

PAMPHREY

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I'm retiring from FAPA with this mailing. I've too high a regard for most of the members to leave them without a word of explanation, so here goes.

I specially want to make it clear that I'm not leaving FAPA merely to put as much distance as possible between myself and McCarr.

There are far too many good apples in this barrel and, besides, committing hari-kari on your opponent's doorstep has never seemed to me a particularly scintillating example of repartee.

No, this is a much longer story, in fact it covers most of my fan career. There are two main incentives in fandom, ambition and pleasure. By 1952 I had achieved pretty well everything open to a fan, and I began to find that achievement itself destroys the other incentive. I've never got used to being thought of as what is called a 'BWF' and I don't like what it involves. I've thought from time to time of killing off Willis and starting again as a carefree neo under another name, but it would have been very difficult...though if Peter Graham's little hoax had been at a more convenient time I think I'd have taken the opportunity. (I'll bet that would have shaken him!)

Anyway, as I was saying, I wasn't getting the old pleasure out of fandom. The main reason I carried on so doggedly after my trip to the States in 1952 was that I felt it would be mean to cash in my winnings and quit. I still enjoyed much of my fandom but as the years went by there seemed to be more hard work and worry. The sight of a porchful of mail started giving me a sinking feeling, and with a fan, non that's bad. By early 1957 I was beginning to think that gothic too might be a way of life. Since 1952 I had published The Enchanted Duplicator, The Harp Stateside, Willis Discovers America, over a dozen Hyphens and Slants and many magazine and oneshots, written articles, columns and convention playlets, inducted numerous neofans and carried T&FF through to its initial success. I felt I had done as much after the Chicon as before and that in some weird way the books were square.

Then the Outlanders invited me to South Gate. The idea of attending another American Convention, this time with Madeline, had been until then just a sort of mirage carrot I kept dangling before my nose, but suddenly it began to look real. And South Gate, of all Conventions. I started fanning again with the old enthusiasm, embarking on another cycle. But then as the prospect got nearer I began to have doubts. T&FF had been changed from my ideals of it by the convention fans, but my disagreements with them were just another reason I shouldn't sabotage it. I'd be like someone kicking over the table when they lost a game. So I told the Outlanders I couldn't accept on account of T&FF. To my everlasting surprise and gratitude, they immediately put the position before fandom and invited them to tell me I should come and that it wouldn't affect their support of T&FF. To my further surprise many of them did, including lots of people I scarcely knew, and their letters were so friendly and heartwarming that I was swept right back into the atmosphere of 1952. I told Rick in confidence that we were coming, but not to say anything just yet in case something else turned up. Unhappily, something did. With consummate timing, McCarr took the chance to publish her allegations that I was anti-American and an embittered loser over T&FF, coupled with sneers at the Outlanders for having invited me. The thrusts couldn't have been more cleverly calculated. It was obviously impossible for me to accept money from Americans when many fans believed I despised them---Genzine has a large extra-FAPA circulation and Bob Larson's letter was evidence of what they were likely to think---or to appear to be competing

with RUFF when they thought me a frustrated dictator. As for Madeleine, as she wrote at the time to Joy Clarke, she would never put herself in a position to be vulnerable to that woman.

So that was that. The other reasons I gave at the time for not coming were real enough but this one was the most depressing. I felt something like the disgust Dean Granell felt after being exposed to the viciousness of Wetzel and for a while thought of getting out of fandom altogether. Early this year I published two issues of Nyphean to keep the subscribers quiet and took a vacation from fanac to think it over. Well, I've had my holiday and sitting here knee deep in unanswered letters and unread fluz, it seems to me that fandom is still a damn good hobby, as Mel put it once. But not the way I've been working at it. Henceforth I'm here to enjoy myself. When I can't readily find time to answer letters I shall ignore them with a clear conscience (hitherto I've been ignoring them with a guilty conscience), I shall no longer worry about meeting deadlines and, finally, I shall cut down my fanac.

Why start with MPA, you may ask idly. Well, for one thing it takes a lot of time to be a good member and causes a lot of frustration when I fail. For another, I think activity in general fandom is more vital just now. In the whole of English speaking sf at the moment there are only two magazines to fandom, the columns by Bob Meade and myself. If fandom isn't to drain away, taking the Apas with it, we've got to offer something worthwhile to what recruits we do get, and that means good general fanzines available on subscription. I hope Nyphean will do the job for those of that turn of mind. Finally and more happily, I inveigled George Charters here into putting his name on the waiting list and when he starts his fanzine I wouldn't be surprised if he allows me a little space now and then to renew old acquaintance.

Well, I think that's all except to clear up some debris from the recent fracas. It mightn't have gone on so long, or my name involved so much, if I hadn't been so fed up I couldn't be bothered opening my mouth. The only comments I ever published about the Carr election results were two sentences in my mailing comments on Gazette. The one on which McCarr based half her entire campaign read: "Are you satisfied with the Carr results now the election has been fought on your principles?" The original "bought" was a typo or Freudian slip, but I left the strokeover because I thought the double meaning conveyed the truth, and I stand over it. The election was partly fought and partly bought, fought by the winner and bought by the runner-up. I could have produced ample evidence when McCarr challenged me but I didn't want to expose my informants to the vituperations of that literary fishwife and I figured the truth would come out in time. As it has, most recently in the Report of RUFF Administrator Ken Bulmer: "After the nukes, it was settled pretty satisfactorily that there had been vote-buying by at least one fan." I haven't mentioned his name because there's a chance that his unwanted champion will at last shut up and let him live it down.

The other half of Mrs Carr's case was the remark in my letter in the British fanzine PLOY about "sex-starved Americans", which she now admits she deliberately misrepresented. (In my simple Protestant upbringing this was known as bearing false witness against thy neighbour.) This may not have been the joke of the century but one thing in its defence seems to have been overlooked. Over here, and everywhere else GIs were stationed or the Kinsey report publicised, it is a joke to think of Americans being sex-starved. And PLOY is an English fanzine, after all.

Well that's all then, I think, except to thank sincerely the people who took my part...and to offer my sympathy.