

# Smell The

# WAWAW

I CAN  
SMELL IT FROM  
HERE!



ALAN WHITE



## SMELLZINE 1

December, 2009

Featuring a paltry few chapters from Alan White's Nostalgia Project "Boomer's Lament"; a delightfully wacky, yet semi-auto-biographical tale of adventure and mayhem while detailing my first 50 years in fandom. Would you want to comment or maybe contribute? You can viisit the website by clicking [THIS](#) button.

# ARE YOU READY TO SMELL THE FANDOM?

## DO I REALLY HAVE TO SMELL IT?

I've been very lucky. Introduced to fandom in 1960 when the cotton was high and times were right for fan activity - all kinds of fan activity. Since then I've had the good fortune to be many places, do many things and had a many good times. Perhaps *too many* good times, you decide.

AND, along the way, I've taken pictures of people, things, events, and places. These pictures, residing in albums all these years are finally starting to fade, deteriorate and fall victim to creepy things, much like myself. And so the time has come to either chuck it all in the garbage or share it with everybody.

Damn my hide, I've chosen to share all this stuff; clearly the most time consuming and taxing choice and over the past month, have been scanning scads of photos and documents - some of which, at this point needed considerable Photoshopping to stave off the ravages of time and vermin. I've also chosen to write an accompanying semi-biographical bit describing the various events and whatever else was going on at the time.

On the bright side, I'd like to think fans may enjoy these photos and rambling discourse which till now have been unseen by alien eyes. On the darker, it occurs just how, who and how much I've shamefully forgotten. There is no doubt I have some mis-captioned photos and askew timeline here, but I think, once before the weak and watery eyes of fandom, much of this will be corrected and I'll wager photographic donations will drop in to add to the fun. I know there are several fannish nostalgia sites out there ([Fan History Archive](#), [Fan History Book](#), plus the early books by Sam Moskowitz and Harry Warner, Jr. but to my knowledge, none have been done in this fashion.

In any event, this is a monumental task that will easily take more than a year to complete. At this point the website deals with the years from 1947 to 1975 and I've already found scads of info and memories to include at a later date. But here I've taken a breather in 1975 to let you, good reader check it out, offer suggestions, find the elusive typo, dangling participle and bad link if you will before pressing on.

Also included on the website is an assortment of pieces I've written over the years, including fanzines, a gallery of arty bits, some videos of fan events and an assortment of free art you may download for use in your zines and other fan projects.

So there you have it. If you're ready to Smell the Fandom, drop by, check it out, leave a comment; all of that, none of that, but I hope you enjoy what you see.

***SMELL THE FANDOM.COM***

## Here are some snippets of what lies on the website:

### 1960 - I Smell the Fandom



I don't know where you lived, but in my neck of the woods, monster magazines ranked in the same literary purgatory as pornography and commie propaganda.

Yeh, there was always some guy who had a rolled up monster mag in his back pocket and a porno shot in his shirt pocket; surreptitiously giving you a peek at either or both during recess. The first monster mag I saw was "Monsters and Things" in 1959. I had never given thought to actually purchasing one of these until. . .one day near the end of 1960 I walked into the corner drug store on my way home from school to find two kids by the magazine rack, furtively glancing over their shoulders as they thumbed through the pages of a magazine. "Would your mother let you have it in the house?" one said to the other; and with that, I was hooked. Waiting for them to tire of their random page flipping and inspecting the object of their curiosity: Famous Monsters of Filmland

#10. Ahh, the magic, the illicit thrills pouring over me, an incomparable sense of empowerment and thus I shelled out the mere pittance and buried myself into what would become my personal manifesto of things to come. Undreamed terrors, unseen photos, unknown movies; all wrapped in a sense of arcane adventure. This magazine would become a launch pad for all that follows.

It seemed forever till visiting the newsstand brought me face-to-face with the next issue of "Famous Monsters" #11 still bailed on the floor boasting Gorgo yearning to break free. Entreating the counter gal the time of Gorgo's release, she responded: "We're sending those magazines back to the distributor because they're bad for kid's minds". I was prepared right then to show her just how bad for kid's minds they really were but controlled myself.

I then set upon an adventure through all the markets and liquor stores in town until I found my Famous Monsters fix.

Much like pulp magazines decades before, "Famous Monsters" not only had the goods, but through the letter column, proved there were fans out there somewhere and being a fan need not be a lonely thing. PLUS, by joining the Famous Monsters Club, you got the hotline to that mystical kingdom known as the Ackermansion!

Yep, once on the official mailing list, you'd receive periodic postcards with info and invites to the next Forry Ackerman Ackstravaganza!

And thus it came to pass I was invited to the Ackermansion. My ever dotting mom drove me from Long Beach to the hallowed address of 915 S. Sherbourne Drive, the Mecca to which all fans must journey. In fact, as I was walking up the driveway, Tor Johnson, (who is hard to miss anywhere) was crossing the yard, brandishing a huge smile as we shook hands.

Words can't convey the sensation of entering the Ackermansion; dumbstruck with awe usually reserved for the Sistine Chapel while Forry, I found dispensing a welcoming, yet distant cordiality. The house, packed with fans receiving the same postcard. My mother eyed suspiciously the selection of adult material, both gay and straight arrayed on the living room coffee table. This led (at a later date), to a battery of questions to the tune of: "But did he ever touch you?"



Don Glut was screening films in the living room produced by L.A.S.F.S and a daylong assortment of his own cinematic home brew. "Funny" mom offered, "He's made movies for 10 years and never got any better". But I was impressed. It appeared this "Fandom" had everything! Print, film, monsters and fans! My visit to the Ackermansion was not, however, without an agenda. I acquired all the back issues of Famous Monsters via the legendary "Captain Company", except issue #4 which had already been cleaned out. I asked Forry if he could spare one and he quietly obliged. From a forlorn closet down a dark hallway he pulled the bright shiny issue of my desire. "\$1.00" he requested. I winced, as up till then, that's the most I'd ever paid for anything, yet slowly I parted with a fresh dollar bill, the solo inhabitant of my Red Ryder wallet but now I was complete.

At last it was time for the ride home and off we went, whizzing down the Harbor Freeway, homeward bound with windows open, spirits high and hair ablow. At some point, I thought to check out my new treasure. Placing it gingerly on my lap, I turned the first page, the next and next, when suddenly there was a flurry of small bits of paper flying around the front seat of the car. "Damn" I thought, my magazine has been cut up!" But such was not the case. Upon closer inspection, the bits of paper where actually small pornographic photos showing couples doing all manner of things I had not yet begun to imagine.

I have to hand it to my mother, who neither slammed on the brakes nor careened off the road, but keeping one hand on the wheel, grabbed my magazine and flung it from the window without missing a beat! My last site of the magazine was skimming across the gravel before disappearing forever. It was a long, quiet ride home.

## 1962 - The Neighborhood

The local newspaper allowed kids to list free classified ads. Mine read "Science Fiction Magazines Wanted" and I received only one phone call. . . from Bjo Trimble, who it turned out, lived a short distance from me! She put me on the LASFS mailing list and suddenly my eyes were open to the world of fanzines! Shangri L'Affaires, Bjottings, Pong and others. Through these pages, I read about fans; which names got the most ink, conventions and events - Wow!

There was even a fan named Bruce Pelz trafficking zines out of his home and for a mere pittance, transforming every trip to the mailbox into an adventure.

These fanzines were a shot in the arm and convinced some friends and I to make our way to Silverlake Hall for a LASFS meeting

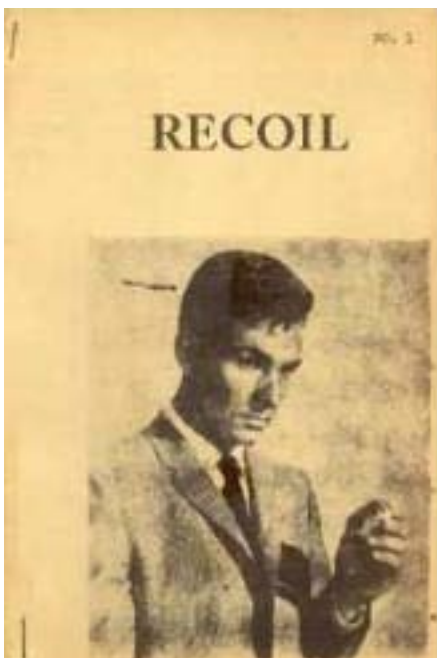
Turned out an auspicious occasion for club elections were to be held that very day. Voting consisted of writing a name on a piece of paper and handing it in. "Odd" I thought, we were given ballots since we knew not one person in the building.

My friends thought it a hoot to write my name on their ballots and turn them in. Bruce read the ballots and each time my name came up, he exclaimed "Who the Hell is Alan White?". I said nothing.

Turns out, I came in second.

Phil Castora noted LASFS rules said nothing about being a member to hold office, which would be immediately changed!

I too wanted to produce a fanzine. Alas, I had no means to produce one and nothing to say nor talent to write it. My mother, however, worked in an insurance company had a primitive form of document duplication device consisting of a tray of chemicals and a pair of rollers. Taking your original document and some photographic paper, you plied them together and ran them through the chemicals, making a negative. You repeated this process and voila! a poor copy of your original document! The process was



unbearably tedious and thus only five copies of my first fanzine "Recoil" were published. Just as well for by anyone's assessment, it was crap of the first water, consisting of 12 single-sided pages about monsters, vampires and such with a photograph from "The Blob".

## 1963 - It Begins

### The First Long Beach Science Fantasy Convention

My chatting up fans and conventions was contagious and sent everyone in the Long Beach Filmonster Society daydreaming about the promised grandeur of conventions and only natural our homegrown gaggle of screwballs should put on our own. Sure, the real conventions were apparently about books, pulps and things of a written nature. While we had such material, most of our collections consisted of movie posters and stills.

Not to worry, we contacted Forry who was most eager to help and sent a bunch of postcards to monsterfen on his mailing list bidding them a grand time at "The First Annual Long Beach Science Fantasy Convention". There was no thought of putting on another con in the future, but the word "Annual" had a nice ring to it.

The comparatively well-heeled family of Steve Dobbins had a rec room in the back yard, perfect for our needs. Danny Jacobs was probably the smartest of the bunch, and certainly the most motivated. Wayne Hatley had a nice collection of movie memorabilia as did myself.

Sure enough, it was late November when 25 daring souls showed up in Steve's back yard rec room to bathe in the glory of our collections and boasting this was the very First FilmonsterCon in the World! Whether or not that was the case, we knew not, but Forry never told us otherwise.

Forry showed up and was most gracious, handing out signed photos and spending the entire day putting up with kids badgering and bumbling about. The highlight of the convention was our own movie show! That being a collection of 8mm Castle Home Movies, a bed sheet strung on the inside of the garage door and a projector I bought from Sears for \$12.00. And thus we whiled away the day, bathed in the flickering light of Lon Chaney, The Lost World, Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, and pretty much anything in the Castle and Blackhawk Films Catalogue!

Never gave a thought we had no chairs in our theater and nobody gave a hoot about sitting on the hard concrete floor for a couple hours. Steve pulled a chair from the kitchen on which Forry would roost and everyone else was consigned to concrete. By and by the show was over. . . by every stretch of the imagination, for it appeared, while everyone was in the garage someone had gone into the rec room and completely cleaned out every poster, photo and magazine; plus the boxes they came in! Yep, there was a room full of squeaky clean tables and to quote the Raven, "nothing more".

Forry was shocked and disappointed, but consoled the 5 of us with dinner at a local restaurant!

Thus bringing down the curtain on "The First Annual Long Beach Science Fantasy Convention"!

We were going to charge something like 10¢ at the door, but nobody thought to actually collect the money, so it turned out to be a free event. This was a shame, as we planned on getting Forry a "Thank You" trophy cup for helping us out. Something grand with the name of our convention and all our names engraved thereon. I almost cried when I saw the final miniscule trophy Steve had engraved till the money ran out reading merely: "To the Ackermonster, Steve D" (Sigh). But Forry took that trophy and put it on his piano along side much grander awards and there it sat (home to a furry toy mouse) as long as he was in the Sherbourne residence.

Surprise, Surprise, I found an AB Dick mimeograph at a garage sale for \$10.00. Of course, I still hadn't an iota of talent for writing, but who can be bothered with details? My first mimeo project "Orbit"



was 10 pages, plus a photo of the Metaluna monster from "This Island Earth" run off on mom's chemical copier of which 20 copies were printed.

There would be other mimeo projects, but I was disappointed with the quality of the finished pieces and the basic limitations of mimeography itself. There were those who had the knack for getting the most from their stencils and using various colors, but in the end, it remained more quaint than interesting. I would soon find Horror Movie fandom, Western Fandom, Comic Fandom, Serials Fandom and yes, Surfing Fandom may have begun with mimeo, but by the early '60s all moved to offset printing.

## **BITTEN**

It was Danny Jabob's wandering eyeball that found an article in Famous Monsters about a horror club in L.A. called "The Count Dracula Society" and meant only one thing: ROAD TRIP!

"Road Trip" usually meant walking to the curb, sticking out your thumb and hoping you'll get where you're going before everyone had gone home.

It was Sunday, August 30, 1964 and we were fortuitous getting to the Ladera Park Clubhouse in only a few hours.

People in capes, people with fangs, effeminate men, burly women, people who couldn't talk, people who couldn't shut up, people who went by imaginary names and people seeking a higher power. There were also those whose names appeared in the pages of Famous Monsters: Carroll Borland, Eric Hoffman, Don Glut, Forry Ackerman and of course, the remarkable Dr. Donald A. Reed.

The Guest, Mr. William G. Obbagy, much touted in the pages of FM (direct from Cleveland Ohio) and President of the International Bela Lugosi Fan Club spoke at length on the life and times of Bela Lugosi (Dracula Invitation 1964).

For a boy from the tepid, stucco world of Long Beach, I felt at home at last and was ready to sell my soul. Danny thought it was a load of crap and never went back.

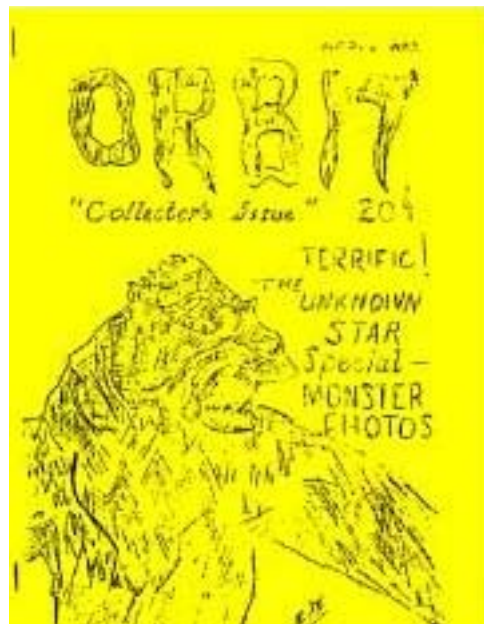
## **NOTHING LIKE A GOOD NUMBER 2**

Thanks to Steve Dobbins' ever dotting parents, we were in the planning stages of another "Long Beach Science Fantasy Convention". They acquired a banquet room in a nearby restaurant that was perfect for the event. The "Hawaiian Inn", regally appointed with tikis, coconuts, fish nets, palm fronds and display tables running around the chair filled room. There would be no movies and the lights would stay on so we weren't as terrified about the safety of our collections.

Danny was taking a printing class at school and printed program covers. While hand-setting the type, he mistook a "U" for an "N" and we wound up with "Conventiou". I was still fumbling with my mimeograph but managed to print the inside of the program.



Forry, always the darling, not only employed his mailing list on our behalf, but actually had guests for us: Bert I. Gordon, purveyor of such dubious pleasures as "King Dinosaur", "The Magic Sword", "Attack of the Puppet People"; Ib J. Melchior who gave us "Time Travelers", "Death Race 2000", "Robinson Crusoe on Mars", "Angry Red Planet", "Journey to the 7th Planet", "Outer Limits" episodes along with his assistant David Hewitt. Also in tow was Marcel Delgado, the man who actually constructed the animation armature for the original King Kong!



It was a grand day with over 100 fans showing up. Bert Gordon gave a chat on his years of monster movie making on a budget, Ib Melchoir brought bag fulls of filmclips from "Time Travelers" and "Robinson Crusoe on Mars" plus set blueprints and prop building schematics for the eager onlookers! His talk "What's the Gimmick?" went into advertising ploys and the wonders of "Cinemagic". The gracious Marcel Delgado was bombard with questions about King Kong. One question in particular was "Did the Kong armature ever break while you were filming? To which Marcel replied "It broke all the time and we broke it when we'd had enough and wanted to go home!"

Johnny Ball had a collectors item everyone was after; a movie edition paperback for "War of the Worlds". Several times during the day I asked Johnny what it would take to pry it from his hands. "Ain't for sale" he'd say, and that was that! At the end of the day, I thought I'd give it one last try and was surprised to find the book missing from his table.

"Where's the book?" I inquired.

"Forry has it" he said in an odd tone but continued: "Forry came over, laid his books on top of it and we talked for a few minutes. When he left, he took that book with him."

"Why didn't you say something?" I asked.

"Because he's Forry Ackerman" he said.

## Westercon 18 July 3 through 5, 1965



My first thoughts about fandom as opposed to the Count Dracula Society, since I'd been reading "Fandom Was A Way of Life", a family and so on, that nobody greeted us, said "HI", wanted to show us around or try to connect in the most insignificant of ways. Much of the events elude me today, but that which I found of interest was meeting authors whose work I enjoyed. Ray Bradbury, Fritz Leiber, Hal Clement, Lester del Rey and Guest of Honor Frank Herbert.

I sat in on a Bradbury panel, next to a rather hairy, shabbily dressed fellow who was picking bits of grit from inside his shoe and eating it.

Was getting a late start on Sunday; Jim and Jerry wanted to go back to the convention and offered to drive. There was a momentary impediment to our evening which had been resolved By the time I got to Jim's. His sister had shown up and decided to hit the town with the mom, leaving her 6 year old kid in Jim's care.

"So where's the kid?" I asked.

"He's with the babysitter" Jim replied.

"I thought YOU were the babysitter" Said I.

"Meet the babysitter" said Jim as he opened the door of the coat closet to reveal the kid. . . gagged and hog-tied on the floor.



Me and Ray Bradbury

< Bjo

Diane & Bruce Pelz >





**The Count Dracula Society** in (and out) of costume.

**Top Row:** Tim Rusk and Jerry Fiore. **The Rest:** Joe Viskocil, Me, Don Reed, Mark Shephard, Eric Hoffman, Don Glut.

completely stewed before, but all four of us were, in the nicest sense of the word: "shitfaced". Clearly, cheap drunks all and I found when in this condition I become mellow and contemplative. Jim swore he could fly and ran about the parking lot leaping into the air. At some point, I lost everyone which only became a concern when I returned to the parking lot to find the car had vanished!

"Holy crap, I've been left behind!"

It would be a long, long night and a hell of a walk. I may have been walking for hours when I heard a 'beep, beep' behind me. It was John - he too had been left behind and not up for the walk, had "borrowed" the hotel's utility cart. I hopped on and off we went. Not fast, but it beat walking. He dropped me off at my place and disappeared into what was left of the night.



"You realize when this kid grows up he's going to beat the crap out of you" I offered.

"Well, I have things to do." said Jim.

John showed up just in time and ready to go.

"I got'er started" said Jerry coming through the door. He had hot-wired the sister's car and off we went, hoodlums leaving a hostage in the closet and driving a stolen car.

All I remember from this night was discovering the parties. Frankly, I had never been

## WorldCon 26

Somebody thought it was a good idea to combine Westercon and Worldcon for a big mash-up in Berkeley. I was hardly one to argue as this was just my third convention. . . AND my first plane ride. I probably made more out of this convention than it warranted, but I was now 21, dodged the draft and not a care in the world, off on a spree. What better place to be than the hotbed of everything your parents were telling you to avoid!

I'll bet, if the walls of the Claremont Hotel could talk, they'd be screaming, but I may have been in OZ for all the grandeur and mystery of the old place. Nestled on a hill overlooking the college community below and soon to be subject of exploration and discovery. I could tell I was no longer in Long Beach. . . when the first people to approach me were tub thumpers for the local Satanic Worship Group. Joe Viskocil heard about a comic convention at the college going on at the same time, so we trekked down the hill to check it out. "The smog in this town is appalling" I said to Joe, with coughing, wheezing and watering eyes as we made our way across campus. Following the signs, we at last found a door with "COMIX - Knock Loud!" on the door and thus we did. A guy opened the door pushing wet towels from the bottom of the doorway and offered us cups of water. Seems there wasn't a smog problem, but the remains of tear gas from an anti-war rally earlier in the day.

**AHHH DAMN, boys and girls. Looks like we're out of time (and space).  
Drop by the website for lots, lots more! Take the Red Pill [HERE](#).**