

Here before you is another edition of PHENOTYPE, from 417 Ft Hunt Rd, Alexandria, Virginia. It is a bitingly cold George Washington's Birthday, the coldest since 1885 in fact. Big deal, huh? Anyway, it's almost as cold outside as an average Spring day in England, to hear Boyd Raeburn tell it. Could there be better auspices for starting the stencilling of Operation Crifanac CCXXIII? You bet there could, chum.

It's Eney's Fault

Empiracy Preferred

The talking about Lundy's independence reminded me of this...

If the cannibalistic imperialists of Wall Street and points south -- about as far south as Warrenton, Virginia -- don't mend their ways, they're going to have to answer to that protector of oppressed minorities, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It seems a dirty plutocrat name of Russell Arundel, a lawyer of Washington and Warrenton, bought an island named Outer Bald Tusket and rechristened it "The Principality of Outer Baldonia", Russell I Arundel Prince Regnant and founder of the ruling dynasty.

Obviously from the Soviet point of view this was an undesirable reversal of the Inevitable Historical Trends. Though they remained heedless of this threat to world peace for three years (which should prove something about the efficiency of their espionage network), the Literary Gazette, which all true fans remember from the time it sailed into degenerate capitalistic stf, soon made up for lost time by indicting Prince Russell and his savage, oppressive government. With a certain disregard for the fact that Outer Baldonia has been uninhabited for the last several centuries, the Gazette condemned him for trying to turn the peaceful fishermen into cannibals.

Nothing, declared the Outer Baldonian chief of state, could be further from the truth. It is officially admitted that guests to the island -- who become vassal princes during their stay -- are encouraged to shuck off their inhibitions, but undoubtedly the line would be drawn at cannibalism. Especially with all that good tuna fish off shore.

Outer Baldonia's main interest, you see, is fishing, which is so good in those waters that the annual international tuna tournament is held nearby. An indefinite number of eight star admirals, drawn from the ranks of the Nova Scotian Tuna Guides' Association, comprise its military establishment and, aside from the vassal princes, the entire remainder of the citizenry.*

It isn't that the Russians were worried about the threat of encirclement from Outer Baldonia, but it's a straw in the wind. This,

*so they won't violate Baldonian territorial waters fishing there.

declares the Gazette, is what happens when Wall Street runs wild:

"He has granted his subjects the 'unrestricted right' to tell lies, to be rude, not to answer questions, go unshaved -- in a word, the right not to adhere to the ethical and moral laws which have been established by mankind!"

Now, strictly, this is a cataract of lies and falsehoods-by-omission. The Prince of Princes -- the official title of the Outer Baldonian chief of state -- does concern himself more with constitutional guarantees rather than laws. (I'fact there's but one law on the nation's books.*) These guarantees include the rights to:

Lie about fish, and be believed.
Praise and inflate oneself with pride.
Swear, drink, and gamble.
Sleep all day and stay up all night.

Baldonian citizens -- while on Baldonia, at least -- also enjoy freedom from questioning, nagging, political discussions, and war talk. Also women. Though the Prince is happily married, his government is officially misogynistic. (But this doesn't prevent Baldonia from having a Princess -- Phyllis McGinnis, the secretary of his Washington legation, also known as his business office. /It's really listed in the phone book that way: Outer Baldonia, Principality of, DIstrict 7-2463./)

All this looks unspeakably sinister to the Russians, who say that the Outer Baldonians' rights and freedoms are an attempt on the part of the prince to develop a nation of savages. Outer Baldonia, declares the Literary Gazette scornfully, is the ideal capitalistic state.

And now we quote the proverb about many a true word being spoken in jest, I think...?

We are quacks, ducking!

It's out of the question to hope that this could be run off and gotten to the AE by deadline-time; I'm afraid I'll have to put this out as a postmailing. (First time in years...I feel all shy and like that.) At all events, time to get on with the review of

MAILING XXXIV

KOBOLD Interestin' indeed. But what are first, second, and third-class degrees? I twig that they're grade divisions, but what criteria? ** Splendid digression on London -- good as the text. (And the text was pretty good all by itself.)

*It decrees the eternal banishment of anyone showing the lack of a sense of humor.

BIG DEAL

EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION

Whoosh, the mad student life of Olde England! I feel a perfect clod, living close enough to school to commute back and forth. ** I am gesmit with horror at the reference to my stuff supposedly being in a postmailing. Wha, wha, wha?!? ** The plot for distribution of the experimental report is thoroughly diabolical and quite fannish. Let us know if you do all make firsts. ** The walking tour idea sounds like interesting fun -- but what is Youth Hostel? We haven't any over here. I gather that it's a chain of lodgings maintained by a hiker's association of which you're a member; how far wrong am I? ** I was surprised that you didn't state your hypothesis for the experiment, or estimate the validity of your tests by a statistical check or even point out that your graph was the typical learning curve.

OFF TRAILS

Mention of the possibility of my stuff having been burned leaves me more confused than ~~usual~~ ever.

SOUFFLE

If Elinor will forgive me for putting my 2¢ worth in on her argument, I think you kind of knock the centrepin out of your argument that "good" and "evil" are matters of personal opinion when you introduce a quantifier. "Evil is almost always triumphant" implies a standard by which to judge the collection of incidents needed to reach such an appraisal. ** I can't quite see that an essential evil in man's nature follows either from a postulated incompleteness and imperfection in that nature or from our intermediate position between animal and superman. (I think Nietzsche's description isn't as neat as Ego Clarke's: "I've found the link between the apes and civilized man ...it's us!") Unfortunately as you don't give your reasons beyond these hints I can't shy a few rocks at the reasoning behind the conclusion that men are lumbered with intrinsic evil, though I'd love to.

PARAFANALIA

MacMillan out, Kennedy out, Khrushchev out, shirttails out puts the idea about in the right perspective. You'd think that after three changes of administration in each country while the Cold War continued at the same old stand people would catch on that it doesn't at all matter who's wearing the driver's cap. ** Berry must have run his section himself; it has the very appearance of his stuff -- typical magnificent duping. ** Stewart suggests that the origin of planting was not at all in the staple crops, like wheat, but in garden goods like melons, cucumbers, and onions. Their advantage is that their seeds are large and obvious, and if thrown out their sprouting is obvious enough to attract notice as they lie on top of the ground. And recall, originally god planted a garden in Eden, not a wheatfield.

SIZAR

Dunno about an sf story, but singing was used to scare aliens -- goblins, to be exact* -- in The Princess & Curdie and the rest of that series. ** If the British people had been overrun by the odd hostile army of occupation a few times in the last century, and still kept that "tolerant liberality of mind", you'd really have a case for citing them as several cuts above the

*well, Goblins are alien to me...

average population. ** Marie-Louise Share got married years and years ago, and dropped fandom. ** Any notion why Pat Kearney thought you a Fascist because you believed in abortion, capital punishment, and mercy killing? Capital punishment, I guess, is reactionary enough for all Fascists to be in favor of it (but hardly vice-versa) but the other items quite baffle me. Pat?

ENVOY But THREE of the Wizards are accounted for, in The Lord WHATSIT of the Rings -- the odd one I suppose you missed being Radagast the Brown. ** No, no; you're right in tagging the "-caine" of Novocaine as a reference to cocaine, but it's no relation to cocoa, which is from the nuts of the cacao tree Theobroma cacao. Cocaine is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant, Erythroxylon coca. The advantage of the various types of procaine hydrochloride (which come under trade names like novocaine, xylocaine, ktp) is that they're less toxic than cocaine. ** The origin of the Mayas is covered very well by DeCamp in Lost Continents, but to say that they were earlier than the ancient Greeks is just plain wrong. The Mayan Old Civilization began no earlier than Alexander the Great; the earliest date they recorded corresponds to our year 31 BC, and undisputed Mayan dates don't begin until AD 350. And as for the Mu-Atlantis jazz, haven't we stolen enough from the Indians without robbing them of their own record of achievement to boot?

VAGARY Well, I spotted the neatly trimmed ends of the log first off. Yes. And then I decided that that was too easy to be the right answer. Looking for something real obscure, I finally managed to figure out something: trying to sit upright on a log that short and thick would be certain to tip the primitive over, especially with the lever-action he'd get from using those paddles at full arm's length without any oarlocks; he'd be safer lying on his stomach and paddling with his hands. I guess I just try too hard to be devious. ** Probably the business about the untranslated footnotes being obscene was originally a kind of countersnobmanship ploy. I can only recall three of Gibbon's that would truly count as dirty, and but one of these -- the one about what the Empress Theodora used to regret -- is really filthy-type dirt. ** Wasn't the "failed BA" grade in druidism ollave, rather than ovate, or am I thinking of some different grade-scale? ** I wonder what Brontosaurus would be like? Most reptiles are very tasty, after all, but something of that size might be unpleasantly coarse. ** The idea of not preaching but entertaining in art is one that would get its perpetrator certified any time between Periclean Athens and Napoleonic France. I suspect its genealogy would trace back both to the Victorian Mauvements and the 1930s' Let's-Just-Deplore-Things syndrome. ** It's not clear that raping nuns is no argument for independence. Remember the wild Indians, who made it a practice to kill and eat all their captives. Then Candide reformed and civilized them; after that, they ate only Jesuits.

PACKRAT Smashin', but what does Hansard mean -- that is, where does the name come from? First editor, as in the case of Jane's, or some such? ** A quotation on the subject of pain making people anti-social came up a few weeks ago in Criminology 137:

The first ~~flogging~~ was 25 lashes, because a bag of flour had been burst, and I picked up a capfull...The cats the convicts ~~in Australia~~ were then flogged with were each over six feet long, made out of the logline of a ship of 500 tons burden; nine over-end knots were in each tail, and nine-tails whipped at each end with wax-end. With this we had half-minute lashes; a quick lashing would have been certain death. That first flogging made me ripe. I said to myself, "I can take it like a bullock." I could have taken the flogger's life at the time, I felt such revenge. Flogging always gives that feeling...

This chap had 35 such sessions, so his conclusion is not a mere impulsive snap judgement. But I guess the idea of reform by flogging is almost as immortal as the other notion that the duello made people courteous. ** Hoo bhoy are you off in your estimate of the Plains Amerinds! (You are right, though, as to the Eastern Woodlands Amerinds, who were sedentary if not exactly peaceful farmers.) The bison was always common -- as far back as human artifacts go, anyway, which is all we care about -- and the Plains tribes seem always to have had hunting cultures based on this beast. (To cover the remaining case, the Pacific Coast Amerinds mostly had gathering-subsistence cultures, the more part of them pretty low-grade.) The great boom-time expansion of the Plains Indians followed the introduction of the horse, right enough, but it wasn't because of a change in their culture; the horse just made it tremendously easier to follow the hunting way of life. Oh, and while sticking parentheses in every other sentence, as I seem to be doing, I might say that the Forest Indians' being farmers didn't make it a bit easier for them when it came to coexistence; American settlers dispossessed them with just the same shameless treachery and violence that we used on the Plains Indians later. Since when did cultural similarity stand in the way of a frontiersman with his eye on a fat farm?

CONVERSATION The fan exclusion practice of the pros' journal, PITFCS, is far from being mere snobbery; they want a medium for ingroup shop-talk, and if they had to keep an out-group population in mind -- as eavesdroppers -- they could never achieve the free conversation they want.

ERG The difficulty over parking lights is another case of that unintelligibility of English and Americans that was being mentioned a few mags back. I can't think of any jurisdiction in the United States that doesn't expect on-street parking.

Ghuism, despite your remark, is not really a dead and ob-
BIXEL scure sect. Coming back from Chi to New York we ran into rain as we were getting into the city, which much dismayed us; but as we stopped by Avram's apartment it let up just long enough for us to disgorge the Clan Davidson and their baggage; John Boardman skipped for the subway to Long Island and made it two seconds before the clouds busted open again. Then we -- Lee Hoffman and I -- drove through the downpour to the other end of the island. I found a parking place, and as we got out and I got Lee's stuff out of the trunk the rain stopped again. We walked

down to Leeh's pad and no sooner were we indoors than it started again. Well, I borrowed the loan of Leeh's washroom to shave and brush my teeth -- I'd been driving since 11 AM the previous morning and was feeling fuzzy at the time, which was 1 PM -- and when I walked back to the car and drove off the rain had stopped once more. I quite forget whether we reached any final decision as to what Divine Power, exactly, had been responsible for this behavior of the weather. Avram being involved complicated things a good deal; we couldn't figure whether it had been the interposition of Ghu, Roscoe, or JHVH. ** Yes, Sneary is right; your return to tell of an alternate view of the days when Laney and the Lasfs were at death grips is very much matter for thanks. In fact, herewith we begin a series you ought to be able to shed vast light on. (The modern Lasfans wonder why people are still interested and appear to want it hushed up, which is a little like the citizens of Dunkirk or Normandy wondering why people are still interested and...)

AMBLE Alces amer(icanus) is the American elk, or wapiti. ** The cover you found so repulsive was a pattern-play made with a French curve (hold the ramarks about mechanical nudes, ta, Terry) and then filled in with shading plates. It was just a Fun Thing, not intended to be Freudian or whatever.

SCOTTISHE Come back, Ethel! Well then, we'll have to pop over there in '65, then... ** I was eager for Walt to get to Chuck Harris, one of my favorite fans. A curious thing about deafness; Russ Chauvenet is very shy on account of his, and now it seems Chuch is too. Why? Maybe you can tell me. ** How does Seth Johnson figure "modern houses" to mean "built since World War I"? If they were built before WW II they're about ready to be scrapped, over here. I jest not; took a look at 5727 North Twentieth Street, built circa 1941 and now ready to be replaced, a while ago and despite having sturdier construction than the normal US frame house of the time I suspect it is ready for extensive repairs. Or would be if it weren't to be replaced. ** Roy Tackett's comment about the ridiculousness of hospital expenses is, alas, not uncalled-for as far as the US goes. Efficient management is part of it, of course, but only part. We have an old hospital in Alexandria, with no air conditioning, poor food service, inadequate nursing staff and inferior maintenance; just outside the city limits there's one that's excellent in all these respects. The basic charge at the first is \$18.50 a day; at the second, \$22.** I recognize the skits, satire, and parties as a sort of hospital Folk Custom at Christmas. Thanks to our Puritan traditions (we omit a rude adjective here) there is no drinking anywhere around the hospital, though I cannot conceal that some unregenerate types manage to get Elevated for the occasion. Another difference, I'm sorry to say, is that we have no trouble findind poor children...

MORPH No; apparently all known races have religion (until they become very sophisticated indeed, when the appeal to universal belief no longer holds anyway). And they have impersonal supernaturalism, like magical practices. What some lack, thus destroying the appeal to the belief of all men everywhere, is the belief in a god. ** Harry Warner keeps the jr to avoid confusion in various records.

A H ! S W E E T I D I O C Y !
- - - - -

THE

FAN MEMOIRS

of

Francis T. Laney . . .

Published by Francis T. Laney and Charles Burbee for FAPA at Los Angeles, Anno Domini 1948. This book is hand-set in Underwood Pica and printed on special sulphite base paper with little or no rag content. Like the fine books of the 18th and early 19th centuries, it is published unbound, so that gentlemen may have it embellished to match their libraries.

CONTENTS:

Chapter I	The Golden Dawn	1
II	A Fan Is Born	7
III	The Acolyte Gang	13
IV	The Odyssey of the Weird Willys	22
V	Utopia in Shangri-La	33
VI	Thunder Over Paradise	54
VII	On the Outside Looking In	74
VIII	On the Inside Looking Out	85
IX	Ebb-Tide	100
X	Indian Summer	114
XI	Death of a Fan	125

I believe any reader will be able to figure out the purpose, theme, and technique of Ah Sweet Idiocy by reading it, if he is With It at all. And if he is not With It he will not be in FAPA, of course.

On the question why Ah Sweet Idiocy is a strong contender for recognition as the most important single fan publication ever written, however, we can do with a few words of enlargement. Though Laney had, well, before beginning ASI, gone in for plain speech and explicit reporting, this was the masterpiece of that genre; the one work which irrevocably incorporated the realistic school of non-fiction into the tradition of fan writing. Before Laney, there had been snarly noises about rudeness, hints of scandals, Drunken One-Shots, even whispers of Nameless and Sinister Quirks of Character. It was FTL who made it a point to describe these events in Behaviorist detail. Some of the results made unpleasant reading -- especially to the nice-nelly fraction, who adhered to the doctrine that making fusses was Not Fannish -- but they dismay'd fuggheads, silenced fools, and pleas'd good honest men; they drove some thoroughly nasty characters away from active fanning, and brought some adolescents to a sharp awareness of their conduct. In large part, fandom is a much healthier place because the Laney tradition operates.

A word on an allied question: whether the memoirs are, specifically, unfair to the LASFS. Unfortunately, I can't tell you. The tradition Speer tags as Forstoism -- absolute silence about club schisms -- still holds in LA, as I found out during the research for Fancylopedia II. The general initial request for historical data brought no result; a specific request to LA for counter-Laney information brought no result; the post-publication request for corrections brought no result. Third time pays for all, as the hobbits say; without further ado, we conduct you to the definitive history of the Insurgent Wars in Los Angeles.

-- Dick Ency

P R E A M B L E

When an individual announces that he is through with fandom, that he is quitting the field; and then implements his withdrawal by producing what is probably the largest one man project in fandom's entire history, it is evident that he owes someone an explanation of such contradictory conduct.

My motivation for writing these memoirs was a decidedly mixed one. Very probably the strongest single incentive was to try to explain to myself the inexplicable, to resolve if possible in my own mind the reasons which caused me to get so deeply involved in the amazing happenings which this book chronicles. Once the scales had completely fallen from my eyes and I saw fandom with pitiless objective clarity, I looked back upon Laney the fan with much the same sense of disbelief that a civilized man would feel upon being thrust suddenly face to face with a Yahoo. Why did this earlier Laney disregard the mountain of evidence to the contrary and persist for years in considering fandom to be a group of wonderful, intelligent, worthwhile, and integrated people; to be an instrumentality for his own redemption and advancement? Why did he stay embroiled in the cess pool that is the LASFS? Why did he permit himself to associate with psychic misfits and social outcasts of every description -- thieves, truants, dead-beats, psycho-pathic drinkers, communists, crackpots, homosexuals -- because they were fans and belonged to the LASFS? Why did he squander untold hours and days and weeks of his best energies toward the advancement of this outre microcosmos? Why indeed? The answering of these and similar questions very shortly became one of my most crying needs.

At the time I wrote the main body of these memoirs in the winter and spring of 1946-47, I was driving out to Covina to see Cecile between three and four times a week. That is nearly an hour's drive, and on those long lonely return trips I used to stew at a great rate as to the whys and wherefores of my sojourn in fandom. From stewing it was but a short step to recalling whole episodes and the recalling merged readily into exhaustive critical analysis.

One night, it occurred to me that if I were to start setting down my recollections it might help my self-analysis, would certainly give me something to keep me at home and away from money-spending temptations on the nights I did not head Covina-wards. And it always had seemed silly to me to write anything on paper when it is just as easy to put it on stencils.

So I tackled Forrest J Ackerman, outlined a 75-80 page brochure of memoirs, and suggested that if the Fantasy Foundation cared to furnish the supplies they could have the profits. We both remembered the \$100 plus net profit on Speer's FANCYCLOPEDIA, so it was not difficult to get this backing. The only difference in opinion between us was that I wanted enough copies so I could put it in FAPA while Ackie wanted them all for sale. The final agreement (until Ackerman renigged as I shall describe subsequently) was that I would run off 175 copies, keeping ten for my own use, and all proceeds from the remainder would go to the Foundation, which in turn agreed to absorb every penny of the expense of production.

The casual reader will naturally assume that the writing and publishing of a book such

as this is a monstrous task. In a sense it is. It must be remembered, however, that I had been a fan. The body of this book was written on the stencils in somewhat less time than Laney the fan would have devoted to his correspondence during the same length of time...something like four to seven hours per week. I invariably spent Monday evenings on it, and about two-thirds of the time Friday evenings as well. A working evening ran from about 6:30 until about 9:00 or 9:30. This regime followed for not quite five months resulted in 130 pages of text.

Back to motivations.

I had never really seen fandom as it is until I started my critical analyses of it. It was patent to me that I'd never have been a very active fan if I'd been able to see both fandom and myself in an objective light. It naturally enough follows that I began to wonder just how many other fans would remain in the field if they ran head on into a revelation. So there was a certain amount of altruism involved. In furtherance of this aim, I early resolved not to spare myself in the least; to set down just what happened as accurately as possible regardless of what kind of a braying jackass it might make the Fan Laney. Perhaps, I reasoned, if I use myself as a horrible example it may help some of the other fans to see the light, and analyse their own participation in the microcosmos. An objective and factual analysis of this nature is apt to chill one's interest in fandom very ruthlessly.

So there has been no intentional elision or omission. On the contrary, I have tried to set down everything just exactly as it happened. This of course makes some of the actors in the narrative considerably less than supermen. And I have tried to hold down editorializing to a minimum. My aim has been to set down what happened and let the reader draw his own conclusions. With the exception of several digressions as to my own underlying motivations at different times, I believe I've usually succeeded in this aim.

One motivation that I've not as yet touched on is a strong desire to expose the LASFS. There is something about this group -- with its banality, futility, and downright viciousness -- that affects many people most unfavorably. Those who have little previous involvement with fandom and hence no roots in the field simply turn and run, fade out of the picture. Established fans who get to see the LASFS as it is react in one of three ways. A few will do as I did for years, deliberately close their eyes and ignore the club's worthless vileness. The less aggressive types will quit the club, and in many cases fandom itself; they will scorn and despise the LASFS but will not as a rule take any overt steps against the group, though chortling gleefully when a Yerke or a Laney starts waving his shillelagh. These are people like Liebscher or Wiedenbeck or Burbee. An aggressive person who has gotten deeply involved in fandom will tend to so lose his sense of perspective as to regard the destruction of the LASFS as almost a duty to his integrity and self-respect. It is mighty hard to justify to one's self one's participation in a fandom which boasts the LASFS as a Shangri La utopia. Among those who have at various times felt very strongly that the LASFS should be destroyed are Yerke, Bronson, Ashley, and Laney.

Despite this motivation on my part, my memoirs are not fabricated, or exaggerated or slanted. I could write pages of invective, and they would not be nearly so much of a body blow to the LASFS as the objective ticking off of the daily happenings around the Bixelstrasse, the good along with the bad.

The writing of the memoirs themselves was concluded in June 1947. I let them lie fallow for two or three months and then commenced reading them over with a view to correcting the more glaring errors. It was possible to make many corrections directly on the stencils, but subsequent information on one matter requires an additional footnote.

This is the strange case of E. Everett Evans. This individual went to prison on a morals charge while president of the NFFF, and information emanating from the midwest indicated that he had been called to the colors for top-secret navy work. The truth of the story very shortly leaked out, and I, among many others, was utterly revolted at the hypocrisy involved. My disgust was not abated by the subsequent appearance of Evans' magazine, The Timebinder, with its quaintly homespun, love-thy-brother, philosophy. On him it just didn't look good, this air of sanctity and Christ-like patience and pose of moral rectitude. On him it stank to high heaven of the most blatant kind of hypocrisy.

So I was pretty avidly anti-Evans. (In justice to him, it is only fair to point out that he claims to have been framed, and, more to the point, that I have never seen him do anything or heard him say anything which could point even remotely to any taint of homosexuality on his part -- on the contrary he appears far more masculine than most of the LASFS members, including some known heterosexuals.)

But there were still plenty of objective grounds for taking a dim view of the gentleman, particularly that hypocrisy. So a couple of us started working along a line of attack designed to put Evans on such a spot that his past would out publicly, with the idea both of showing him up for what he is and of making the LASFS a bit too hot to hold him. A clean-up squad, in other words.

The end result of our maneuvers was that Evans largely vindicated himself.

At the LASFS meeting of September 11, 1947, Evans was so maneuvered into the open that he admitted publicly his incarceration and what it was for, though maintaining his insistence that he was framed. He went on to point out that he meant to quit both the NFFF presidency and fandom at that time, but that he was talked into reconsidering, and that the statement to the NFFF on his behalf was prepared without his knowledge until after the event. An individual was present who was an actor in these matters; he backed Evans up, testified as to the truth of this statement.

In other words, Evans was made the victim of a stupendous double-cross. An alibi was prepared for him by his midwestern associates, an alibi which committed Evans most thoroughly. Then these associates, or some of them, apparently worked overtime spreading the rumor of where Evans actually was and why. Evans was still in prison when I first heard of it, so it is evident that shadowy but unequivocal statements were circulating long before Evans got out and started telling about it himself, as he is reputed to have done in private conversations.

What a way to ruin someone -- fix him up with a public alibi and then tear it down privately!

For some time I seriously considered suppressing all mention of Evans' mishaps from the memoirs, but thorough consideration not only pointed out that he was still the same as always but also drove home the fact that his having been made the recipient of some thoroughly despicable treatment did not in the least palliate his numerous shortcomings. After all,

though he did propose to do the right thing and quit fandom and the NFFF rather than to manufacture a lying alibi, he was not at all reluctant to use the alibi once it had been set for him. The difference between a deliberate hypocrite and a fortitious hypocrite is only one of degree, not of kind.

(It may be wondered what I think Evans should have done. He should have been honest. He should have issued a statement telling fandom what had happened to him, giving heavy stress to his claim of having been framed, and asked a vote of confidence in the NFFT. It is not at all unlikely that fandom as a whole would have sympathized with him and sustained him; had they cast him out he would at least have had the inner satisfaction of having acted honestly and honorably, of having acted in complete accord with the philosophic precepts which he pretends to espouse.)

I believe that these additional remarks give the Evans case the overall truthful accuracy which I have striven for throughout these memoirs.

---ooOoo---

The actual publication of this volume has been fraught with difficulties. As was pointed out in FAN-DANGO #16, the LASFS allowed Daugherty to ban me from using the club mimeograph. So then Burbee and I worked out a deal for me to borrow Rotsler's mimeograph. This machine proved unworkable. After a deal of casting around, I finally traded my OUTSIDER for Al Ashley's mimeograph, an ink-smearred relic of another era. If you are not reading this, it means that the ex-Ashley mimeograph didn't work either and I threw the stencils in the incinerator.

47, Ackerman wrote me as follows:

"I am personally refunding to the Foundation the money it has laid out so far on the project. Several supporters have counselled that, despite its total lack of intention, inevitable mention of Foundation money used for the production of the Memoirs might be misinterpreted by enemies to mean approbation of a document which in all probability the Foundation would frown upon. As you know, I was thinking only of a means by which the treasury might profit. After I see the TLM, it probably will make me unhappy to contemplate that my money made issuance of the item possible. But between throwing mud at the Foundation and at that leading paranoid/schizoid (take your choice) FJackerman, fandom has had more practice throwing mud at me..." etc. He also did not wish his name used as sponsor, so I won't.

Well, I was quite willing to do all this work for nothing and let the Foundation have the profit. I am not willing to do this work for Ackerman or any other individual. Consequently, I shall reimburse Ackerman for the money he has advanced (as an instrumentality of the Foundation) and publish the book for my own inscrutable ends and profit if any.

Oddly enough, this Foundation withdrawal merely underlines what I said along about page 128 about the Foundation and its futility as it is presently being operated. What is that sum of nearly \$400 for, Mr. Ackerman?

---ooOoo---

Well, that about winds us up. At this writing, my only fan interest is FAPA -- I may be active in that group for years yet and I may not. As long as I still feel the yen for occasional written self-expression, I'll probably be around. But not as an active fan, no sir!

February 5, 1948

Francis T. Laney

CHAPTER ONE
-oOo-
The Golden Dawn
*** **

Unlike most reminiscing fans, I am unable to point with pride to a long, pre-fan acquaintance with fantasy. My reading tastes have always been quite catholic, and during the days that my contemporaries were going quietly berserk over Gernsback and Sloane, I was quite happily reading and collecting a much more varied bunch of stuff. At that time, my chief fictional interest centered around seafaring tales, and these were but second choice reading as compared with non-fiction dealing with such things as naval history, zoology, entomology, psychology, eugenics, and the American Civil War.

There was a faint amount of fantasy present, however. When I was very little, I read and reread nearly all of the Oz books, and along about 1925, when I was eleven years old, I was completely swept off my feet by Thomas Janvier's In the Sargasso Sea, the Moscow Public Library copy of which I must have read at least a dozen times. I can also recall reading one installment of Ray Cummings' Into the Fourth Dimension in a stray copy of Science and Invention which my father had brought home for some of the shop notes. Jekyll and Hyde and "The Phantom Rickshaw" were also in my bookcase, though neither of them held a particularly high spot in my esteem.

In the fall of 1929, as I started my junior year in high school, I was given the opportunity to take journalism, a course which was ordinarily limited to seniors. Very quickly, I developed a deep interest in writing generally and in the school paper in particular, a trend which led me to editorial writer, feature writer, copy editor, and finally, in my senior year, to the editorship of the paper. Sixteen issues were published under my aegis, and while they strike me today as being excessively lousy, even for high school papers, there can be no doubt that the training I received at that time made fan journalism possible for me. The teacher, Mary E.S. Fox, not only ironed the more obvious flaws out of my writing, but through a most unusually sympathetic approach gave me what will probably always be an abiding interest in writing and publishing.

From 1931 until 1936, nothing happened to me which even remotely could be said to lead toward fannish paths. I completed my University course, stepped out into the world as a young would-be adult, and finally got a job. My interests at this time centered entirely around drinking and dating; though I did a certain amount of reading, most of my time and energy was spent tripping joyously down the rosebud trail. I averaged perhaps two evenings a month at home -- the rest of the time I was chasing.

Sometime in the middle part of 1936, a girl piano player in a Lewiston, Idaho tavern introduced me to Duane Rimel. Both of them were quite drunk at the time, as was I. Neither Duane nor I made any especial impression on each other at the time, though from then on we moved in much the same crowd, and gradually became better acquainted. I can recall only one Rimel-esque anecdote definitely dating from this period -- a pinochle party which Duane and his gal friend punctuated with too much beer, with the result that my first wife and I had to take care of them.

During my association, off and on, with Duane, I had gradually

become aware of the fact that he had not only written but sold some stories to some magazine, but I more or less brushed the idea off. In 1939, after my divorce, I had blossomed out with a new record player and a number of Louis Armstrong records. One Saturday afternoon, I ran into Duane in a beer parlor, the record under my arm attracted his attention (WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED SWING and JEEPERS CREEPERS by Louis Armstrong), and the upshot of it all was that we went up to my apartment and had our first joint bash. From then on, we were increasingly friendly, but still, somehow, the matter of writing was never mentioned.

As a result of remarrying in 1939, I moved into a small house in Clarkston, Washington, and, for the first time since I left home in 1935 had enough room for some of my books. When Duane saw them, he was immediately sent (my tastes by this time having expanded to cover realism in the novel) and he delivered me quite a monologue on his aspirations as a writer, his sales to WEIRD TALES and FUTURE, and his correspondence with several successful writers, most notably an H. P. Lovecraft. I was considerably amused by Duane's awe as he spoke of HPL; I'd never heard of the fellow, and anyway figured that no pulp magazine writer could be much good.

Not too long after this, Duane informed me that some small, midwest publishing house was bringing out a collection of Lovecraft's stories, and that he wanted me to read them. (I had previously read the January or February 1939 WT with a Rimel story in it, and had been utterly unimpressed.) In due season, he reverently brought over his copy of the then new, OUTSIDER AND OTHERS, and left it with me. It sat around the house for several days, but finally I decided I had better glance at it enough to seem to have read it, and return it to Duane with thanks. I opened the book pretty much at random, leafed back to the beginning of the story I'd opened to, and started skimming through it. That story held me more than any single yarn I had ever read, and when I came to the denouement I was really sent. "The Thing on the Doorstep" is not really a very good tale -- too melodramatic and overdone, and completely lacking in characterization -- but it rocked me that night from top to bottom. I read HPL that night until after three in the morning, and did not really stop until I had read that book through and through.

At this time, Duane's enthusiasm was more or less latent, but I was so completely sent that he began to perk up right away. Yes, he had lots more stories in the same vein -- a whole closet full of WT; yes, he was still writing away merrily; no, he had scarcely any of the books HPL mentioned in "Supernatural Horror in Literature", but HPL had loaned him many of them in some sort of circulating library deal. I immediately made up an alphabetical bibliography of the stuff listed therein, and headed for Spokane and Clark's Old Book Store. The resultant loot, which included a volume of Bierce, set both of us off all the more.

Say, had I ever seen a fan magazine? What the hell was that? Very shortly I found myself with the loan of a complete file of Fantasy Fan, a handful of Fantasy Magazines, and (most important, since it was still being published) several copies of Polaris. My god, I thought, something like this would be fun, but right about that time the writing bug bit me very badly, and it took me several months to work it out of my system. (The less said about the stories I wrote at this time, the better. There were about equally inspired by HPL and Bierce, and the best one -- terrible though it is -- appeared eventually in the first issue of Acolyte. The others have long since met the cremation they so richly deserved.)

I thought very seriously about sending a subscription to *Polaris*, which I regarded as a likely outlet for my stories, but my interest pretty much waned when I learned that Paul Freehafer, in common with other fan publishers, did not pay for material. (All right, laugh, damn you!)

One of the really big events of 1940 was my discovery of Abe Merritt. *FACE IN THE ABYSS* and *SNAKE MOTHER* appeared wellnigh simultaneously in *FFM* and *FN*; Duane brought over his copies, and, after he had left, I started reading them. Meanwhile, nature called me, and I carried the darned magazines into the bathroom with me. Utterly oblivious to where I was and what I was doing, I sat there on that WC nearly all night, utterly lost in Graydon's weird adventures. When I finally finished *SNAKE MOTHER*, the spell broke, I tried to stand up, and was so cramped and cold that my legs would not support me. I collapsed into a heap, and lay there on the floor laughing at myself for being such a damned fool. But I'd give a lot today if I could find any story that would hit me as hard as those two did.

So 1940 faded into 1941. Despite an increasing preoccupation with fantasy, my life at the time was thoroughly normal and enjoyable. Jackie and I got along famously, we were both very much wrapped up in the infant Sandy (then less than a year old), we went dancing frequently, played many evenings of pinochle with other young couples, drove the car a great deal, and otherwise lived like human beings. I spent perhaps two evenings a week monkeying around with fantasy, and oftentimes not even that.

February 1, 1941 Duane and I, in the course of gathering up his girl friend for a party to be held at my house, got into the way of a wild driver. The resulting crash demolished my Chrysler, and put me hors de combat for over two months. Duane was at that time leading pretty much the garret-dweller's life, working like a dog with his writing, and picking up his living p̄aying the piano around town. When I became somewhat convalescent, I spent many of my afternoons with him, and bit by bit borrowed and read all his *WT* (a run 90% complete from 1928 through 1940). Had it not been for the wreck, I daresay I would have escaped fandom altogether, but we were stony broke and without a car until the insurance company paid off, so I fell deeper into the morass of fantasy, and also cultivated much more of a habit of staying at home. The roots of the breakup of my second marriage were very likely planted at this time; since Jackie did not share my interest in the fantasy we gradually began to grow apart somewhat.

In September 1941, we bought a new house (the once-familiar 720 Tenth St. Address) and the moving in, remodelling, and what not momentarily gave us a common focus once again. Duane and I averaged perhaps three sessions a month, playing records and discussing fantasy. On my infrequent trips to the city, I still tried to pick up fantasy in the used book places, but it didn't mean much to me any more, though I used part of the settlement from the insurance company to buy the *OUTSIDER*.

After a year and a half of good intentions, I finally committed my first acts as an overt fan, sending Paul Freehafer a subscription to *POLARIS* and Art Joquel 30¢ for three of the pamphlets he'd advertised therein. This was in late December 1941. Joquel promptly sent me *SUN T(R)AILS*, which was utterly incomprehensible to me, dealing largely as it did with the Hornig/Pogo fracas; and eventually refunded dimes one by one. Freehafer was slower about replying, but finally

sent me a very friendly note, in which he regretted that POLARIS had become defunct, but suggested that I send the subscription and a poem which I'd also sent him, to a Harry Jenkins, who had taken the magazine over. Under separate cover, he sent me the last three issues of POLARIS; I'd seen them before, but was of course pleased to have copies of my own.

After the delay of several weeks, I sent the poem to Jenkins, and rather to my surprise got a virtually return mail reply, which praised the poem quite unwarrantedly and guaranteed its publication. In April 1942 I received the one Jenkins issue of POLARIS, containing my poem, together with JINX #2, and a copy of FAN EDITOR AND JOURNALIST. I immediately answered at some length, but was given the old brush-off treatment by Jenkins, and lapsed back into normalcy.

About the only fanning that I did for the next several months was reading Rimel's set of READER AND COLLECTOR. They gave me a very high opinion of H.C. Koenig, which better acquaintance has only strengthened. His attitude toward ethics in fan publishing also had a very strong effect on the editorial policy of THE ACOLYTE, if I may get ahead of myself for a moment.

This would be a pretty good place to veer momentarily, and sketch in some information on Rimel, since he is such an important character in these memoirs. Duane Weldon Rimel (pronounced rye'-mel) is the son of Asotin County probate judge P.G. Rimel, and was raised in the hamlet of Asotin, Washington. He is a brawny fellow, 6' tall and weighing 190 pounds, but his entire life has been colored by recurrent inflammatory rheumatism, which first struck him in his early teens, and which has pretty much kept him from the active physical life. About simultaneously with his first semi-invalidism, he became very closely associated with another Asotin youth, Franklin Lee Baldwin, who at the time was actively reading and collecting fantasy, corresponding with H.P. Lovecraft and other fantasy names of the early 30's. Duane straightway got into the Lovecraft circle, and soon both of them were actively contributing to FANTASY FAN, FANTASY MAGAZINE, and others. To bind them still closer, they were both crazy about jazz, especially the piano of Earl Hines. When Lovecraft died in early 1937, Baldwin was heartbroken, and dropped out of fantasy altogether. Duane was also deeply affected, but chose rather to carry on as an Acolyte, having hit WEIRD TALES for the first time in the last issue that Lovecraft saw. Though he sold a few stories, and devoted the bulk of his time to writing, he made a passable living playing piano, mostly around Lewiston and Clarkston, and later as a reporter for the Clarkston Heråad; for which he conducted a scientific weekly column (Twenty Years from Today) for over two years. Through his membership in the American Federation of Musicians, he became active in the Lewiston Central Labor Council, and eventually climbed across the bar he had leaned on so often. He's been a bartender for about four years now, is still writing (as witness his sale of detective books both here and in England), and eventually hopes to become a full-time writer. He's married happily, and has a small child.

Duane has one of the most attractive personalities I've ever encountered. He couples the insight and sensitivity of the introvert, with the bonhomie of the born mixer. A brilliant raconteur, he is the life of any party, yet has the depth to hold up his end of any serious discussion. He's always well-dressed, and meticulously groomed; and being an unusually handsome fellow, used to be a devil with the ladies in his bachelor days. He is deeply interested

in fantasy, but has never so lost his sense of perspective as to bury himself in it. All in all, he is the sort of fellow fandom needs more of, and, perhaps, would have if fandom but offered this type of man anything worthy of his serious attention.

At this point, we'll verr back to June 1942, and the next of the series of accidents or what not that kept pushing me into fandom. At that time, I was employed in the invoicing department of Potlatch Forests in Lewiston, and, being bucking for promotion, had made it a point to learn every other job in the department. A reorganization of the office moved the big electric Ditto machine into our department, and more or less as a joke, my boss told me I'd better learn how to run that too. I did, and just about the time I rolled the first page out of it I was struck with its possibilities for publishing a fanzine. I immediately inquired into the possibilities of converting it to my own use, and found that no one had the faintest objection, so long as I paid for materials used, and did all the work on my own time.

Coincidentally with all this, Jackie was pregnant with the child Quiggie, and I had a good deal of time on my hands in the evenings, since she was not very well, and found it necessary to retire very early. Another push toward fandom.

Duane and I talked over the Ditto possibilities, and decided we'd try our hand at a fan magazine. It was easy for him to get into that mood, since he and Lovecraft had almost founded one back in 1935, and had been stopped only by Duane's inability to get the old press he had been promised by a former printer in Asotin.

We had absolutely nothing to go on but our enthusiasm. Duane's contacts in the field had virtually lapsed, but we went through his old correspondence and jotted down all the addresses we could find. In going through his stuff, we found poems by Richard Ely Morse and Lionel Dilbeck which had been submitted for the HPL/Rimel effort seven years previously, and were also struck by the possibility of excerpting from the Lovecraft letters. This material, plus a story by Duane and the best of my own abortive efforts, gave us enough for part of an issue.

Most of the letters we wrote to Duane's old list were unanswered. Hornig wished us luck. Koenig regretted his inability to contribute anything, since he was as usual swamped, but offered to assist in the distribution. Emil Petaja (whom Rimel had met personally a few years previously) sent us a story; and Nils Trone, a Canadian who has been in and out of fandom for the past fifteen years, sent us a letter which I attempted to work over into an article. He also gave me the address of Les Crutch, who became my second fan correspondent, sending me LIGHT for August 1942.

Duane and I spent a good part of our spare time that summer typing merrily away on Ditto carbons I had snaffled at the office. He typed his own story, and designed and drew the cover heading; I made up the masters for the rest of the stuff, and gave it what arrangement it had. As the magazine grew, we saw that we could never afford to put out another issue free, and I didn't want to take a chance on selling copies, since it would just get me in dutch at the office if it were discovered. So we decided to make just the single issue and quit.

The masters were all typed up by the middle of August, but it was not until the Labor Day weekend that I slipped down and spent a Sunday running

off and assembling 120 copies in the deserted office. The entire job took only a little more than seven hours, since the machine was a fast electric model in tip-top condition, required no tedious slip-sheeting, and the office afforded almost limitless table space to spread out on for assembling.

Looking at this first issue from the vantage point of 1947, I find it difficult to understand our boundless enthusiasm over it. Rimel's long poem, "Dreams of Yith", and the two-plus pages of Lovecraft letter excerpts are the only items which would have been thoroughly acceptable in the later issues, though perhaps one or two of the poems might have been usable as filler. Of amusement value only, in light of subsequent developments, is my editorial, which employs the most extreme of the notorious Laney purple verbiage in decrying, of all things, fan feuds!

I have been asked several times as to the origin of the magazine's title, particularly by persons who did not see the earlier issues with the mast-head dedication to H.P. Lovecraft. My inability to think up suitable titles is notorious, as witness the many pictures I've published with the banal caption, "A Drawing", and so it was Duane who christened it. I never did care much for the title, "The Acolyte", but being unable to suggest a better one, let it ride. Through all of THE ACOLYTE's 14 issues, this title, with its strong connotation that the magazine was strictly from Lovecraft, was a constant handicap; but by the time I realized this fact, the magazine had developed enough prestige so that I hesitated to make a change.

Well, there we were, with 120 magazines bravely decked out in gaudy orange covers. The stack looked mountainous to both of us, particularly in light of the fact that our mailing list consisted of only 13 people, several of whom were not fanned by any stretch of the imagination. We simply did not have any acquaintance with the field. Under previous arrangements with Crutch and Koenig, we sent 35 copies to each of them. Koenig sent his to the more prominent FAPA members, while Crutch distributed his to the LIGHT mailing list, thereby giving ACOLYTE a North of the Border complexion that it did not wholly lose until it moved to Los Angeles.

Our brief span as publishers having been run, we thought, we settled back and commenced waiting for the avalanche of response. When a month had passed with no particular notice having been taken, we were both heartily disgusted and through with the field. (Do all new editors expect 100% response to their sleazy first issues?)

This account would stop right here, had it not been for the malignant fate that seemed hellbent on pushing me into fandom.

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CHAPTER TWO

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A Fan Is Born

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About the first letter I received about THE ACOLYTE was from C. M. Brewster, an associate professor of chemistry at State College of Washington, and a long term friend. He complimented the issue, and added oomph to his remarks by mentioning that he had a disused mimeograph in his basement and urging me to come up to Pullman and haul it away. Well, what would you have done? So did I.

My dire fate was further abetted by the war. Lewiston/Clarkston is pretty much a company town, and a Weyerhaeuser company town at that. With shipyards and aircraft factories out on the coast getting into high gear, practically all the less rooted people possessing any initiative were seizing the opportunity to get out of the dead-end one industry town setup and go where they could get ahead a little. The army gobbled up many of our friends; the coast got the rest of them -- and almost before Jackie and I realized it we were almost alone. By December 1942, even Duane had left to go to Pendleton, Oregon. So instead of friends dropping in every evening or so, we commenced hitting weeks on end when no one came to see us and we went nowhere. Yet it happened so gradually that it was a fait accompli before I realized it, particularly with the compensatory emergence into fandom. By that time, my head was turned. Like a fool, I took fandom seriously, found it difficult to manifest genuine interest in much of anything else, and if they can pin the situation onto any one cause, my two little girls can blame fandom for the fact that they do not have two parents and the normal home life which is their right.

But this does not tell of the birth of ACOLYTE into a regular periodical. As soon as I got the mimeograph, Duane and I held an exhaustive pow-wow and set up the editorial policy which, with one change, was adhered to throughout the life of the magazine. We were guided chiefly by Lovecraft's letters to Duane, though the various remarks by H.C. Koenig in four years of READER AND COLLECTOR definitely influenced us, and we moreover tended definitely to pattern ACOLYTE after THE FANTASY FAN. Moskowitz, unless he has already done so in a yet unpublished installment, should really modify his remarks which lead one to believe that first fandom disappeared, except for "later rapprochements", with the death of FANTASY MAGAZINE. THE ACOLYTE, which certainly was a strong influence in the fandom of the middle forties, stemmed directly from first fandom, without benefit of any intermediate steps.

From H.P. Lovecraft, as expressed in his letters to Rimel, came the two cardinal tenets of ACOLYTE'S policy: the furnishing of a medium for the publication of artistic and literate attempts of fantastic self-expression (and an eschewment of the pulp magazines); and the fostering of a literate approach to fantasy through the writing and publishing of serious criticism (as opposed to mere synoptic reviews).

H.C. Koenig, largely through indirect remarks in "Hoist With Their Own Petard", was responsible for ACOLYTE'S adherence to a rigid publication schedule coupled with as prompt as possible answering of all mail, and for our policy of publishing nothing whatever dealing with fans and fandom, the studied elimination of juvenility even at the expense of a friendly atmosphere.

From THE FANTASY FAN, ACOLYTE derived the idea of having regular columns (even going so far as to revive one of TFF's own columns complete with its regular editor), of going all out for professional contributions, and of attempting to knit its more devout readers and contributors into a fandom within fandom.

Contrary to popular belief, THE ACOLYTE was never intended as being an organ for the aggrandizement of H. P. Lovecraft. This is the last thing Lovecraft himself would have wanted. The dedication to HPL's memory was intended solely as an attempt to give HPL our own idea of what a fantasy fan magazine should be like. It was quietly dropped after the fifth issue, since it was being so widely misinterpreted. THE ACOLYTE followed pretty closely FANTASY FAN's old policy of publishing articles on any phase of fantasy (including scientific fiction) and the weird, but restricting fiction and verse to pure fantasy and weird only. This was done chiefly because we felt that amateur attempts at science fiction were too likely to be modelled after cheap pulp stories, while pure fantasy and weird had a reasonably good chance of being influenced by more literate material. When I finally realized that I just couldn't get enough articles on science-fiction to give a balanced magazine, the masthead was expanded to mention that sub-division of fantasy specifically.

The only major change ever made in THE ACOLYTE's editorial policy may be directly attributed to A. Langley Searles and his superb FANTASY COMMENTATOR, and it was made during the height of my feud with Searles. Both Russell and I (look at me get ahead of myself, mentioning a character I've not even introduced yet!) decided that ACOLYTE was markedly inferior to FANTASY COMMENTATOR, chiefly because the free use of fiction tended to crowd out articles, and quietly adopted Searles' no fiction policy, modifying it only to the extent that we were willing to include stories which we felt were very close to being of book grade. We did not, however, renounce certain previous commitments; and as a result the change did not become fully evident before the magazine finally suspended. Had ACOLYTE continued publication, it would by now (February 1947) consist entirely of articles, departments, and verse; the latter being used only as fillers at the bottoms of pages.

We may have been "mouldy figs"; our first fandom affiliations may have put us somewhat in the light of dawn-age barbarians invading the modern civilized world; but modern fandom must not have been as much affected by Moskowitz, Wollheim, and the others of the 1938-41 period as these gentlemen might have wished. Judging both from subscription requests and polls the fan of the mid forties apparently liked THE ACOLYTE pretty well. (My chest is getting sore; let's change the subject, huh?)

Immediately after Duane and I had made our plans for the continuance of the magazine, I remembered Jenkins' FAN EDITOR AND PUBLISHER. I dug it out, and sent a medium-long letter, plus a copy of the first ACOLYTE, to nearly every publisher listed therein. This was the beginning of my personal policy, continued until I moved to LA in October 1943, of writing a letter to every fan whose address I could get, sending a sample ACOLYTE and urging both a subscription and material. I never followed up the pro magazine reader columns very much, but the then current WT gave me Manly Banister, who had just hit the mag for his first pro sale, and who was for about a year and a half one of my most stimulating and enjoyable correspondents. And a copy of the Canadian UNCANNY TALES which Croutch had sent me netted Barbara Bovard. Also at about this time I commenced corresponding

with Nanek (Virginia Anderson), who at this time was hitting the FFM reader column quite regularly with Merritt-inspired verse.

The intensive letter-writing campaign shortly bore fruit. Harry Warner sent me the last three issues of the just-folded SPACEWAYS, together with a most helpful letter of comment and suggestions -- the start of an intensive correspondence which has continued to the present time. Warner is easily the Samuel Pepys of fandom. No one else can take the trivia of his daily life and turn them into a fascinatingly readable letter. Harry has always been one of my major influences in fandom, and usually one of the more restraining ones. Though I've never had the pleasure of meeting him in the flesh, through his letters and other writings he has made himself much more real to me than many individuals with whom I've associated daily.

Phil Bronson had published the last Minneapolis issue of THE FANTASITE at about this time, and had sent a copy in exchange for the ACOLYTE sent him by Koenig. An advertisement in it listed several back issues, including the bulky annish which I still consider to be the greatest single fanzine issue of all time, and my receipt of these really threw me over the brink. I promptly became a FANTASITE fan, and shortly had struck up a very enjoyable correspondence with Bronson which continued until I moved to Los Angeles.

At this point, Forrest J Ackerman also hove on the scene, so far as I was concerned. He was one of the few active fans of 1942 who was known to Rimel and myself, but we tended to regard him with a jaundiced eye due to the Ackerman/Lovecraft-Smith feud in the "Boiling Point" column of FANTASY FAN. (This feud had arisen out of an intemperate attack by the teen-aged 4e upon some story of Clark Ashton Smith's. Lovecraft rather unworthily came back with an even more intemperate rejoinder, and after a couple of exchanges, the boiling point was considerably exceeded. Rimel of course had sided with HPL, and I tended to do the same, though not without deprecating the intemperance of some of Lovecraft's remarks at Ackerman. It was from events leading out of this ruckus that H.C. Koenig christened 4e "Balloon-Pants".) The anti-Ackerman feeling in Eastern Washington had also been considerably fanned by FJA's dealings with Lee Baldwin. Back in 1934, Lee had been collecting photos of fantasy celebrities, and had written Ackerman for a snapshot. Forry had replied that he did not send pictures of himself as a rule, but that he would be happy to sell Lee an autographed picture of himself for 10¢! All these events taken together caused us to regard Ackerman rather lightly, so we made no effort to get his address, figuring that he was so well known that probably both Crutch and Koenig would send him the first ACOLYTE, and if they didn't it would make no real difference anyway. The guy was so well known that neither sent him a copy, figuring that we must have done so ourselves. So it was that the then #1 fan failed to get the first issue. Wouldbe #1 fans might ponder on the drawbacks of Fame.

In early October 1942 came a most amazing letter from Ackerman himself. He opened it with a play on words carrying the thought that since we loved Lovecraft we must hate him, since he had once feuded with HPL, and that we had slighted him horribly by not sending him ACOLYTE and he being the #1 face too, but that we were undoubtedly too intelligent to bite off our noses to spite our faces by not dealing with him, since he had more Lovecraft stuff for sale than any man alive. The remainder of the page and a half single spaced letter was a listing of HPLiana, at characteristic prices.

Rimel tended to get angry about the whole thing, but I laughed him out of it. Fortunately for the peace of fandom, which otherwise might have been plunged irrevocably into War, a letter of mine to Bovard had crossed the one from Ackerman to me. In it, I had commented sympathetically with his five page dirge in connection with army life, and had asked her to show it to him, since I did not have his address. So I wrote him a chiding, if amused, letter, ordered some stuff, and all was well. Out of it all came a large bundle of LASFS material (free, too, bless his heart), and my first VOM, #25.

In October came also the first recruit to what was later to be the Acolyte gang. Fortunately for THE ACOLYTE, I have never held truck with graphologists, or else I would have ignored the sprawled, almost childish handwriting on the note which came from Toronto, requesting that a copy of THE ACOLYTE be sent to Harold Wakefield. I almost ignored it as it was, but finally sent the last available copy to the man who for my money is one of the four or five top experts on fantasy and the weird. There'll be more about this lad in the next chapter.

We received letters from a number of other people in October and November of 1942, but the ones I have named are the only ones that jump readily to memory in 1947. There was a delirious quality to this mail that no fanmail since has held for me; I was woefully ignorant of the field, so every letter was an unknown quantity. For all I knew, the guy might really be somebody, or he might be some crank. So what was there to do but follow them all up? I imagine I must have asked nearly every one of these people for material and/or a subscription.

As time drew on, I saw that the second ACOLYTE must be started at once, if it were to appear in December. Material was at a premium, as a quick glance at the magazine clearly shows. I had prodded Croutch into doing a column, which dragged on for four issues. Rimel had, by main brute strength, gotten Baldwin to do a revived "Within the Circle". Banister had sent us a story which at least was long. But there was no article, and nothing in sight. Rimel and I had often spoken of compiling a glossary of the Cthulhu Mythos, and it occurred to me that I might be able to toss something together that would get by. So I ripped into THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS, noting down every entity and place name together with descriptive data. The whole job, including alphabetizing the glossary and stencilling it took only two weeks, and I am still surprised that someone hadn't done it long before. It was surely a cheap and easy way to make a reputation, though this aspect of it did not occur to me until much later. If it had, I doubt if I'd have done the article at all, because it is embarrassing to me to be cited as an authority on Lovecraft, and asked to give offhand remarks and definitions about the mythos when in actuality I know much less about it than most Lovecraft followers. All I did was to turn out an article for a deadline, and I learned just about as much about the subject matter as a mundane journalist will learn about some topic he does for the Sunday supplement.

With this second issue, I set up the publishing schedule that was adhered to rigidly throughout all the Clarkston issues, and was aimed at here in LA. The only way to keep a regular magazine from becoming an impossible burden, I reasoned, is to do it in small, regular gobs. So I divided up the three months between issues: first six weeks, correspondence only, with emphasis on securing material. Next thirty days, cut one stencil per evening, come hell or high water, but never more than one -- and cut it before doing anything else, so as to be as fresh

as possible for it. This left me plenty of time for other things I might want to do. Next two weeks, run off two stencils an evening, but devote one of the two Sundays to running at least six, so as to leave an evening or so free for assembly, addressing, and wrapping. For a fanzine of 150 circulation or so, I can still recommend this schedule highly, since the chief bugaboo of subscription publishing is putting everything off until the last minute, then doing so much as to get a belly full. The four Clarkston subscription issues of THE ACOLYTE, each scheduled for the 15th of its month of publication, were never mailed to subscribers and exchangers later than the morning of the 15th, and on one occasion as early as the 13th.

The schedule, however, almost hit a snag when I tackled the mimeographing of the first issue. The mimeograph, I discovered when it was too late, was so old as to be unfit for modern stencils, since it required the top line to be a full inch higher than I could put it. Matters were further complicated by a hardened roller, which I did not diagnose for two more issues. By dint of endless experimenting, I finally found a spot just barely within reach of the pickup which would still get all of the print on two sheets out of three. Under such conditions, the second issue was finally sweated out, though there were only 94 usable copies out of an attempted 125. If I'd had any sense, I'd have given the whole thing up as a bad job, but I'm a stubborn character, and besides, the bug had bitten me -- hard.

One other major, from a fan point of view, event (oh gawd! Dunkese!) of the fall and early winter of 1942 was my discovery of magazine science fiction. I had scorned it, in common with all pulp magazines, all my life, and when I finally relaxed my standards and started collecting and reading WT and FFM, I suppose I reacted against the other pulps all the more. This attitude was further abetted by Rimel, who has never cared much for science fiction. But my very deep admiration for FANTASITE, led me to wonder about these magazines which were being so detailedly reviewed in a magazine so otherwise admirable.

So I started browsing the news stands, buying one each of the titles as I discovered them. AMAZING, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, TWS, and CAPTAIN FUTURE were bought once and tossed in the furnace. But I found a mine of information in the fanzine column of STARTLING, and gradually got so I liked even the stories. ASTONISHING and SUPER-SCIENCE knocked me out, colder than a fish. ASTOUNDING I left until last, since it was not displayed among the other pulps, but I went overboard for it when I finally discovered it. A girl at the office introduced me to UNKNOWN, giving me the August 1942 issue with Fritz Lieber's "Hill and the Hole" in it, but apart from that story and one or two others, I never cared for UNK until I started getting hold of the earlier numbers.

My second daughter, later known to fandom as "The Child Quiggie", was born about half way through the preparations for the second ACOLYTE. The stretch of about four months, centered around Quiggie's birth on November 11, 1942, during which her mother was for the most part too much under the weather to be of much company, saw me get mighty deep into fandom. I am restless, and possessed of a driving energy which simply does not permit me to relax and take life easy. At the time I figured that fandom was a good outlet for my energy, that it would keep me from wandering around and getting into woman trouble or spending a bunch of money some other way.

I did not realize then the

insidiousness of it all. In the first place, I naively believed that fans were people pretty much like myself, or Rimel, or Edwards, or Baldwin. It never occurred to me that most fans are neurotic messes, seeking in fandom the fulfillment their botched natures prevent their seizing out of life. Fans are always at their best in letters, and I took them at their self-stated value. Secondly, my friends were all gone; no one was left in Lewiston-Clarkston that I cared anything much about associating with.

Worst of all, I did not know myself. I had a dead-end, low-paid job, secured in the depth of depression, and I'd latched onto it with all the tenacity of a limpet. Events had never given me much confidence in myself -- indeed had had much the opposite effect -- so there I was, kidding myself along with a structure of compensations and evasions of fact similar to that used by the TIME-BINDER crowd. My intelligence, such as it is, told me with a clarion call that I'd better get out of that rut and get a high-paying war job. But emotionally I was incapable of it. In plain English, I had neither the guts to get out of an impossible situation, nor the intelligence to analyse it and see what was wrong. So there I was, not exactly unhappy since evasions and compensations usually sugar-coat our ills, but discontented with a malaise I scarcely recognized consciously.

All of a sudden, boom! I was getting dozens of letters, friendly and well-expressed, praising my efforts (success where I'd been a failure), typewriter acquaintances ripening almost overnight into fast friends (this to a lad whose friends had all left town, and who felt himself too much tied down by family obligations to go out and do things in the evening), and something definitely fascinating and apparently constructive to occupy the long, boring evenings.

I have never in my life gone quite so far overboard for anything as I did for fandom. At first I left the bulk of my free time free, but even after she'd recovered from having Quiggie, Jackie no longer seemed to care about enjoying life, and had adopted a somber and joyless attitude towards everything which made attempts at recreation unpleasant and the necessary chores around the house and yard almost unbearable. Well, there was plenty of fanning to be done, and imperceptibly it took up more and more of my time. I realized that our marriage, despite the two children, was shot -- yet I recoiled from doing anything drastic about it, and had no success in constructive attempts to bring things onto a more pleasant plane for both of us. (Very likely, the mass psychosis of war, which in 1942 and 1943 did not look very hopeful for anything or anyone, had a marked effect on both of us.)

Well, that's all water under the bridge. The fact remains that for what I hope is the last time in my life, I made an evasive, escapist adjustment to a situation. I took something which at its strongest should be no more than a desultorily followed hobby, and made of it almost a full-time job. If the truth were known, I am willing to wager that at least 50% of the more prominent fans are active in fandom for the same basic reasons I was -- evasion and compensation.

By February or March of 1943, I was for all practical purposes a total fan, heart and soul.

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CHAPTER THREE

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The Acolyte Gang

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Since practically my entire pre-Los Angeles fan life centered around THE ACOLYTE, and since the people I encountered in fandom were THE ACOLYTE, it seems eminently logical to describe the palmy days of the magazine in terms of the people who made it possible. Palmy days! Make no mistake about it, the first six issues of THE ACOLYTE were the ones that really meant something to me; though the material in them was for the most part far superior, the last eight issues were the un-inspired product of a meaningless habit, depending almost 100% on the momentum ACOLYTE had picked up during my year as a total fan.

Most important of The Acolyte Gang was, of course, Duane Rimel. Though he took no more than a nominal part in the majority of issues, he was definitely the one to whom I turned to discuss matters of policy and editing, even after he had left Clarkston and moved to Pendleton.

F.

Lee Baldwin did not appear on the scene until December 1942, and made no more than three or four trips to visit me during 1943. Nevertheless, he was a major influence on ACOLYTE, and not just because he was my only "in-the-flesh" fan for nearly a year. He was indefatigable in seeking out new contacts for us, particularly among the professional authors, and was directly responsible for ACOLYTE's contacts with Derleth and the Wandreis. His enthusiasm and candidly intelligent criticism were worth far more than his generous encouraging. Lee, born Franklin Lee Baldwin, comes about as near to being my ideal fan as anyone could. He is another of those all too rare individuals who can take his fanning or leave it, whose interest in the field is that of the intelligently desultory hobbyist, and who does not use his fanning as a substitute or compensation for something else. Lee was raised in the hamlet of Asotin, Washington, and was actively reading AMAZING as early as 1926, collecting it and other fantastic literature, and generally making a nuisance of himself writing to professional authors for autographs and such. His correspondence with H. P. Lovecraft commenced in 1931 and continued very actively until the latter's death in 1937, at which time the heart-broken Baldwin forsook fantasy altogether until THE ACOLYTE dragged him back into fandom five and a half years later. Coincidentally, he was studying piano, and supported himself for several years during the mid-thirties playing in dance bands and taverns all through the Pacific North West. (He is one of the three best white boogie-woogie men I have ever heard, and since the other two are Joe Sullivan and the late Bob Zurke, this is not ungenerous praise. Had he cared to do so, he could easily have made a name for himself in Jazz.) Baldwin's living comes out of the bakery business, and he is definitely a successful man from the mundane point of view, being foreman of the largest bakery in Central Idaho.

In physical appearance, he is short and slender, with pale complexion and dark wavy hair, and has the sort of good looks one is wont to associate with Poë's heroes. Upon meeting him, one is immediately struck by his sharply inquisitive eyes, his rapid-fire conversation, and his dapper vivacity. Baldwin's only apparent abnormality is his unbelievable capacity for food. I remember one occasion when he and Mrs. Baldwin came down to spend the weekend with us. On the way out to the house, Lee stopped at a restaurant and put away a full order of chili and beans. An

hour later, he performed doughtily at the Laney dinner table, eating half again as much as anyone else at the table. By 9:00 that evening he commenced mentioning being hungry, and by 10:30 had me downtown in a cafe, where he topped his evening's eating by polishing off a teabone steak smothered with eggs, a full order of french fries, a full order of salad, a piece of pie, and an antire silex full of coffee. I tried to keep him company, but failed miserably from the gastronomic point of view and was reduced to merely marvelling at such mighty feats of trenchmanship. I still don't see how the man manages to be only 5'8" tall and hold his weight at about 135. If I ate that much I'd look like a garter-snake that had swallowed a chipmunk.

In addition to being one of the best men I know to discuss fantasy with, Lee's musical tastes are impeccable. Well, at least they coincide with my own even closer than do Perdue's. Lee has one of the best record collections in fandom, including a copy (on either original label or reprint) of every side ever made by Earl Hines. For straight bull-festing apart from fantasy and jazz, Baldwin is the full equal of Al Ashley. All in all, I'd say that Franklin Lee Baldwin is right in there.

No mention of Baldwin is complete without bringing in his wife, Evelyn. She is her husband's full equal as a stimulating and informed conversationalist, and moreover possesses one of the most beautiful personalities I ever have encountered anywhere.

Dwight "Whitey" Edwards was the only other fan I met in person until I headed for Los Angeles. He was an ex-fan whose fantasy interests had pretty much crystallized in 1937 or 1938, and whose contacts with outside fandom had vanished entirely when Standard took over the Gernsback WONDER. He had been a charter member and prime mover in SFL Chapter #2 in Lewiston, Idaho (other chief members were Stuart Ayres, Lee Baldwin, and Duane Rimel, though there were three or four others). Edwards still read TWS, and one or two other pros, and browsed considerably in his collection of bound excerpts from WT, Amazing, Wonder, and Argosy of the period 1925-37. He also had most of Merritt in book form and perhaps 50 other fantastic books, together with sets of FANTASY FAN and FANTASY MAGAZINE. I am inclined to believe that he would have become active once more, except that he moved to Seattle to go to work in the navy yard, and I gradually lost touch with him. Had he re-entered fandom, he would have been one of our more notable artists; I still remember with envy an entire apple-box filled with unpublished Edwards originals, many of which compared most favorably with pulp pen-and-inks. Edwards is tall, blonde, balding -- a good mixer, married, and makes his living as a master machinist.

The first out-of-town recruit to the real inner circle of THE ACOLYTE was Harold Wakefield of Toronto. Though I corresponded very actively with Harold for more than four years, I never did find out much about him personally, except that his "Little-Known Fantaisistes" column was tough going for him, and usually came forth by his locking himself in his room with a pint of whiskey and finishing both of them about simultaneously. Van Vogt has told me that Harold is quiet and retiring, and spends his infrequent sallies into Toronto fandom with his nose in a book. Be all this as it may, Harold is one of the best informed men along the line of book fantasy. He has no time for scientifiction, but has about the best collection of weird and pure fantasy in Canada. It has moreover been my experience that his critical opinion is unusually

sound. Not only was his regularly appearing column one of ACOLYTE's very best features, but his limitless enthusiasm had more than a little to do with keeping the magazine going, particularly after I had come to Los Angeles and become increasingly fed up both with ACOLYTE and fandom.

Freehafer did not acknowledge the first couple of ACOLYTES until January or February of 1943. When he did so, he sent a subscription for himself and another for a Pvt 1/c R.A. Hoffman at Camp Beale, mentioning in passing that Hoffman was a good man to discuss fantasy with, and was rather lonely and unhappy in the army. So I sent Bob the customary come-on letter and shortly found myself inundated with the most lengthy correspondence I have ever had. At the time, his army job was strictly gold-brick (secretary to the divisional chaplain) and as far as I can tell he spent most of his time during the spring and summer of 1943 writing to me and drawing stuff for ACOLYTE. The drawings were not only stencilled at Camp Beale, they were actually run off there. Our correspondence very quickly got out of all bounds; there being many weeks that we'd each send the other as many as four long letters. This friendship, alas, did not survive a personal meeting as well as might have been hoped -- though Bob and I have never quarrelled and have always been on the best of terms, we very quickly found that we did not have a great deal in common, particularly after I lost most of my interest in fantasy. Our correspondence there in 1943 was just one of those things, but it was a dilly while it lasted.

Bob Hoffman (or RAH as he prefers to be called) has always had too much sense to allow himself to be dragged very deep into fandom. His ruling passion is classical music, and his musical studies both at USC and under well-known Hollywood figures is calculated to land him in the musical end of the motion picture industry. Bob has the largest symphonic record collection of any LASFSer, and in addition collects sound tracks, motion picture music, Cole Porter, and other similar stuff. He is totally non-hep. His interest in fantasy is a sideline, as is his artwork of various kinds, but he has a very fine collection of the stuff that makes fans go mad when they view it at Ackerman's. Bob is a good conversationalist and a good mixer; it is too bad he is such an esthete! But esthete or no, he was a prime mover in THE ACOLYTE from the moment he first hove on the scene until Uncle finally sent him overseas.

I imagine Bill Evans really ought to be numbered among The Acolyte Gang, since he was one of my earliest correspondents, was one of the most regular during the Clarkston days, and worked so much with us along bibliographical lines. Another favorite during mid-1943 was Art Saha, with whom I had a protracted and fervid argumentive discussion on fantasy, part of which landed in ACOLYTE's letter section. But I'll give these two the works later on, when I tell about meeting them personally.

Two Canadians were also strong influences on the 1943 ACOLYTE: John Hollis Mason and Norman V. Lamb. Mason wrote me a series of most marvellous and provocative letters mostly consisting of brilliant criticism and discussion of the stories in the Campbell magazines. Fandom lost a lot of its savor for me when Mason requested me (in mid-1944) not to send him any more letters or fanzines, because his fanning was interfering too much with his mundane life and the only way he could cut it out was to avoid exposure. Lamb is one of these long-time book and magazine collectors who has been bitten badly by the bibliographical urge. He was a major influ-

ence in that he expanded so much my knowledge of fantasy authors and titles; in addition, he and I did a great deal of magazine and book trading. Our relations were rather abruptly severed in late 1943 when the Canadian army sent him overseas.

These ten fans plus Warner and Bronson made up ACOLYTE's inner circle. The Acolyte gang actually had no organized existence as such save in my own mind, but I did think of them in those terms until I left Clarkston.

The year of 1943 was up until early October a very fannish one for me. As I have intimated earlier in these memoirs, I had become in most ways a total fan by February, but I was benighted enough to like it. In the first place I was getting ego-boo by the barrel-full, and my preoccupation with what I was doing kept me quite contentedly snuggled up in cotton batting, drowning out the still small voices which even then nibbled at my sub-conscious telling me to get to hell out of that dead-end job set-up, to get out and make some civilized friends, to lead the life of a human being instead of spending night after night in my den, pounding on a typewriter or twisting a mimeograph crank. In the second place, I seriously and honestly believed fans to be an extraordinarily gifted and worthwhile group of people, and fandom itself to have extraordinary possibilities and potentialities as a force to build up and improve the persons participating in it. Despite the avalanche of evidence to the contrary, it was not until the spring of 1946 that I finally completely recognized the fallacy of these two unfounded beliefs.

My violent reversal of stand in regards to fannish philosophy is not so difficult to understand when one considers the false impression of fandom I had built up in Clarkston. I was a "purist fan" simply because I felt the persons like Jack Speer whose prime interests in the field no longer centered around fantasy and stf were weakening fandom by dragging in extraneous factors. Since I actively maintained my definitely non-fan interest in jazz even when I was a total fan of the deepest totality, and yet did not find it needful to drag it into fandom, I could not see why these other people could not do the same. I don't know why I was so totally unable to see the inconsistency between fandom's professed aims and ideals and the antics of people in the field. Part of it was probably due to the fact that nearly every one of my chief intimates was a fantasy/stf enthusiast first and a fan second, but most of it undoubtedly was due to the non-recognition which perforce goes hand in hand with any evasive psychological adjustment.

Well, anyway.

The first big event of 1943 came for me shortly after the publication of the third ACOLYTE. Baldwin had gotten extra copies of it and #2 for use in his proselyting campaign, and sent them to August Derleth, the two issues in one envelope. One day I came home for lunch and found a red-hot letter from Little Augie, criticizing the devil out of Rimel's story in the third issue, and lambasting me in no uncertain terms for allowing it to be published. Derleth's point was that the Cthulhu Mythos was at best a difficult thing to use adroitly, and that no one who was not a top flight writer should try to use it, both because such a one could not expect to make a saleable story thus, and because inept use of the mythos tended to cheapen Lovecraft's memory. Well, well. I was a bit ruffed about it, but comforted myself with thinking how mad all this would make Rimel. So I went back to work.

When I went home that night, I found the afternoon

delivery had brought another letter from Derleth. I must admit I had quite a chip on my shoulder when I opened it, figuring that he had thought of something else rough to say. But when I did open it, I almost fainted. Derleth praised my Cthulhu Mythos article except for my suggestion that it be used to guide new writers who wanted to use it in their stories, mentioned that he had considered such a compilation himself but had never gotten around to it, and asked me if I would be willing to augment and rewrite it for the second Arkham House Lovecraft volume.

This was the one time in my fan life that I really went goshwowoboyoboy. I'll bet Derleth never in his life got quite as incoherent a letter as the one I sent him telling him I'd love to do the article for him.

When I came somewhat to earth, I realized that I'd need some help. So I induced Baldwin to loan me his file of WEIRD TALES (I already was storing Rimel's for him) and asked Derleth if he could help me out on certain of the stories which were still unavailable to me. His help was prompt and generous, not only did he send me detailed notes on several tales which I did not have at hand, but he also sent me the carbons of the totally unpublished "Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath". I set to work, and read exhaustively everything by HPL and Clark Ashton Smith, making copious notes from scratch. Not content with this, I skimmed every issue of WT in the house (1925 to date) and read carefully anything that seemed to have a bearing on the research. During this time, I corresponded extensively with Derleth, and somehow or other got him inoculated with the mythos bug too, for one day he sent me a bulky envelope with the carbons of two new Lovecraftian stories he had just sold to WT, mentioning that my compilation had showed that no fire entity had yet appeared so he had created Cthugha. (I was thrilled to death.)

Somehow, I managed to keep my correspondence perking at full blast during the five or six weeks I was working on the mythology essay, even answering all my mail by return mail. But one day I realized an ACOLYTE deadline was staring me in the face, though the article for Derleth was not beyond the notation stage. I went to work then; and finally turned out the final draft for Derleth in a continuous seventeen hour session at the typewriter one Saturday night. I slept most of that Sunday, then tackled the next ACOLYTE that night, turning the entire issue out in less than a month. It came out on time, but my stint took something out of me.

In the first place, my analytical reading and rereading of those Cthulhuian tales ruined them for me permanently. Those stories depend wholly on atmosphere, and once that is dissected it ceases to exist. I've not enjoyed any Lovecraftian tale since that summer, and my pleasure in other weirds has been little more than perfunctory since that time. Secondly, the rapid pace of getting out the fourth ACOLYTE on schedule got me very much fed up with the magazine. Even to my amnion enflamed eyes, fan publishing began to look remarkably like an old man of the sea.

So I attempted to break loose a little. But Jackie, I discovered when I attempted to associate with her, had become even more dour and joyless than ever. Had she cared enough for marriage and so on to make even the slightest effort right at that time, I probably could have pulled out of fandom quite easily. After a couple of weeks of rebuffs, I slipped back into the morass. That's the trouble with fact evasions and compensations -- they're too easy to fall into.

If one has the old side-stepping habit, he just runs and buries his head when trouble approaches, and probably ends up with his troubles aggravated, if postponed a bit. Had I the proper adjustment, so I could have faced facts squarely and acted on them accordingly, I would have done something about my marriage right then in 1943 -- either given it up as a bad job (probably that) or planned a systematic campaign to try to put it back on its feet. But it was so much easier to evade the issue, and slump back into fandom with the rest of the escapist.

Inside of a month, I'd forgotten the whole thing -- rather pushed it down into the same limbo that the TIMEBINDER crowd uses as a locker for inconvenient facts.

By the time the 5th ACOLYTE rolled out of the Clarkston post office, the magazine was really in the groove. Or so it seemed at the time. Enough first class material for another issue of the same size was on hand waiting stencilling for the sixth issue, my year-long campaign had begun to bear fruit what with an avalanche of subscription renewals and the beginnings of a trickle of usable and unsolicited material. I had gotten that old clunker of a mimeograph licked, and no longer had much trouble with technical details. It was not difficult, either, to ignore my increasing boredom with ACOLYTE when I was getting so much praise, and when I could see improvement from issue to issue. Besides, what an escape! No draft to worry about. No financial worries. No matrimonial worries. Ah, sweet fandom. Sweet escape. Sweet idiocy!

Tho my chief preoccupation during the Clarkston days was THE ACOLYTE, I found other facets of fandom quite interesting from time to time. My acquaintance with VOM commenced with issue #25, and I found participation in the "forum" quite pleasant, though some of the more juvenile effusions were difficult to rationalise with my conception of fandom. The chief lasting effect the 1942 and 1943 VOMs had on me was to saddle me with a wholly unjustified dislike of Jack Speer. He made some remarks about girls smoking cigarettes and chewing gum, implying that such women were bags and unworthy of Speer. Or so I took it. When I asked Bronson about this "callow youth" and found out that Speer was considered one of fandom's Great Minds, I was stunned. I still don't see why I should have resented all this so much, particularly when a rereading shows me that I intensified Speer's attitude far beyond what he said or implied. But I did.

Another trend in 1942 and 1943, logical enough when one considers the Lovecraftian tinge to my background, was for me to try to interest mundane ajay in fantasy publishing. This led to my digging out all of HPL's friends who were still in ajay (notably Reinhart Kleiner and W. Paul Cook), joining NAPA, and taking considerable time in surveying the better ajay magazines. Since the good ones do not usually appear in the bundles, but must be wangled individually, this took considerable doing. I did not totally give up on this until late August. During the time I was in NAPA I indulged in a spat with Tim Thrift which did not prove anything except that neither of us were capable of a logical uninsulting argument, got a passel of desirable HPLiana from Cook and Edkins and Barlow, and had a brief argument with Burton Crane. This will dig later.

In December of 1942, I learned of FAPA through a notice in FFF, and wrote to Chauvenet, then the secretary-treasurer. I waited on the outside most impatiently for six months, being kept from resigning from the list only by the combined efforts of Bronson,

Gergen, and Warner. (Gergen was a young but apparently brilliant chap who flashed across the fan scene momentarily in 1942 as a member of the MES, published a bit in FAPA, two issues of a subzine called TY-CHO, and then quit fandom very suddenly in early 1943.) Anyway, I finally got in through a most amusing fluke, though I did not learn of the flukishness until later. At this time, Elmer Perdue was vice president and Chauvenet secretary-treasurer. Elmer sent Chauvenet his dues, but in some way LRC overlooked them, dropped Elmer for non-payment of dues, and notified me that I was in. After the group was committed as far as I was concerned, Chauvenet discovered his error; but it was too late, and the FAPA constitution took one of its beatings by the roster's carrying a 51st member, me.

When I received the notification from Chauvenet, I airmailed him a note inquiring if I would perhaps have time to get a magazine into the coming mailing, my first as a member. He wired me in reply, and through some skullduggery there in Lewiston, the telegram was delivered to the office. We were almost completely idle at the moment, due to the mills' being on strike, so I wangled permission to dash home, jot down Ashley's address, and grab a partially written article I had kicking around. I got back to the office at about 2:30, finished the article (an essay on the possibility of a fanzine anthology), typed it off on ditto masters, ran it off on the company time, and airmailed the edition to Ashley with company stamps. Thus was born FAN-DANGO.

My first mailing (that for June 1943) arrived about a week later. In retrospect, it is chiefly notable for containing the first major exposition of the Slan Center idea, something for which I went completely overboard, as might have been expected from the erroneous and over-idealized concept I had at that time of fans and fandom. My rather detailed entry into this discussion started me off on my friendship with Al Ashley, who is one of my favorite people even if he is a heel. And the mailing as a whole sold me on FAPA.

In the latter part of the summer, a peculiar combination of circumstances made it possible for me to help Tucker scoop fandom with one of 1943's hottest pieces of news, the demise of UNKNOWN. John Hollis Mason saw a letter at Van Vogt's, in which Campbell told him that UNKNOWN was finished. He went home feeling pretty blue about the discontinuance of his favorite magazine, so wrote me a letter crying about it. I got it one noon, so at the office dashed off a note to the then new FANEWSCARD with the gory details, catching Tucker, as chance would have it, just before his deadline. Looking back at it, it seems screwy that an isolated fan from the hinterland would be able to make a scoop like this. And looking back at this paragraph it seems even more screwy that I should waste 13 or 14 lines telling about it, but the incident has been on my mind for two pages and I suppose it might as well be told.

From the vantage point of 1947, I cannot help chuckling every time I remember how I helped Walt Dunkelberger, the lard bucket that walks like a man, to get started in fandom. Little did I know! An early summer issue of FANTASY FICTION FIELD mentioned that there was this character in Dakota who published an amateur magazine for boys in the service, who was buying vastly from Unger, and who looked like such a good bet to get into fandom. So I wrote the guy the customary come-on letter and mailed an ACOLYTE to him. It led into quite a correspondence. We even got so far as considering the joint publication of an ACOLYTE-type fanzine, with Dunk

doing the work and me furnishing contacts, advice, and some material. The magazine fell through when Dunk, typically, took umbrage at something someone said to him. I believe, however, that I was Dunkelberger's first fan correspondent apart from Julie Unger. (Well, this is attempting to be realistic; I'll give you the bad with the good.)

With another correspondent from this period I actually did collaborate. Roscoe Wright, 17 years old at the time, was nosing around the fringes of fandom in early 1943, and since he lived in my neighboring state of Oregon, I took unusual pains to bring him into the field. When he finally overcame his initial bashfulness, he became a most prolific correspondent, writing me extremely long letters in a handwriting worse even than my own, sending me short stories for criticism (as if I knew anything about writing!), and so on. When I discovered that he intended to publish a fanzine without possessing even a typewriter, I couldn't resist offering to help, because I knew just about what some of the more supercilious fans would say if they collided head-on with Roscoe's chirography and I didn't want a friend of mine to take that much of a beating until I was reasonably certain he could take it without being hurt. The result was the first issue of VISION. Roscoe also illustrated Rimel's long poem "Dreams of Yith" with a full page ink drawing for each stanza so that I could publish it in FAPA. The drawings were made directly with Ditto ink, and while lacking a bit in technique certainly captured the atmosphere and spirit of the poem.

The summer of 1943 saw the peak of my correspondence with Lilith Lorraine, a Texan who had taken her interest in poetry and made a very good thing out of it by establishing an organization called the Avalon Poetry Shrine. Avalon accepted memberships from poets and would-be poets, offering personal criticism and help to the members, assistance in getting published, and so on. The group published a very good poetry magazine of their own, but the chief attraction to me was Lilith herself, an extraordinarily brilliant and stimulating correspondent, and a fantasy lover from way back, with four published stories to her credit dating from back in the Gernsback days. She contributed several of ACOLYTE's best poems, gave the magazine most of its poetical contacts, and kept me in a constant dither with her talk of a printed, semi-professional fantasy magazine, something which I hoped THE ACOLYTE might develop into. Lilith also published a critical essay of mine dealing with fantastic verse. In many ways it was quite derivative from Lovecraft, but at least it gave fantasy a plug in a medium that had not heard much of it up until that time.

George Ebey and Bill Watson swam into my ken in mid-1943. Ebey was the same supercilious and amusing character then that he is now, though perhaps a little less polished, but Watson was then at the height of his peak as a boy wonder. Both of them were (and are) good eggs, though at times a bit trying to people who take themselves or fandom seriously. Watson's letters were especially interesting to me, and I was unable to realize that this mature and witty person was only 16 years old.

Andy Anderson has told me since that it was my letter-writing that definitely pulled him into fandom, so I suppose I should mention that he became a major correspondent of mine in the summer of 1943, and that his letters were definitely among those I looked forward to, though I must confess I no longer remember much of what passed in them.

As soon as I discovered magazine stuff in late 1942, I became obsessed with the idea of building

CHAPTER FOUR

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The Odyssey of the Weird Willys

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As September 1943 faded into October, old total fan Laney had very few redeeming features. I did a certain amount of diaper changing and other services for the Child Quiggie, played records now and then, did occasional chore around the house and yard, and occasionally was unable to avoid social contact with the Great Unwashed. But the only non-fan activity that really meant anything to me any more was the nightly sessions with Sandy, then $3\frac{1}{2}$ years old. We would play vigorously for half an hour or so, then taper off with a big sing-song of Mother Goose rhymes and suitable childish songs, rocking like mad in a big platform rocker. Then I'd put her to bed, and head straight to my den, for another orgy of fanning.

I was so deeply involved in my escape pattern, that it was very seldom I consciously missed the companionship of marriage, the pleasures of friendship; only rarely that I was momentarily disturbed by the undesirable factors of my job, or by the still unoptimistic probable outcome of the war. Fandom was All. Of course there was a strong subconscious unrest, which would have broken out and led me to positive and constructive action if I'd let it, but the soporific of fandom was so strong that this disquiet very rarely reached the level of consciousness.

That is the insidious and rotten thing about fandom. Just the same as any other evasive compensation, it fetters its participants, and does them positive harm. A head-on and non-evasive adjustment is by no means easy to make, but through its accomplishment lies a person's only hope of attaining genuine happiness and security.

No doubt you are tired of my preaching. So am I. But the chief reason I am writing these memoirs is to try to get you, and you, and you to face your own personal problems like men instead of like fans, get out of the drugging microcosm, and triumph over whatever is keeping you in fandom.

These memoirs are meant as an object lesson. That's the only reason I'm writing them.

October 3, 1943 saw my little dream world blown sky-high. A new directive from the War Manpower Commission removed the entire office force where I worked from the list of essential jobs. In typical big business fashion, this knowledge was supposed to be kept from us, but one of the minor executives had a sense of fair play, and "accidentally" allowed the directive to circulate through the office.

When I saw it, I like to exploded. Everything I'd been evading and sidestepping rose up three times as strongly as it ever had been before. Our economic situation was precarious enough in the face of rising prices and a growing family; under GI allotments we would have lost our house and everything else. The job was no good anyway, but now it did not even carry draft deferment. And for a variety of probably invalid reasons which I'll not bother you with, I had a dread of army service which was almost an obsession.

Before I had allowed myself to drift imperceptibly into fandom, I had been capable of reasonably positive actions, and long-dormant habit patterns sprang

to life on the instant. That evening I talked the whole matter out with Jackie, decided to take off, and made preliminary plans. The next day I skipped work, talked to my draft board, got a job release from the War Manpower Commission, and then went up to the office and told them I was on my way, but would work two or three weeks while I was getting ready to leave. They were furious about it, particularly when I spent most of that two weeks urging the other members of the force to do as I was doing.

Preparation for leaving was no light job. We owned our own house, and it was indescribably full of this and that. While the bulk of the furniture was earmarked for sale, there remained my home workshop, books, records, and gobs of other stuff which had to be packed for storage and eventual shipment, sold, packed for immediate shipment, or otherwise handled. The house itself had to be sold. My teeth needed some immediate attention. My car, a 1938 Willys sedan, was in bad mechanical condition and required a complete overhaul plus new tires. Gasoline rations had to be gotten.

Not the least of the problems was where to go. I wanted a job which would not only be gilt-edged draft deferment, but which would carry definite postwar possibilities. This indicated a big city, as did my wish to get out from under the company town setup. I didn't want to go somewhere that would offer me a choice between only one or two prospective employers. Five suitable cities were within striking distance: Spokane, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. I would have gladly enough moved the 110 miles to Spokane and called it good, since we would have been able to save all our stuff and also avoid working over the car. Jackie vetoed this, said she hated the place, and urged Seattle or Portland, both of which I disliked for various reasons (in-laws living there, too heavy a dependence on ship yards, lousy weather, and other factors). This boiled it down to a choice between Frisco and LA. So the final decision was for me to head to California alone, aiming for Los Angeles, but laying over in Frisco long enough to study the employment and living possibilities of the Bay Area. If San Francisco did not suit, then it had to be Los Angeles.

I decided to go to Los Angeles anyway, since I could get enough gas for the trip, and compare the two cities -- so I made arrangements accordingly. It occurred to me almost at once that if I worked out my itinerary carefully I ought to be able to mooch overnight lodging and meals from fans along the route. So I wrote to Roscoe Wright, Bill Watson, George Ebey, and Andy Anderson. Knowing that LA was in the midst of a housing shortage, I asked both Phil Bronson and Paul Freehafer if there was any chance on being put up by some club member for a week or so.

Most fan activity was of necessity shelved immediately, but I did have two irons in the fire that had to be handled somehow. Bill Evans and I had been working for nearly a year on a bibliography of H.P. Lovecraft which had advanced to such a point that my share of it would be discharged if I cut one stencil. As good as done. And I had written, on Ditto masters, five pages of comment on the last FAPA mailing which I knew would be lost if I did not run them off before I left. So I finished up the third FAN-DANGO on the company time.

Otherwise I buckled down to work. At first I missed the customary fan activity somewhat, but the relief of actually doing something for a change, and the fun of making the necessary personal contacts to get things I needed very shortly shoved fandom into the background. I was still a fan, yes,

but for the first time since I got so deeply involved in the micro-cosm I realized how deep I was in, what I was losing thereby, and how much nicer it would be to keep fandom as the hobby it should be, rather than almost a full-time job. Unfortunately, my burst of clarity did not extend to showing me WHY I had gotten in so deep.

By dint of working night and day, three weeks to the day from the moment I saw the WMC directive the house was sold, vacated, and a rebuilt Willys loaded to the greaning point with my records and a basic minimum outfit for me was sitting in front of the house ready to go. Jackie and the children were to go to her parents for a couple or three months, until I could get a place. And I had accumulated myself a passenger, a friend of Rimel's named Aaron Shearer. Aaron had no interest in fantasy or fandom, but he was a crackerjack guitar man, and shared our jazz interest strongly.

One utterly mad stroke of luck had befallen me during the three weeks of preparation. While dashing about the rain-swept streets of Lewiston trying to expedite the motor overhaul and the tire retreading, I happened to spy a cigarette-shaped object lying in a puddle of muddy water. Something about it took my eye, and I picked it up, dashed into a nearby hotel, locked myself in a toilet-stall, and investigated. The soggy wad turned out to be a tightly rolled sheaf of greenbacks -- \$385 worth, including the first \$100 bill I had ever seen -- and not a scrap of identification. No use advertising it, though I did watch the Lost and Found closely. It was probably lost by some lumberjack in town on a drunken tear. Whoever lost it did not miss it enough to advertise, so I was "in". Actually, it was a bad thing to happen, since it made me feel entirely too prosperous, and led me to spend a whole lot more money on the trip and shortly after than I should have. But it still was a stab.

So with a pocketful of money, I chugged out of town on October 25, 1943. The car was so heavily loaded that the rear fenders scraped on the tires with every hard jolt, and even with the rebuilt motor most hills were a strain and required going into second gear. Aaron and I decided that 35 miles an hour was enough, what with a five year old car wearing all five of its original tires. The new treads did not restore the rotten casings.

Our first stop was to be Portland, Oregon, where non-fan friends had agreed to park us. Fifty miles short of town, the clutch went out, and I still don't see how we got into town under our own power, what of it we could still get to the wheels. I was frantic. The car was too badly crippled to try to find our friends' house with it, so we shoved it in a garage and went to a hotel for an unscheduled two day stopover. "Three weeks, anyway", the mechanic told me; but I handed him an inspired line of bull about how much the war effort depended on our being in Los Angeles by November 5 (using a fictitious yarn about my connection with Lockheed, and an equally fictitious one about Aaron's connection with Navy recruiting which we backed up with his honorable discharge papers from the Navy). So the man fixed us up anyway. Synthetic taurine excretia is often a great help to one.

While in Portland, I discovered a fabulous cache of sfzines in a store but a half-block from our hotel. The place had a special room stacked ceiling high with virtually mint copies of nearly every issue of every magazine. The biggest haul was a mint set of AMAZING QUARTERLY for 1928, 1929, 1930, and 1931; though I also bought largely of 1937 and earlier ASTRUNDINGS and completed my file of WONDER. This is the best magazine store I ever found; in nearly every instance I had from three to ten fine to mint copies of

each issue from which I could make my selection. Bill Evans, who ~~he~~ knows the place well, has since told me that it had gone to the dogs by the time I found it. Cthulhu knows what it must have been when Bill first hit it!

With the car finally fixed, we pulled out of Portland en route to Toledo, a cross-roads settlement near which lived Rosco Wright. This necessitated a fifty mile detour out of Corvallis, where Aaron had proposed to stay the night. Being near a big army post, the town was so packed that he couldn't get a room, so reluctantly he headed Roscowards with me.

(I might veer to say that Milty Rothman was stationed just out of Corvallis at this time, but we were unable to make connections with him since he was at the moment alerted for one of his many moves.)

Toledo, we found, is situated high in the coast range, over an execrably steep road, which practically tore the guts out of the overburdened Willys. After hours of climbing, we hit heavy fog which further slowed us, and it was close to 9:00 PM when we finally arrived at the Wright farmhouse, or rather at the base of it. (The house is 50 feet over from the road and about 25 feet up from it.)

It was nice and warm in the car, but the icy blast when we opened the door nearly laid us out. But at the top of the hill was a short, stocky young man who was almost incoherent with excitement. Almost his first words were to warn us to say nothing about our religious beliefs, because all fans are atheists and his folks are hyper-religious (Seventh Day Adventist) and never the twain shall meet; also, would we oblige him by attending the nightly family prayer meeting and Bible study if we were asked. We assured him we would do nothing to abuse his hospitality, and dashed into the house hoping to get warm.

The house turned out to be one of the coldest buildings I've ever been in. It is strictly pioneer, built loosely of unplanned rough boards, and was not designed for effete urbanites. As nearly as I can deduce, the place is a homestead, probably sub-marginal, and is attractive to Rosco's parents chiefly because they are the pioneering type born ~~in~~ fifty or seventy-five years too late. A hilly and rocky farm such as this certainly cannot bring in much income, and the isolation (six miles from a village cross-roads) would be bad enough for me even with a car, and would be impossible without one. Yet the Wrights did not even have a truck, and were dependent on a neighbor for transportation and hauling. I daresay that the early settlers of the west must have lived much as the Wrights were.

I do not mean to seem disparaging. The house, though primitive, was comfortable enough in a spartan sort of way; and the hospitality was far more genuine than what one usually meets. But the gap between this homestead cabin with its pot-bellied old heater, and my accustomed surroundings was simply too much to bridge comfortably in a single evening. Very shortly I went out to the car and got every extra coat and sweater I could in order to bear the temperature Rosco was taking in his shirt-sleeves.

Rosco's father is a virile old man in his late sixties or early seventies, and his mother is a woman perhaps 38 or 40, work-worn and quiet. There are siblings galore, ranging down to a little toddler scarcely older than Quiggie. The family life was of a patriarchal nature and apparently centered chiefly around giving glory to God. Other activities were for the most part bent on wresting an existence from a most unpromising en-

vironment.

Rosco had an attic room of his own, to which we shortly repaired. Two of the windows were broken out, and the fog-laden icy air coming in through them had a rough effect on my tendencies to bronchitis. I couldn't help wondering why Rosco had not boarded up the empty sash with some of the dozens of boards stacked under the eaves, and why he had not taken some more of them and built some shelving, since his collection was stacked in the bodies of two gigantic old baby buggies, and in apple boxes. I am afraid I was rude enough to mention this.

Rosco was about the hardiest character I have ever met, for while Aaron and I shook as though with ague even though we were bundled up like mummies, Rosco sat there in his shirt-sleeves and stocking feet. Though he was blue with cold, he seemed comfortable enough.

And I, at least, soon got so deep in conversation that I more or less forgot how cold I was. I told Rosco most of the stuff contained in these memoirs up to now, and also dragged some of the more get-at-able stuff out of the car to show him. He showed me gobs of his drawings, his collection (which was better than mine at the time), and a bunch of other stuff; told me of his aspirations as a writer/artist; and did a certain amount of stewing over the imminence of being drafted. When I found out that he had not only never been to Portland (not more than 175 miles away) but had never even been to Corvallis (a mere 35 or 40 miles) I realized that the draft could easily be the making of him. (It was, too; the Rosco Wright who wore uniform around LA a year later was a far different man from the boy we met that night in Oregon. The only thing unchanged was that Rosco then and now is a swell person, vital, sincere, friendly, and a lot of fun.)

We talked until 2:00 in the morning, breaking our stint only to go downstairs for the religious meeting which turned out to consist of the reading of what seemed to me an irrelevant chapter of the Bible, totally without comment, and rather long vocal prayers. I felt at the time that Mr. Wright was the religious member of the household, and that he had trained his family to be more or less acquiescent, but I may have been wrong. In any event, it was evident that Rosco's father disapproved of his drawing and writing quite strongly, and that his mother probably made it possible. Mr. Wright seemed to be a man to whom religion was the only actuality, and he coupled this attitude with a very forceful and unyielding personality.

At six the next morning, Rosco routed us out of bed, we had breakfast at 6:30, and all had left the house by seven--the Wrights going in a truck with some neighbors to the county seat twelve miles away, and we heading back towards Corvallis and the highway.

The frigid evening shortly had its repercussions; by noon my voice was utterly lost, and I could speak only in a hoarse whisper. I was moreover so racked with deep bronchial coughing that I was unable to drive. I was frantic. Not only was I afraid of getting sick in this unfamiliar country (there isn't a town of more than 10,000 between Corvallis and San Francisco) and going broke waiting to recover, but I had a definite date to meet Bob Hoffman and go meet Clark Ashton Smith on November 1.

A druggist fixed me up with some throat tablets which gradually brought me out of it, but I was a pretty sick lad for a couple of days. Aaron did most of the driving, though, and

the easy stages of the next two days had me OK by October 30, when we laid over in the sun at Chico. John Cunningham was stationed there at the time, but we didn't bother--spending several hours looking through second hand stores and getting a number of very desirable records. Around sundown we finally arrived at Camp Beale, headquarters of RA Hoffman and the 13th Armored Division.

Bob had reserved a room for us in the guest barracks; we had considerable difficulty locating both it and Hoffman, but finally made the grade. The three of us chatted for a while, then Aaron heard music coming from somewhere and went to investigate. Bob and I adjourned to his barracks, where my civvies brought me the biggest barrage of whistles and catcalls I ever had in my life. I managed to weather the storm, though, and soon found myself in the middle of a big conflagration with his cell-mates, all of whom went to great lengths telling me to stay out of the Army. In mid-evening, Bob recollected that he had prepared some Hoffmania for THE ACOLYTE, so we adjourned to the chaplain's office and spent nearly an hour looking at the crifanac Bob had been doing on army time.

It being closing time at the Post Library, we went thither to meet one of the librarians, an attractive but plump girl whose name I no longer recall, but who had been subscribing to THE ACOLYTE with considerable interest and had been having big bull sessions of a fantastic nature with Rah. We collected her and walked through a big recreation hall where a dance was in progress. Struck by a certain familiarity in the solo guitar, I moved where I could see, and sure enough, his civvies sticking out like a sore thumb, there was my boy Aaron sitting in with a 15 piece GI swing band and having the time of his life.

Bob, the girl, and I went to the parlor of the visitors' barracks and spent the rest of the evening talking about fantasy, arguing about music, and generally conflagrating. In the course of all this, Bob and I perfected our plans to visit Clark Ashton Smith the next day, and the session closed on a high note of excitement.

We had to wait until noon the next day for Rah to clear himself with Uncle, but the time passed very quickly when we got to watching a bunch of tanks maneuvering. The Weird Willys creaked and we moaned when Rah finally squeezed into the front seat with us, for he is what might well be described as a Plump Boy, and that tiny car was plenty full to start with---but the couple of hours drive to Auburn passed very quickly, despite a lousy road that knocked another couple of thousand miles of JW's life.

Smith lives a couple of miles out of town, and is at least a quarter of a mile from the nearest road. So we parked on the edge of a dirt cow-track, and started walking through what Hoffman insists is the fabulous Forest of Averogne, actually the remains of an orchard abandoned to the wilderness. Smith's cabin, a weather-beaten two room shack, sits well away from the trees in the midst of a rocky and desolate pasture. On approaching it, one is struck equally by its forlorn loneliness and by the beautifully built rock wall Smith has built around his dooryard.

I had of course heard a great deal about Clark Ashton Smith, and seen many pictures of him, but none of this had prepared me adequately for the man himself. He is tall and slender but well-made, and has a much more striking and massive head than his pictures indicate. On the occasion of our visit he wore dark slacks with a light sport coat and of course his omnipresent beret; trivial, perhaps, to mention the man's

clothes, but it seemed vaguely incongruous to find the man who had written the sort of thing he has, dressed like any college student. And even more incongruous was it to discover, with a touch of pleased surprise, that the man I had thought of as aged and vibrant with a knowledge not of this world was instead as youthful as any of us. Smith is extremely shy at first, but as he gradually comes to feel that he is among friends who will not ridicule his mode of life and thought, he unbends, and becomes one of the most gracious hosts and entertaining conversationalists I have ever known.

We spent the afternoon drinking wine, talking, and being shown Smith's collection. His books, a choice and varied lot, including many surpassingly beautiful illustrated editions, are very much worth examining, but the real stab came from the surprisingly large quantity of artwork, mostly the creation of Smith himself. His sculptures, using the small boulders picked up in his yard, are somewhat known to fantasy lovers, several of them having been shown on the dust jacket of LOST WORLDS and in the illustrations in MARGINALIA. There were far more of them, however, than I had imagined--at least a hundred.

But the high point of the afternoon came when Smith brought out a stack of original drawings and paintings at least two feet thick. Perhaps 25 or 30 of them were commercially published ones, including the originals of most of Smith's drawings from WEIRD TALES, and the Finlay original from "The Thing on the Doorstep". (This last, incidentally, is by far the best Finlay pen-and-ink I have ever seen. Made before Virgil started drawing to size, it measures something like two by three feet, and has a mellowed beauty encountered but rarely among magazine illustrations.) There were also several early Boks, including a couple of wonderful unpublished ones, and an unpublished Roy Hunt drawing of Tsathoggua.

Smith's own drawings and paintings, every one of them unpublished, made up the rest of the stack. Nothing of his that has been published gives any inkling of the man's stature as an artist. In technique, of course, he lacks a good deal, being entirely self-taught. But he more than makes up for it with subtle and bizarre ideas, by a surprisingly good sense of form and structure, and above all by his unconventional and often superlative use of color. Most of the paintings are done in showcard paint, or something very much like it; they tend to be garish, but yet there is a certain use of restraint that makes even the most unrestrained ones quite acceptable. Perhaps twenty show entities from the Cthulhu Mythos; the remainder are extraterrestrial landscapes, divided about equally between non-human architecture and alien plant life.

Of the conversation I no longer remember much. Unforgettable, though, was Smith's impressive recitation of a medieval formula to raise the Devil. The afternoon was just guttering away into twilight, leaving the room in a hazy half darkness; between the look in Smith's pale eyes, the overtones in his voice, and his powerful delivery, I must admit that the chills were really going to town playing hide-and-seek along my backbone. Materialist that I am, I was actually relieved when Smith paused and remarked that he wouldn't repeat the spell a third time, for fear it would work! Then he laughed and the spell broke. But the man has dramatic powers which I believe might have made him famous as an actor had he followed that art.

With the onset of darkness, we went into town for dinner, taking Smith to a Chinese restaurant he had recommended. Our entry took on the air of

a triumphal procession when we encountered the Auburnites, nearly all of whom greeted Smith warmly by name. It was pleasant to see that he is so well thought of by his fellow townsman, a type of recognition not always given to creative artists.

Smith had a date at 8:00, so we left him downtown and headed the Weird Willys towards the Golden Gate. His parting sally was unforgettable. Aaron was riding high on a fresh fruit kick, and just as we were leaving he dashed into an open market and bought a large sack of grapes. Smith looked at him with an air of profound disbelief, turned to me and whispered, "That may be all right, but personally I prefer the finished product."

We had been planning, happily, to have the Hoffmaniack drive us into San Francisco, feeling that we needed a bit of rest. Imagine our stunned surprise when we discovered that this non-commissioned officer in an armored division was totally unable to drive any kind of self-propelled vehicle! In vain we pointed out the intimate family relationship between the Weird Willys and a Jeep; he informed us, smugly, that he had flunked a jeep driving examination and by army order was not permitted to take the wheel of any automobile, truck, or such.

Aaron being exahusted from the disproportionate share of driving he had done through southern Oregon and northern California, it looked as though I was elected. The Weird Willys chose that opportunity to go very, very sour on us. The lights faded out into faint ghosts of themselves, the motor began to miss and clank, and to top it off, I shortly discovered that we had no brakes left. The drive, through utterly wold Saturday night traffic, was a nightmare; we were unable to maintain enough speed to keep out of peoples' way, and were moreover blinded every time we met another car.

But we finally rolled in- to Oakland shortly after one in the morning, after a long conversation about the possibilities of a weird session at the Pacificon put Aaron to sleep. Hoffman suggested that we drive out to Tom Wright's house. I had plenty of misgivings about pushing doorbells at that hour, but Rah egged me on. The fragile little fellow who minced to the door didn't like the idea at all, and was at first even less cordial than I would have been under analogous circumstances. But Rah finally talked his way in and we phoned George Ebey, who had been expecting us but had given up. He had room for two, he said, but Tom, finally awake, had become more hospitable and invited Aaron to stay with him.

When we got out to Reinhart Drive, we found a delightfully zany household. George's mother and a friend had just returned from working swing shift, coffee was brewing, and a disjointed conversation sprang up. At first acquaintance, George was a bit disappointing, acting adolescent as all get out, and it was not until I met him on subsequent occasions here in Los Angeles that I realised he is one of the better characters I met through fandom.

Mrs. Ebey walked all over him for not having made us up a clean bed, but we were too tired to give a damn--even when he told us with high glee that Degler had slept there and the reason he hadn't changed it was that he was saving it for us. The bed was vile. When we saw it, we immediately decided not to undress, and as an additional precaution sleep between the top sheet and the blankets. The pillows we covered with an old blanket out of the car. I was convinced Degler must have kept a sow and litter for bed partners, but George swore this was not the case.

Since this is the first time Degler raises his stupid face in these memòars, perhaps I should backtrack a bit. Shortly before I started packing, I received from T. Bruce Yerke his initial letter of inquiry about Claude Degler/Don Rogers, in which he was attempting to asseble data for his report on the Cosmic Circle. Amusingly, this was the first I had ever heard of Degler, but I answered, and emphasized that any use of my name or that of THE ACOLYTE was totally unauthorized, that I hadn't given Degler permission to use it, and if he was as described I never would. Shortly thereafter I got the FAPA mailing with the first COSMIC CIRCLE COMMENTATOR, and practically blew a fuse laughing over it. As I thought the matter over, I saw that rubbish like that could only serve to give fandom a black eye, and became increasingly angry about it, but finally decided the best counter-attack would be heavy-handed satire. (Widner and Kepner also felt this way, judging from the three take-offs in the next mailing!) Then about midway through my packing, Yerke's report finally came. I read it, and without failing to notice Bruce's tendency towards one-sidedness realised that he had more than proved his point. From then on out, I was thoroughly anti-Degler, and when I saw that utterly vile bed I became slightly bitter about the whole thing. You must remember that I still held very high ideas of fandom, and that nothing even remotely resembling Clod could well be imagined as fitting into fandom as I visualised it.

Well, back to Oakland. The next morning, after meeting George's sister and baby and devouring a big bait of finnan haddy, we drove over to Wright's to pick up Aaron. There we ran into the contretemps of having four people to fit into a car that was so loaded that it would barely hold three. Since George knew public transportation, I suggested that he and Aaron ride the streetcar, and let RAH and myself meet them at Bill Watson's. Though he could see for himself that four people could not possibly get into the putt-putt, he chose to take this as a personal insult, and stalked off down the street muttering angrily to himself. We did not see him again until the next year in Los Angeles.

Not without cussing him a bit, we left Tom Wright's and headed across the Bay Bridge into San Francisco. (The hazy reference in that last sentence is to Ebey, not Wright! Ah, this composing on the stencil!) The car was acting worse and worse, but we made it--and, through a mixture of fool's luck and Aaron's alert eyes, spotted a hotel with a Vacancy sign and knocked off a big room with twin beds. I plunked the car in a parking garage, and started to walk the six blocks to 1299 California Street, and Willie Watson. If I'd realised it was six blocks up, as well as over, I probably would have driven.

Anyway, in due season I arrived, and was met by a most door-filling character. Bill Watson is a big fellow, sandy and freckled but good looking, poised, slow-talking, and probably packs around 195 pounds on his six feet of lazy carcass. I had known, of course, that he was only 16, but nothing in either his appearance or actions gave the faintest hint that Willie was not at least 25. His affectation of boredom is a bit too obvious, and he might be criticised for tending to be a little too much the esthete, but all in all I'd say Bill Watson is one of the five or six best men I met through fandom. A brilliantly entertaining talker, mature and sophisticated--certainly a stimulating companion with whom to spend an afternoon or a month.

Sitting in a corner, with his nose deep in a book, was an owlish looking character in the blues of the merchant marine. It turned out to be my old pen-pal Art Saha, from Hibbing,

Minnesota, who was stopping over in Frisco after his first voyage. Saha was a pretty constant companion during the time I was in Frisco, but somehow he managed to get in my hair something scandalous; chiefly, I think, because he had such unbelievable naivette. When he came to Los Angeles a year and a half later he was totally changed from the bumpkin with alfalfa in his pants that haunted me in the Bay Area.

During the three days I spent in San Francisco I had three or four big sessions with Watson, few details of which I can remember, except that he showed me the bulk of the first diablerie, and a good part of the second one. I also did a good amount of book and magazine store haunting, usually with Saha; and got an unbelievable quantity of good stuff at give-away prices, including a whole stack of absolutely mint 1929 and 1930 AMAZINGS at a dime a copy.

I did no job-hunting whatever, since the raw damp air had set my bronchitis off but good. Nearly every time I stepped outdoors, I was bent double with agonised coughing, which on three or four occasions led to my losing my last meal into the gutter--and all this despite generally sunny weather. It was obvious that I could never live in the Bay Area; in fact I'd not have stayed three days except that the car was in the shop that long. Had it not been for the god-awful climate, I would have stayed regardless of LA, since I was sick to death of driving that pile of junk, and also had heard a good deal of disquieting information about the LASFS from Watson--but I couldn't help thinking about that vaunted southern California weather.

One very interesting evening came when I had a big record session with Bill and Edith Dart of Oakland. I had traded records with them through THE RECORD CHANGER, and had dropped them a note suggesting a bash if I had time on my way down the coast. Saha more or less invited himself along, but I fear he had a boring time. The Darts are both jazz purists of the mouldy fig variety, as might be deduced from the fact that he is the drummer in La Watters Yerba Buena Jazz Band, and I found their dogmatism a bit amusing. But they are swell people, very much wrapped up in each other and in their joint record collection, and they showed me one of the most enjoyable evenings I have ever spent.

Bright and early Wednesday morning, November 3, we found that the Weird Willys was ready to roll, so in deference to my cough we headed down the coast towards Pismo Beach, a resort town noted for its twin biological products: shellfish and Andy Anderson. The trip down was uneventful, except for the glimpses we got of the shipyards, and the covey of blimps which played tag with us for an hour or so.

We arrived in Pismo and found Andy to be a gigantic young man with big knobby wrists and ankles, a shock of curly blonde hair, and a stentorian voice. His mother, whom we saw only briefly, is extremely attractive, and very young looking to have whelped such a massive giant. I still feel bad about usurping her bedroom, but she insisted that she'd already made arrangements to stay across the street with some relatives, that we were tired, we needed the rest, and we were going to sleep there; that was all there was to it. I chatted with Andy for a couple of hours, examined preliminary sheets of the then new CENTAURI, and when I found how poorly he was fixed for stfzines sold him a big stack for \$5.00. (A good \$40.00 worth according to Garage prices.) Pretty soon though, I got so sleepy I couldn't continue, so we hit the sack with a crash and got a much needed rest. For me, it was the first night unbroken by protracted coughing for more than a week.

The next morning we fixed breakfast ourselves, Mrs. Anderson not yet having returned, and I got somewhat better acquainted with Andy, being wide enough awake so that I could see him. He seemed swell, and subsequent encounters have only confirmed this impression.

Towards noon, we headed down the line to Los Angeles, but had no more than begun enjoying the drive when the Weird Willlys once more went temperamental on us. We managed to nurse it quite close to town (somewhere out on Ventura Blvd.) but surrendered and put it into a shop for a while. We got fast and cheap service, but a new generator was indicated, and my failure to get one at the time was largely responsible for my being carless for a couple of months in early 1944. Such a pile of junk!

I had figured out from a map how to get to Paul Freehafer's apartment (2325 Ocean View Ave.) and felt rather elated that we hit this rather hard to find address with no false moves, the first time during the entire trip that previous astrogration paid off without either making inquiries or getting lost.

But it did little good; Freehafer not being home. We held a consultation, went to an early dinner, and returned to a still empty apartment. So in the hope of getting a lead I called up the LASES. A booming voice nearly knocked the receiver out of my hand, and turned out to be Arthur Louis Joquel II in one of his more expansive moods. Yes, yes, Freehafer would certainly be in later in the evening since he had to pre- side at the meeting; who was this?; oh yes, we are expecting you; come on down; this is meeting night.....

Well, I was much more in the mood for bed than a club meeting, but I was supposed to stay with Freehafer until I got established, and Aaron had to go downtown any- way to locate himself a room, so off we went. I was just at the point of entering fandom's self-styled Shangri-La.

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