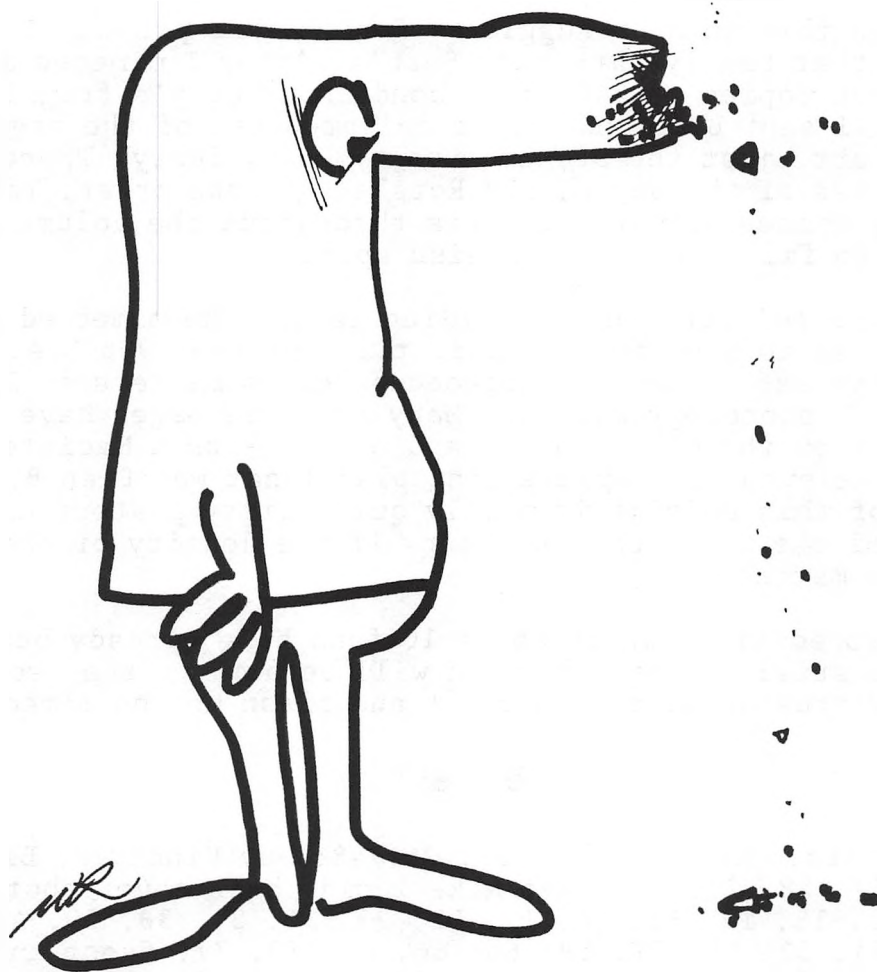


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• THE INCOMPLETE BURBEE •
• VOLUME TWO •



• EDITED BY TERRY CARR •

the incomplete burbee, vol. 2

Edited (and typed) more than 20 years ago by Terry Carr onto Gestetner stencils, which were never completed or run off by Terry.

Published by Jeff Schalles, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315, who was given the stencils at ConFrancisco (the 1993 Worldcon) by Dave Rike who got them from the Nielsen Haydens who got them from Robert Lichtman who got them from Dave Rike who started this whole thing after finding the stencils in Terry's collection after Terry's death in 1987.

Volume 1 of The Incomplete Burbee has gone through two editions and several printings. Copies may still be available from Arnie and Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.



It is sad that in my struggle to finish this project I missed the one deadline that really mattered: Burb's. After I mimeoed an initial printrun of 220 copies on 24# white bond from Terry's fragile stencils, back in 1994, I sent Burb and Cora a collated set of the pages. No headings, no art, just the stencils as typed by Terry. There are only two such dummies of the pages, and Rotsler has the other. Terry left lots of empty spaces of various sizes throughout the volume, and I have done my best to fill them with fannish spirit.

Note: this edition you are holding is not the mimeo edition. I ran out of resources to have that done in time for the 1996 L.A. Worldcon and decided instead to use the mimeoed pages as masters so I could at least get out a photocopy edition. Many of these pages have, in fact, been scanned from the mimeo sheets and output from a Macintosh, though I ran out of time even to complete that plan (that was Plan B,) and the second half of this edition is mostly quick dirty pasteup using photocopies of the mimeo sheets. Sorry if the density of the type doesn't quite match!

The mimeo edition, which about 10 fans have already bought advance copies of, is still in the works and will be out ... real soon now. As soon as I electrostencil all this art and clean up the mimeos and ...



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Table Of Contents

Page No.

Shavings from the Mass #2: More about Laney (Stefantasy, Feb. 1958)	1
Shavings from the Mass #3: More about F. Towner Laney (Innuendo #11, Dec. 1960)	3
Shavings from the Mass #4 (Melange #2, Feb. 1961)	6
The Mind of Chow (Innuendo #7, Feb. 1958)	7
Companion Piece (Klien Bottle #3, Feb. 1960)	9
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #1 by Oxnard Q Hemmel, Fk. Hd. (Shangri L'Affaires #23 , Feb. 1945)	13
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #2: Notes on the Death of the Universe (Shangri L'Affaires #27 , Oct. 1946)	15
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #5: Stream of Thought (The Grotesque #1, Jan. 1946)	16
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #8: The World Agog (The Grotesque #4, Aug. 1946)	18
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #14: The Carpers Capped! (Chaos #5, Dec. 1946)	20
Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, #18: Some Experiments with a Time Machine (Five Fingers, June 1, 1946)	22
Monument to Wisdom by Oxnard Q. Hemmel, Fk. Hd. (Shangri L'Affaires #38, Nov. 1947)	25
Where Are You, Kepner? A Fan's Dream (Shangri L'Affaires #30, May 1946)	27
Me and the Black Pirate (Melange #2, Feb. 1961)	30
Fall In, You Damned Sinners! (Melange #2, Feb. 1961)	33
One Good Turn (Melange #2, Feb. 1961)	34
Fan Article (Masque #1, Winter [Feb.] 1961)	36
The Sunny Vineyard of Easy Memory (Burblings #7, Feb. 1953)	38

Burbee at the Solacon (Burblings c/w Elmmurings, Feb. 1959)	39
You May Quote Me (JAWIBUCCO, June 5, 1954)	42
The Technique of the One-Shot Fanzine (JAWIBUCO, June 5, 1954)	44
Where's Rotsler? (Burblings c/w Dream Quest c/w Primal c/w Esdacyos c/w Skip Me For the Nonce c/w Masque, Vol. 1, No. 1, Whole No. 1, First Issue, Aug. 1954)	46
Some Notes on F. Towner Laney (Correction Fluid 368 #1, Aug. 1956)	49
Too Much Salt, I Think (Ole Chavela!, Aug. 1960)	51
Tule Fog (Century Note, Feb. 1957)	53
The 51 Steps (FAPA Potlatch #1, Winter 1951-2)	58
Fandom in the Headlines (Sky Hook #7, Summer 1949)	61
Gerald Fitzgerald and the Time Machine by William Rotsler and Charles Burbee (Masque #7, Feb. 1953)	64
They Walked Through Glass (Quandry #29, Jan. 1953)	68
Don Bratton, Semanticist (Quandry #29, Jan. 1953)	69
Sneary at Bay (Glorious Spool #1, Autumn 1950)	70
I've Got to Publish Eight Pages for FAPA (Burblings, Feb. 1956)	77
Out of the Hospital (Shangri-L'Affaires #39, Nov. 1958)	80
Churches, Said F. T. Laney (Shangri-L'Affaires #39, Nov. 1958)	81
Noses at Midnight (Shangri-L'Affaires #50, April/May 1960)	82
Sorcery in the Parlor (Sky Hook #13, Spring 1952)	87
Four Letters to Victory (Stefantasy, Aug. 1953)	89

Shavings

FROM THE MASS

MORE ABOUT
LANEY

NUMBER
2

"I was reading the FAPA mailing the other night," I said to Laney a week or two ago, "and I came across your name in two fanzines."

Laney shook his head. "Migod, what can they find to say about me after all these years?"

"Usually your name appears parenthetically as '(Down, Laney!)' when someone has mentioned homosexuality. They remember you because you are the only fan who has ever come out in print with adverse opinions on homosexuals."

"These new fans --" Laney was gesturing with both hands now. "They don't know me. They've never read anything I've written. And they're saying 'Down, Laney' like a bunch of goddam parrots."

"That's right," I said. "Fools are taking your name in vain. Now you know how God must feel."

"Speaking of fanzines," he said, "I got one myself the other day. From some obscenity I've never heard of. It had an article by some other obscenity I've never heard of either. It was a stupid article about Clark Ashton Smith. The whole magazine was practically unreadable. I wonder how the obscenity got my address?"

"Found it in a fanzine. All knowledge is contained in fanzines."

"I started to toss it in the wastebasket when the thought struck me that this was just the sort of serious constructive obscenity fanzine that some fan would think was worth a dollar five years from now. Then I could trade it for a dollar's worth of good commemorative stamps. So I stuck it carefully away."

"Speaking of serious constructive fanzines and research for -- same," I said, "have you dug up any late dope on the Abominable Snowman?"

"Fuggit," said Laney.

"That used to be a special interest of yours," I said.

"Fuggit," said Laney.

"As I started to say before I got sidetracked," I said, "I read your name twice in the current fapamailing. One of the articles concerned the trend these days for fans to marry fans. Male fans marry-

ing female fans, that is. Down, Laney! The writer said, 'I wonder what Laney would make of this trend?' So, since there you are, standing before me in shimmering reality, what, Laney, do you make of this trend?"

"It's a goddam mistake," he said. "A goddam obscenity mistake."

"For fans to marry fans?"

"For anybody to get married. Anybody" -- here his voice went up so nearby people could hear, too -- "who gets married is making a mistake. So if fans are marrying fans, they're making a fourfold mistake."

He strode away. I guess he was through talking about fans marrying fans.

A few days later I mentioned to him that I'd read in an English magazine called ZENITH a reprint of his article about the IPI.

"I remember that article," he said. "You rejected it."

"We were doing a one-shot fanzine and I rejected it. Yes, I rejected that. I think I thought it was obscene. How could I have been such a damned fool?"

"Don't worry about it," said ftl. "You've been a damned fool a hundred times since then over matters less important."

"You're probably right," I said, and felt better about it.

But actually, I did reject that article. I really did. Was it really obscene or just my dirty mind at work?

Anyhow, the foreword to the article said, "We don't know very much about Laney..." I disagree with that. I know a great deal about Laney, I said right back to the fanzine. In fact, I know more about Laney than anybody else in the obscenity world, I'll bet.... I fell to musing about the big FTL article I once planned. I'd intended it for Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY. From the looks of that fanzine it appeared that Lee would publish anything that looked fairly good, especially if it was long.

Also, it seemed to me that people should take advantage of these publishing giants while they are in their strength.

I began the article. I got eighteen pages into it. It was delightful, witty, clever, revealing, and unpublishable. Unprintable, even by today's liberal fanzine standards. A local fan whose discretion is beyond reproach read these eighteen pages. He laughed so hard I thought he was going to be an emergency case of some sort. But I stopped writing the article.

I had to stop. After all, in the original draft it was not printable. But if emasculated it would be virtually unreadable and a poor picture of Laney. So I simply bogged down on it because I could not sustain interest in a dull thing. But I have decided to compromise.

The compromise consists of "shavings from the mass," as Don Wilson terms it so aptly. I will tell some Laney anecdotes as I remember them so that current fandom can have some new tales to tell by the glint of beer glasses during the long fannish evenings.

Two or three pages at a time in mags such as this one.

Shavings

FROM THE MASS

MORE ABOUT
F. TOWNER
LANEY

NUMBER
3

"UNUSUAL YOUNG MAN, 35, interested in jazz, literature, philosophy, and Dianetics on the Second Dynamic Level, wishes to meet lady 30 to 40, to share his pursuits of these subjects. Box 31."

That is a rough-memory draft of the ad Laney put in The Los Angeles Mirror-News sometime in late 1950 or early 1951. It appeared in a section of the classified advertising pages titled Strictly Personal. This department's prime purpose seemed to be to help men and women meet each other for whatever purpose men and women like to meet each other -- no doubt some extension of a divine plan. Perhaps some lonely people used it seeking for companionship but one is always led to wonder about people who have to advertise for love or friendship.

Laney meant his ad to bring him SEX. He had a lot of success. He worked at this new project with all the boundless drive he was noted for. The same drive that made ACOLYTE the #1 Fanzine now served to make him the #1 Lover Boy.

The world of love quickly engulfed him.

Since we worked in the same shop at this time I saw him each day and he kept me up to date on his activities. Matter of fact, I work in this shop still. Laney, if his enemies are to be believed, is laboring away in some subterranean shop under very hot conditions.

He would very enthusiastically describe to me his latest stack of letters and show me pictures that some of the women sent. Now and then he'd receive some rather amazing snaps.

He told me how he'd worked out a system. At first he'd gone to see the women in person but found it terribly time-consuming. So he developed a phone pitch that could tell him in the first 30 seconds if he had a live one. If the prospect showed promise, he'd show up in person. Oh he had a happy time laying his way through stacks of letters.

Several times he'd say to me, with a pleased smirk on his face: "You see, modern society has now reached a state where a young man who wishes to screw has only to announce this wish in the public prints, and immediately he is mobbed by many ladies who also wish to screw."

He sure sounded pleased with the state of modern society.

When the replies to the first ad, which ran a week, began to fall off,

he very carefully framed a second ad, having learned a lot from the first one. That one also ran a week. Then, indeed, he found himself snowed under. He told me that he had grossly miscalculated the delayed-action pulling power of the first ad. Now, some weeks after its appearance, it was pulling in a second wave of replies. And ad #2 was also pulling replies. He was swamped by a tsunami of amorous females.

He was almost worried. He groused a little about it for a time till a brilliant idea struck him. He would divert the surplus women to me! But I had seen some of his Body Exchange Pigs. Besides, I was married.

Around this time I visited his house one Saturday afternoon. I think we were going to record some wire. His mother was complaining to me that she never saw him. She was keeping house for him now that #3 wife Cele was dead. She said he came home from work, cleaned up and changed, bolted his food and rushed away, not rolling in till 2:00 a.m. and later. She said he'd been doing this for 50 or 60 consecutive days and she was worried about his health.

Well, I admitted he was getting to be sort of gray in the face, but it was a happy sort of gray, I thought.

He'd shuffle in to work in the morning, and as he punched in he'd peer dead-faced about and say, "Is it quitting time yet?"

He was almost completely uncommunicative for the first two hours of the day until he fully woke up. Often he would stand at his bench, staring down at a stack of orders, saying, "Naow -- naow!" very briskly, trying to give the impression of a wide-awake man who any second now was going to fly off at great speed -- oh yes, any second now.

He told me many anecdotes about this period. I liked the one about the young lady who was entertaining him in her room in the boarding house and her bed collapsed under the strain. Half an hour later the landlady, a knowing smile on her face, came up to check. She had a sort of gleam in her eye so a night or two later he was checking out her bed.

He met a lady who claimed that every normal woman had a minimum of five orgasms a day. She had a different man for each night of the week. Her ex-husband had Tuesdays and Laney had Wednesdays. So he heard a lot about the ex-husband. I suppose the Thursday man heard Laney stories. This lady made him a hand-painted tie which he never wore.

Then he met the woman who was to be wife #4 and he stopped his frantic chasing.

Since I work with eight people who knew Laney, I am now and then treated to a Laney story that I've never heard or have forgotten. The other day I heard one of doubtful authenticity from Chow the Chinest machinist. He said that he and ftl had gone uptown on the lunch hour and while they were standing on a street corner waiting for the light to change, some drunk came up and tried to scratch a match on Laney. He turned and said "What the hell," and according to Chow the drunk very politely said: "Excuse me, sir, I thought you were a telephone pole."

Not long ago one of the shop girls I drive home said suddenly, "Look, in that car ahead! Doesn't that look just like Laney?" Slicked-down hair

and stick-out ears -- yes, it did look like Laney.

This same girl picked up a filthy white rag off the floor and held it up for us to see. "Look," she hollered, "Laney's handkerchief!" His handkerchiefs were always a subject for remark. He was a hayfever sufferer and was constantly sneezing and blowing his nose. He'd pull out a large filthy handkerchief and turn it over looking for a clean spot to wipe his nose on.

One anecdote I get a kick out of concerns the time the foreman went around asking the employees if they'd favor going from a one-hour lunch period to a half-hour. He wanted a simple yes or no answer. When I mentioned it to Laney he said he hadn't been asked. Then he began to get mad. By God, he was a man who liked hot meals and he didn't care for dry old sandwiches like people brought in paper sacks, and why hadn't they asked him? I said, "Well, Mac just wanted a simple yes or no in less than 20 minutes, so he skipped you." Laney was taken aback for a moment, but he did smile and shake his head and say, "Huh!"

For one who loved to play jokes on others, he could be taken in quite easily. Laney's jokes were somewhat on the heavy side, like letting air out of your tires -- but anyhow, as I said, he could get outraged over very little. Once a girl at work he didn't like happened to get her paycheck half an hour earlier than usual. We made a big thing of this, telling Laney that here was an example of favoritism. He was angry about it for weeks.

We liked that one so well that next payday we hadn't been paid by noon, but we told Laney that this girl had got her check at eleven o'clock and was going to the bank at noon to cash it. She was going to the bank, but for some other purpose -- he actually followed her to the bank to check up on her. It was almost absurd, the way he could flare up at any reasonable-sounding rumor we cared to start. I called him on it once, pointing out to him that this latest story was obviously a lie. It was then that he gave forth with a line that is still quoted in the shop: "If it's chickenshit and involves the management and policy of this place, I believe it."

When we worked overtime, which was usually every Tuesday and Thursday for a number of years, we'd go down to the corner restaurant and eat. There were usually six or eight of us. Laney always ordered the same thing: "Two soft-boiled eggs on white toast, and coffee, please."

One day someone said to him, "Laney, you always eat eggs. Why don't you try something else?"

Laney said, "Yes, I had eggs for breakfast, I came here and had eggs for lunch. I'm going to eat eggs now, and tonight when I get home from work my wife will fix me a snack which will consist of soft-boiled eggs on toast."

Wonderingly, the fellow shook his head. "Tell me, Laney, why do you like eggs?"

Laney then delivered himself of another shop-famous line which caused at least one of us to spew his water across the counter: "I figure that anything that comes out of a hen's asshole must be good to eat."

Shavings

FROM THE MASS

"LOOK! LANEY'S HANDKERCHIEF!"

NUMBER 4

I was writing about Francis T. Laney, legendary fan, the other day for Terry Carr. I'd have included this small story if I'd remembered it in time. Back during the war his wife Jackie was working at a local night club. She was a cocktail waitress and worked each night 7-12. In those days 12 was quitting time. She was paid fifty cents an hour. But her tips went \$10 to \$18 per night. But Laney reported only the fifty cents on his income tax return. I warned him that he was taking a chance on that, because surely not even a simple clerk would expect a cocktail waitress to receive no tips at all. But he wouldn't listen. He said that her paycheck was written proof of that part of her income and there was absolutely no written record of her tips. Well, it was a gamble and he won, because as far as I know the government never checked on him.

Another try at avoiding income tax was more amusing. He knew I went to the races every week or so and he asked me if I could pick up worthless \$100 mutuel tickets for him. I said sure, easily, and in answer to his queries told him that each ticket was printed with the name of the track, the date, the number of the race, and the number of the horse, and these in conjunction with the newspaper chart would be a tangible record of money bet and lost.

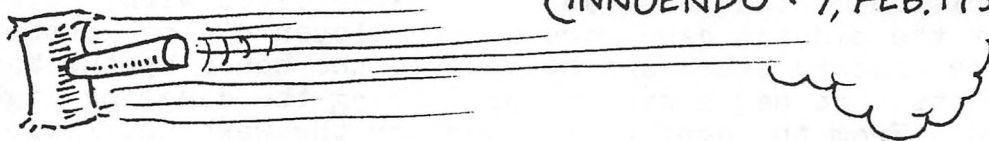
He was joyous and asked me to pick him up maybe \$2000 worth. He said he was going to use them for deductions in his income tax. I told him it wouldn't work.

In the first place, anybody who knew horses could talk to him for one minute and find out that he didn't know the first thing about them. And if he was so ignorant about horses how come he was betting \$100 a clatter on his income? And how could he bet so many horses and still remain so ignorant? None of these objections meant a thing to him, so I uncorked the final argument. Besides, I told him, the income tax laws forbade any gambling losses being declared in excess of gambling wins. You had to declare gambling wins because that was part of your income, but you could not allow your losses to exceed your wins.

He got so mad at the government for beating him to the draw that I thought for a minute he was going to secede from the Union.

THE MIND OF CHOW

(INNUENDO #7, FEB. 1958)



Kimmy '94

Directly at the head of Francis T. Laney the mallet came flying.

This is the same Laney who edited the #1 fanzine ACOLYTE, the #1 FAPA-zine FANDANGO, who was a one-time dignitary in the NFFF, and besides being an office-holder in FAPA a couple of times, was more than once the Director of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.

If I could remember the exact chronology of this affair, I might even discover that he was Director of the LASFS at the very moment that the mallet came flying at his head. Can you imagine anyone throwing a mallet at the head of the Director of the LASFS?

This happened back in 1946 or 1947 when Laney and I worked in the same shop and each working day was like a protracted meeting of a fan club,

A fan club with only two members. For about a year it had three members. Gus Willmorth, founder of the adzine FANTASY ADVERTISER, worked there for a while.

Laney, in response to a loud warning shout, looked up just in time to see the mallet and to duck. The mallet whizzed over his head and crashed into a partition.

Chow, the Chinese machinist who had thrown the mallet at Laney and shouted the warning at him also, came up to him laughing. "Old Chinese joke," he said. "I almost kill you."

Laney, shaking his head, laughed too. It was an incredulous, wry laugh, the laugh of a man who, not quite understanding, was trying to be a good sport. Chow demonstrated his sense of humor in peculiar ways at times, Laney knew. And so he laughed, without much humor in his laugh, because he could scarcely believe that this thing had happened.

I could hardly believe it myself and I had just witnessed the entire sequence. Chow had picked up the mallet, and standing a dozen feet away, had swung it underhand at FTL's head shouting "Hey, Laney!" as the missile left his hand.

For a long time afterward that was a standard shop joke among the three of us. Nobody else could see anything humorous about it. In fact, several people said that they hated having Chow tell them jokes because they could never tell when it was time to laugh. On the other hand, when they told him jokes they never could tell whether he would look at them blackly or laugh uproariously. There seemed to be no pattern.

Laney claimed it was the fault of us inscrutable Occidentals.

One day Chow came to work fairly bursting with a story to tell us. He could scarcely wait to tell us what had happened the night before.

It seems that Chow and his sister lived with their father. Every night the old man came home around eleven o'clock after closing up his little grocery store and he entered the house by the back way in total darkness. He had a system for finding the dangling light cord on the back porch. From the door he reached for the washtub, followed along the washtub so many paces, and having reached a certain spot would reach up into the blackness and grasp the light cord without a miss. He was very fond of telling people how he could do this every time.

One day Chow noticed, in changing the light bulb, that the outside metal shell was electrically live -- he got a shock from it. So he attached a wire to it and ran the bare wire down in place of the switch cord. That night his father came home late as usual, felt his way along the washtub as usual, reached the locating point, reached up and grasped the light cord... Chow said his father's yelp of fright and pain could be heard most of the way down the block.

"My golly," I said when he told me the story. "He was grounded to the washtub. He must have gotten a terrific shock. You might have killed him."

"Only old Chinese joke," laughed Chow. "I almost kill him."

"Did he find out you'd rigged the light switch?"

"Sure, I tell him. I say, 'Oh boy, old Chinese joke. I almost kill you.' So he laugh too."

I guess the old man saw the point.

The other day in the shop the foreman started feeding a piece of material through one of the table saws with the direction of rotation. This is not common practice and this foreman has been running these saws for more than twenty years, but there he was, feeding the strip the wrong way. Of course the saw seized up and shot the piece through the air at a speed we later estimated to be 100 mph. It screamed past six inches away from the ear of Chow as he sat operating a drill press. It struck the wall with a sound like the crack of a rifle.

The foreman went over to Chow. "I'm not hurt. Are you?" he said.

Chow said, "I didn't even have to turn around to know who did that. Only one man in the shop stupid enough."

The rest of the day Chow would come over to me at intervals, usually announcing himself by throwing something sharply against my machine or the wall, then coming up and saying quietly to me, "I'm not hurt. Are you?" Then he'd tell me the story all over again.

About the fourth time he told me the story, I said to him, "What are you so annoyed about, anyway? Old Chinese joke. He almost kill you."

To Chow's eternal credit it must be admitted that he laughed. It was a laugh that reminded me of Laney's laugh, so long ago. A sort of wry laugh, without much humor in it at all.

Companion Piece

FROM KLIEN BOTTLE #3, FEBRUARY 1960



Well, Dewey kind of tricked me. In a nice way. He called me the other night and read me the first draft of Like, Man, a Gagggle of Geese, and of course I laughed like crazy. I loved it. In fact I said at once I would write a companion piece for it, and this is it. Trouble was, I based my piece on an incident suggested by a paragraph in the first draft, and it was written out of the final draft. So I asked him for the first draft and he sent it along and I will reproduce it here so I can go into my own act:

"That man, Tiger Burbee, goes all in a bunch and kind of chuggy at the mere thought of a piano roll. Gets a gleam in his eyes like when he originates the script for some concupiscent lad who doesn't dig the finer points of coaxing into bed with him a girl who'd jump in first if he'd just play it cool. Or when he expounds on the scientific method of determining the closing times of strange bookstores."

Fact is, something glowingly wonderful does come over me at the thought of a piano roll but it is not about those fine things I preach tonight. And I won't expound on that coaxing-into-bed thing either. That, by the way, is a fine story but it goes much better when told verbally on account of the rhythm of the verbs. You must remind me of it when I see you some time. I tell it better when full of good beer. Please do not try to tempt me with Coke, because I frown at soft drinks. They're debilitating. The thing I want to talk about is the scientific method of determining the closing times of strange bookstores.

Elmer Perdue and I (the story began) now and then will head toward some city beyond the horizon looking for books and phonograph records and player piano rolls. We usually set aside some Saturday for this trip and take off early and arrive home late. The day is studded with joyful stops for beer and still more stops necessitated by the beer and whether we arrive home with books or records or piano rolls sometimes seems of secondary importance.

We do not always go alone. Once Bjo accompanied us, taking along her sketch book, but I do not believe she picked up anything useful from either of us.

The time of which I am about to speak occurred about eighteen or twenty months ago. It was some lovely month, May or like that, and Santa Barbara was our goal. Elmer had gotten hold of two bookstore addresses there which he said were excellent sources. Santa Barbara is a mission city about seventy miles from Elmer's house, which in its turn is some fifteen miles from my place. I drove there one Saturday morning and around 9:00 p.m. was ringing his doorbell. Elmer swung the door wide open and stood there in what I suppose he fondly believes is a pose of grandeur. He was clad in a white shirt and black bow tie. And when I say white shirt and black bow tie I do not mean you to mentally include such accessories as

socks or shorts or headgear.

I do not know if it has been mentioned elsewhere, but this is Elmer's favorite morning dress. That damned bow tie gives him a feeling of elan, I think. The white shirt sets off his black tie and shiny face and would swirl out grandly behind him if he ever walked fast, but he never walks fast.

I do not know why Elmer does not walk fast unless it is that his heavy belly requires too much energy to start rolling. And too much energy to stop. It might be that he feels, in his lofty moodiness, that no place toward which he is headed is really important to a godlike mentality and if he doesn't like it when he gets there he will pass a minor miracle and make it unto his own liking.

Part of passing a minor miracle requires the drinking of a vast amount of Angelica wine.

Before long, Audrey Clinton arrived on the scene. Elmer by this time was dressed. Oh, we were a platonic group that May morning.

Elmer turned to me and smiling an Angelica smile (a smile engendered by Angelica wine) said: Honeychild has consented to go with us.

I was consterned -- consternated? -- how is that word used? I'm no semanticist. I write from the heart, letting the syntax fall where it might, and those goddam words clog the aorta at times.

I was croggled, I mean. I thought he meant Honeybelle, his dog. I neglected to mention that Honeybelle heard me coming and barked like crazy because she thought I was a mailman. By now she was silent, of course, and had turned her great sad eyes on Elmer's face, which she no doubt regards as little short of divine.

As I said, I thought he meant Honeybelle the dog and I remember thinking to myself: Good Lord, has Elmer at last taken leave of his senses? Yes, I said to myself, he has, or he would not say that this half-wild dog had consented to accompany us.

Then it struck me that the word Honeychild referred to Audrey, who was standing there staring at me as though she were saying to herself: Has Burbee taken leave of his senses, acting so full of consternation? (See, other people know how to use that word and I don't.)

Oh, I said. My golly, I said. I stared closer at Audrey. I had never up to this time seen a woman who would willingly closet herself in a small automobile for hours with such a bizarre and lecherous pair. I said something about the horrors of bookhunting. Do you realize, I said, that we will be traversing on foot the seediest parts of the towns we stop in? Do you know that we wander in and out of musty second-hand stores, breathing the evil-smelling atmospheres thereof and getting our hands grimy on their wares and it all is a sort of odd way to pass the hours, considering that at no time does a floorshow start or a scantily-clad girl come up to tell you the house wants to buy you a drink?

I said a few more things but it quickly came to me that this young lady was not paying much attention to me. In fact she had ears mostly for her own utterances. In fact as the day wore on she paid less and less

attention. At one point, as a matter of fact, she was asleep, though I attribute this more to the hypnotic effect of steady carspeed than any soporific qualities in my speech.

We did go rather steadily up the coast, through Oxnard, which is famous because it is near Camarillo, which Rotsler made famous, and through other cities, but I think we stopped in Ventura for a bit. In Santa Barbara we poked around quite happily in the various places which were just as musty as we thought they'd be. We wandered leisurely around till about 3:00 in the afternoon, at which time Audrey declared she would go no farther till she had eaten.

It developed that neither of these people had eaten any breakfast and had been up half the night. As a matter of fact, they'd been together in some joint somewhere, arguing about the fact that they had nothing to argue about.

That is what they said. They repeated it a couple of times to be sure I got it right. I got it word for word, all right. I had the feeling they thought it was clever. So I have repeated it here in the hope that somebody else might read it and write in and tell me that it is clever and real modern and possibly even cool, like.

But while Audrey's belly was burbling for want of food, as was apparent from her speech, it was also quite apparent that we still had two big bookstores to visit and here it was around 3:00 in the afternoon.

So I said: I think we ought to check the closing times of these stores so we can arrange our schedule to fit. It would be a hell of a thing if these two stores, which are the ones we came to see, were to be closed when we finally got to them.

Elmer thought I was right.

But Audrey said there was no use checking because she knew they stayed open till 9:00 or 10:00, or even later, as long as they had customers.

Elmer thought she was right.

But I declared: Wait. Elmer and I were in San Bernardino some months ago and there were two bookstores just as close together as these two. We didn't bother to check closing time and went lazily through one of them. When we arrived at the other it was closed. So we checked, too late, and found that one closed at 5:00 and the other at 5:30. If we'd known that, we could have rearranged our schedule and visited both.

Audrey said that was San Bernardino and she knew it was different here. She looked at Elmer.

That is correct, darling, said Elmer.

I am merely being scientific, I said. These things want careful study, do they not, Meyer?

That is correct, Meyer, said Elmer.

Basing my prediction on careful samplings taken from the past performances of bookstores, I say that the first of the stores into which we go

will close at 5:00 and the second at 5:30.

Audrey's mouth set in a sort of tight line but she walked along with us.

At the first store Elmer stood twenty feet from the clerk and inquired as to the closing time.

Five o'clock, said the clerk.

Check one, I said, grandiosely. And what will this next place tell us? Obvious, I think.

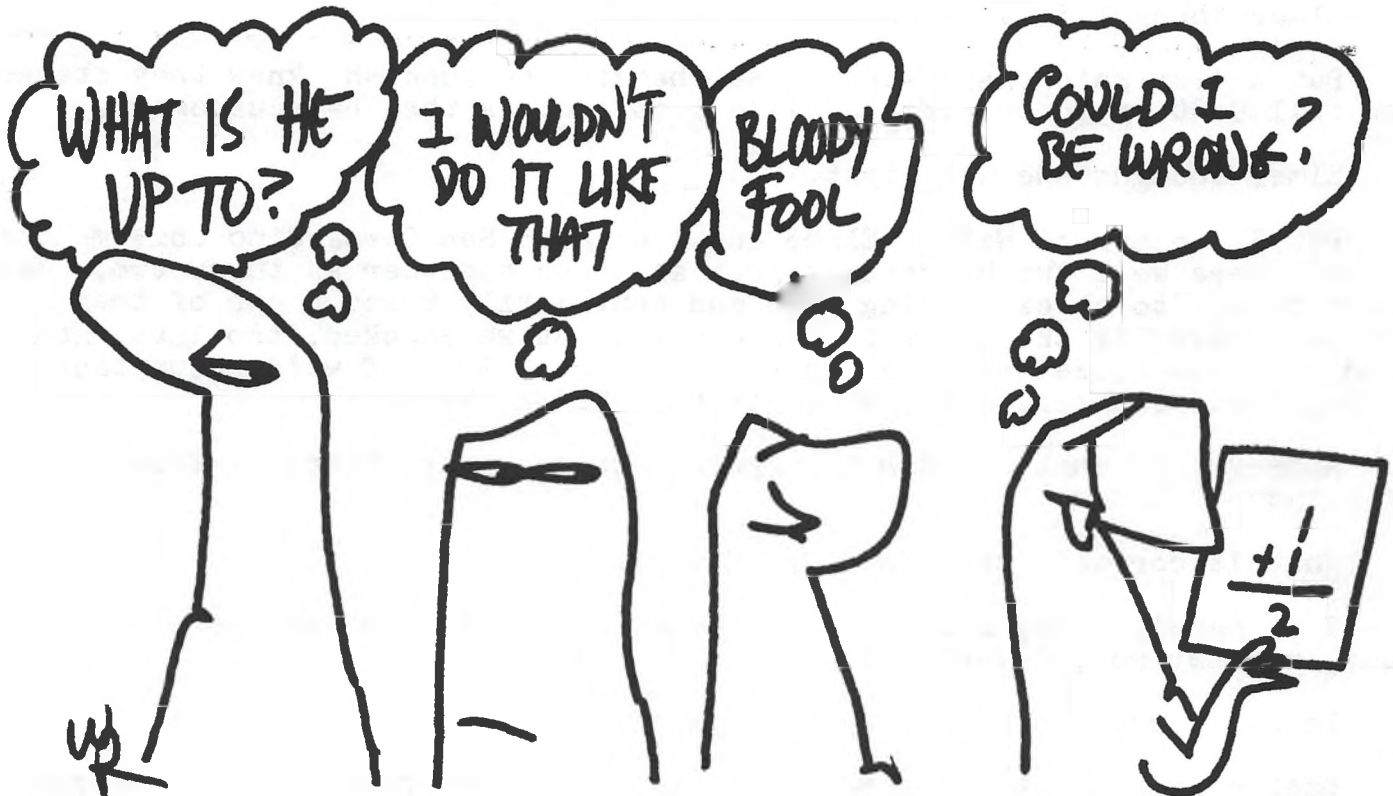
Again Elmer stood proudly twenty feet from the proprietor and asked about closing time.

Five-thirty, said this man.

On the way out I began to sum up the situation: There we have it. Once again validation of the scientific method. I knew it would happen that way, for it was set in the immutable channels of this time-track. It could happen no other way. Based on --

Oh shut your goddam mouth! Audrey's voice cut in. It had gone up an octave or a tenth (I'm no more a musician than a semanticist) as she went on: You goddam fan. You think you're so smart --

She went on for awhile, but mostly it was the same sort of stuff I get at home with no original touches to liven it up so I didn't listen very closely.





Hemmel's Scientific Sorties #1

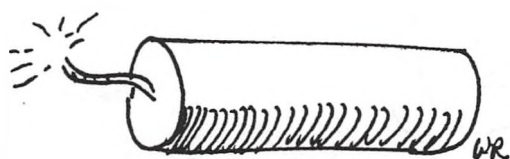
BY OXNARD Q. HEMMEL, FR. HD.

Shangri L'Affaires #23, February 1945

I read a story once, and that is the only reason I can think of for writing this brief article. I do not remember offhand the title of the story, but perhaps if I sort of mark time I will eventually remember it before I use up the whole page. No, I guess I won't do that, because the fellow who asked me to do this article would be vexed and wouldn't give me the twenty free copies of the mag he promised me.

Well, even if I can't remember what the title of the story is, I do remember a good deal about the plot and the science used to further the evil plans of the villain and the science used by the hero to defeat the villain, which in a way was a pity because the villain was every bit as smart as the hero, except I think he was more soft-hearted than the stalwart hero because he had the hero three times in a tight spot where he could have wiped him out and he let the hero get by with only a bop on the head with a Stillson wrench once, a clout in the jaw with a Wedemyer re-activating photo-rumbatronic gun another time, and a low blow on the third time. Then the hero, as soon as he gets the villain in a tight fix, will not let him off with so much as a whack on the scone, oh no not him. No, he bats him through the midriff with the very same Wedemyer re-activating phot-rumbatronic gun. No, come to think of it, it was a variegated geodesic proton flasher he did him in with, yes I am pretty sure that is what it was. I thought it was the Wedemyer gun because it sure would have been more ironic. The geodesic flasher was invented by two soldiers of science, Edo-Tamulinas who were out in a boat one day throwing beer cans in the water and watching the ripples. Edo complained they'd run out of beer cans before he'd got illuminated and Tamulinas complained that he wasn't illuminated either. At this point Edo started sketching on the back of an envelope and the diagram or figure is

reproduced below which he drew with swift sure strokes of his fine Italian hand. In this sketch we recognize such familiar symbols as A, C, D, E, F, and G. Speculation is rife as to where B is.



THE MONOBLOCK UNIVERSE

Some time later, Edo-Tamulinas perfected the geodesic proton flasher and it is naturally be-

lieved that the diagram had the germ plasma of the idea in it, saying that the Ranger would be nettled or vexed if they violated their pledge of secrecy.

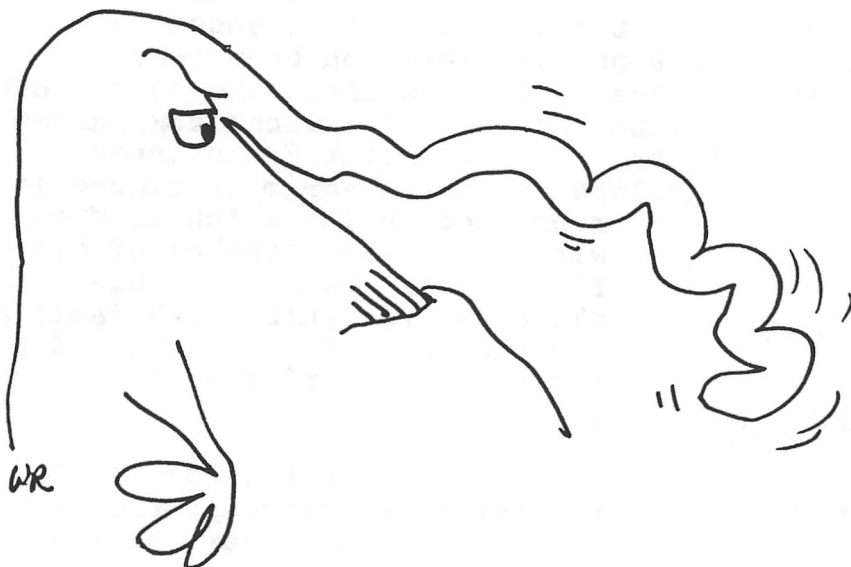
Since no one ever tried to buy the diagram this make it priceless and the original is at present preserved in the Library of Congress with day and night guards in three shifts watching it along with the other valuable documents of the land such as (no doubt) SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #25, TWO FINGERS #1, and the Declaration of Independence.

The principle of the geodesic proton flasher is too well known for me to go into here in great detail but perhaps it would be well to review some of its aspects to refresh everyone's memory.

In the first place, the radial network of the input terminal takes the stuff from the previous stage, shunts it across the low-resistance couples the stage to another output terminal tube where the coupling circuits feed back. The feedback is what makes the gun work, of course.

I could be much more technical about it but I am afraid I would get out of the readers' depth, which is why I said it in such simple concise English so I wouldn't sound like George O. Smith but on the other hand you might think I was specially smart if I filled the page with technical terms -- do you see now how well I understand you better than you do yourself? It is because I am taking a psychology course along with my science courses which enables me to delve into my fellow man, a generic term which includes women too.

Thank you very much for your kind letters to this department; of course I am speaking of the letters you have yet to write, but they can't help but be complimentary letters because of the useful thing I am doing in bringing this dept. before the public. If, by some random shot into infinity, I get a derogatory letter from some nitwit it is possible I will not wish to carry the banners of science supreme to the multitude any more and will resign as science editor of this sterling fanzine.

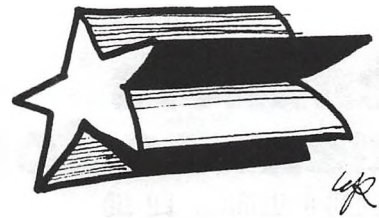


Hemmel's Scientific Sorties #2

Notes on the Death of the Universe

BY OXNARD Q. HEMMEL, FR. HD.

Shangri L'Affaires #27, October 1946



Since the recent enthusiastic reception given my first article in this curious fanzine I have been egged on to greater achievements and their accompanying triumphs. I feel now since I got so many praising letters that I am really doing a worthwhile thing in this field and perhaps this magazine will someday be elevated to the status of a daily newspaper with its stuff syndicated to all parts of the globe. Who can tell? There is no doubt that good strong writers on any subject are scarce and some of them are very lazy and too busy with other things but right now I am in the pink and can rattle this stuff off at an amazing rate.

As I have attempted to explain, these little sorties into science may make many a Hertz out of halfwitz and Marconis out of morons, because by bringing plain everyday science down to the level of the common mind there is no telling what the result in time will be and I am already proud as I sit here ripping this copy off that so many embryonic minds are in my care to shape and mold and slap into condition with deft fingers into the geniuses of tomorrow though it is quite possible that the plural is gennii much as in Arabian folklore.

Well, today or this month I have chosen another well-known piece of science that is hardly known at all, so draw your easy chair up to the roaring fire and while your toes are toasting on the grate like so many marshmallows prepare to get a painless and pleasant injection of pure knowledge that will in the future assist you to climb the ladder of success in a thousand and one ways.

One of these fine days the universe is going to stop. Have you ever lain awake nights thinking about the celestial power plant that keeps the whole shebang running like a Swiss watch? Have you ever thought that the whole business the whole works might one day stop for lack of steam as it were? I have and so should you and for those of you whose educations and experiences both romantic and scientific are not on a par with mine I will begin to describe the gigantic scene with a few broad strokes. There will be nothing at all because everything it seems will be at a state of rest which means no new chemical combinations will be possible and all electrons and protons and photons and rumbatrons will have stopped their mad gyrations and will fall in fine clouds through the ether which will not be luminiferous then. So there will be no matter anymore because these electrons etc. are nothing but charges of force like electricity and when they are all discharged it will be a dangerous place for a person to be even if he is wearing an insulated suit. As far as the eye can see with telescopes of an expensive make there will be nothing to see except a very dark grade of blackness which will be bad for visibility as far as seeing goes. There will really be nothing to see. This phenomenon which will occur only once I have called entropy though it is possible that someone else named it and I am but repeating the term.

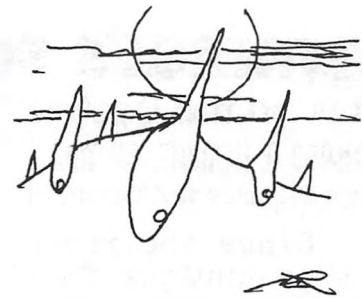
This has been a very elemental lecture on the nature of the universe and next month if this periodical has its regular period so to speak we will talk for a time of spiral nebulae and the various theories of the formation of the very globe upon which we are living and moving this very minute though it is natural to assume that some of us are moving more than others.

Hemmel's Scientific Sorties #5

BY OXNARD Q. HEMMEL, FR. HD.

Stream of Thought

The Grotesque #1, January 1946



I do not suppose anyone will mind if I dip for a moment into metaphysics. After all, the so-called science needs somebody who can bring clarity and lucidity out of the mumbo-jumbo that exists in the field at the present time. My older and therefore more avid followers will welcome this tidbit and will take this opportunity, no doubt, to flaunt this article about as a prize example of the wide scope of this series. So far, it is true, we have left very few sciences or fields untouched and future articles will leave nothing untouched. The sacred as well as the profane go down before my rhetorical guns, and so do the hide-bound and the conventional, not to mention the Bohemian. Amazingly enough, I am at present contemplating an article that will debunk and expose and lay bare my own articles, thus beating some wiseacres to the gun and leaving my faithful followers in a state of profound confusion, not sure of anything except perhaps where their next meal is coming from.

My readers, upon reading my last and final article in this series, will no doubt expect to see a summation or resume of all wisdom in a few powerful paragraphs, and are no doubt prepared to learn the whole article by heart in order to quote sentences and phrases from it in every conceivable quandary or cul-de-sac in which they might sometime find themselves. In this they will be disappointed (they can spend some time meditating on the benefits of disappointment), as I have said, and not only disappointed but confused and confounded as well and to boot, and this will serve to make them wary as wolves of all comers no matter who or perhaps the word is whom. They will take no one's word for anything and thus, I believe, I will have created and helped to foster a generation of cynics who should go far, since they must perforce see for themselves instead of going by what has been written. This alone could serve to carry my name to the far ends of the earth all over again.

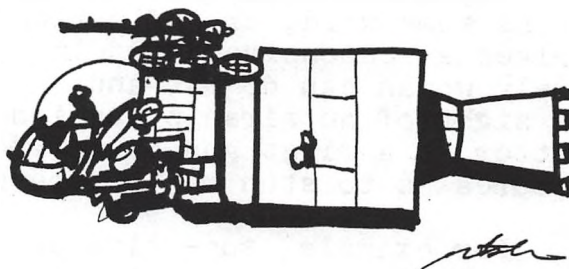
Now to return to the original subject of this article before I run out of space (as once I did). We shall talk for a time about the Stream of Consciousness, as I have termed it. By this I do not mean the device that was invented or publicized in a dirty book and is now used by literary hucksters to show off their inferior wares or to cover up a woeful lack of the King's English. I mean the Stream (which may or may not be capitalized in the balance of this article) which supposedly flows by out there in space or somewhere, and to which we sometimes are tuned in unwittingly, that is to say, without trying.

Where authors and other artists obtain their inspirations has been a subject for discussion wherever the intelligentsia convene. Most of the theories have been wrong and the rest have been inferior, I must reveal. No one has been able to answer this correctly, and I am not sure that anyone can answer it correctly. But some person said, and another agreed, that there is a stream of thought flowing past somewhere and the more sensitive of us can tune in and pick up

wonderful ideas that are floating by. This would account, they say, for the identical discoveries sometimes made by people far removed from each other by physical space. They simply happened to tune in to the Stream and got the same program, so to speak.

Some character in a Midwestern state, it is said, could put himself into a coma (presumably without the aid of strong drink) and answer with ineffable ease all types of questions put to him. Correctly, I presume. He said he turned his thoughts outward and caught the answers somewhere out in space where a great stream of thoughts flowed by. I am not here to call the man a liar. Neither am I here to back him up. Theory, that is all it is, and it will remain thus until the Stream is located, measured, recorded, and tapped at will by investigators.

To indicate now that such an investigation is taking place would probably be premature. But one of these days some syndicate headed by smart men is going to realize the value of tapping at will this Stream. Imagine if you can the value, the immense value of a receiver which could tune in on the Stream! Possibilities beyond the mere commercial ones! The owners of the receiver could gain control of the earth and the solar system and if they wished to go beyond the solar system I cannot think of anything that might arise to stop them unless the Stream itself is able to impose strictures on those who seek to misuse the knowledge gained therefrom. I imagine, too, that the Stream could not only supply all the answers but also unsuspected questions. This sounds like the plot or sub-plot of a super-novel, and I suppose that some of the literary gentry are baldly and without reticence stealing my ideas as I put them down here. I will not mind, but I do think my name should be mentioned somewhere in the prefatory remarks, at least.



However, let it not be thought that I am in the business of supplying hack writers with fresh plots, though my writings are admittedly good source material. I am a scientific observer of the phenomena of the globe and adjacent items such as the Universe or Cosmos. I put down what I see, what I feel, what I think, with no reserve, except for such knowledge as it is wise to keep from the public till I see how you make out with the atomic bomb.

At any rate, I have designed and fashioned cleverly made instruments of a startling nature and these instruments have not located any thought stream within a range of 174 light years, although I must admit that the sensitivity of my devices is not too good beyond the 150 light year mark. Of course, my negative results do not necessarily imply that such a stream does not exist.

Perhaps the first spacemen will find themselves bombarded by a panoply of thoughts both horrible and wonderful as they plunge through the Thought Stream in their crude vessel, and perhaps they will perish there, brains burned out from sheer ecstasy of an intellectual nature.



I have so often left the scientific world agog or set each and every one of my colleagues on his ear that this same scientific world is no longer surprised at anything I say, although I believe that they have merely adapted themselves to the new set of conditions by means of a sort of camouflage.

Ordinarily, however, I am not to be drawn out on any subject unless some word, or inflection, or gesture, or perhaps phenomenon strikes a responsive chord in my makeup. A sunset will do it. A lovely woman can do it, and so can a discarded Christmas tree, and the sight of an airship cushioned in the clouds can do it. The clatter of a rivet gun can stir me and cause me to evoke such word pictures as to stun my listeners.

For example, some time ago I was quaffing, with equable ease, Sauvignon Blanc from kantharos (an early Greek type of wine goblet -- replicas, of course), while the rest of the party was gay about me. I had not added much to the party in the way of knowledge except such phrases as one can lard lightly into drawing-room crosstalk or chitterchatter, but suddenly my eye caught the glint of a high North Light reflected off the left incisor tooth of a lady present. I will not go into the matter now, but if I explained it, you would understand why I acted as I did.

Memories flooded through me, and rising from my chair -- overturning it, I fear, in my mood -- I went with dignified tread to the side of the lady in question, and spoke to her without cease for quite a length of time. What a pity. So unused was her brain to the reception of new thoughts and concepts that she could only stare at me, unable, perhaps, to assimilate the new knowledge being so impartially imparted, though her eyes sparkled in an unmistakable manner.

I spoke to her, and all who cared to listen, of the unseen creatures that could constantly throng around and about us, the other-plane beings hinted at in esoteric fiction (I admit there was a touch of fantasy here) -- I spoke of inertialess drives, tractor rays, antigravity screens, visiplates, the velocity of escape, the way to steer a ship in space, the Law of Inverse Squares (which I soon will disprove), the likelihood of intelligent life on Mercury, the sunward planet, the mind of a worm, the reason for the Cosmos, the extraction of coloring matter from certain South American insects, the reasons for the tides, the triumphs and failures of psychology and my future plans for that science, disintegrating rays, etc.

I was launching into a spirited and image-evoking description of the constituent parts of egg-white and the like, when two, or three, or perhaps four men drew me away in what was later termed a discreet manner.

Some said it was the Sauvignon Blanc (from the Greek type of wine goblet) and others said overwork, while some said underwork, and all were tolerant or scornful depending on their heritage and environment. Some even held to the opinion that I was attempting to inveigle the lady into having an affair with me, and perhaps it is a commentary on modern life that they did not chide or blame me for trying, but for the lamentably stupid (they said) approach, which I understand is known as softening-up or ground-work.

But I did not wish to quibble, and, clapping on my cap (which unaccountably had changed color and size by the time I reached home and noticed it), I stalked from the room, master of the situation.

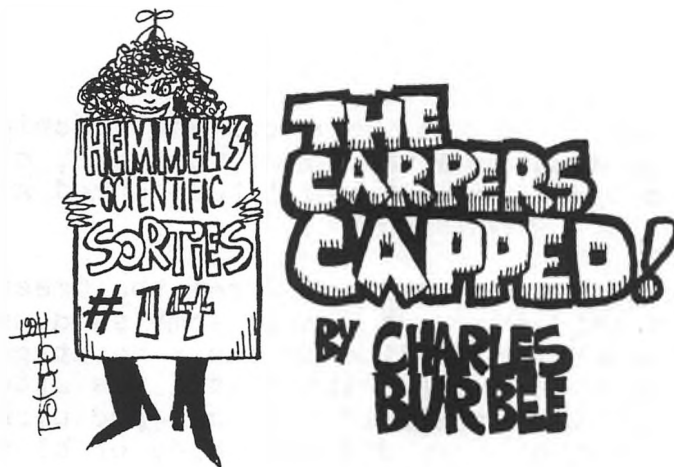
The thought of it all rankles yet within me, and I am determined, though two years have passed with no further word from those present at the party, to refuse curtly the next invitation they send me, be it inscribed ever so artfully in Spencerian script-type printing.

I only wish that some scribe, some Boswell, could have been there to take it all lovingly down -- I am sure the germ-ideas for thousands of articles and stories were contained in that impassioned speech, though no one, save the lady in question, appreciated one iota or moiety of it, and I am beginning to doubt now that she appreciated it, for I have left my chamber door unlocked each night since then, and she has never taken advantage of this to steal softly in and gain further esoteric knowledge and experience under my tender aegis.

On account of this, I am sometimes enjoined to believe that there are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in my philosophy. And here, readers, is a pungent example of the way pure rhetoric flows so facilely from my pen just as though it were a pat phrase rather than something of my own origin.



"THE UNSEEN WORLD IS ALL
AROUND US!"



The flow of carping letters still continues, in spite of my edicts or ukases against such a condition. It does not speak well for a large portion of my readers when they are spending so much time hunting out flaws of an inconsequential nature (if, indeed, such exist) in my studies of nature in the raw or partly clothed. As I have before mentioned there are those who insist upon demanding proof of what they see here. There are those who pick out tiny contradictions and inaccuracies and do not hesitate to dash off a letter and flash it to my headquarters by mail or cable. These people I wish to silence for all time as I do not care to use up otherwise valuable space telling them off when I could just as easily be dispensing with an ever liberal hand the fruits of the fount of knowledge which flows so bountifully and generously for those who wish to take advantage of its steady supply.

I have more than once stated that statements appearing here need no further proof than the very idea of appearing here in the first place. This fact or state of affairs has not changed any as it is part of my policy and I never change a policy once I have established same for if policies are allowed to change there is no telling what would happen to the content of my articles.

On account of these hair-splitters I am again (but for the very last time) forced to say very clearly that they have either got to stop writing in such a declamatory manner or I will have to stop bringing these articles before the eager public they have created for themselves. As adverse criticism acts on me like a dreadful anodyne and I do not care to continue under such disagreeable conditions. I am not being pettish in this matter; on the contrary, I feel that the carpers are acting in a very childish manner, seeking to cut me down to their size, much as is the habit of persons who see a giant in their midst. Because of these people and my own, shall we call it, idiosyncrasy, I have developed, or named, what I shall call the Stamp of Approval.

Now you will find many statements of a somewhat incredible tinge in these articles and since they deal as they do with subjects of an esoteric and sometimes fantastic nature a goodly number of these statements are open to question by eminent experts and authorities in whose fields I am at the same time encroaching or trespassing, or perhaps the gentler term would be "exploring." These statements which no one can believe except the more rabid of my followers are generally just the ones that should be believed for your peace of mind and for the advance of science in this world. They have my Stamp of Approval. On the other hand, there are other statements that I myself am not sure of or which I do not make a brief for, and these statements not only do not bear my Stamp of Approval but should be believed only at your own risk. So much for that.

I spoke a moment ago of peace of mind in believing statements. I see now that I did not precisely mean peace of mind, and perhaps I chose the term illy, for those readers of mine who hang upon my each and every word realize that it's later than we think and darker than we think and it is all, so to speak, a horrible mess, for nothing is secure or free or untouched and if it seems to be that way it will not be that way long and there is nothing anyone can do about it. The sky may at any moment come crashing down about our ears, or the world may burst like a paper sack filled with water as it hits the pavement after being dropped from the fifth story, or the air itself might become unbreathable, or black emptiness, empty even of blackness, might suddenly take the place of everything that we know or see before us now, and the hyper beings that probably flock in interstellar space might very well assume control of the universe for a million years again.

We who read this series are aware of all these things and more that I have not mentioned here. But I speak only of those who read and reading, believe. The others, the scoffers, the unbelievers, read only for the questionable purpose of questioning everything they see here and seem to take an evil delight in ranting about what they consider flights of fancy or inaccurate conclusions. The worst part of the whole thing is that while all the things I say or hint at are irrevocably true, most of them need the test of time for proof, some of them taking as much as five hundred thousand years, and not many if any of us will be around at the time to see the triumph of my prophecy. So the scoffers can scoff and the believers can believe and no one can be too sure but will be sustained by faith alone.

There are those who will think that I am exaggerating a trifle when I speak of the sixteen inescapable dooms that await us, fighting for the privilege of being the first to overwhelm us. I find many comments, questions, queries, and just plain doubters among my own special clientele when I speak of the beings from outer space, and because this seems to be the chief object of dissension among even my faithful ones, I intend to explain the thing in detail, right down to the last dying gasp of the last man, the last shriek of the last raped maiden (rape: to carry away by force) as she is borne off in strange ships over the interstellar void. I will give such a virile word painting that even the most adamant scoffers will be silenced, perhaps in awe, perhaps in terror, perhaps simply for lack of something to say, for indeed, the description will leave many speechless, I know.

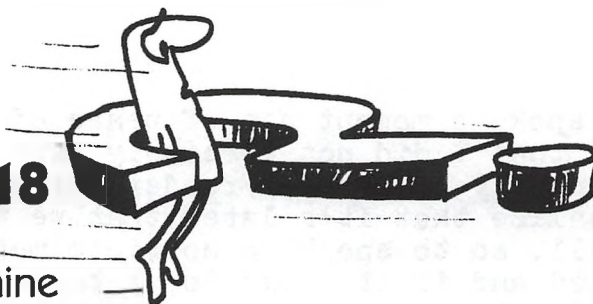
A whole article, as I said, will be written on this subject, and soon. Watch for it (O needless admonition!) in an early issue of this magazine or some other magazine of an equally esoteric nature; but, I warn you, do not look for it in Esquire, for I have stopped writing for that magazine since they never print what I write but only send my material back to me provided I first provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope; though please do not misunderstand this pat phrase, as the envelope is not self-addressing. That is a flaw in the language, and is probably one of the excellent reasons that I am so often misunderstood. I always say exactly what I mean in words as precise as a precision machine, but due to the vagaries of the language I am probably often misunderstood because too many false idioms exist in the vernacular and permit of more than one interpretation of even my most carefully worked out statements.

Hemmel's Scientific Sorties #18

BY OXNARD Q. HEMMEL, FR. HD.

Some Experiments with a Time Machine

Five Fingers, June 1, 1946



WHERE CURIOSITY TAKES YOU • *Robert's*

My eminent colleague, Professor Serge Meyer Pedro Pistoff, has published a brochure at once erudite and obscure. Most of the difficulty experienced by the reader can be explained when it is made known that Pistoff always writes his stuff in Japanese with Arabic characters and leaves it to be translated by his Estonian secretary, who has a typewriter with Sanskrit characters, and who, as she writes, transposes into Esperanto, which the printer renders into English as he linotypes. And then Pistoff refuses to read proof on his works, for by the time the material sees the printed page, his superb brain is far away on another tangent. A tangent, like as not, wholly unrelated to the subject matter of the text.

So much for Pistoff's idiosyncrasy. We go now into the subject of his brochure. In it, after a brief philosophical introduction, he plunges headlong into the subject at hand, which is a running account, highly technical, of the experiences he and I had with the small time machine that he collaborated on with me. The model is now broken and will probably never be repaired.

Pistoff explains how we made the machine, incorporating the essence of some fifty sciences. He spends some pages theorizing on the principles on which the machine operates, but rather murkily, I am afraid, since we agreed, he and I, that we did not clearly understand the thing.

A short description of the machine. It was but a small model. We could send it into time and it would pick up some small adjacent object, and after a bit would return automatically to the time it started from. It was not large enough to carry a person. For this reason we felt it scarcely warranted any publicity, and gave it none. To tell the truth, I was rather irked at Pistoff for publishing the brochure.

We had no way to calibrate the vernier dials except by an experimental method. We ran the machine into time (we did not even know whether forward or backward) and when it returned it brought a garbage can. From a close examination of the contents, we decided, from the preponderance of caviar, that it was dated sometime between 1923, when caviar was introduced by a well-known caterer into America, and 1929, after which date nobody had any money to buy the stuff. We noted this in our record book and sent the machine away again and it returned immediately with a copy of an esoteric magazine titled SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES. This was dated 1984 and was a rare piece of luck, for it not only enabled us to set the controls with a high degree of accuracy but the magazine itself proved so diverting that we ceased work for the day and sat around mugs of ale and read and re-read this little magazine, the editor of which, one Charles Burbee, was -- will be a wonderful man indeed, if his writings be any gauge of his character.

Next day we resumed our experiments and on our first try we brought back a small dinosaur who proved to be a most irascible animal, indeed, and entirely without convention. It was lucky our laboratory had no rug, for we surely would have had to throw it away. This little character escaped and was loose in the neighborhood for some days. Before we recaptured him, all cats in the neighborhood had disappeared.

We also brought back a few other items that might be of academic interest. A pair of socks, unused, a pair of panties, used, a pack of 7-inch cigarettes tied in a bundle, a beer bottle, empty, a bundle of newspapers through 1972-4, a stone tablet, an unmentionable thing of nameless material, a fish with legs, a bucket of sand with several cigarettes crushed out in it, a crate of strictly fresh eggs, an old automobile tire, and other items.

By this time the lab was piled high with nameless items from all the periods of time we had been able to reach. Some of it smelled a little. At this point, one of us was struck with an idea that was so simple that it had naturally not occurred to us sooner, since our minds constantly dwell in the realms of the transcendental. We would simply load the machine with the refuse and send the stuff away into time.

The machine was fully calibrated by this time, so we had some amusement selecting certain items for certain epochs and conjecturing the reactions of the inhabitants thereof when they discovered these

anachronistic items in their midst. So enthused were we that we failed to distinguish between laboratory equipment and the time accumulations, and before long we had all but denuded the room. We did, however, keep a scientifically accurate log of each item we sent away, and the time into which we projected it.



We sent back copies of current newspapers to the 17th century, and 1936 whiskey bottles to 1906. We sent the Smyth Report to the

12th century, and imagined the Indians' puzzlement at seeing it. The dinosaur we returned, out of compassion, to his own era. In a fairly wild fashion we disposed of everything -- very whimsically, we thought. The task finished, we retired to our rooms. Almost before we fell asleep we both had forgotten the time machine. It was a thing accomplished. We forged ahead into newer problems, newer vistas, undiscovered realms of science.

We stepped out of the laboratory the next morning and were amazed. We were surrounded by a plastic city of towering spire-tipped skyscrapers, of metallic streets and fantastically clad people. Wingless craft fled silently and swiftly through the sky. "My God!" cried Pistoff, his customary aplomb gone. "What is -- all this?" We both shot back into the laboratory. It was there, but it was

changing. Even as we watched, new equipment of a fantastic type sprang into being. The time machine, undisturbed, sat where we had left it.

The realization of what had happened struck us simultaneously, though I am sure I was just a little ahead of Pistoff. In sending off those items so carefully gauged to create amusement, we had altered the structure of the time-flow. We had created a new time track. We were in an alternate future. We looked out again. Now we observed the people more closely. The women -- the women! Nine feet tall, breastless. Green hair and three eyes. We hastily drew back into our lab. It had changed still more. We grew strangely frightened, or at least Pistoff did. Our lab was changing. Since it was the hub of the time change, it changed slowest. It was not affected so much -- not right away. But it was drifting gradually into the alternate future. We knew tacitly that we wanted nothing of this future. We seized upon our time machine. We consulted our records. (Object lesson: Always keep careful records.) We shot the machine back through time, got the bundle of newspapers and returned them to their own time. We looked outside. The tallest buildings now had flat tops instead of spires. We got the empty beer bottle, the stone tablet, the unmentionable thing of nameless material. And the Smyth Report. We returned them to their own times. When we looked outside again, things were fairly normal.

Pleased at our success, we carefully recaptured all the items and returned them to their proper and respective eras, and when we looked out again, we were surprised.

The houses were built in octagonal shapes. The air was flavored with mint. A bush in the front yard was hung with doughnuts and golf balls.

Another future! Another time track! But it should not have been! We had returned everything to its proper time and place, being careful to return them so that they would never have been gone from their eras more than a half-second, plus or minus. Madly we searched our records and our memories.

Nothing.

We seemed doomed to spend our time in some alternate time track. Of course, we could conjure up all manner of time tracks by tampering with the past, but we somehow had a nostalgia for our own time. You cannot imagine the nostalgia of being lost in time.

Then, sheepishly, Pistoff muttered something I did not catch and shyly he drew out the pair of panties, used, from his pocket. He's the sentimental sort.

We sent it back, as Pistoff brushed away a tear. When we looked outside again, the landscape was the same as it had always been. Dirt crusted everything. Stupid looking people dawdled along. A faint stink came from the nearby soap factory -- we breathed the air like it was some celestial anodyne. Back in our own time track.

Pistoff kicked the machine into a corner and that is how it got broken.



Monument to Wisdom

BY OXNARD Q. HEMMEL, FR. HD.

Shangri L'Affaires #38, November 1947

After being bruited around the countryside, word has come to me recently that there is at this moment a movement afoot to raise and collect monies for the building of a living memorial to the man Hemmel.

Whether this memorial is meant to be a gigantic Scientific Foundation or a research laboratory or perhaps a brooding colossus I have not yet been able to learn and it does not seem important here because fitting though it may be (and I do not wish to argue the point) I am not particularly willing at this time to be preserved in lines of brass or some more precious metal because I know too little about the group that is raising the monetary means toward this worthy end.

Because it is unknown to me just who is to profit from this venture I hesitate to place my stamp of approval on this project at this time, though it is not to be wondered at if I suddenly release, through the publishing channels of the nation, my formal go-ahead signal, and perhaps accompany the news releases of that gladsome day with a radio address of singular interest to each and everyone in the land.

I appreciate the thought behind this project provided there is no thought of pow'r or pelf motivating the actions of the Hemmel Forever Society, which I understand is the name of the organization collecting the money. After all, I am more or less a rather impractical old scientist, unused in many ways to the world outside the laboratory, and inclined to misunderstand anything I cannot view through the objective eye of my electron microscope, and besides I am not at all satisfied with the Dunn and Bradstreet ratings of these men.

Till I have satisfied myself as to the credentials of the Society, I wish you would forward such monies as you can spare for the living memorial direct to me or to my old famulus and amanuensis Burbee and not under any circumstances to the address of this magazine. I will hold this money in trust for you, non-interest-bearing, and if the project goes through as planned, will invest it for you. If the project is haply abandoned at some future time I do not care to specify, I will cheerfully refund your money -- less, perhaps, a small service or handling charge that will not in any case exceed 40% and which you must agree is not more than fair.

Hemmel, a brooding colossus in bronze. Or perhaps the memorial

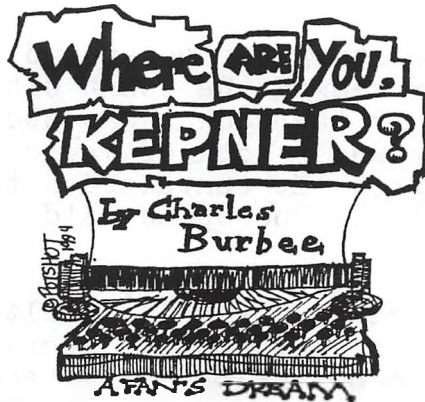
will be a huge building, a research foundation financed royally to delve into the known and suspected -- which shall it be? This is a question to fascinate one. However, do not bother to send in your votes with your money as I have already decided and plans are being drawn up now.

In fact, as I sit here writing this article, thoughts have been pulsing through my head as usual, and some of these thoughts have been particularly outstanding, also as usual. I have also made several decisions concerning this matter.

Soon I will speak on the radio and those of you who have known me only through my published words will have the opportunity to hear the intonations of my voice as it comes intimately into your very home or automobile (and if this is being read in 1969, in your gymobile). What I will say I have no faintest idea but rest assured it will be useful to you on the same scale as these articles.

Perhaps nothing of a scientific value has been learned here but this release has been more on the order of a news report and thus has some value. Historians will be grateful to me for writing this personal item, for it will let future civilizations get a peek into the present age and its great men. When I am compounded with clay this article will live on, with the rest of my material, ever delighting new eyes and new minds and sowing the eternally blossoming seeds of science and knowledge throughout the lands of the Earth and the other planets and, mayhap in some not-too-distant future, the extra-solar-system planets, some fifty-five of which I have already discovered. To this end I have written all these articles in the simplest and most understandable type of language that lends itself easily to translation into any mode of written, oral or visual communication such as may be employed by extra-terrestrial intelligences.





I had been working in this isolated machine shop for about a week when Elmer Perdue and F. Towner Laney both came to work. I knew my way about only vaguely. Laney and Perdue were looking for the oil barrel and asked me to go along to find it for them. I only half remembered where it was, so we had quite a time. We waded for a long time through grease nearly knee-deep. It was covered with about an inch of dirt through which we sank easily into the greasy muck. On and on we went, looking for the oil barrel. At length we said the hell with it and threw our buckets away. We began skirting the grease area as best we could and found ourselves beating through underbrush that seemed to have spent centuries getting tangled. We came to the base of a lowering cliff and we saw, set near the level on which we stood, a malachite panel. It looked ancient; it was cracked in several places and had writing on it. Due to my training in forbidden lore (derived through the pages of Weird Tales and Unknown Worlds and other esoteric publications) I recognized the writing as the dangling Hykranian script. In fact, I could read some of it. It said something about Cthulhu and this being the entrance to his lair, and that visitors were welcome provided they came prepared to stay for eternity. I brushed away some of the dirt and all of us bent closer to read part of the inscription that was nearly illegible. The ancient thing, fragile with age, crumbled away and revealed a passageway into the cliff. Out of it blew warm aromatic air. Laney said we ought to go away. Elmer laughed happily, shouting some obscenity, and said we ought to go in. I next remember walking down the dimly glowing way. The others were following.

Suddenly we entered a room. Well-lit it was, lined with shelves which were piled untidily with various pieces of alchemical apparatus and books. Working in the midst of the junk, gently tending an athanor, was a genial old gentleman, rather plump, about 65 years of age. His noble brow was crowned with a heavy growth of white hair. He turned to us with a pleasant smile and a word of greeting. Laney asked him who he was and he answered, smiling politely, "Cthulhu." Laney suggested we go and Elmer agreed and both bolted for the door. Cthulhu threw a gunnysack at them and it opened and caught them and dragged them back into the room. Cthulhu drew a circle in red about them and said they were imprisoned and would have to stay there till he was ready to get around to them, say in two or three hundred years. Laney began to fume and fret, saying he wouldn't meet ACOLYTE's deadline and he knew the mag would fold if it were left to Sam Russell to turn out. Elmer laughed happily and muttered some obscenity. Cthulhu seemed unaware of my presence so I headed quietly for the door, grabbing one of the tall, thick books from a shelf as I left. I went like mad and the next scene found me in the LASFS clubroom

telling the whole incredible story to Kepner and some others. Nobody seemed to care. Only Kepner seemed the least bit impressed. Where are you, Kepner? He looked at the book I had stolen and expressed a desire to own the thing. It was a book of magic -- seemingly an anthology of the best in magic. It contained a thousand or more pages, crammed with tiny print. The spine said it was the Book of Cthulhu.

While Kepner thumbed through the book I felt the room beginning to turn, slowly, inexorably, resistlessly. I cried out to Kepner that Cthulhu had searched the dimension for me and had found me and was taking me back. I began to turn slowly and the clubroom vanished, being replaced by a pastel green polyhedron big as a room. I was in the center, floating in mid-air. Suddenly, as I turned, I saw a doorway out of which a cheery rosy light flowed. And there was Cthulhu working busily at his alembics, not even noticing me, and there were Laney and Perdue, still imprisoned in the sack in the center of the red circle.

Somehow, I had learned of a counterspell. I recited it now. The rosy rectangle of the doorway disappeared as I rotated in the other direction in the pastel polyhedron. Then came the original compulsion again. I could not withstand it. I rotated once more in the original direction. There was the cheery room again with the pleasant face of white-haired Cthulhu. This time he was standing in the doorway.

Something plucked me out of the cubistic room and I found myself in the circle with Laney and Perdue. We sat there, paralyzed somehow, for what appeared to be months, and then Cthulhu turned to us and glared.

"Where is my Book? My Book of Cthulhu!" he roared. Nobody answered. He grew angry. "Get me that book!" he thundered.

He made a pass in the air. "Now you are bottled up. You are enclosed in a force field, such as we employed on Saturn in 100,000 BC. You will be immensely uncomfortable."

We began to writhe in nameless pain.

"Eventually you will die, and that will compensate me for the loss of my book. I took five hundred years to write it and I cannot bear its loss easily."

I don't know why I didn't tell him where the book was. It would have saved us some discomfort. I suppose it didn't occur to me.

Right away it got harder to breathe, and the pain grew much worse. I really felt nothing, but I knew I was experiencing a great deal of pain.



Then all of a sudden Cthulhu began to flail at the air as though he fought an invisible opponent. He lurched about the room, cursing violently.

Pictures began to flicker on the wall and in the air. They told the story. Kepner, fearing for us in our plight, had stenciled and mimeographed several chapters out of the Book of Cthulhu. He had distributed them through fandom (getting FAPA activity credit, too), with the exhortation to work the spells at once upon receipt of the material.

Two hundred fans were chanting and squeaking spells and runes simultaneously and Cthulhu was unable to fight them all off. At length he fell into a sort of trance, or stupor.

Kepner then materialized out of the air and cut the circle with a paper knife. The sack attacked him but he spoke a word which caused it to fall to ashes. He went over to Cthulhu and drew a pentagon about him. He took us through the pastel green crazily dimensioned polyhedron and returned us to the clubroom and -- it might be said -- sanity and mundane things. The sun was shining brightly outside.

We were grateful to Kepner, I suppose, though we did not show it at the time.

Where are you, Kepner? We never did thank you enough. Where are you?



ME AND THE BLACK PIRATE



About three years ago I began to get a yen to see all the old Douglas Fairbanks Senior movies ever made, so that one day I could say I'd seen them all, every one. I think I talked myself into this condition quite by accident. I'd somehow gotten into a monologue on silent films versus sound films and I was making a case for the silents because they were movies that moved. I was talking to my two boys Johnny and Eddie about this. I cited some old two-reeler comedies and then got onto the subject of Douglas Fairbanks because he was sure dear to kids of my generation. He could do everything superlatively -- manipulate a bullwhip as in Don Q, keep off any number of guys at one time with a single rapier as in many pictures, shoot arrows as in Robin Hood, and outwit and outlove them all as in every picture I'd ever seen of his. I wound up the speech by telling the boys I'd see if I could find some old Fairbanks film showing somewhere and it was but a few weeks later that Elmer Perdue introduced me to the Coronet Theatre in Hollywood, which is an art house that shows all sorts of movies, from silent to sound, as long as they have some pretention to the art of cinema on a classic level. Thus it is possible to see Hamlet one week and a W. C. Fields film the next. What struck my eye when I examined the brochure they issue every two months was a Fairbanks film, The Black Pirate, coming soon, in glorious Technicolor and a special added sound track. This film was made in 1926.

So I took my two boys but when we got to the Coronet Theatre they'd changed the program. Unable to get delivery on The Black Pirate, they substituted another Fairbanks film, The Gaucho, 1927, in its place. Well, that was okay, and we were pleased with it, but I'd sort of set my heart on The Black Pirate. That was Frustration #1.

Then I got a card from Bob Bloch, who'd read in a fanzine that I was seeking Fairbanks film titles. On this card he listed thirty-eight titles in chronological order. I was very pleased to get the card and for a time Johnny and I were competing to see who could write the most titles from memory in a given time.

There happens to be another movie house that shows old films but this one specializes in silent films only. It is called The Silent Movie, quite appropriately, and is across the street from Fairfax High in Hollywood. I noticed in their ad one day that they were showing The Black Pirate! I counted this a rare stroke of luck, and was wondering if I'd have gotten quicker results with prayer. I later learned that the fella has a limited number of films in his library

and is thus forced to repeat his programs every eight months or so.

By golly, this time I wasn't going to miss it. Come hell or high water or even a poker game I was going to see that picture! Came a poker game. Scheduled for Saturday, same day I'd picked to go to the movie. I declined the invitation in about seventy-five more words than necessary. I said that at eight o'clock Saturday night, instead of sitting at a poker table winning their money from them at the rate of ten cents a minute, I'd be sitting in a movie house in Hollywood devouring, eye-wise, a thirty-four-year-old picture. That's what I said. But Saturday at 8 p.m. I was lying in Queen of Angels Hospital, with my right lung collapsed. I kept thinking that I'd get out of there by Tuesday so I could see the show before it went off, but I didn't make it. Frustration #3.

It was about this time I began to wonder if They were keeping me from seeing that picture. Yes, I thought, powers of evil were conspiring -- on the other hand, I thought, it might be the powers of good conspiring. I just might be basically evil myself. Was there a Message in that old film, perceptible to me alone? But I'd seen the movie in 1927 -- ah, but the 12-year-old Burbee didn't have the dark knowledge then.

What sort of Message? Did an unmoving Star's fate depend on keeping me away from the film? Was some dubious war in some remote Wing smoldering even now as its agents strove to keep me busy at other pursuits? Did some dark-eyed princess of some far galaxy wait in vain for the curly-haired lover who first had to see a shadow-play in another galaxy before he could know she waited?

But hell, I thought, in another month the picture will come back to the same theatre and I'll be there. What the heck could stop me this time? My lung had been recently X-rayed by my doctor, who claimed it was good for another six months anyway. The exhibitor evidently owned his own print so there'd be no trouble about delivery. I knew the program schedule so couldn't make a mistake about dates. So what could happen?

The picture, sure enough, came back, and then I saw what could happen.

My son Johnny and I started off on a Monday night toward The Silent Movie, about twenty-five or so miles away. We got onto the Santa Ana Freeway and were proceeding along nicely at about fifty miles per hour. As we approached the Olympic Blvd. overpass, I noticed a slender man in a blue shirt mount the guard rail, and to my astonishment, leap over and down to the freeway directly in the path of the car that was about 300 feet in front of me. The car struck him and carried him along on the left front fender, not changing speed or lanes, and after a quarter mile the body rolled off, to be run over by the left front wheel and the left rear wheel. The driver then floored the gas and took off.

We passed the man as he lay crumpled and dead in the lane next to us, his leg lying on his chest. The sight of him rather sickened us and neither of us felt like continuing on our way. So we turned around and went home.

Yes, the man who drove the death car did stop, and yes I gave him my name so he could call me as a witness in case the cops thought the thing was other than a pure suicide case, and yes, the cops did check with me the next day and the dead man turned out to be an itinerant worker despondent over money troubles.

That was Frustration #4. Actually, as I remember it, there was another small setback before I went to the hospital for Frustration #3. Originally, as I thought about the poker game and the movie, I thought why not go Friday night and then maybe to the poker game after all, the next night? But when I suggested it to Johnny, he said he'd already made plans to go to the football game Friday night, so I said okay, we'd go Saturday night as planned.

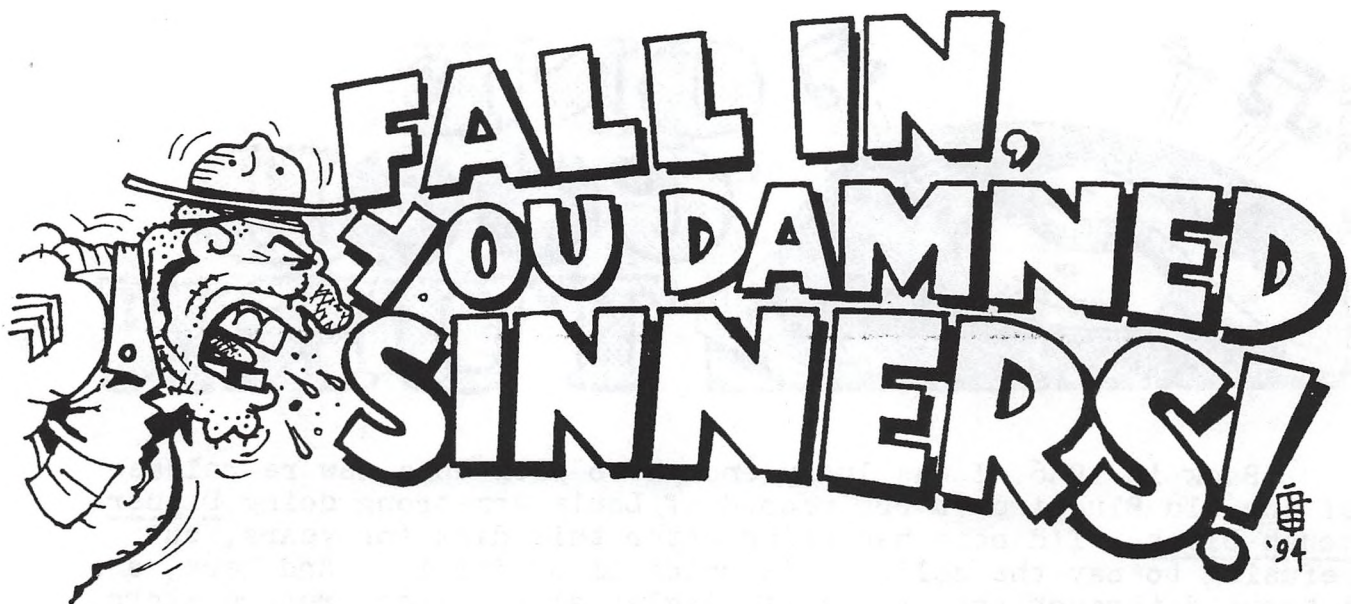
Anyhow, the next night was Tuesday and the last night of the current showing. This was my last chance for at least another six or eight months. Johnny still didn't feel like going, so I started out alone. What would stop me this time, I mused, as I sped along. Oh, something would, I was sure. I breathed carefully so as not to stretch my lung. I wasn't even as far as the freeway, which is some five miles from my house, when I heard a klonk! from somewhere up front in the car. I thought maybe I'd run over some small item which had flipped up under a fender when suddenly the klonk! came again. A few minutes later it came again.

I pulled over and got out and looked under the car. All I saw was the underside of the car. That was all I'd expected to see. I got back in and drove on a way and again came the klonk! I gripped the wheel tighter and set my lips just like a protagonist should and began thinking heroic thoughts in quite corny form: "To hell with them! Damn their torpedoes! I shall drive on and if this car fail I shall proceed on foot, and if my feet fail I shall crawl, and if I can no longer crawl I'll hitchhike, but I am going to get there at all costs...." Well, you get the picture.

I was really wondering what that noise was, and I figured it out. The brake pedal bearing was worn and dry and the return spring did not return it all the way back. Every time I used the brake it would return about 80% to the blocking place and then the vibration of driving would suddenly release it and it would spring back the last inch or so and make the klonk sound as it did. I turned out to be right in this. A few drops of oil stopped the noise.



Oh, The Black Pirate? I got there in plenty of time, saw the picture, and enjoyed it very much. It was not in color. The management explained that the original had been in some now obsolete two-color process. So it was in a sort of sepia tone. If it had a Cosmic Message, I didn't notice it.



I've been a little more religion-conscious than usual of late, possibly because the religious issue was a big one in the recent election. Did a small amount of needling some of the Catholics at work. One bit I rather liked was my takeoff on a TeeVee show: "Hello-a you guysa out there -- thisa's your olda pal Popa John, and thisa's the Popa John Show. Pretty soon I'ma gonna tella you guysa how you gotta toe the lina, but first my fren Frankie'sa gonna singa you a little song.... Take it away, Frankie!"

Anyhow, I got to remembering an annoying bit from my first three or four days in the Army. I was lying around one Sunday while the others were in chapel. Well, there were about twelve or fourteen of us godless ones who preferred our own company to that of churchgoers, which is a fair average in a barracks of some fifty or sixty population.

Pretty soon a thin-lipped sergeant who had the look of Christian arrogance in his eye came in and hollered for us to fall in outside. So we did. He gave us a little speech and disgust for us godless guys was written all over his face. "I'm going to march you guys to chapel if you won't go by yourselves," he said. And he marched us a short way.

Well, about four hundred things leaped into my mind and clamored to be shouted. I thought of just falling out and refusing to go any farther, defending myself with the simple statement that I was exercising my freedom of religion. But on second thought I said the hell with it. I am just barely in the Army and the best way to get along is not to stand out either by volunteering or objecting. Besides, I said to myself, perhaps the service will include dancing girls....

They didn't have any dancing girls but they did have a very pretty girl sitting up there and she seemed quite conscious of the fact that several hundred pairs of lecherous eyes were observing her. She had the air of one being happily uneasy. She sang later.

Would I be on this time track, sitting here typing this, if I'd fallen out and said: "The hell with it, sarge!"?



Back in 1946, I was lucky enough to pick up a new re-release of the old Bluebird 78 rpm record of Louis Armstrong doing Dipper-mouth Blues. I'd been hankering after this disk for years, but refusing to pay the collector's price of \$3 for it. And here, as I browsed through the stacks of singles at the local record store, I found this shiney new copy.

I went mad for it and played it every day for weeks, so that anybody who was in the habit of dropping in on me in those days certainly heard it more than once. And most people liked the record, especially one fellow whom I will call Cy.

He asked me where I'd gotten it and he looked there and I went and searched, too, and we couldn't find another copy. They were selling just about all the records they could press those days because people had been record-starved during the war years, and they were simply not taking orders for anything not in stock. So it appeared that Cy had to be content with listening to my record, or possibly paying a collector's price for a copy of the original pressing.

One day he came over with a record of Clarinet Marmalade. We played it. It was a jukebox reject, so badly worn that the surface was a powdery gray, and in the last few grooves the surface noise was louder than the music. "Gee, what a wretched record," I said. "I don't like the tune too much anyhow, done by this so-called All Star Band." The man Cy said in fine, full-throated tones, "Burbee, I am going to give you this record."

I was surprised, since I'd just told him my opinion of the thing. I told him again I didn't like it and if he gave it to me I'd either throw it out or give it away (if I wasn't too ashamed to give it away). I talked in vain. He gave me the record. And I threw it away.

A few days later he returned with a copy of One O'Clock Jump, a tune I never cared for much. "Burbee," he announced in a voice that intimated he was conferring knighthood on me, "I'm going to give you this record." I told him that frankly I didn't like either the tune or the orchestra and if he insisted on overriding my refusal I'd just give it away because I didn't want it. He gave me the record. And I gave it away.

He returned a few days later with another record, a brand new

copy of Endie by Louis Armstrong. "Well," I said, "you've got one, too. I just bought a copy today at Thrifty Drug at the remainder counter. Nineteen cents. You get yours there, too?" He said to me that he had, and he added in oratorical tones, "Burbee, I am going to give you this record."

I protested quite logically that such an action would be silly because I already had a copy and didn't care a great deal for it and if he gave me another copy I would then have two copies of a record I didn't particularly like -- why did I argue, anyway? He gave me the record. I now have two copies of it and I don't particularly like it.

Next time he came over, he said, "Burbee, why don't you give me that copy of Dippermouth Blues? I'm always giving you records."

It was kind of him to reveal himself to me. Not all odd actions are so conveniently explained.





Fan Article

Masque #1, February, 1961

In a moment of madness I promised Bill Rotsler I would write him something of lasting merit for his new fapazine. I meant it, too. But of course that was months ago, when February 13 looked like a nebular mist, it was so far away. I could have promised anything to anybody then. I don't know how many false promises I must have made; this is the only one I remember, and I remember it only because Bill Rotsler has been dunning me for material ever since.

He won't take excuses. He just sits there staring at me like Al Ashley does, while I explain carefully why I can't do anything for him. A sudden thought just struck me -- is Bill Rotsler a protege of Al Ashley? Is Al charging him some exorbitant rate for teaching him the now famous Indirect Manner? And is Rotsler staring at me silently in an effort to win me over to his side by psychology? If he is Al's pupil, doesn't he know that Al Ashley is wasting that tutoring fee -- squandering it on lavish gifts for E. E. Evans as he tries to worm his way back into Everett's affections? (As incontrovertible proof of this last, I have Al Ashley's own word that he only last week presented Evans with two cigars -- and sat rapt for half an hour watching Evans blow smoke rings.)

So if the man will not take excuses it becomes pretty obvious that the next move is up to me. I've either got to think up some clever counter-move in five dimensions or else sit down here and write a page of stuff for MASQUE, or rather, the man behind it. I tell you, I am fighting this idea tooth and nail. I am sick of writing fan stuff at the moment, having used up all my reserve fan energy doing five pages of excellent stuff for WILD HAIR the Hirsute Fanzine. I don't know when I will ever write again. I am burned out, weary. Don't I sound convincing, especially when you are reading this and can see what I mean? But, convincing as it all may be, Rotsler remains unmoved. He says nothing, just sits and stares or stands and stares (there is little difference). If he would use words to argue, I could refute him, point by point, because I have only recently taken the Al Ashley Legal Course which Al Ashley gave me for a very reasonable tuition fee. But, as I said, he says nothing. On this score, I am powerless, since the Al Ashley Word Analysis Course, which explains the new method of rooting out character traits and weaknesses (not to mention complexes and phobias) simply by analyzing the words a character uses to express his thoughts -- this course, as I said, does not explain how to use Word Analysis when the subject does not use words. (It seems to me I am entitled either to further lessons free from Al or an adjustment on monies paid.)

Of course, I could just be fannish and stubborn and maintain the stand that I simply am overwhelmed by such frenzied activities of one sort and another that I simply lack time to write anything for

him, there being but 27 hours in a day. (I had to add 3 hours to my personal 24 because of lack of time.) I could answer silence with silence more bleak. I could match stare for stare and perhaps I could get out of it that way. After all, when somebody asks you to do something and you happen to be in a bemused state and say yes, does that person consider himself courteous and a gentleman and a scholar to come reminding you of this rash promise? Doesn't your first startled cry tell him that you had forgotten all about it? Why should he be so insistent, so determined? My God, I should say to him, can't you see that I am busy with mundane things? And if he answered What things? surely my brain would dig up some kind of answer. Surely it would. That's a good idea. I think I'll use that defense next time he duns me for material.

I'll let you know how I make out.



THE SUNNY VINEYARD OF EASY MEMORY

Burlblings #7, February, 1953



When I was in my teens I used to stay up too darned late almost every night, listening to the radio. I guess I just hated the idea of going to bed, so instead of studying by firelight, I listened to the radio and found it much easier on the eyes.

This was in the early 30's (my god, this dates me) when Los Angeles had only about a dozen radio stations, compared to the twenty-five it has now.

Every night around 10 o'clock the stations used to switch to various hotels and night spots and we'd have live orchestra music for hours and hours. And of course after they went off, the disc jockeys kept on. One station, KGFJ, called itself "the 24-hour station" and I must admit they lived up to that slogan.

But it is about live orchestras I wish to speak. I must have heard all the top ones of the day. One band I remember especially -- not the name of it, that has slipped me, but the fact that it featured "The Giant Marimba."

Each night, sometime in the program they announced solemnly... "and now...the Giant Marimba plays Lola..." and there would be that slow langourous tempo.

I am smiling as I sit here. I can see the teenage Burbee sitting there wishing for television so he wouldn't have to wonder what "The Giant Marimba" looked like.

I pictured him as a giant, black, shiny, regal figure, beating out the slow majestic cadences of Lola on the odd-sounding xylophone.

I don't know just when it came to me that The Giant Marimba was not necessarily a man.

~~then~~ ~~RECENTLY~~ **NOW** ~~SOON~~ ~~never~~
~~with~~

LIFE



Burbee at the Solacon

BURBLINGS c/w ELMURMURINGS
FEBRUARY 1959

I said to Boyd Raeburn, "Did you come to the convention to meet fans or to get laid?" Whatever his answer was, I don't remember.

This fellow Boyd Raeburn has a place in my heart. As a matter of fact, the convention, the Solacon, that is, came alive for me, when I heard the voice of this same Boyd Raeburn on the telephone. He spoke to me in what I later realized was an urbane accent and said. "I come bearing a piano roll."

Sometimes my homebrew-bent ear hears variants of what is actually said, so I asked him to repeat. "I come bearing a piano roll from Dean Grennell," he said. "It's a cakewalk."

Instantly, I wanted to lay my hand on this piano roll.

In anticipation of it, I vacuumed out my piano's tracker bar, but it was not until two ayem the following morning that I received into my hands the piano roll. I rushed home and played the darn thing at low volume.

I didn't know that I was going to write something about the convention, but since I mentioned the convention, I might as well tell a few small stories about it.

The first person I saw when I entered the convention hall was Elmer Perdue, and for thirty frantic seconds I considered going back to Whittier and staying there for the duration of the convention. But I walked on for ten feet, and the second fannish face I saw was the harsh face of Jack Harness, who at all times wore a helicopter beanie, even on the streets of Los Angeles. As a matter of fact, one of the local fans told me that as he approached the convention hall he saw Jack Harness on Spring St. with his propellor beanie, and hoped to God that Jack wouldn't see him. But Jack did see him, and greeted him with a loud voice, in the middle of metropolitan Los Angeles, and embarrassed this local fan no end.

But even the sight of these two frightful fans did not deter me from advancing steadily till I found a sitting-down place, which happened to be next to Elmer Perdue. I am going to tell my grandchildren that I kept on going simply because my legs were tired, but I can't fool you clever people, so I will admit that it was because I wished to sit next to Elmer Perdue and Jack Harness that I did not flee precipitately.

I sat there, in the convention hall, listening to this thing and that thing, and looking covertly at the blue slip of the sexy young lady who was sitting three chairs from me, and left it only because John W. Campbell was talking, and I couldn't hear a word he said. I guess the acoustics were bad. So I went out into the hall and, coming towards me, I saw a nut with a beard, namely, my friend, William Rotsler. We stood there jabbering for a moment until Anna Moffatt, who later got famous, came out and told us that we were making too darned much noise. I told her I couldn't see how they could hear us in the hall when I couldn't even hear the speaker when I was in the hall, but she did not hear me, or was not in a listening mood, so nothing came of this discussion.

"Who is here at this convention?" said Rotsler. "Well," I said, "lots of significant people are here. For example, besides you and me and Elmer Perdue, G. M. Carr is here." "G. M. Carr, where is she?" "She's down in the bar, drinking beer with Elmer Perdue, so let's go down there and join them."

So we did, and I found the bar such a congenial place that I did not leave it for three days. And I might mention that if I ever go to another convention, I will spend 99% of the time in the bar, because sooner or later all the best people show up there, and the bright-eyed fourteen-year-olds with science questions are kept out by state law. In the bar, I met G. M. Carr for the second time (I had already met her at Ackerman's house the previous evening) and I said to her, "You look like my fairy godmother -- my beer-drinking fairy godmother, that is."

Elmer Perdue was sitting with her, and of course I joined them, and for a while everything went nicely, which was a great surprise to me, because G. M. Carr has often declared in print how she dislikes Elmer Perdue because he is such a lazy Fapa member. But the in-person G. M. Carr is nothing like the paper G. M. Carr.

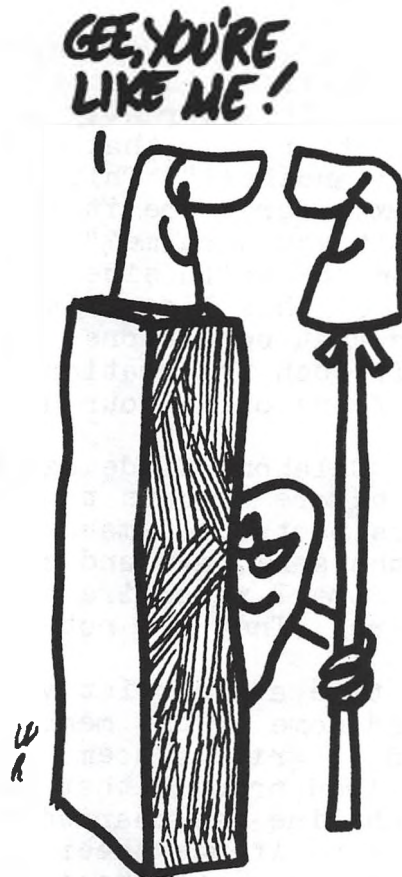
In this same bar, this same evening, I met FM & E Busby, which proves what I said a moment ago, about all the worthwhile people sooner or later showing up in the bar. I have fond memories of the Busbies. I remember Elinor Busby (this is the one without the beard) and I searching the halls of the hotel for a dixieland trumpet man. On second thought, it was not Elinor Busby, but I know darn well that if Elinor Busby knew that I was looking for a dixieland trumpet player, she would have trudged valiantly until dawn streaked the smoggy California sky. I do remember that Elinor wrote shorthand, and she was taking down some of the outrageous things that I said. I always say outrageous things because I call this normal conversation. She published one or two of my remarks in one of the seventeen fanzines that she and FM publish, and to my chagrin, left out part of one of my remarks which I will now give in full. One of them mentioned that I looked like Boris Karloff except that I lacked the bolt in the neck. I said that I would be glad to oblige them by appearing with a bolt in the neck, except that I promised my wife I wouldn't do any screwing at the convention.

Some time during the evening, Elmer Perdue shouted an obscene sentence containing two four-letter Anglo-Saxon words, and I sat there beside him trying to look as though I were not with him. G. M.

Carr sat there looking as though she hadn't even heard him. I think Elmer was trying to act sophisticated but I sure as hell wish that he had chosen another time and place for his social amenities.

I did visit the convention hall another time, and saw some kind of playlet. The only thing I can remember about this playlet is that Karen Anderson wore enormous falsies, which on her looked good, but actually, I spent most of the time writing captions for the cartoons that Rotsler was drawing. I must admit that the playlet was darned clever, even though I heard only 60% of the dialogue.

I think, as I remember the convention, certain episodes or scenes stand out in my memory for no particular reason, and one of these episodes concerns a fellow named Rich Brown. I was walking down the hall with a local fan named Bob Bradford one morning at 3 ayem. We were looking for an elevator. We heard soprano chatter and laughter coming from a room. "Fans," I said, and we went into the room. Sure enough, there was a mimeograph, stacks of prozines, stacks of mimeographed sheets, and four or five very young fans, one of whom was the unforgettable Rich Brown. "I am Burbee," I said, wondering if my name held any magic for these folk. Either it did or they were naturally polite, but they were very polite. I asked them if they were publishing a fanzine and they said they were. "Bring me a typewriter," I said, "and I will cut a deathless stencil." For God's sake, they led me to a typer with a brand new stencil in it, and, for the twenty-thousandth time in my life, I wondered why I couldn't keep my big mouth shut.



You May Quote Me

JAWIBUCCO, June 5, 1954



Since the Insurgent Element started the quote-cover trend, there has been a rash of quote-sections appearing in the fan press.

A sincere form of flattery, but some of the examples I see violate the rules to such an extent that it might be a good idea to publish an expository article on the subject. I claim the right to do this because I am one of the original perpetrators of the idea. Though no rules have been written, they should be obvious. I don't know why I keep referring to the rules as "rules," actually there is only one cardinal rule: The quote, to be quotable, must have an intrinsic value.

People like Walt Willis have instinctively seen this. He caught the quote idea at once, with his impeccable taste, and has been turning out fine stuff ever since. Richard Eney is another. On the other hand, we have William Clyde. His current FAPA inclusion is a single-sheeter devoted entirely to quotes. It is such a wretched example of the new art that I find myself mysteriously impelled to the typer to write this page.

Example of a good quote: "I found myself seriously examining a piece of cow dung to learn if it had come from outer space." It stands alone, out of context. It is inherently amusing. On the other hand, take this quote (or any other, for that matter) from William Clyde's OOPS: "One thing led to another!" This should never have been snatched from its context, for there it stands, weak, alone, flat. Such lines as "Why didn't you warn me?" may have been, when originally spoken, strictly on the boffo side. Of course, one must know the associative aspects of this line. It makes a difference who said it, and when, and under what conditions. The bare quote gives none of this information. If such information is needed, the quote is not a quote within the framework of our definition.

Maybe out there in Oklahoma Clyde can pick up a copy of OOPS and laugh himself sick before he gets to the bottom of the first page. But as he reads, he gets pictures, images. Out here in Southern California I may read the same page and get nothing. I see no point to many of the lines. Some I recognize as punchlines to jokes, but they have no purpose here. They are not inherently amusing.

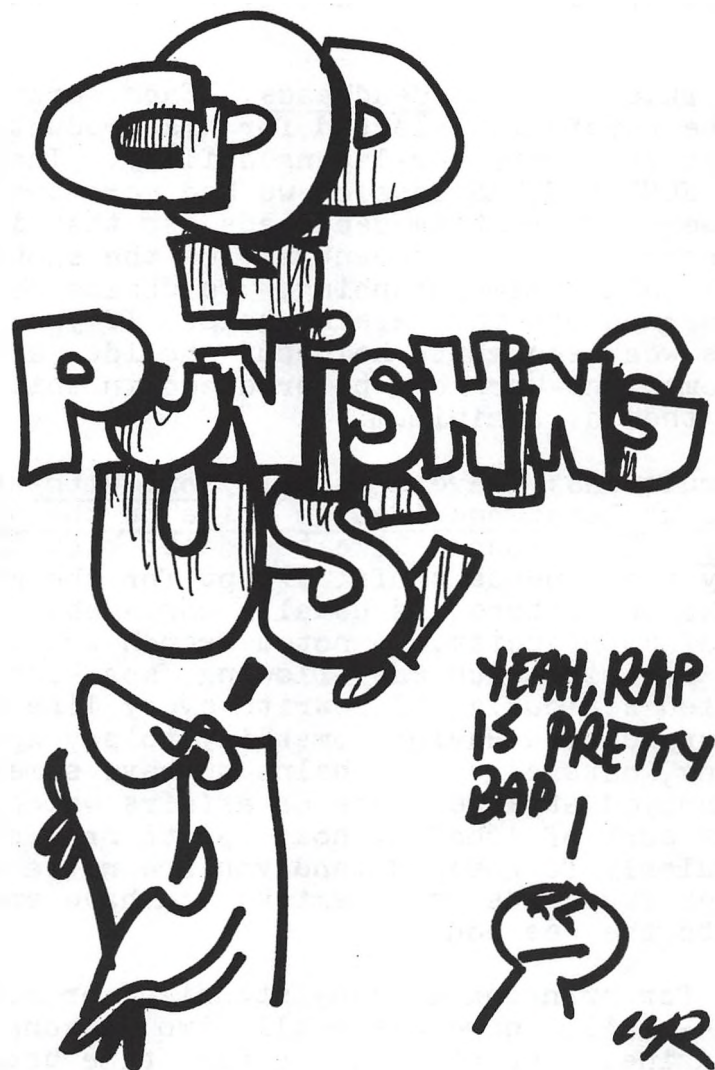
Reminds me of the time a hypnotist visited the LASFS (a pseudo-stf club) and hypnotized some of the members. One person he got into a deep trance and asked to write a poem. The person did so, and while in his trance claimed proudly that this poem far surpassed any poem ever written. Each line was charged with transcendent truth and meaning. To the rest of us it was sheer gibberish. It had come by direct wire from this person's subconscious and had meaning to him

alone and no other person in the world.

I fear we will be plagued with this restricted-type quote cover for some time to come, however. I do not expect anybody to take this article to heart.

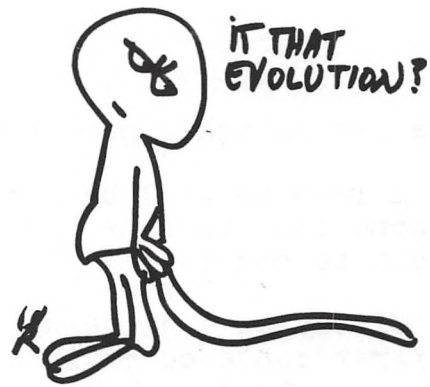
Of course I am being pretty autocratic about all this because the first quote-cover in existence, WILD HAIR #7, had several lines meaningful to but three people in the world, F. Towner Laney, C. William Rotsler, and C. Edward Burbee. Maybe we were just trying to fill up space.

This could easily lead up to the quote which I just stole from myself: "What fandom has long needed is a fanzine designed for reading purposes only."



THE TECHNIQUE of THE ONE-SHOT FANZINE

JAWIBUCO, JUNE 5, 1954



After having filled in the title of this article it came to me that this all happened before, somewhere, somewhen. It did not happen in another incarnation or another time-line, but right here in this mad universe. I once wrote an article with this title but it was never preserved in shimmering mimeography.

I remember setting down some cardinal rules for producing a one-shot. (I must be in my school-teacher facet this session.) First rule was: Don't drink. It is bad for typing. Too, the drunk would rather gab, or just sit there and dream of the wonderful 90-page magazine he could write if he would only get up. Odds are, he never does get up.

The second rule was: No deadheads. Each person present at the session should be carefully selected for his production, just like hens are selected for their egg-laying ability. They should be congenial. At the FOUR FINGERS session we had more deadheads than writers. They were interesting deadheads, so that it was incredibly difficult to ignore them and concentrate on the slow business of writing, stenciling and mimeographing. Deadheads are interesting people to have around but they are no help. If your will is strong and your mind is weak enough to hold but one idea at a time they are bearable, and some fine work can be produced in spite of them, but it is best to keep them at a minimum.

The third rule was: Have a theme. Come with stuff already stenciled. Have at least one idea to write on the session. Have something to say. This sounds like the death blow to spontaneity. It isn't. Truly spontaneous stuff, except for the material written by rather remarkable writers, is usually unreadable. Rather, strive for the effect of spontaneity. A noted French writer was asked how he ever managed to write such easy-flowing, sparkling, spontaneous humor. He replied seriously, "I rewrite every line fifteen times." So much for spontaneity. Having something to say applies to all manner of writing, naturally. It helps to have something to say if your group is annoyed at some state of affairs which affects them all, or has some sort of jehad or holy war to prosecute. If your enemy is particularly fuggheaded (and you are not a man unless you have half a dozen fuggheads for enemies) you have enough ammunition to carry you into the wee hours.

The reason for bringing already stenciled or mimeographed matter to the session -- well, there are really two reasons. One is to add bulk to the magazine. The other is to save time because actual production is always slow. Strangely, it is a rare writer who can produce more than two pages on a one-shot session. Four or five reasonably prolific fan writers might get out eight pages. Most fan writers,

whatever their rate of production, are not used to writing under the new conditions imposed by the nature of the session. Perhaps there are four typers at a single long table. They are all clattering at once. The uninformed person would guess, by hearing the noise, that at least a booklength novel every hour would come pouring out of that great noisy machine. As a matter of cold fact, most of that noise turns out to be just that, without visible result on a mimeographed page. Another thing, a slow producer, sitting at a table with three other typers going like mad, gets the frantic feeling that he is being left parsecs and furlongs behind. He gets edgy. He might speed up his typing. His typing then would outstrip his ideas. He is, so to speak, typing on air. And god help the reader if that ephemeral item sees print. And help the benighted author, too. He will cringe or flinch for years afterward at the thought of that bit of work.

Still, it is possible to turn out things of rare beauty, if you have chosen well and are just plain lucky besides. This magazine you are now reading could be an example, though I will not definitely say that. Let us let the ages judge. I am too close to the picture. From here it looks bad.





WHERE'S ROTSLER?

*Burblings c/w Dream Quest c/w Primal c/w Esdacyos
c/w Skip Me For the Nonce c/w Masque*

Vol. 1, No. 1, Whole No. 1, First Issue, August, 1954

"I think mostly Pete Vorzimer just wanted to look at you," I said to William Rotsler.

"I can understand that," said William Rotsler.

I don't know why we were talking about Vorzimer. We had gathered at my house to publish this magazine. I guess he just came up in the conversation. There were six of us. Rotsler, Wilson, Ed Cox, Jacobs, Miller and me. Everybody was supposed to arrive with two cut stencils and an idea for at least one more to cut on the session. (Lee Jacobs was the only one to arrive with assignment completed.) In no time, the theory went, we could sit around, copies of the completed mag dangling carelessly from our hands as we drank home brew and told each other how clever we were. All of us were here close to the appointed time. Except Rotsler. He was supposed to come down from Camarillo, which, for those of you who might benefit from the information, is about 17 miles from Oxnard.

Before Rotsler arrived, Vorzimer had phoned twice. His well-modulated voice held a hint of worry as he inquired after Willie Rotsler. "You sure he's going to be there? Are you sure?" He wanted to come out to deliver some run-off material to Rotsler and perhaps commission him to produce artwork for ABSTRACT, his fanzine. I said okay, and gave him careful directions. He lives in Hollywood and I gave him comfortably explicit directions: "When you get to Rosemead you are a mile and a half away. It is the next to last signal. From the next signal you can see the bridge straight on down. Turn left at the second street beyond the bridge. And a word of caution -- if you come to Norwalk Blvd., you've gone too far. Turn back right away. You can't miss Pioneer; it's a wide street."

He got here eventually, with another fellow, a non-fan, who for a time seemed like the only human being in the room. When he stuck his fannish head in my fannish door and peered about with true fan myopia at the group his face bore a strange expression of fannish anxiety. "Where's Rotsler?" he said. For all he knew, Rotsler, whom he had never seen, was standing somewhere in that group of five, looking right at him. Rotsler, however, had not yet arrived.

I turned from the door. "Come out, Rotsler," I said. "Meet your #1 Fan." But no one stepped forward to carry the ball. Vorzimer's eyes darted from face to face as though he knew some instinct would cry aloud to him "This is He!"

I began introducing those present. "This is Howard Miller," I said.

"Never heard of him," said Vorzimer.

"Ed Cox."

"Hardly know him."

"Lee Jacobs."

"I don't think I know him."

"Don Wilson."

"I've heard of him."

"I'm Burbee."

"Oh, you're Burbee. But where's Rotsler?"

We told him Rotsler wasn't there yet but any moment would wheel onto Pioneer at 69. He was pretty disappointed at this piece of news but bucked up when he began to distribute copies of his well-duplicated well-laid-out but well-nigh-unreadable magazine ABSTRACT and tell us about the 100-page Convention Issue he plans to turn out within a week after the Convention itself.

He was a rather hard boy to convince about some things. For one thing, he could not accept that fact that Rotsler was not there. For another thing, when I told him that if the group produced a magazine like this every month for four months it would be the top fanzine, he balked at this. He refused to accept it. So I amended my statement. I backed down. "Well," I said. "Make that five months."

He still said he didn't think so and in the same sentence asked about Rotsler. Then he told us that he almost hadn't gotten here at all. Seems he got lost.

"Lost?" I said, incredulous.

Yes, they'd gone down Washington according to my directions but wound up at the intersection of Whittier and Washington Blvds., and a service station man had directed them to an older and therefore better known section of Pioneer (the street is not a through street; it still has miles of orange groves between sections) and since this was miles south of here...well, they almost hadn't gotten here.

"But I gave you perfected direction info," I said. "Half a dozen fans and an uncounted number of people have made their way here without trouble. How did you get lost? Didn't you see Norwalk Blvd.? You were supposed to turn back if by some chance you'd overshot the mark."

"We went on," he said. "The man in the service station told us about Pioneer only it was the wrong part and we almost never got here."

"But the bridge," I said. "The second street past the bridge. A wide street. What about that?"

"We saw the bridge," he said. (I felt a bit better about that, at least.) "But I was looking for a wide street. You know, a wide street."

"Pioneer is a hundred feet wide," I said.

"We went on," he said. "It didn't look very wide to me." This boy must look at the world through 2-D glasses. "Is Rotsler really going to be here?"

He went away after awhile. I didn't give him any directions at all for getting back home, so I am pretty sure that right now, even as you read this, Pete Vorzimer and non-fan friend are nearing Arcturus and looking for a service station at which to inquire directions to Hollywood.



Some Notes On F. TOWNER LANEY



"I didn't know where you two obscenities had gone," said F. Town-er Laney to me the other afternoon. "Anyhow, I started out to look for you."

Eventually he saw G. Gordon Dewey (author of The Ship of Ishtar), who was the other obscenity. G. Gordon Dewey had his back to Laney. So, thought Laney, I will play a trick on this fellow.

"So," said Laney, "holding my hands rigidly at my sides like a clog dancer, and keeping my feet pressed together, I floated across the street six inches above the pavement until I got right up behind him and then I said in a very loud clear voice 'I'm the Galactic Ob-server.' Then he turned and I saw it wasn't Dewey at all!"

We both laughed like crazy at this. "I had to tell you that," said Laney. "I wanted to tell you yesterday but couldn't say it in front of that guy you were working with."

"So that story festered in your bosom all night and all day till you could tell me."

"Right. You are just about the only person in the world who'd appreciate that story."

"You may be right," I said. The scene of this touching bit of analog was the shop where Laney and I work. We do not get to talk a great deal to each other because I work days and he works nights, and only the fact that he comes in a half hour early gives us a chance to exchange stories and such. Of course I sometimes stay over a bit to talk to him. He comes in early because he is the night foreman and he is supposed to "pick up" on the jobs that are being done.

"I think FAPA owes Elmer Perdue something," I said to Laney not long ago.

Laney got a halfway interested look on his face. Things Elmerish and things fapish have little to attract his attention. He stepped in closer, his clipboard under his arm and a serious look on his once sensitive fannish face as he tried to look as though he were conferring with me about the parts I was machining. The day foreman was still hanging around close by and Laney had to look busy.

"Elmer is directly responsible for there being one more FANDANGO in existence than there would have been in the ordinary course of

events," I said. FANDANGO was Laney's FAPAmag.

"How do you figure that?"

I reminded him of the time back in 1943 when Elmer pulled the same last minute activity rush he's been pulling ever since. He got in his dues or his activity -- my memory for the event is not too clear, since I got the story second-hand -- too late and was considered dropped from FAPA. The secretary-treasurer notified Francis T. Laney, #1 on the Waiting List, "to cite credentials and pay dues" and Laney complied with the speed of an antelope, being accepted as a member. He not only cited credentials and paid dues, but within 10 days he had written and published and sent to the OE FANDANGO #1.

Then Elmer managed to prove (as he always barely manages) that he had gotten in under the wire and should not have been dropped. This then made for an awkward situation. FAPA's membership at that time was limited to fifty members, and since Elmer had not been dropped and nobody else had either, and a new member, Laney, had been accepted -- gawd! FAPA had fifty-one members!

FAPA managed to survive this situation.

"So you see," I said, "FAPA owes something to Perdue for being the same type of fella in 1943 as he is today."

"What I like about that whole deal," said FTL, getting a gleam in his thrifty eye, "is that I wrote, ran off and mailed the entire magazine on company time, with company paper and the use of company stamps."

"Say," I said, "if we could get you the same sort of a deal today, would you join FAPA again?"

"Fuggit!" Laney shouted.

Actually, of course, the Laney of today is much like the Laney of yesteryear, except that his fine mind dwells on other topics and we don't get the benefit of his remarks in FAPA anymore. His mind works in much the same sort of groove as ever. For example, the other day I went around the shop asking various people my Question for the Day: "Would you rather work here or play piano in a Hollywood whorehouse?"

I don't remember all the odd answers I got to this completely normal question, except that one fellow snapped, "I don't play the piano and I don't go to those places!"

When I asked Laney the question, he got a faraway look in his eye like an old actor with Rembrandt lighting, softly speaking that Shakespeare sonnet that goes "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought / I summon up remembrance of things past..." Then he giggled (breaking the spell, such as it was) and said, "I regret to say that I cannot play piano well enough to hold a job in a whorehouse of the high caliber with which I would prefer to be associated."

He said this in a loud clear Laney-like voice that only one fapa-member was able to hear. I heartily wish the other sixty-four of you could have heard it.

TOO MUCH SALT, I THINK

Ole Chavela!, August 1960



The other day while casually complaining about my wife Isabel's cooking -- something about the sauce having too much salt in it -- I was suddenly struck with the thought that at last it was happening to me, what people had been wondering about for years...my belly was beginning to bulge.

Seems that Isabel is so famed as a supercook (able to leap tall buildings in a single bound) that people are always remarking that it is odd I am so skinny when I really should weigh 400 pounds. Usually I get off the nasty remark that she doesn't cook like that for me, just for guests.

But now here I am, developing a pot belly. Already Isabel has dubbed me a "middle-aged Casanova." Sheeks, I'm only 45. Seems she saw me chasing a redhead around at a party. God forbid I ever be a pot-bellied Casanova.

Isabel's cooking may today be fabulous, but it was not always so. Oh, long ago, her cooking was not fabulous. Today it would probably be impossible for her to cook anything badly, but there was a time she could cook badly. I served that hitch with her.

Maybe I deserve a lot of credit, too. I experienced her first loaf of bread, for example. She went right at bread-making from memory, having helped her mother make it long ago. That first loaf of bread -- I can see it clearly in my mind right this minute -- it was about the size of an alarm clock and weighed four pounds. The crust almost withstood the attack of our finest knives but I managed to remove a slice or two. I ate them. They tasted pretty good and the next day was Sunday so I didn't miss any work.

Another item in her early career was roasted short ribs. They got burned black. She put them on the table anyhow. I looked at that sad black roast and at her sad pale face, and with what I thought was a cheery smile I said: "Please pass the charcoal."

She picked up the platter of ribs and threw the whole thing at me. I ducked and it hit the wall behind me. I laughed, thinking this rather funny, and she got madder.

Since then I have always taken care to criticize her only in small things like lack of or overabundance of some spice like salt which is the only one I recognize.

Too bad Gordon Dewey isn't around to add something about Isabel's cooking from a gourmet's point of view. He is a gourmet. I guess

he must really be a gourmet, because he is the only person Isabel fears. I mean she is nervous and apprehensive when she knows he is coming to dinner because she feels everything must be superlative rather than excellent.

He also loves her food. Once a few months ago while he was lying around doing nothing in Queen of Angels Hospital, Isabel prepared and I delivered a Chinese dinner. He had Roast Chicken, Chinese Style, steamed rice, shrimp and crab cocktail, spiced peaches, hot biscuits and honey, and maybe one or two other things I've forgotten. I recorded mentally his remarks so I could report to her afterward. Both of them were might pleased at the whole thing.

I remember how it was when Gordon and his wife Helen would eat with us. Isabel and Gordon would get lost in some esoteric branch of cookery so Helen and I would get our own little dialog started. Neither Isabel nor Gordon would pay any attention to us till maybe they overheard me say something like: "...he was the finest skirt-lifter in the county, and one evening..." At this, Gordon's attention would stray my way long enough to hear the story, making me wonder if hunger really is a more powerful force than sex. Maybe to laboratory rats it is but maybe sometimes the science boys forget that people are not laboratory rats.

Speaking of lab rats, I intend to digress as usual. Digression, you know, is nine-tenths of my style. I see by the Wall Street Journal for May 10, 1960, that root beer makers are no longer using oil of sassafrass roots in making root beer because "Federal health sleuths suspect the oil causes liver damage in laboratory rats..." Damn those health sleuths anyhow. If I want to go to hell by way of root beer made with oil of sassafrass roots I ought to be able to. There goes another of our freedoms, men. We've got to limit the power of the government.

Well, to digress back to Isabel for a moment, she is one who believes in spreading the gospel of good cooking. She does not hoard recipes so that she might be unique in the world of cookery. She'll give detailed, accurate recipes to any really interested person. Not long ago she gave Bjo a recipe for beans and Bjo followed the recipe exactly (which makes Bjo something of an unusual person) and the beans turned out to taste exactly like Isabel's.

I've been married to Isabel for almost twenty years and all this time she has remained just about the same sort of person she was when I married her. At that long gone time I thought she was pretty, sensible, charming, gracious and reasonably intelligent, with a great desire to learn to cook exceptionally well. Well, the wear of years of living with a guy like me has knocked the heck out of her youthful prettiness, but she is still all those other things and has now learned to cook like crazy.

Scratch Isabel and you find more Isabel. Her "company manners" are her everyday manners; isn't this amazing?

Her Mexican friends all call her "Chavela." It is the affectionate diminutive of Isabel. I find myself calling her that quite often.

And even though she becomes impatient with me when I chase red-heads, and never reads my stuff in fanzines, and scoffs at the idea of my being a living legend, I like her pretty much.



Tule Fog

Century Note

February, 1957

"Tule fog...what the hell is tule fog?" Pat the mill operator looked puzzled about this. I had just mentioned the term and such an expression had never struck his stirrups before.

"Smog," I said. "It's the old word for smog. We've always had smog here in Southern California, only now it's hundreds of times worse than it ever was."

"I thought smog was something new."

"Course not. Didn't old Pizarro or whatever his name was come sailing up around Portuguese Bend 350 or so years ago and notice the brownish nitric acid vapor hanging distant in the air, and didn't he name it Bahia de los Fumos, which means Bay of the Smog?"

"You said tule, or something."

"Yes. You know, out on West Washington Blvd., about halfway to Culver City, Bellone Creek used to empty out into a big flatland area and make quite a swamp. There were acres of cattails and bulrushes growing there and the local term for the things was tules. They said that sometimes the wind blew the fog off the tules into the city and there you have your tule fog."

"That's my old area!" said Pat. "I lived out there for six years. I lived in a trailer then and those things grew six feet from my door."

"I always thought you looked like something that crawled out of the tules."

"But you know what we call that stuff? Back in Philadelphia we called it splatterdock. Splatterdock. Tules, hell."

"A fine thing," I said. "You come all the way from Philadelphia to tell me about my native bulrushes."

I wouldn't be talking about tules except that this is my way of talking about the place I work in. It is a machine shop and so the account of a day of work would be pretty dull, since it would consist mainly of dimensions in metal and the methods of obtaining these dimensions, and would have practically no people at all involved. So I can't quite follow the pattern that Harry Warner laid down in a recent HORIZONS about his interesting day at work. About all I can do is pick out a few of the conversations that went on in the shop in the past month or so. It will give an idea of the sort of people I work with.

Later, as we were washing up at the horse-trough -- it looks like a horse-trough -- for lunch, Pat started asking about splatter-dock. An elderly German named George was listening in. I turned to George and said: "Actually this stuff that Pat claims is splatter-dock has a German origin. In Germany we call it schutzengreben."

That was a word I had gotten from an old phonograph record of a German army song. I gave it the German accent as phonographically as I could and George got quite a kick out of it. "Do you know what that word really means?" he said as Pat walked away.

"Yes, it means trenches."

"That's right," he said.

That afternoon Pat came over to me. "What's that German word you said -- schuss or schiss or something."

"Oh," I said. "You mean scheissgewehr."

"That can't be right," said Pat. "As I remember my German, that first part means crap and I don't know the second part. I'll go ask George."

"Don't bother asking George," I called after him. "I'm the German expert around here and scheissgewehr means tule fog."

He came back and said, "George says that word means 'stranger.'"

As we were washing up this time we were joined by another old German named Otto. Pat was trying to brief him on the whole situation. This was rather difficult to do at any time since Otto neither speaks nor listens good English. I broke into Pat's labored explanation and helped him deepen the frown of incomprehension on Otto's brow: "You see, Otto, I am trying to educate Pat. The subject for today is German. I am trying to explain smog to him in German but his low type of brain translates everything into dirt symbols. According to him, scheissgewehr means 'crap on you, stranger.'"

"Oh, that damned Burbee," said Pat.

This Otto comprehended. He rolled his merry eyes and started off: "In Chermany vunce I work in a brewery. The braumeister iss man named Burbee. Oh, he is a sunnabitch. He drink de beer he drunk all de time and he steal de kegs of beer and sell dem."

"Did they catch him?"

"Sure dey catch him and he get it. Oh what a sunnabitch dot fella vuss."

"Ah!" said Pat. "A fella named Burbee was crazy for the beer, eh? This is the same one. This is the man you're talking about, right here!"

"Dis vuss tirty year ago," said Otto. "Dis is anudder vun. He vuss big blond fella, not skinny blackhead like dis vun."

"It's the same man!" shouted Pat. "He makes his own home brew now because there's not a brewery that'll hire him!"

Later I was in the restroom. I was talking to one of the minor white-collar men from the office as I washed my hands. "Which color tie makes your brain work best?" I said, as I turned to get a paper towel. I don't remember his answer because at that moment I noticed the urinal still running. It is the type that runs for two seconds at the stroke of the handle.

For those of you who have never seen one of these things and for those of you who are not likely to see one I have asked William Rotsler to illustrate it. The illustration shows a sexy caterpillar in a horned helmet operating one of the things. It is on some page in this fanzine.



Instead of stopping after two seconds this one was running over. Thinking the lever had stuck in the down position I struck it upward. The water kept running. I struck the handle down. The water kept running. I pushed the lever backwards. I oscillated it slowly, trying to detect any lessening of the flow. The water kept running. By this time I was standing back out of the widening pool of water and leaning way over to operate the handle.

"This looks bad," said the office man, whose presence I had forgotten. He looked pretty worried. It might be bad," I said. "This might be a big crisis. I'll go get the maintenance man."

I found him sitting on his bench fifteen feet from the restroom door. He was talking to a fellow employee.

"Jack," I said, "the urinal is overflowing."

"Let it," said Jack. "I was a big man there. They all respected me. They called me 'Mr. Jack, sir.'"

"The urinal is overflowing," I said. "It's all over the floor."

"I didn't even have to fix traffic tickets for my friends. If the cops knew that the guy stood in good with me, they never gave him a ticket in the first place."

"Where was all this?" I asked.

He named a town in Oregon. "That town was wide open. Slot machines, cat-houses, bookies, all over."

"Back in the Thirties I guess that was," I said.

"Hell, no. Right here in the Fifties it was," said Jack. "It was 1954. Oh, what a town. Wide open, and all the niggers called me 'Mr. Jack, sir.' They were crazy for me. You think I'm kidding?"

"It sounds good," I said.

"I owned that town. I had a bar with a cat-house attached."

"Trouble was, though," I said, "you got that belly of yours so big drinking free beer that you couldn't exploit the back room, is that it?"

"Don't think that for a minute," said he. "I've had more women than you can shake a stick at."

"While I am not in the habit of shaking sticks at women I am inclined to doubt that. Anyhow, I just came by to tell you that the urinal is overflowing and I don't know how to stop it."

"Fuggit," said Jack.

I went back to the restroom. The water was now standing wall to wall in the far end of the room and was creeping slowly toward the door. The office man said, "Did you find Jack?"

"Yup, and he said fuggit."

"Good God!" said the office man. "He said fuggit?" This was evidently a high-level crisis like I'd said. He scuttled for the safety of the office where a fellow could restore his sanity by looking at the girls in their snug sweaters.

I walked on my heels through the water and tried to work the lever again with no results. On my way back to work I passed by Jack's bench for a moment to give him the latest bulletin. "The water is two feet from the door."

"Put on your hip boots and shut up," he said.

"If you won't go to the water, the water will come to you," I said as I walked back to my machine.

From where I was working I could see the water creeping under the door and puddling swiftly outward. When it had gotten out about six feet somebody noticed it and shouted and Jack looked up in shock at the revelation. He grabbed some tools and ran into the room. About half an hour later the last puddles were being mopped up. I walked over to Jack. "The water is overflowing," I said.

"I thought you were kidding," he said.

"Here it comes under the door again!" I shouted, my eyes bugging. I'll say this much for Jack, he caught himself before he looked at the door.

The other day a fellow at work asked me if I liked books. I said I did, providing they were of the right sort. He asked me if I wanted to buy any of his books. I said yes, if the price was right and the books were the right ones. "Ten cents apiece," he said. "Anything you want, I've got it. I've got six big bookcases filled with books and there are big boxes of books in the garage. My wife buys them a

boxful at a time."

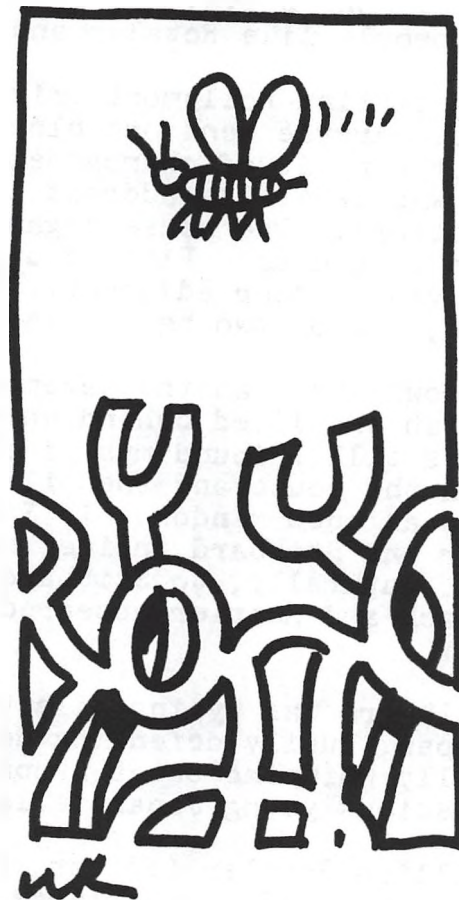
"All right," I said. I wrote out a list of twenty or so authors, the first ten of whom were pennames for Max Brand (itself a penname). He looked at the list and then looked cagily at me. "Why do you want books by these fellas?" he said in a low voice which I recognized as his lead-'em-into-a-trap tone of voice.

"I like their stuff so I collect their books," I said.

He stood staring at me, trying to read my mind. His glance darted first to my left eye, then, finding nothing there, to my right eye, and then back to my left eye. "Well," he said, his eyes narrowing, "if you think I'm going to sell you collector's items for 10¢ a copy, you're full of crap."

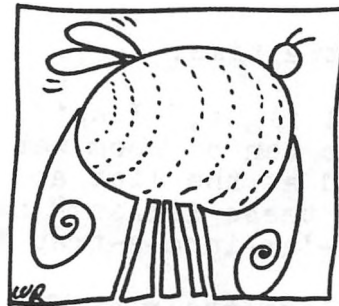
I saw my mistake. The word "collect" was the key. His head instantly must have started buzzing with typical Sunday supplement atrocities about Fortune Found in Attic -- Old Trunk Yields Rare Geo Washington Letter -- Old Love Letter Bears Stamp Worth \$10,000 -- Shop Employee Sells Rare First Edition for Dime....

Two weeks have passed and he has brought me no books, so it appears I must have read his mind correctly without the necessity of staring first at his left eye and then at his right eye.



The 51 Steps

FAPA Potlatch #1
Winter, 1951-52



"The steam car...I wonder why they don't make steam cars," said Bill Rotsler.

We talked this pro and con and decided that the steam car was too cheap to make and operate and therefore the auto manufacturers wanted none of it. In the old days they'd passed laws against the steam car and put out such bad publicity on them that the last steam car manufacturer gave up in 1923 or 1924. We shook our heads sadly over the demise of this simple machine. No transmission, no clutch, no differential. After five seconds of respectful silence in honor of the Stanley Steamer, the Kurtz, the Doble, the White and the two or three other makes, we took up once again the subject of women.

We'd started talking about women almost at once, Stibbard, Rotsler and I, the moment I set foot in their hillside apartment which is snuggled against a hill in a picturesque manner, 51 steps up from the sidewalk on Hollymont Drive. In fabulous Hollywood, where all manner of fabulous people like Rotsler and Stibbard live.

It was easy enough to find Hollymont Drive. I went down Franklin to Argyle, turned right. Argyle went one block, turned steeply upward and became, without benefit of champagne, Hollymont Drive. Staring me in the face was 6255, the address I'd typed on so many stupid postcards and letters. The house began just behind the garages and went up and up and up. Flights upon short flights of stairs, each landing having a door adjacent. I imagine six or seven arty fellers live there, one or two behind each enigmatic door.

Besides the 6255 down there at the pavement level, there was no other mark to distinguish who lived behind which door. So I kept on going up those stairs till I found myself at the top side. A narrow walk led between the house and the hill it ended against. I went down it. I passed an open window. If I'd been the nosy type I could have seen Rotsler and Stibbard inside, but I went on past till a gay voice (belonging, naturally, to Stibbard the Gay) hailed me from the kitchen. I went back and Rotsler appeared and I handed him a baked offering.

In the kitchen Stibbard was typing a letter to another arty feller stationed in Japan, busily defending democracy and protecting the peace by occasionally whipping out a propaganda army poster and steadily enjoying a luscious young Japanese lady.

My genial host William Rotsler (editor of MASQUE, the Gaudy Fanzine) led me to his salon. It was a large room lined with books,

records, pictures. A Chinese mat rug covered the floor. A large poster six feet high announced: "Plaza de Toros! No auguamente de precio. El domingo el siete de septiembre" or something and there was a dashing fellow killing a bull without straining the seams of the traje de luces. Willie is a bullfight fan and runs down to Mexico to watch this artistic exhibition quite often.

It was cooler up there than it was at the bottom of the hill but Stibbard and Rotsler were shirtless. Rotsler shoved a comic book at me and told me to start from the back because that is the way Jap books read. I guess MacArthur didn't get around to changing that. Before I could crack the comic book he gave me a six inch stack of "art" books to look through. They were filled with pictures of large-breasted women. I examined each page carefully as though I wished to implant the images on my mind forever. How very like Forrest J Ackerman's this bit of hospitality was! Except that these pictures showed no pubic hair.

We talked of thirty or forty subjects, though we dwelt for a long time on women and what large breasts will do for an otherwise plain girl. I was reminded of the girl I knew vaguely at college... nice build but a chest like an ironing board. Suddenly one day her chest blossomed ripely and from that day her popularity increased 300%. We chuckled over the story of the local male fan who had a pair of falsies.

I spoke of how my father used to drive me down Hollywood Blvd in the old days when it was just a dirt road and was called Orange Avenue. I used to like to go down there because between the orange groves you could see cattle grazing and now and then you stopped to let a flock of geese cross the road. And you could count the windmills.

By and by I was reminded that I'd gone over there for a specific reason. We'd made this date to get together and publish a one-shot single-sheet fanzine such as we used to publish on an evening back in 1948 or so. I'd written some stuff for it (They Walked Through Glass & Don Bratton, Semanticist) and had lugged my typer up the 51 steps, besides driving the 21 miles from Whittier. And here we were, talking about steam cars, breasts, Hollywood Blvd and avant garde movies.

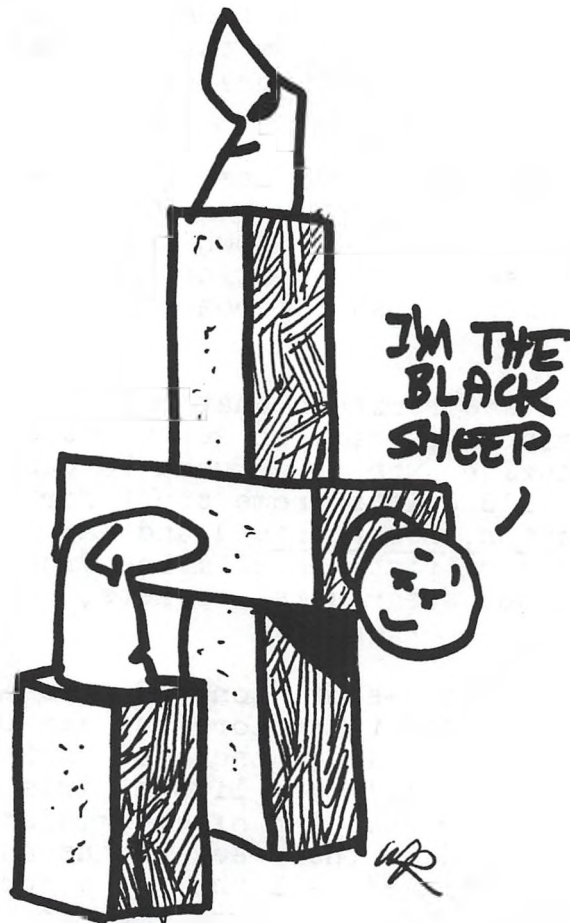
"Hell with the one-shot," one of us said. "For the time being, anyway." We went ahead to deplore the sex ignorance of the American man and woman. I told him of the good Christian lady down the street who is embarrassed to tell her little girls about sex so she just tells them dirty stories. And of the minister's wife who found her little boys playing with their sex organs and so stuck needles into the organs till they bled, all the while screaming of how they were filthy and degraded and would surely go to hell.

All this time I was slowly going through the "art" magazines and now and then reading the astonishing captions..."thin centerline of balance"... "broken shadow effect"... "stippling motif"... These captions were supposed to lend the aura of "art" to these fine pictures of naked girls! It is my belief, but perhaps not the belief of the Post Office, that the picture of a lovely naked girl is its own justification.

Rotsler has been taking arty pictures himself. He showed me 75 prints of pix he'd taken of a young lady in that very room. I tell you, when I finished those pictures I felt that she had no secrets from me. And while I looked at the pictures Stibbard was 3 miles away drinking champagne with that same girl. She'd called up and asked him over to drink the bubbly with her and before our startled eyes he'd flashed away.

I could well understand why.

I finished the stack of arty books and there was the Jap comic unopened, but Bill stuck another stack of art books on top and I was away again. Matter of fact, I never did look at that Japanese comic book. If I had started at the back, as you must with Jap books, would I have been able to follow the story by the pix alone?



FANDOM *in the* HEADLINES



Forrest J Ackerman in jail, held incommunicado. Paul Skeeters held without bail. August Derleth, Walt Coslet, F. Towner Laney, Elmer Perdue, Ray Bradbury, George O. Smith, A.E. van Vogt, Charles Burbee, Joe Kennedy, Bob Tucker, Ray Higgs, Bill Rotsler, Stan Stibbard, all in jail and/or being investigated by the authorities.

Gruesome picture, isn't it? And yet, one day, it may come to pass!

When, the other day, I read of a 33-year-old man who had of his own free will lived in a walled-in closet for 10 years, I began to think about strange cases of this nature and their possible effects on the Half World of fandom.

This unkempt man, upon uncurling himself from his cramped, book-lined cubicle, said he "just meditated" in there. "I wish I was back," he was quoted by the papers as saying. "I don't like the world." His perfectly integrated mother (whom he called "Butch") had put him in there at his own request in 1939 to evade the draft. I guess he just got to liking it -- locked up in there, feeling smug and semantic and superior.

I said to Laney, "Fandom has escaped again by the skin of its teeth." He looked quizzical, so I amplified.

"Why, look," I said. "Suppose this guy was a fan. He certainly looks and acts like a fan. A genuine fan type, at any rate. Suppose he'd published a fanzine. Suppose he had his little cell full of fanzines. Suppose when they found him, he began spouting off about being star-begotten and how high his I.Q. was and how he always took the Null-A pause. Suppose he declared that he was not afraid of anything in the world, having even put his arm around a live lion once? What could the authorities make of that if they wanted to? Suppose the newspapers needed something for headlines...."

The bearded man peered blinkingly at the fireman who chopped down the wall of his cubicle. "Get away," he said, in a curiously harsh voice that seemed to betoken long-unused vocal chords.

The firemen looked at the character as he tried to draw back

out of sight among stacks of mimeographed pamphlets.

"My God, Tim," said one. "Look at him. Got a face like Christ."

Suddenly the man leaped up. "My mimeograph! Don't mar my mimeograph!" he shouted, as the police sergeant pushed his way through the hole the firemen had chopped. He rescued his mimeograph and stood panting by it in a protective attitude, like a mother panther shielding her young.

They took him out. Later, upon questioning him, they learned that he'd been in there fifteen years. He got his food passed to him through a small hole in the floor above and passed out his excreta and assembled fanzines through the same hole, his perfectly normal mother attending to his needs in this connection.

Why had he hidden himself away like that? "I hate the world," he said. "Everybody but me is so stupid. When I used to say that people were just vermin on the face of the Earth and that homo superior was already here, they acted as though I didn't have a high I.Q. And all of them with mother-complexes, every last one of them."

The papers had a field day. At the moment there was no big baffling murder mystery going, and no fiends were at large, and no big wars were in the making. Many of the Los Angeles papers assigned reporters to do special features on Joe Blimp, the bearded boy who had last seen daylight in 1934. They found him a rich source of quotable material. Several articles by various sob-sisters appeared. And later, they had pictures of Joe -- posing by his mimeograph, posing with a copy of Astounding while he sat on a mint copy of Amazing. (This of course did not show in the picture, but it explained the coy smile on Joe's face. It was his own private joke.)

"The atomic bomb was no surprise to me," he said. This seemingly innocent statement had the FBI interested for a short time -- just long enough to find out that the man, so obviously a fool, was a fool.

"I'm a fan," said Joe Blimp. "I publish the #4 fanzine. I've got slant friends all over the world who know I'm an intellectual. There are big fan clubs in big cities all over the earth. Gafia. Gafia. That's why I got locked up. I wasn't afraid of Vitons."

"The bearded self-appointed shut-in," said the Los Angeles Herald Express, "said that there were thousands more just like him all over the world. He said he belonged to a strange cult-like organization with branches all over the civilized world, branches that hold regular meetings at which they speak of atomic bombs wiping out everybody except them, and how perfectly normal they are except that they are much smarter than most people, and how God is a myth and has got to go."

"God?" laughed Joe. "But God is so unsemantic."

The FBI got hold of the NFFF membership list and investigation began. The LASFS, the PSFS (both of them), and the Null-A Men found new visitors at their meetings. The visitors were ignored. They seemed content to sit and observe and "wonder and adore" as Forrest

J Ackerman said in an article written about this time.

The members of the LASFS were amazed when one of their quiet visitors who had attended seven "consecutive" meetings, suddenly rose, declared himself as a special investigator, and marched everybody out the door into waiting Black Marias. At the station house they were interrogated for hours. Their superior-type talk incriminated many others who weren't present (and some who wouldn't attend except with a gun at their backs).

It was considered significant that many of the members were Communists. It was considered that many were homosexuals. It was considered significant that some members preferred to be known by synthetic names such as "Tigrina," "Decil," "Alojo." The members were amazed that the police thought these things of import. They were surprised that psychiatrists were deeply interested.

The upshot of it all was that the various authorities withdrew, with a final statement which, in part, said "...persons who call themselves 'fandom' have been diligently investigated and found to be members of a sort of lunatic fringe or what is commonly termed 'the crackpot element.' Some homosexuals, dope users, winos, ex-convicts, were found, as were some who had persecution complexes, mother complexes, delusions of grandeur and a firm belief that they could 'see the past, present and future as one continuous scroll.' There was a great deal of confusion of terms. For example, some held 'time-binding' to be an obscure technique buried in the meaningless jumble of terms, beliefs, practices, called 'general semantics.' Others held it to mean 'love of fellow men.' Still others thought it referred to a sex perversion. In the group were found several persons of high mental and moral character. These, to some extent, balanced the general low level of mentality and defeatism prevalent in the group.

"On the whole, it is believed that the various officers who participated in the investigation have wasted their time and the public's money on a group with no influence, no importance, and no significance except that society might consider it as a minor sore on a healthy body, or a pimple on the stomach of civilization."

One of the investigators remarked privately that Joe Blimp was absolutely right: there were a lot of people just like him, and that an investigation of all closets and cellars in the nation would probably turn up a veritable horde of supermen.



The first half is by Rotsler and the second half (marked by an asterisk) is by Burbee. I became stuck halfway through, sent it to Burbee to see what he thought and the second half is the result. That's one way to get Burbee to write for a fanzine!

--W.R.

Gerald Fitzgerald and the Time Machine

by William Rotsler and Charles Burbee

"What's all this stuff about you having a time machine, Fitzgerald?" I asked.

"Never mind, I got one, I got one."

"Why haven't you told me before? You know how hot I am on science fiction and that kind of stuff."

"Just so," he said. "I knew sooner or later you'd come over here wanting to use it to go into the future or back to the caveman or something silly."

"Look, lad," I said, "why don't we get together and do something with it? It's big enough for two, isn't it?"

"It's mine."

"Of course, but think of the possibilities!" I said, waving my arms a little. "We could go back in time to Mu and Atlantis and Rome and watch the Goths invade! We could take a peek at Cleopatra, Helen, the Vestal Virgins, and make sure about the Trojan Horse and even check up on the Ancient Gods. I've got a theory about Zeus's lightning bolt being a raygun."

"I'm afraid the machine doesn't have much range, Bill."

"Okay, okay, so we make records of Lincoln at Gettysburg or do a little combat photography at Bull Run or New Orleans or Breed's Hill! Then there's Concord and Fort Sumter and Ford's Theater. My god, man, why haven't you gotten started? Have we enough money for a movie camera and a tape recorder and film?"

"Look, Bill, there's just one..."

"Of course, we hafta get a battery or hand crank tape recorder and portable lights and then check with a costumers to get authentic clothes. Great Laney, there are a million things to do here. Look, sit down at the typer and start making a list, we don't want to get caught short someplace...."

"Now wait a minute, this thing..."

"We'll need a coupla guns maybe. Make that .38 automatics. And ammo. Then there's the recorder, costumes and plenty of film. Will you need extra batteries or whatever you use in your machine?"

"Hey..."

"Look, how's this? You get on the Confederate side and I'll get on the Union and we'll shoot the War of the Rebellion from both angles. Same with the Revolution. And look -- we could rig a stanchion out from the side of the ship and get those torpedoes of Farragut's as we go past them. Man, think of the deals! And underwater shots of the Maine going up, the Titanic, Aaron Burr and Franklin's Kite and then all those famous people, artists, writers and the like. Pavlova and George Washington crossing the Delaware and the birth of Groucho Marx. Think of signing the Declaration of Independence in technicolor! And if we could get it past the Johnson office, the heads rolling down from the guillotine and the storming of the Bastille!"

"Boy. Shit for brains. Hey."

"Are you getting all this down? We will need money, too; that'll be a problem unless we can get some gold bullion. Gold has always been good. A good book on history, too...Beard's isn't bad and it's small. An almanac, also; did that fellow in Mark Twain's book a lot of good. Yes, put that down and...what is it?"

"It really isn't very powerful. It hasn't much range."

"Yes, yes, you told me, but look... Well, stop bouncing in your chair; what is it now?"

"It practically has no range. It is hardly a time machine at all," he said, somewhat shamefaced.

"Whathehell kinda crap you been giving me, boy? Have you or haven't you a time machine?"

"Well, yes, I got one, I got one!"

"Look, I'm giving you a break taking this over. You never realized what a deal you had here. But remember one thing -- we're not going back and bump off grandparents no matter how much you dislike them. We're not going to try to change history, either -- that can get just too damned confusing."

"Gawdammit, Bill, it moves only in time a teeney bit. And sometimes not at all. In fact, I don't ever remember it working decently. Distortion and stuff."

"Have you tested it?"

"I lost the manual," he said.

"Well," I said, "we can experiment."

"We might have trouble with the FCC and there's my family."

"Look, where did you get it?"

"I made it."

"Oh," I said.

"What do you mean, 'oh'?"

"Just plain oh."

"You mean you lack faith in my Yankee ingenuity? Is that it?"

"I wouldn't say that. Seen any good pictures lately?"

"How could I see any good ones when they're not making good ones? But you haven't any faith in my Yankee ingenuity, have you?"

"Well, I..."

"Yankee ingenuity. The same thing that old Cyrus Blochtaw had in 1819 when he invented the automobile to eliminate the horsefly, and the same thing that Samuel B. Ferris had when he made the first Ferris Wheel in 1801. And what about the boomerang?"

"What about it?" I said. "What about the boomerang?"

"Let the boomerang go," FitzGerald said, "although, at that, it might have been invented by the ingenious ancestor of some ingenious Yankee."

"Well," I said, "I didn't want to see your time machine anyway."

"And why not? Don't I always look at your stupid pictures, even when they all look alike? Centaurettes with undersize breasts, phallic symbol men, men with bat ears, caterpillars bigger than Diesel tractors...by God, Rotsler, you'll look at my time machine or I'll tell your father why you got kicked out of art school."



"You've won me over," I said. "I will look at your time machine, Fitz."

"It's in my room."

"This is your room."

"Well it's in here, then."

"Where?"

"Right there."

"But that's an old crystal set."

"That's the beauty of it all. It looks just like an old crystal set. I designed it that way. Pulls its power from the air, a good

precaution in Shakespeare's England when there was a scarcity if not a complete lack of power plugs."

"Of course it doesn't work," I said.

"Who the hell said it didn't?"

"Goody! Now I'll rush right out and see how many of those supplies I can get on credit. I ought to get it all. Rotsler is a big name in Camarillo."

"Don't rush away like that. You ought to know something. This machine is a pilot model."

"What does that mean? That it doesn't work?"

"Sure it works. It wouldn't be a time machine if it didn't move in time. But it's got distortion, like I said. And a short range. And it isn't calibrated. Besides, I lost the manual."

"Well, who wrote the manual?"

"I did."

"Then it doesn't matter if you lost it. Rewrite it as you go. Here, is this the switch?"

"Now you've done it. You've turned it on! You've turned it on! Mortal eyes were never meant to see this!"

FitzGerald rose swiftly, crossed the room like a giant jungle cat and smashed the time machine with a chair. Then he sat down again. "That was quite an experience, wasn't it?" he said.

"What was?"

"Why, moving into 1960 or 1970 the way we did."

"Who did?"

"We did. It was 1960 or 1970 here in this room. Didn't you hear the atomic bombs going off in the distance, Billy Boy?"

"Well, I guess maybe I did."

"Sure, and that's why time machines are no good. Suppose your father had a time machine and he heard the A-bombs going off in 1960 or 1970. Can't you see the danger in that? Why, he'd have you out -- "

"Digging a bomb shelter!" I cried. "Hundreds of cubic feet of dirt, blisters on my creative hands, sweat making me itch -- Fitz, you've done me a great favor, destroying that thing! It was an act of supreme friendship!"

"I think so too," said FitzGerald.



THEY WALKED THROUGH GLASS

Quandry #29, January 1953

About a year ago, though maybe it was more, a Downey, California fan walked through a glass door at the Downey Public Library. The story was played up in all the local papers and John Van Couvering achieved thereby a fame that eclipsed even the news of his birth.

About two weeks ago I was with my wife in a local supermarket. My kids love this place; it has electronically operated doors and music plays constantly through concealed speakers. Suddenly we heard a crash near the front door. A man had walked through one of the full length windows. It was plate glass and he was rather badly cut up by the falling shards. (He claimed he was sober but his friend claimed he was drunk.) I mentioned to one of the clerks that I knew a fellow who'd done the same thing. The clerk said he himself had almost done it. The glass, though, had given without breaking and he got out of it with a sore nose.

I went home in pensive mood -- was I beginning to be pursued through life by people with a penchant for walking through glass?

By the next day this fantasm of the night had evaporated and I was telling a fellow at work about it. He listened to my story of the three glass-obsessed people without any noticeable delight. Then he told me that he once had bumped his head against a door (of glass) and how his political science professor had done better than that, actually having passed through the same door while it was closed.

Where is all this leading, anyway? Is this some plan of Nature that will have its fruition in homo superior? I am not qualified to say. It may be that some of us are being singled out for a Great Experiment.

So, if some day you find yourself tangled in the glass of a door you have just walked through, do not be surprised. You are probably one of the progenitors of a super race.

Of course, being a fan, you already half suspect this.

DON BRATTON, SEMANTICIST

Quandry #29, January 1953

When I first met Don Bratton in the LASFS back in 1944 he was a clean-cut young man. He did not allow the LASFS to degrade him; he is still a clean-cut young man. At that time he did not smoke or swear. I saw him off and on for a few years and then one day in 1949 he came over to my house to run off his FAPA magazine. To my amazement he lit up a cigarette shortly after he came in.

I made some remark about his picking up the habit. He said he'd taken it up for an excellent reason.

"That's peculiar," I said. "Usually people will tell you it was a case of monkey see, monkey do."

"I took up smoking for a purpose," said Bratton. "Not for a silly reason. You see, I had a lot of final exams to study for at S.C. The way I always study for exams is to stay up the whole night, cramming. I go directly from my study table to the exam."

"Without sleep?"

"Yes. I used to keep awake by drinking coffee. But that was a lot of bother, having to watch the coffee and keeping my cup hot, not to mention frequent trips to the head."

By "head" this ex-Navy man meant "can" or "latrine."

"Since cigarettes are stimulants with the same effect as coffee I thought it would be much easier to smoke the night through than to bother with coffee. So, you see, I took up smoking for a sensible reason."

"Would you call that a semantic reason?" I prodded.

"Why, yes," he said.

"Well," I said, "I think it was as stupid a reason for taking up smoking as anyone could wish for. You've gotten yourself a life-long habit, for you can be sure you'll never stop smoking. And some time in 1978 somebody'll ask you how you took up smoking and you'll tell them it was because of some exams you wanted to pass thirty years ago. By then you'll have spent \$2,000 on tobacco, stained your fingers and teeth, ruined your wind, annoyed countless housewives by spilling ashes on their rugs, and burned up at least two shirts by carelessly carrying loose matches in them."

Don Bratton grinned. "You make it sound fantastic."

"I always tell the solid facts," I said. "Look, Don, as long as you just wanted to keep awake for a few hectic nights, why didn't you take caffeine tablets? They'd have been simple to take, would have kept you wide awake, and best of all, would have been non-habit-forming. Why didn't you take caffeine tablets, Bratton?"

A glazed look came to Bratton's face. "I never thought of that," he said in a small voice.

Sneary at Bay

Glorious Spool #1
Autumn 1950



This is a transcript excerpted from Sneary at Bay, the fabulous wirecoding made at the Wild Warp session of 5 August 1950. You read about it in the September 1950 SPACEWARP (the best single issue of a fanzine in 1950). In the interests of art, some editing has been done on this version. Some side remarks have been omitted, and in places I have condensed a little. But very seldom did I paraphrase, or otherwise distort the actual remarks as they were recorded on the spool. This is, however, only a small portion of the hour-long conversation, which touched upon many other things besides the Outlanders. It is not, as a matter of fact, all the remarks made about that club that -- according to Burbee -- Sneary runs "like Walter J. Daugherty runs the LASFS," but, as conversations will, the talk drifted on to other subjects without rising to any definite climax, and I had to end this transcribed version at the best punchline I could find. A lot of very lovely stuff is omitted here, but the only way to bring you the ripe, full-bodied flavor of the whole recording would be to play it for you. This is quite impossible, and will perhaps remain so until Burbee wills the recording Sneary at Bay to the Fantasy Foundation, where it will be made available to all qualified scholars engaged in research.

Those taking part in the following tendril-session are: Richard (Rick) Sneary (RS); Charles Burbee (CB); Gordon Dewey (GD); and William Rotsler (WR).

-- Redd Boggs

WR: Who's the head of the Outlanders?

RS: There's nobody the head of the Outlanders. The Outlanders are a completely equal group.

CB: Anarchistic, eh?

RS: Phooey anarchistic! All Outlanders are born equal.

CB: And by god if they're not equal when they come in, we chop 'em down to size!

GD: Are all of them eligible to hold office?

RS: There are no offices; we have no constitution; we have no elected officers...

WR: Just rabble, huh?

RS: ...we have no dues, and only three rules.

CB: Rules? Who made these rules?

RS: They are unwritten rules.

CB: Oh, I see. Who un-wrote them?

RS: The entire group.

CB: All at one time. They all got this idea spontaneously. Boy, that's remarkable! Well, go ahead.

RS: No. They were formulated by one Len Moffatt and myself, but the others agreed...

CB: Aha!

GD: Not the entire group!

WR: You twisted the others to your will!

RS: Twisted them? We thought of them before they were there.

CB: What do you mean, you "thought of 'em before they were there"? That doesn't make sense.

RS: Well, there were just four of us in the beginning. And the others have joined since. But they've agreed...

GD: In the beginning there was only God.

CB: Why, they're three-up on God! "In the beginning there were four of us." Is that the way your bible goes? You've got a bible, haven't you? An unwritten one, that is?

RS: No. Our bible -- if you wish to call it that -- is only THE OUTLANDER, which is revised quarterly.

GD: That's better than God does; he doesn't revise his bible.

CB: Tell me, what do you have to do to be an Outlander? Of course I'm going to be eligible, you know, to be an Outlander when I move out to Whittier.

RS: Well, I've been doing a great deal of thinking about what makes an eligible Outlander. After considering all the reasons why a person should be an Outlander, I find that only three of the people who are now Outlanders are eligible to be members. And Rick Sneary is not one of them.

GD: According to your rules.

RS: According to my own rules, yes. But of course each person makes up his own rules, and he's equally right. Anyone in the club can refuse membership to any new possible member. Therefore, no one that anybody objects to can get in. Therefore, there can be no feuding.

GD: How can there be just three rules, when anyone can make any rules he wants at any time?

WR: What are the three rules?

RS: The three rules are that there can be no offices, written constitution, or dues; that no one can be a member who lives within the Los Angeles city limits -- or, presumably, outside of the radius of a day's drive by car; and that no one can join the club without the unanimous approval of all current members.

GD: Do you go out after members, or do members come to you, begging to get in?

RS: Well, a little of both. In the beginning we did go out after members --

WR: "Come join our nameless group"!

CB: "And there was darkness on the face of South Gate."

RS: There was loneliness on the face of South Gate. And then I received a word out of the wilderness. And his name was Van Couvering.

CB: Oh, my god! I've seen Van Couvering. I've heard him speak. He walked through a glass door.

RS: That he did, that he did. The Downey Public Library door.

CB: How many times had he been in that place?

RS: Who knows? He reads a lot -- he reads more than I do.

CB: So he walked through the damned door after his 50th visit to that place.

RS: I doubt if it was merely his 50th. It was probably somewhere around his 5000th. But it was a clean glass door, I'll have you know.

CB: You mean it had not been clean on his 4999 other visits to this library?

GD: Maybe when he walked through this glass door, he was creating the Outlanders.

WR: But this was recent.

RS: Yes, the Outlanders, I'll have you know, are almost two years old.

CB: This amorphous group is two years old. Now, supposing you want to throw somebody out of there, how do you do that?

RS: We don't have to throw anybody out.

CB: You mean the group mind just knows that little cell is no longer wanted and they defecate it?

RS: Why no. We have got real powerful minds. We see into the future.

CB: Tell me, when you stand around in a circle and join hands, does a great lens appear mistily about you?

RS: We don't join hands. Not all at once.

GD: Supposing somebody arouses the displeasure of someone else, since one single vote can bar a prospective member from membership, can the displeasure of one individual expell another member from the group?

RS: It don't figure. I really couldn't say, because it's never happened.

CB: But it's almost happened. Our boy Van Couvering -- the man who walked through the glass door -- was the subject of the wrath of one Freddie Hershey.

RS: That was because she just met him. Everybody hates Van Couvering when they first meet him. It takes awhile to get used to him.

GD: If everybody hates Van Couvering, how did he get into the Outlanders?

RS: The Outlanders were formed after we'd known him quite a while. Moffatt, Pederson, Woolston, had already known Van Couvering a number of years or months before the Outlanders were officially formed.

WR: Officially? "There shall be no officials in the Outlanders."

RS: There's an official forming date, though.

GD: How can there be? That word "official" comes from "office." If there are no officers, there can be nothing official.

RS: Oh, we have officers.

CB: You just said you didn't have any.

RS: We don't have any elective officers. They aren't actually officers. I serve the purpose of Welcomer.

GD: What other officers are there in the Outlanders?

CB: Yeah, that you don't have, you know.

RS: Well, we've got to have a secretary.

CB: Who elected himself or herself to that position?

RS: The unanimous group.

CB: The group mind!

RS: The group mind unanimously elected Freddie Hershey as unofficial official secretary-treasurer.

GD: Now we have officers elected to these non-elective offices!

RS: Certainly. But it's only because the people want to be.

CB: Want to be what?

RS: Officers. They wouldn't be elected unless they wanted to be.

GD: But they already agreed they wouldn't be.

CB: They aren't really officers, you see, because they don't hold office. What they really do is hold not-offices. The non-officers hold not-offices.

GD: Non-hold non-offices.

CB: I'm sorry. The non-officers non-hold non-offices. And nothing gets done!

RS: Oh, on the contrary! We turn out THE OUTLANDER, we hold Westercons...

CB: You held one Westercon.

RS: We held one Westercon.

CB: You see, when I know the facts, I can cut you down. You can lie to me about other things, but you can't lie to me about Westercons.

RS: We've held one Westercon so far. We are thinking of going on tour and holding Westercons everywhere.

GD: In the East?

CB: Why, naturally! It figures. Well, go ahead.

RS: That's all.

CB: What do you mean, that's all? How about the Westercons of the South and the North, man?

RS: It sounds dianetically unpure.

CB: Impure. Do you have your own language down there in South Gate? Tell me, what is the official Outlander city?

RS: South Gate -- because that's where we're going to hold the convention in '58.

CB: The Outlanders? Are you going to last that long?

RS: Sure, if we don't get blown up, we're going to last that long.

CB: Just one big happy family, huh? Don't you think -- well, Freddie Hershey is a woman of some discernment, no doubt; of mature years and perhaps mature mind, for all we know?

RS: Most assuredly! All Outlanders are mature and discerning -- except the juvenile ones. And that's only because they're young.

CB: If they're juvenile, they're young -- now, that figures.

RS: Most fan clubs have juveniles that aren't young.

CB: They have juveniles that aren't young....

RS: They're only juvenile in the mind. Second childhood, that is.

CB: Let's see, how many Outlanders are there altogether?

RS: At the current there are nine, with one in Minnesota -- or rather he's now in Pittsburgh.

GD: How can you have a member in Pittsburgh when you said members must live within the radius of a day's drive...?

RS: That's Pederson, who was out here to begin with. You see, he's merely on vacation. He's been gone a year, but that's really a vacation. He actually lives out here.

GD: Once an Outlander always an Outlander, no matter where you go?

RS: As long as you remain active.

CB: Does death release you?

RS: Oh, there's some people retired from the Outlanders.

CB: Does death release you?

RS: Certainly. We have no way of sending a chain letter to heaven or hell.

GD: Why? "In the beginning there were four..."

RS: Oh, there were more than four. Matter of fact, there were less than one.

GD: Less than one? Rick, you're killing me!

RS: That was my intention. You see, if I kill all you people, I can carry that electrical typewriter home with me.

CB: You couldn't even bring your own mechanical typewriter over here. How the hell are you going to lug that electrical one home?

RS: I don't like my mechanical typewriter. I have no interest in it. I need one with an as -- ast -- as --

GD: They don't make 'em with that.

CB: Machines don't need those, bud. It's time you learned. You came in from Outlandia just to hear about machines that don't have those things. They really don't!

RS: That's a bold-faced lie! You've got one on your machine.

CB: I have? I'll have to pat that thing more familiarly after this -- on the pistol pocket.

RS: It looks like a star, only it's got more points than one.

CB: Oh, one of those things! No, my typewriter has not got an asterisk.

WR: What does the Outlander group image look like?

RS: We have never been able to formulate it into a visual image. It's all mental.

WR: Well, mentally visual then.

RS: You'd have to be an Outlander to see it.

CB: Look, we'll kneel before you and you thwack us across the shoulders and make temporary Outlanders of us.

RS: It's impossible. I'm just one member.

CB: You're a pseudopod of the group mind, aren't you?

GD: And one member can make his own rules for the group.

RS: Up to a certain point -- as long as they agree with the others.

GD: Oh, there are limitations? Then you have a constitution of some kind?

RS: No.

GD: Then there are no limitations.

RS: The others have to agree with him. But he can suggest rules. You see, we don't worry about rules and constitutions.

GD: But you have rules.

WR: And elected officers.

RS: But we don't think about such things. When we need them --

CB: That doesn't mean you haven't got 'em because you don't think about 'em.

RS: We don't worry about them. You worry about them.

CB: We're not worried about them. We've got you worried now.

WR: We've got you backed into a corner.

GD: You know, the Outlanders emerge as a rather rigid group.

CB: Damned rigid!

RS: We are the most exclusive fan club in South Gate!

I've Got to Publish Eight Pages for FAPA

Burblings, February, 1956



"I've got to publish eight pages for FAPA," I said to Isabel the Sunday before the deadline.

"Why?" she asked.

"I'll get kicked out if I don't."

"Why don't you just let them kick you out? Haven't you had enough FAPA?" I must have looked at her aghast.

"You're not going to run for Editor again, are you? You've been editor twice and I certainly got tired of all those packages of fanzines stacked up in the bedroom. When I asked you to move them you'd put them under the bed and then I couldn't dust for months."

I've been OE three times but I didn't remind her of that. "I've got to stay in so I can keep getting all those fine fanzines that appear only in FAPA."

"Which special ones?"

"Well, there's HORIZONS...Harry Warner's mag..." I paused. I was thinking fast. Just how many worthwhile mags are there in FAPA, anyhow? "And when Boggs publishes he does good work, and so does Grennell and Tucker and I always enjoy Eney's stuff. Cox writes amusingly, and we must not forget the gracious prose of the English fans."

"But wouldn't those people send you their magazines anyhow if you asked them to, even if you weren't a member?"

"They probably would, most of them. But suppose a new man comes along. I wouldn't even know of him because I'd lost contact with the organization."

"Go ahead and do your eight pages," she said, a pitying smile on her face. She had just been needling me. She knew darned well I couldn't quit FAPA. What would there be in the world for me if there were no FAPA?

Eight pages. I kept saying that to myself. My golly, I said, I haven't got eight pages in me. How does that Grennell do it, anyhow? Bangs out stencil after stencil, and all of it is readable and a lot of it is even good. And Willis and Ashworth, who couldn't be dull if they tried, maybe.

Eight pages. I can't do it.

However, it occurred to me that in the past several years I'd gotten a fair start on several items. Most of them I'd never finished but perhaps, if I could find them, I could polish them up while stenciling, and then improvise some kind of ending on the stencil.

I began searching. I found my collection of Indian Head Cents, of which I have 367. I looked up their catalog value and found I had some of the juicier ones. Among the cents was a small stack of the oldtime 3-cent silver pieces which the catalog said must not be confused with the 3-cent nickel pieces. I had none of the rare ones, but they're worth a buck each. Of course the day wore on and I fondled my coins.

I'd gone back to my search and had located a manila folder full of old Burbee mss. when there was a terrific crash that resounded up from Washington Boulevard. This had to be investigated so we all jumped in the car (wife and two kids) and went on down there. A 1956 Cadillac, long as a submarine, had crashed into the rear end of a 1949 Chevrolet. The Cadillac was sorely damaged but the Chevrolet seemed scarcely touched. After a time a deputy sheriff came along and began setting out flares to divert traffic. A few minutes later he went out and put them all out, leaving them lying there. My other boy, who'd beaten us to the scene, collected these half-burned flares and later on brought them home and had a preview of the 4th of July in the back yard.

No sooner had I gotten home when it seemed a good idea to go out and check on our seven hens, to see if they needed feed or water or had produced any eggs. All three possibilities had come true. One of the hens had the notion of following me out of the chicken yard. I tried to kick her back but she wouldn't be swerved from her objective. I hate arguing with female critters so I let her go. She made straight for the dogs' water crock, out of which it is her special desire and pleasure to drink. We have two dogs, so that apostrophe is properly placed. So eventually back to my research.

While I was trying vainly to remember if Jesus in the Ditch had ever been published (I had a note on it "for SKYHOOK" but couldn't remember sending it to Boggs, his publishing it, or my publishing it, so I will stick it in here; maybe it's a reprint, maybe it's new...will someone tell me?) my wife came into the room and asked me if my last haul of piano rolls had contained any gems. Of course this was speaking directly to my id. I dropped the mss. and gladly showed her the 34 rolls I'd bought for \$1.50 two weeks before. "I strongly suspect," I said, "that this roll here, though it lacks identification, is ragtime. Look at those octave bass beats, and notice, too, the lack of any note perhaps below the 65-note range. This without doubt is a transcription from a 65-note roll. Since I got it at the same place that had an empty box with a rag label, this might very well actually be Joseph Lamb's Ragtime Nightingale!"

Later, as I looked through the manila folder I found several old Hemmel's Scientific Sorties, which I wrote a flock of back in 1944-6. Several of them haven't been published, and are not likely

ever to be, either. Golly, what crud. Did I ever write crud like that?

I found The Fabulous Laney, an article I started in about 1951. It is a merry thing, but too strong for publication. And if I cut out the good parts there'd be little left. Don't know but what I will eventually write that article about Laney, some way or another. And that other story-type thing, Tomorrow the Planets, about an oddball stfclub. That rocks along pretty nicely and I wish I had the energy to finish it.

At last I could put it off no longer. I found enough material to fill out a magazine, and knew I'd have to improvise a coupla pages. So I finally bellied up to the typewriter and stuck in one of these five- or six-year-old stencils.

Golly, I said to myself, there is G M Carr up there in Seattle, too. Not only does she live near a place where a person can buy all the home brew makin's he wants, but she also produces a huge amount of published material. Let fapish wrath fall upon my head, I mused to myself, but -- I like G M Carr's stuff.

So, without as much pain as I thought I'd suffer, I cut a couple of stencils, then laid the holy work aside, listened to a tape recording of nine ragtime piano rolls and went to bed.

Next day at work I said to Francis T Laney, as I held out my hand, "Where is that article?"

"I haven't written anything," said Laney. "I'll write you that article one of these days, but I haven't got any time now."

"But I'm going to press!" I shouted, and the fellow on the lathe in front of me turned his eye upon me. "I'm going to press!" I shouted again.

"Hell with it," said Laney, grinning, and walked away.

I'd hollered the wrong thing. These words would not bring the fanatic gleam I've so often seen in his eyes. I should have said: "Mint commemoratives! Plate blocks!" Then for sure his eyes would have lit up. Oh well. He is going to do me an article one of these days. I will publish it here, in this seldom-type mag.

There is a fellow in the shop who reads Astounding religiously. He rightly regards Laney as an intelligent person. But he also thinks that Laney ought to read science fiction.

"Oh, I've read a little of the stuff," said Laney. "Along with my general reading. It's okay to spice a general reading diet with a bit of science fiction; some of it is quite interesting. But though I find it pleasant to read at times, I can't say I care a great deal for it. And I certainly can't see anyone going strongly for the stuff."

Thus spake F T Laney, science fiction fandom's living legend.



OUT OF THE HOSPITAL

OUCH.

by Charles Burbee

I came away from the hospital bearing a small store of wonderful stories and a small new scar on my chest. My stories are not the usual kind about large needles and bedpan blues. They are about the people I met, and some of the stories are printable and some are not. I was in that place eight days so I met a lot of people. One morning fifteen people showed up before lunch.

Into my room came a stream of attendants, nurses, friends, doctors, strangers who became friends. At least once a day my legendary wife Isabel entered. One night I had six visitors and the next night none. One night I had Willie Rotsler, Bjo, and Djinn Faine, which is why I am writing this thing. You might say I met Djinn in bed. She said something about being the new ed of SHANGRI-LA and I said if they'd revive SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES which I used to edit I'd write the editorial. So here I am writing one of the editorials.

Back to the hospital. One day just before my operation, a shy little nun (this was a Catholic hospital) came in bearing a jug of holy water. "May I bless you?" she asked softly. "You may as well, Sister," I said. "Tomorrow morning I may be standing at the gates of Hell." So she moistened her thumb in the water and pressed it against my forehead, muttering something in what was probably Latin.

I told this to several people at work. One of them, Doris, shook her head. "Can't you ever keep your mouth shut?" she asked. I said I probably couldn't. But I told her I'd permitted the nun to bless me and had even thanked her afterward very politely. "Well," said Doris, "you had no choice but to be blessed. You were bed-ridden. She could have blessed you without your permission and you couldn't have done a thing about it." This gave rise to a picture in my head and I told Doris and we both laughed like crazy. This nun asks me can she bless me and I say hell no. So she stands at the door scooping holy water at me and shouting, "Bless you, damn you!"

I also told her of the other things that happened there and she was roused to say, "How come all these fantastic things happen to you?" I said, "People present their Burbee-side to me and of course that is their fantastic side. Next question, please."

But Doris did put the stopper to me. "That holy water cured you. Say what you wish about medical skills, the holy water did it. That is why you are standing here today telling me your improbable stories. You can never prove the holy water didn't cure you."

As some of you know, I entered the hospital because of a collapsed lung. I happened once before. In the course of changing jobs and getting physicals for medical insurance, and meeting doctors before, during and after the actual operations I must have spoken to nearly a score of doctors. They all ask the same questions in almost the same sequence. But the other day I met one who asked me something none of the others had ever thought to ask -- probably because they deal in flesh and blood and not emotions. "When you realized your lung had collapsed," he said, "were you frightened?"

CHURCHES, Said F T Laney

I learned of F T Laney's death second-hand. His fourth and final (I almost said fatal) wife Edith wrote several people about it, but did not include me on the mailing list. I read two of the letters she wrote. They were almost identical. It got me a bit that in one of the letters she spelled the name of the recipient incorrectly. Anyhow, she said that a number of months before Laney died he was brought around to seeing the light. She said he'd been convinced by a "More Than Enlightened" preacher. She said he'd found peace, and contentment, and quiet. I forgot the quotes, but that's what she said.

I carried one of these letters around for a time, showing it to everybody who ever knew Laney, asking for their opinions. Nearly everybody doubted it very much. Elmer Perdue doubted it most. If I am permitted to quote this man, he said something like: "This is a lot of crap."

For my part, I do not believe a word of it. Laney and God never did see eye to eye.

What is a "More Than Enlightened" preacher, anyway?

Of course I know what happened to Laney. He went to church with his wife simply to keep her mouth shut. This seems like a valid reason. Matter of fact I think that 95% of the church-attending husbands of the world are attendees for that reason.

Laney's third wife Cele also managed to get Laney into church every Sunday. She was a schoolteacher so he as her husband had to look good. So he did. He went regularly to church with her.

So naturally I kidded him about it, telling him I saw a holy light shining in his eyes or asking him if he preferred the odor of sanctity to that of honest sweat -- real clever stuff like that.

He told me how he spent the time in church. "I sit there and play phonograph records in my head," he said.

"Doesn't the preacher bother you, talking away up there?"

"I don't pay any attention to that son of a bitch. I blank him out. I mentally pick out a record, lay it on the turntable and out comes a glorious rendition of Dippermouth Blues as played by Satchmo. And you know? I even hear the needle scratch sometimes, and if my record has a slight crack in it, I can hear that as I replay it in my head."

"You know," I said, "I'll bet the preacher sometimes steals a little glance at you and sees your eyes shining with the light of the righteous jazz fan and he thinks he's really got a sucker on the string."

Oh, well. I think Laney's attitude toward churches might be summed up in the following quote: "All churches ought to be designed like accordions so that God can pick them up at will and squeeze out the worshippers so they pop out like watermelon seeds."



"Willie," I said to William Rotsler the other night, "let me take you by the hand and lead you into the Wonderland of Smell."

Of course, I meant "by the hand" as a figure of speech only. I would not wish to be caught holding hands with any former LASFS member. If one of these days Bjo becomes a former LASFS member, I intend to withdraw that statement.

We were sitting, Willie and I, in Gordon Dewey's basement apartment. It is a fascinating place. Nearly all wall space is taken up by apple boxes acting as book cases. They're filled with books and magazines. I think Rotsler once made the statement that he'd never seen such a complete yet compact library.

Our host, G G Dewey, had excused himself to answer the phone, and in order to give him the impression that we were not listening to his conversation, we struck up one of our own at our end of the room.

Oh, I neglected to mention that this room contains a small refrigerator in which high-class beer is kept. It also contains 3 typewriters, one made of sterling silver. Also it had at the time of which I speak, a female dog named Pi, close by my feet most of the evening because she felt that was the best place to guard her puppies. I sort of wishes she had chosen another spot because she periodically emitted foul odors which I waved away with a copy of KLEIN BOTTLE.

"Dammit, Willie, can't you smell anything at all? Not even faintly?"

"Nope. A few years ago our deep freeze at the ranch went out of order and all the meat spoiled. It was my job to clean it out. I remember taking out a big tub of the stuff. It was so rotten that if you picked up a leg of lamb by the bone the meat sloughed off it. I was carrying it away in front of me, like this, and 250 feet away my mother was grimacing and shouting at me to hurry and get it away. But I couldn't smell a thing."

"Good lord," I said. "But didn't you ever have a sense of smell?"

He thought maybe he had, up to the time he was about five or six

years old. His mother had told him of one or two instances of his mentioning the smell of onions and flowers.

"I see," I said. "And then, at the age of six you had a tragic love affair and as a psychosomatic compensation you lost your sense of smell."

"No," said Willie Rotsler. "The only tragic love affairs are those which end in marriage."

"Another possibility which occurs to me is that you may have sold your soul to the Devil. To bind the bargain the Devil takes a minor physical sense, such as the sense of smell."

Willie wrinkled his beardless brow, causing his bearded face to rise two inches to compensate. "No," he said, slowly, "I don't remember selling my soul to anybody."

"That is the sort of thing one would remember."

"And I don't have any copy of the contract written on fireproof paper."

"Well, shecks," I said. "I guess we've got to rule out the selling-to-the-Devil bit. Darn it, it would have cinched this sketch for some highclass fanzine like SHIPSIDE or CRY."

"You were talking about smelling things," said Willie.

"Yes. I think it a special pity that a fella like you, a self-admitted artist, should be deprived of a channel of perception."

"Tell me," said Willie, "how would I depict the sense of smell in brass or ink?"

"You're the artist; you tell me. Isn't it simply a matter of translation? Isn't that all art is, a form of translation?"

Willie, who'd been doodling all the while on a sheet of yellow paper he had in a clipboard on his lap, suddenly started writing. Willie is always taking notes on the things I say so I wasn't surprised. I leaned over to see what he was writing.

"If a bird, once every thousand years, were to brush a wingtip against the solid brass mountain one thousand miles high..." I read.

"A bird at a thousand miles, Bill? But there's nothing up there to push against."

He went on writing the thing. It ended up with some conclusion about love. Matter of fact, we may yet get around to love in this sketch.

He looked up after a bit. "Not having a sense of smell is rather common," said he. "Many times in a group of people somebody will tell about some smell experience and nearly everybody else will chime in with something. Very often, though, one person will sit silent. These are the non-smellers. I check them out by asking, and

sure enough, they're non-smellers, too. But that's about all we'll have to say to each other on the subject."

"Yes," I said. "I imagine there's not much to be said about a common lack of something."

"On the other hand, I've had many conversations like this one. People trying to tell me what it is like."

"I'm not trying to do that. It would be like the classic case of trying to describe red to a blind man. I know that you can accept the whole thing only as an intellectual concept."

"That's right. I know phrases like 'new-mown hay' and 'salt air tang' and like that. But they don't mean anything to me."

"Those are a couple of good ones. Others are coffee, fresh-ground or brewing; bacon frying; fresh-baked bread; watermelon; the air after a rain; a new fanzine; orange blossoms."

"Those are good ones?"

"Yes, and it just occurred to me that you as a gun bug are missing out on one of the associational aspects of firing a gun, that of smelling the burnt gunpowder."

"That's pleasant?"

"Yes, it has a kind of biting odor."

"That's the smell of burnt cordite like I read about in the detective books."

"Funny thing about the burnt cordite. I read in an article in Writer's Digest years ago about that. Seems cordite was an artillery explosive used exclusively by the British in WWI. They gave it up after a brief time. Something about it not being stable or predictable or capable of being stored. It was never used for small arms ammunition. But somebody mentioned burnt cordite and all the other authors picked up on it."

Sometimes I think I talk too much.

"You know," I said, "this thing might be a psychosomatic thing as we mentioned before and maybe a good hypnotist could restore it to you."

"I've thought of that."

"You'd have to have a real good operator, though. Not like anybody you'd meet in fandom."

He nodded.

"My golly, Willie, if you suddenly got a sense of smell you'd be half nuts for a while. You'd be running around literally sticking your nose into everything."

"But I wouldn't have that big backlog of smells that other people have."

"No, but from reading your magazine KTEIC, I gather that you live at a rate from five to fifty times faster than sedate people like me. In no time at all you'd have an immense backlog of scents. Fascinating things, scents are. They can evoke sharp memory pictures better than anything else."



"I've heard about that."

"Right. Just last week I sniffed at a spice box full of anise and at once I saw the picture of a six-year-old Burbee, overalls and bare dirty feet, running across a field through the wild anise. We kids called it 'Sweet Anna' and sometimes would chew a stalk of it. Tastes sort of like licorice."

"I've heard stories like that. But remember I've also been spared the stinks of the world,

like the stink of rotten meat and the fragrance of ancient gluey socks...."

"Sure. But they're all a part of experience which you arty fellers whip into shape in brass or canvas and sell to people for fantastic sums of money."

He started writing something else down. I peeked again.

"Give me one good enemy and I'll conquer the world," he'd written.

I'd better mention why he constantly takes notes. He's saving up quotes for his next QUOTEBOOK and is a tireless worker in his field. Fortunately for him he associates with people who say clever quotable things, though I fear I didn't do him any good that night.

"Some smells are colorful-type smells. The smell of old ragtime piano rolls; the odor that comes wafting down a Skid Row alley; the smell of love; a freshly-cut lawn; a good cigar; a newly-washed shirt. And women and men, too, smell different. Matter of fact, quite differently, though researches in that line are terribly hindered by the increasing reluctance of people to smell like people. Women don't smell like women; they smell like flowers. And now men smell like sage or lofty pines, or something supposed to be real manlike."

"You said something back there," said Willie. "The smell of love. That has a smell?"

Dear old romantic Willie!

(Four paragraphs of singularly informative and enlightening material have here been deleted by the author -- to be published in

Rotsler's privately circulated BACHELOR'S KTEIC.)

"...and to bury your nose in a woman's hair has a special effect. Well, come to think of it, the odds are against that any more, too. It seems that women now spray cologne on the hair also, though if you are careful to get down to the roots, past the cologne, you might get the real scent."

"Tell me," said Willie. "Do housewives smell different from single girls?"

I pleaded ignorance to that one. Where did he get such a question, anyhow?

Pi let go again about this time, effectively changing the course of the conversation. As I waved the foul odor away with my copy of KLEIN BOTTLE and Willie smirked because he had the advantage of not being bothered by an odor, I said, "You know, there are times when the lack of a sense of smell might be a good thing. Or rather, the ability to turn it on and off. Say, there's a good research project. Find out which of the earth's creatures can turn it on and off at will."

"If somebody would endow us with a million dollars, would you be willing to work on that project? You'd have a lab, a supply of sterile white smocks, bubbling retorts with smoke and steam rising ominously, and maybe in the corner a couple of rods with static electricity crackling up and down."

"Say," I said, "that's real scientific, that is."

"Sure it is, and of course you'd have a beautiful lab assistant, tall and lovely and graceful, with a Rotsler-type bosom and a pear-shaped derriere."

"She may be pretty but she knows her stuff and is devoted to the subject. She calls me Doctor."

"And she's secretly in love with you."

"Well, she's only human."

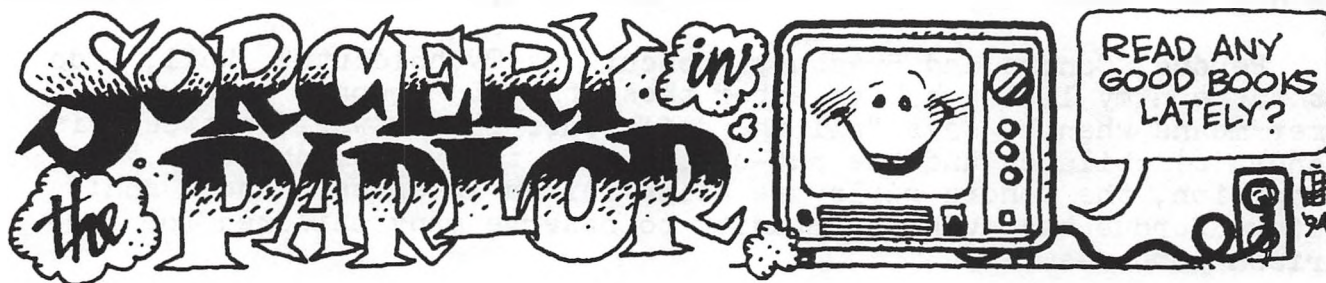
"But you don't know she's in love with you."

"Well, that doesn't sound very human. What does she smell like?"

"Oh," said Willie, "like new-mown hay or a field of poppies or maybe a new car? I'm told they have a special smell."

"Yeah. But couldn't she smell just like a woman?"

"Not this one. How about the smell of burnt cordite?" said Willie.



I got some kicks out of Elmer Perdue's ELMURMURINGS, recently postmailed, but then I always enjoy Perdue's writings except when he talks about his job. In fact, one of these days I am going to write an article which will contain examples of what I consider the finest fan writing of all time -- and Elmer Perdue will be represented there.

ELMURMURINGS had five pages of text s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d to use up eight pages so he could claim full activity. But it isn't about fore-shortened activity that I intend to write. His comments on TV set me off.

Elmer says, "Conversation was at one time a fine art. It is no longer." I don't think he can blame the decline of conversation as an art on TV. Was it ever an art in this century? Is it an art in the countries as yet untouched by the new medium, or in the TV-less sections of the United States, for that matter? Elmer should know that the vast majority of the population has no parlor conversation anyhow, and wouldn't have, even if all the TV and radio sets were to be scrapped tomorrow. Perhaps the decline of artistic conversation in Elmer's case is due to his not being welcome in so many parlors as he used to be.

Elmer's habit of leaving the radio turned on "much of the time" as "background" is vastly irritating to many people. Matter of taste. Easy to turn off the radio? It's just as easy to turn off TV sets. They have switches, too.

"Oily-voiced bastard invading my home at my expense, to lure me from doing what I want...." This very charge can be leveled at radio, with which he finds no fault. The "oily-voiced bastards" were for the most part recruited from radio.

People who will not turn off TV sets when guests arrive are boors, to be classed in the same category as people who use radio as background, let us say. Of the five homes I've visited recently, the sets were turned off at once in two, weren't on in the other three.

It is quite natural for people to be temporarily obsessed by a new toy, whether it be an automatic washer, a garbage disposal unit, a mimeograph, a tape recorder, a TV set. Then the novelty wears off and the shiny new gadget simply becomes another adjunct of gracious living.

If the forty-odd workers in Perdue's office weren't talking about TV, would they be talking about anything else of intellectual interest to Elmer? Chances are, they'd be talking about basketball games, football games, radio programs, or some such ephemera.

I believe Elmer Perdue's attitude is partly due to his desire to be different, and partly to his gradual metamorphosis into a crusty

old dog who hates any kind of change because it means another adjustment.

Perdue, Condra and Bradbury "concur" as TV holdouts? Well, I do not pattern my living habits after these three. I don't know what Elmer means when he says "all the difference in the world between his (Condra's) children and the run-of-the-mill television children." In my opinion, the Condra girls are being raised as snobs. And I don't believe Perdue has much opportunity to observe many children for comparison purposes.

On the other hand, I live in a child-clogged neighborhood. Nearly all my friends have from two to six children. Among our immediate neighbors (12 houses) there are 35 children. Some of these homes have TV, some do not. Now, certainly I'm as intelligent and observant as Elmer Perdue, but I can't tell a TV child by the cut of his jib. Can Elmer? I believe the average intelligent child, after the novelty of TV has worn off, grows selective in the choice of his programs. If he doesn't, that's where the parental control comes in.

Elmer was very smug and erudite as he spoke casually about the "high survival value" of "watching anything that moved" but he neglected to mention that it is difficult to hold a small child's attention longer than 15 minutes, another well-known phenomenon. It is this smugness of Elmer's that once caused some oldtime FAPA member to dub him "God's Big Brother Bill."

Certainly there must be a few adults who are TV wacky. I don't know any. I try very hard to steer clear of the weak-minded. If they weren't gone on TV, they'd be just as overboard for something else. TV, like wine, can be abused.

The bulk of TV programming is bad. In this respect it is the same as radio, night club shows, movies -- any entertainment medium. There are, however, first-class shows. Scarce, of course, but quality is always scarce.

Poor old Elmer, terrified of TV. You see, he is afraid to get a set. He would be forced, by the survival instinct of watching moving things, to look at the picture. There he would sit, englamored, witched, entranced, staring mindlessly at the screen. Even when the station went off the air he'd still be forced to sit, watching against his will the shimmer of the rasters. And there he would sit, immovable, unable to drink, to eat, to answer the call of nature, till somebody with a stronger will than he, like his wife, would rescue him by snatching the plug from the socket (because his set would have no switch), releasing him from the dread enchantment.

Hell, Elmer, you can always hide your head under the pillow.

FOUR LETTERS TO VICTORY



A four-letter word won the war. World War II, World War I, and all the others we've been in. And it will win all our future wars, too, simply because we are the most inventive people on earth. The device of the four-letter word will carry Earth's banners to the farthest reaches of the galaxy.

The American language, which is distinct from the tongue spoken by the English (the two having had no common interchange in the last two hundred years) has been made flexible and malleable in the mouths of Americans. It has in its mighty, fluid vocabulary a four-letter word that has come down to us from the earthy Elizabethans and perhaps even an earlier age. I leave further historical research to those who take more pleasure than I in delving into old manuscripts in search of the four-letter word. This four-letter word, once used in polite conversation, is no longer in such use. Although its short pithy sound rings upon American air millions of times a day, it is in bad odor in the nostrils of the righteous. You won't find it in your dictionary, not even in the college edition, but you'll see it scrawled on back fences and privy walls. Also, if you could probe the heads of those zealots who go about holding their mouths pursed up you would find that word ringing in their heads.

This word has been taken by the Americans and given all sorts of constructions. Incorporated in one term or another it is heard in America a million times a minute. But there is not another country on the face of the earth whose language permits such constructions. They cannot be literally translated, for the nearest other languages can come to them are reflexive phrases. You see already how inventive, how ingenious, we Americans are?

I made the statement sometime in 1944 that if this four-letter word were ever struck from the American language, the whole war would grind to a halt in four hours -- one hour for each letter. And I believe that statement to be utterly true, since it is well known to all soldiers and ex-soldiers that all phases of military procedure and strategy are born and carried out in a veritable verbal storm of this word in its various constructions.

And so we have proceeded by easy stages to the atomic bomb.

The greatest hoax history has ever seen. That is the atomic bomb. I admit there is an atomic bomb and that it goes off as well as any firecracker would, only louder and bigger. But that is sheer accident.

We have all heard of the Manhattan Project which produced the bomb and of the fabulous sums of money that it spent. The enemy knew of the project long before we did and perhaps managed to sneak in a few agents. But this was all to the good, because the real Project was totally unsuspected, even by the technicians themselves!

The real Project! The technicians, 40 of them, were located in an old barracks building at Fort Ord. They were all old soldiers, sergeants and ex-sergeants who had been broken four or five times. Their lurid language made them invaluable as cadremen, but they were not used for this. There they were, salted away in the old barracks, and orders never seemed to come through for them.

They were fed moderately well, but not too well, so they could gripe about the food. They stood guard duty over cisterns, outhouses, and an old rose bower under which a former leading politician had made indecent advances to a 19-year-old soldier. They griped about this. Outside of that they had nothing else to do, but they were not given passes to town, so they griped about that. A PX was located but 60 feet away and had enormous quantities of strong beer, and this PX never seemed to close. The old soldiers didn't know what to make of that, but they managed to gripe about it, though not sincerely.

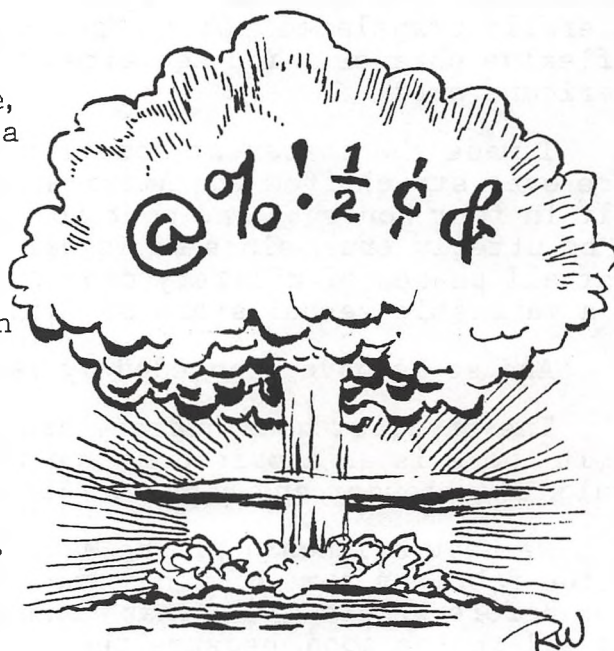
This little group of old soldiers was the Project. They began to feel after a time that the army machine had pigeonholed them accidentally and that this was a deal. They spent innumerable hours drinking beer and gabbing about all the places they'd been and the things they'd done and the officers they had wished to kill.

And little did any of them realize that wire recorders were taking down every word they said and a battery of operators was busily editing this wire to suitable form for the daily conference of big brass to listen to. The big brass listened to each wire with the tense air of a slot-machine player who expects this whirl to yield the jackpot. And one day it did!

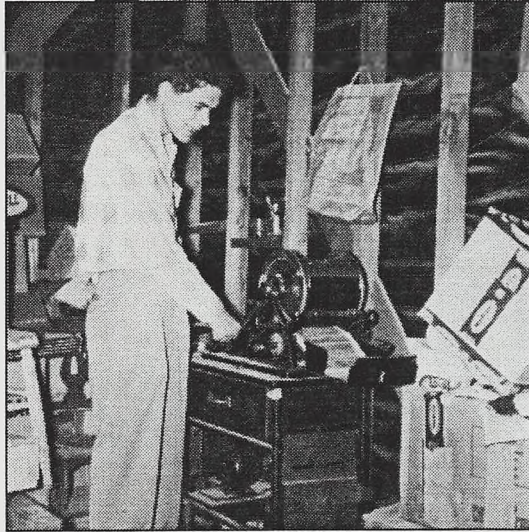
It paid off, in big round numbers. Out of the daily conversation of these salty old soldiers came the WORD, as the psychologists and high brass had hoped and expected. It was flashed, in code, to all parts of the military structure. And from that moment the war was won. The word did it. It was, as they'd predicted, another derivative of that good old Saxon word.

At almost the same time, word came from the Manhattan Project that they were also successful, but nobody gave a damn about the bomb. They kept up the pretense, though, and dropped a couple for propaganda purposes. But the war was really won at the Fort Ord Project, by a nameless old soldier out of whose horny brain came the new and thrilling and fibre-shaking word. The word that in bowdlerized form lends earthy emphasis to statements in a million communications each year, including those from Marion Z. Bradley.

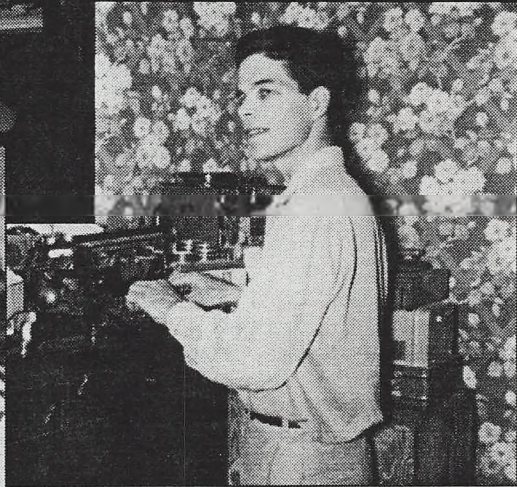
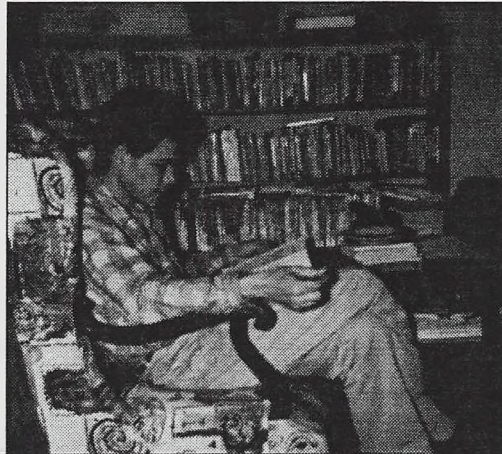
And now word reaches me that the old soldier who invented the word has faded away. Two days ago he passed away. Cirrhosis of the liver, caused by drinking too much beer in 1944 at Fort Ord. And so must be added another name to the honored scroll of those who have martyred themselves on the altar of science.



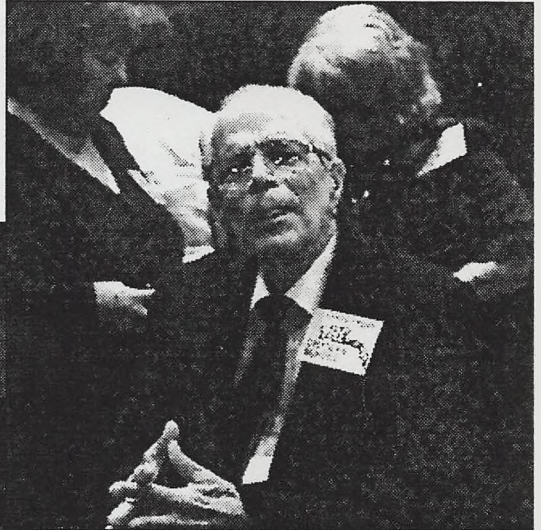
1952 photo by Dave Rike



1952 photo by Dave Rike



1952 photo by Dave Rike



1995 photo by Geri Sullivan

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