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L O G A R I T H M I C

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I AM IN A FAPPISH MOOD TONIGHT. I have been re-reading the 1960 mailings prior to filing them away, and got to feeling quite nostalgic about these eleven-plus years of FAPA membership, and then all of a sudden I was hauling out mailings from 1949 and 1950 and going through them, and before I knew it I was putting a stencil in the typer. And the November mailing isn't even here yet. The pity of it is that only four stencils are on hand when I'm in such a Fappish frame of mind. I shall have to write Raeburn for more.

Leafing through my first three mailings, I was struck by their relative thinness -- 186, 420, and 189 pages, with the maverick in the middle being the 50th mailing. It seems to me that the average level of quality was higher than today, though -- but I freely admit that this may be the bias of nostalgia. The magazines tended toward meatiness of material, essays and criticism rather than much in the way of mailing comment. For which, as it happens, I was then and still am profoundly grateful.

You see, I joined FAPA in my very early teens, and contributed what probably was the poorest FAPazine of the decade (which was, of course, a pre-Wansborough decade.) It was half-size, execrably mimeographed, and consisted mostly of dreadful science fiction interspersed with naively pretentious editorial comments. The current comment-happy membership would have reviewed it in terms that might have left permanent scars on my ego (I thought it was quite a good little zine at the time.) But back then only a handful of magazines went in for mailing comments. Of these, some generously neglected to discuss my effort. The others were -- as I now see -- incredibly tolerant, patient, and sympathetic. Harry Warner, then as now a gentleman, offered hints on improving the mimeography. Bob Pavlat wondered if he could have done as well at that age. Charles F. Hansen (whose return from the limbo of shadow membership I now eagerly await) opined that he would prefer to wait a couple of mailings to see how the magazine shaped up before making comment. For all of which, I am deeply grateful. I would have slaughtered the magazine myself if it had been offered by someone else in recent years, I'm afraid. But I like to think I would have shown restraint.

Only nine or ten of those 1949 members have maintained unbroken membership to this day -- Burbee, Crutch, Boggs, Coslet, Moskowitz, Perdue, Rotsler, Sneary, Speer, Warner, Wesson. Eleven. So now -- and without contributing very much of merit along the way -- I'm one of the dozen senior FAPANS. I'm awfully glad there aren't many left who remember my first FAPA contributions.

Some three weeks have elapsed since the typing of the previous page, and it is now the last day of 1960 -- a day likely to bring forth introspection and recollection. It is, of course, only a semantic illusion that one year has a definable character setting it off from the next, yet it's universal to stop, take stock, characterize the year just over as a "good year" or a "bad year." I remember 1958, for example, as a "bad" year -- friends died, professional difficulties were many, life seemed relatively hard. I was genuinely glad when 1958 ended. 1959 I would tend to characterize as a neutral year -- a year of consolidation, of a good deal of professional success, but by and large a standstill year, typical of the Eisenhower era.

I'll look back fondly at 1960. That was the year we visited Puerto Rico and Italy, the year I finally stopped making excuses and learned how to drive, the year we elected Kennedy -- a political event that captured my emotions completely for the better part of the year and leaves me with great hope for 1961. It was also the fourth consecutive year of selling more than a million words, and by far the most successful year I've had as a writer, at least so far as the mercatorial aspects of writing go. (I would not call it an outstanding year creatively, but that was through conscious choice, not through any drying-up of inspiration.)

And tonight, with the proper accompaniment of a bottle of Dom Perignon '52, we'll be seeing 1960 out. I feel optimistic about 1961 -- but if "it" merely measures up to the level of its predecessor, I'll feel warranted to chalk up another "good" year. And what would Korzybski make of all this?

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COMMENTS ON THE 93rd MAILING

As a general note to the membership, I'd like to point out that this was also the year I didn't send out Christmas cards. At least, not very many. There were half a dozen left from last year, and those went out in return for the first half-dozen cards received. Otherwise, I rebelled at this mail-clogging custom. Some cards received were cherished for their esthetic values -- Larry Stark's, in particular -- and some because it was good to get a personal yuletide greeting from a friend not seen or heard from in a while. But I do want to make clear that my not sending cards is more an expression of irritation with the idea of confining warm feelings to one season of the year than any sign of coldness toward friends. So thanks for your cards, and for the feelings behind them. I won't send you any next year.

FANTASY AMATEUR -- I don't like this system of weighted votes in the Egoboo Poll at all. An ill-advised FAPAN

throwing all 30 points to one publication can introduce a quite potent element of distortion. The results this year ought to be quite startling -- and I expect will result in a return to the old system of weighting the points next year.

KLEIN BOTTLE (Carrs) -- The Chessman case seemed to bring out the wildest thalamic reactions since the last unthinking stampede to vote for Ike. I was particularly irked by people who were able to offer the doublethink statement that they "were in favor of eliminating capital punishment in California, but let's get rid of Chessman first." Equally confused, I felt, were the people who thought that Chessman's success in avoiding execution for twelve years pointed to grave defects in our judicial system, which allowed an individual to suffer such "torment." Presumably such people would agree that Chessman would have been much happier if he'd been executed the week after the trial and spared his subsequent "torment." The said torment, of course, was self-inflicted, and no more surprising than the torment a man will inflict on himself when he's hanging by three fingers from a 20-th-story ledge. How much happier he'd be to let go, and safe all that wear and tear on his arm-sockets! My own feelings on the Chessman case were that nothing he did merited capital punishment, and that reprieving him would be an act of the moral imagination with great value in healing national psychoses. I ought to add that I'm opposed to capital punishment in all instances -- but it seemed particularly unjust here, whether or not Chessman did commit the crimes for which he was judicially murdered. # Rotsler, that fabulous house we went to in '58 belonged to a friend of Liebscher's. Walt didn't live there himself. X

HORIZONS (Warner) -- Scrapping the numerical fandom system in your fan-history volume is probably a good idea. I'm becoming convinced that the idea has only slight value, high-order abstraction that it is. But you definitely should cover in detail the numbered-fandoms aberration of the mid-Fifties, since that was no abstraction at all but a very real episode in fandom's history, my part in originating which I eternally lament. (Though it does seem to be my major contribution to the annals of fandom, alas!) # I came up short at your "World of Dietrich Fischer-Discount" heading. F-D has been a private enthusiasm of mine for five years, now; I collect his records as assiduously as any Sinatra fan collects Frankie's, and respond warmly toward anyone who seems at all familiar with the man's art. As for the stores you mention, Chambers happens to be the place I do my in-person record-shopping; I'm on first-name terms with the management and find them the most satisfactory record dealers in New York. ✓

PHLOTSAM (Economou) -- I keep telling people, EdCo, that I'm a member of that baseball-fandom subsidiary too. Or used to be, until the Dodgers left Brooklyn. I keep in touch with the statistics and records nowadays in a nostalgic way, like a castrato looking up old girlfriends, but the kick is gone. ?

CATCH TRAP (Bradley) -- Marion, you've touched off two attacks of squeamishness in me in the past year.

The first arose from your account of the gory death of that kitten with a fondness for car-snoozing, and now the second comes in your account of the knife-throwing mishap. It's getting so I have to make a cortico-thalamic pause before reading your publications.

DIFFERENT (Moskowitzes) -- More semantic muddles. If the alien on the cover is reading a book with an English title, why the title on the back cover? Now, if the lettering had been in Hebrew --

DIS (Speer) -- My own reactions toward the nomination of a Catholic were similar to yours. The Catholic Church has impinged on my life in so many ways (from censoring the movies I see to conspiring in general overspanning of population) that I'm not minded to give it any more political power than it already has. But Kennedy's quite obvious independence of hierarchical pressure, his positive qualities as a candidate, and the overwhelmingly unsatisfactory nature of the alternative left me unshakeably pro-Kennedy. I'd sooner have voted for Eisenhower again than for Nixon, I think. But I'm glad I didn't have to do either.

TARGET: FAPA (Eney) -- The pro-author group at that table, Nancy Share, consisted of Silverberg, Ellison, Pohl, and del Rey. Garrett was elsewhere, and Heinlein didn't enter the hall until after the banquet. (Like Jesus coming to High Mass, indeed.)

✓ THE VINEGAR WORM (Leman) -- If you are really only 5'9", then my memory of having met you at the Solacon is fictitious. The Bob Leman I remember meeting (briefly) was about 6'2" and massive of build. (I particularly remember an awesome chin.) Are you shrinking these days, or did I have one drink too many, or didn't we ever meet? Anyway, congratulations on one of the finest first FAPAZines I can remember. You're starting off right at the top. I'd love to battle you on half a dozen points of your conservative philosophy (especially where you seem to misconstrue a profoundly conservative Mack Reynolds story that is advocating just the opposite of meek surrender to Communism) but unfortunately there are no more stencils at hand. Welcome, though. You enhance FAPA.]

X SALUD (E Busby) -- DH Lawrence's wife's name was Frieda. Her first husband was German aerial ace von Richthofen. She married again after L's death. She doesn't figure in SONS AND LOVERS.

GAFIA PRESS STYLE BOOK (Boggs) -- I wish you hadn't retained that Britannica-inspired notion of not capitalizing things like "Gafia press." Unsightly, and needlessly confusing.

Alas, no mere stencils left. A pity.]