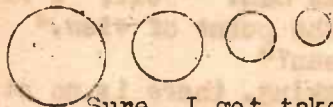


PNEUMO

The Coccus Fanzine

#1 (and only). March 1948. Published by Charles Burbee in his own honor. Inspired by the wonderful crud put out in his name, to solace and comfort him and to give him strength to rise from his bed and once more forge his way courageously into the Outside World. Distributed in FAPA and perhaps one or two other places.

IT WENT LIKE THIS ---



Sure, I got taken with a case of pneumonia, here un Sunny Southern Calif., where the sun is hot and the wind blows cold. I got taken by pneumonia. I was coccus-mad for a time. But now I am well and strong again and am able to drag myself around with a reasonable facsimile of youthful spring and bounce. I feel sure that by next mailing I will again be my old self (to the great disappointment of my friends and neighbors) and will as usual bump the mailing out on time.

My days of illness were considerably cheered by the frequent visits of Rotsler, who came by and forced me to talk till I grew hoarse, and by the visits of Cyrus B Condra (a false fan described elsewhere in this mailing) who came around with his new mustache and a lean and hungry look. I suspect his motives. Once, when I'd dropped into a coma and thus brought the clever part of the conversation to an end for a time, I distinctly heard Condra ask Rotsler if I'd made a will yet. Since he is a law student I saw nothing odd in this question. Then he said, "Has he provided for the disposition of his file of Unknowns?" His voice broke slightly on the last word so I knew he was laboring under a terrible emotion. At that moment I began to suspect. Of course I may be unjust in this matter. After all, I was in the depths of coma at the time. I don't think he really wants those Unknowns because he hasn't yet offered to trade me his wife for them. So I know he's not a True Fan. Probably wouldn't appreciate them if he did get them.

At any rate, he left his new wire-recorder with me for several days and this electronic toy fascinated my electronic soul for many hours. It is not true that

I am fascinated by the sound of my own voice being played back at me. I am not held spellbound. I am not enchanted. It's just that I'd rather listen to my own voice than anything I can think of.

When he at length came to take the recorder away, I thanked him in typical Burbee fashion, by carefully explaining to him in quasi-technical language (that I didn't understand very well) that it lacked all sorts of refinements and was, in short, a pretty poor specimen of its type. Greatly pleased by my obvious gratitude and lavish thanks, he sped away through the night with a merry song on his lips.

Next time he came over he found Rotsler and me creating Disturbing Element, the Brutish Fanzine. After watching us cynically and superciliously for a while, he got imbued with the publishing urge himself and got out a couple of paragraphs for the project. Just a few lines was all he could manage; he had such a terrific yen to read his own stuff that he couldn't wait any longer and had to bring his sketch to a quick close so he could sit back and read and re-read his sketch for 45 minutes, laughing appreciatively and calling our straying attentions back to some of the choicer phrases.

And the next time he came over, he found Moffatt, Woolston and Burbee at work on Brownout (The Magazine Fans Believe in) and after a time wrote an item for it, too. But the item was crowded out of that mag because Moffatt went hogwild and used up most of the space. For that matter, an item of mine was also crowded out. But this is all to the good, because I am using them both in this mag and therefore have saved myself a lot of time and trouble. I gather that Condra takes a dim view of a fan who will sell stfantasy items. He's got some old Weirds and Astoundings from me and

while he is happy to find these items, he is not constituted to understand how anybody can live without them. It isn't that I don't like these old mags of mine--it's just that I like money more.

SEMANTICANTICS

CYRUS B. CONDRA

Early and late at the Burbee house it gives nothing but publishing, publishing and more publishing. One-shot fanzines, mostly. The volume of crud that is poured into the U.S. Post Office from Burbee's house is unbelievable. FAPA mailings; FAPA postmailings, FAPA miniature mailings --plus an assortment of correspondence and illegitimate (?) fanmags so voluminous that even Burbee, avid fan that he is, lacks time to read them all.

"Are you actually a science-fiction fan?" I asked Burbee.

"Absolutely," he said. "By any test you want to make."

"Do you read all the stf mags?"

"Hell, no," he said, inelegantly.

"Well, which ones do you read?"

"I don't read any of them anymore," said Charles E. Burbee, Fan.

This seemed like a rather puzzling statement to me.

"I always thought a fan was a person who enjoyed reading the stuff, and preferred reading it to all other forms of activity," I said.

"Well," said Burbee, "you might say that....yes, you could certainly say that." He rolled a cigarette and turned back to his typewriter.

"But you'd be dead wrong," he added.

"Hmm. Then what is a fan?" I asked.

"Why," said Burb, "a fan is a--a--well, he's a--by Ghod, he's just a fan, that's all."

"Then what is it that makes him a fan?"

"Look, lad, I've got deadlines to meet and a mailing to get out. You'll have to excuse me."

Burbee is still busy writing, mimeographing and mailing his stuff so busily that he doesn't have time to read it.

I guess he's a fan.

PHONE CALL



"Do you know Ackerman?" I said.

"Never heard of him," said the voice.

While we were sitting around doing Brownout (The Magazine Fans Believe in) the phone rang and the voice at the other end said, "Hello Burbee." "Ah, hello," I said. "Is there a science-fiction club in town?" asked the man. "Well," I said, "that depends on the point of view."

"How do you mean?"

"Strictly speaking, there is no stf club in town but the nearest thing to it is the LASFS."

"Ah. And have they got a clubroom?"

"Well, that depends on the point of view. They've a little room the landlord permits them to meet in once a week." He asked for the address and I gave it to him. "You know," he said, "I've been reading the stuff for 30 years. I'm 61 now and I got to thinking the other day that there ought to be a place where we stf fans could get together."

"What's your name?" I asked. I'd been talking to him wondering who he was and since he seemed to know me it seemed silly to ask him who he was. So I asked him who he was.

"Oh, never mind," he said. "I saw your name in Amazing and thought I'd call and ask about the club. There ought to be a club for people like us. After all, we're a species apart, you know."

"Yes," I said, "I've noticed that." He asked about club meeting nights and I told him. He said he'd drop in some time. I warned him he'd get a cold reception since fans talk only to people they know and then only when spoken to first. "But," I added, "Ackerman will talk to you if you talk to him first. You'll soon find out whether or not the club holds anything for you."

"Ackerman? Who is that?"

"An old time fan. A big name. Everybody says he's a big name."

"Well," said the voice. "I may drop around there some Thursday."

"You can talk to Ackerman," I said.

"He's a big name."

"I will, I will," said he. "Even if I don't know him."

I guess the guy doesn't know you, Ackerman.