

Redd Boggs'

SPIROCHETE

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WHAT'S AFOOT WITH LEGMAN

G. Legman seated himself gingerly on the sofa and, ignoring the current issues of such insignificant journals as Time, The New Republic, and The Realist stacked on the end-table, snatched up the really important reading matter to hand: Spirochetes #9 and #10. He scanned them narrowly for some time, then asked if he could keep these copies and if he could "subscribe or something." I was flattered into an unwary promise to send him future issues, but was sobered by a reflection that he might want Spirochete for some inscrutable purpose not related to its high quality and scintillating contents.

Legman remarked that years ago he had acquired about half a ton of fanzines. Those he remembered most vividly were a series of publications that "proved the Los Angeles fan group a hotbed of fags." He asked me who had published them, and I said, "Burbee and Laney." "Ah yes," Legman said, "Laney was as sad a case as they come, and Burbee..." He said he thought the best fanzine he ever saw was published in Canada and was titled "Searchlight, perhaps?" I said, "Light, edited by Leslie A. Croutch," and Legman nodded. "Yes, that was it." I croggled quietly, never having thought Light of more than trivial interest.

He wondered if the LASFS was still a fag group, and I denied it, explaining that its principal sexual manifestation these days was a non-sexual homosexuality resulting from the fact that a number of leading members live in all-male slant shacks, fraternity houses, and the like. Thinking of the attitude of Berkeley fandom and fandom at large toward the LASFS, I suggested that the image projected by L. A. fandom these days is one of overage teen highjinks. "Sometimes one almost yearns for the era of the overt fag," I confessed sadly.

Legman had phoned Gretchen early in the afternoon, revealed that he was in El Cerrito for a few days, en route from La Jolla to New York and on to Alpes-Maritime, France, and inquired if he could see her when she wasn't guarded by her "watchdog." He told her that my writeup of his lecture in San Francisco 25 February (Spirochete #4) was evidently a deliberate slam at him which seethed with animosity, although it was done so subtly that he had to read it several times to become aware of this. Gretchen invited him to call at 1700 hours, and I ran off growling, intending to spend some hours in the library gnawing at the literary bones of Mark Twain.

He phoned again later, reporting that he couldn't make it at 1700 after all. Gretchen and I had intended to see Bob and Carol Chazin later that evening, and Gretchen suggested that he come along. So here

he was. He was less dapper than when I saw him last. He wore a brown sportscoat, a white shirt unbuttoned at the neck, no necktie, and corduroy trousers. "I didn't dare wear my Oxford suit," he said, glowering at me, "because you made fun of it last time."

En route to the Chazins in Berkeley, Legman looked up through the lavender summer twilight at the distant Campanile and the misty hills beyond, and remarked appreciatively, "This may be the greatest university and the greatest college town in the world. And there I was," he added ruefully, "stuck at U.C.-San Diego. There were only two persons in the whole area I could talk to. One of them taught at San Diego State -- a real 'nothing' college. A brilliant man immured in a dusty corner of the universe."

At the Chazins he settled himself comfortably, drank canned beer sparingly, idly lighted little Japanese matches and watched them burn, and argued with Bob and Gretchen. He was full of stories, anecdotes, theories, and observations, usually centered around his old themes of sex and censorship. He described a scene in an old Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis movie he had seen on TV where "this faggy juvenile" is taking a bubble bath and squeals, "Oh, Deanie! Come here and scrub my back!" He also described with great animation a terrifying scene in "Goldfinger" where a Bad Guy is electrocuted in a bathtub. (He had seen only the trailer, not the whole film. I shudderingly agreed with him that the trailer was quite enough.) Legman objects to the themes of sadism and homosexuality in the popular arts, and insisted, "If I could import some stag movies from Tijuana that show normal sexual acts and run them in a theater down on Telegraph, the James Bond trash would go out of business." He and Bob disagreed whether the Bond movies are entertaining, and he and Gretchen disagreed with Bob whether they are satires.

He revealed his new parlor game, wherein he asks each person at a party to relate his three favorite jokes. These jokes, he said, always reveal hidden facets of the person's character. He told us numerous jokes he has collected, the best one involving a tough Irish cop and a little Jewish immigrant. This broke me up, a fact which he noted appreciatively. Since he said most of his jokes involve sex and money, I told him one about politics.

Legman was rather mysterious about where he was staying in El Cerrito; he bade me drop him off on a dark street somewhere near Blake and Walnut. "You can write me at my old address in Alpes-Maritime," he said in parting. "I'm heading home to France, and I intend to make it." He waved farewell as Gretchen and I drove off, and we didn't see him again.

A FLUNK IN SUBJECT A

SAPS, step back. N'APA, stand aside. You might have been famous in the old days for fannish zilch, but these days you must take a back seat to Apa L. The Caltech oofuses are incredibly deficient in skill in handling the language -- worse than any N'apan I've seen. Not a man of the raggie-taggle crew could "write their way out of an essay on 'Why My Daddy Buys Life Insurance.'" But the grand prize for rank incompetence (a one-way ticket to Irkutsk) has been won by Rekciptin in Apa L #35. This stands alone as a gaunt and lonely example of ungepotch rhetoric and unseasoned salmagundi. And it's from a young lady attending UCLA! She should have been able to write better than that in the third grade.