

The Passing of a Blithe Spirit

The late Ole J. Sneide spent his earlier years as an accountant, which must have imposed considerable foreclosure upon a soaring spirit. In any case, when he retired to a quiet Market-street hotel he devoted much of his time to composing fantasies of the occult, chiefly interspatial.

These were communicated from time to time to The Chronicle via The Safety Valve. It required the flying saucers fever of last July, however, to draw Mr. Sneide to the attention of the newsgathering end of The Chronicle. The phenomenon was right up Mr. Sneide's interplanetary street, and his letter of dead-pan "analysis" resulted in a reporter being sent to interview him, the first time in the long relationship that anyone from the paper had ever actually seen him.

The saucers, he told the interviewer, were radio-active discs capable of gathering information, sent here from Nimbre A. Theatos, a region on the dark side of the moon "peopled" by highly scientific denizens who had come to take a sour clinical interest in behavior on this planet. Seeking

detailed information about the saucers, he said, he had fohatically teleported himself to Nimbre A. Theatos, where in a blinding flash the Nimbrian intelligence had been revealed to him. The Nimbrian "explanation" of the saucers, he said—a Sneidean touch—was: "Information refused!"

Mr. Sneide was an artist in his avocation, scorning lazy invention. If he wrote a letter telling of secrets inscribed on something called the Castle Crags Astronomer's National Monument, the letter was "documented" with cabalistic equations. "Fohatic" and "teleportation," traceably, meant just what he wanted them to mean, and for all we know "Nimbre A. Theatos," too.

Elfin to the end, Mr. Sneide willed \$10,000 of a modest estate to pay for a statue of Aphrodite to stand in some prominent place. Many San Franciscans, Mr. Sneide's heirs understandably excepted, would enjoy the idea of every glance at an image of woman incarnate recalling the memory of a recluse. We are professionally neutral in the matter, beyond saying that we do not think it would require a statue to keep his memory green.