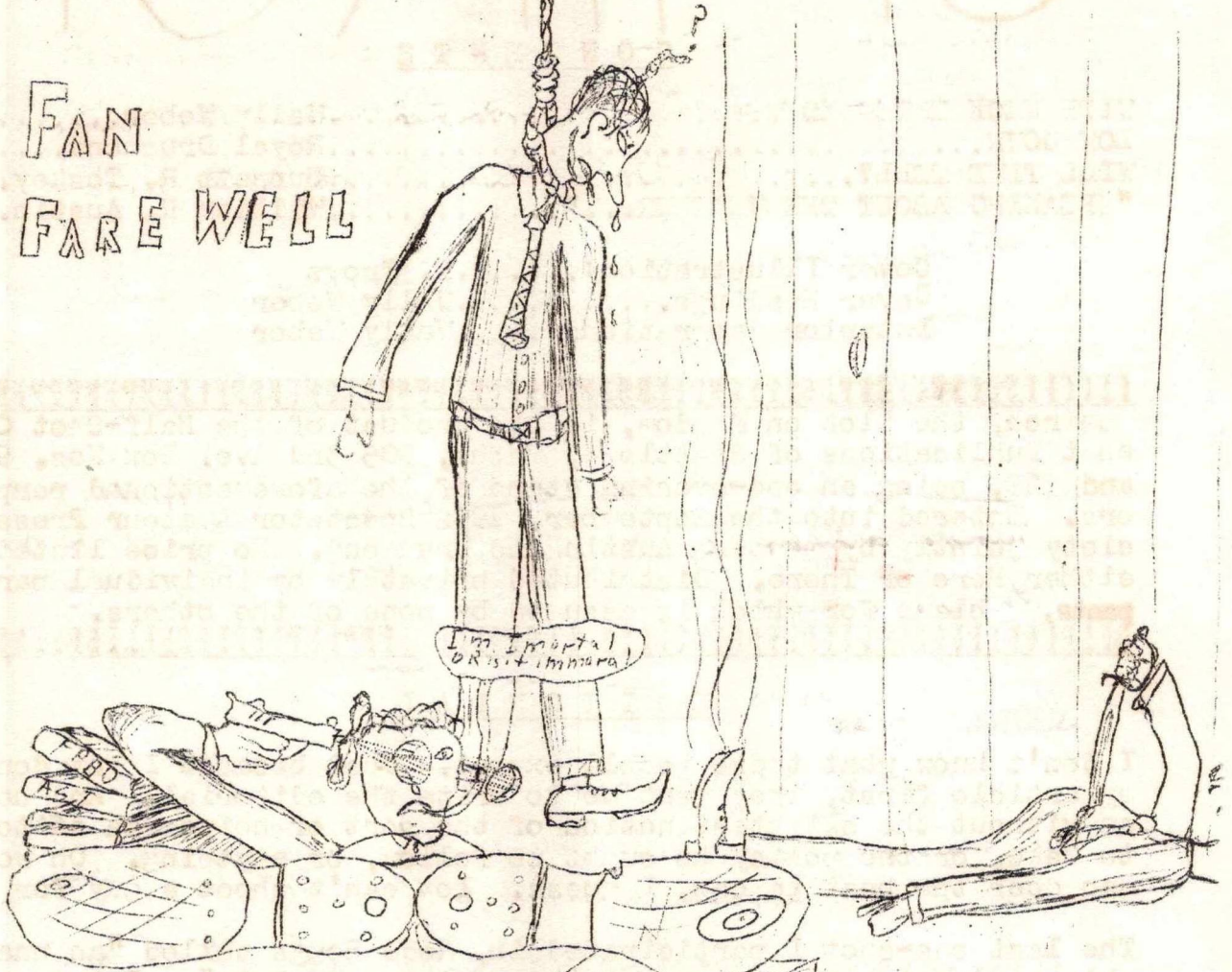


SMIRCH

THE BLOT ON FANDOM

FAN
FARE WELL



I'm immortal or is it?

Di Hos 

E. Frowe



HALF-SHOT ONE-SHOT PUBLICATION

SMIRCH

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E D I T O R I A L

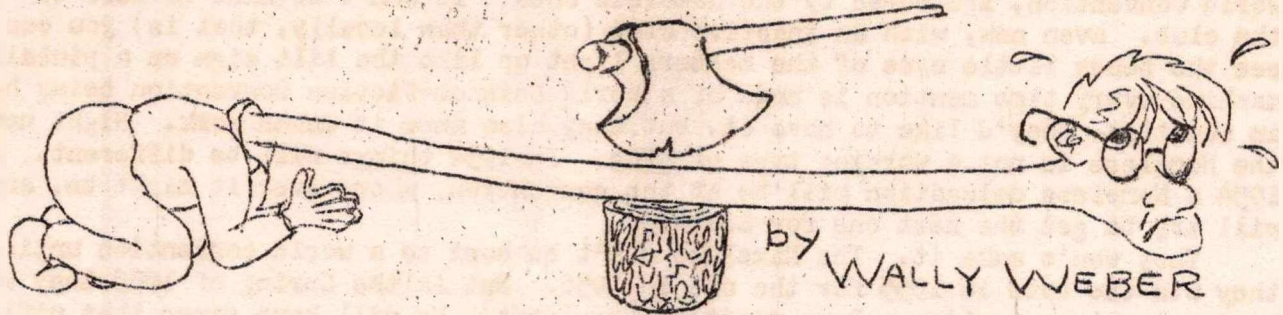
I don't know what these people expect. Just because I got done with my article first, they want me to write the editorial. And here I am without the slightest notion of the sort of noises an editor ought to make, or the policy he ought to follow, or anything. Oh well, a man does the best he can, I guess. You can't shoot a guy for trying.

The last one-shot I participated in, Redd Boggs called "an unanswerable argument against spur-of-the-moment one-shots". I thoroughly agreed with him, which is why I wanted to explain that this is not a matter of impulse with us, but a way of life. If I had my "druthers" I would do nothing else with the rest of my life except put out one-shot fanzines, like Coswal does.

Even though this is a one-shot, it is not "spur-of-the-moment". It was entirely premeditated, as a sort of celebration on the occasion of Toskey's departure for the army. We thought we should show him what he'd be missing by being in the service, and maybe make him a little more contented with his lot.

Burnett seemed happy enuf when he came up here, but we fixed that.
(Editorial continued on back)

WITH NECK EXTENDED



by WALLY WEBER

In the past I have refrained as much as possible from protruding my long neck from its protecting shell of conservative comment. I have come to love that neck of mine. Without it I don't know how I would be able to keep ahead in the fan-world about me. The lengths to which I will go to save my neck from any possible harm are infinite.

But there comes a time in every walrus's life when the coast appears to be more clear than usual. The best of necks like a little fresh air at intervals. All of which leads up to the fact that, with nervous typewriter and pounding pulse, I am going to attempt an honest presentation of my opinions on the future history of the Nameless Ones. What's worse, I'm going to attempt predictions, dated to the year.

Change of Purpose

The Nameless Ones, as it now stands, is a Seattle group. Its purpose is that of a social group, which is exactly what it is. Friends meet and talk about mutual interests. Unlike sewing bees and poker parties nothing else than visiting will take place, unless perhaps there is a program. With a little change in program the club could change its name to The Northwest Canasta and Chess Society and none would be able to find any basic difference.

This will change.

Like all changes, there is a critter responsible. In this case the critter is our present President, Ted Ross by name.

Ross is not so much a doer, but he is an organizer, and one hell of a good one, too. He has a problem, though. He has nobody at present to organize. He has yet to discover who in the club can do what. Most of the Nameless attending meetings are the canast-club variety, showing up just for the visiting and whatever program there might be for entertainment. So Ross has a problem, and it's going to take him a long while to unravel it. I'd say by Fall of 1953 he'll have it licked and by Spring of 1954 the club will be changed.

There is a catch of sorts to this. Ross has got to stay in office as president during this entire period. He's an organizer, but he likes to organize for himself and not some other person. If another Nameless is made President, Ted will still remain a member, but he won't organize.

I feel safe enough in stating that Ted will remain in office that long. Until Ross changes the club, there will be nobody attending the meetings who will offer him any competition as a candidate. Only two other alternatives will see Ted losing his office. One is if the University demands that a student preside at the meetings which is extremely doubtful. The other is if Ted becomes discouraged enough to up and quit, which will be avoided when the opening of school and the ending of vacations, not to mention programs at the meetings, will put an end to the summer slump in meeting attendance.

So Ted will have us a new club by '54. In what way will it be new? It will be a fan club, not a tea party — that will be the way in which it will be new. The meetings will be more for getting together to discuss club activities than to chat away about science-fiction and flying saucers in general.

World Convention

When Ted shapes his new club in 1954, preparations will be started for a World Convention, sponsored by the Nameless Ones. It won't be hard to sell to the club. Even now, with an inactive club (other than locally, that is) you can see the beady little eyes of the members light up like the tilt sign on a pinball machine every time mention is made of a World Science-Fiction Convention being held in Seattle. They'd like to have it, but they also know it means work. Right now the Nameless is not a working type of club. In 1954 things will be different. In 1954 a Nameless delegation will be at the convention, where-ever it might be, and will try to get the next one for Seattle.

They won't make it. The Nameless won't be host to a world convention until they win the vote in 1955 for the one in 1956. But in the Spring of 1955 they will have a local convention. Ross won't be President. He will have given that office up to somebody not even in the club yet. It will be some one attracted to the revamped Nameless, and he (or possibly she, not to mention it) will take Ross' place in the first election of officers in 1954. Ted will continue to attend the meetings, but he will no longer be a strong force in the club.

The 1956 convention will be the hardest job the Nameless ever undertake. By that time, science-fiction conventions will have become so intensely commercialized that a perpetual battle will be waged between the club and commercial interests for control. The club will lose, of course, and will in fact break up. The Convention will be put on by the commercial interests using the Nameless name, if you can imagine that.

After the Convention, the Nameless will start again. It will be the same type of club as we now have and will remain so until a new generation of active fans take over the club and start the cycle again.

The State-Wide Nameless

The original ambition of the Nameless was that it would be a state-wide fan organization. It is not that and it will never be that. There will, however, be a state-wide club. It will grow as a consequence of the 1956 Convention. By the time of the Convention, several local groups will have become strong fan clubs in all the major and many of the minor cities and towns of the state. These will form the state-wide organization at the Convention and will not be known as the Nameless Ones, although the Seattle club will become one of the less active members of the organization.

Nameless Personalities

I have told the story of what will happen of Ted Ross. I've also got some opinions as to what will become of some of the others.

Burnett Toskey, who is leaving for the army by this September, will carry on a moderate amount of fanactivity while serving his two years (minimum). His activity will be limited to fan articles and fan fiction. Eventually he will trade his love for science-fiction for a love of women. He will pursue the latter with the same enthusiasm that he once applied to the former. There is no particular date for this change. Toskey will gradually creep up on it.

G. M. Carr will stay active in the N3F until 1957 when she will quit fandom and write professional fantasy for the better quality women's magazine. Her only connection with the Seattle club will be to attend a few of the meetings and quite a bit of work on the Convention for the N3F.

Royal Drummond will have no connections with the Nameless other than being a member after his participation in Sinisterra number six. He will be a member of both FAPA and SAPS until 1984 when he will retire from fandom to spend the rest of his life writing books on batcheons. He will be an authority in the field.

Bill Austin will become active in the Nameless Ones, permanently taking over the editorship of Sinisterra in Summer 1954. He will put out a large number of his own fanzines and collaborate on several one-shots until 1962 when he will become editor of one of the many professional fan magazines that will then exist.

Victor Stredioke will become extremely active in Nameless work, taking over the position of Corresponding Secretary in the Fall of 1953 and holding it until the summer of 1955 when he will devote all his fan activities to world-wide fandom.

Phillip Barker will return from India in 1953 to take his place as Program Chairman of the Nameless until sometime in 1955 when he will return to India permanently.

Richard Frahm will be moderately active in club affairs until 1955 when he will be put in charge of the World Convention. After the breaking up of the club he will drop from fandom.

And then there is one other prediction I feel called upon to make. Wally Weber will take to drink in the Summer of 1953 after having his first submitted story to a prozine rejected. He will end his life, such as it was, in a Seattle house of ill-fame on the night of the 1956 Convention, having been discovered there by one of the persons mentioned in this article. As far as I am concerned, that will be...

The End

HOW TO KILL A FANCLUB

Fanclubs are born and die every day, and anyone who would like to terminate a club can usually save himself the trouble by waiting a year or two until the club dies a natural fan death. But now and then a club does get started and, through inertia, determination, or plain stubborn ignorance, the club just will not die.

In such a case steps must be taken. The club cannot be allowed to continue. What would it be like if other clubs followed such an example? In no time the world would be jammed with fanclubs. There wouldn't be enough fans to go around. No, such a situation could not reasonably be encouraged. Something would have to be done, and this is how to do it.

First, the murderer-to-be must become a member of the club he intends to exterminate. No one has a better chance to finish off a club than a member. It is not a matter of casing the club or avoiding suspicion. It is one of the necessary steps.

Having become a member, the next step is to take on more and more responsibilities in club activities. It is not particularly necessary to become an officer, although that often results, but you must eventually be the controlling factor of each and every activity of the club. This is not difficult, even in a large club with a great variety of activities because it is never necessary to carry out your duties. You need only to be willing to take the responsibility for them. The other members will welcome you with open, loving arms, losing no time in assisting you into the exact position you desire.

Once instituted in the desired position, you have already killed the club. As far as the rest of the world is concerned the club no longer exists. Being in charge of its fanzines, you will see to it that none are published. You can see to it that the club gets no outside publicity. Now all that is left to do is to let the club itself realize it is dead.

This part can be fun. Being in charge of all activities, you can make out reports on the progress of your work. They don't have to be particularly accurate. In fact, if you feel that writing reports is too much work, hold a laundry slip in front of your face and pretend to read your report from it. Nobody will doubt you for fear of getting their old jobs back. And it can be profitable, too. You can present a bill for a fifty-paged printed fanzine, explaining that the printer refuses to release any copies until the bill is paid. (You will, of course, state a large bank balance in your report to the treasurer so that the club will have no qualms in paying you. Your bill will only amount to every last cent the club has in the bank.) If the club is unusually profitable, this venture alone may make worthwhile the effort you have expended in killing it.

All that you need do to finish the job is . . . nothing.

-*-

By
ROYAL
DRUMMOND

-6-
LOWDOWN

Okay, I'm supposed to tell you-all what I think of the group of local fans known as the Nameless Ones. But, seems to me, before I give my impressions you ought to know something of the background of my association with them, and with fandom in general. Actually, for a man beset with the problems of earning a living and raising a family, the question of whether Seattle should shoulder the burden of a larger, more active fanclub, or even whether it should have a fanclub at all, seems purely academic. I cheerfully leave the problems of achieving such a fanclub to those who are willing to cope with them.

The extent of my interest in TNO is merely that of once-in-a-while visitor, who goes to the meetings to associate with the fascinating people who ought to be found there, but who so seldom are. I enjoy the Cry when it comes, but forget it ten minutes after it's filed; enjoy seeing other members, but they're out of mind as soon as they're out of sight. And as for taking a more active part in the Club --- phooey! Better I go down to the Municipal League, or the ADA, or take up golf.

It's purely an accident that I belong to the Club, anyway, and I know just how it happened. Lemme tell you about it. A long, long time ago, I took my wife to the hospital for a couple of weeks, and of course made daily visits thereto. One September evening I decided to walk downtown, it being a nice night. Upper Pike street is not a part of town I usually frequent, and I was delighted to sight a bookstore never seen before. It was open, apparently; the lights were on and it was filled with people. True, they were somewhat odder-looking people than one usually finds about the streets, or even in bookstores, but that was all right with me. I only wanted to look at the books anyway. So I opened the door and went in.

The air was blue with smoke and purple with conversation; from somewhere just east of the rolltop desk came a girl's voice saying, "Ch, I think that's revolting!" which sounded promising. (But I never did find out what she was talking about.) It began to dawn on me that this was something more than just an ordinary evening in the bookstore, but I thought: I'll just make myself small and look at the books in the back of the store, and maybe no one will notice me. So I scrunched all up and crept through the crush in the center aisle, until I was halted by a pair of feet (complete with shoes & socks) planted firmly in my path. Scanning up from the ankles, I perceived a lantern-jawed pipesmoker, eyeing me with speculative gleam, and nodding his head as if to say; a-a-a-ha.

"How do you do, sir." he said pleasantly, "You read science-fiction, do you?"

Bulp!! Of course I'd been reading ASF for years and years, but I didn't think it showed. I was about to apologize abjectly and scuttle out the door, when this amazing fellow continued, "Well, you've come to the right place. Sign your name in the register, won't you? The meeting will start in just a few minutes."

Well, sirs and madams, the evening went on and on and on; people got up, or rather, since there were no chairs, they shifted to the other foot, and made little speeches about how the club ought to do this or that; several committees were designated, and a writer's group was formed. During all this I was in the back of the store looking at books, which is what I came for in the first place. I wasn't alone; three-fourths of the other people (?) were back there with me, leaving a small and energetic bunch to do the work. After a while bloody footprints began to appear on the cement floor, and it was decided to adjourn. I found myself walking down the street with a group of 6 or 7 people who were headed for one of the local restaurants so naturally I joined them. It was in there, over coffee, that I really began to enjoy myself. Conversation was fast and furious, and full of allusions to unknown

publications and people. We wound up at 2:00 AM, when the place closed, and I took a couple of the out-of-towners home with me to spend the night. They were wonderful people, and engendered an admiration for stf readers that has never been outgrown, and which is one of the reasons I've kept up with the club.

And that, little ones, is how Grandpappy became a charter member of The Nameless Ones. Of course, they weren't The Nameless Ones then, just a bunch of nameless people who had decided to underline their namelessness.

And that also set the pattern for all the meetings of the Club I attended later. Oh, they're a leetle more colorful -- besides the blue and purple of the first meeting, figurative little green men run in and out, and objects of a saucerish hue swish through the windows occasionally, and there are some gray, gray speeches made -- and we have chairs now, and a little more formality, plus some worthwhile programs and some not so worthwhile. But by and large, the evenings are wasted until the jam sessions begin after the membership has removed to the nearby eatery. You go, or at least I do, to enjoy the company of fellow slans, but dammit, you never get to talk to anybody.

The club is filled with good talkers, and with people who will let them talk while they're arranging what they'll say when the other fellow quits, but there are only a few good listeners who attend the meetings regularly, and some one always beats me to them.

Then, there are always the people who can't listen or talk. I think this is because they've been subjected to so many years of adverse conditioning ("Ya mean you actually read that Buck Rogers stuff? Snf!") that they're afraid to let themselves go, even in congenial company. Poor guys.

So that is the main reason why I don't enjoy the meetings more than I do. Taken two or three at a time, the average Nameless One is the most interesting person I've ever met. Not the most likeable, now. Remember, the average Nameless is a male, by sheer weight of numbers, and for some strange reason I find females much easier to like. But by the same token, female Nameless are more likeable than nameable females.

(If all this seems somewhat obscure, it's probably because it is.)

I don't say that membership in the Club hasn't been rewarding; far from it. If nothing else, the two or three close friendships I have formed are more than sufficient recompense for the time I've put in. For that reason alone I shall probably continue, to belong to the Club and to attend meetings at infrequent intervals. But I shall probably continue to feel that most of the evenings I attend are wasted.

I don't know how to change this state of affairs, and probably wouldn't have the energy to do so, even if I knew how to go about it, being strictly a dilettante type.

Whither Nameless?

Well, I predict that the organization will either flourish as the green bay tree, growing and growing until it becomes necessary to set up a quota system for new members; or it will die an early death, with a few faithful hangers-on meeting in each other's basements; or it will continue on its merry way, with the same tea-at-the-parsonage atmosphere it now has..

One of the three, anyway.

WILL TIME TELL?

WILL
TOSKEY
TELL?

By BURNETT R. TOSKEY

The Time: 4151 Con.

The Place: The only city left on Earth, or any other planet.

The event: Pucon MMCMXVIII

Scene: To the uninitiates, the year 4151 Con. is equivalent to what the ancients termed 6193 A.D. A few words of history might bring us up to date on this little matter. The 33rd annual world science fiction convention was held in the Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington, and was entitled the Pucon, by virtue of nearby Puget Sound. The convention was such a success that it was voted by an unprecedented unanimous vote to hold the next year's convention at Seattle also. Thus 1976, the year of the 34th convention, became known throughout the universe as 34 Con. All other cities of Earth, Mars, and Venus were deserted in favor of attending the wonderful Pucon II. By a strange coincidence, this was the exact time which the Russians decided to conquer the universe. Armadas of ships plundered the universe with Z bombs, until not a building was standing or a person alive, even in Russia. Only the one invincible city, Seattle, remained untouched. The power mad Russians, stopping at nothing to gain their foul ends, amassed their fleets for a giant attack on the super city. And they attacked! This proved to be their utter downfall, for as their ships approached the dread city, they were met with such a tremendous blast of hot air from the ensuing convention that the entire fleet was burned to a crisp. Thus Seattle became the only surviving city, and the only fans left were those who attended the convention. So naturally, for the next four thousand years the convention was held in Seattle. Seattle itself grew and grew until the city limits extended beyond the orbit of Pluto. By common tradition, the convention programs were held in the Olympic, which had had been enlarged to encompass the area formerly known as The United States.

Events leading up to our opening scene: Immediately after the final rites of the Pucon MMCMXVII, The Shaverites held their short convention, once more nominating Richard S. Shaver to run against the nominees of the other three parties, the Hubbardites, the Fanatics, who espoused both Dianetics and Shaverism, and the Independents, who espoused neither. Shaver himself had become a giant fifty seven feet tall, and an immortal by virtue of what he called the T-ray, which he found in the caves under Seattle. Of course, no one believed his fantastic claims, and he had lost the election to chairmanship of the Pucon somewhat more than four thousand times in a row. The Hubbardite convention lasted a full three months, while the clears battled it out with each other over the question of which of them was the most clear. The nomination was ~~was~~ won on the final ballot by Clarice Clear, who claimed to be a direct descendant of a cousin forty times removed of ~~the~~ Hubbard's third wife's fourth husband's great grand-niece in law's step-nephew's fourteenth cousin-in-law. The Fanatic convention split into two factions, the Shaverites and the Hubbardites, and the party was once more found without a candidate. But the Independents, who had swept the chairmanship election for as far back as anyone could remember and history fanzines could

record, had a sure fire candidate in Ted Ross CCLXVII, direct descendant of the Ted Ross who sponsored the Pucon I. Ross as usual won Earth on the fan's platform, and with no trouble carried Mars and Venus tentacles down.

Our drama opens on the third day of the Pucon mmmcxviii, and chairman Ted Ross CCLXVII is about to introduce the guest of honor, Burnett R. Toskey, who had discovered the secret of eternal youth, but would not reveal it to anyone else. His subject for this year's Pucon was the same as it had been for four thousand years: "The advantages of growing old". The chairmen of past Pucons had always invited Toskey to be the guest of honor, in hopes that he would reveal his secret, but always Toskey would talk on the advantages of growing old and dying. Strange as it may seem, each time Toskey had finished with his speech in past conventions, fans would leave the convention halls, or shut off their television sets with a shudder and everyone would feel relieved that he was a mere mortal and would be allowed to die.

ROSS:(In a quiet easy voice) Ladies and gentlemen, today we are very, I should say EXTREMELY fortunate(he makes a wry face) in having a very, I should say EXTREMELY distinguished guest here at this convention. Uh, well, I'm sure you all know who I mean --- he's been a fixture at these conventions as far back as me or my ancestors could remember. Hehehehe.

(Toskey steps up to the platform, dressed neatly in his tattered army uniform, which saw three thousand years service. He looks to be a young man of about twenty, but actually he was four thousand two hundred and sixty four years old, really an insignificant difference considering Toskey was doomed to live forever and ever. Just behind the figure of Toskey stands an odd looking creature with a long neck and seventy five eyes, one on top the other. A shudder of horror rips through the entire television audience at sight of this pitiable figure. This is the well known figure of Wallace Weber, the only other person whom Toskey had granted the gift of eternal life.)

TOSKEY): I thank you I thank you. Ah, greetings to all you fans who were good enough to send in your Seattle bus token for membership in this great event. Of course, everyone knows what I will be talking about today -- the delights of growing old and the ecstasy of death. But this year I have something special for you. Today I am going to make you realize(heavy emphasis in his voice at this point) just what an utter curse immortality is. Today I present to you TRUE HORROR!!! In short, I present Wallace Weber!

(At this point, the needle on the audience participation recorder swerved so sharply to the horror corner of the dial that the needle broke in six pieces before the remaining stub had a clear field of travel which allowed it to accelerate its circular speed. The event ended with the machine itself disappearing in a cloud of blue and green smoke to the accompaniment of a sound resembling an Oldsmobile's muffler exploding combined with a sour trombone note aimed at the drum of an eighty year old mimeograph machine.)

(The telescreen focuses on Weber, and in the distance is seen several square acres in perspective within which could be seen the faces of countless female fans, and young fans ranging from infancy to adultery. There were also other instruments of torture in sight, but those

mentioned were the most gruesome. --- There was a slight delay in the convention proceedings while the damaged equipment was in the process of being replaced.)

TOSKEY:(his face appearing in a small corner of the screen) You have before your eyes a picture of what the curse of immortality is. I awarded Weber eternal life, and you see the results! Fortunately he is the only survivor, for it so happens that the secret of immortality is in the possession of a certain title. The Reason for Wallace Weber's immortality is solely because he possesses the title of Corresponding Secretary of the Nameless Ones. Yes, fans, that is the whole and complete secret to immortality, the answer to the question that has been in fans minds since the dawn of Fucon!

(Silence is heard throughout the Solar System at this announcement as fans everywhere sat with strained fingers and tentacles and eyes bulging more than usual. The perspiration of relief began to flow in large quantities then, and the floods nearly swept the convention platform into its maelstrom. Mars was pulled inward toward the Sun another fifty thousand miles as a result of the increased gravity caused by the floods of perspiration. Relief seemed to be the universal emotion).

TOSKEY: The Nameless Ones is an ancient organization which fathered our cozy little civilization and brought it to its present high peak of development. None of you would remember it, unless, of course, you were an immortal. Naturally when the Nameless Ones was encompassed by Fankind, the office of Corresponding Secretary became honorary rather than functionary, and naturally Weber, who had held the office for something like twenty five years, having been re-elected to that office for fifty consecutive terms or more, I forget which. As for myself, for a period of one year I possessed the title of assistant to the Corresponding Secretary of the Nameless Ones. The previous Corresponding Secretary, I forget her name, would also have had eternal life, but with Fucon II, the N3F folded, and she committed suicide. Of course, as you can see, Weber is much too cowardly a character to do such a thing --- therefore, as you see, he lives in agony. But, my fellow fans, I have been depicting only the utter gruesomeness of eternal life. 'Tis time I turned to the more pleasant aspects of growing old and dying.

(The scene on the screen changes, the awful horrible ghastly gruesome mess known as Weber and family disappeared from the scene, to be replaced by a strange sight. On one side of the room shown were stacked volumes, some three thousand in number. On the other side of the room were also stacked volumes, some three thousand in number. Dimly visible to those with large screens were the titles on some of the volumes. On the right, there seemed to be some five hundred volumes on the care and feeding of batcheons, about two thousand volumes on the anatomy of the batcheon, and five hundred volumes on the sleeping habits of the batcheon. On the left, was three thousand volumes on the sexual behavior in the batcheon.)

TOSKEY: Here you see depicted the life work of a great man. The author of these essential items to every fan's household was a mere mortal!

(Loud cheers of joy echo through the audience participation recorder, and the author of the aforementioned books is greeted with a large applause, some four thousand years after his death.)

TOSKEY: Think of it, Fans, who but mortal man could devote a lifetime of study to such a worthwhile project? I propose a pause in honor of the honorable Royal H. Drummond, one of the truly great benefactors of fankind.

(A period of intense deafening silence resounded through the Solar System, as the proposed pause was observed.)

TOSKEY: And, now, fellow fans, I am about to show you something which will make you glad you are a mortal. It is a photograph of a fan, now long resting in peaceful bliss, whose bones have long since had the eternal pleasure of rotting away. I'm sure you'll recognize him. EVERYONE knows him, from the chairman of the convention to the lowest fan. And I present to you now, a mortal!

(On the screen the well-known face of The Founder, William N. Austin appeared, ~~xxxxxxx~~ lined with deep retrospect. As the awe-struck audience gazed upon The Founders august features, a low voice intoned the sacred prayer:

"Our Founder, which art in Forest Lawn
Austin be thy name.
Thy fandom comes
To his old Tomes
On the eve of Fankind's dawn
Gave us our fanzines and gave us a meeting
place, as we gave him our money.
And lead us not into Dianetics, but deliver us
from Shaver,
For His was the founding,
The glorification,
and upholding of all Fankind.
Afen"

At the close of the sacred prayer, the picture of William N. Austin fades slowly from the screen, to be replaced by an intense blackness. The convention adjourns for the remainder of the day, and such was the religious effect on the fans that the printing shops were unusually well attended that night.)

AUTOGRAPHS:

Royal H. Drummond
Wally Weber
Burnett R. Toskey
William N. Austin

"SPEAKING ABOUT THE WEATHER....."

by wm n austin

Standing here in front of this nearly unfamiliar Royal, whilst a not-so-unfamiliar Royal sits in front of yet another, with brothers Wally Weber and Burnett Toskey clattering away elsewhere in the office, the question comes to mind as to whether or not fandom in general, and fan clubs in particular, are a way of life and living. The time is late afternoon one hot August Saturday. The question coming to mind is being goosed along "to mind" by a sort of pre-determined effort towards arriving at destinations of a similar though hardly related nature. "high road, low road" stuff. To task then, Austin!

Speaking as an ex-fan if I may be called such, I'd say first that, sure, fandom and fan clubs are worth the time, effort and money that goes into participation of an actifan nature. This even though the pro's and con's are multitudinous.

For one thing, fans, whatever their faults, are generally if nothing else interesting individually and collectively---to me, at least. They usually talk less about the weather for one thing. Anything that gripes me more than people greeting one another with half-hearted inquiries as to the well-being of the other are those hearty souls who seize every opportunity to torture unfortunate acquaintances with generalizations about the state of weather, all tenses. (At the moment, it's 87°F., humidity 39, with a barometer falling off from 30.34". Looks as though it might rain one of these days.)

Science fiction fans generally do not talk about the weather.

And yet, looking at the matter fairly, you might say this is not particularly a good sign, this lack of pre-occupation with the weather. Say, for instance, everybody cold-shoulders the subject, and it is truly unseasonable---which it usually is, because one usually considers it in terms of the "average" weather, something usually ignored by Nature in practice---one might view the mass obliviousness as something less than patriotic---downright un-American, perhaps. For what is more important to more of the people more of the time than a consciousness of the state of weather, if not the weather itself? And how can one be certain of the accuracy of his consciousness of the state of weather unless he compares it not occasionally but often with his fellow man?

Not exactly an attribute, this.

Well then, we can point out the individuality of fans. No two alike, each with his particular (yes, you might say "peculiar" even) set of idiosyncrasies.

While operating the Wolf Den Book Shop here in town several years I encountered many fans, a good share of whom belong, or at one time belonged, to the Nameless Ones, the local fan group which first saw light of existence in the shop in late September, 1949. Yep, seems like yesterday...

It was February, 1949, when sinusitis had me groggy, that I found myself owner-operator of a cluttered old shop full of cobwebs and unscannable tomes. At the time I had a rather interesting job in the Complaint Bureau of the Seattle Police Department, from which I was forced to resign several months later due to the pressure of too ^{much} outside activity, doubled. Two bears by the tail is one too many, twice.

Right off the bat I started stocking old prozines, new stf and fantasy books, and collecting stfen. Immediately I discovered they were more interesting than most other frequenters of the shop, although in general they admired more than they bought. An inspection of the till at night brought tears to an inverse proportion to the day's take of fans---usually. Exceptions to every rule.

Like the itinerant actress who popped in once and displayed among other talents a working knowledge of Yoga. She stood on her head and revolved her tummy muscles. "Ovulated," Drummond says. Somehow neither of us could visualize her in heavy drama thereafter.

And the little chap, later active in the club, who invariably instructed me on the manner of re-pricing books---by coincidence items in which he was interested. Seems I'd have these things overpriced in every case.

And the fellow who never bothered to pay for things, who always left as unbulky-seeming as he entered, until an inspection of the tangible stock was made directly after his departure. It wasn't so much a question of what he did but how he did it.

Then there was the college lad who did buy prozines by the bushel, who never attended a single meeting, who introduced fanzines to my attention. I've never been the same since.

And then there was the Eaton's, Miles and Betty. They lived Walden-like in the Cascades, painting, drawing, mastering languages. Miles helped form the stf club, not so much because stf interested him any longer, but because stfen he found more alert, less unreasonably prejudiced than most other groups of people. A better chap than Miles one cannot find, anywhere.

Gertrude, too, turned up at the first meeting after we'd met via phone and correspondence. A purposeful woman, who formed the impetus behind the club with the very first meeting and for a long time thereafter. Now she's doing similarly with a larger organization, the NFFF. Gertrude Carr, that is...

With the first meeting, the off-trail types blossomed from every direction, but primarily from the direction of the University of Washington. With an assist from Alderson Fry, Medical Librarian there, the club moved from unsuitable quarters at the bookshop to the University of Washington where it has since remained. It has flourished and waned, but it has not suffered from violent political schemes as have other stf clubs.

Lessee, there was Drummond, Weber, Toskey, Phil Barker, Gil Stuart, Harry Johnson, Richard and Jerome Frahm, Ed Wyman, Don Brown, Frances McKinnis, Delcie Oban, Ed Walthers, R.Fallen, Monte Solkover, and a whole host of others who either showed at early meetings or shortly thereafter. And an equally large host of newer fans who I know less well, being as I attend fewer meetings than of yore, and no longer operate the bookshop.

This latter fact or group of facts I attribute largely to the fact that Delcie Oban and I were married last autumn. The bookshop, fascinating as it was with prozines and fans, I couldn't visualize as strong enough, even potentially, to carry a family. Let alone to carry local fandom. Time becomes increasingly less available with the passage of same.

But fond memories persist. All those people, so unique individually, sometimes offered too rich a fare in groups, with the result that all those open minds seemed, somehow, more like open mouths---collectively.

That was only at the time, however. The passage of time always favors these recollections soft lights and mellowness.

Yeah, I'd say "sure, science fiction is great. Everything about it, from fans down to the stories themselves." Science-fiction clubs should be fostered, carefully nurtured, and properly administered thereafter. For, verily, fans are slans.

Just watch out for those chaps who venture not opinions about the contemporary weather.

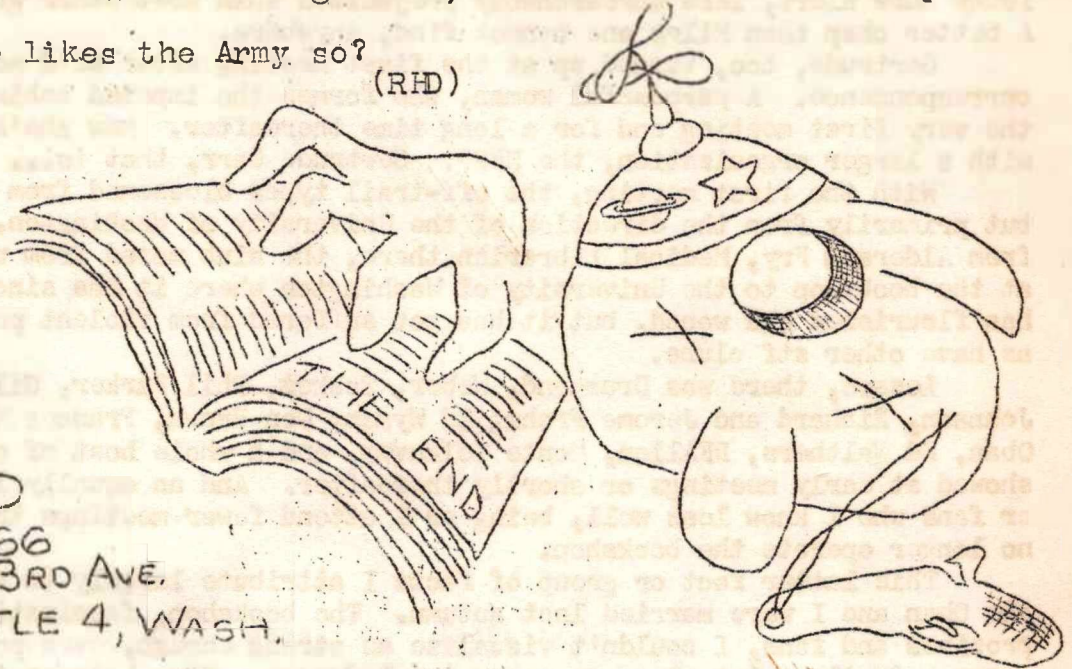
(Editorial---continued from page 2)

We know the post he's going to; we have promised to send him, in care of his Commanding General, all sorts of interesting mail, like for example, an envelope bearing the return address of the Russian Consulate. Inside would be three sheets of blank paper, with a note attached saying "message will not break if clear". We could lay bets on how long it would take Toskey to convince Them that he didn't know how to bring out the secret writing.

Also, we thought of getting him a subscription to the Daily Worker, and sending literature from the Family Planning Center, and threatening letters from the Divorce Proctor, and send-off cards from all the Turkish baths in town (with love from the "girls"). But the threat that really sent him to his knees, was our promise to send copies of all the fanzines he's published, with requests that he autograph them. That got results. He has assigned us one third of his salary and allowances for all time to come, given us outright all his 78 rpm records, his collection of magazines, and the address of his perfumer.

Wonder why he likes the Army so?

(RHD)



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