individual differences our major materiae logica. Science is a useful habit of mind, engaged in forcing similarity; but it all begins with the recognition that every person, every object, every event, is unique and like nothing else, any place, any time."

The same mailing distributed the 12th Tumbrils, whose lead article dealt with another topic that retains its prominence today; the draft and those who object to it. The article quoted a press release about a draft card burning

demonstration in Washington "against the impending threat of peacetime conscription" and ended with Blish's own opinions about the effectiveness of statistically small protest movements:

> "This protest may not, probably will not, prevent universal military conscription from being enacted. It will pound home into the noggins of our military-headed State Department that an unknown proportion of its draft army is going to be disaffected, and that the draft army is to be a less reliable instrument of policy than they had hoped. A small result? Certainly. But it is of such paving-stones that the road to peace is made - not of pyramid-like blocks requiring thousands of people to move."

You don't normally think today of Blish as a person with strong interest in poetry. Of all the poets you might imagine him to write about, Clark Ashton Smith would require one of the greatest exertions of that imagination. But in the second Tumbrils, distributed in May, 1945, two pages are devoted to CAS's poetry. Blish recalls that Edwin Markham called Smith the greatest American poet, "and while it is obvious from internal evidence that 'The Man with the Hoe' was a fluke, it is possible for a man to be right twice in his life." Blish estimates that the wordage written about Smith must equal the output regarding Cabell, but finds barely 2,000 words of actual criticism of Smith in all the outpourings. He decides that "Smith has occasionally achieved some really moving effects with such eclectic material", and occasionally "the results are more unfortunate...to the sober reader merely the sewage of a plastic-and-chrome Eblis," Blish finds that Smith does not have full control of prose and chose deliberately a style and material that

> "is incomprehensible and boring to the pulp readers whom he has – perhaps perforce - addressed most often. It is moribund and intolerably 'arty' to a literate reader. The best he can hope from it is that it will please the very tiny segment of the reading public that is made up of men like Derleth and Lovecraft, who, incapable of distinguishing the artistic from the arty, can pass it through their digestive tracts and absorb from it the little nourishment that it contains. As a product of irresistible influence and inclinations, it might have been forgivable. As the conscious choice of a man who has shown that he can do better, it is funny."

Blish's own preference in poetry seemed to favour quite advanced style and hard-to-extract inner meanings. I hesitate to quote from his own poetry in Tumbrils, since its effectiveness increases as you grow accustomed to a lot of it. If anyone must suffer, let it be an outside contributor, Ree Dragonette. "A Dedicated Poem" appeared in the 20th Tumbrils, distributed in February, l949. Blish praised it highly, and it's typical of his preferences in this era:

> Met to no burning point
> At any day's encountered dark.
>
> Touched somnolent recall
> In monotones, of sun
> Of frequent sky
>
> From unfamiliar weather
> Taught sudden modes
> To quick, divergent light.
>
> Paused;
> Informed astonishment of answer
>
> In ear grown conchoid Struck to resonance.

Better known today, because of his fiction, is Blish's interest in music. He once wrote a story in which Richard Strauss comes back to life. Only slightly less impressive is what Blish did about Richard Strauss in VAPA. He published some fifty pages of review and associated materials about one record album containing music by Strauss. In the late 1940's RCA Victor released in this country a 78 rpm album containing four twelve-inch records. They contained with a few cuts the final scenes from "Electra" conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. This was only about forty minutes of music, but it was a tremendous event in that era, before the lp record caused the production of modern operas in uncut, complete form to become commonplace. The 21st Tumbrils, distributed in June 1949, consisted solely of a 32-page review of this album, delving deeply into the background of the music, its Freudian implications, and the Straussian composing methods in general. In the same mailing, Virginia Blish published her translation of the portion of the libretto contained in the Beecham album. As if this weren't enough, the next mailing provided VAPA members with ten pages of "appendices" to the foregoing: musical quotations to go with the prose and miscellaneous addtional information. I feel quite certain that the "Electra" publishing must have consumed as much time as a short novel would have eaten up. The scholarship that went into it is almost frightening, dealing with this important opera in such depth and detail as nothing known to me in print in professional

musicology even today. And it was almost completely wasted, as far as the readership was concerned. Perhaps five or six VAPA members were interested enough in music to be able to make sense of most of what Blish wrote, and I doubt that Blish circulated his accomplishment much outside the organisation, because of copyright problems.

Less rarefied in subject was an essay in the sixth Tumbrils, which went out in January 1946. Francis T. Laney had been propagandising for jazz in FAPA, and Blish thought that Laney was making too much of a kind of music that Blish enjoyed himself. Laney had remarked that jazz fans "are going to listen to the stuff that kicks us and to the devil with the rest of it." Blish took this as the text for his sermon:

> "It assumes that there is no way to judge a work of art - in any artform - except through the personal preference of the individual spectator or auditor, as Mr. Laney agrees in the next line of his essay. Actually it does not make any difference whether this is Mr. Laney's opinion, and the opinion of millions, or not; it does not happen to be fact. I propose a similar example; millions believe that the world is only as old as Bible concordances make it, a matter of some 8000 years; specialists in the subject know that this estimate is wrong, and very wrong at that. In exactly the same fashion, anyone who is thoroughly familiar with music as an art-form – a field involving vast areas of knowledge outside the emotional twinges of the uninstructed - is aware that there are definite standards of judgement in the weighing of a musical composition, which seldom change regardless of what Mr. Laney or anyone else happens to 'like'. Unfortunately Mr. Laney does not seem to know what these tastes and measurements are, let alone how they are applied; he has held the mirror of his personal preferences up between himself and music, and naturally cannot see any more therein than what he himself brings to the observing. The mirror itself is the multiplicand of his equation, and has flung back in his face, even in the course of this two-page essay, a whole series of contradictions; it has made it impossible for him to be faithful even to the method he wants to use.... Jazz, like the pulp magazine idiom, continues to forge ahead in any number of directions at once, with the astonishing commercial vitality discoverable in any industry which manufactures a utilitarian product needed in the kitchen or by the kitchen-mechanic. It has about the same artistic standing as Lowndes' love magazines or the two-in-one corkscrew. The cook may feel that the corkscrew is a very useful object and one hell of a lot nicer to have around than an Epstein bust, regardless of superficial similarities between the two objects. Mr. Laney, in his turn; prefers Jazz."

Despite the frightening thoroughness with which he sometimes considered a topic, Blish also had the knack of putting into compact and plain form quite difficult matters, when he felt in the mood. For instance, the fiction of James Joyce's later years. I haven't seen anywhere a better brief explanation of the reasons for its difficulties than a mailing comment in the 13th Tumbrils, in the September 1947 VAPA mailing:

> "As for why a committee is needed to explicate Finnegan properly: Joyce spoke fluently every major language, including Russian, Norwegian, Latin, Greek, and Chinese. It had smatterings of other languages, including Sanskrit. He was a medical school graduate, with a continuing interest in the sciences. He had a good tenor voice and knew music from the technical as well as the listener's side. And so on; he was a flabbergastingly erudite man and evidenced an eidetic memory. He used everything he knew in writing the last novel, and the reader, lacking both Joyce's original information and the knowledge of where and how he used it in writing the book, is at a considerable disadvantage in explicating it. If you have on your committee another person who speaks fourteen languages - Pound say – then your language problem is pretty well solved; but most normal scholars rarely speak more than two languages well, so that's seven people necessary for your committee right there. Then, philology is a special science, rarely combined with, say, knowledge of music, in the same person. Two more committee members. And does anybody in the room know Dublin well enough to tell us which church in that city is known as St.-George-The-Greek, and on which street it is located? No? Well, we'll have to find one - and ask him if Eccles Street in Chapelizod runs as far as the house number 1132, while you're at it, and if so, whether or not the house is still there."

Then there were the occasional light-hearted moments in Tumbrils, not many of them, but worth the hunt. One page in the 16th Tumbrils, distributed in July 1948, would be a good candidate for reprinting intact someday, provided copyright permission can be obtained. Entitled "Bloody Pulp Stories", it takes the hero in a few hundred words through the pulp art forms of the sea story, African adventure, gothic mystery, sport epic, and horse opera, ending with the final section for which the reader was supposed to supply his own technicalities because "we've had a bad day":

> Maren looked at Fenwick, the _____ standing in her _____.
> He brushed her _____ gently with his, and took her little _____ in his huge one.
>
> Don't be _____, darling, he _____ softly.

This could go on and on. Tumbrils had splendid Eric Frank Russell articles, on Fortean theories and racism in science fiction; an extended series by Blish on the art of prosody that beats all hollow the explanations you read in college literature books; more musical material, like a long explanation of Vanguard Records, the fan-directed commercial recording firm, and an extensive commentary on Peter Grimes; a whole barrage of articles, comments, and replies devoted to another of Blish's favourites, Ezra Pound; philosophising about the apa phenomenon in general and FAPA in particular; morsels of information about such recondite subjects as the art of silk-screening and a fantasy by James Fenimore Cooper; and, as the advertisements always say today, much more. A big anthology from Tumbrils is needed; until someone gets the ambition to publish one, keep your eyes open for the few surviving VAPA mailings, in case one should be offered for sale.

The Cosmic Circle

So you've tried to forget the Breenigan? And you've been making efforts to think as charitably as possible about Steve Pickering? Besides, you've been in fandom too short a time to remember when the mad dogs were on the point of kneeing Harlan Ellison in the groin? Then you've heard about only the minor ripples that have recently swept across the calm waters of fandom. For listen:

> "And so, tho the black clouds have been gathering as Fandom knows — for a long time — yet I feel a singularly deep sadness inside me tonight as I finish this, my closing Oration or Address to the LASFS on the eve when perhaps all fandom will be plunaged into a 'war' that will parallel the war in the outside world!!
>
> "I hope it is not too late that this may be averted! Certainly if a vote is taken here tonight it would be a black dishonour against all democratic ideals in Fandom to be a signer, and I would hate to have my name connected with a similar proceedure in any way. In the outside world we are fighting a war for freedom and democracy — in fandom the P.F.F. has always stood for Democracy and the rights of newer and younger fans, as well as the old timers. I can only say that if this monsterous farce takes place here tonight, it will be a victory for the forces of totalitarianism and reaction all over fandom –- this concerns every reader of stf and fantasy fiction on this planet!
>
> "What about the scores of other fans who may want to join this, or any other club, in the future? It is the Futurian-New Fandom fight and Nycon exclusion act all over again! I hear the horrible laughter of Czechoslovakia, Poland, France and all the others that fall before the dictators!! I see the shades of Wolheim, Lowndes, Michel, Pohl, Kornbluth, Gillespie!
>
> "Will fandom be free? Will fandom continue to grow and prosper in peace, or have only bitter war and feuding for ages to come!!??"

I've taken the liberty to do something analogous to the way Lovecraft used to spare his readers the more awful details, by disguising them under such adjectives as "certain" or "curious". Several words in almost every line of the original were either capitalised or underlined. I didn't designate those emphases, for fear of scaring you as much as Claude Degler shook up fandom when he wrote that speech late in 1943. It was published in the second issue of Futurian Daily Planet, a single-sheerer. It's a good thing that this Cosmic Circle publication exists, because the speech would otherwise be lost to the world. Degler, then referred to most of the time as Don Rogers, had just been kicked out of the LASFS, prepared a farewell address, but never delivered it "due to circumstances arising near the last minute."

Laney once defined Cosmic Circle publications as bowel movements postmarked Newcastle. For a year or a little longer, they florished incredibly. Most of them were slim, rarely running to as many as a dozen pages. They bore a staggering profusion of titles. Almost invariably they were stenciled on the same elite typewriter, usually mimeographed on a darkish hue of paper, and squeezed an improbable number of words onto each page by dispensing with artwork and offering only the most grudging of margins.

Perhaps the most famous of the titles Degler published was Cosmic Circle Commentator. Its first issue, dated September 1943, contained in its four legal length pages a summary of the Cosmic Circle as Degler then imagined it to be. It listed ten local CC organizations, 22 state CC organizations, 15 sectional CC federations, and an ll point programme for fandom. Excerpts from this programme include:

> "To work toward the attainment of such an increase in membership publicity, prestige, influence, and public recognition, so that Cosmic Fandom will actually be some sort of power or influence in the post-war world of the near future.
>
> "Cosmic Camp...a tract of land in northwestern Arkansas, owned by Cosmic Circle. This tract in the mountains of Van Buren County, near fishing, hunting, and other recreational facilities may be used free by vacationing members of Cosmic Circle...Club room-laboratory-library for members' use. An apartment in Indianapolis where an "open house" is always maintained for visiting fans. Food and lodging and true slan hospitality for all hitch hiking, vacationing, or visiting fans and members. Free storage space for books, fanzines, records of members going in service or moving away to new jobs...

The owner of a large ranch in Arizona has granted us permission to conduct rocketry experiments there after the war!

"Immediately after the war, the purchase of a tract of land (or even an entire city block) and construction of futuristic (taking advantage of the latest developments in building and prefabrication technique) homes for fans, with gorgeous landscaping, provision for playground and recreational centers, set in the midst of an incredibly beautiful park, making use of hydroponics and the latest agricultural discoveries."

But that was just the start. Later in this issue Degler-Rogers explained:

"We have created a fannationalism, a United World Fandom. Someday soon we will have our own apartment building, then our own land, our own city of Cosmen, schools, teachers, radio programme — later; our own laws, country perhaps! Our children shall inherit not only this earth — but this universe! Today we carry 22 states, tomorrow, nine planets! We can and will help to make a better world of the future — have influence and be an active force in the furtherance of scientific democracy in the post-war world! — attempt to conquer space travel and see another world — in our own lifetimes — while we of the council are alive! Our children will carry on this organization after we are gone — The Cosmic Circle now exists for all eternity."

The second issue of Cosmic Circle Commentator looked back at more immediate matters, like one of Degler's famous good-will tours of fandom. These were hitch-hiking expeditions during which the CC gospel was spread in every fannish home where Degler wasn't denied admittance. Let's look at some of the laconic descriptions of one of these trips:

"Thence to the remote mountains of New Hampshire, there after some of the most toilsome searching and walking 31 miles found an old time fan in a remote hamlet who promised to organize a group in the White Mountain State... A hectic trip across fantastic and isolated wildernesses, up through Maine and Quebec North Woods to the city of old Quebec. Here Rogers visited friends in the Mountain Police and a French doctor at CHRC. He also rescued Jodine Fear, a girl from Frankfort, Indiana, who was in some minor trouble with the Canadian authorities...Following the unsuccessful attempt in Virginia, Rogers met up with a guy heading West and helped him drive to Oklahoma. Some rather weird, fantastic and almost unbelievable occurrences preceding a noteworth visit with Red Gale and the subsequent forming of an Oklahoma and North Central organization. Don thereon proceeded to get stuck out on the Gila desert, near Yuma where the thermometer stood at 120 degrees in the shade, (no shade)...finally the weary pilgrim arrived at his Mecca...the crowning achievement...the high spot of the whole trip... Rogers was in Shangri-La after 5200 miles of crossing deserts, mountains, and seas. The Quebec-Los Angeles Goodwill Tour of Fandom was finally completed."

As you may remember or guess, Degler was a fan whose enthusiasm exceeded his judgement, who took literally the high-sounding nonsense that is published in fanzine editorials and spoken in worldcon speeches. When a fan or a pro speculated that fans were different because of their interest in the future, Claude assumed he could count on them to rule the future: when he read about a feud between two fans and then got angry at someone, he threatened a feud far beyond the poor capacity of the Hatfields and the McCoys. His Cosmic Circle caused at least one heart attack, engulfed prozine editors and the most obscure fans, caused chaos in staid groups such as the LASFS and FAPA, and was accompanied by an impressive assortment of subsidiary and auxiliary groups. (The P.F.F. mentioned above was the Planet Fantasy Federation.) Nobody knows for sure if Degler wrote all the material in CC publications not obviously the work of established fans. He listed associates and friends who with one exception remained completely unknown to general fandom. The exception was Helen Bradleigh, a name under which a young girl was introduced to several fans; but internal evidence indicates that the Helen Bradleigh who bobs up throughout CC publications cannot have been bound by normal limitations of space and time. The first extended manifestation turns up in what is not exactly a CC publication: the second issue of Infinite, dated November, 1941, which was co-edited by Degler and Leonard Marlow. It alleges to tell about an early adventure of Degler's, his "actual — believe it or not — attempt to reach Hell!"

"Just why we decided to dig the hole was not precisely clear at first. There were three main reasons. Degler had a radio tube device with which he had detected a metallic object of some sort below the ground. We wanted sand to make some concrete. We also thought we might hit water at that spot. I am greatly afraid that we had read overly much of fantastic literature concerning the probable nature of the earth, underground cities, etc. We had no intention of having anything but a little exercise and fun at first. Then as progress was made we became more enthusiastic. We were young and foolish then."

Helen describes their digging a hole four by seven feet at the top, "heading for the nether regions at incredible speed." She says that Claude and his brother, Robert, wired the hole for electricity, created a bucket brigade to get rid of the excavated material, and used a phonograph to speed work. "More and more distant people whom we had never known came over to see who was digging a hole to Hell. They got in the way and hindered the work horribly. So many people came to see the Hell Hole, as it came to be called, that it finally caused us to erect a sign at the top saying 'Hell 12ft' and an arrow pointing down. When people were standing around watching, we would heave buckets of dirt out and work ferociously, while yelling things like 'On to Pellucidar, on to Hell!' The main shaft finally went down to 23 feet or a little more. Of course when we were in our tunnel the people standing around the shaft could not see us at all. We built large fires, many times for fun, in the bottom of the shaft while we were back in the tunnel, and let the smoke and flames roll out the top." The narrative halted there with a promise that a second installment would make fans "understand why Degler's back yard was given as wide a berth as possible, and why no longer would anyone use the alley in back of the house after dark if this could possibly be avoided." But the third Infinite never appeared, and the remainder of the manuscript very well could be lost to posterity.

Things around Degler's home had changed considerably a few years later. The 12th issue of Cosmic Circle Commentator, dated December 4th, 1943, published a dispatch from Oakgrove, Ind., which I believe it would be wise if I copied in an unexpergated form:

> "Special meeting of the New Oakgrove Fantasy Society called! (This has only recently been taken over by Frank Stein and has no connection with the old O.F.S.) A banquet was staged for the surprised, half-starved Rogers, who had went over 22 hours with nothing to eat (only a few hours ago). Rogers was surprised no end — not yet having learned that ghu-ghuists (and Martha's Cathaginian Government in Exile) had shortly before superceeded Taliafero's Home-inspired, pro-Ashley, pro-Axis regime in the Oakgrove Fantasy Society. Notable innovations were: that the 16 x 22 picture of Sykora had been removed from above the speaker's platform and had been replaced instead by a smaller photograph of Wolheim! Kinney came dressed as Bruce Yerke, complete with horns and tail. The little plaques on the walls with slogans on them: such as "Blessed are the Damned, for they shall inherit fandom," — Stein. Frank trying to improvise something known as the Slan Shack Stomp (a definite takeoff on the Michifans who invariably hate anything but classical music!) but failing because he hadn't had time to work on it.
>
> "Newcastle, Ind. Nov. 2 — Rogers developing cold from exposure, general debility and lowered resistance due to the Ashley Atrocity — and was feeling quite sick today. Nov. 4th -Rogers is suffering from what was described as a 'bad chest cold with complications developing'. Has been confined to bed for last three days. Bradleigh, Mathews, Raymond Kinney, Rosy Jinkins and others carry on the CC publishing projects and try to catch up on the mounting correspondence and clerical work of the Planet Bureau. Nov. 5 — Rogers condition is critical. This was the only information given out today at HDQ."

Claude, you see, had not entered the Al Ashley home, at Ashley's insistence, and blamed this event for his declining health.

The second issue of Fantasy Forum, dated February 27, 1944, really shook up fandom which might have expected anything from Dealer except the headline in this single-sheeter:

"NEW C.C. POLICY — NO MORE FEUDS!"

The explanation:

> "Larry Shaw has written a card, intimating that he 'might join again' 'if we could have him — now'. Certainly, he may if he wishes. And you are already paid up, too, Larry. It is we who are louses — we hadn't even refunded your money! And Degler has said that he wants to apologise to Larry and to Suddsy, for some of the things he said about them!! Larry was right about the feuding. Bob Tucker has written us a very long and well-thought out letter; it also mentions that persons have been 'villified' in certain sheets. Not Rob, of course, who is as nice a fan as one could care to know. His letter of constructive criticism to Raym and Don, will help the organization and quality of the pubs a lot. Bob said he hoped that Raym might be able to accomplish this result. We wish to thank Bob Tucker for his letter, even though not complimentary.... We hope it is clear to all that the Cosmic Circle (Planet Fantasy Federation) considers it beneath their dignity to regard any other organization as a 'rival club' and wage competitive feuds accordingly (or to carry on feuds with any fan or fans)!"

Raym was Raymond Washington, Jr., a youthful fan in Live Oak, Florida, who inherited the Cosmic Circle when Degler finally decided that he was offending the more sensitive members of fandom and tried briefly to salvage something from the organization's putrefying cadaver. One envelope filled with CC publications bears Raym's name as return address, is postmarked Live Oak, but contains publications that are unmistakably from the hands of Degler. These were inspired at

least in part by the investigation Jack Speer had made in Newcastle, Ind. (Officially, it's New Castle, but Degler and most of the rest of fandom always wrote it as one word.) Degler promptly announced the forthcoming publication of "Investigating and Investigation" and "Conversations at an Asylum" by Don Rogers "a true account of the Speer affair in Newcastle". (Spear had discovered that Degler's background was what we might describe today as troubled.) The World Science-Fantasy Association, yet another Degler organization, "wishes to announce its complete independence of the promags, of the rest of fandom, and of any other group, as of July 4, 1944. We support the pro mags, we buy 'em, but we are completely independent. We would keep right on existing whether there were any pro stf mags or not." Palmer had said some nasty things about the CC. This batch also reprinted a letter from Dr. C. L. Barrett, who confessed inability to understand the fan situation in Oakgrove. Helen explained:

> "There were two Oakgrove factions that fought bitterly; it was worse than the Outsiders vs. the LASFS. But it's over since last Sept., October. Frank Stein who fought for democracy and the right to even hold any fan meetings at all in Oakgrove finally won, though some of his overenthusiastic Ghu-Guerillas were jailed for fighting, when carrying the flag of General Draja Mihailovitch (and his Chetniks), they stormed the old Oakgrove Fantasy Society, armed with slings and brickbats!"

There's just one other thing you should know about the Cosmic Circle, over and above the detailed narration which you may soon be reading in the first volume of my history of fandom. When in the mood, Degler could write as calmly and as well as the average good fan. Rarely but often enough to show that it was no accident, the hysteria, obvious hyperbole, and near illiterare syntax disappeared from a Degler publication. It happened once in a set of mailing comments he wrote for FAPA, and again in reply to the Speer investigation and his claims that most events and people in and around Newcastle were Degler's imagination. Degler pounced on weak points in the Speer report: an undocumented statement by Speer that he was speaking for hundreds of fans, for instance; and Degler unerringly and accurately countered Speer's complaints about sloppy reproduction of CC fanzines by recalling some Speer publications in early FAPA mailings.

So where's the real truth? Was Degler a fan with a sort of manic-depressive fanac, who ran the Cosmic Circle during an unusually long dominance of the hectic phase? Was he a different kind of Steve Pickering...rarely allowing his real personality to appear in his fanac because he discovered that he could gain notoriety by this method of making himself conspicuous? Did he take his own claims about fandom and the CC at face value? Or at some point in his fannish career, did he realize that fandom was taking something seriously he was doing for a lark, and then proceeded to pull fandom's leg out of sadistic delight in seeing fans hop around and howl in anguish? I wish I could promise the answer in my fan history, but I can't.

Fantasy Advertiser

Once upon a time there was no hucksters' room at the worldcon. For that matter there hadn't been a worldcon for five years, when a sort of two-dimensional hucksters' room, capable of extending itself through time long beyond the chronological confines of a worldcon, unlimited by the physical dimensions of a hotel room, was born in fandom., It was Fantasy Advertiser, the first big success of the market-place fanzines, and one of the all time record-holders for high circulation maintained over a long period of time.

Gus Wilmorth, who still appears at an occasional convention, began Fantasy Advertiser in the spring of 1946. It was a symbol of the fannish times. World War Two had prevented fans from staging worldcons, where big audiences could bid on prozines and other treasures at auctions. Meanwhile, wartime jobs and increasing salary scales had nade fans more prosperous than ever before, there had been a boom in the number of prozines, and wartime paper drives had decimated the quantities of stocks in back issue magazine stores and second-hand book shops. All over fandom, prices were going up, people were hunting harder for items that used to be easy to find, fans were returning from the service with the collecting urge goosed by knowledge they'd again have a safe place to keep their books and magazines, and conditions were just right for a regular publication where people could advertise their wants and offerings to a large readership.

If you are tensing yourself for awful disclosures about how cheap science fiction rarities were in those days, you are invited to relax to a state of semi-repose. The pages of Fantasy Advertiser disclose that there hasn't been the inflation in collectors' costs that you might expect over the twenty-year span. Because interests and tastes change, it's impossible to compare lots of old prices you'll find in today's advertising fanzines, then calculate from those comparisons the exact rate of increase in prices. But I'd guess that only the extreme rarities and fanzines have shown manifold doublings, triplings, and quadruplings in prices. The prozines that were old in 1946 can probably be bought today for not more than twice what dealers normally charged then, maybe not quite twice as much, and you must remember that the cover price of a new prozine is today three or four times greater than the prozines cost new in 1946. Run-of-the-mill science fiction and fantasy books may have been a trifle cheaper just after VJ Day than they are now. Naturally, comparisons in book prices can't be made right down the line because of special circumstances: paperbacks had not blossomed in great profusion then, while the semi-pro publishing houses' books weren't rare yet because they were so new.

The first issue of Fantasy Advertiser was dated April, 1946, and didn't look as if it would amount to much; it was just a normal-looking thin fanzine, with a dozen pages mimeographed on brown paper, selling at five issues for a dime, and able to go through the mails for a penny postage. That fist issue contains some indications of how much money was wanted for stuff in those long-ago days. F. Lee Baldwin was offering $2 for a 1939 issue of Detective And Murder Mystery Magazine, Ackerman was asking $3.30 for Werfel's then-recent fantasy novel "Star of the Unborn", and E. Everett Evans was trying to sell a batch of 15 Planets for $10. Burroughs fandom wasn't very active that long ago, but two of the ads in this first issue were devoted to trying to find copies of his books.

From that unimposing start, Fantasy Advertiser prospered rapidly and mightily. Before 1946 had ended, its mailing list stood at 1,000 copies, including many bookstores. By the next summer it had discarded the lowly mimeograph in favour of a form of offset printing known as plnography. The first issue of 1948 announced a new policy for the magazine which was now calling itself "the amateur professional for professional amateurs". It intended to pay $5 for each article accepted for publication; material of interest to collectors was inserted between the advertisements in the ancient tradition of luring readers to look at pages more lengthily in this manner. Gus was talking about raising both advertising and subscription rates because of a prospective circulation increase to 1,500 copies. In its octavo format the January, 1948 issue contained lots of splendid little illustrations, including a batch from Lin Carter, and advertisements whoso messages make the reader of 1969 weep and smile and sometimes shiver. An Omaha bookstore was asking $3 for the first issue of Captain Future, then only eight years old, and $2 or more apiece for early issues of Startling Stories, $30 for a one volume edition of Poe's works, but mysteriously only $50 for a complete set of Verne's works in a limited edition. On the other hand, someone whose name was listed as Robert Degler of New Castle, Ind., had many issues of Famous Fantastic Mysteries available for 35 cents apiece and wanted only $1 for a copy of "Pilgrims Through Space and Time". So you see, it isn't safe to decide just what you'd pay for stuff in those days. Ackerman had a slightly unusual advertisement; he wanted to sell the original manuscript of Weinbaum's "The Mad Brain", but there was a stipulation. "The purchaser must publish the story!" Forry was quite honest about the quality of the manuscript, quoting Weinbaum's widow on the topic: "The Mad Brain was hacked out for a newspaper syndicate – we planned someday rewriting it as a serious novel. But if his readers want to meet Stan in a slightly different phase of his earlier work....."

Elsewhere in this particular issue is good evidence about what I meant about changing tastes. Claude Held had a batch of issues of Unknown for sale. Each of them cost $2.50. This is still a very rare magazine which brings good prices from people really anxious to collect it. But I doubt very much of issues of similar size in a hucksters' room would bring prices substantially higher today, a quarter-century after the magazines were published. Held was reflecting the tremendous current demand for back issues of Unknown, because other prices in the same advertisement are quite reasonable, like $2.50 apiece for some of the first issues of the Clayton Astounding and $3 apiece for 1928 issues of Weird Tales.

If you're a collector today, leafing though these old issues of Fantasy Advertiser can be a frustrating experience. You see so many things you would desperately like to own today at the prices they were offered for in the 1940's - despite my thesis that inflation has not been excessive, there have been lots of exceptions for individual items, and there were occasional big bargins advertised when someone was unloading his collection or didn't know the worth of rarities. Then there are the laconic listings of items you've never seen anywhere, which might be altogether impossible to track down today without decades of hunting. For instance, does anyone reading this know "The Far Place" by Willis A. Boughton? It was offered for $2 by the Kaleidograph Press of Dallas, Texas, identified as "a poetic fantasy of every man's future". Whatever its worth or worthlessness, it had five Finlay illustrations. Then there is the advertisement from something called the S.F. & S.F. Photo Bureau of Kings Park, NY, offering "complete sets of photos of the Convention". You could get 25 4x5 prints for five bucks, and I felt bitter thoughts about my failure to invest in that September of 1950, because they would have been so useful when I was hunting illustrations for the first volume of the fan history. And who owns today the boxed copy of an autographed "Ornaments in Jade" by Arthur Machen, which Donn Brazier was ready to sell for $7?

Sometimes, when I get tired of worrying about the way humanity is exhausting the earth's petroleum or silver reserves, I find some variety by fretting over the depletion of collector's items as the years pass. Nobody to my knowledge has ever tried to calculate the rate at which the stuff becomes permanently unavailable. If a small semi-pro publisher issued and sold a thousand copy edition of a science fiction novel in 1944, for instance, what percentage of that edition was destroyed by 1950 because the purchasers threw away books they had no room to store and no patience to try to sell after a few years? What lower rate of destruction has ensued in the years since then, as copies that managed to reach the hands of collectors were burned or sold for waste paper after the collectors lost interest, or died without leaving instructions to heirs about the importance of saving the fantasy items? And now there's a new source of depletion, insignificantly small today, but certain to gain as the years pass: the copies that are transferred into collections where they will be preserved but will remain permanently. Here and there a public library or university library is taking interest in building a collection of science fiction or fantasy, and when one of these institutions buys a collector's item, that copy will never again go up on the hucksters' tables. And as you leaf through these old issues of Fantasy Advertiser, you're suddenly struck by the realization that the collector in the late 1940's and early 1950's could buy or trade for things which may be close by now to total unavailability. An article, rather than an advertisement, in the September, 1950 issue illustrates my point. Malcolm M. Ferguson was writing about the works of M.P. Shiel, and he cited the difficulties of building, even then, a complete collection of his works. How long would you look through secondhand bookstores before you'd find a surviving copy of a paperback Lippincott edition of "The Man-Stealers" which sold in 1900 for 50 cents? Or "How The Old Woman Got Home" in a blue cloth binding used on a leftover batch of sheets to save money? Or "A Mysterious Disappearance", which Shiel serialized in The Household in 1914 under a pnename? (Ferguson might be a collector's item himself now. He had an absolutely unique career in fandom. He was an American who did nothing in fandom until he went to England with the armed forces, immediately became famous as a bibliophile, then disappeared almost as rapidly when he returned to the United States.)

Even though the advertisements are the part of Fantasy Advertiser that can arouse the emotions most readily, the fanzine's non-advertising matter holds a lot of interest too. The January, 1950 issue for instance, contained articles by Lin Carter on Lord Dunsany and George Martindale on James Branch Cabell, 165 entries for a checklist of fantasy books in print, a checklist of all issues of prozines that were on the stands dated 1949, and a group of book reviews. The July, 1948 issue contains the only detailed obituary known to me on W. Paul Cook, one of the pioneers of Lovocraft fandom, and an amateur publisher from 1901 until his death culminating in five superbly printed issues of The Ghost, each containing 50 quarto pages filled with magnificent material of fantasy importance. "Already this file of The Ghost is difficult to obtain", Earle Cornwall wrote in the obituary notice. "Aficionados clung tenaciously to their copies, learning soon after Cook's death the owner of the Driftwood Press could find no copies among Cook's effects."

In general, there wasn't room in Fantasy Advertiser for exhaustive-type articles on scholarly topics. But sometimes the reader got the impression that this encouraged better writing, without the padding and the meanderings from the topic that sometimes bob up when someone wants to act learned in a fanzine. The Fanscient and Fantasy Commentator are probably the only other fanzines of that general era that equalled Fantasy Advertiser for long-term publication of hard-core writing about fantasy and science fiction with high quality standards. Roy Squires, who had taken over the editorship of Fantasy Advertiser at the end of 1949, somehow managed to get 10,000 or more words of non-advertising text into a typical issue.

The last issue with its original title appeared in November, 1951, and I lost touch with the publication after its change in name to Science-Fiction Advertiser. I don't see FA mentioned very often these days in locs and articles where fans reminisce about the great old fanzines of the past, perhaps because it seemed too commercial, too closely linked to the filthy pros and the hucksters to win affections. And yet, I can think of many legendary fanzines which are less fun to read and less useful to own than this one. Quite aside from the masochism you get from looking at lost collecting opportunities, you can find several ways of using those closely packed pages. They would provide raw material for a dozen articles tracing the trends that have occurred in how much fans will pay for stuff and the ways that fans have altered their fields of interest. (Who bothers to collect Blackwood these days, for instance? His books were enormously sought-after at one time.) If you were doing bibliographies, you might find a line-by-line search through every issue justified by occasional clues to the existence of editions or titles which you hadn't previously suspected. There's also the faint possibility that a few lost collections, neglected in attics or cellars for decades might be put back into circulation by some vigorous police work. Many of the advertisers in FA are still active in fandom today and it's common knowledge that other advertisers' collections were broken up and resold after death or gafiation. But countless dozens of names and addresses represent individuals or small firms that drifted unnoticed out of fandom's awareness. It might still be possible to trace down some of them after all these years and discover some dusty rarities that have been forgotten but not annihilated as yet.

After all, it was just a few months ago that I got a letter from a collector of standard gauge Lionel trains, asking if I had any equipment for sale. He'd fount my name and address in a promotional magazine Lionel published in 1928 when I was six years old. We can't let old prozines crumble to dust while model train collectors are saving old Lionel locomotives from rust.

The Moon

When I was a little boy, and experienced great excitement each December, I always felt minor pangs of sorrow as each Christmas Eve arrived. Here was th occasion I'd awaited so long, expectations were about to be fulfilled, and yet there was the gnawing, inescapable thought that in a few hours there would no longer be anything to wait and hope for until the unthinkable eons of the succeeding twelve months had elapsed.

That old sensation has been sneaking into my emotions as the time before men land on the moon for the first time dwindles from years to months and now to weeks. Barring some kind of tragedy or act of bems, this could conceivably be my last chance to review how fans have behaved in connection with an inaccessible moon. I'm anxious to hear about the first landing on the moon, I'm steeled against the probability that it'll appear utterly lifeless and lacking in surprises, I'm convinced that years or decades from now life and surprises will be found in crevices or caverns that won't be explored during early landings, and simultaneously, I'm a bit unhappy over the knowledge that part of the mystery of the universe is about to be solved, never again to exercise its puzzling fascination for men and fankind.

One thing is certain: reading and collecting science fiction did not give fans any deep and accurate insight into the coming of space flight. The atom bomb went off in 1945, and perhaps those explosions were to blame for the bad guesses that so many fans made aboutt he conquest of space during the next couple of years. Gerry de la Ree took polls about space flight in those postwar years. In 1946, 47 out of 61 fans who answered the question predicted that atomic power would be used to propel the first spaceship. Fans did a bit better with respect to the sponsors: 25 predicted that a government would conquer space, while 19 held out for an independent group's backing. Predictions on when the first unmanned space flight would occur ranged from 1947 to 2000, with 1950 the approximate date most popular with the forecasters. The first manned space flight was most generally placed around 1960, though individuals chose dates starting in 1947 and running through 2100. It remains to be seen if fandom was correct on another matter: 25 thought the United States would sponsor the first interplanetary flight, and 9 favoured Russia. Before you grow too patronizing about the firesight of that generation of fans, think again about the new atomic bombs and ask yourself if you'd have guessed that the power provided by the bombs still wouldn't be in general use for less destructive purposes, two dozen years later.

I'm not sure why it should be so, but San Francisco and Berkeley fandom seems to ahve paid more serious attention to the moon, pending the first space flight, than fans in any other era. Once they got national attention in mundania, and on other occasions, they touched off a fannish whimsey that didn't subside for years.

The newspapers and radio stations all over the country gave a pretty good play to the Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's SF Chowder and Marching Society around the start of 1952. That group calmly filed formal notice with the United Nations that it claimed several properties on the moon. It gave writers of funny headlines and caricaturists a good chance to exercise their ingenuity. It seems to have failed to come to full attention of the Security Council, but it did alarm the committee that was planning Chicon II. Persons who joined that con had been promised a small bonus in the form of one moon crater for each person who paid his dues. The committee promised that the craters were guaranteed, even if the Elves, Gnomes, and co., won the rights to their lunar properties.

But fandom soon forgot all that in its obsession with a project which the Fancyclepedia II credits to Dave Rike and Terry Carr. This was the tower to the moon which fandom was to construct out of beer cans — empty ones, of course. Beer guzzling could no longer be criticised as a mundane activity for fans, because it was an obvious type of fanac following disclosure of the great plan. All sorts of speculations, written and drawn, filled vast acreage in fanzines for years and years. The only dissenting voice seems to have been that of Poul Anderson, who cited the rings of Saturn as an awful example of what happened when a similar project was attempted many years ago on another planet without allowance for the difficulty of creating a rigid tower of this height from a rotating earth to an encircling moon. Nobody paid much attention to him, because a serious story published in Amazing around 1935, called 'The Moon Waits', had been based on the existence of a rigid tube from the moon to a point on the earth's surface, and what man can imagine, man can accomplish.

So far, no fan has become famous as an astronaut or a major official in the nation's space programme. Maybe the example of Bill Dubrucq had more influence on fandom's behaviour than Gernsback's insistence that fans should become scientists. Bill was a member of the Lunarites, the Memphis fans' club, in 1940. He was helping in the search for a stable rocket fuel and tried to concoct one that proved to be definately unstable. He temporarily lost his sight in the explosion that resulted. So fans by and large didn't do creative things when actual progress started towards real space flight. But it's interesting to read, after a lapse of years, how some fans as bystanders reacted to the major events that have led up to the imminent moon landing. Here are some examples:

Dick Ryan, in 1955, on Eisenhower's announcement that this nation planned basketball-size artificial satellites: "It's started, by golly. It's much less than the space platform we've heard popularised recently, but it's something. Don't you have a sense of destiny?"

Andy Young, studying and teaching astronomy at Harvard, on the same occasion: "That business about the artificial satellite took us unprepared, and we were just as uninformed as anyone when the story broke."

Dan McPhail, two years later, after the Russians had launched the first sputnik: "I think we are going to see the darnedest race into space that you can imagine, between the USSR and the USA. It's going to mean a boost in research beyond anything rocket scientists dared to hope for in the past." Andy Young, again, on the sputnik: "We waited eagerly for the first step into space. But whoever thought it would be like this?"

Contrasting reactions to the 1962 orbital flight of John Glenn: Dick Bergeron: "John Glenn would probably chuckle at the fact that a simple triple orbit was too restful a theme for our favourite fiction. There's something spinetingling about the sound of a midwestern voice coming from outer space. I sort of like the idea." Hal Lynch: "Well, now we've got the cheering section. Suddenly we're all of us in this thing, playing to win. Shades of D. D. Harriman! Even if Glenn is one-half the creation of a legion of ghostwriters and legendmakers, the other half is more of a full-fleshed character than the science fiction writers have ever been able to make of the first American into Space." Steve Stiles: "I find myself so accustomed to the idea of travelling between galaxies that a mere few orbits around the earth don't excite me. I find myself wondering if I'll be able to drum up suitable excitement when the first manned ship lands on the moon. I suppose that it's true that it's hard for a romantic to pay proper attention to his own era."

When Glenn rode in a triumphant parade in New York, Larry Shaw described how he, Bob Rhea, and Dick Lupoff "left our usual sophistication and unfinished lunches behind to yell our heads off with the rest of the crowd. As Dick pointed out, "This is a day we've waited all our lives for! It was one time we were complete conformists, and loved every minute of it." But how will fandom react to the first actual trip to the moon's surface? As divergently as to the preliminary flights, or in a uniform manner which we won't foresee until the returns are actually in?

One fan thought hard about that, two decades ago when atomic-powered space flight seemed quite near to many observers. The outcome of this thinking was perhaps the first piece of faan fiction ever written. It's Redd Boggs' 'The Craters of the Moon' first published in the July 1948 Dream Quest reprinted a time or so since then, and probably on the verge of reappearing in another reprinted form this year. 'The Craters of the Moon' describes the events of a few hours on the night when the first human lands on the moon. The local fan club votes itself out of existence, and the narrator curses that lunar explorer. Little else happens in a physical sense in the story.

Redd makes a lot of predicting boners. He chose June 19th 1950 as the date for the landing on the moon. There is apparently no means of radio communications, so light signals are flashed from the moon to bring information to earth. The local fan club has only one feminine member, George 0. Smith has taken John W. Campbell's place as editor of Astounding, and the magazine's name was changed not to Analog but to Science Fiction. It would be easy to go on and on with proofs that Redd Boggs doesn't have the ability to look into the real future.

But there's another side to the faan story. Basically, it's the most accurate prophecy of its kind ever written, even though we haven't yet had that moon landing. What have you been reading about in fanzines recently? Worldcons that can't cope properly with a couple of thousand attendees? New wave writing that differs so greatly from the kind we're accustomed to? Wolheim's talk, with its emphasis on how much science fiction has come true? Complaints that there is too much "Star Trek" influence in fanzines. Through the mouth of the imaginary Clint Martin, the senior citizen in the Centerville Science Fantasy Society, we learned basically those problems twenty years ago. The first moon flight of 1950 has spurred public interest in science fiction — "Will this new stuff be science fiction? Of course, as long as it is speculative, it will have to be classified as such, but it probably won't be of the type the fan enjoys... We old-timers will be submerged by the new fans, who are all goose-bumps about the interplanetary love story or the tempo-nautical adventure yarn... No longer will we be avis rara... Fandom was at its greatest when a science fiction fan was an oddity, unknown to literary critics and feature writers. Subconsciously, I think, we have known and understood that. In some subtle fashion we've resented all this publicity, and popularisation of our favourite literature. All of us were alarmed when the atomic bomb fell — alarmed, in part, because it was a horrible weapon, but equally because it brought fulfillment of an old science fiction dream. Like all dreamers, we science fiction fans enjoy the dream more than the dream-come-true."

The girl blasts the club's decision to disband. "Science fiction fans are willing to peek into the future, but when the future creeps up on you, you start looking back", she says and announces that she intends to volunteer for service on the moon And the narrator curses the explorer when a semi-literate news dealer corrects the fan on the name of the crater where the explorer had landed. "It was a hallmark of the new age."

I bought a box of Compoz a year ago when squirrels broke into the attic and threatened to chew up my prozine and fanzine collection. I took one, then gave the squirrels something else, and haven't had occasion to resort to the other Compos tablets since then. I intend to take my second Compoz the day someone lands on the moon, just in case that day proves to be more unsettling than it gives promise of becoming.

Rocket To The Morgue

Fandom is never easy to understand. But it presents particular comprehension problems of unusual difficulty every so often. One of these times of bafflement has existed for more than a year. Anthony Boucher has been dead since April 1968. Obituary notices and expressions of regret appeared in many fanzines. But to my knowledge science fiction has not yet done the proper things, and this puzzles me. Here was a pro who behaved like a fan part of the time, he delighted every fan who met him and starred at many worldcons, he wrote fine science fiction and edited one of the best prozines, and he was the first to write a piece of faan fiction and sell it as a successful mystery novel. And only those hasty brief notes about how much he'll be missed have appeared in fanzines. We haven't had a thorough discussion of his fantasy and Science Fiction in the other prozines, and I've seen no extended accounts of what Tony was like and the good things he did. Instead we have had endless rehashes of Heinlein's philosophy, the meaning of 2001, and eighty-seven denunciations of Star Trekkers.

This column normally treats of fannish productions. But I want to do what I can to remedy this neglect. I didn't know Boucher, I lack the time to do for his prozine what Alva Rogers did for Astounding, but I can say some things about that faan mystery novel ***Rocket To The Morgue***. It isn't to bad a subject for this column, because it couldn't have existed without fandom of a past day. (In parentheses, I can also point sadly to the way mystery fandom has done much more than our fandom for Boucher's memory. The Armchair Detective, edited by Allen J. Hubin, ran a "Boucher Portrait", a compilation by Lenore Glen Offord. It contains many reminiscences by bit and little people of this "modern version of the Renaissance Man", followed up by a bibliography.)

Fiction about fans has appeared in fanzines before ***Rocket To The Morgue*** saw print, and one or two prozine stories had used fans as characters in science fiction adventures. But ***Rocket To The Morgue*** was a stunner when Duell, Sloan and Pearce published it in 1942. Here was a story in which you could read about science fiction fans, filthy pros, costume balls at conventions, fanzines, and many other trappings of fandom and prodom. One of the murders was committed with the help of a rocket. There were in-group references of the kind fans love so well: the book was published under the by-line of H. H. Holmes, but it contained references to Anthony Boucher. During your first reading, there was the added delight of uncertainty over the locked room puzzle: was there a mundane explanation or was a science fictional element responsible.

By page 27, the mundane reader was learning about us. In the middle of a brief history of fantasy fiction, Boucher wrote:

> "It has its aficionados, as intense and devoted as the audience for mysteries or westerns or hammock-romances. And the most loyal, most fanatical of these followers of fantasy are the devotees of the fiction of science — scienti-fiction to its fans, or more simply stf."

A few pages later, more respectable segments of the literary world discovered that the filthy pro who got more than a penny per word for his science fiction stories was doing quite well. In unmistakable words, it became obvious that agents for science fiction are not always the world's finest people. Then, about one-fourth of the way through the book, the reader was plunged into an extended description of a get-together of a bunch of pros and one fan. "The science fiction fans are highly organised, and they have Annual World conventions," one of the pros explains. "The last one was in Denver, so the fans, ever incorrigible neologists called it the Denvention. The next one's here in Los Angeles, and I'm afraid it's called Pacificon." 'Fanzine' is used in what I suspect was its first appearance in any professional publication outside the prozines.

The entire plot would be impossible without science fiction and its traditions. It's basically the story of an heir to the literary legacy of a series of scientific detective stories, best thought of as what we might have had if Arthur Conan Doyle had written about Professor Challenger as frequently and as successfully as he did of Sherlock Holmes. This heir seems to have been the only major character outside the police in the novel who had no model in reality. By a weird and curious fate, however, a modern generation of fans might imagine a resemblance to one of the Bob Stewarts of recent fannish fame. I can't say more without spoiling part of the plot for anyone who hasn't read the novel. Various people have traced the characters to their prototypes. T. Bruce Yerke, a Los Angeles fan of that era, apparently was the fan named William Runcible in the book. His big moment comes more than half-way through the novel:

> "Gribble bent over the rocket. There was a flare of exhaust and a loud explosion. All eyes turned, tennis-wise, to watch the rocket shoot past. But those eyes saw something else. They saw a plump figure topple over the lip of the trench into the immediate path of the Aspera IX. The ears heard a crunch of bone and flesh, and sharp ringing screams..."

It happened right under the eyes of a detective who was afraid there would be a murder. A now-forgotten Californian, Tom Wright was another fan who turned up in the book. As Arthur Waring, he refers to one of the eternal points of debate when he discusses Runcible to a detective: "He kept saying what fans ought to support was pro writing instead of fandom." He accidentally provides an important clue to the mystery's solution by giving the detective a sample of his artistic accomplishments.

The Armchair Detective's survey speculated that Boucher appears under two names in the book. Boucher is used as the name of a subsidiary character, and Matt Duncan may also be Boucher, as a novice prozine writer. L. Ron Hubbard, who had not yet become famous as a dianetics exponent, is credited with being the prototype of D. Vance Wimpole. Some extracts from stories about Captain Comet, a creation of Joe Henderson, leave no doubt that it is Captain Future and Ed Hamilton under the thinnest of disguises. Don A. Stewart doesn't appear in the story but is used to refer to things that John W. Campbell is doing off-stage. One puzzle I've not seen explained is Ackerman's identification of the important character Matt Duncan and his wife with Mr. and Mrs. Cleve Cartmill. He mentioned it only a few weeks after the novel was published, he was in the middle of the science fiction people Boucher knew, there must have been grounds for that identification, and yet the Duncans are holdovers from a previous Boucher novel which has nothing to do with science fiction. Austin Carter and his wife are listed by The Armchair Detective as Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore, but Ackerman when the book was published and George Locke many years later both considered Heinlein as Carter's model, possibly because Carter is described as creator of a future history around which his stories are modelled. The Califuturians is a club that is presumably the LASFS, although some reviewers have listed that organisation as prototype for the Manana Literary Society. The book is dedicated to the MLS and to Heinlein and Cartmill in particular, and one of Heinlein's pennames, Anson MacDonald is mentioned in passing in the story. (The actual MLS came into being after the book was published and was named for the book's creation.)

I'm on the shakiest ground when I try to assess the book's value, because mystery fiction is a field in which I've read only sporadically and intermittently. Tentatively, I'd say that the strength of ***Rocket To The Morgue*** is the superb way in which Boucher brings science fiction people to life and the remarkably accurate, condensed descriptions he inserts about the history and traditions of prodom and fandom. As a novel in its entirety, however, I don't find it as entertaining as Boucher's fantasy fiction. A couple of things about the novel seem to me to be flaws. One is the curiously minor attention paid to the first murder; it's almost ignored during the first two-thirds of the novel in favour of the narrow escapes from death suffered by the literary heir. The other problem is a great deal of plugging for a previous mystery novel featuring some of the same characters, ***Nine Times Nine***. I know that mystery writers like to call attention to their other books in this manner, but I'm afraid it's overdone in this case.

Nonetheless, it's a fascinating book, one that I acquired in both pulp magazine and paperback editions long ago, then just recently in its hardcover format. I read it again not long ago, for the first time in fifteen years, and found myself thoroughly puzzled by the course of events; over that long interval I'd succeeded in forgetting the identity of the guilty person.

To those who actually knew Boucher in person, ***Rocket To The Morgue*** should provide reminders of many phases of the man. His enthusiasm for Sherlockian lore obviously helped to create the fictional Dr. Derringer cult. His gourmet qualities show up in various places through the novel. He was a devout Catholic and the most important continuing character in the series which includes ***Rocket To The Morgue*** is Sister Ursula, a Catholic nun.

And if you have a good memory for names, but have never read the book, you may be wondering about a vague familiarity you sense in characters' names. You may remember them from their appearances in other Boucher stories. Dr. Derringer turns up in 'The Barrier', first published in that same year, 1942, in Astounding. Henderson, Carter, and Duncan bob up in 'Transfer Point', first published in Galaxy in 1950. Both have been reprinted in anthologies.

It was the first of a lot of professional stories in which fans appeared. Mack Reynolds' 'The Case of the Little Green Men' topped it by having a murder occur in the middle of a worldcon. Robert Bloch's 'A Way of Life' became infinitely more celebrated with a later fandom, one former fan even got a lot of money as a commission for a serious novel about fandom that never did get published, but ***Rocket To The Morgue*** was first. There has never been anyone else quite like Tony Boucher, and I doubt that there'll ever be a piece of faan fiction exactly like ***Rocket To The Morgue***.

Spaceship

I've been reading for the first time 'To Live Again'. It's a story of a type you don't find frequently in the science fiction field: grim in its implications of how humanity might misuse one form of immortality, possessed of no character with whom the reader can feel real sympathy or affection. It's more frightening in its way than most atomic doom stories, and it's a splendid novel. It sent me to the attic. I wanted reassurance that the Bob Silverberg who wrote the novel really had been a neofan once, creating goshwow fanzines. Sure enough, I hadn't dreamed that Bob Silverberg had once published a fanzine named Spaceship which grew as impressively in quality as his professional science fiction has gained in lasting worth over the years.

I suspect that a lot of people in fandom and prodom are unaware that Bob continues to publish a fanzine. He bobs up in FAPA a couple of times every year with a personal-type fanzine that isn't much known outside that organisation. Moreover, there have been other fanzines in Bob's past. He was even a SAPS member at one time, producing for it a journal with the amazing title of Z Prime. But let's stick to Spaceship this time, as the subscription fanzine that introduced the Brooklyn youngster to the delights of writing about the future and seeing what you write in print.

The Earliest issue I've succeeding in unearthing today is the fourth, which was distributed in late 1949. It looks like an unadulterated crudzine at first glance. The format is unusual: half-size pages created by splitting standard paper down its short axis, and bound with one staple in the upper left-hand corner. It's illustrated by a very young Robert Silverberg in a way that doesn't help the first impression it makes on the eyes, although one full-pager depicting an alien world seems prophetic of the crumpled fender school of three-dimensional art that later became notorious. This issue is interesting as a display case for the kind of fiction Bob was writing at this very early date. The lead story was "John Brown's Cellar", which is something like Damon Runyon crossed with Weird Tales-type fiction. The youthful author seemed to sense even that long ago the usefulness of attracting the reader's interest near the start of the story, for on the first page we find:

> "I am a reporter for the Bowery News and have a certain professional instinct aroused when a man pumps fourteen bullets into his wife and then disembowels and decapitates her."

It's not a particularly good story and the editor shows better success in handling words in some of his non-fiction remarks: "The recently revived Super Science has to learn to walk again. It's crawling now." for instance, or a description of Amazing as possessing "a mongoloid collection of tales."

At that time, Spaceship was co-edited by another Brooklyn fan, Saul Diskin. He disappeared from the masthead to go to college in 1951. The final issue on which he helped was a great improvement over those first few semi-botched editions. The fanzine used full-sized paper now, and you could show its illustrations to a hundred fans before you found a correct guess about the identity of the artist. It was Lee Hoffman, before she had evolved the distinctive stylus style. This 12th issue also leads off with a story. It's credited to James A. Adams, whom I don't recall as a fan of the period. Certain internal evidence causes me to suspect that it's Agberg under a house name. It's a very good little story about a man with unprecedentedly acute hearing which develops several surprising twists as it goes along to a climax akin to the conclusion of "John Brown's Cellar". But this issue is interesting mostly for the unknowing way in which several fans make remarks that seem much more striking today than they did at the time. For instance, someone named B. Chandler wrote an article giving cautious approval to the use of dianetics, after 23 hours of processing; his recommendations to other fans to try the discipline with care are strangely akin to the things several fans have written in the past year or two about the use of LSD. I had an article in this issue, comparing fandom of the day to the fandom I'd found when I entered the field. I marvelled at the way fandom had mushroomed in size, the high prices that were being asked for collectors' items, and the high proportion of fans who were eager to make money out of science fiction by becoming authors or editors. So what else is new in fandom.

Silverberg as a writer is definitely represented in this issue with a discussion of the lunatic fringe, 1951's popular description of Forteans, Dianeticians, Korzybski-worshippers, and various other people obsessed with some unaccepted way of life. "The lunatic fringe is here in fandom, and we've been forced to put up with them and laugh at their antics," Bob wrote. Of Shaverism, Bob called the first cave story, 'I Remember Lemuria', "readable and fairly entertaining. At least it was something new, which war-jaded fandom needed badly." But he criticised Palmer for turning Amazing Stories into "a haven for a group of neurotic and psychotic imaginers who were paid for scribbling down their imaginings." Bob sounds just the least bit envious as he also condemns the "tongue in cheek" authors who made small fortunes by toeing the Palmer line.

The July 1951 Spaceship contains a discussion by Redd Boggs of 'Destination Moon', which reads strangely today, in light of the way things actually happened. Redd's prophetic paragraphs stand up fairly well, when he predicts that this

film would not have as much survival value as 'Things to Come': the latter definitely receives more attention today from film historians and festivals. I'm pretty sure that the summer of 1951 was before the era when Hollywood began to release large quantities of movies for television showing, so Redd couldn't have foreseen 'Destination Moon's survival on the late show. In general, Redd felt the film "will be forgotten except by science fiction fans" after man really reached the moon, because its Technicolor effects might lose their brilliancy over the years, and because its characters weren't larger than life and didn't have very spectacular crises. "The only genuine idealistic touch in 'Destination Moon' was the scene in which the crew solemnly took possession of the moon "in the name of the people of the United States" and planted a flag in approved explorer tradition. This touch was in such ludicrous contrast to the realism dominating the rest of the picture that the audience laughed." Boggs also turns up in the letter column, delivering a lament that fans are making today as if it were brand new for fanzines: "The forte today seems to be specialising for particular groups... Quandry isn't quite as generalised as fanzines of ten years ago. I doubt if any fanzine is."

A couple of years later, Spaceship had become a fanzine capable of holding its own in any collection of the leading fanzines of any era. The 23rd issue, dated October 1953, is noteworthy for an essay by Harlan Ellison on Harlan Ellison. The author and subject was still a fan at the time, but he sounded identical with the Harlan Ellison of today in respect to the quantity of energy emitted and ideals. A now-forgotten fan named Bert Hirschhorn had been rash enough to refer to Harlan's editorial pronouncements in Science Fiction Bulletin as "raucous bellowings". Harlan wrote about himself in the third person:

> "Harlan Ellison is a naturally exuberant person. He has a most highly developed sense of wonder which allows him to stand in open-mouthed astonishment at the sight of Niagra Falls, or laugh like a Watusi with the wiggles over a copy of MAD. This same sense of wonder is what makes him leap to the ceiling when in comes a thick envelope containing a story by Bill Venable, for instance, which Ellison feels is a gem. So our noble editor goes ahead and demonstrates this faculty for astonishment by ballyhooing the Venable ms. in every possible way. And when the readers later agree, by an undeniable point score that rates Venable's story above most of the stuff Astounding publishes, why then Ellison is so happy he burbles some more."

Ellison, as if he were already thinking of ***Dangerous Visions***, claimed that SFB had discovered over thirty new talents in its first year. He'd "gone and purposely struck out in new directions to widen the scope of the amateur science fiction field with new viewpoints and new talents."

The recreation of hopping on Campbell, which is not yet obsolete, was quite well established in the Spaceship era. In this same issue, for instance, Redd Boggs was wicked enough to devote part of his 'File 13' column to this quotation from Campbell's June 1945 editorial: "Television, my own guess is, may never reach the stage of being in everybody's home, as radio receivers are now." Silverberg was a much more foresighted editor. In this very same issue, he seems to have sensed that the whole publication picture was changing for science fiction. "Despite the vast quantity of high-grade stories being brought us by ASF, GSF, F&SF, SS, TWS, the ex-de Ray mags and many others, the best s-f of all those days is coming from Ballantine Books, the exciting new firm which began publishing last fall." Titles that Ballantine was issuing around this time included 'The Space Merchants', 'Childhood's End', 'Bring the Jubilee', 'Fahrenheit 451' and a Kuttner collection. From this perspective I don't know whether to be more regretful at the fact that Bob didn't start writing fiction of that quality for another dozen years, or at his failure to continue publishing Spaceship until he found in recent years his full abilities as an author.

Light

I keep thinking about Les Croutch. His death more than a year ago might still be unknown in fandom, if Bill Danner hadn't belatedly answered a letter and found the answer back in his mailbox, with DECEASED stamped on the envelope. There's nobody active in Canadian fandom today who was part of the old Croutch gang. Les is rarely mentioned when people reminisce about the old days in fandom. Nobody ever reprints from the fanzines he published over a span of two decades. It would be hypocritical to eulogise him as the great forgotten fan genius of the past, because he wasn't up there with Laney, Hoffman and Willis as a writer or personality or innovator. But he was at the very top of the ranks of the important fans who never quite reach the highest level of creativity. I dug out a lot of copies of his fanzines to make sure I hadn't remembered them wrongly. They turned out to confirm to their mental image, but when I inspected details in these ancient pages, I decided that today's neglect of Les Croutch is even less justified than I'd originally assumed.

Les was one of the two famous people who lived in Parry Sound, Ontario — the hockey star, Bobby Orr, is the other one. I never met either of them. But what I have read of Bobby, and the interviews with him I've caught on television, cause me to suspect that his personality isn't too different from the Les Croutch that emerged from letters and fanzines. Casting about for a modern fannish equivalent of Les, solely on the basis of the written word impression, I thought about Dick Schultz. Their fanzines resemble each other to some extent, there is a common informality of style that sometimes seems to move faster as you read it, as if your eyes can barely keep up with the rush of words as they tumble onto the stencils, and there's another common trait, a lack of hesitancy about changing areas of emphasis when some aspect or other of fandom or the real world suddenly began to occupy their attention.

Light was the title that Les used for his biggest and most important fanzines. In the October, 1952, issue, he told something about himself:

> "Hair: brown, greyed at the temples (started going that way when I was 17); eyes: brown; height: 5' 9"; weight: 232 lbs.; chest: 46"; waist: 42"; I wear glasses, smoke cigarettes mostly, a pipe now and then as a change and the occasional cigar."

He had his own radio and television repair business and occasionally a Parry Sound mundane became immortalised in Light for presenting him with a particularly hard time at the shop, like the woman who brought in a filthy radio for repair, then accused him of switching cabinets when she failed to recognise the radio after the free cleaning and polishing job he'd thrown in.

One of the many flaws in All Our Yesterdays is its failure to pin down definitively the fans and fanzines that turned the tide to the deliberate red ink financial policy most fanzines now use for their budgets, in place of the old strict rules about distributing copies only for cash or trade. Lowndes' Le Vombiteur has been credited with the pioneer status in this respect, but that was an awfully small fanzine, and for years after its appearance, its influence wasn't fully felt. I suspect that an untitled single-sheeter that Les Croutch mailed to a lot of fans late in 1945 provides one of the first full statements of the attitude that was taking control of fannish thinking, and the appearance of this philosophy in duplicated form may have helped to popularise it.

> "If you want to receive Light, all you have to do is drop me a line, a card will do, and say so..... You don't have to send money. I am not after a contribution, though if you ever send one I'll be very appreciative and read it, though I won't promise to take it and use it. I don't even ask you to write a letter in return for every issue, though I do like to get them and feel that if I spent time on this publication and send it to you, you should drop me a line now and then. You needn't feel duty bound to say nice things when you do, either. I want honest, truthful letters, even if they do nothing but criticise.... My return for this? Well, this is a hobby. It is a sort of a vocation.... I like publishing. I like to show what I print to others. I like to write just for fun."

Les published some material by United States fans, although he liked to feature Canadians, who considered him as a sort of founding father of their fandom. The August, 1942, Light contains an article by Ackerman that has no great significance today for its message — the existence of a feminine fan, Barbara Bovard, whom a few fans had considered a hoax. But it happens to provide a first-rate sample of Ackermanese, the odd writing style which Forrest J then used in fanzines. I wonder if the Famous Monsters readers would recognise their hero if he wrote this way?:

> "I have been derelict in my duty to myself & my fellow fangelenos by letting LITE's 'Babsy' remain undiscovered on the home front all the time she's been making a faname for herself amongst U Fanadians! But do U noe what? I thot BEB was a seudonym! Well, look at the picture for yourself: Barbara Bovard — appears out of nowhere — is featured extensively & exclusively in Canadian fmz — while reputedly living in Los Angeles, hot-bed of fan activity. Why would a girl centre her interest in Canadian fandom when she didn't even get the VOM that was published practicly in her own backyard? (Odd coincidence: My st. no. 2361/2, hers 12361/2). No, I assured myself, 'BEB' is but a brainchild of lil Les Croutch, who latterly has brancht out under the same seudy in CENSORED. Well, there myt be a Barbara Bovard in LA — but she must just be a maiden aunt of Croutch's, or sumthin! No connxion with stf."

Curiously, Les loved Christmas and tried to produce extra large issues of Light decorated with Christmas seals and sketches of holly each December, despite his outspoken opposition to many aspects of organised religion. The Christmas issue for 1942 might conceal some information about Van Vogt which has not been accessible since, in a three-page biography written by Les and verified by both Van Vogts, shortly after he'd attained his first fame as a science fiction writer. For instance, Indiana's burgeoning fandom might like to know that the author of Slan obtained some of his earliest impressions of the world in Indianapolis. His family lived there briefly, starting when he was eighteen months old, while his father went to law school. His first sale was to True Story Magazine, an 8,000 word explanation of how he was a poor girl who had had to live in the park for a while, that brought in $160. He wasn't a newspaper man as Campbell once wrote, coming closer to that unfortunate condition when he did some trade paper writing for several years in the late 1930's. Campbell's 'Who Goes There?' was the story that finally hooked him on science fiction as a genre that can be written well.

In July, 1950, Canadian Norman V. Lamb wrote the feature article in Light. It has a familiar ring, because its twin theme is the rising cost of science fiction publications and the way some publishers were charging new fiction prices for publications containing mostly reprints. Lamb found that Astounding in the past dozen years had increased its prices 25% while its wordage had dropped by 8%. Science Fiction, he estimated, cost 135% of its pre-war price and weird fiction cost 125% of the pre-war price. "There is a mystery the writer is unable to fathom and that is how one publisher can give its readers nearly 200 pages of all new material for 25 cents, while another purveys a mere 128 smaller pages of mostly reprint material and charges 35 cents for the resultant product."

In April, 1942, incidentally, Light had given some news on the reprint question. Croutch wrote:

> "The US Federal Trade Commission trampled hard on the toes of the publishers of Marvel and the publishers of Future Fiction — seems the two outfits have been caught printing yarns that weren't new and not telling anyone they were reprints. Such magazines must henceforth run the word 'reprint' or 'reprints' on the cover in type equally plain to see as the title. This must also be done on the 'contents page'. This 'reprint' must also appear on the title page of the story that is not original. If a new title is substituted for the original, the original must also appear conspicuously."

Now, if someone today gets angry with the whole science fiction publishing industry, and digs into the lawbooks and discovered that this regulation is still on the books, and that it can be enforced today and retrospectively as well, some enterprising young fan equipped to overprint paperbacks and prozines might find the business quite brisk.

Les kept getting into trouble with a few fans over his artistic productivity. His own sketches ran heavily to Chic Sales as subject matter, usually with some kind of punchline involving science fiction or fandom. When he published the work of other artists, he had a bad habit of putting extremely ugly nudes on his front covers. Some had ninety-degree angles at spots where a normal body should be either straight or gently curved, leading to the general impression that only girls with steel plates in their bodies would pose for Light's artists. Breasts usually looked like the extra pair of lungs that someone or other in today's fandom conjectured loud-mouthed women must possess instead of the usual mammary glands. But occasionally Light had a cartoon that was amusing enough to neutralise the impression left by the nudes, like one by Gordon Peck on the last page of the October, 1942 issue: the explorer being roasted to death in darkest Africa by a native tribesman, who is using a giant testtuble supported by an ingenious array of pipes and tubes to turn it over the flame, with the caption: "Best equipment, bwana."

If Les still exists somewhere and hasn't altered his outlook on life and fandom, I'm sure he'll understand my good intention when I say that Light was the best of all possible crudzines. If you looked for impeccable mimeography, polished writing, the best available art, and a consistent format you would have a long hunt through all those scores of issues, with little success in your quest. But Light was as comfortable as a pair of old shoes, nobody ever got angry at anyone else in its pages, and after all these years it still seems to be alive as the ink and paper incarnation of a good guy's personality. Nowadays, when I'm afraid to open a fanzine for fear the staples holding its 140 pages together will fall out, or I must improvise a temporary binder so its four-colour covers don't get smudged, or I must spend hours thinking about how I can

write a LoC without getting myself involved in the deadly hatreds nurtured in its pages, I wish someone still produced something as scruffy and unassuming and genial as Light.

Stardust

Almost everyone must have a certain love-hate mixture in his reaction to those big, professional-looking, photo-offset fanzines with full-colour covers, better art than the prozines, far-out and inventive makeup inside. It's impossible not to love them, but there must be some hate adulteration in various groups for different reasons: the rest of the fanzine editors because it's so hard to compete with these for Hugo nominations, their own editors because the cost is too great for frequent publication, old-time fans because of a lingering fear that their existence may discourage lots of people from starting modest-looking but worthy fanzines, young and impoverished fans because they cost a great deal or are too beautiful to risk getting fingerprints on or frighten these fans from submitting material.

One consolation might be that fandom had something almost as impressive three decades ago and survived without experiencing the trauma that theoretically should have occurred. Stardust was the first printed fanzine that looked professional, provided beautifully reproduced halftones as well as line cuts for illustrations, showed some imagination in makeup, and rivalled some prozines for quality of fiction. Printed fanzines had always had a vaguely sloppy look about them before Stardust, usually appeared on scruffy pulp paper, and had too small a format to allow much leeway for artists or headings. Exceptions were a handful of beautiful publications that had been handset and published for a special audience on some particular topic with no intent of spreading it all over fandom.

In 1940, W. Lawrence Hamling was a comparatively new fan who was already mutating into a pro. While in high school, he had been chief editor of the school publication, Lane Tech Prep, which claimed to be the largest slick prep publication anywhere, and circulated 10,000 copies. He wrote some fantasy fiction for the school magazine, and in turn borrowed some of its format ideas for his fanzine.

"Ever since the days of the Fantasy Magazine and Marvel Tales, fandom has wished for such a magazine," Hamling wrote in an autobiographical sketch using the third person to refer to himself. "Bill decided that it was worth the effort involved to give fandom such a magazine — and did it."

The reference to Marvel Tales explains some of Stardust's one great flaw. It ran too heavily to fiction. The stories were good, probably representing what their professional authors considered the best of their rejection backlog. But already the great boom in magazine science fiction had begun and the need for a semi-pro fiction magazine was not as pressing as the need that had existed when William Crawford tried to make a success of the fiction-orientated Marvel Tales. Hamling knew the group he wanted to reach, "the larger, but as yet inactive group of fantasy followers who have up to now taken a back seat and have been contented to slide along," and it's hard in retrospect to understand how he felt that a fiction-dominated publication could fit the job he thought he had filled. His first issue editorial described it:

> "This chain has not been severed. The chain, that is, which separates these fans from the field of active fandom. To that end Stardust is dedicated.... A common ground must be found on which these two great factions can tread, side by side. I firmly believe that Stardust has found that ground. We know that a strictly professional magazine is inadequate to the task, and similarly do we know that a strictly amateur publication is inadequate...Stardust has its aim. To awake interest! To provide that common bond! To unite the passive group and that of the active fans into one huge fantasy organisation!"

Fans who risked the almost unprecedented price of 20 cents for the first issue of Stardust received a 24-page, 8 by 11 inch, professionally printed magazine with slick, heavy paper, featuring on the front cover a razor-sharp reproduction of a photograph of a nebula. The line-up of contributors was quite impressive, perhaps the most star-studded since the collapse of Fantasy Magazine: L. Sprague deCamp, Malcolm Jameson, Robert Moore Williams, Charles D. Hornig, and Ralph Milne Farley, not to mention the not yet celebrated Chester S. Geier. A less celebrated contributor was Henry Bott, apparently a writer of popular science non-fiction. His fact article on the moon and speculation on travel to it contains a sentence which we've heard paraphrased quite a lot of late: "But of what use would this worthless world be?" He answered by citing the moon's possibilities as a jumping-off place for flights to more distant worlds, as the site for an observatory, and possibly as a source of minerals. He concluded: "Oh, what a boost to man's ego when the first Earthman, clad in a space suit impervious to lack of air, or cold, or heat, steps from the air-lock of the first crude vessel, upon the pock-marked surface of the moon, and hesitantly (from emotion) says, 'I claim this world in the name of Earth!'" Armstrong wasn't quite that imperialistic, and it's curious that the speculators of old didn't foresee a logical necessity like a small stepladder.

In the same first issue, Hornig wrote an essay on a topic that is not yet exhausted in fanzines, "Sex in Science Fiction." But it's not likely that discussion on that topic today will use quite the language or argument that Hornig adopted:

> "Good science fiction stories tend to place the fan on a higher mental plane, a psychic condition that broadens his horizons and causes him to identify himself with the generalities of possibility — to lose his present identity in speculations of the future. There is a very hackneyed phrase (which I must plead guilty of helping to perpetuate) about science fiction taking one 'out of the hum-drum work-a-day world'. I think that phrase is so overworked because it is true. Now: the sex-mood does just the opposite. It is mostly animalistic. It eliminates the higher mental plane. It battles the escapist attitude of science fiction, spoils the illusion of glorious psychic expansion, and, in fact, reduces the reader to a lustful, very down-to-earth personality."

As a slight anti-climax, Hornig added: "A little wholesome love interest belongs in a good story, but it should not create a sex-mood."

The second issue had graduated to two-colour printing on the cover drawn by Jack Binder, brother of Eando. Its most important item is one of the very few articles about Heinlein the man, as distinguished from Heinlein's fiction, that you can find in the whole corpus of fanzines. Ackerman wrote a personality piece at a time when Heinlein was just becoming a familiar name. Nobody had heard of the future history stories, all the novels were yet to come, but Ackerman had read some of Heinlein's unpublished fiction, described himself as steeped in "Heinleinarratives long before he has begun to make an impression on the reading public" and proclaimed: "Bob is coming, with a bang!" Some of the unpublished fiction to which Ackerman refers still hasn't appeared, to the best of my knowledge, such as a novelette about Atlantis which he was writing in collaboration with another Los Angeles resident, Elma Wentz, or a story about a mutant man "of the nature of New Adam". I'm also unable to figure out if a story which Ackerman calls Bob's personal pet, "A Business Transaction", really was published later by Campbell under a different title. "Misfit" Ackerman revealed, was originally called "Cosmic Construction Corps" and the working title of "If This Goes On" was "Vine And Fig Tree". Ackerman lists as Heinlein's favourite science fiction Taine's "Time Stream", Smith's "Galactic Patrol", Wright's "World Below", and Stapledon's "Odd John" and "Last and First Men", plus anything by Wells. Heinlein, Ackerman says, "considers science fiction can be a very important form of creative literature and is inclined to think 'a considerable amount of speculative science fiction would be excellent collateral reading for students majoring in science, just to keep them from getting dogmatic and set in their ways.'" Ackerman asks Mrs. Heinlein to describe her husband and quotes her: "Bob has the eyes of a wounded olive." Heinlein is alleged to possess independent control of his eyes and to prefer blue beyond all other colours.

With its fourth issue, Stardust changed format slightly, reducing page size to 6 by 9 inches and increasing to 32 the number of pages. And by the fifth issue, the magazine had settled down into a better balance of fiction with non-fiction. Moreover, the non-fiction had turned away from popular science articles to the kind of material the fringe fan who didn't know most fanzines couldn't find in professional publications. Mort Weisinger, for example, was speculating about the chances of prozine writers selling science fiction to the slicks.

> "The slick science fiction tale should be elementary in concept, with an emphasis on characterisation and plot. Futuristic trimmings should only serve as a skeleton, yet be convincing. The story is the meat. Once the writer has established his premise, he's on his own. The reader has swallowed that foundation because he has been able to identify it with contemporary settings and situations. The reader accepts the idea of a Fair of the future, a West Point of tomorrow. These concepts become as taken for granted as the pulp scientificition reader's understanding of the Lorentz-Fitzgerald contradiction, Newton's Third Law, etc."

Hardly anyone except Heinlein and Bradbury fulfilled Weisinger's goal by selling consistently to the slicks, but their slick-published stories bear some foundation for his theories, and his suggestions seem more cognate concerning science fiction on television, after the tube killed the slicks as fiction markets.

Ray Palmer has a long article in this same issue which goes on and on, sounding at times strangely like one of Harlan Ellison's farewells to fandom. However, Harlan has never claimed credit for creating Robert Moore Williams' writing style. Williams has been involved in some recent fanzine controversy. I have no idea whether Williams remembers in the same way a historic occasion which Palmer describes in this manner:

> "For two years I tried to teach writers what I wanted. A classic example is Robert Moore Williams. He came to my office one afternoon, after having had a dozen straight rejects from me, to find out what was wrong. I told him simply 'Your stories are a lot of pretty writing. You write for Mr. Campbell. I don't like Campbell's way of writing... If you'll take your next manuscript, blue-pencil every phrase you consider to be good writing, I'll buy it.' He did. Yes, dear fans, he 'done went an' hacked sumpin fearful!' And he wrote a good story. He's been writing 'em since. He has been learning too, with practice, and today, he is still writing stories, with hack words (Webster says they are common, ordinary

> ones) but those stories are beginning to get naturally the ‘soul’ he used to think he was giving them with his pretty, high-sounding phrasing. Today, ofttimes, he sells me some pretty phrasing, but it has guts. It really is writing!”

Ackerman’s biography appears in this issue. To give you some idea of how long ago 1940 was, his collection filled only two rooms in his house and one garage at that time. I doubt that any publication anywhere has revealed since that issue of Stardust some Ackerman trivia: His favourite actresses were Jean Arthur, Alice Faye, Hedy Lamarr, Priscilla Lane, and Marlene Dietrich; green was his favourite colour; he preferred the scent of pine; and among his favourite stories were “Odd John”, “Mastermind of Mars”, “Black Flame”, and “The Diminishing Draft”. I seem to remember that the last title was “Draught” but don’t ask me who wrote it when.

And those five bimonthly issues in 1940 were all that Stardust ever issued. The final issue appeared around the time of the first Chicon. After that event, Chicago fandom splintered, many of its members turned into pros, Hamling soon was working with Palmer, selling fiction, and preparing the career that was to lead to editorship of Imagination and later men’s magazines, and Stardust didn’t change the nature of fanzines after all. I’m glad it didn’t, even though I enjoyed it immensely and was even given a token listing on the masthead for several issues as a member of the editorial staff. I like the spectacular fanzines of today and I hope they survive much longer than Stardust did, and still leave the bulk of fanzines unscathed.

The Damn Thing

I can prove that 1941 was a long time ago. First: a fanzine was considered magnificently daring when it was given the title The Damn Thing. Second: its editor introduced a story with a note which concluded "I've got to fill this mag with something," and the something was fiction by Ray Bradbury.

T. Bruce Yerke was editor of The Damn Thing, one of the earliest of the nose-thumbing, faanish fanzines. It emanated from Los Angeles, which normally emitted sercon publications, and very possibly it had a major influence on later fanzine editors like Charles Burbee and Francis T. Laney. Yerke didn't edit it nearly as long as Laney published Fan-Dango or Burb produced Shaggy, and its not as much fun to read as the later insurgent publications from Los Angeles. But its five and one half issues are notable for the instant nostalgia that they can evoke for lost people and times, and even though I've never seen a copy advertised for sale, I suspect that the Yerke fanzine would command a quite high figure nowadays from anyone collecting Bradburyana. There's something under his by-line in four of the five complete issues, and its quite probable that he was also responsible for some of the pseudonymous material. Bradbury is also responsible for at least one of the covers, a head and shoulders cartoon that isn't bad at all, and appears to be in imitation of Virgil Parch, who contributed occasionally to fanzines of that era.

> "I haven't bought or read a professional scienti-fiction magazine since the middle of 1939. They became so putrid I got sick," Tubby wrote in the editorial of the first issue, dated November, 1940. His outlook on golden age Astounding and certain other prozines highly respected today was matched by the way he felt towards some fans. A few of the milder remarks he directed toward the New York City-area fans who were acting as if they had planned a worldcon in 1941 in competition to the Denvention:
>
> > "The same person who has done more agitation in the fan world, and caused more hard feelings and unfavourable publicity for science fiction in general, is now doing his latest dirty stunt... We trust that the bigots behind the idea are quite happy that they've been able to make things difficult for the more honourable faction of science fiction fan circles. The editor can express only the most detestable opinion for any group that would deliberately attempt to sabotage the activities of the majority of fans.... We trust that the blustering bulls and sour egotists of the Newark pushers will be told just where the hell they stand by the rest of U. S. fans..."

No, I don't know whom Yerke meant by the opening sentence quoted.

More interesting than the 15-line story in this first issue by Bradbury is a personality sketch by someone identified as Ben Dover Farr. At one time, Bradbury seems to have been very nearly the court jester in Los Angeles fandom. "Bradbury was neither a critique nor the Rabelanasian (sic) that he is now," good old Ben says. "He was simply a wacky student of Los Angeles High School. Then one night Bradbury came in and commenced to hold his nose, giving imitations of Franklin D., W. C. Fields, and Fred Allen. We all followed his example and held our noses. Ever since then we have been plagued by Bradbury's imitations... Today, Bradbury is a critique. He is an aristocrat. He is Rayoul Douglasse Bradbury, a most unique individual... Rayoul attends all the latest affairs of Hollywood. He is on speaking terms with Jack Benny, with whom his father went to school in Waukegan... Rayoul is also acquainted with a number of Hollywoodians. His favourite hangout is the Brown Derby on Vine Street, though he gets his meals at Hugo's Hot Dog stand across the street. Here, in front of the Brown Derby, he points out (but never speaks to) all the celebrities to anyone who may be with him. And yet, Rayoul makes his living as a news hawker on 10th and Normandie! What we can't figure out is how in the devil he makes his ten dollars a week stretch like it does."

Ray replied to this description in the second issue of The Damn Thing. Yerke, he wrote, "suggests to me an epileptic beer-barrel doing a jig in a delicate old Chinese print. But still, all those who know Bruce have grown to love him. Even Bobsy Heinlein loves Bruce. Even after that article which Bobsy made Brucey toss out of The Damn Thing... Brucey wanted to print an article in this issue telling all about Bobsy and his strange reasonings on Technocracy, only Bobsy dint have no sense of humour and he threatened to sue."

In this second issue, Bradbury had a longer story, Genie Trouble! It is notable mostly because of a passage that seems to have obsessed Ray at this time. It keeps turning up in one little story after another that he published in fanzines, usually with a change in noun. "There sat a genie. Not a BIG genie. That would be silly. But a little genie." It was a Martian, I believe, in a short-story he contributed to my fanzine, Spaceways.

A purely personal pang strikes me every time I look at an advertisement in the third issue. I had all sorts of trouble finding clear photographs to illustrate All Our Yesterdays and I quiver all over at the thoughts of what might have been if I'd somehow found someone with the pictures advertised for sale in this issue. Ackerman, Morojo, Bradbury, and Hornig standing in front of the former Futurian House. An early LA Hallowe'en party including Heinlein, Daugherty in cowboy outfit, Ackerman and others. "Yerke having a fit over a stencil." Jack Williamson and Daugherty talking in Walt's car, guaranteed to be candid. "Nash breakdown on way to Pomona, showing Hornig, Bradbury & Nash." Film is prominent in another startling way elsewhere in this issue. Yerke wrote some paragraphs about fannish events in Los Angeles, and included some remarks about a then fan who later had considerably more success with movies than on that night of January 9, 1941:

> "A brief intermission was held while an ancient and creaking movie projector which was being jointly operated by Ray Harryhausen, Arthur L. Joquel and Yerke, was stopped to permit it to cool. With a gigantic light in the lamphouse, there was no means of fanning it. The damn machine got so hot that people around it were moving away, and the insides of the thing were scorched. Not so funny was the danger of fire, and the old-fashioned film is the highly inflammable type. To act as a precaution, ten or twelve glasses of water were sitting beside the operators, and they weren't for drinking purposes. In case of emergency, Joquel was to pull the plug, Yerke pour water down the top of the opening, and Harryhausen attempt to extract the burning film."

And Yerke was still commenting on New York City area fandom: "Congratulations, Burford, for knocking Sykora half across the room, even if it did start a riot."

The Bradbury contribution to this issue is the closest so far to a real short story. 'How Am I Today, Doctor?' is described as similar to a story in Thrilling Wonder Stories several years previously, although to me it sounds more like a short-short by Weinbaum which was published, as far as I know, only in Fantasy Magazine. It's about a hypochondriac who wants to live practically for ever and worries more and more as he feels better and better. Eventually his doctor gets tired of his patient, gives him a pill containing poison, and after the patient has asked the title question for the last time, the doctor tells him: "You were never better off than you are now."

Somewhere in the Ackermansion, I imagine, is a fabulously rare small piece of yellow paper which riled dreadfully yet another pseudonymous writer in the fifth issue of The Damn Thing. Here's a superb demonstration of how much fondness we can feel for the enemy after he no longer threatens us. Ackerman's home was the place where Claude Bloomer Quid had seen the note sent out with the Science Fiction League emblem by Thrilling Wonder Stories. Here is the text of that note:

> "Hi, Space Pilot! Red Spot of Jupiter, but here's that gold-plated SFL emblem your old Space Sarge has been telling you about on his etheradio. It's as rare as a Martian fire-opal, you can bet a sun against a meteor, and I had to comb the nine planets to find it. Well, Rocket Rookie, this button makes you a full-fledged space veteran. You're welcome now to passages on all voyages of the good ship Thrilling Wonder Stories, Startling Stories, and Captain Future. And I'll be riding the space lanes with you in every issue. All the luck in the Universe.
>
> "Sergeant Saturn".

But some of the fun had gone out of The Damn Thing by the time this last complete issue was stencilled. The needling, the parody, and the slapstick humour of the earlier issues had begun to turn into more serious, sometimes nasty, fussing. As you might expect, a penname was used for one of the blasts. I more or less agree with Fywert King, who wrote in defence of a conscientious objection, as far as his arguments are concerned. But some of his statements are quite as far below the belt blows as the paragraph by Jack Chapman Miske which set him off. Miske was scornful of several British fans who had refused to fight, whereupon King referred to Miske as an Aryan superman, described his mind as paranoid, described him as on a par with Hitler, and in general sounds as if he were John the Baptist preparing the way for the coming of Claude Degler. Fitmore Katel (and you can guess the reality of that name) filled a page with an equally unsatisfactory criticism of FAPA, although the poor fellow couldn't have had the foresight to know that exactly the same faults would persist in the organisation for another thirty years. "Fans are too lazy to put out a worthwhile mag for the FAPA. All they need is something in the mailing to maintain their membership... The avid collectors who want to get a copy of everything issued by fandom, continue their support and thus contribute to this disgrace to fan publishing and fandom in general." A shorter blast, this one at Damon Knight, directed this scornful insult at him: "Maybe you are going to turn professional." John B. Mitchel took out after Walt Daugherty, who had criticised some poetry by Robert W. Lowndes, mainly because of its erotic aspects. A sample of Michel as critic: "Pastels for Rosalind is a frankly sexual work which clearly tells the story of a frustrated lover rejecting the advances of the daughters of joy, simultaneously subtly imploring his loved one to assuage his passion. It is simple, direct, and true to life."

I don't know if the bad tempers exhibited in that issue formed a cause or a symptom of the approaching end of the fanzine. But the sixth issue never appeared in complete form. Yerke issues pages five through twelve as a separate publication. Most of it was quite different from previous issues, a conreport on the Denvention. Among the several thousand wild notions I've acquired over the years is to issue someday a worldcon history which would consist simply of the best conreport issued on each year's event. The six pages in this issue don't tell too much about the events in Denver, but they are crammed with what must have been the spirit of those pioneer worldcons. For instance:

> "That night at the party, a large keg of foaming stuff was placed in the kitchen. Fans sneaked cautiously around it. Leonard Jenkins, a Denver man, had a small pump, and promptly pumped up the pressure. Granny Widner led the fans in a devil dance around the sacred fluid, and Adam Lang (of no relation to Adam Link) turned the first tap. For the next hour we got nothing but foam. The party had to suffice on wine while McKeel, Martin, Wiggins, Madle and others bailed out the foam. Towards eleven, we began to get some liquid. But then it was past hotel drinking hours and the barrel was removed. Cries of anger and remorse. The kiddies being boisterous lay down on a rug in the lobby and whistled at the doormen. When they were kicked out, they took the rug with them and made an encampment on the street. All was going nicely when sirens were heard in the distance. Fortier wanted to know if they were blonde or brunette sirens, but when he was told they were sirens with red lights, he joined the rest of us in scattering down a side street. The fans reformed again, slightly above 17th Street on Broadway, and headed northwards looking for a bar."

Yerke, who wrote the conreport, was proud of the way the Los Angeles fans had made the LA-Denver trip in 36 hours with only two drivers. "This is as good as Lindbergh did."

Someone sent me a printed announcement not long ago which revealed Tubby to be still alive and well, holding some kind of function in a library in California. I hope he realises how many forms of pioneering he did with his fanzine and his writing.

Fanzine Indexes

Quick, now, what's happened only three times since fandom began and may never happen again?

Publication of a fanzine index, that's what has taken more than four decades to make its three appearances. I'll be terribly surprised if the next four decades produce a repetition of this rarest of fannish events.

Hardly anyone still has a complete set of the first of the fanzine indexes, which R. D. Swisher published and then revised during the late 1930's and early 1940's. It was hectographed, didn't have a big circulation, and never appeared in complete bound form as one volume. It was done at a time when there was still a reasonable chance for a nearly complete, accurate fanzine index to be published, and Swisher was the ideal person to accomplish the task. It's doubtful that anyone in fandom has ever had his persistence and thoroughness as a compiler of facts. He's remembered today only for the fanzine index, but he also compiled for his own satisfaction similar indexes on prozine stories, activities of fans in printed form, and goodness knows what else.

It would be ridiculous to say anything derogatory about a person whose pioneering index made possible later efforts in the same direction. It wasn't Swisher's fault that nobody with similar persistence turned up in later years to complete new editions of the index on the model he'd created. But you can't help wondering if fanzine indexes would have appeared more frequently in the years that followed, if Swisher's original creation had been a trifle less thorough. He listed where known the number of pages in each issue of each fanzine, the method of reproduction utilised, the size of the pages, together with the date when known and the volume and number. Digging out all those figures about page numbers and sizes magnified the task stupendously for those who followed him, and this information may not really be as relevant to users of the index as some kind of designation on the general nature of the fanzine — genzine, apa publication, polemic or whatever — and the address of its editor or publisher.

Strangest of all was Swisher's determination to include a listing for every fanzine he could find mentioned anywhere, even if no issue of a given title had ever appeared. It made his work all the harder, and it must have discouraged many a fan in later years from deciding to bring his index up to date, out of the conviction that fandom would expect the same meticulous inclusion of imaginary fanzines that existed only as titles in fiction about fans or a vague publishing idea that flitted briefly and without further consequences through the mind of a neofan.

Swisher himself found the fanzine chronicle toil so giant that by the mid-1940's, when he seems to have abandoned the activity, he had fallen five years behind on reading the prozines, with great harm to his complicated file cards which were coded to show his opinion of each story, then averaged out to create relative standings of quality for each author. I'd assumed that Swisher was either dead or so completely gafiated that nobody would ever find him again, when nearly a quarter-century went by with no new mention of him in fanzines. But just recently I discovered that he's alive and well in Missouri. I notified some fans who live near his present home, in the hope that they could sound him out on a return to fandom and on the whereabouts of whatever may remain of his file cards. He may still even have some things important for the sercon fans, because he was one of Campbell's best friends and safeguarded numerous unpublished and incomplete Campbell manuscripts.

Starting in 1952, a new series of fanzine index instalments began to appear. Bob Pavlat and Bill Evans, two Washington DC area fans, undertook the updating of the listing which was already a half-dozen years out of date. They published at intervals over the next seven years a new complete rundown of fanzines from the beginning through 1952, this time in a thoroughly legible mimeographed format, retaining the basic format of information that Swisher had created, but omitting the titles known to have never materialised. They had some problems that Swisher hadn't encountered, such as figuring out how to list Metalo-Mag, Ackerman's fanzine that was published on Army dogtags. They also had to make some decisions on the beginning of the trend for fanzines to spread out from their original subject matter and move into different fields. Thus, Max Brand was the subject of a fat publication by Rev. Darrell C. Richardson; the Pavlat-Evans index included it, even though its connection with fantasy or fantasy fans must have been quite limited.

This second fanzine index is still quite valuable as long as you remember that fandom had already grown so large in the 1950's that it was almost impossible to be as nearly complete as Swisher had been. Thus, through my fault, this index lists very few of the fanzines that were distributed through VAPA. I had one of the few complete sets of VAPA mailings in the possession of a still active fan. I promised on their request to provide all the necessary facts; I never got around to it, and so you'll not find listings for quite a few fanzine titles that belonged to people who are today quite celebrated professionals.

The third fanzine index to be published was essentially identical with the Pavlat-Evans achievement. Harold Palmer Piser was active in fandom so recently that most readers of Focal Point should recognise the name, even if they know little about him. He was an elderly man who claimed to possess absolutely no interest in fandom, had a low opinion of most fans, but was retired, had lots of spare time, and had a mania for indexing things. He decided to bring the fanzine index up to date through 1965, planned to rename it the Bibliography of Fanzines, and started out by reprinting the Pavlat-Evans volume within one cover, in loose-leaf format. For reasons that I've never understood, he insisted on a strictly sic reprint, including totally irrelevant paragraphs that had been published in reference to non-index matters in the original serial production, and not making the least effort to correct and augment the listings with the things Piser had already discovered in the course of his own labours.

The 141-page volume appeared five years ago. Piser was even unhappier with fandom when it failed to sell well but refused to make any particular effort to merchandise it. He couldn't understand why dozens of orders didn't arrive in each day's mail, or why it would be more likely to sell if he arranged to have a pile of copies available at each regional con than if he simply announced its availability in some fanzines. Nevertheless, Piser continued to work on his bibliography. He asked fans to supply information on fanzines to him, but he really wasn't satisfied with a fact unless he'd personally written it down after holding in his own hands the fanzine to which it referred. This led to his borrowing entire collections of fanzines and the ensuing near-disaster to several important collections when Piser suddenly died a couple of years ago. Most of the borrowed fanzines seemed to have found their way to survival, but all his research work was destroyed and nobody seems to know what happened to the unsold copies of the reprinted Pavlat-Evans index.

It's unlikely that another Harold Piser will come along and I have doubts that there will ever be another fanzine index that attempts to cover everything from the beginning to the present. The magnitude of the task is staggering. Doing the job on just one current year in fandom of today's size and diversity would probably be as large as Swisher's labours when he covered fandom's first ten years or so. Neither Swisher nor Pavlat-Evans had any great problem with such contemporary facts of fannish life as the semi-secret apas, the fanzines that exist in a dozen or so nations where English isn't the native tongue, or such phenomena as comics fanzines and monsters fanzines. The fan who decides in some future year to follow in the footsteps of Swisher must do some awful soul-searching. Comics fanzines have been even more numerous, ephemeral, and small circulation in recent years than those in the direct science fiction fandom tradition. But you can't conceive of a fanzine index that omits Xero, and if you include Xero, by what criterion do you omit a fanzine published by a 13-year-old for two issues about the Dynamic Duo?

If it's any consolation, such an indexless future for fandom has its parallels in other hobbies. I'm most familiar with the lack of a comprehensive and complete catalogue in record collecting fandom. Recordings are published professionally; most of them are listed in catalogues issued by the producing companies, and they sell thousands of copies, which would seem to make the task of publishing a complete list of all records quite simple. But there's no such thing. The person who collects records must do the best he can by hunting partial listings: a few giant volumes that listed all available recordings of serious music when they were new, reprints of old catalogues of the major recording companies, 'discographies' of various composers and performers, as many of the Schwann catalogues as he can find and afford, and improvise with these as best he can.

I wouldn't be surprised to see the fanzine index of the future split up in somewhat the same way, instead of embodying one thousand-page volume that would drive the compiler to an early grave and bankrupt the dozen fans who tried to finance its publication. It's quite practicable to plan and accomplish complete indexes to the important apas; old-time fans who have spent most of their careers in a large city might in their dotage amuse themselves by putting out indexes to all the fanzines published in and around Los Angeles, Philadelphia, or Bloomington; and someone might begin to publish an annual index to the fanzines of the past dozen months. It may not be too late to think about revising the Pavlat-Evans volume to increase its accuracy and completeness for the period it covers. Fandoms in Europe and South American nations are young enough for complete indexes to non-English language fanzines to be compiled.

If someone out there in fandom has been secretly compiling a complete and up-to-date fanzine index, and wants to gloat over my discomfiture by sending me an advance copy to prove that I'm a poor prophet, I hope he waits a little while. I'm under doctor's orders not to lift more than 15 lbs., and I don't think that the new edition could be published under that weight limit.

The Southern Star

Someone ought to take a poll on the best forgotten fanzines of all time. It would include fanzines that were popular when published but neglected today because even more brilliant ones in the same time and spirit are more publicised today; Aporrheta suffers this way in comparison with Hyphen. There were fanzines that seem more impressive today than they did when they failed to attract much attention as issues appeared, for one reason or another; Sam Youd's The Fantast would qualify, because its literacy and serious subject matter were out of joint with the general fanzine outlook of its time. Then there are the short-lived fanzines that produced so few issues that their quality is overlooked. The Southern Star is one of these.

The Fanzine Index lists five issues for it, but the last issue appeared four years after the fourth issue, in a hopeless attempt to revive a local fandom that was dead. Those first four issues had appeared in 1941, at a time when Columbia, South Carolina, somehow became a major fan centre. Three or four superactive fans suddenly sprang into existence in that comparatively small city, sucked into the whirlwind of their fanac a few other persons, seemed to be responsible for every other fanzine and every third contribution to all fanzines for a while, then subsided as abruptly as they'd blown up. They called themselves the Columbia Camp, and they broke camp through no fault of their own. The draft and wartime situations destroyed Columbia's fandom, and it never reincarnated in any concentrated form after peace returned.

The Southern Star wasn't remarkable in appearance, a conservative mimeographed format with artwork that was good for its time but appears crude today. It was somewhat larger than most of 1941's fanzines, ranging from thirty to forty pages. It was somewhat unusual in that it featured a geographical bias. There was an effort to feature fans from the South as contributors, and it plumped for the Dixie Fantasy Federation, the first major attempt to form a fanation in Dixieland. The Southern Star had one major advantage over most other fanzines of the time: excellent grammar and spelling combined with legible reproduction. It seemed to be a law of fandom at that time that the most literate fans were least able to cope with a mimeograph or hectograph.

But the bit thing that makes The Southern Star a leading candidate for the top ten forgotten fanzines is the remarkable way its material retains interest today. Aside from some indifferent fiction, it ran consistently good stuff that holds either nostalgia value or an appeal which time hasn't affected at all over the years. Joe Gilbert, a youngster, and Art Sehnert, a Memphis fan who was somewhat older, made a good co-editor combination. Harry Jenkins, another youthful Columbian, was listed as art editor but I suspect that he did quite a bit more than the title implies. Fred Fischer, another resident of Tennessee, and W. B. McQueen, one of the older Columbia fans, provided various types of advice and help on editorial matters. They seemed to get along well together, for they were all still listed on the editorial board after the fourth issue, and that's quite an achievement for such a large editorial staff.

The first issue showed the results of a real effort to get fresh, different types of material. Gilbert offered The Handwriting on the Wall, an attempt to analyse fans by graphology which he described as a limited but real science. His analysis of Tucker's handwriting seems quite accurate in retrospect, and you must remember that some of Tucker's lasting characteristics weren't as prominent in 1941 as they have been over the past thirty years:

> "Bob is highly individualistic. His ideas and thoughts are well defined and his vision is broad. He reflects before acting. He has an excellent and magnetic personality, and is a most likeable fellow, despite the fact that he's reserved inwardly. He's well-balanced, conscientious, and possesses a good control over himself. A normal, human, dependable person is this Tucker fellow; really quite a nice guy."

Then there was an extensive exchange of opinions on space warfare, extracted from correspondence between McQueen and Fischer. Some of their ideas anticipate more recent theorising on the topic that I've seen in fanzines. This issue also began a series of quite entertaining looks back at the old Munsey magazines, both generalised remarks and specific synopses of fantasy stories they published. It's by-lined Panurge, which was, if my faltering memory serves me, a McQueen penname. Whoever it was knew how to sound enthusiastic. Of All-Story Weekly, during its six years of life before its merger with Argosy, he raves:

> "Some of those unmentioned or unknown stories, gentlemen, were great stuff. Are you acquainted with Swami Ram? Do you recall the blind hero of the most powerful descriptive passages ever printed in a pulp is to be found in Francis Stevens' Claimed, telling of the destruction of Atlantis? Do you know that as far back as 1909 Cavalier carried a short having to do with the preservation of a Viking's body in a

block of ice? Across a Thousand Years was the title. In the old All-Story, Stevens, Julian Hawthorne, Sheeham, and several others are good material for a self-appointed press agent, so crusading we will go, I betcha. Maybe."

The big thing about the second issue was an untitled article by Milt Rothman. I hope Terry Carr gets around someday to include it in his series of reprints from old fanzines. It dealt with the argument about whether science fiction is escape literature. Maybe its conclusion will be coherent without the thousand preceding words. Milty was writing about two guys who disagreed about that old notion and one of them decided to become a scientist.

> "Of the two guys one had a push and the other didn't. Both hated the way of the world, but one was pushed into doing something about it. The other just hated and was unhealthy. What was that push? Under a mechanistic psychology there are no abstract qualities such as intelligence and ambition. There are merely patterns of behaviour, combinations of synapses, which the individual has acquired or inherited. The Gernsback Theory said that science fiction itself was the push. That is not true, for lots of guys who read science fiction don't have that push. In the guy who was going to be a scientist the push was an inferiority complex because he didn't have a girlfriend and didn't know how to dance so he said he was going to learn more science than anybody else. The Gernsback Theory apparently applied to him because he already had the push and science fiction made him jealous so that his push had something to work on. Maybe the push was something different in the other guys who had it, but whatever it was, science fiction was escape literature to the guys without the push, and it was stimulation literature, like Horatio Alger, to the guys with the push. Liebig said: 'To one man science is a sacred goddess to whose service he is happy to devote his life; to another she is a cow who provides him with butter.'"

I also suspect that a full reprint of L. R. Chauvenet's brief essay on ERB in the second issue would be justified despite the millions of words published about that author over the intervening three decades. Russell attempted to find the qualities that had made Burroughs such a big seller in the face of all those limitations as a writer. Of Tarzan, he writes:

> "In having Tarzan at once English lord and savage ape, ERB demonstrates his genius by managing to simultaneously appeal to the snobbery and secret rebellion against civilised customs which are to be found in the average person. Mowgli could boast no royal blood in his veins, and in the jungle of Kipling, animals for which the average person feels few sympathies appeared wiser than humans. Compare Kaa, the python, with Histah, the snake, for an instance of my meaning. The physical prowess of Tarzan, as contrasted with the cunning of Mowgli, illustrates another great difference between the two jungle heroes, and even the most cursory student of human nature in the mass could have predicted that physical prowess would win more admiration. And why? The average person has muscles; he can imagine them much stronger, and so can place himself in the role of Tarzan. Our average person does not have brains; he cannot, if normally dull-witted, imagine himself as clever, and the role of Mowgli becomes distasteful to him. Hence the immense sale of Tarzan — and the continued popularity of the Jungle Books among comparatively few."

Tucker was an innocent youth in 1941 who couldn't know the surprise that a Savannah fan named Lee would give him a few years later. So in ignorance of that future episode, he wrote in the third issue of The Southern Star:

> "Earl Singleton and myself once held dear the illusion that Nebraska Nellie, otherwise known as D. B. Thompson, was a girl. Earl called my attention to some of the writings of Thompson in then current fanmags, particularly a lengthy letter in Fanfare, which, apparently, he had dissected line by line, phrase by phrase, chasing the mirage. The mirage in question was the exact sex of that critter, Thompson. All I knew of Thompson at that time were his initials, DB. Nevertheless Earl seemed to think I should know all about everything, particularly as to whether Thompson wore skirts or trousers. The flattery was nice, but I couldn't measure up to it. I don't believe I had exchanged more than one or two letters with the Nebraska Nibs. However, I promised Earl I would soon be hot on the trail of the mystery because the matter interested me, too; imagine a femme hiding her fan talents under a cloak of secrecy! What a scoop it would be for me, if I could expose him/her. I looked into letters. I must admit I was practically convinced; some of Thompson's neat phrasing possessed an almost girlish twist; his syntax even suggested it. After debating the matter pro and con for several days, as to just what would be best, yet decent method for finding out, I threw caution to the winds and addressed a letter to him, which, if I remember right, was headed 'Dear Donna Belle'. I asked him point-blank his sex and he didn't even threaten a libel suit."

There's another penname in this issue which I'm not sure about. A news letter from New York had Morley as a by-line. It was probably Lowndes. Anyway, the writer provided a sidelight on the Futurians' antics at the Devention:

> "Chet Cohen was attending the convention equipped with a saintly beard (genuine) since he was planning to go to the masquerade as a prophet. There is an understanding between Chet and Johnny (-Michel-) to the effect that Johnny can hypnotise Chester at any time. So, on the evening of July 3, a bunch of the lads were going downstairs in the elevator leaving him standing rigid against the side. The poor elevator boys, knowing nothing of Futurian peck-rights, were beside themselves. They tried to revive him; they unloosed his collar and rubbed his wrists; water they sprinkled upon him and smelling salts the wafted under his nose. All to no avail; Chester was as one of stone. So with great difficulty they carried him up to the second floor and laid him out on a couch. Johnny had forgotten all about Chet. Comes the time when a large knot of us are gathered outside the Shirley arguing and trying to gather funds for a bottle of vermouth, and one of the elevator boys comes out and tells us one of our friends is sick upstairs. we all dash madly up — and it's Chet, lying rigid with his eyes glassily open. Everyone crowds about, all diagnosing and prognosing. Finally Johnny quiets everyone. 'Chester' he says clearly and snaps his fingers. And Cohen arises, looking about him bewilderedly."

The most obvious value of the fourth issue is a picture page. Halftone reproductions show quite clearly eight scenes from the Devention. I overlooked them hunting illustrations for my fan history book. There's Ackerman as the Huntchbackerman of Notre Devention and damon the demon knight as John Star at the costume ball, a very youthful Heinlein at the podium, and numerous other treasures.

Fischer had a continuing column called From the Starport. He remarks on Heinlein might be interesting, as a hint that the anti-Heinlein attitude is not a recent phase of the anti-establishment movement:

> "He takes a fantastic theme and embroiders it in such a matter of fact way that the entire spice of improbability is stripped from the framework. I read his The Devil Makes the Law! and I never once got the impact of unreality inherent in any real fantasy. Instead, I seemed to be reading what was merely a story — and not a very good story, either — about the workings of a protective racket in a modern American city. Except for the incontrovertible fact that the gangsters of the story were magicians, I found the bare plot to be as hackneyed and as threadbare as any I've every read. In short: Gangsters threaten shop owner with disaster, should he refuse to kick in with the heavy sugar for protection. He is not intimidated, but rounds up his own gang and fights back. Virtue, as always, triumphs! Pretty puny stuff, Heinlein! Take the frills away from almost any of Heinlein's stories and you'll have hidden in the wings strictly modern plots, made into fantastics merely by terms, times and tense.... His studied dryness takes away the glamour of impossibility.... The majority of Heinlein's stories build up to a climax or to a particular scene and just bob up and down on a sea of commonplace events before and after this point."

And Rothman gave a brief word picture of the Heinlein of the time:

> "Heinlein is a medium sized person, extremely good-looking, wears glasses, has a faint moustache, speaks slowly and with great deliberation, is very serious in manner and thought, and looks like a cross between Errol Flynn and George Brent."

Moreover, Milty quoted a Heinlein rap session with fans at Denvention:

> "The first question asked whether Mr. Heinlein approved of the use of drugs such as the Benzedrine surrogate which was mentioned in one of his stories. Heinlein answered that upon occasion he had partaken of certain drugs and approved of their use when the situation called for them."

So what else is new in fandom?

Horizons

Hagerstown's summer resembles this year the sunward side of Mercury. I feel not the slightest impulse to go into the sizzling attic and burrow through stacks of redhot fanzines, excavating molten ore as subject matter for this instalment of this column. Moreover, people who do odd things under the influence of exceptional circumstances like a prolonged heat wave are less severely chastised for those indiscretions. So, if I can avoid a trip to the stifling attic and simultaneously if I can risk attenuated denunciation for blowing my own horn, why shouldn't I devote the column just this once to one of my own fanzines?

There's another reason for this egocentric procedure. I was greatly flattered by the showing Horizons made in the Focal Point poll and I've received since the Fannual was distributed several plaintive inquiries from people who didn't know that such a fanzine exists. The most recent book about fan history barely mentions Horizons, many fans prefer not even to think about it, and maybe the time has come when some of the facts about it should be narrated in one convenient assemblage.

I had begun publishing Spaceways in the fall of 1938 as a general purpose fanzine which ran all sorts of fiction and non-fiction, poetry, columns, and advertisements. When it was six months or so old, I thought I had acquired the fannish know-how to cope with any fanzine situation. But a fat envelope from a woman somewhere up in the Great Plains States provided me with a real puzzler. She sent a couple of science fiction stories. They weren't good but they were better than some of the fiction I'd been publishing in Spaceways, I hadn't reached the stage yet of rejecting anything submitted for publication, and those stories were much too long for Spaceways if its issues were to continue to offer the variety readers seemed to like. What's more, I'd been thinking for some time about the deprived fannish condition in which I laboured, lacking the experiences almost all other fans liked to discuss: in other words, I'd never owned and used a hectograph. So I decided to start a second fanzine, smaller in size and circulation, which would emphasise fiction and would run stories too long for my mimeographed fanzine.

Everything I'd read about hectograph turned out to be true. It made the western part of Hagerstown purple, it decayed in the middle of reproducing a page, it produced barely legible copies, and a twelve-page Horizons turned out to be much more trouble than Spaceways which averaged twice its page count and drew ten times as much comment from readers.

But the lady who wrote those stories was happy to have a magazine created for her fiction, even though she never did anything else in particular in fandom. I also had the satisfaction of learning how bad I was as a writer of science fiction, by reading the comments on several stories I wrote for those early issues of Horizons. Moreover, there was one undiluted good thing about the fanzine's first few issues: covers by Walt Earl Marconette. He's forgotten today as an early fanzine artist, and his art wouldn't win much favour if displayed amid the creations of the powerhouses who are turning out pictures for fanzines today. But Marconette's drawings were smoothly executed, they weren't jumbles of excess detail, they exercised some taste in the use of multi-coloured hecto pencils, and I still contend that they were the best-looking series of covers, taken all in all, that any hectograhed fanzine ever had.

The first issue of Horizons was dated October, 1939. I tried to maintain a quarterly schedule, deviated several times in the first few years, and missed an issue altogether when intestinal flu knocked me out completely late in 1943. Maybe someday I'll get around to publishing that missing December, 1943, issue, because I haven't missed an issue since then and I hate to think of a three-issue volume five of a fanzine which has four issues in every other volume for a third of a century.

But I'm getting ahead of my story. After perhaps a half-dozen issues Horizons underwent a considerable change. I'd joined FAPA early in my fannish career, but hadn't done much publishing for it in that era when it really didn't matter if a member contributed his eight pages, because there was no waiting list and the person who was dropped for lack of activity could rejoin without missing a mailing. But after several years as a deadwood member, I felt a bit nagged by a bad conscience, and I was dissatisfied with the reaction that the fiction-slanted Horizons was getting. I decided to convert it to a FAPA publication, sometime in 1941, I believe. I began to shift emphasis to FAPA-type material, and by the Fall of 1942, two great things happened. I stopped publishing Spaceways and consigned the hectograph to the tender mercies of the devil who had created it, switching Horizons to mimeography.

Very little happened to Horizons since 1942, otherwise. About a dozen years later, I was prosperous enough to double its size to 24 pages. Before that occasion, I'd reached such financial heights that I stopped using yellow second sheets on which Horizons had been published during financially critical years. There were occasions when issues had cover illustrations, but not often; ten years ago, Jean Young Rose did a series of cover illustrations for me that I considered a good

mimeograph equivalent of the tasteful and simple drawings Marconette had provided in the hectographed era. About a dozen years ago, I did something which I still feel remorse about. I stopped cranking a mimeograph. A deadline was approaching, I was overwhelmed with non-fannish affairs, mechanical difficulties with the mimeograph were too much for me, so I bundled up a quire of stencils, some of them very inky and sent them off to Ted White who not only ran them off beautifully but somehow managed to type his Qwertyuiop Press imprint on one of the most saturated stencils. Ted, Dick Eney, and the Coulsons have successively been my mimeographers since then, and without them I never would have managed to retain the 28-year-old record of hitting every FAPA mailing.

It's presumptive enough to write so much about my own fanzine, and I have no intention of making this worse by quoting extracts from various issues the way this column normally does, because Horizons has been mostly self-written after those first few issues. There has been an occasional outside contribution. Ackerman bared his fannish soul once, revealing many fascinating things about his early years in fandom. Walter Breen contributed a scholarly essay on Shakespeare's sonnet mystery. And, of course, there has been a department entitled The Worst of Martin in every issue for the past decade. This baffles people who came in late and needs some explaining.

Early in the 1960's, FAPA dropped a member named Edgar Allen Martin on the grounds that material which he'd published for activity credits was not original. This ignited a fuss that lasted years. The material was a group of short stories which Martin had written, based on ancient jokes. In the end, everyone admitted that they were original material and that Martin had been dropped as a result of a mistake, but officialdom ruled that Martin had not adopted the proper procedure to have the mistake rectified and so couldn't retain his membership. I don't normally hold grudges but I did in this case, since the incident destroyed much pleasure I'd formally found in FAPA. I decided that Martin would be represented in every mailing of FAPA as long as the membership roster contained anyone who had opposed his reinstatement. I began to reprint the poorest examples of his writings I could find, in and out of fandom, usually filling one or two pages per issue with them. Occasionally I got pressed for time and wrote some Martin material myself instead of wasting hours digging through old mailing. Nobody seemed to notice the difference. To this day, I don't know if Martin knows that he has been subjected to these reruns.

I think I can claim Horizons as the oldest regular published fanzine which hasn't undergone changes in editorship or lengthy suspended animation. It isn't the oldest title still being published, because The Fantasy Amateur, the FAPA official organ, hasn't missed an issue since FAPA's organisation, several years before the first Horizons. But the FA has had dozens of editors. For a while I was reluctant to make this claim, because much of the material in Horizons down through the years has been on mundane topics instead of concentrating on science fiction and on fandom. But then just recently I realised the fallacy of such modesty. As certain experts on science fiction have proved, anything which a professional writes or does is important, even if it's an inter-office memo written by someone who once edited a prozine. I sold perhaps a dozen stories to the prozines during a brief period when I was doing other irrational things, too. Therefore, anything I write or publish has significance in the world of science fiction letters, because it emanates from one of the sacred congregation of the select few who have accepted money for science fiction stories.

Material in Horizons has taken several forms down through the years. During the early FAPA years, I wrote a lot of reviews of science fiction. Later, I began to publish some of my own fiction again, sometimes straight science fiction or fantasy, on other occasions faan fiction, once a chapter from a novel which was to be published until a magazine folded and then I couldn't get the manuscript back from my agent until I became ashamed of the story. That chapter, incidentally, was the only thing I've ever published in Horizons after trying to sell it. Articles about events and people in Hagerstown have grown more and more prominent in recent years, mainly because I can write them with less forethought and fewer halts to contemplate what should come next. Mailing comments have always been prominent in Horizons: they've led off most issues for thirty years, except on a few occasions when I couldn't get a mailing read in time.

Of course, sheer luck is responsible for this feat of not missing an issue since World War Two. I'd stencilled a new issue just a few days before the Christmas Eve fall in 1960 which busted a hip and prevented all forms of fanac for nearly three months. A six-week sentence to the hospital and convalescent home a couple of years later also came at the proper time between mailing deadlines. I had just enough time between orders to have an operation and entering hospital in early 1971 to stencil an issue which I probably couldn't have written in time during convalescence. Similar good fortune or extra devotion to duty had characterised the people who have been doing the mimeography, and whatever its other deficiencies, the post office system has been consistent about delivering stencils and completed copies.

There's a persistent legend in fandom to the effect that I dummy each issue and revise a first draft of all material. This erroneous belief apparently comes from the fact that each item in Horizons ends at the bottom of the page. Everything I write for Horizons is done without previous first drafting on paper and things come out even because I've had a lot of practice writing to space requirements for the newspaper. The Martin material fits because I cut it or choose items of approximately the right length.

The most entertaining thing about Horizons is the thirty copies which are left over after FAPA's requirements are met. I never know how to give them out. I owe obligations to perhaps three hundred people in fandom that I'd like to meet with exchange fanzines. But I consider Horizons principally a FAPA magazine; much of its material has meaning only in relationship to previous issues or other magazines in the mailing, and I don't want to order lots of additional copies, then feel impelled to change its nature because of the wider distribution. For nearly two years, I've solved the dilemma by doing nothing. Once every month I tell myself that I've got to send out to someone all those back issues that are piling up and every week or two I get a request from someone to go on the mailing list. The best procedure, I suppose, would be to ask various fanzines to reprint the things in Horizons that might have general appeal. Bruce Gillespie did this with one long article and has another lengthy one in the works. Over the years, material has been reprinted occasionally, and I believe one little story about fans got published in three or four different publications at one time or another. Occasionally I get the urge to dig out lots of back issues of Horizons, select from them whatever seems worth salvaging, rewrite them to make some improvements, and send them to people who ask me for stories and articles. A half-hour walk in the nearby town park usually gets such impulses under complete control.

Some people apparently collect Horizons. One almost complete thirty-year run of issues recently was advertised for sale, and I understand someone actually bought it. I hope collectors won't be too attentive, because some thing about Horizons have always been lamentably slapdash. Its pagination is wrong, for instance. I never put numbers on the pages until one of my mimeographers found it impossible to figure out what should come after which, so I just made a quick guess at the approximate number of pages that might have been published until that issue and started numbering from that estimated point. Bill Evans claims that there is a mistake somewhere along the line in the volume and whole number calculations. Writing in the stick causes me to omit the things I'd wanted most to put into a mailing comment or an essay and I'm getting increasingly careless about proof-reading. The inconsistency of quality that goes into Horizons can be proven by the outcome of the Egoboo Poll, which showed it to be tied for 20th place as best all-time fanzine, but only in 21st place among currently published fanzines.

Hyphen

The most frustrating thing about writing these fan history books is the lack of space. All Our Yesterdays was the longest individual manuscript about fandom ever published, the next book dealing with the fifties will be at least as long, and still there's never enough room to consider fully many major topics.

For example: why has Hyphen gained such an extra-ordinary reputation, one that continues to grow many years since its last issue appeared? Obviously, it was a great fanzine, but that's not a sufficient explanation. Thousands of words could go into a full exploration of the reasons for Hyphen's place in the dizziest heights of the fanzine Olympus.

Since the next volume of fan history won't permit such detailed delving into every topic, I'd like to advance here a few theories and explode a couple of misconceptions about Hyphen.

There are really two aspects to Hyphen's reputation in fandom: one it acquired in life and one that has grown since its death. Fandom today contains only perhaps five per cent of the individuals who were active when Hyphen flourished, and most of its admirers today never saw an issue while it was current.

The overwhelming reasons for Hyphen's reputation was the basic one, the quality of the writing in it and magical way in which the illustrations meshed in spirit with the text. Willis himself and the other Irish fans who were frequent contributors formed a superbly literate, erudite, and good-hearted team of writers who had perfected the informal essay, or rather had restored it to the good health which it had enjoyed before it had been badly battered in the fanzine writing which predominated in the 1930s and 1940s. The standard of writing in Hyphen was so uniform and so superior to the very end that I actually experienced a pang of unhappiness when each of the last few issues arrived. They came at constantly increasing intervals, like the rattles from the throat of a dying man, and I experienced momentary gloom because these increasingly rare issues of Hyphen somehow symbolised remnants of civilisation in an otherwise deteriorating universe. The final issues became painful reminders of the earlier times when there were several fanzines of nearly equal quality and taste appearing on both sides of the Atlantic.

But there must have been other causes for Hyphen's popularity. Maybe it benefited from the accident of its isolation. The 1950s were the years when fans first grew into the habit of visiting one another frequently, forming more and more local clubs, attending a half-dozen or so conventions every year. Before then, fans were fewer, auto-owning fans were scarce, and first the Depression, then World War Two had caused most fans to be isolated except in a few metropolises. Certain ideals get pulverised when fans begin to have numerous personal encounters with one another: we discover that other fans are unable to create in unrehearsed conversation the brilliant remarks that they include in their fanzines, they sometimes live like pigs and they may outstay their welcome as visitors. By the late 1950s there weren't many little-explored areas in fandom's geography, but Belfast was only known in imagination to most of us. Hyphen, along with other Irish fanzines of the period, benefited from the fact that we could paint Oblique House, John Berry's moustache, and ghoodmington competitions in whatever colours we pleased. The handful of North American fans who visited Willis found him personally as admirable as his fanzine, but the point is still valid. Hyphen was a survivor of the earlier days when fanzines had been the best known things about fans.

I think Hyphen may have attracted us as a symbol of the victory of fandom over prodom, too. Remember, the first Willis fanzine, Slant, had resembled a professional periodical by using letterpress reproduction, science fiction stories had been prominent among its contents, and some of them eventually sold to prozines. Willis, obviously gifted by nature with more ability to write professionally than nine out of ten fans who deserted fandom to write professional science fiction, not only remained a fan; he also discontinued Slant and substituted for it Hyphen, the most fannish of all fanzines. Hyphen's existence told us that not everyone was selling out at a penny per word less agent's percentage.

What's more, Hyphen was comfortable to the eye and to the fingers: never so thick that it required too much time to be read on the day of arrival, never so mint in condition upon arrival that you were afraid to open it less you create the first wrinkle. It was mimeographed on medium quality paper, mailed without envelopes, and it arrived creased down the centre. I'm timid about reading some of the magnificent fanzines published today simply because they look too perfect. And this brings me to one warning to anyone who may never have read an issue of Hyphen. If you've such an unfortunate neofan, don't feel disappointed when you finally decide to splurge out a year's savings on a few copies of it. It doesn't look at first glance nearly as good as it is.

One misconception I mentioned involved Hyphen's reputation. Don't imagine that it enjoyed while it was alive quite the legendary reputation that it possesses today. It was on everyone's list of the ten best current fanzines. But many fans would have rated above Hyphen certain of its contemporaries. Today, Hyphen is probably the most sort-after of all fanzines, except among those who seek the extreme rarities and the earliest fanzines.

Anyone who praises Hyphen for its good influence on the fanzines which followed is throwing bouquets in the wrong direction. Maybe the opposite was true for logical reasons: very few fanzines were modelled after Hyphen because it was too good to be imitated.

But Hyphen as a whole never had a first-rate equivalent from any other fan's mimeograph, no more than any successors ever sprang up to fill the gaps left when such diverse fanzines as VOM, Le Zombie, and Quandry succumbed.

If anyone today feel in the mood to create a second Hyphen he shouldn't try to imitate it in any way at all. Instead, he should try to fill his fanzine with better writing than exists consistently in professional publications, maintain editorial control that is absolutely conditioned by what the editor wants to write and print, and blend seriousness with humour, trivia with philosophy. He won't publish another hyphen, but his fanzine might attain a couple of decades from now much the same reputation that Hyphen enjoys today, for similar reasons.

Tapes

Let me start by pleading my case. I think fanzines today are better than they've ever been, on average, even if the finest ones lack the glamour and patina that age has conferred on famous fanzines of the past. There has never been a time when fandom produced anything resembling the number of fine fanzine artists active today. The scholarly type of fanzine writing is a new phenomenon which will get more of the praise it deserves when fandom grows more accustomed to thinking while reading. I don't see any degeneration in the character or behaviour of the average fan today when I compare him with the fans of the past, and he shows more timebinding ability today than his elders ever did. So, if I recognise the good things about fandom today, may I be excused for thinking wistfully about just one minute phase of fandom in the past? I don't find fans today doing the creative things with their tape recorders that they achieved when tape was a comparative novelty.

I've been reviewing some of my tape archives. Some of the things in them were as fine as memory insisted they were. Maybe I'm unaware of some tape recording feats of the last few years, but I get the impression that fans are using their tapers nowadays principally to correspond, to preserve the sound that comes from record players or television sets and to exchange dubbings of old radio programmes, plus some collecting of speeches, panels and similar events at cons.

A good example of what fans aren't doing today is the faanish satirical tape productions that were emerging from Cheltenham and Liverpool about a dozen years ago. They were exceptional, hard to distinguish from professional ventures in any way. In fact, I still haven't figured out how certain effects were achieved with the resources available to the fan groups in those British areas. Dubbing from them enjoyed a limited circulation in this country, but I don't think many people in the United States have yet heard my favourite. It's a tour de force derived from three sources: the United States presidential race of 1960, TAFF and the innuendoes that were arising from TAFF and some lively feuding then in progress in British fandom.

This was a Cheltenham production. It's put together like a fine watch, in the form of BBC coverage of an Ashworth-Bentcliffe-Sanderson TAFF race. Reporters give breathless details of the progress of voting from different parts of the British Isles, with painstaking differentiation of background hubbub every time a new city reports in. Some of the humour would be unintelligible to newer fans, like the excited announcement that Liverpool fandom has just case 300 votes for Bentcliffe, a stunning surprise development. (The shock results from the fact that only 60 fans were eligible to vote in that city, a nasty allusion to vote-buying charges that had been heard in previous TAFF campaigns.) Sanderson is cast as villain of the piece, so bitingly that Pittcon attendees were deprived of a chance to hear this tape. (The only recorder at the con capable of playing this tape belonged to one of |Sandy's best friends and nobody was willing to risk it.) One climax comes with the tumultuous arrival of William Makepeace Harrison, a then-celebrated character in British fanzine fiction modelled after the old Edwardian adventure novels in the Doyle tradition, with the deciding TAFF vote. Whoever spoke his lines gave an uncannily accurate imitation of Churchill's voice and rhetoric. The vote goes to Bentcliffe, and then comes what I still can't figure out: what sounds like hundreds of voices singing a triumphant campaign song for Eric. Someone tried to tell me it was done with sound-on-sound techniques, but it doesn't impress me as the kind of sound you get with that method, and besides, this explanation doesn't clear up the mystery of how the Cheltenham fans managed to accompany the choir with what sounds like a very large symphony orchestra.

John Myers Myers' Silverlock is a book that had a tremendous vogue in fandom a few years back. I don't think it's often discussed today, but I own a lasting proof of how much it was admired by some fans, in the form of musical settings of some of the poetry interspersed in that roman a clef. Ted Johnstone and Bruce Pelz do the singing, apparently accompanying themselves on the guitar. Their lusty voices fit very nicely with the folk-type settings which were worked out for the Myers stanzas. I'm a little vague about the composers, but I think they did most of it, with some help from Karen Anderson and Gordon Dickson on either the melodies or some extra verses for the shorter Myers poems. Little John's Song particularly intrigued me, for the ingenious delays introduced into its meter to elevate the melody above the level of the obvious. Larry McCombs sings one of the songs on this little tape in an eerie high tenor.

Some fans made real productions out of ordinary tape correspondence. Perhaps the leaders in this respect were Jean Linard, a pioneering French fan and his wife Anie. They evidently wrote a script before answering a correspondence tape, to make sure that they would cover all the matters that interested them in a succinct and interesting way, sometimes including special effects. In fact, Jean once confided to me that he felt a certain amount of resentment every time he mailed a correspondence tape to a fan, because he didn't think it quite fair for the recipient to destroy all his work by erasing the tape in the course of recording the answer. Curiously, all this hard work didn't destroy the informal quality of tape correspondence with the Linards. I saved one of their voice letters, maybe for the egoboo it provided. I'd tried out my French the last time I sent them a tape, and the comments they made in reply were absolute proof that they had understood

what I was saying. Anie wasn't too skilled in English, but she had the knack of remembering my limitations and held her speaking pace down to about 200 words per minute when speaking French to me. Jean rattled on at three or four times that pace, except when he was suddenly inspired to toss in a word or phrase or entire sentence in English, which he could speak very well. (He always had to correct his pronunciation of my name, which he would give correctly when he wasn't thinking about what he was saying. Then he would immediately correct himself and call me War-nair so American delusions about how Frenchmen mispronounce names would be riddled.) I wish I knew what happened to the Linards, who were active before fandom had really sprung up in France. He was publisher of Meuh, an indescribable fanzine, and wrote even more fantastic letters. Anie looked and sounded like Mea Farrow, as far as I could determine from the tapes and photographs, although Jean was also a camera fan who diverted himself by sending out photographs of his wife which gave her three eyes or an upside down nose or a triangular head. Unfortunately, Jean suffered a breakdown, I believe the marriage later broke up, and I haven't heard a word about either for many years.

Wouldn't it be fine, every time a big city produced a famous fan group, if they all got together and chatted to a tape recorder for an hour or so, enabling posterity to gain some idea of how they were before gaifation and migration and other troubles ended the municipal golden age? It probably hasn't happened too often, but it did in Los Angeles when practically everyone who was anyone in the early 1960's created a tape not meant for me but which eventually landed in my house through a complicated set of circumstances. Everyone was in fine humour, particularly Bjo. Rotsler wasn't there, but they were reminiscing about some of his artistic feats which are as hopelessly vanished as the famous Picasso sketch in the sand in the Bradbury story. They were the drawings he had made on barebacked feminine fans at a recent con, such as the one which depicted a Rotsler woman carrying a sign lettered "Phone for rates." Bjo, the possessor of the finest giggle I've ever heard in fandom, also told a wonderful account of a mysterious attack of hiccups because they were spaced exactly two hours apart, instead of the customary rate of several per minute, and a companion had embarrassed her by remarking after a hiccup in public: "Well, it must be 10:30." I think it's the voice of Perdue that tells on this tape about a pet dog that jumped through a plate glass window to demonstrate its hatred of postmen and speculates on the sales potential if someone started to produce a Mailman brand of dogfood.

I've saved some tapes because they rounded out my mental picture of fans whom I knew otherwise from letters and fanzines. Particularly precious is a substantial hunk of tape containing the voice of Walter Willis. WAW always claimed that much of his popularity as a fanzine writer came from the pain he took with his manuscripts, writing carefully and later revising and rewriting. But this tape proves his ability to be wise and witty on an ad-lib basis. He tells how he felt somehow guilty and imagined he was some kind of inverted bore because someone had made a tape for him at a party and had called certain fans away from the hilarity two or three separate times to say hello to Walt. WAW also explains on this tape something I don't recall seeing in print about his speaking style, which isn't the accent we normally associate with Irishmen. He used to have a strong Belfast accent, he says, then went to a public school (the UK equivalent of US private schools) where part of the education consisted of driving out regional influences on his speech. When he left that school, he felt homesick for his old style of talking, and now his accent is frozen midway between Belfast and the public school. Curiously, this tape contains the earliest example known to me of a fan expressing interest in golden age radio. Short-wave stations in this country (USA) used to send all the network programmes overseas and Walt loved them. Then the Voice of America took charge and began producing its own programmes aimed specifically at other nations. And so, perhaps 15 years ago, while the golden age was still gleaming faintly in this country, an Irish fan was longing for its great radio era as ardently as Americans have done in recent years.

A special curiosity is the first and probably the only issue of a Japanese tape fanzine. The group that published UCHUJIN as a Japanese fanzine decided to try to make themselves better known in the United States. The sound quality on this tape is not very good, because Japan's 50-cycle electricity created dubbing problems. But it's worth the effort of listening closely to hear such unexpected things as a 17-year-old feminine fan whose name sounds like Shelko Hira singing a cappella "Swanee River". Various Japanese fans give little talks about their activities or hopes for world peace, and there's a lengthy story by a writer named, I think, Hoshi, read by the translator whose name might have been Saiosho, with the help of a girl who spoke a few lines of dialogue.

There also seems to have been more effort years ago to put onto tape the most extreme audio rarities in fandom, the recordings made on disc or wire before tape recorders came into general use. I can't remember who sent me one precious reel of tape which contains dubbings of some remarkable things. There's another Japanese relic, a recording made commercially by Burton Crane. He wasn't well known in fandom, but he dabbled in it as a result of his interest in mundane apas and his friendship with Helen Wesson, who has long hovered between mundane and fantasy apas. Butron was a New York Times employee who was stations in Japan and moonlighted with some success as a singer. I don't know whether the song is Japanese or American in origin. He sings one chorus in Japanese, the other in English, to a very western tune that sounds something like a polka. If you know a song containing the lines "Glorious, glorious, one keg of beer for the four of us," that's the one Burton recorded. Also on the tape, one of the few surviving examples of the voice of Francis T. Laney, who was cutting a disc with Charles Burbee's help for Redd Boggs. It includes a probably unpublished anecdote about Al Ashley and the Hypnotic Ad, an odd reference to a man with shiny fingers that is new to me, and the story of the time Walter J.

Daugherty tried to use an hourglass at a LASFS meeting. I haven't decided yet if Laney was using a fannish expression I know nothing about or a mundane term when he called something "strictly henhouse."

I made one unnerving discovery when I was renewing my acquaintance with these archives. Some fo the tapes have become quite brittle. Like most fans, I have no scientific method for storing tapes, and they have been subjected to hot summer temperatures and chilly winter days in a semi-heated bedroom under whatever humidity nature provided. If you have any rare old fannish tapes, I recommend dubbing them onto new tape the first time you have access to a second recorder to save yourself endless trouble splicing broken ends of tape as the substance deteriorates further in futre years. So far I've found no evidence that the immortality which old fanzines seem to possess also extends to unique copies of fannish tapes.

Fido Was A Gay Dog

Every year, the backlog of fanzine material which should be reprinted for today's fans grows more immense. I wish someone would resume the habit which Bill Evans once had, publishing large collections of complete articles or extensive excerpts from individual fanzines of the past. I get these reprinting moods only occasionally, but I was looking through a bulging envelope the other night and realised that I could provide some welcome relief for Horizons readers from my own writings, by borrowing from the fanzines which had rested in it for three decades.

Futurian War Digest was a publication which kept British fandom together during World War Two. J. Michael Rosenblum started it as a for-the-duration replacement for his The Futurian. Doug Webster did an immense amount of work on it later on. It emphasised news notes on fandom and prodom, most of which wouldn't interest today's fans, and lots of book reviews, mostly too short to have lasting value. But there were longer items which I think have more than curiosity value for today's fans. I hope I don't get into trouble with anyone for my failure to seek permission to reprint from anyone involved. Some are dead, others have vanished completely, I'm sure I couldn't assemble a complete set of okays, so I didn't go out for any.

The first item is a rather long one which I'm going to quote without cuts. It's John F. Burke's biographical essay on Eric Charles Hopkins. Even older fans may have difficulty remembering Eric, so the piece is important not for the specific facts it narrates but as an example of how magnificently the British fans wrote when they really tried in that antiquity. It's from the February, 1944, issue:

> "In dealing with Eric, I am on more dangerous ground than that which I covered when attempting to present short studies of C. S. Youd and D. W. L. Webster. The first two subjects in this series are better known to fandom through their letters and publications than through personal contact: conventions and hasty fan gatherings are very pleasant affairs, but one has little opportunity of really getting to know one's fellows. Sam and Doug, despite their expeditions, are still more like wise voices speaking from far distances than human beings. Eric Hopkins is well-known to all the Londoners, who will have a definite conception of him that may disagree with mine. I could have invented many things about the first two, but with Eric I must be careful.
>
> "At the 1939 SFA Convention our chattering group was approached by a dark-complexioned, rather sinister person who was, if I remember aright, dressed in a green sports coat and flannels (and, presumably, shirt, tie, socks, and shoes). Eric denies the green sports coat, but I still feel sure that I remember it. He looked just as I imagined Sam Youd would look. Sam does not look in the least like Eric. We talked about something, but I cannot recall one word of it now. The second time we met was in London when Sam and I were staying with Maurice Healy: again I recall some very animated discussion wherein Sam and I were explaining some idea we had to Eric as we walked along by some park railings; again I have no memory of what it was. As we walked in the rain round the Albert Hall, sneered at the monument, and discussed all the fans we might visit, Sam mentioned 'Brave New World'. Eric said "Isn't that the one where the woman takes off her clothes and makes improper advances to the bloke?" "It is," we confirmed. Eric said: "The improper advances are all I remember of that book." He lost his ticket when we were travelling on the Underground, but we all looked so honest that the collector let him through without paying.
>
> "The third meeting was in Liverpool, shortly before I was called up. Joan had had some throat trouble and lost her voice, which made things very much easier for Eric and me. We went out for a walk in the darkness and he became involved with the road blocks at the end of our road, finishing up on his knees, muttering at me from the gloom. We went back to Yorkshire, where he was at the time stationed with the RAF, leaving behind him Henry James' 'Ivory Tower' and a box of Christmas cards he had promised faithfully to take back for his colleagues.
>
> "This absent-mindedness does not quite tally with Eric's character. He is an extremely methodical person: I am not too sure that he is not over-careful; too much deliberation can squash inspiration altogether. Eric's judicial approach and refusal to be stampeded make him an excellent critic, but as yet I have seen no signs that he is likely to be a creative writer. He is impartial to a degree that astounds a person like myself: he chided me for saying that the writings of all the world's great critics have been enlivened and improved by their prejudices and intolerance, and that an absolutely unbiased attitude would be rather a dull thing.

"Examine any of Eric's few contributions to fan magazines, and you will be impressed by the care he has taken. He admits that he writes even his letters with some thought to their construction and phrasing. Though a great believer in good balance and form in literature, I think it best to write letters to a friend quite spontaneously, letting it all come out in a spurt. I realise, of course, that the effect at the other end may at times be alarming.

"Arnold Bennett said that "the fame of classical authors is entirely independent of the majority... It is by the passionate few that the renown of genius is kept alive from one generation to another. These few are always at work." Eric has often quoted this to me when I have disparaged one or two writers of the past for whom he feels respect; he feels, with some justification, that if an author has survived some hundreds of years, there must be some reason other than affection on the part of the reader who claims to enjoy him. This is not to be denied, but there are dangers in such a belief. Eric is inclined to advance the more fact of their survival as proof of their excellence; he approaches each author whose work he has not tested before with the assurance that it must be good if "the passionate few" have been saying so for so many years; when asked his reasons for liking a particular work, he is likely as not to quote somebody else' opinion, or justify its existence by something not unlike the "survival of the fittest." So willing to believe that all things have their good points, he may at times lack discrimination.

"All this is not questioning Eric's sincerity. More than any other of the circle with which I am acquainted, I think he may claim to have been in a job (pre-war, of course) to which he was entirely unsuited. In the most unfavourable circumstances he has developed a passion for art in all its forms and good taste that even his too open-minded policy cannot conceal. Entry into the Forces has made him think more deeply about post-war planning and all the difficulties attendant on the abolition of war from human relationships. Most of our acquaintances have put aside all such things, preferring to drink themselves silly or to sit contemplating their navels.

"I have been turning out my files and sorting through some of Eric's letters. It is impossible to quote from them properly, as when he seizes upon an idea he develops it at some length — and there is an astonishing miscellany of ideas in the few pages I have had time to examine. He complains: "I have not the slightest recollection of a single instance when I had a poem explained to me in its construction, style, form, or any of the ways in which poetical expression is arrived at. Still less have I ever read a poet's works in conjunction with his life and with a knowledge of his period, two indispensable prerequisites for a proper understanding." You will observe that he is interested in the ***expression*** of ideas — in the machinery of art: I have not been able to find in his letters that he has paid any attention to the original inspiration. Manner rather than matter seems to have been Eric's study so far.

"His method of reading in 1940: "I work in a period, and read contemporary fictions, etc., as an anchor to my voyages into the peaceful past. As Bennett suggested, I let one author lead to another. In this way, Coleridge should be the next purchase to Lamb, but I have ordered Wordsworth instead because of the latter's 'Literary Criticism', which is 'indispensable to an appreciation of verse.' W.W. was a great friend of Lamb anyway." Very methodical, you will admit.

"A few other glimpses of his opinions my be enlightening: "I like music of any period if it's good, from Bach to Wagner..." "I have no preference in painting because I am without experience, although in time I shall endeavour to penetrate that wing of Art, as I am music and literature now...." "My own opinion is that the inbred instincts of centuries and a fundamental difference in mentality besides physical life sets woman quite apart from man..." Maybe we had better leave off there, as one's opinions on such matters change in a couple of years, though it may be noted that in a recent letter from Canada he refers to the women there as empty-headed. I have no idea whether that proves anything or not.

"As usual, I come to the end of my study with a feeling of profound dissatisfaction. Human beings touch one another at so few points. Eric will doubtless be horrified to learn that I have always regarded him kindly as having many things in common with me. Thinking it over, I realise how little I know about his thoughts and his real attitude to life. In his conversation and his letters he says what he has to say quite clearly, but with such obvious calmness that one wonders if these are his real opinions or the result of stewing several philosophies from books he has read, straining the result through his critical mind, and producing a polished article that somehow reflects nothing of his real character. If his critical mind is still functioning, he will soon be writing to me and explaining just what is wrong with that startling metaphor of which I have just delivered myself."

It's a bit disconcerting to encounter a contemporary enthusiasm for something which we have been congratulating

ourselves on first appreciating, decades after it was new. This same Fido contains a paragraph which proves that Val Lewton was discovered by fandom long before the nostalgia people thought they'd done the same thing in the 1960's. Wartime confusion in Great Britain caused Fido's staff to be unable to determine the identity of the writer:

> "As one example of a film in which the physical aspect of a weird story is not unduly stressed, I might mention 'The Cat People', a very unpretentious production that has received little publicity among the general public. Based upon a legend said to be current in a part of Serbia, that certain people are descendants of the 'cat people', it tells of a young woman in America who marries, despite the ancient warning that those of their type will, if occasion should arise, change into large cats of the panther variety. Although, in the film, she changes and roams in search of per prey, no actual changes are shown and the only view of the 'cat' is by silhouette or shadow. One of the best scenes is where, driven by instinct, she attempts to kill the woman friend of her husband, chasing her through an hotel swimming bath. The other woman frantically diving into the pool, treads water, all the while listening to the roaring of the beast in the darkened hall, lighted only by the flickering water on the ceiling. The familiar pseudo-religious touch is introduced, when her husband and the 'other woman' are trapped in the draughtsman's room where they work, and the man routs the beast by the simple expedient of raising a T-square so that the silhouette forms a cross, and calling the beast by his wife's name, telling her to go "For God's sake". On the whole I found it an engrossing film and hope there will be more like it."

Fido had fleas of a sort. United States called them riders in later years, when fans got into the habit of publishing small personalised fanzines and sending them to this or that fanzine for co-distribution. Fanac was probably the most famous later example of a fanzine that reached readers with this type of riders. Futurian War Digest must have been the first fanzine that did this regularly, and there were times when the riders provided more pages of reading matter than their mount. With the May, 1943, Futurian War Digest, for instance, went a British Fantasy Society Bulletin, probably published by D. R. Smith, Dennis Tucker's Delirium Tremens, and Ted Carnell's Sands of Time. From the Tucker publication, here's a narrative by Edwin MacDonald of how another hermit was hampered in his efforts to live up to his reputation:

> "The Hermit of the North and the Hermit of the Highlands had long thought it was time they got together, and so they did, to plot a campaign for the Fanarchists. I arrived in Aberdeen and promptly started out in the wrong direction, but eventually found my way to the spot marked 'X' on Doug's map, at the bus stop near the Union Street and Bridge Street crossing, where I was to await the arrival of Doug in bus. I had just deposited my case on the pavement and straightened up, to be confronted with a figure which bobbed up from I know not where, with hand outthrust in front of my nose. "Edwin MacDonald?" the figure exclaimed. "Good Ghu!" thought I, "this must be the Webster"... "Doug Webster?" said I, taking hold of the outstretched hand, Doug had apparently arrived early. And thus we met...
>
> "We wandered around till lunch-time, when we met Doug's sister and brother-in-law; very nice people. Then we hopped aboard a tram, after Doug had assured me it was quite tame, and reached Fountainhall Road and the far-famed 'Idlewild'! On the doors, inside the bests and inside the tripewriters were large placards:- "Shut This!" — "May You Be Haunted By The Souls Of All The Tomatoes If You Do Not Water Them ***Now***!!" — "Sinners Beware! Water The Tomatoes Now!" and such like. The majority of Doug's family was, you see, away for a week's holiday. Incidentally, the Web has had a pillar-box placed just outside his gate especially for his convenience...
>
> "We explored some bookshops and in the evening we went to the theatre and saw an amusing play of Somerset Maugham's.
>
> "When I entered Doug's room, I gazed in awe at the beautiful collection of books. Forthwith I began my excavations in the various bookcases and shelves; Doug was astounded at some of the things I found. He has quite a number of books on psychology, his favourite fruit, many of fantasy, weird, science, philosophy, mathematics, sadism, humour, general, and the best collection of pornography it has been the pleasure of my eyes to rest upon; also quite a few 'Weird Tales', 'Unknown's and other items, rare and other. I even discovered some science-fiction magazines, and imagine Doug reading things like 'Terror Tales' and 'Horror Stories'! He also has a Flash Gordon book which he treasures. I became immersed in all this literature until the early hours of the morning.
>
> "Next day, Sunday, we journyed to Hazlehead, wandered through the park and over the moor, where we were entertained by Home Guards slithering along the ground on their bellies, practising methods of crawling. We walked on and talked... I even got Doug to talk about science-fiction! Back in 'Idlewild' we frittered away the time; ping-pong, records, tea, talk. I wormed my way through his books and mags., — and correspondence when he wasn't looking. (Anyone wishing to know who 'Swine' is

should send me a 1/- P.O. and stamped addressed envelope!)

"We finally kissed each other Au Revoir with tears in our eyes, as Doug was going back to the land early the next morning, which I spent wallowing among the books again. All this was interspersed with fights with bellicose little Berlioz, the fascinating Webster kitten. In the afternoon I set out for home again to recuperate from the shock of my first meeting with a fan...

"I may conclude by saying that though Doug did not at first seem like his letters, he did later seem to 'fit in'..."

Webster, unfortunately, was among the many United Kingdom fans who gafiated during, or soon after, World War Two. He was erudite without being stuffy, and seemed to possess far more talent than the three or four fans of his generation who became rich through professional writing. "Back to the land" probably refers to the public service farm duties which I seem to remember him tackling as a conscientious objector. Incidentally, the three-dot outbursts are in the original, not signals that I've cut anything, probably a writing affection of Edwin's. Then, in October, 1944, Fido ran an item about the adventures in Italy of a pair of Canadians. It was written by Bob Gibson:

"It was a bright and sunny morning when Sgt. Norm Lamb of Toronto and your humble scribe set out. It stayed that way, only more so, all day, for the local weatherman has been reading the inter-bellum tourist leaflets, and has turned on the sun.

"All leave, pass and 'absent without —' travel is by rule of thumb. There are official pick-up points to facilitate it. And by some strange ruling of destiny it is always easier to get away from camp than to get back. We reached Naples in two lifts.

"Bookshops were known to exist on and near the Via Roma, near the Naafi. We came upon them in due time, and entered the nearest. First blood was mine — La Casa del Genere Umano, by Mario Viscardini. (Neither of us is an Italian scholar. We pick fantasy by the cover illustrations, mostly. The majority of books are paper-bound>) Norm groaned at this, but it soon developed that he was a faster reader than I, and his professional training — he ran a bookshop back home — gave him the edge. He soon made up the difference and went ahead. I have yet to catch up.

"We passed from one little shop to another, beset by shoeshine boys, ring sellers, souvenir peddlers, beggars, and children touting restaurants the while. While I looked over a blank windowful Norm struck a rack containing several by Luigi Motta and Capt. C. Ciancimino. At the end of it I was very much behind, and tried to make the assistant understand I wanted copies, too. The chorus was "No kapeesh." (Phonetic spelling). When I lifted the pile and asked "Dooay?" he went into the basement, but returned with a shake of the head.

"The next shop was the last on that street. My chief harvest there was a two-volume (paper) Italian version of Kellermann's Tunnel — Il Tunnel Sooto l'Oceano.

"When we returned past the shop where Lamb had reaped his harvest I had an inspiration and said I was going to try an experiment. I had copied the names (of Lamb's books) down and showed the list to the man. Then I added 'Etcetera'. It clicked. He led me into the cellar and pointed out a couple of shelves. I wondered where Norm had got to and began to look them over. I found other copies of most that Norm had acquired outside. Shortly, he entered. And lo — I found that I was a sump of duplicity, who had left him to bake in the boiling sun, while I revelled in a nice, cool cellar full of BOOKS! Seems he didn't think I'd be in long enough to matter until I was. (When I mentioned that I was going to write this he commanded me to confess my treachery in the matter. Orders is orders!)

"At the end of our time I had twelve books, Lamb about eighteen. (One of these was non-fantasy. Kipling's Plain Tales from the Hills. Another was by Jack London, but I had it in English, so wasn't tempted.) All in all, a satisfactory trip. We got a kilo of oranges to help us bear our burdens, oiled up our thumbs and set out for camp. Took us seven lifts to get back.

"Now if only the language wasn't Greek to us we'd have lots of reading matter. But readable or not, this week we are going to Naples again... If the thumbs hold out.

"In all we have made three trips. Books that sold at L5 (lire, not pounds) new, are sold at an

average of L25 second-hand. We've been asked L250, but it didn't take. When the Lamb was asked that for a hard-shelled book I'd got for fifty I could fairly see the spikes of his moustache smoke.

"My score is 29 Italian (11 of which Norm hasn't yet acquired), one German and two English. His must exceed 40 all told, and he has 13 I still want, including the prize of the lot, Grifone's Dalla Terra Alle Stelle."

Such episodes in Scotland or Italy are trivial and meaningless even as incidents in fan history, I suppose. But I feel a sort of triumph whenever I read such things in old fanzines. The events described, unimportant though they are in comparison to the might events of the mundane world in those years, have been reprieved from the oblivion that wipes out such things as soon as memories grow faint and participants die. Maybe every copy of the fanzines that originally published them and of this issue of Horizons will eventually crumble into dust or meet some more violent fate through the work of centuries or another war. Until then, a few fragments of the past have been salvaged and maybe someone else will reprint them anew some day, giving them a further parole from the common fate of man's works. Meanwhile, an event which had more eyewitnesses was the 1944 Eastercon in London, organised by the Cosmos Club of Teddington. Billed as the first full-scale convention of the war in Great Britain, it was reported in diary form by Dr. John K. Aiken in the June 1944, Fido:

"Saturday: 2pm. Aiken and Frank Parker arrive at Waterloo without tickets and are detained by officials. In the distance they see hordes of conventioneers, who avoid their gaze. Eventually they are permitted to leave the platform.

"2.15 — 3.0pm. Gathering of the fans: by 3, Syd Bounds (Kingston), Hal Chibbett (Bowes Park, N11), George Ellis (Manchester), Bruce Guffron, Fred Goodier, Gordon Holbrow (Teddington), Ron Lane (Manchester), Arthur Hillman (Newport, Mond.), Peter Hawkins (Surbiton), Don Houston (Letchworth), John Millard (RCAF, Jackson, Mich.), Dennis Tucker (High Wycombe) and Arthur F. Williams (Camberwell) have accumulated. Attempts are made to read the Con Booklet, which Hawkins has spent the whole previous day in duplicating, but although the cover is fine the paper inside is too bad and the attempts are swiftly abandoned. (The quiz which was particularly illegible is to be reprinted.) Everyone worries because Gus does not appear (it is later learnt that all leave is cancelled in his area.) ((Ed. — No British fan gathering is complete these days without our pet Angeleno, Norman (Gus) Willmorth — in American uniform, a friendly smile and... well!))

"3 — 4.30. Perambulations. Nothing interesting is found in Charring Cross Road.

"4.30. Coventry St. Corner House. Pandemonium. The Oaseleys (Stoke-on-Trent), Michael F. Lord (looking magnificent enough to be his namesake of the Admiralty) and Bullett turn up, and, like the rest, are pushed through the mangle which is called the cafeteria. Manchester expresses surprise that London can keep alive on such fare and retires to recuperate in the park.

"5.30 — 7. Disney programme at news theatre taken in. Things are looking up.

"7 — 7.30. Consumption curve for Scotch Ale in the London area begins to rise.

"7.30. The Convention President (Walter H. Gillings) and Mrs. Gillings and W. A. Devereux arrive. The Shanghai Restaurant is invaded. Some participants perform prodigies of eating, despite the theory that the soup is nothing but an aquarium warmed up bodily. They become completely surrounded by piles of empty dishes. Others hang back delicately, valuing their stomachs. Scotch Ale is brought in an enormous jug, and is imbibed. Professor Low, unable to be present under military exigencies, sends the gathering his love. Names are signed in wax (stencil). Devereux, Gillings and Aiken decide that everyone must take everything much more seriously.

"9.30 — 10. Scotch Ale curve reaches peak for the year.

"10.00 onwards. Many meet their Waterloo.

"Sunday: 10 — 11 am. Prodigious fetching and carrying by one and all. Shirley's (Teddington cafe housing Sunday's session) disappears beneath a wave of auction items and electrical apparatus. This latter turns out to be useless, doing nothing but emit loud indelicate noises, and keeping a mobile fuse-mending squad constantly in action. Gascoigne, Gateland, Gomberg and Sandfield (wearing a tie of a totally new primary colour) are newcomers. Swing discussions rage. Hawkins appears with duplicated

dinner signatures. Ellis reads Captain Future, undisturbed.

"12 noon. Museum. Original Turners, an original Morey, MS of The Smile of the Sphinx ("It's the cat's whiskers," says Hawkins) and other ToW contributions, first issues, old books, and the complete files of Beyond and Cosmic Cuts are on view.

"12.30. Brains Trust. Gillings, Aiken, Hawkins and the questioners maintain high intellectual level except for typographical trouble leading to moonstruck fans and ribaldry about Millard's socks. ((Ed. — A peculiarity of American servicemen is their rolled-down gents natty half-hose — can someone tell us the reason?)) As clank of cutlery comes from below, the last question is answered in monosyllabic unison.

"1.00. Lunch. "Proper Food" asks someone anxiously. (It is.)

"1.45 — 2.15. Presidential Address. Gillings performs the prodigious feat of keeping large numbers of fans silent and attentive for half an hour wile he discusses the possible future and functions of fandom and fanwritings, emphasising the need for an attitude at once more serious and more broadminded. He outlines the kind of professional magazine he hopes will appear in Britain after the war, and suggests the Beyonds as the training-grounds for its authors. It is up to fans, he says, to show that stf is worthwhile and can really foster achievement. (The high-spot of the Con.)

"2.30 — 3.30. Talk.

"3.30 — 5.00. Monologue by Parker: i.e. first session of the auction. Quiet opening: later terrific bidding for FFM's in particular. Surprising lack of enthusiasm for original drawings and manuscripts as against magazines.

"5.00– 5.30. Tea, and relaxation for the auctioneer's throat.

"5.30 – 6.30. More auction — top price (10/-) paid for complete file of Scoops; the FFM of 10/6 fame does well again (8/6). Only a half-dozen items turned in. Ellis gets his Captain Futures. Curiously no British reprint Editions are left. A spare Beyond does well.

"6.30 — 8.00. Films. The Cosmos Club film now patched and scratched almost beyond belief, plays all its tricks: it breaks, the reel falls off, the sprockets go haywire and finally the projector lamp blows. But Millard is a match for it, there is a spare lamp and after he has whirled it through in well under the bogey the remaining films are tops, Monster of the Loch being a little cryptic and dated. Departures begin, Tucker and Lord leading.

"8.00 onwards. The King's Arms. Relaxation. Toasts are drunk to the Cranberry Bogs of Cape Cod and the Governor of the Greater Antilles. Trains are missed. By special arrangement the full moon rises to light the walkers home.

"In conclusion, the Committee would like to thank the participants (and in particular the President, for his generous sacrifice of a placid weekend) and the donors of auction items, for all they did to make the Con a success. They announce that <u>they</u> propose to issue a souvenir booklet of higher quality than the illegible Programme; as to the proceeds (not so large as they would have been if that lamp hadn't blown!) a proportion will go to a Future Convention Fund. One further announcement: the Debate ("Man is not a free-agent") postponed for lack of time, will have been held at Shirley's on May 13."

I should explain that I'm using Fido's typography in most respects, without exerting undue care in the matter. I'm omitting the all-caps which were used when mentioning prozines, partly because of the limited legibility capital letters possess on this old typewriter. I'm omitting an occasional editorial insertion in these articles. Meanwhile, I think it's time for another brief biography by John F. Burke. This series, incidentally, had begun in Sam Youd's The Fantast, It moved to this fanzine when Sam gafiated to become first a soldier, then John Christopher. This sketch of Donald Raymond Smith comes from the April, 1944, Futurian War Digest:

"This is going to be awkward. It is more than somewhat presumptuous of me to attempt a biographical sketch of the aloof, secretive secretary of the British Fantasy Society. I have met Don thrice, corresponded. with him, and fought with him in the columns of fan magazines, but although he has never been reticent with his opinions, he has never been communicative about himself. When it came to

writing this study, I wrote and tried to coax a few details from him, but received only a refusal to divulge any "intimate secrets" of his life, with a rhyme that sheds little light on his character.

Donald Raymond Smith
Was beloved of all his kith;
But he was never very well in
With many of his kin.

"Having failed to produce any response, I tried to recall some little thing from our meetings that would help to start a train of thought. Don came to my rescue when I was stranded in a particularly awful army camp near Nuneaton. He came over to collect me with his tandem, and probably does not realise even now how close I was to turning away in fear. Perhaps he hoped I would, and had brought the infernal machine along merely to scare me. If so, he failed; we wobbled about a bit, I made apologetic noises and thought how contemptuous the back of Don's neck looked, then we started on the long road to the Smith' ancestral home. I was fed well, given several books of cartoons to read – these being considered about my intellectual standard – and later delighted by a recital of gramophone records that testified to an unsuspected musical taste in the retiring Mr. Smith.

"This brief respite from captivity was not my first meeting with the Sage of Nuneaton. We had chatted for a few hours in Birmingham several months previously. We met for a third time and indulged in much the same routine. And from these three meetings I gathered – well, not much. Don was fair, somewhat windblown, wore spectacles and looked more good-humoured than I had expected. He will, in my memory, be clad in sports coat and flannels forever, unless we come together at some future convention and he wears the flowing gown and peaked hat that suits his office.

"But that is unlikely. He says that he will not attend conventions. He discourages people from visiting him, and in his letters and articles has always sneered – yes, I say sneered — at fans. Unsociable? One of those unfortunates who cannot escape from the inexorable grip of fantasy, but endeavours to salvage his pride by making derogatory remarks about his fellow slaves?

"Nothing ready-made will fit the case. If I look back to the days when I first read the Smith articles in Novae Terrae, I can remember the feeling I then had of his being conceited, affected in style, and shallow. Time has altered that opinion, though not to such a degree that I number myself among the "Cosmic Case" admirers. Sam Youd and I quarrelled over some of the prose poems by Smith in Fantast, particularly the purple "Oceana", which was acclaimed by the devotees of gush as a minor masterpiece. I thought it bad then, and I think it bad now, but certain features of Don's style appeal to me more now than they did then.

"The name of Donald Raymond Smith will not, I feel confident, ever be known as that of one of the great creative writers of the world. He himself has no such ambitions, as far as I can judge. He would like to make as much money as P. G. Wodehouse, but that's not much help. I think he would make a good critic of the caustic, destructive kind – a minor James Agate. His phrasing is terse, and at his best he can produce delightful flashes of critical sensibility but in anything long his style would suffer. Perhaps he was destined to be a journalist, but he is not interested in the ephemerae which must of necessity be the journalist's main concern. And perhaps he was destined to be no more than what he is, a jig-tool mechanic, dabbling in literature and music, admiring blood-and-beery writers like Hemingway, making a name for himself as a sardonic sage in a small group of adolescent fanatics. There is something for the psychologist: is Don a would-be mighty figure who can find no outlet for his desires in the larger world, and endeavours to build up a reputation among a few gullible readers of science-fiction? It fits – he sees as few of these fans as possible because personal contact always destroys such illusions as the Sage of Nuneaton's reputation for wit and caustic criticism. Could be.

"It could be a lot of other things as well. What makes Don what he is? Was he dropped on his head when young? The shape of his head and features does not suggest it – at any rate, no more than those of any other fan.

"Work it out for yourself. He writes satires and vague fantasies, confesses to having written a science-fiction novel (kept well out of sight), likes the idea of strong men, shows no sign of liking women, beer, or cigarettes; would not like to pluck and clean a chicken, dislikes intellectuals, likes Wagner, James Thurber, David Langdon, climbing mountains....

"He has annoyed more people than I would care to annoy. John Russell Fearn threatened a libel action. Sam Youd, after being one of Smith's most ardent disciples for many years, fell out with him because he showed no signs of sharing Sam's political views: Sam is like that. Doug Webster, I think, found the views of Smith too much to endure, probably because Don exhibited no social consciousness. We were all shocked at the name of D. R. Smith being entered in the B.F.S. rolls as secretary: the individualistic, unsociable D.R.S., notorious as the dead-end of letter chains, magazine chains; the lazy, annoying Smith! But there he is. It serves him right.

"So far Don and I have not had hard words. We quarrelled in fanmags before we began writing to one another, so perhaps that phase is over. Doubtless if I were a budding politician or a sociologist I would find him intolerable. As it is, I find him tolerable. No more than tolerable? Well, now...."

Occasionally, Fido published material not by Britishers or by New Worlders on duty in Europe. Such was an article "Down with Fan Humour," which Francis T. Laney wrote in the August, 1943, issue:

"The literature of fandom teems with allegedly comic articles and stories – some entire fanzines are devoted exclusively to the silly side of things. Even crudely drawn cartoons have been allowed space in some issues – as though we were all juvenile followers of the Buck Rogers funny books. An outsider looking through a representative stack of fanzines could not fail to be unfavourably impressed – and could scarcely be expected to be attracted by so apparently frothy a hobby. Fans generally speaking are fairly intelligent, reasonably serious people (judging from my own contacts) and it is a source of never-failing amazement to me that so large a proportion of so many fanzines is devoted to laboured attempts to make us laugh.

"In late years, the cult of silliness and asininity has been growing by leaps and bounds among the general population, and it is not surprising to see a reflection in fan circles. The "kidder" and the "wise-cracker" have become national heroes; every night, millions of Americans sit spellbound, listening to some inane radio comedian. Jokes and humour obviously have their place in a well-balanced life, but it is pathological when <u>nothing</u> can be taken seriously, when <u>everything</u> must be twisted and distorted into something to laugh at — this condition is, I suspect, merely one facet of the widespread inanity that grips mankind. The walls of a madhouse ring with pointless laughter.

"I freely admit that humorous fantasy has a legitimate place in literature (cf. Thorne Smith), but it so happens that of all types of writing, humour is one of the hardest to compose adequately. Serious writing can vary greatly in quality without completely repulsing the reader, but humour must be well-nigh perfect. It is too easy for the would-be humorist to be obscure, in poor taste, silly – or to commit any one of a hundred other faults – and in any of these cases, the product is definitely unfunny. Amateurs, being proportionally less skilled, are all the more likely to lay an egg. In fact, I can offhand think of but one intentionally comic piece of fan writing that struck me as being definitely funny: Art Widner's "Saved by a Pill" in a recent issue of Canada's Light — though of course there are belly-laughs to be found in some purportedly serious items!

"Our hobby of reading, collecting, and writing about stf and fantasy is not furthered by pseudo-humorous accounts of fanventions, fantrips, and the like, entertaining though they may be. A good fanzine should not be entirely ephemeral — fiction, verse, serious articles dealing with various phases of bibliography, biography, criticism, discussion forums, arguments — and of course, moderately sane accounts of fan doings. Please don't get the idea that I am a humourless and solemn old sour-puss, with no appreciation of the lighter side of life. I enjoy a good joke just as much as the next fellow, and my laugh is loud and frequent. I merely assert that fan humour is NOT <u>good</u> humour, and even if it were, that there is no legitimate place for it in fanzines.

"I have noticed that you British fans have developed quite a tendency to ape the alleged "humour" of American fanzines – even in some cases reprinting humorous items verbatim. Generally speaking, the British fanzines I've seen so far display a decidedly sane and level-headed approach, and it is my sincere hope that you Britons will keep your magazines serious. If you must imitate or reprint from America, refrain from the giddy items disgracing so many of our publications. Some things should be allowed to moulder into oblivion."

The moral, I suppose, is that Laney drew generously on his own past fanac when he helped Burbee invent a fictitious personality for Al Ashley after Al had dropped safely out of fandom. And here's another example of an

uncharacteristic style for a famous fan of the past. Arthur Clarke wrote an article for the January, 1943, Fido in reply to a discussion on space ships which had been appearing in earlier issues:

> "Here are a few comments on some of the suggestions on space ship design. Firstly it is painfully obvious that most of the writers have not the slightest idea of the technicalities involved, and most of their ideas are culled from the s.f. mags. Nuff said!
>
> Silburn. Oh, so you can't have a ship that, is 90% fuel can you not? That is true but it gives a very false idea. It is still possible to make a ship with an overall fuel ratio of nearly a thousand to one by using the principles of cellular construction, as in the BIS design which has been extensively publicised.
>
> "When it is possible to refuel ships on other worlds much more advantageous ratios can be employed: in fact the improvement is about ten to one. However I agree that chemical rockets do not seem likely to be economical though improvements in design and fuels may make them so.
>
> "Why should we leave at seven miles m.s.? Because although a rocket could travel as slowly as it liked, in theory, it would very quickly burn up its fuel just "sitting still" fighting gravity. The most economical use of the fuel is a rapid combustion to impart the full velocity to the ship at the earliest possible moment so that it can coast the rest of the way out of the Earth's gravitational field. The rate of combustion is limit-ad by the acceleration the crew can stand and so the ship would not reach its full speed for nearly two thousand miles. By that time it would be travelling very nearly 7 mps. So the 7 mph figure does relate to the practical rocket ship.
>
> "Streamlining. Who the hell discussed the use of streamlining at 7 mps? By the time the ship reaches that speed it is a couple of thousand miles up in high class vacuum. But for many miles the ship has to plough through air and then streamlining may become vitally important. It would make a difference of literally millions of H.P.! Above 600 mph true streamlining fails but it is important to have a correct profile. Why does R.J.S. think that shells are pointed???
>
> "Windows. Why on earth shouldn't the control cabin be in the obvious place, the nose of the ship? The body of the ship would be useless to protect it against any possible accident – in space at least.
>
> "Nothing much to see". My God, does the fellow know what he's talking about???
>
> "As for the idea of using television to look at the stars – does Silburn realise the weight and complexity of television equipment? We want the ship's circuits to be as simple as possible and as light as can be made.
>
> "And what may the "Two inch layer of ozone" be? I presume the reference is to the very thick – many miles at least – layer round the earth which would be two inches thick at ground level pressure. And in any case this layer only stops ultraviolet and has no effect on the inconceivably more penetrating cosmic rays.
>
> "I assume that R.J.S. is really capable of working out what 7 mps comes to in mph and that the figure in para. 3 is a typist's error.
>
> "The idea of a ship deliberately emptying itself of precious air is the funniest thing of all. I suggest that S. work out just how much the air in a ship would weigh."

I hope I caught most of the typing mistakes that plagued Ego's reply, although my stupidity left me afraid to change at the start of the fourth paragraph the initials to what I suspect he meant, p.s. Much more characteristic in style and content is Ted Carnell's recounting of recent adventures. It appeared in the December, 1943, Sands of Time, which came along with the Futurian War Digest of the same date:

> "Over 30,000 miles in eight months of travel ia the latest achievement of your Sandsman; we knelt in homage to the first rain and fog we have seen in almost that length of time. The last rainstorm we had the pleasure of shower-bathing in was the clash of three mighty electrical storms somewhere in the Indian Ocean near the Equator. Since then it has been very stormy for the Nazis and Italians, to our lasting satisfaction.
>
> "Reading the issues of Fido that have appeared during our absence we observe that a few airgraph letters of ours have reached home; that there has been much going and coming amongst fans; arrivals

from the States; and that it seems to have been Baby Time in Britain too. What are we – a man or a mouse?

"To our regret we never quite caught up with Sphinxy Temple – we arrived in Cairo only to find that he had moved on to the Tunis area a month before; we moved from Sicily to Italy to find that he had followed us into Sicily; and now we have left Italy we hear that he has arrived in our footprints there and is probably chasing the Tedeschi still further back. Of other fans in the Middle East we saw and heard little, although we had some amazing meetings with non-stf people we knew from the old home town, and many were the carousels on looted Italian wine.

"The past eight full moons have borne great significance to us in our travels. Each one has brought new scenes and strange places, and stranger adventures – until our travels have read even stranger than fiction. So that these glimpses of life in the raw are not lost upon posterity we have been writing a book about them — "Foo-ey, a Travelog of the Little Foxes" which will never see print owing to its rawness, but may make interesting reading to a private audience after the war.

"March full moon found us sweltering in the heat of the tropics somewhere off Freetown, Sierra Leone. The long weeks of idleness with nothing to read produced from three of us a naval game taking six hours to play. The game became the craze or the ship, and seems to have spread throughout Fleet circles, for when we reached a North African port a few months ago we found that it was being played by officers and men there complete to the final details of rules. (Patent applied for.)

"At this time, too, we undertook to edit and produce a four-page ship's newspaper every other day, "Tropical Times" became quite a success during our eight-week voyage, and we wrote several controversial articles: ancient astronautics, ghosts and telepathy, which raised local storms. Astronautics was hotly debated in the Officer's Lounge and we finally had to give a lecture to some 200 of them, explaining simpler more fundamental principles – our brain couldn't go deeper than that, not having the depth that Pilot Officer Clarke has. Needless to say that the old bogey of whether a rocket could work in space or not cropped up, and many bets have been placed upon our proof or disproof of the fact.

"The full moon in April was under idyllic conditions – it shone across the outline of Table Mountain, Cape Town, while we where delving in a variety of secondhand bookshops loaded down with pro mags – on loan only, as the supply had been stopped from USA. May saw us watching a movie show in an open-air cinema, at Suez – it happened to be Disney's "Fantasia" again, while June moon leered down at us from across the mountains in the heart of Syria. July illuminated the Sphinx and Pyramids under a mysterious light, and for fleeting moments of magic woven by the sonorous voice of an Egyptian guide we were transplanted back to the days of the Pharaohs.

"July saw a different scene — the battle of Catania Plain in Sicily, with huge fires burning from the aerodrome; of cones of red flak floating skywards in the protection of our ports and beaches; the roar of artillery barrages, and the chatter of machine-guns.

"August brought almost a total eclipse of the moon, a calculated fact as we stealthily crept in on a commando raid on Messina, allowing us to get ashore under darkness only to be pinned down on a mile stretch of road for a whole day by German and Italian guns from the mainland. September saw us again viewing a movie, this time only a few miles behind 8th Army front-line in Southern Italy, with General Montgomery as guest of honour. So rapid has our movement been that October full moon shone on us once again at a movie show, this time back in N. Africa while the November's one peered fitfully down upon us in the setting of our Editorial address."

It makes running around to a lot of cons seem less adventure-some, doesn't it? Meanwhile, Ted had had a lot to say about a still current topic in the October, 1942, Fido. Writing in the Sands of Time dated September of the same year, he launched forth from comments in another fanzine by Art Widner. Widner had suggested that fandom no longer needed science fiction. Carnell wrote:

"That's a nice meaty statement, and one that we are in total agreement with. We feel that the reason fandom has swung away from stf as the mainspring of interest, in this country, is because we have <u>had</u> to. With the trickle of supply that has been our misfortune since the war began, fans have had to find an out for their writings in other fields. We praise the older fans who refused to get out when there didn't seem to be much left in fandom to write about. We praise the newcomers who managed to sow some seeds amongst the most barren and stony ground that could possibly be found. That British fandom kept going

is still a miracle to us – but we feel that it is infinitely stronger and more sensible now than it ever was before, or could possibly have been if there hadn't been a war.

"However, Art misses one singular thing. It wasn't us Britishers who started this trend away from the centre-pin, fantasy, as a means of expression of thought. It originated in his own country, America, and he is one of the pioneers of the new style, although he seems to have overlooked the fact. For many years now there has been quite a number of American fans who have endeavoured in many ways to break the traditions that have kept fans and fandom in the groove worn by predecessors. Their efforts have often been ridiculed – many of them have been ostracised, called Radicals, Reds, Fascists; embroiled in senseless arguments, until such a host of minor red herrings have been across the trail that it has been almost impossible to discern the true spirit of these pioneers.

"Now, this isn't a plug for the New York Futurians (the above build-up might be misconstrued by some people as being such), but mention of the NY Futurians makes us realise that some of their members are amongst the foremost of the fans who have been endeavouring to lift fandom out of the rut. Many years ago Wollheim, Lowndes and Michel were expanding their fan writings into a broader field. Along with them went a score or more American fans who wanted to write better and more interesting stuff; who no doubt also felt the urge to cash in on their abilities and make their hobby pay for itself.

"From this nucleus of fans came the FAPA (Fantasy Amateur Press Association). Yes, you can take this as a plug if you want to, although it won't help any for you probably won't be able to become a member of FAPA these days. Art must have forgotten all about the FAPA when he wrote that we were pioneering this new trend in fandom. He's one of the leading members himself, which is probably why he says "It is the kind of fandom I like." Obviously. The FAPA was formed in 1937. Its principal object in view was to assist would-be fanzine publishers who just wanted to publish "for the hell of it," by criticism from other members and primarily as a central mailing office, whereby each quarterly mailing would be gathered and sent out under one wrapper.

"This doesn't sound a particularly worthy ambition, on the face of things. Especially as membership was limited to 50 members. Yet it was the seed from which much has grown in five years. That first mailing is still a pain in the neck to me. It was representative of the awful junk that American fanzine. editors were flooding the mails with. Bad duplication, uninteresting articles, childish artwork. It was a great disappointment to me, for I foresaw that the FAPA could be one of the finest and strongest amateur organisations for would-be authors and artists both in America and Britain.

"With subsequent mailings, however, the standard began to creep up. Each editor-publisher began to strive hard to beat his 49 competitors. Realising that they had practically three months to turn out good results they really got down to it, and by the end of the first year, FAPA had reached the stage where classy, pleasing to the eye fanzines were rolling off the duplicators and mimeographs.

"This had a tremendous influence on contemporary fanzines – those who were publishing monthly fanzines, and belonged to the FAPA, forced the pace of those who didn't belong. The latter either had to turn out good stuff or fall out of line in the circulation race. (Not that this has ever been very high, but it makes the difference in loss considerable). Then gradually throughout FAPA fanzines I noticed this vast swing away from fantasy as the backbone of amateur publishing. It was a welcome trend, for it brought forth many healthy ideas along with the increased perfection of production.

"Jack Speer and Milt Rothman were pioneers of the new trend. The former's "Sustaining Program" and the latter's "Milty's Mag" are both running commentaries on almost everything from politics to pills. Far different from them is H.C. Koenig's "Reader and Collector" which has always been our favourite. HC debunks everything debunkable in humorous style, as well as providing reviews of many old stf books from his vast collection.

"There are many others – and there are still some that need alteration to bring them up to standard – but all of them have helped to break fandom away from that narrow-minded groove whereby all fans bowed down and worshipped the Good God Science-Fiction – as presented by Gernsback. That age is dead. Therefore, we feel that the healthiest sign here was that trend away from fantasy, and the swing to normal writings on many subjects.

> "It is interesting to note that many of the original FAPA members are now established as authors or editors. Some have become professional artists. Many of the present members are writing and selling stories to numerous markets as well as their own stf magazines."

But Fido published material about science fiction quite often. Jack W. Banks demonstrated in the October, 1943, issue how long ago critics were using Heinlein's fiction as a springboard for dives into sociological waters, long before Heinlein's own ideas were being inlaid into his novels as conspicuously as candles on a birthday cake.

> "Robert Heinlein's "If This Goes On" is a dramatic portrayal of the ultimate development of totalitarian dictatorship, based on the false omnipotence of a pseudo-religious creed, upheld by scientifically determined mental conditioning of the population. The inspiration for this story might well be found in "The Rape of the Masses" by Serge Chakotin, published here at the beginning of the war. Chakotin's work, subtitled "The Psychology of Totalitarian Political Propaganda", first deals with the concept of the conditioned reflex, and the pioneer work of Pavlov especially, leading to a survey of that principle as applied to propaganda directed to the masses of the population for political purposes. Chakotin says: "The possibility of influencing men existed, of course, in all ages, since man lives and talks and has relations with his fellow-men; but it was a possibility availed of blindly, and one which demanded great experience or special aptitudes: it was a sort of art. Now this art has become a science, which can calculate, foresee, and act under rules which can be tested. An immense step forward is being made in the sociological domain." This science of applied psychology can be used for good or evil; Heinlein shows it a weapon in the hands of a minority, to impose a dictatorial rule on a nation. Consciously used, in this case, whereas it is the view of the author of Rape of the Masses that Hitler, the present-day example, has not consciously applied these principles. Rather, that purely by intuition, he, an unsophisticated man, has used in the political arena, the laws of conditioned reflexes defined by Pavlov. And he has been successful: no one can deny that, and Chakotin's complaint is that no one has recognised why he won. (And it might be worthwhile to note here that his success was not necessarily because of any particular gullibility of the German people, compared to others. In 1933, Nazis and Nationalists polled 52 of every 100 votes. The other parties rolled 48 of every 100. So that 48 of every 100 Germans, despite the propaganda of the Nazis, did not vote for them. In Britain, in the panic General Election of 1931, the people were bluffed into believing that if the Labour Government continued in office, they would lose their savings. Only 33 in every 100 Britons voted against the National Government.) Chakotin believes that the broad mass of the population is passive, and at the mercy politically of the successful propaganda of a minority: a minority in the proportion of one tenth. The militant one tenth who can shape the future of the remaining nine tenths. The author states his belief in the power for good of an enlightened minority, and here one notes his views resemblance to those of H. G. Wells, to whom the book is dedicated in these words: "To H.G. Wells. Thinker of the Future." Those who have read Wells' works of the last few years and especially since the war, are aware of the theme on which he has continually played. "Become a conscious devoted Revolutionary," he says in his Common Sense of War and Peace, after having returned the compliments paid by Chakotin, and whether one chooses to interpret "Revolutionary" in the usual sense or not, the challenge remains."

You'll note that Jack was a fan after my own heart. If he'd remained active as long as I did, maybe he would have had the guts to carry out my secret dream: write an entire article in one pages-long paragraph. And to conclude, I'm not sure if a slim publication without a proper title came with a Fido or separately; it was alone in a wrapper when I was rummaging, but it might have gotten separated from its host at some time or other. It seems to have had elements of a one-shot, written during or just after the Norcon in Manchester around the end of 1943 or start of 1944. I'll tidy up the obvious typos, won't attempt
to create a consecutive conreport out of it, but strive to fulfil my real purpose: to demonstrate the miraculous morale achieved by British fans in a world that was crumbling physically and morally. (It's not entirely clear who wrote what paragraphs, so don't worry about that.)

> "Scorning Manchester's unique transport system (the best thing to do if you want to get any place), we walked the ten miles to the hotel (Ron insists it's only one and a half), and then, in Mike's room, we talked. We saw the New Year in without alcohol — too busy talking to drink. We decided to go to bed. In the privacy of my room I ate – one apple and one orange.

> "Kitten on the keys this time is Ron Holmes, arrived this morning, Saturday, with little gal after much hardship and trial. Train three quarters of an hour late, and then half witted conductress managed to sabotage the works and delay us from arriving at Ron's house until after 11 o'clock.

"This is RRJ typing. Ron Holmes and Rita bringing up the rear, we tried to reach the hotel — Gus, Mike and I singing lustily in French, German, and Yorkshire; Mike recited "Albert and the Lion" much to Gus's amusement.

"And now 'tis JMR. Roy has apparently omitted to mention the interesting spectacle of a Manchester tram, on being left forlorn by the sudden omission of five fans, gritting its metaphorical teeth with rage and refusing to budge. The driver, in between abortive attempts to persuade his behemoth to perform its particular species of locomotion, glancing after us with evident affection in his honest careworn visage — apparently he considered we had something to do with the rebellion of his should-be moving mass of machinery.

"To return to the place where Ron left off, we had tea on Sunday night, and then we proceeded with the Brains Trust. Such a waste of mental energy was never seen before, and I doubt will never be seen again — they all expired. The Lane homestead became a shambles, Ron proceeded to play the piano until his foul yellow tie — highly ornamented with fox-heads and surmounting a dark blue shirt — got got mixed up with the works and was saved from an untimely death by Ron Lane who neatly amputated the horrible growth in the nick of time.

"Ron Bradbury vanished a little before tea, and was discovered several hours later sitting on the stairs, dead drunk, with his arms wrapped lovingly around Rusty, the Lane dog. Crying into its lap and wishing he had never learned to play Solo.

"And so, minus Millard, the Convention proceeds. Probably dinner is the next item. During which occurs some further stencilling — s'right. Then a visit to Belle Vue — for the ultimate, a zoo. One of those zoos. Being fans, normal zoo animals did not impress us, though rude comments were inspired by noted resemblances. And there were remarks about typers and monkeys and fanmags."

It should be obvious that I built up the foregoing out of snippets taken here and there, in contrast to the way I didn't abridge anything else. And for the benefit of the handful of FAPA members who can remember receiving Fido, let me finish by quoting extracts from the wrappers in which it was mailed in those years of paper scarcity: "Guaranteed Pure Split Peas. Reliable. Packed by Wood (Leeds) Ltd., Meadow Road, Leeds, 11. 6 oz. net. Have you tried our ground rice and finest marrowfat peas?" Some variants contained the recipe for ground rice sponge cake. Michael Rosenblum got the can labels somewhere, noticed that they were printed on only one side, and decided not to waste precious envelopes or blank paper for wrapping his fanzine. The wrappers had approximately the tensile strength of Kleenex, and it is testimony to the postal efficiency of the era that they never suffered more than the most trivial crimping or tears in transit.