

NOV 1964

BOBOLINGS comes to you with the same haste as ever, through the usual FAPA channels, with the same mild wonder as to what issue this may be but not sufficient in amount to cause me to check, and from Bob Pavlat, who has been responsible for this publication since its beginnings. The address is different--9710 47th Place, College Park, Maryland, 20741. There's also been a change more worthy of note, the former Miss Peggy Rae McKnight having consented some months ago to my proposal of marriage.

I've never bothered counting how many fans in FAPA are married. A quick and rough count indicates about 33 presently are and about six now aren't but previously were.

By exercising a surprising amount of restraint I've managed to decide that I shouldn't inflict upon you a description of my happily-married state. This restraint does not apply to the house.

Peggy and I started house hunting on May 17th. We were reasonably lucky in agreeing on the basic elements we wanted. A house, not an apartment. Land with trees and room for flowers. A fireplace. Two or three bedrooms, separate dining room, brick or masonry construction, and not a development. We got a masonry home, three bedrooms, fireplace, dining ell, land with seven large trees and at least as many smaller ones (dogwoods, two holly trees, flowering cherry, beech, and who knows what else), radiant heat, outdoor grill, and other goodies. It perhaps isn't perfect, since the dogs in a nearby kennel do make a racket at times, the filling station behind it makes filling station noises at nights, and the lawn fills up with grass that needs mowing in the summer and leaves that need raking in the fall (and also, I imagine, snow that needs shoveling in the winter), but it's very very close to what we wanted. We even got it for less than our first offer and maybe, a few years from now, will be able to afford it. I'm told this is unusual.

The last change in my personal life that I expect to mention this issue is a change of job. I haven't started on the new job yet--it starts November 16th. Shortly after I finished college in 1950 I went to work for the Army. I've worked there ever since, with reasonable success and happiness. In the last couple of years, or maybe the last three, the job has gradually been going downhill. I've wondered, at times, whether it was me or the job. But there was no satisfaction, too many untrained military men were thrown into supervisory posts, civilian travel became a thing of the past, and hastily conceived reorganization today became the cure-all for yesterday's faulty organizational planning. So long as I feel that way, it doesn't really matter whether it's me or the job. Either way it's a mismatch. As a result, on the 16th, I report to Review & Analysis Division, Internal Revenue Service.

With all of those changes, Bobolings should show some difference. But it probably won't, for I still like sports cars and skiing and roses and travelling and some fans and that's as it's always been.

BY LAW It seems only a short time ago that I last did something having official bearing in FAPA. I voted in the egoboo poll. Not for, or against, your fanzine--I hadn't read enough of FAPA to be able to intelligently choose the good or the bad. Many of the members were, and are, almost strangers to me--a short-coming easily corrected by one year in the Secretary-Treasurers chair. Thanks to the long memories of some fans, I've been given that year.

To date official correspondence has been limited to two or maybe three letters out, and the same number in. One of the incoming letters goaded me into this essay. It probably shouldn't be called a letter, for it was only a check for FAPA dues. A check, not cash. It was from one of Walter Breen's adherents. And it was certified mail, return receipt requested.

In the egoboo poll mentioned above I cast a blackball against admitting Walter to FAPA. I imagine that I thought there were good reasons. At present, I can't find any but bad reasons. Walter is a competent writer (though I find him verbose on too many subjects); he's a consistent producer; and I can get along reasonably well with him at a distance. I'll probably never like him, but that assuredly is no reason for a blackball. The moral issue is the only reasonable one, and I'm not at all sure that it exists as an issue which should affect his FAPA membership. The convention action, yes. But FAPA? No. I had every intention of signing the by law. I'm sorry I didn't.

There is a possibility that one day I'll turn in to a mature adult. Some things seem easier now than they did a few years ago. I can go out for a job interview without shaking in my boots. I'm quite competent in my position and can present some aspects of my job to others without feeling cowed, whether it's a desk-side chat or a formal briefing. And I know to some extent where I stand on moral issues.

When I was 16 or so I used to very much like to argue with one of my sister's boyfriends. We'd talk a few moments, one of us would make a positive statement, and the other would promptly take the opposite side. The "side" wasn't important; we just liked to debate. That easy facility to see either side is a wonderful thing, and I've regretted having it most of my life. When you can see the other side, you know your arguments aren't really composed of the everlasting verifiable truths you'd like to have on your side. And this little bit of knowledge makes it a little more difficult to be positive until all the data is in. 55% is a landslide in an election--but it's a marginal percentage of "truth" to base one's own convictions on. For a judgmental issue, you're lucky if you can get 55% of the facts in support of your cause. I don't think I've lost my facility for seeing the other side; I am more sure that I have at least 55% of the facts on my side on some issues.

As I recall, I passed a moral judgment or two last issue. I said some fans were silly. I'm not about to retract that--the silly fans have remained silly, to judge from the isolated

instances of FAPA and fannish behaviour I've noted this year. Breen gave a greater than normal percentage of us a chance to act silly--Walter's smart enough to intellectually enjoy this despite his involvement. Providing, of course, that "enjoy" is the proper verb. It probably isn't.

As I said, it was the certified mail check in payment of dues that made me decide to write this bit of narrative. It is more difficult to say what made me decide I'd erred in casting the blackball. There was a letter, saying, in essence, "We've got him down, now let's stomp on him" which made me begin to wonder if that wasn't all I was doing. I also objected to the fact that the writer evidently had a picture of me as being safely anti-Breen (as did the writer of the check). It was at least enough to start me thinking again.

Some time ago, when the blackball provision was first put into effect, the question of malicious organized use of it came up. It no longer is a question, the provision can be misused. We still need a provision to exclude the member who is actually a danger to FAPA, or who is completely useless as a member. Can we always depend upon a special vote to reverse faulty black-ball actions? Probably not--there are too many apathetic voters, and trial by fanzine is slow, with no formal verdict possible.

Could a provision be made for the case of an individual who had been blackballed to be brought automatically before a board of review? The board might consist of the three (or five) most recent FAPA presidents (and vice presidents (allowing for the individual who had held both offices)) who were still active in FAPA. They would have access to the names and comments of those who had voted for the ouster, could call for such statements as they wished from the membership or otherwise, and would be empowered to either sustain the ouster, retain the individual in his prior status, or provide for retention of the individual on the waiting list pending results of the next egoboo poll.

We can't all keep from being silly all the time. The check-and-balance system of the Federal government and of most states recognizes this. A FAPA check on the operation of the exclusion act might be in order.

Should the three (or five) members of the review board be able to override the act of the twelve or more who voted for exclusion? I think so. First, they'll have time. Second, they'll have responsibility. And third, if the membership feels strongly enough, the 33 votes of the majority can overrule to review board.

Whatever form it takes, I hope some amendment will be submitted to make the exclusion act a little more capable of operating as intended, which was to close FAPA's doors to those who could damage FAPA if they were let in.

THIS ELECTION has caused me to think a little about the most important office in the world. The DC Democrat's plugs for Johnson have stressed the importance of the office of President of the U.S.: "The leader of the most powerful country in the world" the ads say. "The results are too important for you to stay home." Strangely enough, they barely mention either Johnson or the Democratic party.

There probably isn't much room to question that the US is the most powerful country in the world. Under surprise conditions, Russia could wipe out the US, or the US could wipe out Russia, but it appears the US might still have the edge in deliverable megatonnage. Let it stand that the US and Russia are absolute powers, without worrying over-much about which is the most absolute.

The extreme power of the US makes it almost self-evident that someone living in the US should think our President is the most important individual in the world. At times, he is. The wrong man in that job is a frightening prospect. Careless use of all that power, lack of understanding of the difference between a snap judgment and a calculated decision--brrr.

But almost any position of leadership can be critical in today's world of long-reaching power to devastate. A madman would be dangerous in the US, in Russia, in China, in France, and possibly in lesser (i.e., non-nuclear and/or non-ICBM) countries. Further, the madman would be equally dangerous in any country with nuclear weapons and the power to deliver them. So there's no real point-of-decision to be made based on where a madman could cause the greatest damage.

The Secretary-General of the UN carries a lot of weight. but he has no independent power. He can stall off bad times, and carry the weight of wisdom to the battlefield, involving himself in arguments in which no other leader in the world could become involved with impunity. His job as mediator of the world's troubles is surely one of the most important jobs in the world.

But I rather think that the most important job is the one presently held by Mao Tse-tung, leader of Communist China. Or just call it China, for it surely is China, while Nationalist China is only China by courtesy.

In the US, and in the USSR, the basic formation of the political structure and military strength of the country is relatively firm. In China, both politics and strength are yet in the formative stages. Both the US and Russia are in a defensive, consolidating condition, with only minimal current opportunities to expand; China is capable of great expansion. The industrial base in both the US and in Russia is large enough that any but the most extreme measures can affect it only in minor degree; China's is subject to radical change under the proper impetus. The leader of China, in other words, can lead his country to the greatest change, and take the world along with it. That's why his job is the most important job in the world.

## PAPA WAS NO FAN

Dad wasn't much of a reader. Newspapers and newsmagazines, yes, but I can't recall ever having seen him sit down with a book to occupy an evening. Dad's interests ran more to politics (national and world, but not local), and to sports. He was fond of radio entertainment (he died before the days of TV), and I can remember a number of his favorite programs--the news and sports announcements, of course, but also Amos and Andy (the original show, not at all like the program of the '50s), The Lone Ranger (which he followed as faithfully as I during the late '30s and early '40s), I Love a Mystery, Pretty Kitty Kelly, Sergeant Preston (of the Canadian Mounted Police--or whatever the title was), Charlie McCarthy, Inner Sanctum, Lux Radio Theater, Jack Benny, Burns & Allen, The Shadow, and some of the quiz programs, particularly the \$64 (sic!) Question. His other entertainment was talking, and participating in sports.

Dad's lack of interest in reading, and my intense urge to read anything that came along, was perhaps the reason he and I weren't closer. There was even a problem in holding on to my collection during WW II. The family moved to Chicago in 1942, before I'd started collecting SF. Prior to that, I'd accumulated a hefty run of Wild West Weekly, but by 1942 interest had changed sufficiently that I left that collection behind without compunction. From '42 to '44 in Chicago, quite a science fiction collection built up, including all the current material, fair back files of ASF, the Burroughs issues of Amazing, complete files of Fantastic Novels and FFM, and the first four Arkham House books. I was in service when the family moved back to D.C. area in 1945, and dad was all for leaving the "junk" in Chicago. I knew dad. I'd left all the books and magazines in mom's care, and so it was moved despite dad's protests.

Surprisingly, it was dad, far more than mom, who gave me a science-fictional interest in the world.

Interesting things were going on while I was growing up in Nebraska. They were building a 200 inch telescope to put on Mount Palomar. They looked for and found Pluto. An almost total eclipse of the sun passed over my home town. Buck Rogers was an important part of the daily comic strips. The canals of Mars were much more in the news then than now (I think it was about that time that Percival Lowell built his observatory near Flagstaff for the primary purpose of studying Mars for proof that life existed there--whoops, he died in 1916). Mom kept me up to date with Buck Rogers (I learned to read late in life), but dad took care of the rest of the science-fictional aspects of my upbringing.

It's too far in the past for me to recall it all clearly. There was one night, when the stars were bright and hard and shiny as they can be only in the west, when I asked dad if he thought people lived up there. That was the night I first heard

that "life" didn't necessarily mean people or plants or animals as I was used to them. The idea is old, I imagine. It was new to me. I'm still surprised that the idea came to me from dad-- it just doesn't seem like his kind of a notion.

It might have been the same night, or a different one, that I asked if we'd ever get to the stars. I must have already had the notion of rockets in my head, but it was dad that described how they moved through space (like the recoil from a shotgun-- a little detail that had me thinking it would be a pretty rough ride until, many years later, I learned that it was a continuous recoil), and dad that derided the nincompoops who said that rockets needed something to push against.

Dad was a college man, but not a professional. In Nebraska, he owned a grocery store (actually a general store) until the depression put him out of business, and thereafter he worked in relatively minor roles in the Treasury Department. His interests weren't in the least scientific. Sports and politics, meat and potatoes, the price of hogs and the thickness of ice on Booth's Lake (at least I assume it was Booth's Lake, since it was the lake created by the water backed up by Booth's Dam.) Actually, he was the town expert on ice. He not only ran the ice house, but also tested the safety of the ice for skating every winter. He did it in his own typical fashion. He drove his Model T (or, later, his Essex Super Six) across the pond. If he made it across, the pond was safe for skating. (I guess we did call the lake "Booth's Pond" rather than Lake).

The interest in science just doesn't figure. Science was "bookish," and dad had no interest in books that I ever discovered. The only scientific toy that I recall was a smoked glass, for watching the eclipse of the sun. Guns he knew, and prairie dogs' habits, and how to help a cow give birth. How to lure an antelope near so that the kid I then was could get a good look at one, and how to chase a coyote across open country in the Essex just because I wanted to -- though maybe he wanted to too.

One of the very old pictures of dad shows him with what looks like an encyclopedia salesman's kit over his shoulder. I think mom did once tell me that he helped pay his way through college by selling books. He might have even read them.

But the best answer I can figure is that dad was interested in the world. He didn't like mankind, but he liked men and women as individuals. The only sod house I ever saw was the one where old Polonichek (phonetic spelling) lived, when I went there with dad on his routine visits, just because Polonichek needed someone to look after him now and then. Nature and man made up his world. The stars and the moon are an immense part of nature in the west-- or at least they were to me, possibly because they were to dad.

Papa was no fan, and there was little room in his life for fiction. I think he'd approve of today's research in space. We're getting there in fact, not in fiction. That would be a proper part of dad's world.

THE RECENT MOVE from time-honored 6001 to the new address at 9710 has turned up many an item I'd long since forgotten. At hand at this moment are some 50 pages once drafted for FAPA or OMPA, but which never saw print. I have an abhorrence for discarding the unpublished when it still reads reasonably well. Publishing a few of the bits here will help me finish the job of moving by cleaning out the files.

"They were washed thoroughly, and the Wyandots enjoyed the spectacle. To Lyon, hearing the jokes and laughter, the scenes of the night before seemed unreal. After the ceremonial washing, they were dried and their faces painted. Then they were dressed in garments of whitened buckskin, stiff with bead and porcupine quill work. Soles and uppers of the forest moccasins were of one piece of well-smoked leather, rich with beads. Headdresses of concentric rings of feathers were set on their heads. The top feather was attached to a wooden swivel, so that when the wearer walked the feather whirled. ..." Wilderness Virgin (Buckskin Cavalier), by John Claggett. That little bit has been in my files since 1956. Anyone want to do a bit of research and find out if the Wyandots really did invent the propellor beanie?

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This next item was set aside at the time/the fuss about "fanzine fan" and "convention fan" as separate breeds. At the time, there was also a considerable amount of complaining by some of the older fans that back in their day a fan was well-rounded and covered all aspects of the field. I don't know quite when "their day" was, but it wasn't in 1939-1940. In the March 1940 FAPA mailing there is an Oklahoma Institute of Private Opinion poll in which Speer found it convenient to separate fans into three classes for some tabulations of results: "Top fans," "Average fans," and "Mere Scientifictionists."

As a matter of general interest, in the same magazine Speer found the average fan age to be 20, and the median age 18. No wonder FAPA's waiting list was shorter then!

I think it was in that same mailing (the combined 10th and 11th) that I got a bit of a "gee you mean it ain't new" feeling. I had always thought that high fidelity was largely a post-war development, and that the term "hi-fi" was decidedly post-war. Yet, back in 1940, Sully Roberds quite casually used the term, not at all as if it were something new and strange and wonderful.

Add to classic typos the one discovered a few years back at my office. "Enlisted classification" came out of the typewriter converted to "enlisted classifiction." Some ex-soldiers might think that falls more in the realm of Freudian slips than routine typos. They might be right.

As I recall, Bob Tucker said he'd never known he was mentioned by Elmer Davis. Oh, fiddle, the book I want is still at 6001. Since the book I'm after is "Fifty Seconds Until Midnight" and tomorrow is election day, if Barry wins it will be most appropriate if I get that book tomorrow.

## OLD HOME GROUNDS, REVISITED

One of the items that I ran across, in the general house-cleaning which accompanied my move, was a sheet of notes on the Christmas when we moved the TV from the living room to the back bedroom. Since this issue already has some old time reflections, I'd perhaps might as well continue the theme, and transform those notes into type.

The purpose behind the movement of the television into the back bedroom was to make room for the Christmas tree. The result was more space, as expected, but also a radical increase in the amount of free time, and in the amount of chatting which went on in the family. Chatting about anything, including something just seen in the television room. Like the day that mom came out, complaining about the inability to get anything better than a bunch of gunslingers on TV. (No, Eney--this was before the current presidential campaign.) Mom generally deplores violence, and she was particularly unhappy that day, and said, "It sure isn't real to life. Even if it wasn't so long ago that Sherriff Platt was shot." Mom sometimes says blank sentences like that.

I reviewed my knowledge of sherriff's of the old west, and couldn't come up with any "Sherriff Platt," so I asked mom what she was talking about.

Seems that Sherriff Platt was the sherriff of Colby, Kansas, back in the 1920's or thereabouts. Mom had lived there, with her parents, from the time she was 9 until she got married in the early '20s. Her father had died while she was young, and it seems that one of the people her mother had considered marrying was this sherriff. Early one spring, word syphoned down to Colby that a bunch of badmen from North Dakota were heading toward Colby. Sherriff Platt, true to the western tradition, organized a posse to intercept the gang outside of town. Unfortunately, his plan worked. He intercepted them. Bang, bang, just like on TV, and Colby had to find a new sherriff.

Had the TV been in the living room, that would have been the end of the story, but as it was, mom went on to talk a little of her second-hand portion of the west. Mom was born in St. Paul, near the center of Nebraska, in 1895. She said one of her clearest memories of the early days was visiting her Aunt Libby, some fifty years older than herself, who had been one of the original settlers in central Nebraska. The early houses in Nebraska were sod houses, built out of baked squares of sod--similar to adobe houses, except that sod never dried as hard or firm as adobe. Aunt Lib said that before the sod house, dugouts weren't uncommon, and when she first moved there they used to lie awake at night listening to indians passing overhead. This would have been about 1872. The battle of Little Big Horn was 1876, and Crazy Horse died about 1879--there were indians in plenty about in the 1870's.

There's an interesting story behind the movement of mom's people to Nebraska. It's a story that's been used as the plot of books which were read, but never quite believed. It still happens--

DC newspapers printed a similar story about five years ago.

My great-grandfather, on my mother's side, was born in Vermont. I always knew him as "Tata," and that's enough of a name for this account. Tata's father died while Tata was still an infant, which left his mother with eight children, and no way to support them. Tata was adopted by a family named Knapp, with the agreement that he'd never know that he was an adopted child. This worked fine for many years, until about his sixteenth year.

Tata evidently took and early and deep liking to girls. Unfortunately, the one he liked best was his sister, and so the Knapps were forced to break their vow of secrecy about the adoption.

I can only read between the lines here, but it seems fairly obvious that Tata was pretty badly shaken up, since he promptly packed up and left Vermont to move to Nebraska.

Mom says she can still remember her grandmother's (Tata's wife's) complaints about the early days. When summer came, if Tata started laying in a supply of wood, it was going to be a bad winter. For, when he felt the urge, Tata would lay in what he considered to be a winter's supply of food and wood and take off into Indian country--mostly Montana--to go Indian hunting in the winter, returning the following summer. Since Tata lived at least into his 90's, the life apparently agreed with him. I remember Tata, with his sharp eyes and great-horn of a hearing aid, but his wife died long before I was born, so what was good for Tata might not have been so good for his wife, Metta.

Tata must have been quite a character. I can remember that I liked him, even though I didn't quite trust that large hearing horn he used. I saw him too seldom to get to know him, and at that time didn't appreciate the fact that he'd gone from adopted waif to Indian fighter to judge, that he knew both the mountains of Vermont and the high country of Montana, or that some day I'd wish I'd known him.

So much for nostalgia. And so much for TV in the living room.

Eventually, we did move the TV back out, though it stayed buried in the back bedroom for a total of some two years. It came back out partly because we got a second set (to pick up UHF), and partly because my brother worked afternoons, and liked to watch TV when he got home around midnight.

Peggy and I have had the TV in various rooms, here at 9710. Mostly, it's been in the living room--it's most convenient there. We watched TV election night, and one other night when we both felt completely lazy, but Peg has her U of Maryland studies, and when she isn't studying we like to talk.

