

# Bobolings

It's November, and in November it's my practice to publish an issue of Bobolings. Not because November is so special, but because I usually haven't published an issue earlier in the year. In this year of 1966 I did publish an earlier issue, but that was intentionally held slightly short of meeting renewal requirements, just so I'd publish another issue this year. The additional issue--this one--was supposed to be more than just a page or two, but I've let things interfere. Overtime last week-end (the first overtime for me in many a year); car shopping; getting to know my daughter; laziness; a bit of work on the new (to us) car; watching Star Trek; the annual revival of interest in skiing as the ski magazine subscriptions come back to life after the summer doldrums; living.

The overtime was unexpected. Generally I have more time than I know what to do with. This year I accepted responsibility for the annual report of my office, and for some four months that's kept me reasonably happy, productive, and busy. Not frantic, but with close to eight hours of work a day, 5 days a week. The Government Printing Office missed its due date on getting the first proof back to us--it was 3 days late. The annual report was two months late last year, due to the cumulative effects of a number of missed dates like that, so this year we're holding to our own targets if at all possible. It was possible, involving only 11 hours of overtime on my part--there may be a similar problem on second proof, but I can use the extra cash if there is, and the satisfaction of meeting a schedule if there isn't.

The annual report is the first time I've really been faced with editing. I'm finding it rather fascinating. I've previously had to pass on the written work of subordinates, and to comment on the technical details of the work of peers and superiors; but technical and gramatical editing of persons far higher in authority than I is a new experience. I've previously seen my own writing in print. It's passable. But it hurt to see some of the material I let slip by me as an editor, and to have to pass some of it because it was too late for the extensive changes which would be required to make it really readable. I'm probably too amenable an editor for a job such as this. The annual report reads as though it were written by a dozen or more people--which, of course, it was. It might be better if I'd rewritten more into my own style, not because it's good, but because at least it is one style. But had I so edited the copy I might not have achieved the easy acceptance of the more important changes that were made in the original copy, and so maybe the remaining defects are far less important than the achievements. I'd like to experiment around for a couple of years to find out how best to approach an assignment such as this; on the other hand, once through a task like this is enough--I just don't qualify as an editor. I like problems. Start here. Use these tools. End here. A printed annual report is not to me an ending, it's a by-product; a sop to the masses; a sorry summary of the goal achieved or not achieved, of the success or failure of the operation. I'm an operator, not a reporter. I'm in the wrong job.

The obvious solution to being in a wrong job is to get out of it. I'm hopeful, within a couple of years, of moving to or near Albuquerque. Information from Speer, Tackett, or others on that or surrounding area would be more than welcome. Just general information on the area--climate, activities, citizenry, and the like. I'm at least planning that I can find the job that needs me when the time comes for me to move to that area, or to some other should I decide the Southwest isn't for me after all.

In mental imagery I like the Northwest and Southwest about equally well. The Northwest is Montana, with maybe Idaho and Utah thrown in. The Southwest is New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada, with Texas, Oklahoma, and southwestern Colorado recognized as members of somewhat different character. The Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, northern California); San Francisco; and Southern California comprise the rest of the west. Peggy wouldn't like the winters in Idaho or Montana; I'm not sure that I would either. Utah is too church-dominated. Arizona I like, what I've seen of it, but somehow New Mexico seems the more attractive--possibly because the climate seems more reasonable, the skiing possibilities are better developed, and because I don't know of any Arizona cities with the character of either Albuquerque or Santa Fe. Probably, first and foremost, I want to move for me. For years, however, I've thought that it's a shame to raise a youngster in the East. I have a youngster now, and I still find the East repugnant from Connecticut south.

Once upon a time I used to write mailing reviews. I may again, assuming either more leisure or more direction of my time toward FAPA mailings. Some of the old comments never got beyond the first draft stage, and one turned up here a few months ago which Peggy Rae enjoyed part of. One comment on comment (to Economou) concerned the oddest news broadcast I ever heard. It was about seven years ago, and I was listening to some jazz on radio while reading, when the program was interrupted for the usual hourly newscast. Everything went smoothly through the commercial and the opening ~~We~~ now bring you Girdly Smellingdash with his report on the news. The silence which followed eventually crowded into my consciousness (you know--mental note of something lacking, quick recheck of mental circuits including replay of audio to see what has been happening for the last couple of minutes, and discovery that what you are missing is the news that was promised), and I started listening to the silence. There was a wait of a few more seconds, and then one of those rising carrier note whines started, all the way from the bottom of the scale right up to the top, over the valley, and back down the other side. More silence. A cough or two. A snatch of a cha-cha tune. Silence. A deep throaty rumble which I haven't to this day identified. More silence. There were probably a couple of other minor items thrown in--it was an eerie five minutes of silence with punctuation. The crowning glory, however, was when the station finally came back to life with the statement: "You have not (sic) heard the news brought to you by:..."

In those old mailing reviews I made a run-down on individuals with long consecutive memberships. It surprised me to re-read that

list today, and find that some of those old timers have dropped out of FAPA. Members dropped in the five or so years between then and now include Burbee, Coslet, Croutch, Higgs, and Woolston, all of whom joined FAPA before mailing 50. Members who joined later than mailing 50 but who are no longer around include Danner (joined with mailing 53), GM Carr (54), Alger (55), Wilson (60), Rike (63), Economou (67), Ryan (69), and Ashworth, Dunn, Schaffer, and Young, all of whom joined with mailing 71. As of mailing 117, 18 people have been in FAPA with consecutive memberships for  $\frac{1}{2}$  or more of its life--Ballard, Boggs, Bradley, Calkins, Carr, Eney, Evans, Graham, Hoffman, Martinez, Moskowitz, Pavlat, Perdue, Silverberg, Speer, Tucker, Warner, and Wesson. I still haven't met Wesson from among that group, nor Benford, Bergeron, Demmon (?), Lichtman, Locke, Lyons, Morse, Tapscott from among later joiners. Since my knowledge of waiting listers is scattered, it will be some years before I manage to reach the magical 65. I rather doubt if I ever will.

Some five years back Grennell made a remark about a bullet going through a post that caused me to reminisce about a time in France. We were zipping gaily down a narrow country road in Linard's area in our nifty little M-8 armored car with its 37mm gun when we came to a cut-bank with trees felled across the road. It would have stopped a jeep nicely, but the armored car could have gotten through with no trouble. The difficulty was that the German's had a nasty habit of burying mines in just this type of road block. We were in a rush, couldn't go around, had no mine detecting equipment, and so decided to sling in a few anti-personnel shells into the area in hopes that, if there was a mine, we'd touch it off. An anti-personnel shell is a cylindrical (unpointed) shell, loaded with heavy buckshot, powder, and a fuse set to explode some fifty or one hundred yards after the shell is fired. When the fuse goes, the shell explodes and buckshot is forcefully sprayed sideways (including upward and downward) from the shell. We backed down the road the appropriate distance for whatever fuse we were using, and sent in three rounds. No mines. As much out of curiosity as anything else we decided to send in one high explosive shell, so I drew a bead on the crotch of one of the trees and let fly. We saw and heard the shell explode, but on walking up to the area we couldn't see what it had hit. We looked over the spot I'd aimed at--not a mark. We examined nearby logs. Still no mark. Some of the men started examining trees way the hell out of the line of fire, and I was so puzzled that I didn't even object to this arrant display of distrust in my ability to put a shell someplace near where I'd aimed it. Finally someone found a flash-mark on the wall of the cut which just could have been made by the shell. We turned to see if the mark lined up with a reasonable trajectory from the car--and there, staring us in the face, was the place the shell had exploded--the back side of the tree crotch I'd aimed at. We were all fairly green, and it just hadn't occurred to us that the shell would be coming out of the tree by the time it received the message that it was to explode. Even with this proof of where the shell had been we couldn't find the entrance hole--the tree had parted and closed as though nothing had ever touched it.

And thus into limbo go twenty-odd draft pages of mailing comments on what was probably the November 1959 FAPA mailing. It condenses something fierce when the time-oriented material is removed.

I think that it's time to stop, for this delayed issue limps and I'd not want to weight it down with more words than it can carry.

Thanks for those of you who voted for me as OE. I'll try again in a year or two.

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