

Descant

971

F135



OUT OF MY LOVE AND MIND

-- Norm Clarke

HELLO AGAIN, MAYBE

This is a postmailing to the May (1971) FAPA bundle and it is being published and mailed in June, just after the arrival here, of the "May" mailing. I have absolutely no faith whatsoever that the combined efficiencies of the Canadian and American POs would deliver a parcel from Aylmer to California in time for the August deadline. A fairly recent lilapa mailing, airmailed from NYC, took a month to get here, and another mailing never arrived at all. Several of my important manuscripts -- again, airmailed -- were never delivered to my New York Publisher (ahahaha). In fact, it seems to me that one of those envelopes was mailed Special Delivery, as well.

Meanwhile, on both sides of the border, the postage rates continue to rise.

The odds are, of course, that some of you -- perhaps even many of you -- will not receive your postmailed copies of this Descant, and so I'm printing plenty of spares, and I will ask the OE to include a note in the FA to the effect that if you didn't get a postmailed Descant, just write me and say so, and I'll AirMailSpecial you a duplicate.

Goddammit, is this trip necessary?

DEARLY BELOVED...

Though it may not have been readily apparent, the last few years, the fact is that I do like FAPA a lot, enjoy the writings of many of its members, and even consider a fair number of them to be ol' buddies -- even some whom I have never met nor even corresponded with.

Like other Fapans, I have been disappointed with the size and quality of the mailings for some time, and I have also been guiltily aware that I must share some of the blame for that, for I, too, have been just minacking along for far too many years. And yet, to me, one of the enduring charms of FAPA is that it is not a-bustle with frantic Activity. One of my most favorite members is Mister Minac Himself, 520 07 0328, and I'll be perfectly content if he'll just keep those eight pages coming, annually, for at least another couple of decades. When you get eight pages from Elmer, you can be damn sure that every word was well worth waiting for.

At the other extreme, of course, there's Harry Warner, who, for all I know, has never failed to have 24 pages in a mailing, and yet one never has the impression that Harry just banged out a bunch of hasty schlock. Indeed, perhaps we have come to take Harry too much for granted. Maybe he should miss a mailing or two, that we might appreciate him the more upon his return. But you know and I know and he knows he wouldn't do that (and I'm just kidding, Harry, don't miss a mailing, please).

And whether you agree with Redd Boggs's opinions or not, when Redd sits down to write something other than his sometimes wispy whimsy, bignod, he doesn't mess around, boy: that sum-bidge writes like an angel.

However, this didn't start out to be an Unabashed Egoboo Dept; what I meant to say is that FAPA needn't attempt to be in competition with the hyperactive fast-acting apas that are flourishing or floundering all about us these days. Amid all the rockers, revolutionaries and free-style rappers who are over-running fandom and its fringes, surely there is a place for a more leisurely, even lethargic, sort of fanac. And surely that oasis is FAPA, bless it.

Juanita Coulson remarked, some time ago, that "to today's Young Fans, that line about FAPA's being 'the Elephants' Graveyard' is no joke." Well, whoever said it, FAPA is the place where Old Fans go to, if not die, then at least to ripen, to mellow, to bask in reminiscence, to flare briefly with the old fannish urge before relapsing back into that half-sleep in which they "dream softly through the passing of the years."

FAPA doesn't need New Blood. Let me repeat that, with emphasis: who needs it? FAPA will, and should, be infused regularly and gently with the sort of aristocratic Tired Blood (free of such dangerous impurities as Goshwowism) that it requires to sustain is delicately-balanced life.

There are dozens, or more, of arenas in which the Young Fans can strut and trumpet their Outrageous New Ideas, and flourish their causes and convictions before the dazzled eyes of their peers. And perhaps we, here, snug in the core, will from time to time hear echoes of the clamor without, and will smile or grumble a bit as we stir and rearrange our limbs into a more comfortable position in our rockers. And from time to time, some 25-year-old veteran of the Great Wars out there will stumble to our gates, bleeding and crying faintly, "Succor! Au secours! Let me dwell among you, for I am weary and fain would lie down. Wounded? Nay, I'm gafiated, sires!" And he will collapse at our feet, his tattered eight pages trickling from his wounds.

Of such is the Kingdom of FAPA.

NO, I'M KIDDING

Well, sort of. That, above, isn't really FAPA as I See It, but it's pretty goddam close. The only thing is I do think that we Tired Old Fapans could stir ourselves a bit more, instead of just snoozing along. Lord knows we've got plenty of talented members in here Fapans who could, with just a little effort, come up with Fapish material that would rouse the rest of us to sit up a little straighter in our easy chairs. I am not going to go into a diatribe against mailing comments, not even to repeat again that, if MCs are what you want, then the Fast ~~Wax~~ Apas have got FAPA beat all to hell in that department. All I'm going to ask (of myself, as well as you) is just a little more care in FAPA writing. I am not asking for more Formal Essays or Serious Poetry -- though I wouldn't object to either -- but only that you (and I) should try to ensure that there'll always be an Ivory Hoard (so to speak, Bruce; so to speak) to be found in this Elephants' Graveyard. I don't think that metaphor is exactly what I intended, but...

* was?

Hell, I don't want to sound like a Rotarian or Kiwanian, but we last-minute minackers know who we are and we know we could do just a little bit better. So let's, hey? It's only a goddam hobby, but hobbyists in other fields take pride in their hobby. You show me yours and I'll show you mine.

And finally; so they say "FAPA is where Old Fans go to die," huh? Well, there's another old saying, too. Remember?

"FAPA Forever!"

ROCK AND ROCK WILL STAND
FOR TOTTER, GRANDDAUGHTER

How many thirty-eight-year-old rockrollers do you know? Well, you know one, anyway; me.

I, too, find it hard to believe. I thought I was finally out of it towards the end of 1967 (when I was 34). At the time, the band I had been working with -- the St. Patrick Street Rooming House -- fell apart. I got an offer to go on the road with another group, and decided against it in favor of the relative security of a weekly local TV show I was doing at the time. I also rejoined an oldfart Hotel Band that specialized in playing such Good Music as "Dr. Zhivago," "Love Is Blue," and "Thoroughly Modern Millie." I quit that band, for the sake of my sanity, in early 1968, and didn't work much for the rest of that year except for the TV show, which folded in 1969. By that time, however, I was a member of a weekend band called The Friars (formerly The Red Cats), a semi-reformed Dixieland group that was into Versatility: that is, besides plying Dixie, they attacked some Modrun material such as "Mrs. Robinson," "Spinning Wheel," and -- oh yes -- "Dr. Zhivago."

It was a very mediocre band musically, but actually quite a lot of fun just the same: the guys in the band were, if not skilled, then at least enthusiastic weekend musicians, and the people we played for generally enjoyed our stuff (except for a few High School Graduation Dances, which were kind of embarrassing, for me at least). But in September of 1970 I got a call from Maury Logan, with whom I had worked in the early '60s, when he was Ottawa's Elvis Presley or something like that: he wanted me to join his band, which was about to open in the Standishall Hotel (the very same hotel I had quit in '68). I had some qualms about going back to that joint, but I said to myself (and to the leader of The Friars), "Maybe I'll do it for a couple of weeks, just to make a little bread."

Well, it's been about nine months now, and I'm still the featured saxophonist with *Maury Logan and The Targets*. (I shuddered at the idea of being in a band called "The Targets" at the Standishall, legendary for the deadly accuracy with which beerbottles are hurled.)

And it really is a Rock&Roll Band. Not an Acid-Rock, Pagarock, Freak-Rock, or even Heavy Rock band. We play Good Ole Rock&Roll and not in a campy, "R&R Revival" way, either. The thing is, Maury has never really noticed that the times they are a changin' (if, after all, they are); he just keeps on doing things like "Johnny B. Goode" and "Rock Around The Clock" and ... well, like that. Oh, of course, we keep up with the Hit Parade, to some extent, too: we do up-to-date stuff like "I Hear You Knockin'."

And I must admit that we don't play authentic R&R exclusively: no, we do a little bit of everything, a sort of Variety, you know what I mean? Why, we play Ballads ("Rags to Riches"), C&W ("Your Cheatin' Heart"), Bossa Nova ("Meditation" -- my Big Feature almost-jazz solo, wowie!) and -- oh yeah -- "Dr. Zhivago." Well, we aren't purists! (Except for Maury, maybe, who is rock&roller through and through, and who says things like, "What do they mean, 'heavy'?" and "It don't sound like Rock&Roll to me!")

But the amazing thing is that the Standish is doing business the likes of which I've never seen in all the years I've known the place. The crowds consist mainly of people in their twenties, though there are some younger than that, and a smaller number older. And they dance and sweat and yell Hooray and have a helluva good time. And, you know, that makes me feel good, too. Even when wearing my Jazzman Hat (something, alas, I rarely do anymore) I've never felt kinship with the cool introverts who sneer at the Squares or the Straights. And when I'm playing R&R, or even just Dance Music, bighod I blow to get feet pattin and fingers poppin.

And it's happening, and I dig it. My aim now is to be a 50-year-old Rocker.

THAT NORMAL BUCK ROGERS STUFF

I haven't read very much science fiction since about 1954, when all the pulps were disappearing and being replaced by the now-uniform digest-sized format. It wasn't just the change in size and style that turned me away from good old stf, though: it was also a growing conviction that the stories were getting worse. Either that, or I had simply outgrown that sort of, uh, Literature.

In any case, I have been a fakefan for about a decade and a half, now. Periodically, through those years, I would buy (or borrow) and peek into an F&SF or a Galaxy or one of those Things, to see what was happening in the stf field; nothing was. I heard about New Wave stuff, sought some of it out, and yawned. The New Wave washed over me, its only effect being to dampen my enthusiasm still further. By god, that's a marvelous metaphor.

At the Toronto Fan-Fair convention, recently, I succumbed to the longlost smell of pulp and purchased a copy of the July, 1953 Fantastic Story Magazine. I bought it mainly for nostalgia's sake,

and for the fun of reading its letter column (Terry Carr, Gregg Calkin, Ron Ellik, Ted White), but later I actually read the stories, and damn it, they were good. Not Good Literature, but good bighod Science Fiction (or "Fantasy"). The prose was pulpy and functional. The stories were stimulating (if not mind-blowing) and entertaining. But I'm not going to go into pages of comparison and criticism of the old stf vs. the new.

All I know is that, once upon a time, I enjoyed stf quite a lot. At that time, science fiction was definitely a minority taste. Fans used to joke, half-seriously, about their need to band together because Mundane regarded them as freaks and oddballs who read "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff." Anyway. I used to enjoy stf, and then I lost interest. Over the years, I kept checking the field, wondering if Good Old stf would ever return, or if it was just that I had changed immutably. (I am summing up here, so look sharp.) And then I read an old pulp, and found it Good. And then I recalled that the old pulp were read by a very special little crowd.

A couple of days ago I was in a Woolworth's, a cheap and tawdry "five-and dime": it was the sort of place that sells baubles and bangles to the sort of girl who stands, gum-chewing, behind its counters. The place is full of cheap gimcracks, gaudy gewgaws. Its lunch counter dispenses dreadful concoctions of green and purple, and everything but the ice-cream is fried. Through the aisles of this horrid emporium swarm masses of roobs, gawking and handling the spangly trash.

Woolworth's has a Book Department. It stocks mainly rotten-core pornography and doctor/nurse novels.

And racks and racks of science fiction.

ON THE WAY OUT
WITH THE CHARLES

I have a Restaurant Story to tell, a Restaurant Story that I defy anyone to top (or bottom, more likely). Now, I have had many strange and croggling restaurant experiences (such as being served straight vermouth when I'd ordered an Extra Dry Martini), but...

Jenny had a birthday last week, and I decided to take her out to dinner (along with Gina and Laurie) and afterward to catch my first set at the Standish, illegally and sneakily. So: I wanted to take her someplace close to my gig, someplace not terribly FE (not Louis IX, Boyd, or Mme. Burger's) but not a Doggie Diner, either. I couldn't think of any place that was quite what I had in mind; but then, with a flash of inspiration, I consulted a "What's On In Ottawa" guidebook, specifically the "Recommended Restaurants" section. "Hotel Duvernay," read one entry, "...Executive Penthouse...Blabla Dining Room...etc etc" "Okay," I thought, "that's only a few blocks from the Standish."

I'll try 'er."

The Dining Room was small, and looked rather like a cafeteria, and I had misgivings, but "Let's glance at the menu anyway," I thought, so we did. Hey, not Great, but not bad; snails, duck a l'orange, lobster, etc., all at quite reasonable prices. However, there was no wine list. "No, all we have is DuBonnet," said the waitress when I asked. "Oh hell," I said, "can't you send upstairs to the Executive Penthouse and get me a bottle?" "Well..." she said dubiously, "What do you want?" Well, we hadn't decided yet what we were going to order to eat, but I didn't want to delay things too much -- I had to get to work, you know -- so I asked for a half bottle of Medoc, which I find goes well with most things. Fine, in ten or fifteen minutes it was brought to our table, opened with a passable flourish, and I squeezed the cork, sniffed the me great bloody 'ooter, and took a connoisseur's sip. The sip, unfortunately, coincided with a cough, and I gasped and wheezed for a couple of minutes, choking genteely. "Smooth!" I croaked.

Okay, time to order; "Jenny here will have the filet mignon -- rare -- and duck for the lady ((I didn't want to call her "the ole lady" in a public place)) and for my daughter the conservative, Laurie, the Fried Chicken. And I will have the broiled lobster." "I'm sorry sir," said the waitress, "but it's just lobster tails." "Well, that's okay," I said magnanimously, "lobster tails it is then. Oh, and you want some snails as an appetizer, Jenny? Yes? Okay, bring us a half dozen snails, too." "You like snails?" the waitress asked Jenny. "Oh yes," Jenny beamed proudly, 12-year-old Sophisticate. We sat back expectantly. I saw the waitress say something to the chef (it was an open kitchen sort of place), and I saw the chef shake his head, and I saw the chef reach for a phone, and then I saw him speak to our waitress. And I saw our waitress coming back to our table. "Oh damn," I thought, "I bet they don't have the snails." "I'm terribly sorry sir, but we don't have any snails..." "I knew it," I muttered. "...and we're out of filet, and as far as I know we've never had any duck. And there's no lobster." I just gaped. When I could speak, I said, "That doesn't leave much of our order; does it? What is there?" "Well," she stammered, truly embarrassed, "there's fried chicken." "And?" I asked. "Oh sir," she almost cried, "I'm SO sorry. If I'd known...there isn't ANYthing...I wouldn't have opened the wine...I'll have to charge for the wine...would you like some fried chicken?" "NO FRIED CHICKEN!" I said in a voice that Ron Ellick would have admired. And I poured the wine from our glasses into the bottle, pocketed it, paid for it and left. I still don't believe it.

ED COX, DO IT HERE!



COMMENTS VERSUS COMMENTS VERSUS COMMENTS VERSUS COMMENTS VERSUS...

BILL, your o/age was a trif, and heavy. I can dig it.
You're marrying a fair fan, TRILBY? I guess you're not a bigot.

Love your cover. WY P I've a thing for trains.
W. R. V. r-riends, indeed, REDD DOGGS! Yrs truly, Shit-for-Brains.

Your Sercon's Bane is Russko's Bane, there, BOZ, ya summarit!
But where is ELLION, these days? And there's ... oh, there's DON FITCH.

CHERRY (or LOW-OUT 22), the Fanzine Fans Believe In!
I haven't any comments, but the scansion comes out even.

BILL BOWMAN utwor asks, he says, high level of response.
Well, gee I ..gosh...well, noted, the. (I have to say that, once.)

W. COX, I dug your great report of Pileora Street a-quakin.
(It's time you came back East again, if I am not mistaken).

Well shit, I dug your fuckin zine, you IVERSUS there, you two.
It's fuckin far out, heavy shit, yep. Ka-ka, pee-pee, doo-doo.

I never read DAVE Wray "GREGG" (This comment is just a quickie,
as is the following hello Hello, ROSEMARY HICKLY!)

Good stuff by W. ANDERSON, and by her daughter ASHT
and lots good stuff by ELLINGTON (El Dick ya crazy lastrid).

The Devil's Work, by MORROW, and something by DICK LAMY.
I haven't read them. That's because I am, I guess a meanie.

What's this? A fan (JOHN K) resides in Wascings, Minnesota?
One Japan at a time, I guess, is Minnesota's quota.

A Faanish title, anyhow, has sister BLISS's doorway.
Inside, it's Dirty Prosy stuff. Still, W. E. you do it Your Way.

Le poindre BOYE I've always used my hands to peel an orange
(though now my finger-joints grow stiff and creaky as a door-hinge).

Horizons, HARRY, brings me joy in lip lall, it's a Gasper!
And so, in its post-light house way, is HARRY CARR's disappar.

BILL ROTHER's Wishing You The Same I cast a squinty glance on
in such a scene. I wonder, BILL, why do you keep your pants on?

DICK B: I don't know what I like; but, man, I know what's Art, and yours is. Can The World Be Saved? It's far too late to start.

Five twenty Zero seven (ELMER) Zero three two eight:
your pages fine as ever ... and mighod it's getting late.

Forgive me, DIANE, CAUGHRAN, and whomever else I've missed:
I'll get around to you next time. I've got a little list.*

--Norm

*to starboard, I think.

oOo oOo oOo

SO HERE IT IS, publishing day at the home of Dave and Marne Johnstone, inheritors of the fabled (some say there is a curse attached to it) ABDick Natural Gas Mimeo. Dave whirls the crank while I stand by and supervise. "Don't DO that!" yells Dave good-naturedly, "Keep yer goddam hands out of the fuggin machinery." Meanwhile, Gina (who is responsible for all the typos in this fanzine, except for those in this final paragraph or so) does esoteric things with a stylus (or a "stylui," as our more creative members would say, hey Juffus?); and Marne sits benignly by, very very preggers. Cultural footnote: until recently, sour mash whiskey was unavailable in Canada. In particular, one was unable to purchase a bottle of Jack Daniel's. But a few weeks ago, Dave or somebody told me that Ontario liquor stores now had JD, at eleven-something per fifth. I was all set to buy a bottle of it, at that price too, until quite by accident I discovered that the liquor store in Hull, Quebec, now carries Jim Beam for eight-something a fifth. So I drink Jim Beam, sometimes. Actually, I still think that JD is a better sippin' whiskey, but not three dollars' worth of better. ((P.S: And now there is an "Alberta Springs Old Tyme Sippin' Whiskey." Not bad, either.)) Rumors have it that various rather well-known and formerly prominent Fapans are going to drop out. Some of them I thought had dropped out years ago. You certainly have to look closely to be sure, these days.

Oh, by the way: I'm looking forward to your mailing comments, Mr 0328.

~~Descant is published by Norm and Gina Clarke, 9 Bancroft St, Aylmer E, PQ, and is intended as a postmailing to the May 1971 FAPA mailing. If you're not in FAPA, and still you find you've somehow got a copy, start wondering where you went wrong.~~