

tried to improve the efficiency of site-based by sending emails to their primary readers with hotlinks to the download location. That undoubtedly helps, but people often can't click the link when they open the letter. They may be busy doing something else or have a reason to leave the computer. Then that letter slides down the queue, perhaps disappearing with a misplaced "delete."

The coming growth in electronic fanzine distribution will eventually make both methods unwieldy and potentially even unworkable. Very few fanzines are distributed electronically at this time, so the problems haven't become obvious yet, but trouble is almost inevitable.

Right now, as the operator of StatsKatz, the central fanzine email center for Las Vegrants, I'm emailing two or three fanzines a month. Based on plans floating around the club, that could increase to four or five by the end of this year. Other fans are showing interest in electronic distribution, too, so active fans can expect to receive more and more fanzines. Similarly, the number of fanzines posted on web sites in the manner of *Gloss*, will also become more numerous.

Low cost and convenience will lead to a fanzine boom by mid-2001. We may soon return to the days when five or 10 fanzines arrived in a busy week. Imagine the tangle when 10-15 MB of fanzines hit your email box on the same day. Imagine having to schlep to 10 different sites to get those various fanzines.

The answer might be an online Fanzine Newsstand. It is simple to launch, easy to run, convenient for fanzine fans and could even be made to pay for itself. As a bonus, it will create a focus for electronic fanzine fandom and provide a point of entry for people who are intrigued by the idea of writing and editing their own little publications.

Fanzine editors would send their .PDF files to the Online Newsstand, which would post them as downloads. Perhaps each editor could also furnish a short explanatory paragraph for the benefit of browsers. The faned then sends a notice with a hotlink to the Newsstand top the fanzine's primary readership.

Fans who want the download immediately will click the link; the rest probably have the Newsstand's email address on their "Favorites" list for later use. A central location would greatly increase the likelihood that a fan will actually go to the location.

The site would be valuable if that's all it does, but there's also an opportunity to do more. Links to other sites, fan news, fanzine store and archives are just a few possibilities. Corflu, DUFF, TAFF and others would certainly be able to make good use of such a site, too.

Web space is not very expensive. My ISP gives each subscriber a 20-MB site and extra space is something like \$5 per 20 MB. The Online Newsstand could ask participating faneds to establish accounts and then charge \$1 per MB per month, deducting from funds already on hand. This might even generate a few extra bucks to pay for drinkables and smokables.

If I know fandom, the success of an Online Newsstand will beget others. This would undercut the unifying effect to an extent. But I don't think it would be a real problem. I would hope that all Newsstands would swap links. Perhaps each Newsstand will come to specialize in a certain school or coterie. I can almost see the Group Mind site in the browser of my mind.

Now what we need is someone who will take action and give the Newsstand a shot. I'm willing to sign up as the first client. 🗨️





More than half a century since it was published and forty-two years since his death in 1958 just as I was entering fandom, most fans remember Francis Towner Laney for his magnum opus, *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!*, if they remember him at all. For those who don't, the above-named production was Laney's 130-page tale of his entrance into, immersion in, and ultimate rejection of fandom.

But Laney was a multi-faceted individual and his essays trashing fandom were but one part of his personality. More often than not, he took off on extended flights of fantasy. The one that follows, which first appeared in the 23rd issue of his FAPAazine, *Fan-Dango*, in the fall of 1949, was composed on ditto masters as he scrambled to meet a FAPA mailing deadline. Who of us hasn't had this particular fantasy, although a million dollars these days isn't what it was in 1949. Laney rambles far and wide here, but it's typical of him that he manages to wrap things up neatly at its conclusion.

-Robert Lichtman, November 2000

The pipe-dream which is this article arose from my telling Cele's mother about the bullfest Burbee and I had one noon, talking about what a guy with unlimited time and money could do in the way of making a series of authentic jazz recordings. She took the view that unearned money was more or less of a curse, and usually the ruination of the people getting it. And finally, she made a direct challenge to me. So this article is for Mamma May. If anyone else enjoys it, why that is just frosting on the cake.

First, I'd like to postulate that this "million dollars" idea is merely my Aristotelian attempt to have a high-level abstraction for the title. For the purposes of this article, what I'm really thinking about is a financial situation which would make it unnecessary for me to spend the bulk of my time and energy in making a living. Obviously many of the things I speak of buying and projects I imagine I'd like to undertake would require a huge fortune. Others I actually will undertake without financial windfalls. But what I am trying to do is to rough in

the outlines of a daydream to end all daydreams-the activities of an F. Towner Laney who suddenly had a silver spoon thrust in his mouth.

About the most urgent requirement would be a building to house my activities-a fantastic melange of storage space, work shops, and base of operations. Ideally it would be located in my back yard, but between zoning regulations and other adverse circumstances it probably would be elsewhere. For a starter, a building perhaps 50 x 100 feet would be adequate. I visualize a one-story brick or concrete structure-a small factory building-without much in the way of partitions (which I'd have to build as the Master Plan evolved). It would have to have at least one entrance big enough to admit a good-sized truck, and the floor would have to be strong enough to hold heavy machinery. Though the actual construction of the building would be fun, I'd rather buy an existing structure

The fun would commence when I started setting up my shops. Except when I encountered something



beyond my strength, I'd want to do the whole thing personally. If something, or rather, when something came up that I didn't know how to do I'd want to learn, either by fighting it out myself or by talking with people who did know or through studies in trade schools. Now and then I imagine I'd take a job somewhere, just to learn how something or other was done.

I'd want a reasonably complete machine shop and woodworking shop. For the machine shop I'd start with a 9" or 10" lathe, a drill press, small miller, power hacksaw, arbor press, and perhaps one or two other major items- adding other equipment as I felt a need for it. The wood shop would have a large table saw, planer/joiner, and just possibly a wood-lathe. A forge, welding outfit, air compressor, and other stuff would probably be useful to tide me over. And of course the needful small tools, a large proportion of which I of course have anyway.

Now I'd not want anyone to misunderstand me. I just want this stuff to play with. My basic idea is that I'd like to have the needful equipment to make anything of any nature that I take a fancy to. And since obviously I lack the know-how to make lots of things I might wish to undertake, it is evident that I'd probably have to do a sizeable amount of trade-school attending and on-the-job training of one sort and another.

A particularly noticeable lacuna in my knowledge is the matter of automotive repair and overhaul. I've no especial desire to spend my time tinkering with my car, but it annoys the hell out of me to know that I can't fix it, to feel dependent on the whims and wiles of garages. So one of the first things I'd do would be to learn at least the superficialities of automobile mechanics.

And then would come something of great joy. I would get myself from one to four antique automobiles, rebuild and refurbish them lovingly, and delight myself driving them hither and yon. There are clubs of putt-putt enthusiasts, and of course I'd ally myself with these people. Although I'd take almost any pre-1915 car that I could find, I'd especially like to have a 1908-12 Rolls Royce and a fine Locomobile of about the same age. Both are ponderously gorgeous and both are well enough designed and built so that both the restoration and maintenance would be practicable. Ah, what a hobby! The search for the

chariot de joye, the restoration of it into an approximation of its youthful prime, and then the terrific kick of thundering down the street in it-the sun glancing blindingly from polished brass and gleaming red paint, and, no doubt, my liver thinking it was going over a corduroy road in a conestoga wagon.

Another portion of the Laney Building would house a print shop. I must confess I don't, at the moment at least, have any particular yen to turn out beautiful limited editions, to become an amateur Aldus or Grolier. I'd like to have a good linotype machine, and a good-sized flat-bed press-something big enough to handle about 16 pages at a time of 6 x 9 pages. I'd compose FAPAazines on the linotype just about as I'm composing this on the masterset. And in addition, from time to time, I'd publish brochures and books on all manner of subjects. The first item, of course, would be the Collected Works of Charles Edward Burbee. And I think I'd enjoy publishing a "little" magazine devoted to jazz. It also would be great fun to attempt to get detailed autobiographies of great jazzmen-guys like Kid Ory or Muggsy Spanier-collaborate with them on the writing and then publish the result as a book or series of books. And, no doubt, other literary and semi-literary projects would be thrust at me. This book idea, I see, implies that I should have whatever equipment would be required for a first-class small bindery. Well, money's no object, I'll just get it. And I suppose I should have half-toning and other cut-making facilities, and this of course also implies a good dark room. Well, why not? I'm going to have a dark room again someday anyhow, I'd just as well



postulate a good one and stick it into my daydream.

Another of the many facets of human knowledge that is to me today just one great all-inclusive blank is radiotronics, sound equipment, and such. Sooner or later, I'd want to dig into this; by the time I got done I'd probably have a recording studio, and lord knows what else.

The brainstorm of Burbee's and mine which started this entire article was the idea of constructing a high-class recording outfit in such a way that it could be carried conveniently in a small truck, and touring the country in search of good jazz. It is safe to say that at this very moment there are at least 25 unknowns who are playing wonderful stuff, wonderful jazz which is just being tossed out into the smoke-filled air of a cheap dive somewhere and lost forever. I think it would be fun to find these guys and record them exhaustively. Through the releasing on a semi-private label (analogous to HRS or Commodore or Jazzman) of their best efforts, jazz enthusiasts would not only have new kicks but in many instances the musicians themselves would find themselves climbing nearer the big time. And of course there are the old-timers who should also be recorded exhaustively. Bunk Johnson has just died, and most of the others are old enough so that they can expect but a few more years at best. Yet many of them are playing, or capable of playing, their best work.

These men should be preserved for posterity. If arrangements could be made, I'd like to record at least 500 sides by Kid Ory and his group. And that's just a starter. The idea of taking the recording outfit to the musicians would in its execution furnish a never-ending series of kicks. The listening would be fun, the contacts and new friendships would be fun, and the eternal hunt would be fun.

It need scarcely be mentioned that the silver-spoon version of FTL would be a very redoubtable hunter for books and records. And it is within the realm of possibility that I'd branch out into other collecting hobbies, though with me the major stab comes from the use of what I have collected rather than the mere meaningless packratism of the

true collector. In other words, I play my records and read my books, and habitually dispose of anything I find I don't like well enough to reread or replay. So the more accumulative hobbies, such as stamp collecting, aren't as rewarding to me-though I believe I might enjoy a certain amount of coin collecting.

However, I can imagine less tasteful pursuits than doing collecting for public institutions. (Or private individuals, for that matter.) If the expenses were defrayed for me, I'd probably enjoy building collections of just about anything imaginable, provided the stuff was something I could watch for as an incidental during my own collecting excursions. There is a definite altruistic purpose here, incidentally. So many collections of one type or another are not only of genuine historical interest but are of items ephemeral enough so that their preservation is in a sense a historical duty to the person having the time and energy to devote to it. A collection of automobilia, for instance.

There is also the matter of satisfying my intellectual curiosity along various lines. Of course, in common with any other would-be informed person, I do a certain amount of this. Unquestionably, however, if the time and energy I fritter away now making a living were available to me for piddle-paddling, I'd



For Carl

dig far deeper into far more facets of knowledge than I possibly can under present circumstances. If, as an example, I got wrought up about semantics (which Aristotle forbid!) I'd be free to go and study under old man Korzybski himself. And if I lacked any of the pre-requisites, I'd be free to go get them.

Another facet of activity would be the personal witnessing of a number of widely differing "events" which I've always wanted to see: the Mardi Gras, a presidential inauguration, the Army-Navy football game, the 500-mile Indianapolis race, to name but a few. I'm not at all sure that I'd want to see any of these the second time, but at least I'd like to see each of them once.

An analogous line of endeavor would be museum touring. I don't mean to say that I care about aimless rubber-necking, but I've never seen a museum yet that didn't have at least one collection which fascinated me. And I'd particularly like to pay exhaustive visits to all ships preserved as historical relics. I've been on the barque Star of India which is moored at San Diego, and on the ancient battleship Oregon which was moored at Portland before it was broken up for scrap during the late war. But there are lots of others. There is an old whaling ship permanently preserved on Long Island somewhere or other-dragged up on land and mounted in a concrete bed. The famous racing yacht America is afloat still. And several famous warships: the steam-frigate Hartford, the Spanish-War cruiser Olympia, the WW-1 and -2 battleship Texas, and of course the British Victory all come to mind. I'd like to visit them all in detail, and write and publish an exhaustive book on the subject. Maybe no one would read it but me (though I somehow doubt this), but I'd get a frightful charge out of such a project.

At this point I back-tracked and read all of what I have just written, and I realize that my composing on the master has led me to commit a gross error. This whole essay reads as though I were figuring on doing all this stuff alone and single-handedly, and this impression is totally false. Essentially, I like people, and none of this stuff would have any real savor to me if I couldn't have lots of collaborators.

Cecile, being an essentially practical individual, has never done much day-dreaming like

this, out loud at least. But I can imagine a number of things which she would want to do, and I most certainly would want her to do them-alone if need be, but preferably with me mixed right in the middle of them. (And I am rather strongly aware that many of my own projects would bring her as much joy as they would me.)

Since her gardening ambition far outruns the strength of any half-dozen people, I'd like to hire her a Japanese gardening couple-man and wife. That way, while she could still dig and delve and dabble all she wanted to, the routine drudgery of gardening would be in great part removed. I don't know if she'd want it, but I'd derive great personal joy from the construction of a good-sized greenhouse. And while the growing of plants is not a major interest of mine, or indeed a thing in which I even have any aptitude, I would certainly want to be right in there with any projects she might feel the urge to undertake, whether it be the development of new varieties of plants, the collection of rare orchids, or what.

And in the same way, I'd want to relieve her of the major burden of housekeeping by hiring both a cook and a housekeeper-if Cele wanted them. While it would give a mighty howl from me if she were to forsake her kitchen and that good Southern cooking altogether, I'd like to have it so she was able to do such things just when she wanted to.

As wild as that gal is about horses, I can see that the Laney's would have to have a stable. As far as that



goes, I'm not so sure but that I'd love to ride if I tried it a few times.

Cele's interest in ceramics and allied crafts suggests certain things that would have to be in the shop, such as a good pottery kiln, a wheel or so, and the like.

Unlike me, Cele has a strong sense of social obligation, a wish to be of service to the community. This being the case, her retiring from teaching might perhaps leave a lacuna which would require filling if she were to be happy. I believe it is scarcely necessary to point out that two moderately intelligent people-foot-loose and fancy-free and with money to burn-should not find it too difficult to find service activities which would not only be of intrinsic interest to them but which they would be better fitted to attack simply on account of their unique economic status. The mere listing of possibly activities of this nature would require pages.

And if it were at all possible to cut Sandy and Quiggie into our wild-eyed new way of life, they most certainly would be in it. However, it would most certainly be necessary to take especial pains that their new conditions of upbringing did not unfit them to lead satisfactory lives. Any of this program which conflicted with the needs and best interests of the little girls would have to be modified or shelved.

One thing that we'd constantly have to watch out for would be getting ourselves imposed on by fuggheads. (An undesirable fugghead is a person who is more fuggheaded than I am.) But I would regard the entire program and its physical plant as so much ashes if we could not have gobs of congenial friends who shared it with us to the utmost.

Another qualification to all this wild regime I've

been outlining: I'd want us to go on living much as we have been. That is to say that we'd carry on our present habits and activities, modifying and augmenting them rather than making a complete break with the past. And I'd not want to feel bound to do any one thing at any one time. If for instance I had a book partway through the press, I'd cheerfully drop it to go chasing jazzmen with the recording truck or make a horseback trip through the Sierras or go to Allentown, Pennsylvania, to track down the rumor of a 1909 Locomobile stored there in an old barn. The machinery in the shop might run night and day for a week and gather dust for a year. If we got dazzled by some will o' the wisp not even touched on in this essay, I'd want to feel absolutely free to go and do something about it. That's why I specify the need for gardeners and caretakers.

Well. This has been an excursion into escapism to end all such side-trips. But I believe it at least indicates that the Laneys have sufficient interests in life so that no one need worry about their disintegration if a golden shower of wealth were suddenly to cascade into their laps. The chief worry would be how in the dickens we'd live long enough to accomplish a quarter part of what I have just outlined, let alone the new interests which would unquestionably sweep over us.

It's a good thing for the Barham finances that Mamma May does not have a spare million or two. Otherwise, I'm afraid she'd be so swept away by all these winged words that she'd endow us, and I wouldn't be able to go to work in the morning!

-F. Towner Laney



Auriga Corridor - "Alien Resurrection"



Walking IN THE FOOTSTEPS of STAND-UP JESUS

by Bill Kunkel

I honestly don't remember when I met Majid Khoury, hereafter known exclusively as Majid. It's pronounced just like "magic" except there's definitely an id at the end. Many people, such as the headwaiter at the Rainbow, actually called him Magic.

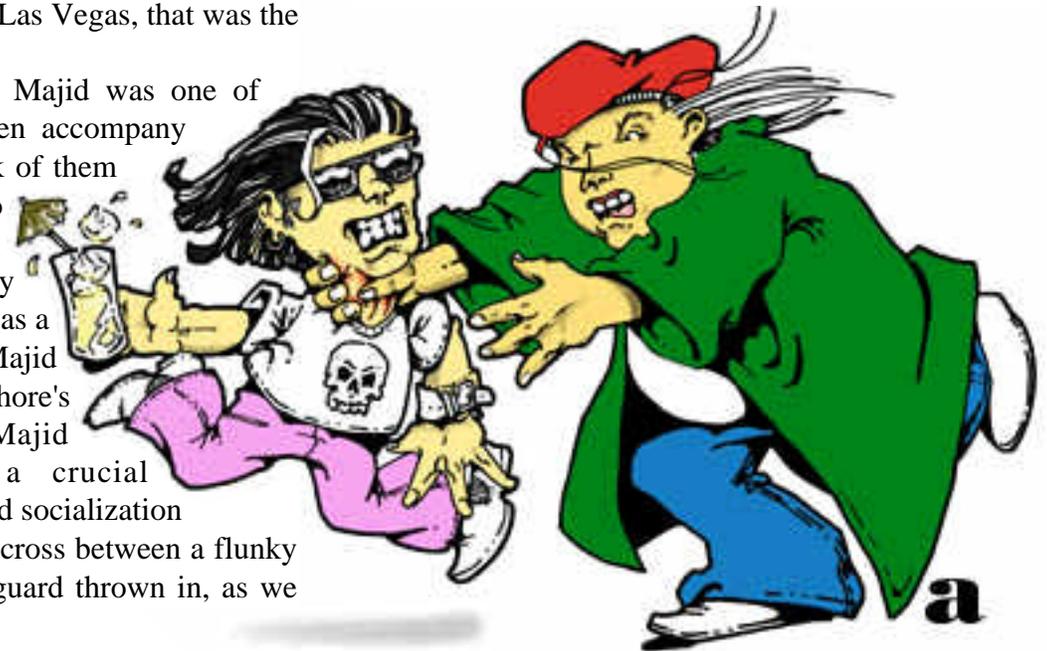
I met him through a mutual friend, a brilliant guitarist from the Las Vegas demimonde who we shall call Carl. Carl was part of a crew that included wrestler Barry Orton (aka Barry O, younger brother of "Cowboy" Bob Orton) and LSD Rick. And when Sam Kinison was alive and in Las Vegas, that was the posse he ran with.

Now we come to Majid. Majid was one of those "companions" who often accompany celebrities. Some people think of them as flunkies, but Majid was no mere flunky. He had some flunky in him, and he certainly worshipped Sam--who he met as a then-struggling comic while Majid worked as a waiter at Mitzi Shore's legendary Comedy Story. Majid also apparently served a crucial function in Sam's creative and socialization processes. He was probably a cross between a flunky and a muse, with some bodyguard thrown in, as we shall see.

Anyway, Majid wanted to sell the story of his time with Sam and Carl had sold him on the idea that I was the person to write it. It was an interesting experience. Heard some great stories, learned some amazing shit, and, for research purposes, spent a memorable weekend at the Mondrian, a fading but still vaguely respectable hotel on Sunset in West Hollywood, next door to the House of Blues and across the street from the Comedy Store.

The Mondrian was Sam's joint. The staff took care of him and he took care of them. It was at the Mondrian, Majid told me, that Sam tried to choke Slash to death. Now by all accounts and my own personal experience, Sam was one hell of a guitarist, and he would even get interviewed occasionally in the musician magazines. Turns out, Sam had made some comment in one of the guitar player magazines about Slash, just when Guns N Roses were breaking really big. What he'd said, basically, was that he could play as well as Slash "-if he was drunk." It was a pretty innocent comment and, considering how good Sam was, actually could be considered a compliment. Slash, Majid told me, did not take it in that spirit.

Kinison & co. had just checked into the Mondrian when a bellboy clued them that GNR were ensconced, so of course Sam had to party with them. When he and Majid reached the band's room, however, Slash was feeling pissy. He'd reacted badly to Sam's quote, and the meeting started off in an unpleasant manner.



Surprisingly, Sam cooled things out immediately. “Look,” he explained, “I said you'd have to be drunk before I could play as good as you.”

This apparently mollified the Guns' guitarist, but unbeknownst to the rest of the group, one of the girls had gone into the bedroom to inform another member of the band that Sam and Slash were fighting. The timing on this has to be perfect, because just as she finishes, the half-asleep musician sees Kinison stroll into the bedroom and he pops the funnyman right in the eye. By all reports, Sam could be amazing fast for a fat man, and he was quite strong. In a half-blink, Majid sees Sam with his hands locked around Slash's throat and the rocker is going down, his face weirdly-discolored, tongue lolling. Majid is eventually able to break it up, but it had been a bad scene.

“The Comedy Store stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the burning edifice, a windowless death trap.”

Of course, that was another reason Majid was there--he “looked after” Sam, making sure the Wild Thing didn't kill anyone or get killed during his less modulated moments (he was a war hero, after all, and not unsuited to this role).

When Majid and I checked in for our research weekend, the Mondrian was undergoing renovations. The entire first floor was covered in this trippy stuff that looked like industrial-strength Reynolds Wrap. From up in our room, we could see the Yellow House in the Hills across the street, up above the Comedy Store in the Hills. Mitzi owned the place and she used to let the comics who didn't have anyplace else to live crash there. Sam, and several others, christened the place by urinating from the front porch down onto the city below. Paulie Shore lives there today. That was the house where the bad blood started between Sam and Andrew Dice Clay. One of Sam's friends was letting several people stay there without clearing it and Dice supposedly ratted them out to Mitzi. This got back to Sam and it became a personal thing. The bad blood simmered and occasionally boiled over in public during the ensuing years.

The centerpiece of our tour lay just below and to the right of that domicile, however. The Comedy Store is like a roach motel with a sense of humor. All black corridors and staircases, they lead to three different performance rooms, all of which were being worked as we arrived on a Friday. Friday is Performance Night. Comics tune up during the week in the Original Room, the Belly Room, and the Main Room, working out the kinks under Mitzi's watchful eye. On most Fridays, Mitzi isn't even there, like a director who doesn't need to see the opening having been at the dress rehearsals.

Each of the three rooms is intimate and dark, as if the walls were wrapped in tarpaper. The performer stands on a darkened stage, like a glow-in-the-dark statue under a glaring spotlight, incantating to the assembled, evoking the magic thing we call Comedy. The most elusive and undervalued of mankind's distinctions is our gift of laughter. To laugh till you scream, the way Sam would scream. Laugh till you cry. The way Sam would cry. The comedian tries to “kill” his audience, to pin them down under a pounding wave of helpless mirth. Comedy is a primal force, and Sam courted its power many nights in the darkened rooms of this dingy temple to the great god Belly Laugh where he once worked as a doorman.

I looked at the cathedral of comedy, flanked by the Hyatt on one side and a lavish, Imperial Mexican-looking office building on the other and Majid is telling me about the night the office building caught fire, with flames roaring 60 feet into the Hollywood sky.

The Comedy Store stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the burning edifice, a windowless death trap. It was a Friday night and the place was packed. Majid was working a shift on the floor that night and reported quite a surreal scene. The people coming into the place obviously knew the building next door was an inferno, and fire engines were howling through the night, rocketing directly toward them. Yet there was never any panic.

This was at least partly because Mitzi waited quite a while before she decided to alert the patrons. Hey, it was a full house! And, as irony would insist, who was working the main room that night but Richard Pryor, who had just come back after setting himself afire in a notorious incident approximately a