WARHOON 27

WARHOON

Warhoon is edited and published by Richard Bergeron at 11 East 68th Street, New York City, New York, 10021. This is issue number 27, dated Sept. 1970. It is available for contributions, letters of comment, in trade for your publication, or 60¢ if inspiration fails you. Letters are the preferred medium of payment, but if you are Bob Tucker, Bob Bloch, or James White, your memoirs would be acceptable. Do not sent money for more than one issue due to the erratic publishing and price schedule. All letters of comment will be considered for publication and may be published unless otherwise noted.

It seems after a year and more of intense hyper-fanactivity I stand on the threshold of fannish oblivion. There are fleeting but heartening indications such as the Egoboo Poll that some of you do remember this fanzine (though I'm convinced all 33 voters were either fan historians or people I owe subscription money who wanted to encourage another issue). But I have a feeling this appearance of Wrhn will be greeted with the nostalgic surprise that would be given a revival of Spaceways.

That opening remark about all the fanac I've been busy with isn't the sheer bravado it sounds like. In the past year, counting the issue at hand, I've prepared over 300 pages of material for Wrhn -- certainly the most activity in any of my twenty years in fandom. I guess it's about time I published something.

This issue was originally intended to feature the bulk of that stenciling and was to have consisted of everything Walt Willis has written under the title "The Harp That Once Or Twice" including a few extras tossed in such as "The Harp Stateside", "The Harp In England (I)", and "The Harp In England (II)". 266 pages, in short. However it seems after all that stenciling I've forgotten how to publish so I decided to turn to the moldering files of material and produce this issue as a sort of finger exercise. Hopefully once I've rediscovered my techniques the special Harp issue will soon be forthcoming along with some other delayed projects.

Now, I'm surprised at how easy it is to publish an issue of Wrhn and wonder why I don't do it more often. Well, why don't I?

NO-DEPOSIT, NO RETURN

"Freeze - Wait - Reanimate!" is the chilling title of a mimeographed phamplet I received in September, 1967. Apparently more than a one-shot effort it is numbered "Vol. 3, No. 38." I didn't pay too much attention to it on arrival; putting it aside to be scanned for mentions of my name along with the latest shipment of new fanzines.

Turning to it a few years later I studied an electro-stenciled photograph of a rather handsome woman with the hand lettered legend: "This is as I wish to be 'Restored'." Under this was typed the information:"Marie's instructions in her own handwriting. She wished to be restored to the way she looked in 1940 and before."

Maried died on the night of August 26th, 1967, at the age of 74.

There have been few examples, I should think, to surpass such simple faith in the eventual powers of science. The issue begins with a report on the case of Marie Phelps-Sweet:

"Marie once said she always wished to be on the crest of the wave of the future. She was adventurous and progressive to the heart: one in ten million. Direct action

for Marie was as inevitable as the rising of the sun. ...

"With all of her marching, organizing, speaking, teaching, learning, protesting, advising, letter-writing, petitioning, telegraphing, visiting, ad infinitum, she apparently had little thought, except in a minor way, of providing funds or insurance for freezing and storage. Being fearless and an eternal optimist she tended to neglect her own future. It may also be that she wished the proper insurance but could not stand the cost of a policy for a septuagenarian. However, she did declare most strongly her wish to be frozen and carried a Life Extension Society card stating that desire...

"As Marie died unattended a relatively long time elapsed (as much as 73 hours according to one report) before she was perfused and frozen. It would be disingenuous to claim a good perfusion and freezing for time is so crucial. But at least she was frozen and remains so. This is the best that can be expected considering the delay before anyone was informed who was willing to perfuse and freeze her...

"Perhaps with wild hope we can imagine that Marie can eventually be rebuilt in into a person very similar to her old derringdo self. For Marie to be reanimated as identical to her 20th century self seems impossible because of the information loss through memory molecular disarrangement from delay before perfusion and freezing. The central fact, nevertheless, is that Marie has been frozen. What miracles future science can provide remains to be seen...

"The newspaper accounts and reports from individual members vary considerably. The Glendale paper has a photo purporting to show Marie in a Cryo-Care liquid nitrogen freezer in Phoenix. Others say she is really packed in dry ice in the Los Angeles area. Others indicate that Cosmodyne, a Southern California company interested in freezing, might be willing to store Marie in a liquid nitrogen environment. Others indicate that Cryo-Care in Phoenix is unwilling to accept Marie until Cryo-Care receives some money first. Because of the conflicting reports the newspaper accounts do not seem to be entirely trustworthy. But these accounts are fascinating reading as exercises in publicity at least in part. Some relevant information has been handily forgotten. Marie is not the first woman frozen. To be candid and more complete we must not forget the first woman that Cryo-Care froze and held in that condition for some months before the family decided for some reason to give up hope. Dr. Bedford, the second person frozen in this program, remains frozen with Cryo-Care in Phoenix as far as we know.

"For the immediate present we have to assume there is no insurance fund available for Marie's care in spite of newspaper reports to the contrary. We trust, sufficient to say we know, that Russ Stanley has advanced about $75 of his money for dry ice and sundry expenses."

Marie's story closes with a listing of funds donated and a solicitation for more with the promise that "In the event your contribution is not used it will be returned to you." The remainder of the issue deals with letters discussing the problem of how to alert people that you want to be immediately frozen if you die in unexpected surroundings (such as while piloting a glider), club news and finantial statements in which assets of $18,000 are balanced by liabilities of $18,000.

Interested readers can obtain the 1967 address of the Life Extension Society from myself and in the meantime should stay close to their refrigerators.

THE OVER-HELPFUL EDITOR

"Speculation is really the only other fanzine I've seen that contains the sort of

sharp-mindedness that I expect from any magazine" Bruce Gillespie wrote in a letter to Wrhn over a year ago. Since then Peter Weston's editorial abilities have gone on from sharp-mindedness to such flagrant exhibitions of brilliance that it's obvious Speculation is very due a Hugo. The special Heinlein issue was beautifully handled and coups like acquiring the provocative Frederik Pchl as a regular contributor demonstrate to despairing fan editors that (a) Dick Geis' monumental SFR doesn't have the field completely under contract and (b) that their own laziness as much as Geis' abilities is maintaining SFR's dominant position in the local fanzine scene.

Pete cooly produces a fanzine for people who are assumed to be able to fathom the most abstruse and complicated critical arguments and, judging by the May 1970 and earlier numbers, a fanzine for people who can't find their way from page to page through the issue.

As you'll have guessed from that remark I am mystified and enraged by one of Weston's depraved editorial practices. There's a curious clash of implied attitudes in its pages. Pete flatters his readers by conducting Speculation on an uncompromisingly high level and then confesses he thinks we're idiots by telling us a piece is "(Cont/d)" when the page ends in mid-paragraph or mid-sentence, and the next or even the facing page continues the text!

One wonders (this one, anyway) how he thinks his readers find their way through the pages of all those books reviewed in his magazine -- all of which seem to survive without any such readers' guide. Does he fear that without some warning the piece doesn't end abruptly in mid-sentence that the readers' eyes will continue off the bottom of the page, down his moving finger, the back of his hand, across his desk, the floor, out the window and down the street?... Attention does wander at times, but hardly when we're reading Speculation. Or does he anticipate irate letters from people who failed to notice an article may be longer than its opening page and wonder why the author suddenly lost interest in writing the piece?

Enigmas abound.

This isn't the most puzzling example of this sort of thing I've discovered. An advertising trade journal finds its way into my office occasionally and I'm baffled by the little note at the bottom of every right-hand page: "Turn page." I often wonder if the editors think this is a sort of hypnotic command to get the casual reader through their junk journal failing which the reader will sit there in a glazed stupor induced by the tedium soaked text? If they think the readers have to be told to turn the page to get through an article what makes them think their readers can even read?

But Pete Weston is more likely to be guilty of over-estimating our intelligence which makes those little warnings that Brian Aldiss hasn't decided to quit writing in mid-paragraph even more mysterious. Or does Pete know something about the sharp-mindedness of fans that we don't?

CLOUDING FEN'S MINDS

Somewhere in the pages of the Willis writing is a suggestion that there are certain fans -- among them Bob Shaw -- who have the ability to so influence the actions of others that they could take over all fandom merely by writing a postcard. If my recollection is not completely in error -- and it may very well be; the steel doors are jammed on the room where I keep the chrome files containing the indexed papers on such matters -- it seems to me Bob Shaw elaborated on this thought by detailing the fantastic impact he'd had on some crudzine when he complied with a request for material... it's possible he was made an associate editor and inducted into the local fan club (in the mid-west or was it Baltimore?). I'll never replace Warner and Moskowitz this way.

At any rate the notion is not that far fetched. I know there are fans who have a great deal more effect than others. And Bob is certainly one of them. For instance, after he sent a few letters and wrote a couple pieces for Wrhn I found myself writing to Willis broaching the idea that Bob should run for Taff. The rest is a chapter of fannish history.

Now it seems Shaw is at it again. No sooner does his letter of comment appear in Focal Point #8 than we find (issue #10) an entire Fund has been started to import him to the 1971 worldcon in Boston! And the irony of it is that Shaw may be entirely unaware of what he's doing: in a beautifully surprised letter in Focal Point #10 he tells Arnie Katz how delighted he is (Katz & Brown, pawns that they are, have no idea what's actually happening) and writes: "And the proposal, I kept thinking bemusedly, came from a faned who never even received a letter of comment from me..." See how he tries, consciously or unconsciously is not for me to say, to cover his own tracks? Or did Proxyboo Ltd. write that letter?

You wouldn't believe the chain of events one loc has started. Microcosm, Nope, Infinitum, and Beabohema will have special BoSh issues with the procedes going to this Fund. SFR is offering lifetime subscriptions for $30 with all money received being donated. The Enchanted Duplicator is being republished. Long out of print this classic will be available for $1 from Katz with all the money going to you-know-what. Terry Carr is offering 20 fanzines of recent years for every $1 donation. Focal Point has published a wonderful 50pg issue featuring material by Burbee, Boggs, Shaw, Katz, Brown, Demmon, White, Stiles, Rotsler and others -- price: $1 And Terry Carr is going to publish a special BoSh issue of Innuendo. Countless fans are donating treasures from their fanzine collections and an auction is underway in Focal Point featuring items like a complete set of Slant (At one time Ackerman and Burwell were thought to be the only American fans having these rarities but two sets were sold in the Axe auctions during the last Willis fund. Larry Ivie won the first for $21 and Lee Hoffman took the second at $25.), Fanhistory #1-4, Futuria Fantasia #1 (Ray Bradbury's fanzine), and The Science Fiction Fan #1 (the famed publication of Second Fandom). Also in there is a run of 20 issues of Wrhn -- from #7 through #26 -- some 1000 pages of material by Shaw, Bloch, Willis, Boggs, Blish, Lowndes, Breen, Warner, White, Carr, and others. If you'd like a representative collection of fanzines here's an opportunity to eliminate several years from the hunt. All this from one loc and this is just the beginning!

From now on there are certain precautions I think we must take. It might be best to read Shaw's column in this issue by holding it up to a mirror and perusing the reflection -- though I'm afraid it might not make much difference. That's the way I stenciled it and look what's happened to Wrhn! We've got to find some way of filtering this fiendish fan's fatal influence... if we don't have the moral fortitude to skip his material entirely. I shudder to think what effect the cartoon heading his column will have. (It came as a deceptively offhand little scrawl at the bottom of an airletter -- you can see what a gargantua it has already grown into.)

In the meantime we've got to see if this Shaw is for real and I strongly urge you to send donations, fanzines, encouragement, help, best wishes, Cadillacs, old gold coins, rare jewelery, fine bindings, haute cuisine, Picasso lithographs, Art Deco enamels, Chippendale furniture, 18th century French frames, penny jars, Buck Rogers pistols, Foo dogs, Zulu beadwork or anything you can lay your hands on and send it to Rich Brown, 410-61st St. Apt. D4, Brooklyn, NY, 11220. And buy a copy of Focal Point and get into the fun.

You, too, Charlie Brown.

THE AGE OF LUNNEY

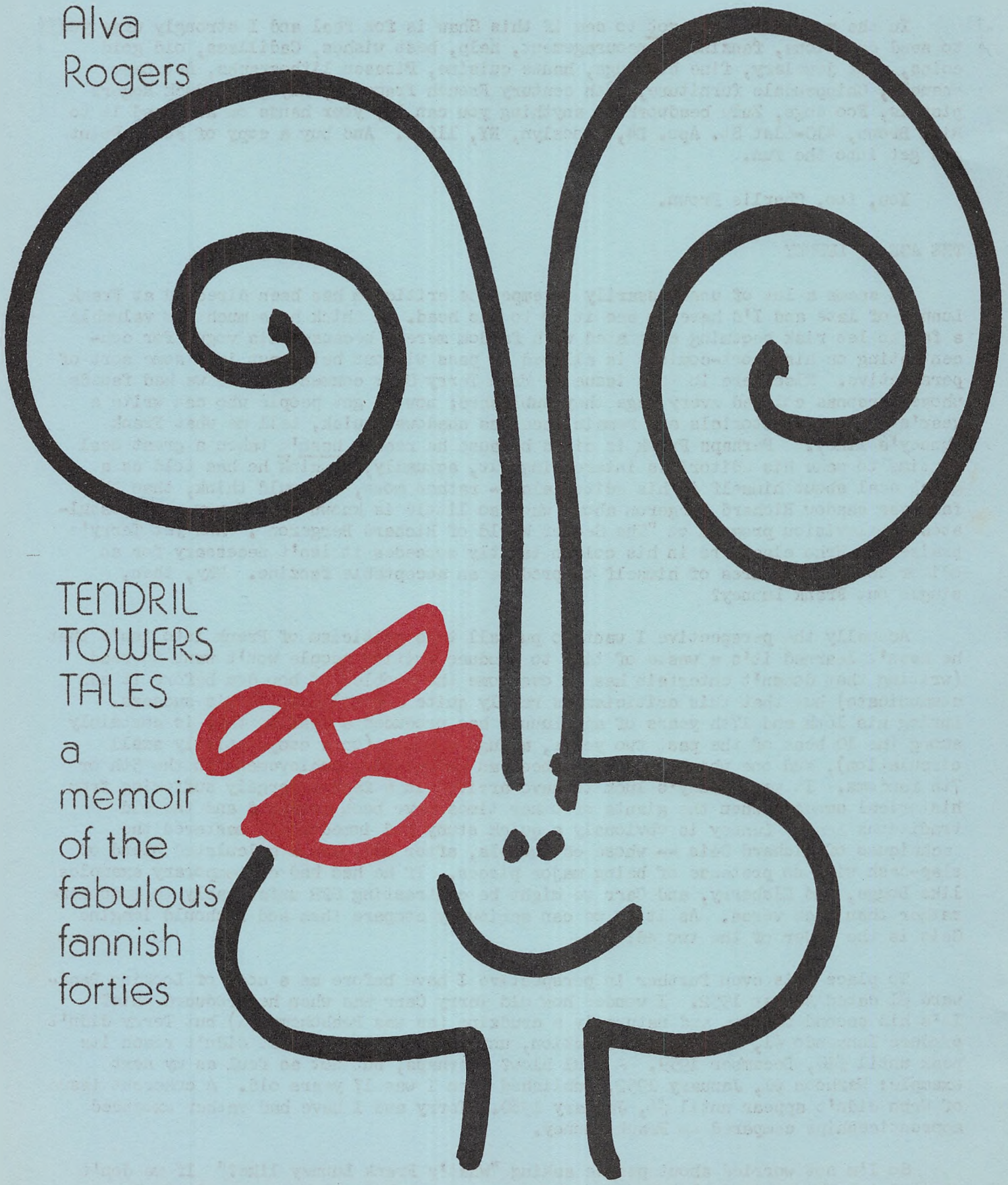
It seems a lot of unnecessarily intemperate criticism has been directed at Frank Lunney of late and I'd hate to see it go to his head. I think he's much too valuable a fan to let risk becoming alienated with fandom merely because this vogue for concentrating on his short-comings is allowed to pass without being put into some sort of perspective. Elsewhere in this issue of Wrhn Terry Carr comments "once we had faneds whose personas colored every page they published; now we get people who can write a year's worth of editorials and remain faceless shadows (quick, tell me what Frank Lunney's like)." Perhaps Frank is cited because he really hasn't taken a great deal of time to make his editorials interesting but, actually, I think he has told us a great deal about himself in his editorials -- rather more, I should think, than that faceless shadow Richard Bergeron about whom so little is known that Terry even postulates a television program on "The Secret World of Richard Bergeron". And yet Terry's praise for Wrhn elsewhere in his column tacitly concedes it isn't necessary for an editor to draw pictures of himself to produce an acceptable fanzine. Why, then, single out Frank Lunney?

Actually the perspective I want to put all this criticism of Frank into isn't that he hasn't learned it's a waste of time to produce writing people won't want to read (writing that doesn't entertain has to overcome the problem of boredom before it can communicate) but that this criticism is really quite a compliment to his success. During his 16th and 17th years of age Lunney has produced a fanzine that is certainly among the 10 best of the past two years, a Hugo nominee (on a comparatively small circulation), and one which would have been an astonishing achievement in the 5th or 7th fandoms. It was Lunney's luck to have arrived in a fandom largely suffering from historical amnesia when the giants of other times have been moribund and the old traditions lost. Lunney is obviously a quick study and immediately mastered the techniques of Richard Geis -- whose editorials, after all, are a calculated blend of slap-dash with no pretense of being major pieces. If he had had contemporary examples like Boggs, and Elsberry, and Carr we might be contrasting SFR unfavorably to Beabohema rather than vice versa. As it is we can seriously compare them and I should imagine Geis is the older of the two editors.

To place this even further in perspective I have before me a copy of Looking Backward #1 dated August 1952. I wonder how old Terry Carr was when he produced this? It's his second fanzine and naturally a crudzine (as was Beabohema #1) but Terry didn't produce Innuendo #1, his 39th publication, until June 1956 and that didn't reach its peak until #10, December 1959. A foul blow? Perhaps, but not as foul as my next example: Warhoon #1, January 1952, published when I was 17 years old. A coherent issue of Wrhn didn't appear until #6, January 1960. Terry and I have had rather extended apprenticeships compared to Frank Lunney.

So I'm not worried about people asking "What's Frank Lunney like?" If we don't succeed in making him feel like one of the great unwashed and he stays in fandom as long as we have I'm afraid the question will be, "Terry Carr? Richard Bergeron? Who were they?"

Alva
Rogers



TENDRIL TOWERS TALES

a memoir of the fabulous fannish forties

Late fall, 1942. Crisp mountain air of Denver, Colorado forecasting early snow. I mark time in the Lowry Air Force Base Hospital -- will I or won't I get a medical discharge. The doctors (young, serious 2nd and 1st Lieutenants fresh from their residencies, older, more experienced Captains and Majors) can't make up their minds. Weekend passes into town. Second-hand magazine stores. Rare finds to add to my collection and to while away the time in the hospital. Awed to find that one of my favorite -- and one of the all time great science fiction illustrators is also stationed at Lowry and doing drawings for the base newspaper, but too chicken to look up Charles Schneeman. Twenty-five years later, when we finally meet at the LA Westercon in '67 he tells me I should have looked him up. My one contact with the world of fandom is Julius Unger's Fantasy Fiction Field (FFF) each week. I read about Weaver Wright's induction into the Army and ESP him my best wishes. Stunned to read that the December, 1942 issue of Famous Fantastic Mysteries to be the last published by Munsey, and disheartened at the news that Popular Publications has bought the Munsey chain and would no longer reprint the old fantasy classics from the Munsey pubs of yesteryear.

Early winter, 1942, and an early snow comes silently in the night to change the face of the land. The towering Rockies encircling the Denver plateau stand like white cowled sentinals holding back the rest of the world. December 7th and one year since Pearl Harbor and six months and four days since enlisting in the Air Force -- the world beyond the sentinals is still grimly present. December 21st and the doctors finally make up their minds; I get my medical discharge. I take the train from Dnever to the point of my enlistment, San Diego, and arrive home on Christmas Eve.

My discharge from the Air Force in December, 1942 because of arthritis (for lack of a better diagnosis at the time) in my knees, which the Army Air Force medics found to be unresponsive to their treatments, marked a turning point in my fannish life. By virtue of having volunteered for the Air Force in the early months of the war at 19 when the minimum draft age at that time was 20, I felt that I had affirmed my arrival at manhood and independence. For the ten years prior to that date my fanac had been pretty much confined to reading, collecting, associating with a handful of local readers and collectors, and subscribing to and reading a few fanzines. I had had no real contact with the wider world of fandom, which in those days seemed to be concentrated in New York and Los Angeles. But now that I was man growed I was determined to sooner-or-later make contact with the fandom I had read so much about in fanzines and in some of the fan departments of the prozines. But before I could make the move from San Diego to the Western locus of fandom, Los Angeles, I had to make some money.

Sometime in 1943, I believe it was, the government launched the GI Bill and I suddenly found myself eligible to attend art school (my ambition at that time) at government expense. And where else to go but to Los Angeles? So, by October, 1943 I was able to make the long(120 miles!) trip from San Diego to LA to check out the art schools -- and incidently to attend a meeting of the LASFS. At last! I would see real live fans in their natural habitat! Wowee!

Like most fans of the day I had been fascinated by the accounts in FFF and elsewhere of the move by the LASFS to their own private full time clubroom early in 1943. Prior to that move, I knew, the two main meeting sites for the club had been Clifton's Cafeteria, and lastly, before the move to Bixel Street, a rooming house just around the corner from Bixel on Wilshire Blvd. The description of the clubroom we had read made it sound fabulous beyond belief -- a spacious room with indirect lighting, carpeted floor, book shelves filled with books and magazines, the walls covered with original cover paintings by Paul and others. I could hardly wait to see it with my own eyes.

South Bixel Street in Los Angeles runs roughly north and south from somewhere

around Third Street to Olympic Blvd., which would be 10th Street if it were a numbered street. The stretch of South Bixel involved in fannish legend is one block long, from 6th Street to Wilshire Blvd. The street slopes down from 6th to Wilshire at about a 20 degree angle. The west side of Bixel is broken by an alley about three-fourths of the way down from 6th. On the north side of the alley stands the Wellman Apartments, a red brick building of four or five stories, and directly across the alley from the Wellman is the house that was once the home of Morojo (Myrtle R. Douglas). If you stood in front of the Wellman as I did early that evening of October 14, 1943, you would find immediately to the right of the apartment steps as you face them a door at sidewalk level, and to its right a fairly large window. On the window is painted in black and white the emblem of the LASFS designed by Roy Hunt, above which is the legend LOS ANGELES SCIENCE FANTASY SOCIETY.

October 14, 1943, of course, was a Thursday, then as now the meeting night of the LASFS. I approached the door with tense anticipation, and not a little apprehension. The time was between 6 and 7 o'clock and dusk had settled on the city. The peacefulness of that hour was complimented by the muted hum of automobile traffic on Wilshire and the occasional rattle of streetcars and the staccato jangle of their bells on 6th street and even further away on 7th. The street lights were on and the warm yellow squares of lighted windows in the apartments and houses on Bixel added their bit to the peaceful scene. The window of 637½ was shaded by venetian blinds, but light could be seen seeping around the edges and through the door. The clubroom was occupied. Fully conscious of the giant step I was taking I opened the door and stepped for the first time into the LASFS clubroom.

As you walked through the door of 637½ you came face-to-face with another door, which turned out to be the door to a storage closet housing the publishing supplies and other incidentals belonging to the club and its members. The room proper was to the right of the door, a squarish room about 20 x 30 feet. The indirect lighting consisted of something like six or eight unshaded bulbs in sockets spaced around the room on the walls about a foot from the ceiling. The carpet was a threadbare thing with a faint indistinguishable design. There was a bookcase under the window and a couple more against the north wall with a few beatup magazines and books in them, and a few cover originals (unframed) stuck haphazardly up on the walls. There was a square kitchen table serving as a desk, an army cot against the west wall, and a number of folding bridge chairs scattered around the room. On the wall in the southwest corner there was a square black wall phone, the kind with the adjustable up-and-down mouthpiece below the dial and the earpiece hanging from the hook on the left side. And against the south wall stood a couple of fiberboard crud barrels, on one of which rested the club mimeo. This, then, was the clubroom as I first saw it. I thought it was magnificent.

I stood in the doorway looking about me, soaking up the atmosphere. On my way to the clubroom I had speculated as to who would be the first fans I would meet there: would it be the famous Forrest J. Ackerman? Perhaps Walter J. Daugherty? Or even the fabulous Morojo? Who? I was little prepared for the actual confrontation. Seated in the room and looking me over critically were two of the more colorful members of the club -- C.J. "Mike" Fern and Merlin W. "Mel" Brown.

Mike was a little pixyish guy about 19 or 20 with an infectious grin, heavy slightly tinted metal rimmed glasses, and thick dark hair that stood straight up and was cut in a rather high crew cut. Mel was older, about 30 at that time, of medium slim build. He had dark blond hair which was generally unkempt, usually combed by simply running his fingers through it occasionally. He had a sickly complexion against which a few large freckles were prominently displayed. His neck was long and skinney, and his nose jutted out from between his slightly hyper-thyroid eyes (one with a cast), came to a point, and then dropped off abruptly at the end. Mel wore a full upper plate which

bothered the hell out of him, so he left it out most of the time. This added an interesting touch to his appearance -- his upper lip would fall in against his gums while his lower lip and jaw would swing out and up, adding to the beauty of his profile. Mel had a disturbing habit (which one got used to after constant exposure to it) of sticking the little finger of his left hand deep into the corner of his mouth and massaging the back of his upper gum, which constantly irritated him, by biting down on the finger. He did this one time, forgetting that he had his teeth in, and almost bit the end of his finger off. You could hear his howl of pain a block away.

Mike and Mel introduced themselves to me and I to them. After talking for a few minutes they suggested that I join them for dinner before the meeting at 8. I happily agreed to join them and we made our way up Bixel to 6th and then to the right on 6th to the Coffee Shop in the Professional Building on the next corner. We took a table to the rear of the room and were just starting in on our soup when a roly-poly young man with thinning blond hair and rimless glasses came bouncing in and joined us. This was my introduction to the dynamic T. Bruce Yerke. Yerke's account of that first meeting, as written up in the minutes of the LASFS, went like this:

> The Secretary, arriving late from his new job in Hollywood, went first to the Coffee Shoppe, in the hopes of finding some late diners in session at the SFS auxilliary. He not only found Brown and Fern there, but opposite them, and to which he sat down next to, was a red haired gentleman.
>
> "Who is this?" the Secretary asked.
>
> "That is Mr. Rogers," Fern chirped over a bowl of famous potato soup. Mr. Rogers was slightly startled as the Secretary shrieked: "God no...not another... The Sec was soothed as both Brown and Fern explained that Mr. A.C. Rogers, of San Diego, was in no way related to Don Rogers (Claude Degler), an itinerant bogie man from the Indiana dustbowl. Mr. Rogers appears to be a well versed fan for one not having much contact with fan organizations (perhaps a disguised boon), and was introduced to the local bunch by another red haired individual named Rusty Baron (James Havelin), currently affiliated with the United States Marine Corps. Rogers, recently assisting the United States Army, intends to go through an art school here in the city, and was in town looking the bunch over prior to enrollment if and when sufficient funds can be mustered.

About all I can remember of that first meeting was mass confusion. According to Yerke's minutes there were 19 people present, including one pro, Arthur K. Barnes -- more fans then I had ever seen before in one place in my life. Besides Yerke, Fern, Brown, and Rustibar already mentioned, I met for the first time that night Paul Freehafer, Walter J. Daugherty, Samuel D. Russell, Phil Bronson, James Kepner, Charles Dye, Eddie Chamberlain, Arden (Buns) Benson, Lora Crozetti, Morojo, and, of course, Cpl. Forrest J. Ackerman of Ft. MacArthur. Although the meeting was largely devoted to wrangling over club business which had little meaning to a first time visitor, I was fascinated by it all and intoxicated at just being there. These were fans -- fans I had been reading about for weeks and months and years.

After scouting the art schools in LA I finally found one that would accept me and I moved to LA more-or-less permanently, staying at first with an older cousin and his family way out on the south side of town, then moving closer in to the clubroom, trying out a couple of different rooming houses before finally managing to get a room in Tendril Towers, 628 South Bixel -- right across the street from the clubroom.

There have been a number of now legendary fan domiciles -- the various Futurian Houses in New York, Slan Shack in Battle Crrek and later in LA, and a generation later the Dive on Riverside Drive in New York. But probably the most famous (notorious?) of all (largely due to the efforts of Francis T. Laney to memorialize it in "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!") was 628 South Bixel -- Tendril Towers. Warner (in "All Our Yesterdays") just

dwelt briefly on these various residences, which is understandable, but in a way a pity, because each of them (excluding the Dive, of course) figured prominently in the fandom of the forties.

In 1962 Sid and I drove to South Bixel on our way to the Westercon so that I could again see the house that held so many memories for me. I can't swear to it, but I believe the last time either of us had seen it was when we stopped there for an hour or two to visit with friends in July of 1947 on our way back to San Diego from our honeymoon in San Francisco. It was late in the afternoon that July in 1962 when we turned the corner from Wilshire onto Bixel and parked. The house which was to me twenty years earlier such a magnificent structure was now a pitifully small and woebegone house with peeling stucco and weed infested lawn, huddling like a beaten puppy trying to lose itself in the shadows of the larger apartment buildings on either side of it. But age cannot wither, and all that. I still thought it was a beautiful dump.

The first fans to discover 628 were Mel Brown and Jimmy Kepner and Arthur Louis Joquel II who all moved in shortly after the club moved in across the street at 637½. Tendril Towers was a two story house at least 30 or 40 years old at that time, a former mansion turned into a rooming house. It sat regally atop a steeply sloping lawn and was approached by two flights of broad concret steps, and then another flight of steps to the porch which ran the full width of the house. The massive oaken front door opened into a large entry hall with stairs to the left and a table on the right where the phone stood. On either side of the entry hall sliding doors closed off the two large front rooms from public view; these at one time in the dim past had been the living room and dining room, but now were the two choice rooms in the house, both spacious and each with a fully glassed-in alcove overlooking the front porch and the street below. The hallway passed on to the rear to the landlady's apartment and to two small rooms and a bath further to the rear. Upstairs there were two large rooms in the front separated by a bath, then two rooms going down the hall from there, then a small room just at the head of the stairs with a sleeping porch tacked on, and then around from there another room.

Mel Brown had the room with the sleeping porch and Jimmy Kepner the room next to it, a somewhat larger room. Joquel had a smaller room downstairs to the rear. The rest of the residents were older non-fans, none of whom seemed about to give up his room for a deserving fan (me). In time, though, one of the two lower front rooms became vacant and Mel moved to it, leaving his room available. I immediately moved in. The room was not much bigger than a shoe box and incredibly filthy from Mel's abhorence of housekeeping; but I managed to clean it up, build shelves for my collection, and made it comfortable and livable.

I lived in that room for several months, all the time faunching without success for one of the larger rooms in front, either upstairs or down, where I could have more room and better light for my drawing and painting.

And then one day, in a rather macabre way, I got my break. Being frequently out of work in those days I was home one afternoon painting when I heard the sound of sirens which seemed to have stopped in front of the house, and then a few moments later a commotion downstairs. I stepped from my room and peered over the railing to the entry hall directly below. There I saw a most unusual sight -- two white coated men were placing what appeared to be a body on a stretcher. I saw Aunt Dee, the landlady, hovering an iously nearby and asked her what was going on.

"Mr. Smith just died from a heart attack while making a phone call," she informed me.

"Gee, that's too bad," I said. Then the significance of this tragedy hit me, you

might say, where I lived. "Can I have his room?" I asked before the poor man had been wheeled out the door. Mr. Smith, a man in his fifties, had occupied the upper north-west corner front room, and had conducted a minuscule real estate business from the house, using the house phone to make business calls. It was while calling a client that he was seized by the heart attack.

The room was a vast improvement, being a large cheery room with large windows facing both north and west letting in huge gobs of sun-shine. At a somewhat later date Jimmy Kepner and Mel Brown joined forces in one of the downstairs rooms and I eventually got what I considered to be the prime room in the house, the downstairs front north-west corner room.

I can't begin to list all the fans who lived in Tendril Towers over the years, but a few of them were: Mel Brown, Jimmy Kepner, Arthur Louis Joquel II, myself, Nieson Himmel, Gus Willmorth, E. Everett Evans and his daughter Jonne, Art Saha, my sister Marjorie and the man she eventually married, Mark Blanck, Lou Goldstone, Ed Cox (or was it Arthur Jean Cox?), and Ghod knows who else in the later forties and into the fifties.

The landlady of this establishment deserves a book all her own. Delta Wenrich -- Aunt Dee, as we affectionately called her -- was almost an archetype: put a babushka on her head and she could have sat for a portrait of the indomitable and ageless Russian peasant woman. She had coarse gray hair pulled straight back in a bun, a deeply lined square face, small twinkling eyes, and a kindly smile that revealed a wide gap between two aged yellow fangs. She was dumpy but not particularly fat, and her usual garb was a shapeless and colorless house dress. Except when leaving the house she always wore felt carpet slippers because of bunions.

Aunt Dee was the kindliest of landladies, at least as far as I was concerned. One day, during one of my jobless periods when I was behind in my room rent a few weeks, I came in the house and started upstairs to my room when Aunt Dee popped out of her apartment and told me she wanted to talk to me. I thought to myself that I had had it, that she was going to ask me to pay up or get out. She made certain the door to her apartment was closed after I entered the room, and then she turned to me.

"Alva, you owe me over a month's rent." I acknowledged the debt."That painting you have on your easel," she continued, "would you be willing to trade it for the rent due?" I looked at her, amazed. The painting she referred to was one I had just finished, showing two spacesuited men looking down and across a valley on the Moon to a spaceship in the far distance with the Earth in the sky over the Lunar horizon. It was quite colorful and very science fictional.

"I think it's a beautiful picture," she said, displaying her artistic perspic-scity," and I would like to get it framed and give it to my daughter for a wedding present."

Naturally, I took her up on the proposition without thinking twice -- but a wedding present for her daughter?! She made me swear not to tell anyone about the deal, and the next day I took it down town and bought a frame for it with money she gave me.

Aunt Dee always fussed over us, was convinced we didn't eat properly, kept bad hours, drank too much -- but never censored us. Sometimes when a party got a little noisy or a fangab session too loud she'd urge us to keep it down in consideration for the other tenants, but she never once told us to knock it off.

Aunt Dee was a political activist of the old school. In her youth she'd been a

militant suffragette, had been a Wobbly, had gone to jail as a Socialist war protestor during World War I, and had been in on the founding of the American Communist Party shortly after the war. She remained a dedicated communist to the day of her death, suffering few if any doubts as to the rightness of her faith. Her joy when "her boys," Mel Brown, Jimmy Kepner, Art Saha, and I, joined the party at a Futurian meeting in my room in her house, was touching to see; her bosom swelled with pride and her face took on an almost holy glow.

It was one of the sadder days of my life when some years later I received word of the death of this kindly, gentle woman. She was one of the greatest.

Los Angeles was an exciting place to be in during the war, a booming wartime city, not as overwhelmingly big as it is today, but a big city on the make, nonetheless. For a fan newly arrived from the fannish hinterlands it was doubly exciting. There was the excitement of being in Los Angeles, a big, big city in comparison to San Diego, as well as the excitement of being a part of the LASFS and the LA fan scene. Scarcely a day or evening of the week went by that didn't see two or more fans at the clubroom, either indulging in fanac or just loafing,or to meet for dinner, or to rendevous for some other evening or weekend activity. Located as the clubroom was about halfway between downtown LA and Westlake Park (known today as MacArthur Park), and convenient to several streetcar and bus lines, it became the ideal focal point for nearly all activity for most LA fans.

Technically the clubroom was the home of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (at least on Thursday nights), but it was much, much more than simply a meeting place for the club. For many fans, myself most certainly included, it was a second home providing the space, the facilities for fanac, and (most of the time) congenial fannish companionship most of us didn't have where we lived. I'm sure that for much of the time I was living in LA I spent as many or more of my waking hours in the clubroom as I did in my room, including time spent in drawing. Things were always happening there, as for instance:

One afternoon about 3 o'clock I was sitting in the clubroom working on a drawing for the cover of the next issue of Fran Laney's Acolyte when Walt Daugherty came in. He watched me draw for a while, and then said, "Alva, what would you do if you had some oil paints?"

"Why, paint, of course," I replied.

"Okay, come with me. We're going downtown and get you a set of oil paints."

With that he hustled me out of the clubroom and downtown to one of the bigger art supply stores. There he turned me loose with instructions to buy whatever I needed -- the works.

"But, Walt," I protested, "I don't know when I'll be able to pay you back."

"Don't worry about that. Just paint. You can pay me back someday with a painting, if you want."

For the rest of the afternoon I was in a happy daze. I selected a good but inexpensive easel, a good selection of brushes, and assorted sizes of canvas board to practice on, and went home and immediately started daubing paint on canvas.

It wasn't until 1946 that I was able to repay Walt's selfless generosity. I was attending San Diego State College as an art major in 1946, and was planning to attend the Pacificon in LA over the 4th of July weekend; but before I returned to LA I wanted

to have a suitable painting to present to Walt. Walt, I knew, was a staunch supporter of the Southwest Museum in LA, and was very much interested in the prehistoric mammals that at one time roamed the southwest portion of the United States. I also knew that he was particularly interested in the giant Three-toed Sloth, a most fearsome beast.

So, a couple of weeks before the convention, after considerable research to assure authenticity, I started a painting on stretched canvas about 16x24 showing a giant Sloth crouching and snarling, his front paws with their huge razor sharp claws poised for slashing, being beset upon by a couple of Neanderthal types with spear throwers. I was quite pleased with the finished painting and hoped Walt would be also.

I finished the painting just two days before I was to leave for LA and the con -- and I had a problem: the paint was still wet and I was going to have to carry the painting on a crowded train for a three hour trip. I called my painting professor to see if he had any suggestions for quick drying the oils, and he just laughed at me. Finally, in desperation, I nailed thin strips of wood on the four sides of the stretchers, projecting them about ½ to 3/4 of an inch above the level of the canvas, carefully tacked a solid sheet of heavy cardboard over the whole, and then prayed.

During, and for some time after the war the Santa Fe deisel THE SAN DIEGAN between San Diego and Los Angeles was always packed to capacity, usually with standees in every car. The day I left for the con was no exception. With the 4th of July weekend stretching ahead the depot platform was a small mob scene of people, mostly service men of all ranks eager for the excitement of a weekend in Los Angeles, jostling each other for position as they waited for the noon train to pull in. If memory doesn't fail me the SAN DIEGAN was made up of three chair cars and a club car on the rear, and seats were always quickly filled so that the lame and the halt and the less aggressive were left to stand all the way to LA. I guess I qualified as all three as I ended up standing in the aisle in the club car, desperately trying to protect the painting which I kept snugged up to my leg.

When we reached LA it was the middle of the afternoon. The con had started that morning, so not wishing to miss any more than I had to I grabbed a cab to the Park View Manor opposite Westlake Park where the con was being held. I seem to recall arriving at the hall as Bob Bloch was convulsing everyone in his inimitable manner. I stood in the doorway and finally caught Daugherty's eye, presented him with the painting, received gratifying praise for it, and then was doubly pleased as he immediately went down the aisle and propped it against the speaker's lectern where it remained throughout the convention.

I suppose it's inevitable when reminiscing about LA in the early forties to talk about Francis T. Laney. But why not? He was without a doubt one of the most colorful personalities on the scene, if not the most colorful. Fran and I arrived in LA at almost the same time and from the beginning became good friends. The controversial Laney has been dealt with ad nauseum over the years by many fan writers, including myself. So I'm not going to write about that Fran Laney any more than I have to, but about the Laney who was, for a couple of all too short years, a warm personal friend.

I first became exposed to the Laney personality and mind and his wide ranging interests at the memorable "LeeCons" held on Saturday nights in his closet-sized room in the Lee Hotel, a fourth rate dump on 6th just off Figueroa and not too far from Bixel, where he first stayed on arriving in LA. Regular attendees at these sessions were usually myself, Paul Freehafer, Bob Hoffman, Dal Coger, and Jimmy Kepner, but every session would see two or three non-regulars also in attendance. The room would invariably take on the appearance of the mad stateroom scene in the Marx Brothers flick, "A Night At The Opera", as we would all crowd in, sitting on whatever was handy, and indulge in wild talkfests. These were almost always exciting and stimulating affairs.

Fran and I spent considerable time simply enjoying each other's company, sometimes in quiet drinking/philosophising bouts either at Fran Shack or in my room; or in wild book and magazine hunting orgies or seeking out and listening to such jazz greats as Louis Armstrong, Wingy Manone, Sidney Bechet, Kid Ory (in temporary eclipse in that era of big band swing) demonstrate their geniuses in hole in the wall or cellar joints in LA or Hollywood. Even though our personalities were considerably different, and we were separated in age by about ten years (he being the older), we had an extensive mutuality of interests and mutual respect for each other, and it was this that was the adhesive that cemented our relationship.

Laney was unquestionably the best party thrower on the scene in those days, his parties usually being noted for a wide variety of attendees, fans and non-fans, much booze, good talk, and good Dixie-land music from his extensive jazz record collection which was second to none in the country. Two parties stand out in my memory of those far gone days, the one from which Elmer Perdue departed to hunt for marijuana and failed to return, and the one during which Forrest J. Ackerman got drunk.

The party from which Elmer launched his Quest was just a party with everyone well lubricated and having a good time, with the record player going full blast, with the talk trying to rise above the level of the sound of the music. The party was noisy but not disorderly. Perdue was stretched out full length on his back, his eyes closed, a serene smile on his lips, and his head right up against Laney's portable record player which was on the floor: Elmer was floating on the waves of good jazz coming from the speaker. He had been lying there for an hour or so, . twitching in accompaniment to the music, when he suddenly lurched to his feet and announced to no one in particular that he was going out to buy some marijuana. We cheered him on his way and then went back to partying. About 1:30 someone remarked that Elmer had been gone a couple of hours, surely long enough to make his connection. We began to worry a bit because he'd been pretty drunk when he left and not in the best condition for driving the clunker of a car he had, or any car, for that matter. So, after a short discussion, Laney and I and a couple of other fans piled into Fran's Willys and went out to search for the missing Perdue.

We finally found him in a bar not too far from Laney's, sitting in a phone booth, blissfully sleeping the sleep of the beautiful and the innocent. Suppressing our merriment we gently removed him from the booth and half carried him to the bar where we had the bartender pour him several cups of strong black coffeee.

After a couple of cups of coffee he finally came alive enough to tell us that his expedition had been unsuccessful, and in a last attempt to score he had ended up here and was just going to call someone he knew who might have some marijuana. He was tired, he said, and had only closed his eyes for a second before making the call -- and the next thing he knew he was sitting at the bar drinking coffee (ugh!) and surrounded by his dear friends.

The memorable night that Forry Ackerman got drunk for the first and last time in his life was written up in detail in an article I wrote for Terry Carr's Innuendo #11, December, 1960 ("Fran The Iconoclast"). What follows is from that article:

This particllar party was on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, 1944, and was being given in honor of AE van Vogt, who had just moved to LA from Canada. All of local fandom was invited plus a few non-fan girls from the plant were Laney worked.

On Thanksgiving day Sgt. Ackerman invited me to be his guest for Thanksgiving dinner at Fort MacArthur. Being a chronically hungry fan I accepted with unseemly eagerness. This was a typical act of thoughtfulness on the part of Ackerman and is only one of the many reasons I have for personally regarding him as a lifelong friend.

After a pleasant day spent as a civilian guest of the Army and the worthy Sergeant we boarded the Red Car for the return to Los Angeles. As we bucketed along the flatlands between San Pedro and LA in the late afternoon Forry placed his ever present attache case on his nknees and proceeded to open it. Having full knowledge of its major contents, I waited with lascivious anticipation for what I thought was to be a first showing of some new acquisitions. Imagine, if you will, my shock and credulity when he brought forth not the photographs I had so confidently expected -- but a pint bottle of better than good bonded bourbon!

"Is this a good brand?" he asked me.

I assured him that it was indeed -- in fact, for an amateur he couldn't have picked a better -- and then asked him who it was for.

For himself, he blandly informed me, to be consumed at Laney's party.

I scoffed at this ridiculous statement, but he firmly insisted that he had every intention of doing so.

When pressed for an explanation of this unheard of thing he was contemplating, he told me that because of the recent breakup between himself and Morojo after so many years' close relationship, his entire set of values was suspect. Therefore he was going to drink at the party in defiance of those values.

I passed the word to Laney that Forry was bringing to the party a bottle for his own use, and he replied with a whooping laugh of disbelief.

The night of the party came at last, and by this time everyone had heard the news. The anticipation of seeing Forry drink and just possibly even go so far as to get drunk, almost relegated the debut of van Vogt on the scene to a secondary position. The feeling was that one would probably be able to see van Vogt anytime, but the sight of a drunken Ackerman was a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon -- which is just what it amounted to.

Van Vogt and Mrs. van Vogt -- E. Mayne Hull -- were dutifully lionized: and Forry, by ghod, was drinking! His progress through the various stages toward drunkenness was a fascinating thing to watch. He would prowl through the house, from the living room to the dining room to the kitchen and back again, a tall glass filled to the top clutched firmly to his chest. He would approach a group talking, lean forward to listen solemnly to what was being said, smile vacantly, and roll off to another group. When he stood still he would weave gently forwards and backwards, his eyes getting glassier by the minute.

When the full impact of the alcohol finally hit him, the results were far more chaotic than Laney relates in his memoirs: there was real pandemonium for awhile: women screamed, Daugherty yelled for someone to call a doctor or an ambulance, fans milled about in confusion and got in everyone's way -- oh, it was a mad scene!

Whether or not Ackerman's collapse was deliberately put on as Laney implied is debatable -- I always believed otherwise. Forry passed out on Laney's bed, his body so rigid it seemed to vibrate, his hands clenched so tightly they couldn't be loosened, and his face as white as the pillowslip his head rested on. His forehead was covered with sweat, his eyes were shut, and he moaned in a low monotonous key. Altogether an admirable performance if it were a sham. Myrtle, despite the coolness existing between her and Forry, was near collapse herself and kept frantically massaging Ackerman's hands in an effort to revive him. Finally, Daugherty and one or two others got Forry to his feet, out on the sidewalk, and walked him up and down the block until

he began to show some awareness of his surroundings. After that, everything else that evening was anticlimax.

The next day, Sunday, about 1 o'clock I was sitting in the clubroom, alone, nursing a kingsize hangover, when Ross Rocklynne wandered in. We started talking, and naturally I had to fill him in on the most exciting event of the party, which he had been unable to attend. Just as we were discussing the probable severity of his hangover, who should walk through the door but Ackerman, a big grin on his face and looking as though he had drunk nothing stronger than orange juice all night long.

In my estimation one of the great and largely unsung fans in LA at that or any other time was the fabulous Nieson Himmel.

I can still remember the first time I laid eyes on Himmel. It was a Thursday night, a LASFS night, and I was standing on the sidewalk in front of the clubroom when I saw a short stocky trench coat clad figure trudging up the hill from Wilshire. As he drew closer I could see he was a young man in his twenties, not bad looking, with dark blond wavey hair lying flat on his head. He stopped in front of the clubroom, looked at the window, and then turned to me.

"Is this the science fiction club?"

"Yes, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society," I told him.

He told me he had come across the name of the club in the phone book quite by chance, and being a reader of science fiction and finding the name intriguing decided to look us up, and here he was. We introduced ourselves and he told me that he was a reporter for the Herald Express, the afternoon Hearst paper.

After the meeting we stood at the door of the clubroom and he asked what happened now. By this time we'd been joined by Laney and we told him that different members did different things after the meeting, but as for us we usually went up the street Sharkey's for a few beers and would he care to join us. He would indeed, and thus began a friendship that has lasted for twenty-five years.

So the three of us, and possibly a couple of others, most probably Mel Brown and Jimmy Kepner, went up to the corner of 6th and Bixel to Sharkey's, a gin mill of low repute, but fondly remembered by a few of us. Sharkey's was a dark and comfortably relaxed joint on the north-west corner of 6th and Bixel across the street from the corner drugstore.

We went in and ordered beers. In those days the beer behind the bar was kept in lockers of ice water, so that when one ordered a beer the bartender would plunge his arm into the water up to his elbow and bring out a bottle dripping wet. The fannish habitues of Sharkey's, myself, Laney, Himmel, Brown, Kepner, and later on Gus Willmorth, made a ritual of always sliding the labels off the beer bottles, placing them sticky side up on the flats of our wallets, and then flinging the wallets up to the ceiling where the labels would stick as the wallets dropped to the floor. That night we initiated Himmel in the ritual. In time Sharkey's ceiling became an almost solid montage of colorful beer labels which remained there until the bar was torn down many years later.

Himmel, in his quiet way, was quite a character. He came from a well-to-do Minnesota family (his family name is Himmelstein), and while still an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota became a general assignment reporter for the Minneapolis Star, with a particular talent for crime and political reporting. After migrating to Los Angeles he'd gone to work on rewrite on the Herald, and then on general assignment

under the nation's only lady city editor, Agness "Aggie" Underwood. By the time Himmel made the LA fan scene he was regarded by Aggie Underwood as one of her best all around younger reporters.

To digress a bit, I'd like to relate a tale of coincidental near misses almost too good to be true, involving myself, Nieson, my wife-to-be Sid, and Cleve Cartmill. I first met Himmel in the fall of 1944; I met Sid for the first time shortly after Easter, 1947; Cartmill I met for the first time around 1949. Okay.

Now, close by the Herald Express building was a bar called Moran's, a favorite watering place for the working press of the Herald, the Examiner, and some of the guys from the Daily News. The LA Times reporters lived in a world of their own. I used to meet Himmel once in a while after work for drinks at Moran's. Cartmill, who at that time worked for the News, would sometimes get drunk with Himmel at Moran's, but never at the same times I was there -- I never met Cleve at Moran's. Sid, who worked on a paper in San Diego, would stay as a house guest at Aggie Underwood's on her trips to LA, had been known to visit Moran's, and had bent an elbow or two with Himmel on those occasions, but never when I was there, although there was at least once when we just missed meeting for the first time in 1945 at Moran's by a matter of minutes. Sid also knew Cartmill, but as a very close friend and newspaperman, not as a fantasy writer.

1947, and I had yet to meet Sid or Cleve. Easter week of that year I left San Diego State College to spend the vacation in LA, and then became so reluctant to leave LA I unofficially extended the week vacation to over a month, staying the time with Nieson and Gus Willmorth in Tendril Towers, until Gus and Nieson and Daugherty almost literally put me bodily on the train back to San Diego.

Meanwhile, at just the time I left San Diego, Gene Peach, a reporter on the conservative San Diego Union, write an expose of the wild radicals on the San Diego State campus -- a most scurrilous article, full of innuendos and half-truths -- in which he characterized them as "the horn rimmed set." Inasmuch as I was one of the leaders of the campus "radicals" (actually we were just veterans in political conflict with the younger, fraternity oriented set) and was one of the few men on campus in those days wearing horm rimmed glasses, and had disappeared mysteriously just as the expose hit the streets, my friends drew the erroneous conclusion that I had left town because of the article. Not so: I wasn't even aware of the article until I returned to San Diego.

At any rate, on my belated return to San Diego a big party was thrown on my behalf, and present at the party was the strikingly attractive, long legged blond named Sid Rees, brought to the party by a mutual girl friend who had been trying to maneuver us together for some time. Sid and I started going together from that moment, and soon discovered that we had mutual friends, most particularly Nieson Himmel. I soon learned also that Cleve Cartmill was a long time close friend of hers, and that she was unaware of his fame as a writer of fantasy and science fiction. In time I met Cleve after he moved back to San Diego, and Cleve and Veda Cartmill (the daughter of Malcolm Jameson) and Sid and I became a close foursome. And when Sid and I decided to get married in June of 1947 in LA at a fannish wedding (what a blast that was!) we both immediately knew who we wanted as my best man -- Nieson Himmel.

Nieson was one of what was even then a vanishing breed, the cynical, hard drinking, hard working, "Front Page" type of reporter, with an almost infallible nose for news. Off hours he relaxed his reporter image, but still managed to remain pretty much of a character.

Being a reporter for an afternoon daily Himmel's working hours were from 6 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon. This left his afternoons free for fun and games. One of Himmel's favorite games, which I frequently joined him in, was attending

whodunit flicks and punching holes in them. We would rendezvous in the afternoon (on those days we decided to play the game) at one of the bars in the Biltmore on Pershing Square where we would prime ourselves with a couple of drinks and study the paper for a likely looking picture. Picking our movie we would then hit the nearest liquor store and stock up on vodka and a six pack of 7-Up. Then, armed with the booze we would enter the theater and go to the balcony, if it had one, or to the rear seats if it didn't, and proceed to get thoroughly smashed while carrying on a loud running derogatory commentary on the fuggheadedness of the celluloid detectives, much to the disgust of everyone else in the theatre. Fun.

One Friday night we caught a double bill in a neighborhood theater not too far from the USC campus, a godawful whodunit coupled with a 'Blondie' disaster. We had a ball with that one. We came out of the show about midnight, bombed to the eyeballs. It was still early, the night was nice and mellow and clear, and we still had the better part of a fifth left, so we decided to walk over to Laney's (not the USC campus) and share it with our good buddy.

We were walking happily down the deserted sidewalk, at peace with the world, the bottle in a paper sack being carried by Nieson, when all of a sudden we caught the flicker of a red light behind us and a spot nailed us to the wall of the building beside which we were walking. We stopped and faced the two cops getting out of the black-and-white. They regarded us suspiciously and asked us what we were doing afoot at this hour, in this neighborhood -- and what was in the sack? We showed them the bottle in the sack and told them we were on our way to visit a friend; then Nieson hauled out his wallet and extracted an accordian card case therefrom. He started pulling out all sorts of cards and showing them to the increasingly more respectful officers -- press card, sheriff's pass, police pass, fire pass, honorary police badge. At the same time he casually dropped names that had even me standing there goggle-eyed.

We proceeded on our way without further hindrance from LA's finest.

When we arrived at Laney's we found the house seemingly deserted, although the living room light was on. After a moment of fruitless ringing of the doorbell we deduced that Fran had undoubtedly gone to pick up Jackie who was working evenings as a cocktail waitress. We stumbled around to the side of the house looking for an open window through which we could gain entry to the house, and sure enough we found one, the kitchen window. It was fairly high up from the ground, so being the lighter of the two of us I had Himmel hoist me up and I stepped through the window -- right into the kitchen sink. I was standing in the sink, feeling foolish as all hell, when suddenly the kitchen lights went on and standing in the doorway was five yaar old Sandy, sleepily digging her knuckles into her eye and plaintively asking what was going on. I turned and helped Himmel through the window just as the younger daughter, Quiggy, started crying in the other room.

We had just gotten the girls calmed down and back in bed when Fran and Jackie returned. Jackie was furious with us and wouldn't even say hello; Fran was angry, too, but for other reasons. When he found out that we'd been in the neighborhood with a couple of bottles of booze and had gone to a show instead of coming over and helping to relieve the monotony of his evening, he told us in explicit language what he thought of us. However, after a couple of drinks he forgave us and we settled down to partying for the rest of the night.

In the late summer of 1945 Himmel came home one afternoon (he was living in Tendril Towers by that time) with the gloomy news that Aggie Underwood had presented him with an ultimatum -- get a car or look for another job. The reason for Himmel's gloom was that he'd never learned to drive, hence had never owned a car. In covering his assignments he either used public transportation, a taxi, or hooked a ride with

a photographer or another reporter. Aggie, however, felt that this limited his mobility and insisted that he get his own car. So he bought himself a pre-war Ford tudor sedan; but he still didn't know how to drive. Gordon E. Dickson and I put our heads together and came up with the solution: we would teach Nieson how to drive.

Sunday morning, bright and early at 8 o'clock and after a sober night, Gordy, myself, and G. Gordon Dewey planted a trepidatious Himmel behind the wheel of his Ford and on the br oad expanse of an empty Wilshire Boulevard, and headed him west. We had decided that we'd have Himmel drive to Morrie Dollen's studio in Culver City and that Wilshire was the ideal route to take, it being straight and wide and virtually empty this early of a Sunday morning. After grinding through the gears Nieson finally got the car rolling more-or-less in a straight line, and we were on our way. Fortunately most of the signals along Wilshire were flashing amber so we didn't have too many stops to make.

By the time we neared Culver City and had to turn off Wilshire to get to Morrie's Himmel was driving almost (but not quite) like a pro and Gordy and I were feeling pretty smug. We drove without incident down the street toward Morrie's until we came to a signal one block before reaching the corner where we were to turn to get to the studio. Himmel stopped the car without stalling it and we sat there waiting for the signal to change. Just then a cop car pulled up in the lane next to us and as they sat there both cops gave us a critical once-over. Himmel became increasingly nervous under this scrutiny and sat there eyes front and on the light with both hands tightly clenching the wheel. When the signal changed Nieson let out the clutch too abruptly and the car started to buck and jerk; then he ground off just about ever in the gearbox going through the gears while at the same time trying to negotiate the right hand turn into Morrie's street. The cops, their suspicions that something was not right seemingly confirmed, threw on their red light and followed us around the corner. Himmel managed to bring the car to the curb without going up over it -- but just barely.

Now it happened that not too long before this I had, in a burst of misplaced idealism, joined the American Communist Political Association (the protective name of the Communist Party took during the war) and I had my brand new membership card in my wallet. Even in those days of co-operative goodfellowship with our Soviet allies the LA police were notoriously hard on Communists when they came afoul of the law and I had visions of being drug off to jail by my heels as a dangerous radical if that card were found in my wallet, so I asked Nieson, as a man wise to the ways of the LA law, what I should do. He said for God's sake get rid of it -- tear it up, swallow it, throw it out the window, but above all get it out of my wallet or we might all end up in jail. So, as the two cops, one on either side, warily approached this car with the four suspicious characters in it I slipped the card out of my wallet and into my sock and down into my shoe.

The cops looked us over carefully, asked us our names (but didn't ask for identification), asked us what we were doing (we told them we were teaching Himmel how to drive), and then they wanted to know who owned the car. It was then they told us that the car bore a resemblance to one reported stolen. Happily, Nieson just happened to have the receipt for the car on him, and everything ended well.

Meanwhile, back at the club...

Laney's memoirs ("Ah! Sweet Idiocy!") tend to leave one with the impression that politics and bitter in-fighting were the order of the day. There was that, of course, but it really didn't dominate the scene. Most of the time it was relatively tranquil around the club. My strongest memories of those far gone days are not of bitterness and strife, but of good times, good talk, and good friends both close and casual.

During the war there was a good deal of travelling by fans, and much of that travel was at government expense. Consequently seldom a week went by that some fan didn't pass through LA on his way to or from the war. The war also brought about increased prosperity to many non-service fans who were able to indulge their penchant for visiting other fans at far distant points of the compass. Being in the LASFS in those years was the fannish counterpart to standing on a corner near Times Square -- sooner or later you'd see just about everyone you knew personally or by repute. It was during those years that I first met Gordon E. Dickson, Joe Gibson, Rosco Wright, George Ebey, Joe L. Hensley, James Hevelin, and many others. The most notorious civilian fan to visit the LASFS in the early forties was Claude Degler (whom I missed meeting by one week) who made of hitchhiking a high art. Other equally well known (if not so notorious) civilian fans to visit the LASFS in the early forties were Jack Speer (whom I also missed by about a week), Frank Robinson, Charles McNutt (before he became Charles Beaumont), Jules Lazar (who stayed a few weeks in LA, made his mark, and then disappeared to the east), George Ebey, Bill Watson, and others whom I've forgotten over the years.

The biggest permanent en mass infusion of new blood into the blood-stream of LA fandom was the migration of the Slan Shack gang from Battle Creek to Los Angeles in the summer of 1945 -- Al and Abby Lu Ashley, their daughter Tooples, Walt Liebscher, Jack Weidenbeck, and E. Everett Evans. The Ashleys, Liebscher, and Weidenbeck took over Myrtle Douglas's house across the alley from the clubroom (Myrtle kept one room in the back for herself), while Evans and his daughter Jonne moved into Tendril Towers taking the small room with the sleeping porch previously occupied by Mel Brown and myself.

Ashley was in his late 30's or early 40's in those days and a fascinating man to be around. Weidenbeck was quiet and reserved, a little on the portly side, younger than Al but sometimes seeming older, and a fine but not exceptional artist. Leibscher was...well, Leibscher. Walt was in his mid-twenties, slim and good looking, a bundle of nervous energy, an accomplished pianist and not a bad composer, but most of all a funny and irreverent man with a crazy way out dirty sense of humor -- and he hasn't changed a damn bit in twenty-five years.

Ashley, it turned out,was a journeyman sign painter and shortly after settling in LA he got a job with a sign shop just a few blocks from Bixel Street on 7th. Soon after taking the job his shop was awarded a contract by Lockheed to appropriately repaint Lockheed Constellations which were being converted from military back to civilian service. This involved painting on the stripes, emblems, and numbers for TWA and PAA (the two airlines involved) on the planes going to those airlines. Al was named foreman for this job and told to make up his own crew. The crew selected by Al was made up of two regulars from the sign shop plus Jack Weidenback, Gus Willmorth, and myself. For a couple of months there we had ourselves a ball.

Every morning Gus and I would walk across the street from Tendril Towers to Slan Shack and join the Ashleys and Weidenbeck in the kitchen where we tried unsuccessfully to keep pace with Al in drinking Abby Lu's excellent coffee. We would then descend to the street in front of the house where we would be joined by the others of the crew and take off in two cars for Burbank and the Lockhead plant.

The planes we worked on were either in a huge hanger or on the line out on the field, gleamingly clean of all Army markings. Whether TWA or PAA the method of painting was the same. Working one side at a time we would ascend the scaffolding enclosing the plane and break up into two man teams, one couple laying out the pattern for the TWA or PAA emblem on the nose with a punched paper pattern and chalk bag, another couple doing the same with the numbers and letters on the wing, and another with the tail fin. Then, all of us working together, we would lay out the long stripes down the

full length of the Connie. After the chalk patterns were down we'd carefully mask the plane with tape and paper and then spray -- red, black, and gold for TWA: blue and white for PAA. The pay was good, the weather was perfect, the job was easy and interesting, and the crew grooved together. It was a fun job.

Those middle years of the 1940's saw an appreciable outpouring of high grade fan publications from LA,some long lived, others one or two shots. The two most notable publications issuing forth from LA mimeos were unquestionably Ackerman's Vom and Laney's Acolyte. A few of the others were Phil Bronson's Fantasite, Mel Brown's Fan-Slants, Lora Crozetti's Venus, Andy Anderson's Centaurus, the Outsider's Knanve, Jimmy Kepner's Toward Tomorrow, the LASFS's own Shangri-L'Affaires, Dale Hart's poetryzine Ichor. All of these zines, with the exception of Knanve, were distinguished by the lavish use of lithographed artwork, not only on the front and back covers, but for interiors as well. This extensive use of lithographed artwork was made possible through Reed Litho in downtown LA, the owner of which liked science fiction, liked the fans he dealt with, was a perfectionist, and charged something like $5 or even less for an average run.

In those days my interest was in art, not in writing or publishing, and soon after arriving in LA I started turning out front and back covers for Ackerman's Vom and other LA published fanzines. Most of the covers I did for Vom were stylized nudes, but one was an illustration to a favorite current sf story -- C.L. Moore's "No Woman Born", a drawing that still pleases me. My most ambitious project was a series of covers for Acolyte, four in all (although more had been planned), illustrating H.P.Lovecraft: "The Call of Cthulhu", "The Outsider", "Celephais", and a verse from his poem, "Psychopompos". A few years later the "Psychopompos" cover and a back cover from Vom were pirated and used as cover illos for the first and second (and only) issues of the British prozine Strange Tales.

In 1945 I designed a bookplate for a girl I knew in Pasadena. The central object in the drawing was a nude, chaste, almost ethereal, with flowing, star-speckled hair, strumming a small harp held in front of her. The nude was such was almost completely non-sexual; but everything else in the drawing was blatantly erotically symbolic -- the two sides of the harp being stroked by the nude were upstanding phalluses, to one side of the drawing stood a small lecherous faun with a protuberant belly, and balanced on the belly and held with both hands was a giant candle, the flame of which was licking at the open vulva which formed the central portion of the many petalled flower reaching toward the flame. The stem of the flower was entwined around the candle, and the leaves on the stem were stylized spermatozoa. Appearing from behind the legs of the central nude was an aged female counterpart to the faun with tangled hair, emmaciated paps hanging down, reaching her skinny arm out in a clutching gesture toward the candle-phallus held by the faun, a lewd and lascivious expression on her face. (I still have the original drawing. It hangs framed on our living room wall.)

When Dale Hart saw the drawing he insisted on using it for the first cover of his new poetryzine, Ichor, which was also going to go through FAPA. Imagine Dale's indignation when the then OE of FAPA denied its inclusion in the next Fapa mailing on the grounds that the cover was obscene and might get Fapa in trouble with the postal authorities!

Incidentally, the Acolyte cover shown on page 133 of "All Our Yesterdays" is my "The Outsiders" illo, and the originals to be seen on the wall behind Laney on page 132 are all mine as well -- the first is an oil rendering of "The Outsider", the second is the back cover from Vom used as the cover for the second issue of Strange Tales, and the third was a front cover for Vom. So much for personal egoboo.

The two outstanding publishing events of those years (1944-45) were the

publication of Speers "Fancyclopedia and Ronald Clyne's labor of love, a portfolio of Wallace Smith's illustrations from Ben Hecht's banned "Fantazius Mallare".

After a couple of abortive starts Speer's monumental work on which he'd spent almost three years was turned over to the LASFS for publication under the auspices of

the NFFF, Forrest J. Ackerman, Publisher. In these days when 100 page (or more) fanzines are frequently published by individual fans as a matter of course, it might be hard to imagine with what awe we looked upon the projected production of Speer's mammoth work -- 100 pages! For one month the clubroom was turned into a publishing house with three mimeos used to run off the stencils cut by Speer. The end product was 250 numbered copies (mine is #7), with the purchaser's name inscribed on the title page in Forry Ackerman's distinctive hand in his distinctive green ink. It is bound in red leatheroid with silver printing on the cover.

Today's publishers of giant fanzines might be interested in the publishing credits of this historic book printed on the last page of the Fancyclopedia, so herewith they are in part:

> "One hundred and 8 'fan hours' went into the mimeography alone -- the crank turning (c. 28,775 revolutions), the slip-sheeting, the de-slipping, and a special trimming job on a portion of pages. A good gallon of ink was consumed.
> "The tremendous assembly job yet remains to be done; and it appears likely that the creation of the Fancyclopedia, in addition to its authors' two years of compilation, will have cost, in the time of a composite fan, 5 nonstop 24 hour days."

There then follows a breakdown of the number of hours worked by different fans in mimeoing, slipping, de-slipping, with the total times spent on the combined operations: Ackerman, 46 hours; Morojo, 30 hours; Daugherty, 13 hours; Brown, 5 hours; Laney, 5 hours; Crozetti, 5 hours; Rogers, 4 hours -- 30 DAYS IN PRODUCTION!

Ronald Clyne was a young and tremendously gifted artist who contributed significantly to the general high level of art gracing the pages of LA fanzines in those days.

One day, quite by chance, Ron came across a copy of Fantazius Mallare in a Hollywood bookstore; although the price asked for it was a staggering $24 he happily paid the price after seeing the fantastic Wallace Smith illustrations which had been the major reason for the book being banned and burned.

The more Clyne thought about it the more convinced he became that these drawings deserved to be enjoyed by others as well as himself and the few who were able to view his copy of this extremely rare book. This was about the time Famous Fantastic Mysteries was promoting portfolios of reproductions of Lawrence illustrations from the magazine as they had a few years earlier their Finlay portfolios. So Ron decided to publish a portfolio of reproductions of the Wallace Smith illustrations on good quality paper suitable for framing.

Ron carefully removed the illustrations from the book (which, of course, radically reduced the book's potential resale value) and turned them over to Reed for the reproduction. This became an almost impossible task for Reed, who became thoroughly engrossed in the project, because most of the drawings were made up of fine white lines on large masses of black, and in inking for all this black area the white lines would tend to become obliterated. But eventually Reed whipped his problem and produced a beautiful set of prints.

Ron's primary concern being the wide dissemination of Wallace Smith's drawings rather than the making of money on the sale of the portfolio, the asking price of $1 a portfolio was almost a giveaway. The production costs were considerable, even in those days, and in order to offset them (I don't think he ever broke even, let alone made a profit), he solicited financial backing before launching the project. The following are listed in the portfolio as financial angels of the project: Forrest J. Ackerman, Andy Anderson, Myrtle Douglas, Mike Fern, Paul Freehafer, Francis T. Laney,

Charles McNutt, James Kepner, Alva Rogers, Sam Russell. We all felt it was money well spent.

In "All Our Yesterdays" Warner astutely points out that most of the major fannish attempts at a history of fanddm, i.e., Speer's "Up To Now" (1939), Moskowitz's "The Immortal Storm" (published in the early 50's, but concentrating on pre-1940 East Coast fandom), and Laney's "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!" (1947), tended to deal with the minutiae of relatively local fannish politics rather than with the broader picture of fandom. Looked at from the perspective of 25 to 30 years Speer, Moskowitz, and Laney seemed to have suffered from a marked degree of tunnel vision; but really, at the time, these political issues and wars seemed tremendously important to those participating in them. Even today blood is spilled and friendships sundered over such picayune things as Fapa offices and memberships, consite bidding, bid support, and the like.

Most of us active in the LASFS in the early and middle forties were young (just as the members today are predominantly under 30), and those of us who took an active interest in the club did so with considerable enthusiasm. Because the club in its broadest sense was so central to the interests of many of us (Laney included) we were inclined to give it our all.

The LASFS in those days had two levels of membership, members and rent paying members. Ordinary members simply paid their 50¢ a month membership dues and 10¢ a meeting fees, rent payers payed an additional $1 or more a month toward the rent and were given keys to the club room enabling them to make use of the clubroom at any time they wished. The rent payers, having jurisdiction over the club premises and, in effect, loaning the use of the hall to the LASFS on Thursday nights, constituted a key power bloc within the club.

The LASFS had one elected officer, the Director, who in turn appointed the Secretary and Treasurer. Until 1944 the term of office was for one year, but in 1944 the constitution was revised to make the term of office 3 months.

In August of 1944 I became Director of the LASFS by default. Myrtle Douglas had been elected Director and appointed me Secretary and Fran Laney Treasurer. A week later she resigned...which automatically elevated me to the Directorship and I in turn appointed Walt Daugherty Secretary, retaining Fran as Treasurer. Events were so peaceful at that time, and the quarterly terms were still so new, that I had gone six weeks into the next term before realizing it and calling for a new election.

In those days the LASFS was a fair sized club with 20 or so active members, but consider the election for my successor. Laney nominated me and asked that I be returned by acclaimation, but I'd have none of it and refused, nominating Walt Daugherty. Laney nominated me anyway, over my objections, and Mel Brown in turn nominated Laney. According to Laney's memoirs he felt he didn't have a chance running against me and Daugherty, so he was going to see that he got at least one vote besides Mel's and voted, quite properly, for himself. Now consider the final vote in this most significant election: Rogers - 2, Daugherty - 2, and Laney a tremendous 3! Seven votes cast in all! Naturally, only those attending the meeting could vote, and only those attending who weren't in arrears with their dues. Many life and death issues in the club were settled by equally impressive votes in those days.

In chapter 10 Warner mentions that "fandom didn't learn of the tremendous events in this one block of Bixel Street until Jules Lazar spilled the beans in a letter published in Unger's Fantasy Fiction Field, dated March 11, 1944." He goes on to say that Jules revealed that he, Pogo, Laney, Bronson, Mike Fern, and Brown had resigned from the LASFS the night before, excoriated the "Ackerman-Morojo-Daugherty combine" in the process, and named a couple of members of the LASFS as homosexuals. This was the

first public announcement outside of LA of the resignations of a number of the Outsiders from the LASFS, and the first public disclosure that there were homosexuals in the club.

When the LA subscribers to FFF received the issue with Jules's letter in it there was considerable buzzing over Jules's hanging out of the LASFS's dirty linen. However, this didn't seem to faze Jules who showed up the next Saturday night for a poker party in Walt Daugherty's apartment in the Prince Rupert Arms where he was subjected to some mild criticism for his letter by those present. Walt Daugherty, one of the major subjects for abuse by Jules in his letter, jumped on Jules mainly for his gratuitus disclosure that Jimmy Kepner and one other fan in the LASFS were homosexuals, rather than for anything said about him personally.

I remember this poker party quite well for another reason than the above -- this was the last time I saw Paul Freehafer alive. A week or so after the poker party Paul was dead.

The year 1945 was a year of constant activity and, although I didn't know it until later, my last year for a decade and a half of any real involvment in fandom. Casting one's mind back a quarter of a century one finds it difficult to separate events from one year to another -- except for certain highlights -- or to remember exactly with whom one did what. Today I have the impression that a year twenty-five years ago was an incredibly long period of time, at least twice as long as a year is today. Again except for certain highlights, my memories of those two years of my youth in LA, 1944 and 1945, in which I was totally involved with fans and fandom, LA variety, are of an almost hedonistic existance of indulging in simple pleasures at will, day and night and for extended weekends, with pleasant and congenial friends. Nostalgic memory is a treacherous thing: the rough edges of the past have been worn down and smoothed off by the flowing stream of time and what remains are the comfortably smooth pebbles of pleasant memories. And even something which at the time was unpleasant or even traumatic takes on a softened patina with the passage of enough time.

The art school in which I enrolled on first settling in LA didn't come up to my expectations and I soon dropped it to take on a variety of jobs over the next two years. But the jobs were only incidental to my fanning and were taken without any thought of the future, but simply to keep me in pocket and expense money. For a time I worked for the Alfred Hart Distilleries in LA, bottlers of Hart's Rum, a particularly noxious concoction in those days, and Schenley's Black Label bourbon, an equally noxious whiskey. I never was able to devise a method of safely liberating any of the better liquors stored in the warehouse, most of which were earmarked for officers clubs around the country and overseas. Another time I worked for a record company in Hollywood pressing records. The company was fronted by Hoagy Carmichael and movie producer Boris Morros and released mostly Hoagy Carmichael records. I got that job through the aid of a young Communist I'd met after joining the Communist Party and it wasn't until many years later that I learned that Boris Morros was a counter-spy in the Communist Party and that the record company was used to funnel money into the Party's pockets. Needless to say Hoagy Carmichael was innocently involved.

In retrospect those two years seem to blend into one long summer of play without major problems or responsibilities, the last days of youth before the onset of adulthood. There were lazy afternoons boating on the lake in Westlake Park; joining Mel Brown and Jimmy Kepner in exploring the routes of unfamiliar streetcar lines; long afternoons and evenings indulging our mania for miniature golf on courses all over the city; pub crawling with Laney or Art Saha or Nieson Himmel or combinations of all three; concerts at the Hollywood Bowl; heckling Gerald L.K. Smith rallies at the Philharmonic Auditorium; pleasant Sunday afternoons at Morrie Dollens's studio in Culver City in company with Phil Bronson and his incredibly beautiful sister Beverly,

and Yerke, and Liebscher, and Sam Russell, and others; brousing in Ackerman's garage; theater parties; and parties, parties, parties.

By the summer of 1945, though, I began to have vague and unformed feelings that there was more to life than the simple indulgences of fanning. I was twenty-two years old and not getting any younger. I was not alone in this, and Art Saha, Mel Brown, Jimmy Kepner, and I organized the LA Futurian Society as an adjunct to the LASFS and as a medium for exploring various philosophies of life and politics. We drew into the Futurians other fans who likewise felt vaguely dissatisfied with simple fanning: Myrtle Douglas, Sam Russell, Elmer Perdue, Nieson Himmel, Art Joquel, and a couple of others. This activity in time led to Brown, Kepner, Saha, and me joining the Communist Party and discovering (we thought) a greater goal in life than publishing fanzines or collecting mouldy pulp magazines.

In the meantime the four of us had established a line of communications with the New York Futurians (Wollheim, Lowndes, etc.) and began to talk about moving to New York to join them in radical activity. LA was okay, but New York was where it was at, comrade. Kepner and Saha and Brown planned to get themselves connected in some literary endeavor, prossibly working for the Daily Worker or The New Masses. I had obtained a letter of introduction from a fellow Communist in Hollywood to artist William Gropper urging that I be accepted by Gropper as his student. Our plans were crystalized, now to implement them.

The first step in making the move to New York was to unload our collections. At that time I had a prized collection -- mint colmplete sets of all the prozines published to that date (not including Weird Tales and British magazines), mint first editions of A. Merritt, the Arkham House books published to that date, and numerous other sf and fantasy books the titles of which I have long since forgotten, plus many fine fanzines and original illos (Finlay, Paul, Cartier, St. John, etc.) I was convinced that all this was dross, a part of the discarded past, that I had the future to think of, a future of glorious class struggle in which there was no place for fantasy. So, I sold my collection for ridiculous prices, even then: a complete set of mint Unknowns for $15, a complete set of mint Famous Fantastic Mysteries and Fantastic Novels for $15, Astounding mint and complete for $30, Amazing Stories and Annual and Quarterlys for $30, and Wonders and Wonder Quarterlys for $30, both titles mint and complete, other magazines at equally give-away prices. One exception I made to this dumping was my books and certain fanzines which I had boxed and shipped to New York in care of Don Wollheim at Futurian House.

Late in July Art Saha and Mel Brown took off together for New York. Jimmy Kepner and I delayed our departure until after the Labor Day weekend and went down to San Diego so I could say goodbye to my parents. Over that weekend in San Diego I met a girl and fell madly in love for the very first time in my life. However, the Tuesday following Labor Day Jimmy and I got on the highway east of San Diego and started thumbing our way to New York, making it as far as Tucson, Arizona by midnight of that first day.

But my heart was no longer in the trip or New York: it was in San Diego with the woman I loved. So, bidding farewell to Jimmy and wishing him Godspeed and a safe journey, I found the bus depot and bought a ticket to San Diego.

However, within a week my true love proved to be not so true and informed me that she had no intention of getting overly serious about our love affair. Within two weeks I was back in LA trying to take up where I'd left off as if nothing had happened. My heart, though, was still somewhat bruised from its recent amorous adventure, and I will forever be grateful to the memory of the late Myrtle Douglas for physically helping me to quench the still spluttering torch I carried.

I immediately plunged back into the mad whirl of fanac and to all intents and purposes abandoned the Communist Party with its grim dedication to socialist realism and the class struggle for the more satisfying pleasures of fandom.

It was at this time that I joined Al Ashley's crew at Lockheed, sticking with it until late in December when I finally left LA for good to return to San Diego to enter San Diego State College as an art major. My departure from LA in December, 1945 terminated my first period of more-or-less concentrated fanac which, except for brief periods during the Pacificon, Easter vacation in 1947, wasn't to be resumed until I got active in Bay Area fandom in the late 1950's.

It was a ball while it lasted and I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

--Alva Rogers

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The Mortal Gael - Conclusion

cars travel too close to them and at too great a speed.. The thoughtful Ulster motorist reduces the toll of human life by maintaining maximum possible distance from both footpaths, i.e. driving in the centre of the road. His speed is the calculated maximum at which a sheep can be struck without being prematurely converted to lamb-chops -- 20mph. But in dense fog, when not many sheep would be about, this can be increased to 40 or even 50mph.

The Drumskinny Delay. The one case in which the use of trafficators to signal a turn is preferred to the Swatragh Swing is when waiting to go right at the lights on a busy intersection. Strangely, this is also the case which baffles and enrages the visitor most -- probably because the Ulster motorist makes a point of not operating his trafficator until a column of drivers, most of whom had been planning to go straight ahead, forms up behind him.

But the reason for this tactic is obvious to anyone who studies the thinking behind the Mournebeg Median -- it prevents cars from cutting into the left-hand lane thus going too near pedestrians, and also reduces traffic speed at the intersection to a very safe level.

An added benefit is that it gives the delayed drivers a good opportunity to test ancillary equipment such as horns, headlight flashes, etc. One can often see them making gestures of appreciation to the driver at the head of the queue.

The Gilnahirk Gambit occurs in the tricky field of relations between drivers and pedestrians who wish to cross the road ahead of them. The native Ulster motorist understands, instinctively, that the pedestrian hopefully surveying a stream of cars is not watching for a break in the traffic -- he is simply trying to catch a driver's eye. Having done so, he sends a telepathic message to the effect that it is the motorist's responsibility if he runs over anyone, and immediately plunges into the road.

For the pedestrian's own good, the Ulster motorist avoids his gaze and drives straight on; whereas the visitor has his nerve shattered by encounters with pedestrians who stare him right in the eye then -- apparently -- try to commit suicide.

As a study of the above will show, Irish motorists are just as good as any others. It's just that they are more liable to kill you.

--Bob Shaw

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"He's the giant marshmellow crouched in the corner." (Robin White, via John Berry)

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FLAHERTY, MAPMAKER

THE MORTAL GAEL

POP CORN

I wish that the optimism inspired in Terry Carr by pop music (Warhoon 26) was something I could share. For the life of me, I can't view the modern pop scene as anything but a plot to make money -- although I have no doubt that if some of the rake-off was coming in my direction my cynicism would abate. The music itself seems almost uniformly dull but as I'm not qualified to speak on that subject, I will concentrate on the thing which really dismays me. There is a widespread feeling in the world of youth that young people, say teenagers, have a great fund of instinctive a priori knowledge and understanding which will gradually desert them as they get older, so that by the time a person reaches forty he will know nothing, feel nothing, understand nothing. I am in my thirties (therefore my spark must be almost extinct) but I can remember twenty years back when I too had this conviction -- so I'm not saying that today's teenagers are not entitled to have it. I recall clearly leaning on my drafting board at the age of eighteen on a summer afternoon and experiencing a deep gloom over the fact that I knew everything there was to know and wondering how

Bob Shaw

I was going to satisfy my thirst for learning for the next half century or so. This feeling faded away though, and one of the things which helped dispell it was the then general belief that as a person got older he acquired wisdom and stature. I looked forward to a continuing development of my personality over a period of decades, and there was a comforting feeling that I would not reach my peak for thirty or forty years. As it turned out, this feeling was justified, and one of the things which helped reinforce it was the music of the time. It was written by adults, performed by adults, and appealed to adults -- and to me the world of pop music as it was then was just one more thing that I too would appreciate more and more fully as I got older.

Since then there's been a change in the pattern of money distribution, with the result that practically all the money available for spending on records is in the pockets of teenagers. So now most of the music we hear is written by and for youngsters and performed by youngsters. In this country Auntie BBC has shocked the millions

of adults whose taxes support her by switching to almost non-stop pop on the principal wave length. Not being a musical type, I can't make an outright statement that something written in one evening by a 17-year-old will not be as good as something the same person would produce after a further twenty years of study, sweat and striving for improvement in his art, but I suspect that in this respect music is no different to literature...

The trouble is that there is so much easy money to be made in pop music as it exists now that it is economically impossible for anyone in the business to criticise the output and try to change it. The groups continue to make virtually identical disks, earning dollars by the million and superlatives by the billion. If all it meant was that some youngsters were enjoying themselves and getting rich I wouldn't complain (I'd be jealous, but I wouldn't complain) but I'm convinced that the philosophy that the second decade of one's life is the only one worth living is both sad and futile. Recently a workmate came up to me on his nineteenth birthday in genuine misery because, as he put it, "The good part is almost over." I almost laughed at him, then realised that he was only going by the evidence presented to him on the communications channel which most influenced his life -- pop music. Cynical recording companies and cynical radio network owners had told him time without number, through a trillion transistors, that a six-note tune called "Dum Diddy Rock" was a high-class musical composition; and that the message contained in its lyric -- usually "sex is pleasant" or "getting a bayonet stuck in your belly is painful" -- was a new philosophical concept which the fossilised brains of people over twenty could not comprehend. Small wonder then that he regarded his post-teens as a grey epoch.

Like anybody else who has published a few books I'm not particularly enamoured with critics, but I do believe that without criticism -- from without or within -- art becomes involuted and stagnant. The uncritical adulation which characterises pop music has resulted in some strange things, like intellectuall lightweights such as John Be-a-millionaire-for-peace Lennon and Ringo "There are fifty million planets in our solar system" Starr setting themselves up as gurus. "War is bad," they keep telling me accusingly, regardless of the fact that I -- who at the age of eight saw my Belfast home destroyed in a blitz, escaped dying in it by pure coincidence, and trudged fifteen miles in a refugee column -- hated war long before they were born.

This is drifting away from the point, but I'd say that even the names which groups choose for themselves show mental inbreeding and lack of creativity. The Beatles started off with their whimsy title, then we got The Monkees -- also with one letter changed from the usual spelling. No doubt dozens of other groups subsequently sprang up along the Mersey and elsewhere with names like The Sheap, The Doggs, The Flees, and so on. Then somebody decided not to use a collective noun at all, and we got The Scaffold -- which is fair enough -- followed by a host of other miscellaneous objects. In Britain, The Marmalade was followed by The Strawberry Jam and doubtless, at a mercifully obscure level, a wide range of preserves and condiments. Next came incompatible adjective/noun combinations, including The Clockwork Orange, from the title of the Burgess novel, The Soft Machine, etc. Now there has been another breakthrough -- why bother with the definite article? Why even have a noun? This has resulted in a spate of derivative names, none of which has achieved its object in my case, because I can't recall one.

Having read of the fantastically high number of groups which appeared on the banks of the Mersey in the past few years, I'm glad it wasn't a river like the Amazon. Let us be thankful for small Merseys.

THE FACE THAT MUNCHED A THOUSAND CHIPS

I was saddened to see that Greg Benford, in a report of his trip to Europe in

the current issue of Doorway, describes me as "wholesome" and "open faced as a half-made sandwich". Almost twenty years ago Walt Willis told me, to my great delight, that I had a "Rather sinsister" face -- and ever since then I've nursed the delusion that the front part of my head inspired in those who chanced to look at it an impression of mystery, reserve and fierce brooding intellect. Any time people seemed to avoid me I used to say, "Hah! They're made uneasy by my mystery, reserve and fierce brooding intellect". Now I learn that I'm merely wholesome, and that -- leaving aside the possibility he was talking in heraldic terms -- Walt was either being kind or was alarmed over the fact that I had just eaten an entire batch of his chocolate walnut slices.

Does anybody know a plastic surgeon who does a good sabre scar at a reasonable price?

AUTO SUGGESTIONS

Now that summer is here again, Irish Fandom looks forward hopefully to visits from overseas fans -- and as Will McNelly has set a precedent by bringing his own transport I thought it would be advisable to explain a few things about driving in Ireland.

Visitors to this country sometimes find things they don't particularly like. (Will McNelly, for instance, says that Irish toilet paper is only good for fine finishing of woodwork.) Other common protests are about the price of beer and Sunday closing; but the informed and patriotic Ulsterman easily counters the former by saying that no man values a thing he gets cheaply, and the latter by quoting the Irish Temperance League's dictum that visitors who are accustomed to a pre-lunch pint on Sunday find it a refreshing change instead to take a brisk turn around the Bog Meadows or some similar landmark.

In recent years, however, as more and more visitors bring their own cars a new criticism has been heard, and it is one which hurts all the more for being totally unfounded. "Ulster drivers are the worst in the world," we are assured by Britons and Americans alike. "It's because you didn't introduce driving tests till 1957, which means the majority of motorists never had to learn the rules of the road."

This, of course, is just another case of the blunter sensibilities of outsiders being unable to appreciate the subtleties and nuances of our folkways. It would hardly occur to a visitor that the Ulster motorist had succeeded in devising a much superior driving code of his own, one that is commonly recognised and practised throughout the Province.

Until now we have never deemed it necessary to commit our code to sterile print, but in the interests of international fandom the following is a brief summary of its major features.

The Swatragh Swing. Many Ulster motorists disdain to use their turn indicators, for the very good reason that such mechanical devices can develop faults and are therefore considered unreliable. The visitor in traffic behind a native motorist should instead learn to watch out for the Swatragh Swing which invariably presages a change of direction.

Before a right turn this takes the form of an abrupt swing into the left-hand lane; and before a left turn a sudden swerve into the right-hand lane. What could be simpler?

The Mournebeg Median. In other countries, many pedestrians are struck down because

(Continued on page 29.)

the fannish i
terry carr

I HAD A DREAM:

What a peculiar dream it was. I dreamed we were all on television.

In my dream it seemed I was watching the tube, and without any noticeable transition the mundane world of tv as we know it was transformed into the phantasmagorical world of fandom.

It must have been during the 11:00 o'clock news. Somehow, before I knew it, the weather forecaster had turned into Andy Porter, who grinned at the camera and said, "Hey, guess what the humidity's going to be tomorrow."

I sat bolt upright. I rubbed my eyes. I slept on.

Charlie Brown came on the screen, sitting behind a newsman's desk and looking grave. "Today's body-count from the throughways between New York and Boston..." he began, but I shuddered and switched channels.

And there was Dick Geis doing a talk-show, and lined up as guests next to him were Piers Anthony, Harry Harrison and Harlan Ellison. "I understand you're in town to plug your latest novel," Dick said to Piers, and instantly I switched away.

On the next channel Buck Coulson was interviewing Harry Harrison, Piers Anthony and Harlan Ellison. He said to Harlan, "I understand you're in town to plug your new short story."

I switched. And found Frank Lunney interviewing Harlan Ellison, Piers Anthony and Harry Harrison. He said to Harry, "I understand you're in town to plug your new feud," and hurriedly I punched the OFF button.

I sat shaking for a while. What was this? Had the science fiction nuts taken over? Had SFWA managed to gain control of the FCC? Or had General Sarnoff and the rest been SMOFs all along?

Curiosity overcame me: I turned the set back on.

It was the Doris Day show. Everything was as God intended it: Doris was cute and wholesome and just a little bit, just nicely kooky. The show was a situation comedy in which such unlikely things happened that it might have been a LASFS meeting. In fact, it was a LASFS meeting, and Doris Day had disappeared: Bjo was now the star of the show. The funny thing was, the plot didn't seem to change.

"Far out," I murmured, and changed channels again. Who could say what wonders might lie before me?

On the Smothers Brothers show, I found Greg and Jim Benford introducing Share a Little Tea with Pat Lupoff, who said, "Here's a handy hint for all you freak fans out there: sniff your correction fluid. Go on, just sniff it, breathe it in. Isn't that groovy? Sometimes I spend all day just typing one stencil and making all the typoes I can. Wow, sometimes I get a really long word and I can make too or three typoes right there; so if you know any groovy long words, why not write in and let me in on them? Meanwhile, peace, and don't forget to come to the rally where we'll all be burning our Heicon membership cards. Victory through vapors."

Then Leland Sapiro came on and said that in response to enormous public demand he'd consented to run for TAFF, and he started a campaign speech that seemed to be all about the theme of sin and redemption in the lettercolumns of last year's

Science Fiction Review. I switched away.

I found another talk-show, this one run by David Frost, or was it Eddie Jones, and he was interviewing Liberace, who turned into Forry Ackerman before my eyes. "How would you, in fact, define love?" Frost/Jones asked him, and Forry said, "I remember a day in 1927 when I first found a copy of Amazing Stories..."

"Spa fon," I said in bemusement, and off I went to a different channel. This one had Laugh-In, starring...good lord, was that Ted White and me? We were going to a closed-door fan party in somebody's sauna, and of course nobody had any clothes on. There was Harriet Kolchak hitting Isaac Asimov over the head with her purse, and there was Sam Moskowitz saying,"I don't mind when the hippie fans say their New Wave stories are psychedelic, but they're going too far when they claim Doc Smith was a speedfreak." Then over the screen flashed the legend YOU WILL ENJOY THE HEICON. THAT IS AN ORDER.

I couldn't take it, not even to see myself doing Dick Martin routines. So I turned the knob, and I was just in time to catch the ending credits for the News Special of the Month: "The Secret World of Richard Bergeron". Gee, too bad I missed that one.

From there on it was all downhill. Another news program came on, and the news was dull and depressing, just like the stuff you read last week in Locus. And to cap it all, on screen came Harlan, who'd just won his nineteenth Hugo, and just as he was explaining to the crowd that he was donating the trophy to Clarion up leaped John J. Pierce, who shot him right on-camera and was dragged off yelling, "Sic semper novus ordum!"

I sat bolt upright in bed, cold sweat bathing me. And it was many long minutes before I was able to convince myself that it had only been a weird dream, that I was now back safely in the comfortable world of fandom as we know it today.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

With this issue of Warhoon, fandom has a great fanzine in its midst for the first time in almost two years -- since the last issue of Warhoon, in fact.

I suppose a lot of people haven't really noticed, but fanzine fandom is in a pretty bad way these days. When fanzines like Beabohema and Locus are considered at the top of the field, and Charlie Brown and Piers Anthony get nominated as best fan writer of the year, then I find myself picking out TV Guide from the day's mail before I investigate the mimeographed envelopes.

Fanzine fandom, mark me, is turning into a cultural wasteland. It's appalling. Once we had faneds whose personas colored every page they published; now we get people who can write a year's worth of editorials and remain faceless shadows. (Quck, tell me what Frank Lunney's like.) Once upon a time, you see, there were people in fandom who were writers. I don't mean people who made their money turning out stories for If or Lancer Books, but real writers, people who could communicate feelings, ideas and experiences with words on paper. Most of these people were fans,not pros, and they were perfectly happy to be fans-not-pros. They weren't sf groupies whose ego ideals were Dean R. Koontz or Jack Wodhams.

It may sound a bit weird to hear me creebing about how much attention fanpublishers pay to science fiction, considering that I'm an occasional sf writer who likes to see comments on his stories, and a working editor who clips and saves every review of the SF Specials, but I'm thinking now of the things we gave up for all this stfnal discussion. We gave up Norm Clarke writing about the funny thingsin a jazzman's life; we gave up Mal Ashworth's gay, mad legends of Lancaster fandom; we gave up Dean Grennell

exchanging unforgivable puns with Walt Willis and Bob Bloch and Chuch Harris; we lost the totally individual comic outlooks of Charles Burbee and Calvin Demmon, and we lost the lovingly engraved essays of Redd Boggs, and Bill Donaho's unlikely anecdotes that were all true, and a hundred more things like them.

There was a time when an unknown fan like Bob Leman could publish a thin fanzine like The Vinegar Worm, filled with nothing but his own writings on any subject under the sun, with no letter column at all, and despite the fact that he hadn't even been asked to contibute to David Gerrold's anthology fans would actually pay attention. Nowadays Creath Thorne comes along with Ennui and people say, "Yeah, not bad; hey, did you see what Robert Moore Williams said about Alex Panshin in SFR?" Ennui doesn't seem to come out anymore.

Fandom as it's constituted today often seems to be a mass of protoplasm flowing thermotropically toward the nearest source of friction between professional writers, yearning for the heat and not really caring whether there's light or not. The ego tripping of someone whose claim to fame is that he sold a story to Venture is rushed into print; crotchety third-rate pros from the south write "the truth about" the New York publishing scene and are read deligently; temper and belligerence take precedence over talent, and sometimes I get the feeling that John Campbell's editorials would be the most popular thing going if only he'd write about science fiction people instead of his private stereotypes.

People wonder why TAFF doesn't capture fandom's imagination the way it used to. Well, aside from the fact that it's simply an outdated idea to exchange delegates between European and American conventions as though that were a novelty, there's the fact that we used to elect TAFFmen largely because we wanted to read what they'd write about their trips: in a fandom where it isn't particularly fashionable for mere fans to do anything interesting with words, who cares about trip reports?*

The whole orientation these days, as I see it, is that science fiction is something vital, visionary and Pretty Damn Important, and we can show our perceptiveness by lionizing the golden people who actually produce it. Interview them, review their stories, drop their names. This is a value system that makes fans into parasites, or at best second-class citizens. In the latest SF Commentary Bruce Gillespie complains of bad writing in a story by an ex-fan, and it follows as the night the day that he must add, "Once a fanzine writer, always a fanzine writer?" Oh boy.

Well, science fiction is vital, visionary and important, now and then and in varying degrees. But when seventy-five fanzines a month scramble to review the latest harvest of the newsstands you just know that most of that loving attention has to be going to waste on stories of somewhat limited quality. (Did you know that the Dictionary of American Slang reveals the original meaning of "crud" to be "Dried semen, as sticks to the body or clothes after sexual intercourse"?) It would be a different matter if fan critics devoted most of their comments to the best stories, but in a year when Piers Anthony's"Macroscope" is nominated for the Hugo we have proof positive that too many fans can't tell the difference between a novel and a kitchen sink.

Today it's seldom that I can read reviews for either entertainment or insight. Book and magazine reviewing has become the refuge of a mindless fandom, just comments on one story after another, a reflexive spewing out of emotional reactions in the form of sentences, with seldom any connections, extrapolations or conclusions. I read the reviews of a book to get the consensus of reactions to it, but to get any insight into the book I usually have to read it myself.

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*Yes, I know several TAFFmen including me didn't produce expected TAFFtrip reports. Save that for the question period later, please.

I'm aware, sometimes uncomfortably so, of the analogues between the fields of rock music and science fiction. The people who like both tend to be in the same age group (young), and their consciousness is often such that they enhance a record or book out of all recognition by adding their subjective associations to the material that's there. This can be the best way to enjoy art, but it doesn't produce judgments worth communicating in print.

It might actually be better for the state of fandom's own creativity if there weren't so much really good science fiction writing being done these past several years. Back in the dog days of science fiction, the late fifties when Randy Garrett, Bob Silverberg, Harlan Ellison and a few others wrote so much boilerplate for a living that the pro field clearly didn't deserve much attention, the fans had to rely on themselves for entertainment, so we had fanzines -- great fanzines -- like Oopsla! and Hyphen and Grue and Bem and Discord. They did talk about science fiction -- when there was something worth talking about. Some of Walt Willis' best fan writing was in his commentaries on John Campbell, and when Redd Boggs chose to review a book his comments were usually better than his subject.

I think the attitude of current sf fans, again similar to the one rock fans have about their field, is that science fiction is a continuing story wherein each writer and each book or magazine is another character or event in the ongoing chronicle. And when this attitude prevails, when a fanzine like Science Fiction Review serves its most important function as a checklist of who's mad at whom and why, then the news fanzine comes into its own as a publication read not so much with interest as with concern.

Which makes the task of a newszine publisher a lot easier, as a glance through a file of Locus certainly shows. Locus is evidently edited on the assumption that the ideal newszine would be produced by a computer, chock-full of facts whose ordering and interpretation is up to the reader. It's a long way from the irrepressibly cavalier attitude Ron Ellik had when he reported the news for us in Starspinkle. From the sixth issue: "In the Feb issue of Horizons, Harry Warner poses six pages of questions which need answers if his history of fandom (1939-1959) is to rank with Toynbee and Macaulay." From the eighth issue: "Dave Rike totalled his car on the way to the Sierras on 9 March -- he took a snow-bound curve too fast, and slid off the road. Beyond being amazed that his car slid off the road, Dave was unmarked by the accident; he rescued his popcorn from the wreck, gave the remains to the wrecking-truck that came for it, and went home after looking around the mountains."

None of that is great writing, but it is writing, it does communicate the fact that there was a man rather than a clipping service behind the typewriter. Maybe the reason we have so few fans who come through fanzine print as full-fledged people now is a quasi-religious delusion that fans aren't as "alive" as pros in some mystical sense, which is a little like thinking the audience is less real than the players.

But it's comforting to see that there are still a few people around who recognize fanpublishing as a process of creation rather than plaster-casting. There are fanzines like Egoboo, Nope and Focal Point, all good fanzines though none of them is a great fanzine; but they have the potential. There was, in an issue of Granfalloon a year or two ago, a most beautifully conceived convention report (by Ginjer Buchanan?) that told what happened at the SFCon in the form of a parody of Harlan Ellison's "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream." There are the fan artists/cartoonists both old and new: George Barr, Tim Kirk and Alicia Austin, Steve Stiles, Doug Lovenstein and Bill Rotsler. There are seasoned fan writers like Harry Warner, Ted White and Bob Tucker who've managed to remember that a writer should contribute more to an article than his byline.

And, of course, there's this issue of Warhoon. Fandom now has a great fanzine in its midst for the first time in almost two years.

WHITE RABBIT:

Carol and I couldn't make it for the whole week of this year's Milford SF Writers' Conference, but we did drive up Friday night and stay for the festivities through Sunday. The final Saturday night party is traditionally a blast, what with the influx of all sorts of people who couldn't get away during the week. Sometimes, if the Conference has been wearying or even depressing, the party is muted and tentative in its hilarity, but this year the week was reportedly very good, and I believe it, because the party was great.

In particular there was Gardner Raymond Dozois, a good young writer with an open face and flowing blond hair, doing his running Igor routine. Igor is his alter-ego as Dr. Frankenstein's assistant and he speaks huskily in such phrases as "Igor like that. Ho ho. Make Igor sweat." At one point it got so catching that five people stood in the kitchen discussing literature in Igor-talk. "What think of Nabokov?" "Ho ho! Igor love Nabokov. Vonnegut make Igor sweat too." This sort of thing is heady stuff to experience, believe me.

At 2:30, while I was having a serious intellectual discussion with A.J.Budrys about why blurb-writing isn't strictly speaking an artform, suddenly here came an entire conga line made up of most of the people at the party, singing and laughing, undulating in one door, across the room and out the other. "How did this happen?" I asked as they passed, and Kate Wilhelm Knight explained in some perplexity, "Damon asked me to rub his back, so I did, and then Gordy started rubbing my back, and Keith joined in behind him, and so forth, and here we are."

I shook my head disapprovingly. "What kind of people are you?"I shouted at the passing parade. "Look at you, some of the most respected names in science fiction, writers everyone looks up to for inspiration and leadership, and this is now you act. Noblesse oblige, dammit, noblesse oblige!"But they only chortled the more as they danced by.

Joanna Russ was collecting titles for science fiction books all night. My favorite was "Rouge Molecule",but there were other goodies like "Gynecologist To The Stars" and "Dangerous Vegetables". Separately, Norbert Slepyan (sf editor at Scribner's) and I were discussing titles for anthologies along the lines of Critics' Choice. Damon wandered into the room just then, so I said, "It could be "My Fifteen Favorite Science Fiction Stories Except For Those By Damon Knight". "Hey wait a minute, I protest," Damon protested. "Oh, sorry, Damon," I said. "How about "The Fifteen Worst Science Fcction Stories Of All Time Except For Those By Damon Knight"? "No no," he said, and went away.

There were a batch of people there from Clarion, none of whose names I caught except for Ed Bryant; the rest were Jack and Joe and no last names.Very good types all of them. They made up part of the Milford youth contingent which foregathered in the basement around drums and electric organ and guitar to jam rock while those above charted the future course of speculative fiction. Kate's son Chris, who's fifteen or sixteen, owns the drums and manned them while Charles Platt worked the organ and Jim Sallis doubled on guitar and harmonica. When I went down there they were doing a Steppenwolfe blues, with Gardner Dozois banging on a tambourine and Gordy Dickson watching Jim's fingering on his guitar. Later they jammed up something called "Obligatory Fellatio Blues" in honor of the surprising number of fellatio scenes in workshop stories the preceding week. "Oh, it's the obligatory fellatio scene," was a line much in use during the Conference.

All this may not paint quite the picture you expected of a Milford Conference, but it's the kind of thing that happens when creative people get together to have fun. Still, logical as it may be, it does strike me that things are getting a bit weird when the Milford Mafia becomes a bastion of fannish fandom. -- Terry Carr.

"Gafia too might be a way of life."

-- Walt Willis, 1958

A WEALTH OF FABLE

Harry Warner

Mrs. G.M. Carr was a Seattle fan better known in the city's fan club and as a member of Saps and Fapa than as an all-out participant in general fandom. She had twice or thrice the age of many fans, and offered as a fanzine writer a weird mixture of ultra-conservative housewife and decidedly unconventional opinionator. Her anti-Willis period was brief, violent, and variously explained.

While the campaign to bring Willis to South Gate was developing, Mrs. Carr struck, principally in her Fapa publication, Gemzine. Her springboard was made of two hinged portions that seem today even shakier then the normal platform for any political purpose. Mrs. Carr expressed outrage because Willis had written lightly about the "snog in the fog" motto for a forthcoming British convention and because, she claimed, he was angry over Bob Madle's victory in a Taff campaign. A contributing factor may have been even more incredible: someone in the United Kingdom had sent Mrs.Carr a copy or two of The Reporter, a publication which she had apparently never seen before. She blamed Willis, calling the publication "a shocking revelation to me" and "a disgrace to our nation."

In Ploy, Walter had said of the slogan: "If we're not careful, some of these sex-starved Americans will ask for their money back if we don't run the con like a brothel." Mrs. Carr appeared to take seriously a statement which had been intended to show through hyperbole the absurdity of mading a big thing of objections to a lighthearted slogan, then further extracted "sex-starved Americans" from context to bolster her theory that Willis was anti-American.

There had been some bitterness and rumors had sprung up in some sections of fandom about the Taff campaign which Madle won. Willis denied that he had passed on stories or added to the clamour. In the fall, 1957, Fapa mailing, Mrs. Carr took it for granted that he had done so, in such heated terms as: "Ever since your attempt to dictate to US fandom how it should conduct our end of the campaign was opposed, you have displayed an increasing bitterness. I can understand that this problem of establishing a caste system in fandom impinges on a very real and basic difference in social attitude between Europe and America. The unsportsmanlike way you have acted in expressing your disappointment that your favored candidate did not win has been a disgrace not only to yourself but to all of the United Kingdom. Don't you think it is time you apologized for your unfounded accusations and your lack of confidence in the Americans?"

Up to this point, Willis had enjoyed a near-perfect press. Differences that he had with individual fans had occurred in private manner, and the nearest approach to serious public criticism had been of an indirect type: some grumbling that his company on his first trip to the United States had been monopolized by a small group of fans. Willis was hurt and spoke plainly in reply to Mrs. Carr. "A vicious streak several inches wide is hanging down beneath your flowered cotton," he announced in a letter which denied the anti-American charges and the role she would have him play in an anti-Madle whispering campaign. He stood up for the right to express opinions on Taff and claimed no attempt to dictate to fandom about Taff.

But at the start of 1958, Willis decided not to accept the invitation to South Gate in '58. In February, he announced to fandom that his wife's pregnancy and baby-sitter problems were among the reasons he was declining with thanks. Money that had already been collected was divided between Taff and the Solacon treasury. Then, after the worldcon, Willis said publicly some plainer things about the situation. His first enthusiasm for the trip to South Gate, Willis recall-

Part Four

ed, had been interrupted by the fear that this special fund would damage Taff. Then the Outlanders, who originated the special fund idea, insisted on telling fandom about the idea, fandom urged Willis to come, and Willis decided to accept without a public statement of such acceptance. Then, Willis said, "With consummate timing GMCarr took the chance to publish her allegations that I was anti-American and an embittered loser over Taff, coupled with sneers at the Outlanders for having invited me. It was obviously impossible for me to accept money from Americans when many fans believed I despised them, or to appear to be competing with Taff when they thought me a frustrated dictator. The other reasons I gave at the time for not coming were real enough, but this one was the most depressing."

By this time, Mrs. Carr had issued a semi-recantation. In the summer, 1958, Fapa mailing, she brought forth the claim that she had deliberately chosen him as target for remarks about the Taff rumors because "I considered (Willis) a fan of such stature and so firmly entrenched in fandom, that nothing I could say would have any effect." She did not explain why she brought up the matter at all if she intended her Taff remarks to have no effect.

A particularly unfortunate side effect of the whole wretched smear campaign was the loss of Willis to Fapa. He had been a member since the start of the decade, in a era when it was so simple to enter the organization that Walter joined by expressing interest. He was not Fapa's most prolific member, but he turned up regularly as a contributor to magazines published by Lee Hoffman, Vernon McCain, and Shelby Vick, and with a few issues of his own Fapa publication, Pamphrey. The magazine lacked the stature of Hyphen and Slant, but it had the title that theoretically belonged to one of them: Pamphrey had been the word chosen first by the pin when Walter was deciding on a title for his first fanzine by the help of luck and a dictionary. Walter told Fapa in his final contribution: "I'm not leaving Fapa merely to put as much distance as possible between myself and GMCarr. 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 BNF and I don't like what it involves. 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. By early 1957 I was beginning to think that gafia too might be a way of life. I felt I had done as much after the Chicon as before and that in some weird was the books were square."

Willis wasn't forgotten at the Solacon. Dottie Faulkner and Rick Sneary climbed the steps of South Gate's City Hall and dipped a banner to symbolize the absence of the person who had planned to join them in that reunion. ("The life of the South Gate tradition has coincided almost exactly with mine in fandom and I think of it as one of the eternal verities," Willis had written. "One of the reasons I was so keen on getting the Worldcon nomination for London in '57 was that that was the only way South Gate could get it in '58.") Meanwhile, Mrs. Carr never recovered the favor she lost in most of fandom; Fanac, the leading news publication of the time, even announced in 1959 a movement to cut her from fanzine mailing lists and ignore her because she "has carried her promulgation of warped effusions in the form of personal attacks just too damned far." She never again ran for Taff, after losing in 1955, and had begun to concentrate her fan activity in the NFFF as the 1960s arrived.

Walter had kept talking about the United States after his first coming. Usually his statements were as anti-American as this one: "What really did impress me was the American small town, which seemed to me the nearest thing to the ideal place to live in that has appeared so far on this planet. Pleasant houses, tree-lined streets, young people in summer clothes, and warm evenings filled with the crepitation of crickets and of neon signs -- symbolically indistinguishable in sound." In return, the notion of a second discovery by Willis of America refused to die over here. As soon after the

Carr attack as April, 1960, Ted White and Les Gerber talked over a new fund but when Gerber sent out feelers toward Belfast, Walter suggested waiting a year before a formal invitation. The Second Coming was officially proclaimed as soon as 1961 arrived, by means of a special issue of Void, White's fanzine. This issue took the form of a plea to Walter to come back, voiced by the editor, Gerber, Greg Benford, Pete Graham, the Fanoclasts, the most fannish group in the city, and most of the rest of New York fandom. The trip was proposed for 1962 for significant reasons: it would represent the tenth anniversary of WAW with the Crew in '52, and once again the worldcon would be in Chicago. The appeal to Willis included this time Madeleine, who hadn't come over the first time and had by now become a fannish legend of almost Walterian proportions, for her frequent key roles in the stupendous quantity of half-true, half-fictional accounts of Irish fandom written by Berry, White, and Willis himself. That issue of Void was a special Willis appreciation issue that had been in the planning stages for eight months. Since a large proportion of 1961's fandom had been learning how to blow noses in 1952, much of the issue contained material about Willis that acquainted him with the new fannish generation. Berry, for instance: "His mind is so nimble, so quick, that it takes apart every sentence he hears, every word is carefully digested, every possible meaning and inflection tried out, and an invariably clever pun is the result." Meanwhile, veteran fans were learning from other sources the newest aspects of the Willis legend. Scrabble, for instance, had begun to assume part of the proportions that ghoodminton had once possessed in Oblique House. Berry accused Willis of using a three-month leave of absence from work to publish his own dictionary for this purpose. There were those who wanted to hear from Walter's own lips how a newcomer to Irish fandom, Ian McAuley, had done graduate work in atomic physics, then proceeded to take a job in a fertilizer factory. Fans were still whispering about how Willis could have forestalled the awful moment at the Solacon when one of the tea-drinking contest participants had produced teabags.

The campaign succeeded in the wildest possible completeness. The final figure raised by donations, lotteries, and other means was $1,784.66, more than the total income of some early worldcons, and that figure doesn't include some 22 pounds raised in England. Some fanzines published special issues at special prices, like the $1 per copy issue of Xero which sold out quickly its edition of 118 copies and immediately became a collector's item. By the end of 1961, Willis could say: "Everything has been done so gracefully and apparently painlessly that I'm determined to accept the same way. I shall even try not to feel inadequate."

The Willises arrived in the United States on August 28, 1962. The wisdom of importing both fans became apparent immediately, because they found not one but two welcoming parties, offering rival greetings to the nation and New York City. Walter went in the car driven by Dick Eney, and Madeleine became a passenger of the delegation driven by Ted White. Both vehicles rendezvoused at the home of Don Wollheim. The Larry Shaws provided overnight accommodations for the Willises during their stay in New York, where the Dick Lupoffs hosted an imposing welcoming party on August 29. Sixth Fandom was officially declared resurrected at this festivity.

The Willises and Ethel Lindsay, Taff winner of the year, had decided to invest in special Greyhound tickets which provided 99 days of unlimited travel for $99, a decision that was later to have unfortunate consequences for the peace of mind of Walter and the Greyhound administration. Walter kept his 99-day ticket in his official Chicon coat, a garment created by James White with interior pockets of tremendous proportions for better transportation of fanzines, program booklets, and similar necessities for fannish survival. One pocket was fashioned into a quick-draw holster for a notebook, and the Willis pantaloons were provided with a billfold hideaway in a remote area.

"It was the best convention ever, pitted against the worst hotel ever," Willis

said in summary of the Chicon. He had a strange sense of returnigg to a previous decade, when he found a Catholic girls' con again in progress in the hotel, and saw on Lee Hoffman's dress the Harp brooch that he had bought her at Chicon II. Jim Webbert was again there, but Jim helped to prove the existence of 1962 by behaving maturely this time. One of the scheduled side effects of Willis' Second Coming did not occur, however, because the world was not destroyed. It was generally conceded that the first confrontation among Willis, Dean Grennell, and Ackerman would result in an earth-shattering ultimate pun. ("He almost becomes destiny itself, unobtrusively manipulating events and laying powder trains of association to lead up to the big bang", Bill Temple once said of Willis' punmaking.) The official explanation for this sole blot on the Willis trip was that Ackerman was forced to leave before anything extreme occurred, and a small earthquake in Iran was the only effect noted by the national press.

Curiously, this worldcon was conspicuous for its lack of fan-slanted program items, despite the special visitors. The Willises were given a reception at the con, where Ethel was also honored. Wrai Ballard found it so crowded that he was afraid of getting bitten if anyone talked near him. The Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund, Taff, and Washington fandom formally sponsored the reception where some 250 enjoyed the Willises, Pepsi-Cola, and potato chips, nearly half as many as showed up for the Chicon itself. Walter also served as a member of a fan panel which Grennell moderated. Not everyone heard him explain that history and astronomy were capable of stimulating his sense of wonder, because the microphones were hooked into someone's tape recorder, rather than the public address system.

No Harp Stateside emerged from the Second Coming, but both Willises wrote in various places about their adventures. He was impressed when Larry Shaw, introduced among the pros, stood up and said, "I'm a fan." People trying to get out of the circle in which fans had been formed for the masquerade reminded Walter of pips in an orange, when they eventually squirted free. Heinlein's white suit impressed Walter as too spotless for the titanic struggles in which Heinlein said he had indulged to get to Chicago to receive a Hugo. Walter considered Bloch's talk the accomplishment of the impossible: both regular fans and monster fans were satisfied with it.

After the Ccon, the Willises saw their first drive-in movie, and headed West. In mid-September, Bill Donaho threw a party in the Bay Area honoring them. It was a good thing that he'd been saving up home-brew for the preceding two months, because about sixty turned out, including virtually all of the Little Men and Golden Gate Futurian Society. The Willises bussed eastward across the country on a virtually non-stop basis, failing to find the place were Walter longed to live, "a small university town in the Rocky Mountains just outside New York with the climate of Florida." In turn, Greyhound failed to find something both the Willises longed to possess, their luggage. They took off without it for Ireland on September 29. From his own ample literary resources, and with assistance from a lot of native fans, Walter guided a campaign of harassment against the Greyhound people whose equal hadn't been seen in fandcm since the last time a Fapa official editor gafiated with a mailing undistributed.

Walter and Madeleine haven't returned to the United States since then. I believe that I am the first to point out publicly the fact that it's time to start planning, with 1972 just around a couple of corners.

(To be continued.)

.....

...PSSST! Any fanzines for sale? I'll buy whole collections or copies of Quandry (1-12), Spaceways (1), Psychotic (1-2), Xero (1-2), Oopsla! (13), Fanac, Innuendo, etc. Or I can trade many copies of Hyphen, Oopsla!, Quandry, Slant, or a complete set of Chanticleer or Vampire for the above wants. Dick Bergeron.

THE SNAKE PIT

Please remember most of the letters quoted below were written over a year ago and the authors may have changed their minds about certain matters. I'll preface some of them briefly if they seem to desperately require a context -- in the meantime if something seems terribly puzzeling there are about 50 copies of Wrhn 26 still available from your humble scribe at cover price. :: Last issue I welcomed Terry Carr to these pages as a columnist, mentioned our "heated debates" of the early 60's, our battle over Joe Gibson, and my "letter dated '51 or '52 advising a very fledgling Terry Carr that his obviously carefully prepared columns for Peon were his best fan activity."

TERRY CARR replied: I'd forgotten the arguments we had in the early 60's, but your mention of them sent me to my collection and I dug out Kipples and Wrhns. Strangely, there are holes in my collection, and in this case they correspond each time with the issue in which I might've replied to a broadside from you, so I have no idea what I said back, if anything. I remember that the anti-discussionzine columns I wrote for Cry and the paragraph in Fanac were written during a particularly bad period of my life, when my first marriage was inexorably breaking apart, and knew even at the time that my writing during that period was turning sour. I did think that you took the furthest-out examples of my opinionating, though, and didn't pay enough attention to some second thoughts I worked in here and there -- but you did cannily include enough lavish lefthanded egoboo (in the form of "surely a man as sensible and talented as Terry couldn't seriously believe" to take the edge off my annoyance, so that I think the only answer I ever set down was an implicit one in my one-installment fanzine review column in Habakkuk.

But that whole argument served to teach me several things about the reactions of one's ego when he thinks he's being threatened with extinction, even if only in the fannish sense. During 1960 I had Habakkuk, a fanzine that despite its manifest virtues I still consider under-edited, reaping hoardes of praise right in my own back yard (and winning the Fanac Poll) while the whitherers of fandom talked of a "New Thing" style -- discussionzines -- that would shortly replace us fannish hasbeens. This was annoying as hell because it really seemed threatening when my mundane life was in process of derailment too; so when I ran across a couple of really flagrant bits of nonsense such as those of Bill Gray and, to a lesser extent, Dick Lupoff, I leveled all cannons and fired...grabbing whatever ammunition I could find, some of which proved to be garbage, as you pointed out.

But isn't it interesting, the parallels between this period in fannish history and our current period in the pro field, where again we have a "New Thing" and some apparently threatened egos yelling intemperately and largely nonsensically. Having been through it in the microcosm, I can see the pattern more clearly now, and I'm a bit embarrassed when I see established, accomplished professional writers and editors reacting as though the popularity of a Disch or an Ellison could somehow negate "Against The Fall Of Night," "I Robot" or whatever. There are indeed new writers doing extremely good things in sf, but surely none of us can forget that they stand on the shoulders of giants, many of them "Old Thing" giants. I do wish people like Lester del Rey or Isaac Asimov or whoever could fully realize just how large, how vast, is the sf field that they helped to build, and how many mansions there are in it with no signs of ghetto crowding. (If we have slums that need clearing, they're nowhere near Asimov Avenue or Pohl Place.)

But back to remembrances of our earlier tiffs, Dick. I doubt that I ever answered your published letter on the Joe Gibson affair, for the simple reason that I was forced to realize that I'd been wrong from the start. My problem there was that Joe was, I thought, a pretty close friend of mine, and so I felt rather fiercely loyal to him and consequently laid the most liberal interpretations possible on his writings. But my interpretations were of course incorrect, and when I found that Joe was busily contradicting me and supporting your arguments by what he was saying in G2 -- which I

wasn't getting myself, since I refused to subscribe to any fanzine and friendships didn't count on Joe's mailing list -- I dropped the whole thing in disgust. Joe later snubbed me pointedly at the 1964 worldcon (I think it was over the Boondoggle) and I didn't even bother trying to say hello when I saw him last year. :: But speaking of remembrances, you may be surprised to hear that I remembered, much more clearly than our two arguments, that letter you sent me 18 years ago telling me you thought Fanta-stuff in Peon was my best fanac because it was so carefully prepared. You were, in fact, a strong early influence on my fanac because of that letter -- though I confess I've thought for years it was Richard Elsberry, not Bergeron.

I'd better cut this short; it was supposed to be just a note, but you see what happens when I write to you. I do want to say, though, that the idea of getting Harry Warner to continue his in-depth studies of fans and fan-groups is a very fine one and I hope you'll be able to prevail on him to do so.

And I'd like to say to John Foyster that my list of my ten favorite fanzines was most definitely an all-time list, and if it concentrated (it did) on fanzines after 1950, that's because fanzines after 1950 have been much, much better than earlier ones. It would take a Warner article to explain just why this is (earlier fans tended to be younger, they had fewer accomplished writers/faneds to emulate, they had less money, very few of them were college educated, the sf they read was mostly of lower quality, etc. etc.), but I think it's undeniable that there was absolutely nothing before 1950 that can seriously be considered beside the really stunningly good recent fanzines like Hyphen or Warhoon. Sky Hook comes closest, but it didn't hit its peak till the early 50's; other than that, we had flashes of brilliance amidst juvenility and mediocrity: the artwork in Ashley's Nova or Goldstone's Fantasia, some good critical writing in Fantasy Advertiser, good gossip columns in Spaceways and The Science Fiction Fan (? -- I think that's the one I mean: a late-30's-early-40's hektoed half-sized zine that was for a time involved in the New Fandom-Futurians feuds), some very funny, even brilliant, humor writing in Shangri-L'Affaires or Spacewarp, and so forth. Foyster's example, Le Zombie, will serve just as well as an example for me: there were marvelous things in LeZ, many of them, but I have many issues and have read many others and I have to say that the average level was not that high; there was an amazing amount of sophomoric and cornball humor (Walt Leibscher's godawful punnery, for example). It was on the whole a very good fanzine, but primarily for its role of gadfly and focal point during the lean fanning years of World War II.

Having done such a dogly deed at the base of this fannish monument, I'd better sign off and go away. But fear not, Bob Tucker: your monument will continue to stand, while my comment will evaporate quickly. (35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, NY, 11201)

MARION BREEN: I seldom read or comment on fanzines any more, but I have been watching with amusement, not to say amazement, the strange controversy aroused by Walter's review of 2001.

It says a lot to me about the nature of criticism and the unbridgeable gap, probably, between science fiction criticism and that which is normal otherwhere. Science fiction fans, by and large, are again proving to me with rare exceptions that they are generally an unimaginative and intolerant lot. They disagree with Walter's critical analysis -- but this isn't enough; they seem distressed and outraged that he should dare say such things.

Now if criticism is anything at all except jacket-blurb writing, it is a way of saying; "This is where I was at when I read (saw, listened to) this particular work; how would you like to try sharing my thought processes?" This sort of thing is what makes criticism fun, when it is fun. It is what makes it possible to have a casebook on "Turn Of The Screw" with one person swearing that James was writing a "straight-

forward ghost story" and getting very incensed at "dubious symbolic or psychological implications" and another doing a workable Freudian exegesis. More recent examples of this amplification that interest, as well as beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, have been "Tolkien And The Critics", not to mention "The Pooh Perplex".

Well then. "There are nine and fifty ways/ Of composing tribal lays/ And every single one of them is right." Who am I, who is Walter, who is Ted White, for that matter who is Arthur C. Clarke, to say that thus and no otherwise is the way to interpret 2001? But they do.

Maybe we need a special "casebook on 2001 criticism."

The point is that all of these criticisms are honest and valid ways of saying; "This is what 2001 meant to ME".

What seems to upset most readers of Walter's criticism, is simply the non-materialistic explanation he gives it. Walter and I saw the film together. Many of the points in the review are those which we whispered to one another, or talked over on the way home. His review is not mildly incomprehensible, since he and I (who after all have read many of the same books) without discussing it, came to the same conclusions about what was meant in certain sequences. I read the novel "("Sentinal"?) months after seeing the film, and was interested, though not entirely certain I was wholly wrong, about the way in which it had been written/explained. Walter has not yet read it. After all, at the Lunacon, Clarke himself stated that the film was to be experienced as an art form in itself independently of the novel, and running to the novel to see what he "really" meant seems to be the wrong approach to experiencing something like the film, with its almost wholly visual and nonverbal approach.

Science fiction fans, by and large, are terrified by, and unable fairly to contemplate, any non-materialistic interpretation of anything. Their watchword seems to be that of the supposed scientist who said, relevant to ESP, "On any other subject, one-tenth the evidence would have convinced me; on this one, ten times the evidence will not convince me. I seldom bother to argue with such people; there simply is no point of communication.

But to the end of my life I will maintain that when a writer creates a purely visual and symbolic work, without deliberately supplying a printed programme, he is thereby stating that the watcher (and by extension the critic) may interpret it as he pleases, and therefore any interpretation which is an honest record of experience is equally valid. There is a famous painting which is hanging in the Cleveland museum. It consists of two unevenly divided areas of blue and red; no more. And no less. I have asked half a dozen people who have seen it for their reactions. No two had the same reaction. If at this level of simplicity, interpretations about the artist's purpose can exist, at the infinitely multiplied level of such a visual construct as 2001, there could be at least ten thousand reactions.

And I, for one, find it stimulating to read at least ten of them; and where I may violently disagree with one or nine, I am willing to admit that this is where they were at where they saw it.

Colette write years ago; "The novel which the reader reads is almost never the novel which the author wrote."

But some of the critics who have jumped, foot first, into this affray, have seemed more angry than I would be if Walter had reviewed one of my books and missed the point!

Why does it matter to them that what he saw came from a different fund of memory,

experience and habit than what they saw?

The reaction of the critic -- Walter or another -- always says more about the critic than it does about the thing reviewed; which is why I seldom review anything. I don't like revealing myself so nakedly. "Tell me what you love and I will tell you what you are." But the critic who does so has said something precious about human nature and himself; and he should be listened to lovingly. I cherish all the comments on Walter's reviews, favorable and execrable; but I am gleefully puzzled at how they can yell so loud, without realizing it, "I am intolerant, I dare not listen to this man's words...someone might be listening...."

Long live criticism and critics, and long live the laughter among them....but I wish they'd laugh loud and not so nervously. (2 Swaim Ave. Staten Island, NY 10312)

JAY KINNEY: My two favorite pieces in this issue were Harry Warner's continuation of his history of Willis, and Willis' own Harp. I have recently been reading through Arniekatz's file of Hyphens and getting the hell impressed out of me. Those fanzines read so well now (even, and perhaps especially the letters) that they almost transport me bodily back to 1954...which is a bit uncomfortable as I was only four years old at the time. They also establish the fact that "the latest" is not always the best -- something which is sort of hard to remember sometimes in the jungles of the Cultural Revolution. Old Oopslas have the same lasting power it seems, too. All of which makes me look wildly around to see if there is any fanzine currently being produced which will be just as readible in another 15 years. Not too damn many. Warhoon most assuredly. Quip too, though in a different way. In comparison, SFR will probably be just so much dead controversy in the years to come. The majority of the rest of the fanzines are usually dead even before they come out.

BRUCE GILLESPIE: Your point about not reading fiction really annoyed me for a couple of minutes. Happily, John Foyster answered in exactly the right way. Indeed, I think that was the best letter Foyster has submitted to any magazine. The aim of all thought, or at least all structured thought, is to explore existence. Most of the time, the so-called "objective" reporter skims the cream of circumstantial triviality from the milk of existence, and leaves most of the remainder unseen. I feel this about pop sociology and psychology in particular. Probably little real science makes the school textbooks and the best-seller non-fiction charts. The world as the journalist and tv newsman sees it, is more of a fantasy than anything a fiction writer could invent. Presumably that is the truth behind the saying "Truth is stranger than fiction".

The great fiction writer (both Foyster and I will take Proust's "Swann's Way") makes no pretense at objectivity, because the scientific, or even the historical model, is not exact enough to detail the relationship between the individual psyche and "existence", whatever it may be. Any great work of fiction has to deal with important ambiguities of human thought, and not the monumental (and very boring) clarities of a sociological text. The most important ambiguity is that of the human mind. There is the conscious soul that observes, and the world "out there" that seems to exist. How do you know it exists? Should you try proving its worth? Should one be content with the private, the ill-formed, the immature view? Should one cut oneself off from attempted self-knowledge, and seek to leap right out of the confines of the personality towards the universe that beckons to be embraced? In short, what should the individual human look for? What within and without himself does the individual human have to contend with? This is the sort of multiple question that no journalist can even begin to phrase. A poet captures these questions at a particular moment in their gestation. Only in the rigorous, but diffuse, structure of a novel such as Proust's can the questions be worked out in time and space, in terms of both the writer's psyche and the reader's. The object of literature is to map the writer's mind, and if the reader can never be privileged to trek every crevice of the terrain of the mind of the writer,

he can, by hard work and intelligence, get to know the map very well.

On the other hand, as you might point out, the writer's mind is downright barren unless it has itself attempted to stock his mind from the "world outside". This seems to be another dimension of the ambiguity. Perhaps one can say that there is a continuum between the soul and the universe. Psychology cannot describe this continuum, except in terms of some ridiculously mechanistic and or biological functions, and the philosophical mind/body problem is no nearer to being solved than it ever was. It remains for the great fiction writers to transmit the experience felt by every human of a relationship that cannot be solved by analysis, but can be explored.

You may extend this viewpoint to your editorial expressing disappointment at the fans' disappointment in, or indifference to, recent moon shots. The role of science fiction has been, for me, to look at the world in a particular way, which should theoretically be both a wider and a narrower way than that used by more conventional fiction. Science fiction should seek to explore and uncover the possibilities of existance -- not the-world-as-it-is, but existence-as-it-may be. This leads both to originality, and mere fancy. We all know into which category most sf falls. Far worse, most sf does not even make an attempt to be novel and original, because its adherents like the cosy warmth of musty cliches, and would be scared to death if sf ever did what it was supposed to do.

Now, the idea of flying to the moon, and all the possible ways of getting there, were fully explored a long time ago. The idea of moon travel, which was the really interesting thing in the first place, has been old and stale for twenty or thirty years. The Moon Landing, like heart transplants, and even computerization, had the distinct feel of deja vu for many sf readers. The sense of wonder must turn into the sense of fulfilment. Like you, I feel the sense of fulfilment, but I would hope sf has gone way ahead of moon landings, Mars landings, or whatever, towards new planes of Wonder. This, of course, was what was provided in 2001 -- the old projections were given a higher order of importance and became completely new entities.

I think this is what can be read into the current hogwash kicking around American fan circles about "New Wave" and "exploration of inner space". A developing field must advance to higher stages of abstraction, but when this happened in English sf, the American fans were caught particularly flat-footed. They had, as far as I can see, become contented with ideas that were out-dated twenty years ago. When something really new arrived, the large mass of reactionary fandom raised its brutish collective head and snarled in outraged fear. The paranoid reaction was all the more marked because the beast had no real idea of what it was afraid -- anything more like the elephant-afraid-of-a-mouse legend cannot be imagined. New Worlds, with all of its 5000 circulation, in England, was read by very few Americans, and is still not read by many, although many of the more enlightened (and better paid?) fans seem to import it. Meanwhile, when its influence filtered down through the editors to the readers, the implications of the New Wave were accepted without demur, and with lots of beautiful money. I doubt if Norm Spinrad will be starving on the proceeds of "Bug Jack Barron", or whether Harvey Jacobs is any less acceptable in Playboy for having sold to NewWorlds.

What has all this to do with the Moon Landing? Everything. It excited me -- it was, as we always knew it would be, the most important exploratory step for man in six or seven hundred years. It must put back confidence into man -- a confidence that has quite correctly been missing during this century. As a race (and not only as a single country or civilization) man is going somewhere again, even though it will take a long time, and even though these developments will almost inevitably be used for military purposes. As long as scientific and self-aware man can stay one step ahead of brutish man, we may keep going.

But... all these implications were realized many years ago in sf. The moon landing

does not effect sf a bit, because sf, and the best sf writers, have been romping on ahead of Moon landings. The tools of man cannot remain the centre of interest; the sf writers now must explore the real heart of the problem - Man himself, or within sf's narrower limits, the entity that is the "psyche". Novelists like Philip Dick and Brian Aldiss are doing precisely this, and they now lead the field in a spectacular way. Mr. Ballard, who seems to have invented all these cliches, never quite made it, I don't think. It remained for Aldiss to sharpen the blunt instruments of analysis that Ballard handed to him. As Aldiss himself says in SF Commentary 2, it took Dick to "digest the whole field of sf and come up with a creative variety distinctly his own".

The above is hardly original. Aldiss himself has trumpeted the "inner space" clarion for several years, and has been writing stunningly in this genre for even longer. "Cryptozoic" is an ill-starred foray into Aldiss' new preoccupations, but his new novel, based on some dazzling stories from New Worlds, should be the great classic of the post-Outer-Space science fiction. However, you don't seem to have read Aldiss as either polemicist or novelist, so I hand you his ideas in my own way. For my own part, that's the reason why I look beyond the Moon Landing to...a slab two million years old and the withered gentleman who will command it? (Australia)

JOHN FOYSTER: I wish I could be as optimistic as Terry Carr seems to be in this reprint which you introduced so well. Perhaps the problem is that when you're way down any change seems to be an improvement. And we are a long way down just now. There are all sorts of things which Terry sees as encouraging but which I see as just continuing the present farce. Poetry, for example, was alive and well when last I looked, not dead in the exemplars of the pop scene Terry names: granted I've only seen lyrics of about half of them, but I just can't grasp anything poetic there, or in International Times either, to choose another place and time. Maybe Terry is very close to the scene and I'm too far away. :: It also seems that somehow Terry is using 'non-linearity' in just about the most superficial way possible. Certainly the writers for New Worlds do so. But my daughter doesn't talk in sentences: children just starting school can't describe their feelings. That's a different kind of non-linearity, the kind New Worlds favours, the kind which large numbers of teenagers favour, and the kind which, apparently, Terry Carr favours. :: What would cheer me rather more would be to see large numbers of people realising that unless most of us get our finger out there isn't going to be a world in which we can have a ball. And then getting the fingers out.

The three pieces on Willis go together well: although Harry Warner's article contains little that is new it does gather into one place a large number of small pieces. And Willis himself, by spreading out into realms about which he has been generally silent, shows that he has plenty of cards still up his sleeves. But I can't help wondering how Nudgism works when a situation arises which must be dealt with quickly and certainly: perhaps this is what Willis has in mind when he promises to write about Northern Ireland in his next column. Meanwhile I'm disappointed that he chose an Australian aborigine as an example of remoteness, since an Indian would have probably been a better example. Anyone wanting to get a personal introduction to an Australian aborigine could probably not manage much faster than through me. :: This article makes me all the more regretful that I phrased my comment on the column about Flann O'Brien in a way which would enable you to distort it (in my remark there is no suggestion of Willis publishing old material, only of Bergeron carrying out this activity which, in some ways, is reminiscent of John Bangsund). (rb: My apologies! And my miss-reading, apparently. Here's what I read: "I've a little theory about Walt's non-mention of 'At Swim-Two-Birds'. I have often complained to John Bangsund about his practice of holding material until it is cobwebbed and then publishing it as though it is fresh and new. Now if this was a piece Walt wrote for the old Wrhn it would be easy to understand why he wouldn't mention Flann O'Brien's death or 'At Swim-Two-Brids'." Of course, I read "his" as a reference to Walt; knew I had no old Willis mss languishing for publication and had no way of knowing whether Walt had in fact

written the piece for the old Wrhn, put it aside in favor of something else and then decided to exhume it failing inspiration for that issue. At any rate, please know I wasn't trying to distort your meaning and that Walt knows you weren't berating him.)

Concerning my letter, I blushingly confess that after sending it off to you I thought I'd better check up on my own reading habits and found that in 1968 I read more non-fiction than fiction. Of course, that is counting C.G. Jung as non-fiction. I find this hard to explain, except perhaps that last year I was rather busy and non-fiction is much easier reading than fiction. Nor was I thinking of memorizing the contents of non-fiction books, but the trouble is that too many of them don't have much purpose beyond that. The few non-fiction books written to entertain or influence probably manage to have just as many facts wrong as those who demand memorization. Maybe my trouble is that I don't like guys who set out to be objective: at least a writer of fiction admits his bias. Buck Coulson's comment seems to provide ammunition for Andrew Sarris' contention (expressed in his review of 2001 last year) that sf raaders are no good schmoes because they cannot face the world in their own time. I'm uncertain about the attitude one should take on this, but I am inclined to think that the worse the world gets the more time people should put into doing something about it (as opposed to trying to escape from it because it is more unpleasant). But then I think Farmer was (and is) barking up the wrong tree as well. I dunno how you'll ever get around to reading fiction: it seems you'll just have to keep trying every now and then and perhaps you'll hit the jackpot eventually. (rb: It's just that there are so many other things I'd rather be doing.) (12 Glengariff Dr., Mulgrave, Vic. Australia)

JACK GAUGHAN: The answer to your inquiry as to why most fan art is Tarzan oriented seems to me to be absurdly simple. So simple, in fact, that I may be wrong but here's my theory...do with it what you will.

Most fan artists are young and new to drawing.

When you are young and new to drawing to have put anything, anything at all on paper is a gas....particularly if it looks like something. So rather than pursue the difficult and perhaps tedious method of drawing by observing the world around them they go for a quick, easier, symbolic method of doing something that looks like something. I did the same thing myself when I was a kid. The most easily grasped set of symbols available to them is this short-hand way of drawing called comic art... wherein the drawing is less drawing than an accumulation of short-hand symbols for jaws and eyes and noses and legs and arms and stuff. You see the important thing to them (as it was to me) is to produce something in a mode which is acceptable and since comic art is in print and therefore official it is acceptable and an achievable goal. You can do something close to being acceptable right NOW rather than go through the long process of building and growing. Most of the muscular-type, Tarzan-type fan art reflects not drawing but little tricks like drawing the convergence of lines of muscles (however inaccurately) or just the shadows....well, all the tricks of the comic vocabulary of symbols and VOILA! a drawing!

That they are largely Tarzan-type is, I suppose, because of the same reason I do so many doodles myself in that vein and that is that all those swords and lion tails and bracelets and boots and stuff are more interesting and fun to draw than a guy in a business suit and that the Tarzan literature is probably the first thing one encounters when growing out of comics into the wider fields of literature. In my case it was Planet Stories.

So... its really nothing very complicated and its all part of the growing process. Speaking for myself, I am amazed at the favourable reception some of what I assumed to be my most far-out drawings receive. I mean they're not all just Tarzan fans or Rock fans or Heinlein fans out there. The breadth of fandom and pro-dom today is truly

wondrous and I think that a lot of noise generated about new waves and old waves and swords and sorceries and Downhill motor races is from a lack of realization that we (science fiction) have become large enough to embrace ALL these styles and interests a and needn't be so concerned with excluding one or the other. (Box 516, Rifton, NY)

JOHN BANGSUND: Er, actually, what John Foyster meant was that I have a practice of holding material until it is cobwebbed. Not Walt Willis. I deny this strenuously, of course, but it is true that the odd article or review might have been left now and then to, shall we say, mature a little. Particularly pieces by John himself, which at one stage were coming in so thick, fast and illegible that I might have filed a few for future reference, or lost, as some might say. This has led to the odd item or two being published twice in ASFR, but I don't go round admitting it, and no-one seems to have noticed anyway. :: I'm really looking forward to Walt's book. He is to blame for my current almost-obsession with Irish literature, and I have the feeling that all my unanswered questions about Irish life will be answered now. The biggest question, of course, is just how big is the Dublin GPO? From what I've read, it must have held something like 92,476 Irishmen on Easter Monday, 1916, since there seem to have been almost as many Irishmen there on that day as there are Germans who had nothing to do with Nazism. (I know my Irish forbears weren't there.) :: In Australia we don't have "we were on the Mayflower" claims at all, since most of those who arrived in the First Fleet were -- well, you know. And the only other event of any significance was the Eureka Stockade business, and no-one claims descent from the gentlemen present that day, either, since, as is well known, they were all Communists. :: American publishing is an alien world to me. Obviously not an occupation for gentlemen. But how anyone could force Jim Blish to publish "Doctor Mirabilis" himself beats me entirely. It is a marvellous book. (Australia)

NEAL GOLDFARB: "A Wealth Of Fable" continues to be excellent, and I do wish Harry would do more fan biographies or fan history in future issues. I would greatly appreciate it if he did, for the only knowledge of past fandom is what I read. (Conn.)

CREATH THORNE: I have two general comments to make on Warhoon 25. First, I want to explicitly commend you on the effort Warhoon has made to develop a "shock of recognition" in fandom. I always have a feeling of excitement when I read Warhoon, and I believe that this feeling comes mainly from my realization as I read the issue of how good fandom can actually be. This realization comes from two sources: (1) the actual writing in the fanzine; (2) the explicit pointing-out of good writing in fanzines and the science fiction field that you and your authors do.

In other words, Warhoon is fulfilling the act of criticism, often on a very high level. Good criticism should distinguish, point out subtle elements in writing, give a sense of the field as a whole, and excite the reader as he gains a sense of what things are all about. Warhoon does this and in doing so not only provides entertainment but becomes a necessity to the growth and development of fandom.

Keeping all this in mind, I was rather shocked at the general attitude toward criticism expressed by several people throughout the fanzine. This is my second point. Too many of the people who wrote for this issue, it seems to me, still regard criticism as a kind of second-rate thing that a person does when he isn't good enough to write the real thing. Too many people regard it as purely personal value-judgment and nothing more. I totally disagree with them. Criticism at its best is a fully developed discipline which is just as "good" or as "important" as a work of fiction. Criticism deals with literature, but its purpose is to talk about literature in a way that literature cannot do. I admit that the criticism most people read is superficial and nothing more than the expression of subjective values. But the deeper I get into the academic study of English literature and the more I read my current hero Northrop Frye the more I realize that within its own boundaries literary criticism can become a

systematic, developed discipline based on intellectual operations rather than emotional judgments.

You seem to be emphasizing this type of criticism in Wrhn, and though it is not at all systematized, I hope that your readers, as they peruse the fanzine, will begin to realize the separate delights and enjoyments that criticism offers. If Wrhn can bring a sense of criticism to fandom while avoiding the stuffiness of so much academic criticism, it will indeed be fulfilling a grand function. (706 Hudson Hall, Columbia, Mo.

(rb: On the other hand, other people find other things in Wrhn:)

JIM REUSS: Something popped in my mind about three seconds ago while paging through Wrhn 26. There had been something about the issue, just wavering on the horizon of tangibility, ever since I pulled it from the envelope. Wrhn 26 smells like bubble gum wrappers, viz., the 'Double-Bubble' bubblegum wrappers of my childhood. Thank you for such an interesting smell -- a frank novelty after reams of pulpy mimeotone-smelly stuff and slightly fetid ink thickly applied. (Illinois)

RICK SNEARY: I hope you sent a copy of Wrhn to Art Rapp. Being told one is a genius is the kind of egoboo even an old fan and tired would still enjoy. The plan not only makes getting material easier, but given reasonable columnists it provides a lively letter column as you have found. Columnists almost always are dealing in opinions and spark agreement or argument. Fiction, reviews, travel reports, no matter how well done, leave very little to comment on. Something Ted White never seems to have understood about Stellar. (2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, Calif.)

RICHARD EISBERRY: What surprised me was the letter from Larry Williams, #2 Best New Fan of 1962 (when he must have been about 14 or 15). Larry is a bright, and very impatient, young man, now serving four years in the U.S. Air Force because, as he says, he's also a coward. A lot of bright young college men pass through my portals and Larry was a little younger and a lot brighter than most. He liked to get things done, fast -- a trait I very much appreciate, seeing as how I have too many writers who might best be characterized as "slow." In fact, at times I felt Larry thought that getting a job done was more important than getting it done well. Such feeling is, I think, substantiated in Larry's letter, where he indicated that writing an editorial was just a necessary evil needed to complete an issue of his fanzine. One might consider this a serious fault -- actually it is -- but I thought it could be remedied; although careless, he was extremely fast. And in the time one staffer might take to write an acceptable story, Larry could do two or three -- including the two or three revisions I might force on him. A man can learn, or be taught, to think through what he is doing so that he does it right the first time; but I have absolutely no hope of ever teaching a slow writer how to become fast. Larry is a hell of a producer (he would probably have made a superior rewrite man for a wire service) and has plenty of potential; hopefully, the military will teach him about patience, and he'll gain a measure of maturity. Four years from now he should be a hell of a prolific writer for someone -- I hope us. In a lot of ways, I guess, Larry reminded me of myself when I got out of college: the original angry young man. The Army kicked a lot of that out of me, but they never got it all. Thank god. (1710 Applewood Lane, Louisville, KY. 40222)

CONTENTS

No Deposit, No Return (editorial).....3
The Over-Helpful Editor (editorial).....4
Clouding Fen's Minds (editorial).....6
Tendril Towers Tales (Rogers).....8
The Mortal Gael (Shaw).....30
the fannish i (Carr).....34
A Wealth of Fable (Warner).....40
The Snake Pit (letters).....45

WARHOON 27