

by
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CALIFANATALES

Part Three:
The Outlander's Tale
(continued)

Wherein Len continues his fannish memoirs.

The Outlander Society would sometimes have guests at its meetings. The guest could be a local author or fan including those who had expressed interest in joining the club. A secret ballot requiring a unanimous “yes” would determine who got invited to join.

When Dorothea M. Faulkner (aka “Grandma the Demon” when she wrote locs to the prozines, Rory Faulkner when she wrote poetry both serious and humorous, and “Dottie” to her close friends) attended her first LASFS meeting we knew at once that she was Outlander material. She was a little old grey-haired lady from Covina and the type of person we used to call a “pistol.”

Intelligent, well-read, opinionated, and articulate, she was fun to be with, to talk with, even if you might not agree with her right-wing politics. She carried on a correspondence with John W. Campbell, Jr., Eric Frank Russell, and Robert A. Heinlein. She was the widow of a Naval officer and had at least one daughter whom I only met once or twice. She was an independent as a hog on ice, to use an expression that she might very well use, and an outstanding story teller and limerick reciter.

I remember an Outlander meeting at Stan Woolston’s home in Garden Grove. Our special guest that day was Cleve Cartmill who was one of the members of The Mañana Literary Society which included Heinlein, Anthony Boucher, Ed Hamilton, and others of

that era. (Read *Rocket To The Morgue* by H.H. Holmes - or Anthony Boucher, if you find a later edition. One of the characters is a composite of Cartmill and Heinlein.) Cleve wrote fantasy and s-f for the old pulps, including Campbell’s *UNKNOWN WORLDS*. He was in a wheelchair due to some infirmity but quite able to wheel himself around as well as create entertaining fiction.

We got into a limerick reciting competition and Dottie won the day with the following gem:

“There was a rather shy young lady who found herself at a limerick session like this one and, when it came her turn she blushed and said that she know only one limerick and would it be acceptable for her to say da-da in place of the naughty parts. The others at the party agree, if somewhat reluctantly, and she proceeded as follows:

There was a young lady da da da
Da da, Da da, da da
Da-da, *Da da*
Da-da, *Da da*
Da-da, Da-da-da *fuck!*”

Cleve almost fell out of his wheelchair and I was rolling on the floor.

Some time before Dottie joined the LASFS and the Outlander Society, Alan and Freddie Hershey arrived on the scene. Alan was a chemist who had been part of the crew at Alamogordo during the war. His quiet manner and pleasant personality got him elected to the office of Director of LASFS and he was one of the few Directors who managed to keep order during the meetings without raising his voice or banging the gavel.

I don’t recall Freddie running for office but she, like Dottie, was a “pistol” in her own way and helped make the old club as well as the newer Outlanders a bit livelier, to say the least. Outlander meetings as well as other parties at the Hershey’s home in Bell were always filled with everything from serious discussion to outlandish fun and nonsense. Actually, it was always open house at the Hersheys between meetings and parties if you were considered a really close friend. There was always beer in the fridge as well as bites to eat plus good conversation or simply reading while listening to classical music.

It was during this time that I started to write my Katchelkicklekalikanese Opera Trilogy and the first of the three “L’Amour de la Trine” was performed at an Outlander Meeting hosted by the Hersheys. I was

really flattered when Freddie dubbed me the funniest man in the world. In the room, maybe, but surely not in the entire world.

But that was the way with Freddie. When she liked something her enthusiasm knew no bounds. Alan was the quiet one of the pair; but his comments, sometimes serious, often wryly humorous, carried as much weight with us as did Freddie's more boisterous remarks.

When the Outlanders sponsored the third Westercon, we decided that Freddie should chair it. We may have been wrong, but we assumed this would be the first science fiction convention to be chaired by a woman, at least on the West Coast. So, naturally, the precedent was established that if we did win the bid for the 1958 WorldCon it would be chaired by a woman, presumably Freddie. But Freddie dropped out of fandom before then. We then assumed it would be Mari Wolf, who had joined the OS after attending the third Westercon. But that wasn't to be, either, as the fannish fates would have it.

The Hersheys were good writers, too, and added to the quality of material that we published in *THE OUTLANDER MAGAZINE*.

They also helped with *Shaggy (Shangri-LA)*, especially Freddie, which was still surviving under the revolving editorship system. Because of the decrease in circulation, Shaggy's letter column was virtually extinct. When I took a turn at editing an issue, I tried to encourage readers to write by having some kind of a letter column, come hell or high water. I got Rick to write a loc and created a letter of my own, pretending to be a British fan reader (I used the name of a character from an H.G. Wells story, but I forget which one). I asked Freddie to write one; and, following my cue, she pretended to be a nurse who read s-f and lived in Idaho or somewhere in that area. Naturally, she wrote a sort of caustic letter in an attempt to stir up the monkeys. But, with only three letters, I'm afraid it wasn't enough to get others (local or elsewhere) to write locs for the zine.

The youngest members of the Outlander Society were also the youngest members of the LASFS, Con Pederson and John Van Couvering.

Con, like more than one young fan we have known, was not happy at home with his parents. They had had him late in their lives so there was a

bigger than usual generation gap. As I recall, they lived in Minnesota, and Con did have to go back there to live with them between extended trips to Southern California. For a while, he lived in one of the beach towns with bachelor Bill Elias, an Outland from West "By God!" Virginia. Bill was like a big brother to Con.

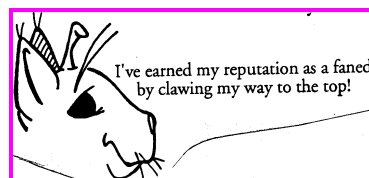
John Van Couvering came from a large family, all redheads as far as I could tell. His father was an engineer in the oil industry; and, I think, John wound up there, too. He had gained some fannish fame as the fan who walked through a glass door. This was not literally true, although John was somewhat accident prone. What happened was that he bumped into a glass partition (which shattered) in the local library while walking along with his nose in a book.

John was a pretty good self-taught cartoonist and comical writer. Someone at LASFS (maybe Rick or me, but it could have been any member interested in keeping the club 'zine going) suggested that we have a *Junior Edition of Shaggy*, with Con or John (or both) at the helm. I think John wound up with top billing. Other Outlanders pitched in to guide and help the young'uns, and so we found ourselves at the club room on a Saturday afternoon with stencils ready to run on whichever mimeo was available at the time.

There was one, small problem. We could not find the club's paper supply. The club room was sublet from Walt Daugherty. The paper could have been in a locked cabinet, but we had only the key to the clubroom and Walt wasn't there. We kept looking; and, eventually, heard a cry of "Eureka" or some such from Van Couvering. He had found some paper which we assumed belonged to the club as it wasn't locked away. Perhaps we should have known better, as the paper was 8" x 11", not the regular 8^{1/2}" x 11" mimeo paper.

John proceeded to slap on a stencil and start printing while Rick complained that there wouldn't be any margins. "Who reads the margins?" asked John blithely, proceeding to repro the zine.

On the following Thursday evening he wasn't so blithe when Walt raised hell about the misuse of his private stock of paper. As I said, perhaps we should have known better because of the special size of the paper.



THE OUTLANDER MAGAZINE was usually run off on one of my mimeographs although we may have done a couple at the LASFS club room. We had a rotating editorship, too, not that any of us did any real editing. The person responsible for the issue was just that. He or she was expected to get the other members to write stuff for it. Rick, as our unofficial treasurer, kept track of the mailing list so it wasn't likely to get lost.

We published excerpts from our "eternal chain letter" (round robin), wrote articles, verse, a little fiction, and all three of my opera take-offs. I recall how pleased I was when Sam Merwin, Jr. reviewed *THE OUTLANDER MAGAZINE* IN **Startling** or **Thrilling Wonder**, I forget which one had the fanzine review column, and expressed his appreciation of what he called my "horsing around operas."

I would get to meet Sam some time later at a local MWA (Mystery Writers of America) meeting as well as at conventions and local parties. But, before then, he sort of figured in my life when I tried to sell a novelette to some mag or other. It came back with a nice note saying they might have bought it, but they had just purchased a story with a similar theme from Sam Merwin, Jr. It turned out to be *House of Many Worlds*. My story was a parallel time world story, too, but had an entirely different plot and situation. Still, it was nice to get that kind of letter instead of a printed rejection slip.

I think Sam was living in Florida at that time but later he moved to California to write for movies or TV and do some editing here and there. He drank more than was good for him as did more than one writer from that era. We didn't really think that we would live forever, but it was somewhere in the backs of our minds.

Stan Woolston, who was a printer by trade, had a small Chandler & Price letterpress in a shed in his back yard. He usually worked at someone else's print shop and used his own press for hobby purposes. All of the covers on *THE OUTLANDER MAGAZINE* were printed by Stan. You certainly couldn't judge the zine's content by the covers as they were what one might call "symbolic." He had this cut of an Indian tepee and it seemed to go well with the "Outlander" logo. I think only one reader asked what Indians had to do with s-f fandom and I'm not sure we bothered to answer that one.

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I haven't said much about my two best friends, Rick Sneary and Stan Woolston. For three guys who didn't have a heck of a lot in common outside of our mutual interest in science fiction and fandom, we got along very well. Eventually we were known as the Hub of the Outlander Society. I'm not sure who came up with that appellation. It might have been Rick but it could have been one of the Hersheys. Members came and members went but we three seemed to go on forever. Long after the Outlander Society was no longer meeting or publishing, we hung together and even managed to organize a committee to put on the 1958 WorldCon, combined with the Westercon for that year.

Rick, a native Californian, was born a cripple and his health was poor enough to keep him out of public schools. He was tutored at home and that, plus his wide range of reading (s-f was only a part of it) developed a brain and personality equally strong in facing the rigors of trying to live a normal life. He got into fandom, as so many of us did back then, through the letter columns in the pulps. I could write (and have written) pages on Sir Richard Sneary, but I would recommend that you get a copy of *BUTTON-TACK: THE RICK SNEARY MEMORIAL FANZINE*. The first edition is out of print but SCIFI, Inc. published a second edition and copies are probably still available from Bruce Pelz.

Stan Woolston was born in Illinois, but his family moved to California where he has lived most of his life. Having a club foot, he was not in the armed service during WWII, but served as an air raid warden. However, his mother and one of his sisters were in the Army. Stan's primary interest in fandom became the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Living in Garden Grove in Orange County, a long distance from LA and the LASFS, he welcomed the chance to be an Outlander. Meetings at his place, especially back in the days when that area was more rural than it is now, were always fun.

Freddie dubbed Stan "the benign Buddha" because of the way he would sit on the floor smiling at the goings-on around him. He sometimes came up with some marvelous story idea or situations but never got around to writing them. He did manage to write up something and send it in to John Campbell for *Astounding's* old *Probability Zero Department*. Campbell published it and it is a shame that Stan didn't work harder at pro writing. Foo knows, he did enough for fanzines and writing in general to keep the NFFF going.

Rick and I, along with other old friends like Ed Cox and Art Rapp, were active in the NFFF at one time. We were even on the Board of Directors and Rick was President at least once. More on that later.

Stan was among the last of the old time letter writers. Rarely did he write a brief note. His letters were long and detailed and often decorated with cartoons and bits of comic verse. He could be deadly serious or wacky-funny and he never took himself too seriously. If I write of Stan in the past tense, it is because he is as gone from us as Rick is. His body may be alive, but the marvelous mind that was Woolston is no longer with us.

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Another special guest at an Outlander meeting, this one hosted by the Hersheys, was Ray Bradbury. I'm not sure how he got to the meeting. Alan may have picked him up, either at Ray's home or at the end of the trolley line. Ray didn't drive and did not like to ride in cars or on planes. Trolley, trains, and I guess buses (as well as his trusty bicycle) were his chosen methods of transportation when it was too far to walk.

Ray announced that he just happened to have his latest story with him. I don't know if he had sold it yet, but I do remember that it was "Way In The Middle of the Air" - the one about the black folks migrating to Mars. Naturally, we asked him to read it to us.

Before, he began to entertain us with one of his W.C. Fields imitations. When he began to read, Alan, as was his wont, crawled under the coffee table to relax. Alan was a tall man, so only his head and shoulders were under the table and I think out of sight of Ray, who was sitting on the couch. At some time during the reading, I heard these soft buzzing sounds and realized that Alan, as was his wont, had drifted off to sleep and was softly snoring. Freddie noticed this, too, and made an unhappy face, but none of us dared wake him lest he bump his head on the underside of the table and draw even more attention to the fact that he was not, at that moment, an ardent Bradbury fan.

Actually, I suspect that Alan was simply tired and was one of those persons who do not like to be read to. God knows, he did enough reading on his own. Freddie once told me - when Alan wasn't present - that he would sit and read for hours on end, which tended to make her somewhat impatient.

"He just sits there and *reads!*" is the way she put it. "If the roof was made of green shit and it fell in on his head, he would still sit there and read!"

Freddie was a reader, too, but she spent a lot of time on gardening, cooking, and developed an interest in archeology. Eventually, she and Alan would go their separate ways and find happiness with new partners.

I almost forgot to finish the Bradbury story. Ray stayed for the whole meeting/party and I guess it got too late to catch a bus or a streetcar. Dave Lesperance, a temporary member of our group, volunteered to take him home, and legend has it that it was a white-knuckle ride for Ray all the way.

Shortly after my move to California I submitted a short story to **Astounding**. It was one that I had written when I was in the service, and my college Journalism instructor had given it good marks. It was returned to me along with a very encouraging letter from Editor John W. Campbell, Jr. I guess the story was totally unsuitable for the Campbell **Astounding** as he didn't give me any hints or help on how to make it acceptable to him (as he did with some other writers) but he did assure me that I was a good story teller and should continue to write and submit stories to him and to other editors in the field.

The only other time that I had submitted a story to a prozine was back in my high school days. I can't remember the exact plot of the short I sent to Ray Palmer at **Amazing** but (unlike the one I sent to **Astounding**) I do remember the title, which was *Beer and the Fourth Dimension*. Now, at that young stage of my life, I was equally ignorant about beer and the fourth dimension, but I didn't let that stop me from writing what was supposed to be a comic story. It came back from **Amazing** with the standard printed rejection slip. Scribbled in the margin of the slip was one word, "Overstocked." At first, I had no idea what that meant. The story was "overstocked?" With what? Eventually, I assume that **Amazing** had a large backlog of short stories and didn't want to buy another one at that time. So I was slightly encouraged.

But I didn't really get into professional writing until after World War II and two or three years after my move to California. I was too busy having fun as a bachelor fan attending club meetings and parties, writing and pubbing with the Outlander Society and for LASFS, NFFF, FAPA, etc.

But, during this period (shortly after the war),