

It's positively alarming, the way Horizons has survived into a year which many science fiction stories I read as a youth happened before. Unbelievably, I pretend that this is the February, 1970!, issue of the FAPA publication mostly written by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, United States of America, and totally reproduced by one or more Coulson/s. As if that weren't enough, would you believe volume 31, number 2, FAPA number 115, and whole number 121? If this keeps on, it'll be time for an annish soon.

In the Beginning

Descant: Dam up that rushing torrent of panic. You didn't get an incomplete November mailing; I'm still immersed in comments on the preceding bundle which weren't finished in the previous Horizons. 'I had been thinking about an issue of Horizons whose main article would consist of one-sentence summaries of all the projects I didn't get around to doing during the 1960's. But this index to the undone will form the concluding sentence that won't be written, I suppose. Just for Horizons alone, I can think of such things as a mystery issue composed of reprints from old FAPA mailings with no clue to the identity of the authors, and everything chosen as uncharacteristic of the creator; the first few instalments of my memoirs as a fan; translations of more fantasies by Storm; long articles on why I like Verdi's operas, how the American press has gone downhill, and afterthoughts on Kim Darby's contribution to True Grit; a transcript of the Cronkite-Clarke-Heinlein colloquy that memorable Sunday which most fans seem to have missed and I taped; a list of things I need to know about the history of fandom in the 1950's; and goodness knows what else.

Snickersnee: Then there are the other things I didn't accomplish over and beyond the aborted Horizons contents. Such as an inquiry inspired by the Silverberg blaze into having the power cut off from my attic. I almost never go up there after dark, because the one light bulb in the ceiling doesn't stand a chance against the sullenly looming, tumbled mountains of gloom-spreading stuff. My untechnical mind insists that I'd reduce the risk of a fire of my own by considerable if I got an electrician to cut off all juice above the second floor, and use a flashlight for any late pilgrimages to the upmost level. 'If the task of restoring the collection is still partially incomplete, try Walt Coslet. His enormous collection is apparently still for sale, according to a notation in the Nostalgia Book Club bulletin, and his address remains unchanged. Sambo: I'm confused. I associate The Saturday Evening Ghost with Bob Jennings and here it is described as Bob Martinez' fanzine. Was there a penname everyone in fandom except me knew about, or am I thinking of another fanzine title? Sercon's Bane: It just occurred to me that I'll be deprived of a small source of happiness, when cigarette advertising leaves tv channels. Presumably the anti-smoking spots will also disappear. I have grown quite fond of them, in much the same way as a pious old woman must enjoy a Jesus Saves! sign as she walks down the street. The cancer and heart people have a particularly effective one that simply reminds the smoker how his body rebelled the first time he smoked a cigarette. Blush: I share the affliction admitted by some others, inability to keep several Australian fans completely separate as distinctly different mental figures. They're all literate, write a great deal about pro science fiction matters, have somewhat similar writing styles, and it's a real jolt to find a couple of them sudden-

ly arguing, as if a body rejection were beginning. We need a special fund or two to import Australian fans to a convention where they'll be demonstrably separate and equal entities. Synapse: Examples of the preoccupation with Indian music early in the century were two English language operas produced at the Met, Cadman's The Robin Woman and Herbert's Natoma. MacDowell's Indian Suite is one of many concert hall items resulting from the same theory that this was the true American music. 'I can't remember a network ban on recordings, but there was a time when the FCC required announcement of the fact that something just heard was a recording or transcription. 'When you hear a speaker, instead of get a copy of his talk, you can make at least one decision, whether he understands what he is saying or is so stupid that he doesn't even recognize the important words in what he is reading. Since it's become undignified to print key words and sentences in capital letters, it's also become more difficult for the reader to gain certain insights into the things an intelligent speaker can be heard to emphasize, shadings to indicate that this is meant lightly or warningly which the words on a page fail to reveal. Finally, many spoken things look so terrible in print that you can't force yourself to read all the way through them, and you may miss some important thing which the audible words would have caused you to hear.

Lighting Permit: There's another possible factor in the slight decline of TAFF. There isn't quite the mystery about fans from across the ocean that existed a decade ago when an overseas visitor was a rarity. Now you see a dozen or so Europeans at every worldcon held in the United States, over and beyond a TAFF delegate and a couple of dozen Americans get to one or another con in Europe each year.

King Biscuit Time: You can draw unemployment compensation in California when you're workless because you were fired? Maryland doesn't pay off if unemployment is the worker's fault and gives the employer the benefit of the doubt in situations like discharges from jobs. But even the nasty Maryland lawmakers haven't figured out how to stop another system for evading the intent of the law. Someone who wants to loaf for a while quits his job, immediately takes another job which he knows is only temporary because it's a seasonal business, then applies for his money when the layoff comes in the slack season. In theory he is supposed to accept whatever new job the unemployment people find for him but usually can manage to make himself unsuitable for these jobs in some way when the interview comes.

Of Cabbages and Kings: I fear that those slobs who do nasty things unobserved around your home have unlimited mobility. A sample of my own sufferings in recent years: The backyard incinerator knocked over and its side smashed in. Part of an orange thrown against the brand new storm door. An egg on my present car the first night I had it, although that may have been a mistake since the Jewish gentleman who lives nextdoor has been getting this treatment from wasps for some time. One garbage pail stolen or, more likely, borrowed by a family who wanted to make a lot of soup and never returned. Three initials cut with a knife into the top of the car. One or more Christmas trees dumped in the backyard every January. Rubber mats twice torn from the front porch steps. I didn't lose my temper over any of these things as completely as I did the day last winter when I was forced to park several doors away because a leaking gas main had caused an enormous excavation to yawn in front of my house and the next two houses down the street. Someone put a note under the windshield wiper: "Park in your own place." And I've never had an unfriendly word with a neighbor in a dozen years at this address. There are psychopaths in this block or highly

mobile visiting spoilers. Grue: Reappearance of this title is the only August event that didn't seem anti-climactic to Armstrong's first step. And to think that the very first lines inside will be lost on those who don't read every word of The Worst of Martin. ' ' As Tina Hensel wasn't saying but might very well have been, the odd thing about this conquest of us all by the phony and the ersatz is how we accept without objection the very things we felt scorn at in the 1940's when they became wartime substitutes for the real things in warring dictatorships. Germany didn't have enough real food or real metals and even promised its people small-sized people's cars at which we all snortled loudly over here. At which point we leave this substitute for genuine mailing comments and proceed to the November distribution: The Fantasy Amateur: I hate to see FAPA officers forced to hustle around and collect activity credit just like us hoi polloi. Surely there's enough work and activity involved in the four officers' obligations to exempt them from meeting the eight-page requirement when circumstances gang up on the officers. Horizons: I wondered how lonely I'd feel as the only member of True Grit fandom. But apparently there are many mundane people who see the light, even if the film hasn't inspired any fanzines of its own. It was chosen as movie of the month in the Boxoffice poll, with the help of my vote, and has been averaging better than 200% business in its early weeks of showing. One professional football team went to see it en masse before a crucial game and was sufficiently inspired to score a victory the next day. The Atlantic Monthly not only gave it a learned review but took up for Kim Darby, whom a few boorish and doubtless subversive writers had dared to criticize. I hope I survive whatever number of months may remain between now and the release of Norwood, the second Darby film. Aliquot: I got a taste of handwritten fanac during the two hospital sentences after broken hips. So I have special reason for hoping that Rusty returns immediately to typewriting capabilities. Meanwhile, I believe that this represents FAPA's first penmanship publishing since the first coming of Louis Russell Chauvenet. Celephais: I'm on the board of directors of the local community action group that administers OEO projects, and I've felt for a long while the need to do things about the rundown suburban areas. Hagerstown has some that grew during World War Two, have been steadily declining in the quarter-century since, and are going to be absolute slums in another decade or two if something isn't done. ' ' So I'm all that stands between FAPA and higher postage rates for the bundles? It's taken 47 years, but I've finally found a purpose for living. Rubber Frog: Something that bothers me about this FAPA senility is what happens to the fans who eventually drop out. Does loss of membership really do serious things to the outlook on life of a Dan McPhail or a Curt Janke? Does loss of that membership symbolize the final disconnection with youth? I suppose it's not a critical event, but I can't help remembering a situation years ago when someone persuaded me that one member might be driven off the deep end if his membership wasn't rescued. ' ' The trouble with football is sloppiness. You see two or three errors at the most in a well-played baseball game and in a football game everyone thinks the quarterback is a phenomenon if he completes two-thirds of his passes. The sight of all those players losing their balance and falling when the action is twenty yards away from them offends my sense of the fitness of things. I can't understand why a quarterback should fumble the snapback any oftener than you see a baserunner move up because the pitcher missed the catcher's return toss. Besides, as far as I can see, nobody ever

knows officially who wins a football game. There is no provision in the rules for an official scorer, as there is in baseball, and none of the officials on the field seems to have scorekeeping included among his obligations. As far as I can see, the guy who runs the scoreboard could put up any figures he pleases and nobody could claim the right to contradict them. Different: Different describes the eye with which I look at old prozine illustrations today. The lack of clouds on earth in the Paul picture suddenly looks very odd, now that all those real photographs have been brought back from space. Cognate: It might be just as much fun and much less work to put on at a party a live performance of an old time silent movie by a live cast. No dialogue to learn, you see, a major simplification, plus an extra role for someone chosen to hold up cards containing the essential printed bits of dialogue. Blackhawk Films has squillions of ancient one- and two-reeler melodramas in any of the home movie formats for study purposes, 8 mm, super-8, or 16 mm. Sercon's Bane: Fans might as well get used to such things as the shared bathroom in the con hostelry. I'm convinced that hotels and fannish cons are coming to a permanent separation. Room rates are rising to impossible heights, some of the fannish events are too big for most hotels, the drug problem will continue to be with us, and other solutions will be needed. Taking over an entire beach or mountain resort area out of season is one possibility. Another is campus facilities. ' ' Feeling left out of abnegation, since I don't smoke or drink or take trips, I decided recently to get virtuous in a second-rate manner, cutting down on coffee consumption. I'd been averaging six cups a day. I'm down now to four most days and never more than five, and haven't minded the cutback. When I feel the need for the fifth or sixth cup, I simply drink a batch of water and the urge goes away. Diaspar: I can sympathize with the harassment that the gawkers represented to the hippies and the desire to flee those stares. But I can't help simultaneously wondering if this isn't a serious evidence of a basic wrongness in the hippie way of life. If that sort of living can't withstand some publicity and tourists, how viable would it be when it encountered a really serious problem? A Propos de Rien: You're apparently talking about a hot air furnace humidifier. There is no way to hook up one to the furnace when it is the steam heat variety, and the humidifier must be in the lived-in part of the house to provide effective moisture, not in the cellar. ' ' There must have been quite real reasons for the moon race, rather than a simple prestige struggle. I suspect two major motives in this nation: the fear that Russia would claim the moon as its own property if it got there first in accord with old earth exploration tradition, even if new UN tradition called for an international moon; and the stupendous military importance of the moon, if only from the negative standpoint of making sure that nobody else puts nuclear missiles up there. You can think of ways in which you might search out and try to destroy a missile-launching satellite sent up in earth orbit, but how do you find a base hidden somewhere among the tens of thousands of square miles of surface on the far side of the moon? Futurian Commentator: I filled out a civil defense form and got back recommendations for making my basement a fallout shelter. The basement as it exists seems to provide better than average protection and it wouldn't be too expensive to increase the safety factor. I won't. I know me well enough to be certain that I'll go down there in case of radiation and stay a few hours and then come up on the supposition that if fallout is still lethal by now, civilization will break down

to conditions too rough for a puny middle-ager like me to cope with. My civil defense preparations consist of trying to keep fresh batteries in a flashlight and transistor radio, and perfectly good intentions to store a lot of drinking water real soon now. Of Cabbages and Kings: It's been a long time since anyone mentioned a Robert Nathan story in a fanzine. Back in the 1940's, he was much read and praised by fans. I wonder if Heinlein and Sturgeon will go out of favor as Nathan, Blackwood, and van Vogt have done? There was a fine film version of Portrait of Jennie, starring naturally Jennifer Jones, that never seems to turn up on television channels available in Hagerstown, a monstrous pity. Poor Richard's Almanack: Aren't you arguing against yourself? You point to the bad effects of alcohol and cigarettes, in support of the stand that some drugs should be legalized. But alcoholic beverages and tobacco were illegal in the past and I'm sure that they were legalized partly because of the very arguments now advanced to urge drug legalization--take the profit away from outlaws, keep prices low enough so people needn't steal to afford the substances, and so on. I don't believe that these analogies provide much cheer and comfort when we think of a future in which drugs are legal. There is much more alcoholism today than during Prohibition, and I've seen figures which seem to prove that there's more bootlegging today than during the great drought. Look at any race track or Las Vegas to see the kind of people and atmosphere that accompany legalized gambling. Legalizing drugs would simply make it easier for everyone to try them, automatically augmenting the strain on hospital facilities, miseries in families where the wageearner had been fired for being under the influence when he was due at work, and moreover you'd have in that future just as you have today the crowd who want to demonstrate rebellion by doing illegal things and we'd probably have an opium popularity wave. I don't think it's worse to take drugs than to drink but I find either activity a very unsatisfactory way to live. And I hate to see drugs taken up by young people before they've given reality a chance. '' Incidentally, in Maryland people who are hooked on heroin and are too poor to finance a cure can get welfare money to buy methadone, which is just as addictive but lacks the bad side effects of heroin. Bobolings: If you have trouble remembering the number of the new house, think with pity on the plight of a person who lives alone and has a telephone. There is absolutely no reason for me to call my own number, I can never remember it, and when I'm asked for it, I must look it up in my little notebook while everyone gawks and wonders why I'm so forgetful. '' Maybe I'm the senior member of FAPA by now in one insignificant respect. My membership has never been in temporary limbo pending rescue. I don't remember if Elmer Perdue was already a member when I joined, but he was virtually a non-member a couple of times until an officer made a decision or a petition was assembled. I think that Speer's membership once lapsed but was quickly renewed before the next mailing appeared, in the era when there was no waiting list and this was possible. '' Planning and control officer of the management information division? I hope I'm not divulging secrets that should be left undisturbed, but I'm pretty sure that this is the computer's way of saying that Bob Pavlat is now dictator of the nation. He may not know it yet, same as the fellow in the Asimov story who didn't realize for a while that he had been selected as the sole voter in a major election. Even Stalin didn't have such an imposing title, you know. '' Swisher really did keep track of fanzines' contents for a while. Art Widner told in the April, 1941, issue of Spaceways about cards covering 5,000 fans (many of them undoubtedly

one-time appearances in prozine letter columns) with close to 200 separate entries for such important fans as Wollheim and Ackerman. Also forgotten is the way Swisher put his own opinions into his index of the prozines, in the form of ratings appended to each story. One note which I failed to attribute describes him as having spent a full year catching up on back reading and succeeding in the attempt in '45. There's no doubt about it, though: fanzine contents remain the only virgin territory for bibliography in fandom. I recall only three or four important fanzines that ever got indexed by contents and I doubt that any of those listings are now available.

Kteic Magazine: Now I know that fandom and prodom are indistinguishable. I long to receive the old carbon-copied Kteics that were even franker than this, simultaneously with my realization that the beautifully reproduced new issue is luxury that the writing deserves. I'm sure that Bill Rotsler will someday form a part of the anecdotes and legends in every book about Hollywood. Since I've been wanting to see more of Kim Darby, I hope circumstances someday enable Bill to cast her in one of the films for general release. And yet I can't get rid of a nagging sense of frustration about the success in the movies. I still feel that Rotsler is potentially one of the great artists of the world, and I feel that all these years of still and motion pictures have been as depriving to the world as if Picasso had been crippled with arthritis in his hands during a couple of decades in the past. I hope something happens to bring the art out of Rotsler in the form of drawings and paintings. At least I don't have to think harshly of a 15-foot Dylan wig, as things turned out.

The Tattooed Dragon Strikes Again: This is a small example of what we might have in quantity if the Rotsler bread were not being earned in other ways. I don't know quite what to say about it, except that it possesses all the considerable virtues of its predecessors and adds to them a new depth, a sort of pitying cynicism. I suspect that Rotsler is getting older, just like some of the other FAPA members, and it shows to good advantage in this manifestation.

Horib: I knew something was wrong as soon as I saw those margins, almost Warnerian in their miserliness. As I've said so often about other members with declining interest, the failure of FAPA to do something about its silliest tradition, the chronologically ordered waiting list, is the culprit and it's more and more apparant that this spur-of-the-moment tradition will grow into the organization's murderer. Three years of regular and interesting FAPA activity is more than we get from most new members, but it's sickening to think that there would have been six or more years of Lupoff writing and publishing, without the blind faith in the premise that Jimmy Taurasi's jerryrigged solution for the sudden question of what to do when more people wanted to be FAPAs than the membership limit permitted is the wisest and most irrevocable of solutions.

Terminus Telegraph: Now all my wonderings about Amra are resolved except for why the volume hasn't changed for so long and what caused it to make its only change to date. The dreary task of writing addresses and licking stamps and rigging up some kind of wrappers was one reason why I didn't publish any more subscription fanzines after 1942. But I should think that an even greater difficulty today would be: how do you decide whom to send your subscription fanzine to? In Spaceways' lifetime, there was no such thing as free copies for letters of comment. Subscription fanzines were scarce enough to permit trading with every other fanzine without undue strain on the budget. You

didn't make scads of new friends outside fanzine fandom every time you attended a convention, to whom you felt an obligation to send your publication simply because you liked them, not because they read many fanzines. There were no real subfandoms whose members might be interested in certain items in your latest issue. Tucker wants me to revive Spaceways for the 40th anniversary of the allegedly first fanzine and this is the matter that causes me to hesitate. I'm sure I would feel that I owed free copies to at least three hundred people, for recent kindnesses and if I sold some more copies, all that attention to circulation might ruin all desire ever to create again a fanzine of any description. ' ' Isn't it probable that a television network will need one of those three-dimensional star models pretty soon? There's bound to be speculation some day soon on unmanned star probes and this will impel at least one network to do a documentary on the very different and special space flight problems involved in sending something to the stars, and a three-dimensional map will be essential to enable a moving camera to show by perspective changes that the stars aren't all pasted on a deep velvet background just beyond the solar system. The Vinegar Worm: I don't find any real conflict between those two statements on how I view the world's problems and what I might do about them. It's something like the difference between tactics and strategy. I don't pretend to look into the real soul of any politician and say that he's a secret leftist when he seems to be a middle-of-the-roader, but even if the specific details are uncertain it's easy to spot a coming upsurge of far right power and influence in the nation as a whole, as soon as the Vietnam mess is finally called off. ' ' Grosset & Dunlap published two or three Claudy novels in its 50¢ hardbound edition for boys around the start of the 1930's. I've seen them listed occasionally in used book catalogs at reasonable prices, usually between \$1 and \$2 a copy. The one about Mars whose title I can't recall just now had a powerful influence on my thinking when I was just discovering science fiction. An important character's body was killed so his brain could be used for Martian purposes, and this was more tragic than most fictional events I normally encountered. Then the twin heroes personified brain and brawn, a philosophical aspect of story-telling that also helped me to see how a good story can have something more than action. ' ' Lots of drivers seem to have resorted to tape playback units running off auto batteries to relieve the barren condition of the radio waves. My inability to hear a radio when I'm driving makes it a pointless thing to buy. I concentrate entirely too much on road dangers and wouldn't hear the tapes if I had them and the playback equipment. Kim Chi: Gunk sounds something like the steamed hamburger which is extremely popular in this valley but unknown in many civilized parts of the East. Visitors from afar can't get used to hearing people order steamers in restaurants, and the first look at apparently predigested meat is also quite hard on observant travelers. ' ' It's good to hear about Oakland gaining in symphony attendance. But it's no use kidding myself: "serious" or "concert" or "good" or "classical" or whatever you want to call the music is in bad straits in this country today. I hope it retains enough appeal to stay generally available during the rest of my lifespan. The cause, I'm positive, is in the near-impossibility of performing most important contemporary music of this sort without enormous resources in manpower, equipment, skill, and perhaps special training for just this one performance. It's the first time in four or five centuries that the person with a few years' musical training couldn't produce for himself the significant new music. It's tragic.

Auld Lang Syne for '69

This isn't the first time I've summed up in Horizons a year that still had a few weeks to live. Nothing terrible has resulted from the presumption on the previous occasions, but once again, I feel as if I'm egging unidentified, unknown gods to vent wrath toward me for such presumption. Something might occur in the remaining days of the year that will make my emphasis on the matters in this summary seem in retrospect like the worst kind of reporting. My only consolation is the knowledge that December would be forced to come up with a whopping big surprise, to top the moon flights and the batch of fannish honors that were the highlights of 1969's first eleven months.

I've written at some length for another fanzine about my reaction to receiving a Hugo, and don't intend to repeat or preview that article in Horizons. But the Hugo was only one of several big moments in fandom for me: the Evans Memorial Award, the status of guest of honor at the 1971 worldcon in Boston, publication of All Our Yesterdays, and yet another potential honor which I decided to decline with many thanks. I've always felt considerable pity for people who are vain about concrete symbols of recognition, because obviously the intangibles are the really important kinds of respect. But now that I have one trophy on a record cabinet, another on my desk, the author's copies of the Advent book in the spare bedroom, and a letter in my desk from T. Lewis telling me to get busy on my guest of honor speech, I realize that some concrete manifestations of the intangibles are nice, too. I see them occasionally and get a good feeling from what I've seen, at moments when I wasn't thinking about them. This is much better than the former situation of being fairly certain that a good many people appreciate the time and work I've given to fandom over the years.

I accepted the duties with the Boston convention after rejecting them with many thanks, and then changing my mind because of a stern talking-to by Boston interests. I still don't feel that I'm a good choice for the honor because I don't drink, a habit that makes it more difficult to be the perfect conventioneer, and because I'm so much older than most fans, who might feel happier paying tribute to a person no further than the next generation higher up. There is also the health problem, which has been increasingly on my mind and could conceivably cause real difficulties after two more years. But some second thoughts caused me to accept, among them the possibility that the only way I'll ever talk myself into attending a worldcon is by reason of an obligation which can't possibly be avoided, and the chance that I'll need in 1971 another massive dose of egoboo to keep up spirits that have been sinking steadily under the weight of mundane burdens.

Publication of the fan history was a morale booster in many ways. Letters keep coming in, most of them are in the vein of those that appeared in the last issue of Horizons, and so far there hasn't been any sign of a libel suit. If other states have the same statute of limitations as Maryland, I still face two years and four months of suspense on this point. I made every effort not to be malicious, not to publish anything that could harm the present status of anyone mentioned in the book, but I haven't been able to shake the worry that someone will take violent exception to the irreverent attitude I displayed to some events in the 1940's and will consult an attorney. I also possess, by a coincidence, just about the same waiting period

before it's necessary to start writing the manuscript for the history of the 1950's. Advent tells me that the second volume can't be published until perhaps 1973, because of commitments on other manuscripts. I felt resentment at first to be shunted aside, then quickly realized that this is really best, after all. There still remain large amounts of research to be done on various matters, which would prevent completion of the manuscript for perhaps two years, even if I were told to work toward immediate publication. Concentrating on the fan history would kill for another two years or longer any hope of writing the novels that I've had plotted out mentally so long. Then there is the knowledge that the 1950's are still uncomfortably close to today's fandom. It'll be harder to write an acceptable book about that decade than about the period covered in All Our Yesterdays, because so many more fans from the more recent decade are still among us, and memories of the more recent happenings are fresher. By 1973 or thereabouts, it might be harder to spot my mistakes. Since this long interval before publication lies ahead, I hope to do things differently, or more precisely, to follow a revision of the procedure that I'd intended to carry out for the first volume. I hope to do a good many long articles for fanzines on various phases of the 1950's, covering much of the ground that Son of All Our Yesterdays will eventually work over. In this way, corrections and additional memories will presumably get published in fanzine letter columns, and will be available for incorporation in the later manuscript of the book. The plan will have the further advantage of preserving much of my labors, in case I should drop dead or gaffiate or become completely incoherent before the second volume gets published. Please, don't everyone ask at once for some of these articles. None of them will be ready until I've done more note-taking. Meanwhile, the Willis biography in Warhoon could be considered a sample of what I hope to turn out.

Only two things spoiled this year of fannish honors. One was inability to get to the St. Louis convention. I started feeling ill in mid-August, and decided at the last minute that while St. Louis is a fine place to visit, I wouldn't want to die there. As things turned out, I felt fairly good in Hagerstown during the Labor Day weekend and didn't start to get really sick until the middle of September. The other disappointment involves my failure to keep up with fannish obligations, particularly during the last part of the year. Up to early summer, I was falling behind on locs, correspondence, and similar matters at a seemly, moderate pace. But in the last months, I've been near panic from the galloping pileup of undone things. You can't imagine how it hurts to know that all these unpaid fannish debts are in and on the same desk that holds a Big Heart Award. Trying to be objective about it, I tell myself that fandom is now too big for anyone to do all the things that people expect him to do, and that there were many days this fall and early winter when I was physically unable to do anything more intellectual than take pills. But there's a large gray area in my conscience which I don't dare explore too minutely. It involves such questions as whether it was proper and right that I watched movies on television on some nights when I had a headache which fanac might have worsened severely and whether I should take some positive action like a form letter informing fans that I'm in too deep and must cut back, as a more ethical and honest form of behavior than this predestined losing battle to do the impossible.

The doctor says that low blood pressure and a misbehaving sinus are the principal causes of the health problems. He wants to do some body renovations which I haven't permitted as yet because he won't

guarantee its effectiveness. Moreover, he doesn't know about another physical malfunction or two, which I've decided to save for another occasion to complain about. I hope that I'm not blaming my body unfairly for much of the indolence and idleness that has reigned in 423 Summit Avenue of late. Maybe I'm finally getting tired of everything that I formerly loved. There are enough days when I rush around energetically, attacking problems and working at chores with the old-time enthusiasm, to convince me that it's sickness, not a real change in attitude and interests, that has been to blame.

Meanwhile, this was also the year of space travel's first big achievements. The second moon flight isn't completed as I type, and I hope that I don't jinx the returning astronauts by writing about it as successfully concluded before the splashdown. This one worried me almost as much as the first landing on the moon, because I kept wondering if the perfection of that first expedition was a thousand-in-one stroke of luck. The Eagle could have come down on a level, solid spot by accident and the next ten Apollos might crash in landing, or the limited length of the first moonwalk might have saved death from some unsuspected radiation or bacterial cause. The November flight was easier to follow, because I'd scheduled a week's vacation to permit giving full attention to it. Then I just couldn't give up the sleep needed to follow all the wee-hour procedures, while I was feeling so bad, and I ended up missing the only moments of color television from the moon's surface. Fortunately, I saw the entire telecast that followed the Apollo's escape from lunar orbit to return to earth and I found this unexpectedly impressive. To see the moon dwindle gradually over a span of a half-hour gave a sense of presence in space, a proof of travel through space, that hadn't come in quite the same way from any previous transmissions from space.

Even though it appears that these first two trips have provided no evidence of extra-terrestrial life, I'm still convinced that the moon has some important secrets to give up. Maybe something will be found the first time space travelers go several miles from the landing site. It's logical to assume that any bems in the neighborhood before the landing would be frightened far away by the impact of the touchdown. More logically, if there's any life on the moon, the surface is the only area of the moon where we shouldn't expect to find it. That life would be the kind that burrows deep into dust or lives in crevices or has somehow fashioned homes far below the surface, away from those stupendous temperature changes and unimpeded solar radiation and the meteorite menace. Even if nothing is found on or below the surface of the moon during the Apollo flights, I won't give up belief that there's evidence somewhere on the moon that we aren't alone in the universe. If Vegans flew to the moon 100,000 years ago, found nothing of interest, and left behind a small amount of litter, we'll find it eventually but it'll be a long while before we've explored enough of the moon's surface to have much chance of finding such evidence of bem visitors, by any law of probability.

And still the newspapers and broadcasters hammer away at the remarks by people who think that money spent on the space program is needed to solve problems like poverty and bigotry. I cannot comprehend why the space program, one of the minor manifestations of science from the standpoint of either money or manpower, should be segregated for this kind of criticism. Why shouldn't the criticism also center on astronomy courses in colleges, development of new kinds of aircraft, laser research, and a thousand other kinds of scientific ac-

tivities? At the risk of taking the same stand as Spiro Agnew, I believe in the existence of informal conspiracies by the media to take united stands on various matters, and the space program currently is in approximately the same situation as a supreme court nominee: something the administration is backing and therefore to be potshot at, in a time when the media are anti-administration.

Barring a miracle in the few remaining weeks, 1969 will end with me still in a condition of regular gainful employment. I remain steadfast in the decision to quit that regular job, and I continue to feel that the time has not yet come. The nestegg that I'd long ago considered necessary to giving up regular employment will finally be on hand in the first months of 1971, unless unexpected events intervene, and that is the current target date for quitting, subject to a fit of temper too great to be conquered between now and then. But in a lot of ways, this is the hardest single decision that I've ever faced. It's a decision that can really be made only once, there can be no effective later change of mind about the decision, and the wrong decision could mean years of misery from either the financial or mental standpoint. If I get out of Hagerstown newspaper work, nothing could ever persuade me to take newspaper work elsewhere, for the things to which I object are not peculiar to the press in Hagerstown. I'm too old to find any other kind of work at anything approaching my present salary. Inflation might arrive and put me into an impossible position, with no regular job. Or the eternity of eighteen years before retirement that now exists might shrink sharply if I stuck it out a while longer--it's not unlikely that social security rules will alter to get aging people out of jobs before they're 62 or 65 and the newspaper would probably be happy to change its retirement plan to coincide, since this would mean more workers at low starting salaries and fewer who'd built up wages by regular increases over the years. On the other hand, I was deeply impressed by a letter from the wife of a former fan who is even younger than I am and has managed to support himself, wife and two children on a modest retirement income. "Go ahead, Harry, it's easy!... Of course we do without a lot of frills and sometimes it would be nice to get something special without figuring up a way to do it without scrimping on something else...but it's rather nice to be a whole family at home together with no need to face the rat race every day. ... You'd be surprised how easy it is to live on a retirement income as long as you don't try the idiotic habit most people have of keeping ahead of the neighbors. Cheech! So, I hope you DO live up to your promise to yourself to retire soon. Life is too short to spend it doing something one does not enjoy."

There's the added problem that Hagerstown may soon become uninhabitable for a person of my disposition. It's getting bigger and bigger, more and more dilapidated, increasingly a prey to the promoters and real estate speculators and "planners". I grew up in a town where any destination was within walking distance, most of whose residents I knew by name or by face, where costs were reasonably low, in keeping with the low wage scales. Now some families move into Hagerstown and some other people move away almost every year, my feet start to hurt if I walk to the suburban shopping centers, and the Hagerstown dollar is almost identical with the United States dollar. The situation could become impossible if either of two predictions come true. There is a theory that the intersection of two interstate highways, 70 and 81, just outside Hagerstown will cause a giant industrial boom here because of new transportation advantages. And there's the be-

lief, carefully nourished by real estate men, that the Hagerstown area will soon be a suburb of the Baltimore-Washington metropolises, now that it's possible to drive to the edge of either city from here in an hour. This belief foresees tens of thousands of people with jobs around those big cities buying homes up here to be a little further from the riots and bombing targets. Farmland that once sold for a couple hundred dollars an acre now brings ten times as much, and speculators have driven the price of mountainside timberland up to fantastic levels as they urge people to buy while there's still time or for investment purposes. I have hopes that such horrible things will not be in Hagerstown's future. It seems much more likely that both the automobile and the large city will be growing obsolete in another decade or two. I still think about expatriating myself, knowing perfectly well that each month I wait, the smaller become my chances of making that break.

Meanwhile, 1969 produced a considerable change in my behavior on the job. I've abandoned completely the custom of being a good journalist, for reasons involving distortion of the things I write before they see print and rebellion against having been the only general duty reporter of events for the morning paper during three or four of the year's months. I've broken away from most of the non-reporting activities. I'm taking pictures for the newspaper on only the rarest of occasions because they don't seem to want local pictures and the equipment supplied for photographic purposes is entirely inadequate. By loud and prolonged screaming every time I'm asked to put out the paper, I've managed to break free of headline-writing and dummied chores except when there's a genuine emergency. I no longer work 40 hours most weeks, after averaging 46 to 50 hours during most of the weeks of the previous quarter-century and no compensation for overtime. I speak quite bluntly and frankly about the newspapers' failings to anyone who brings up the topic, and undoubtedly a lot of the opinions I express are getting back to the management. This fall, I topped off all these heresies by committing the ultimate act of defiance, reducing sharply my contribution to the United Fund. I sent the difference to UNICEF, without giving anyone at the office my reasons. They involve some wasteful procedures I've observed at member agencies, the fact that United Fund money has been used to establish in essence segregation in local swimming pools after a group of Uncle Toms was prodded into setting up an organization to run a pool in the former Negro school so that only token integration will be in effect at the YMCA pool. I get awake in the night sometimes, worrying over the new work patterns, despite the fact that I could goof off much worse than this for the next eighteen years and still not compensate for the undue time and effort and energy I put into the job during the first quarter-century I worked it. I didn't know whether to laugh or become hysterical when late in the year I was informed of a raise, which turned out to be the largest raise I've ever received, and retroactive to last May. The only comparable pay increase came after the abortive attempt to unionize the reporting staffs in Hagerstown, in which I'd been a ringleader, and the management somehow acquired the idea that I'd been anti-union and wanted to reward me for it.

So Hagerstown's newspaper purchasers didn't read this year about a lot of interesting things I heard about but didn't find the time or inclination to follow up. Not five miles from Hagerstown there's a building erected for freezing sick people until science can cure them

just like the plots in three out of every four novels of the future you'll find today on your paperback racks. I have directions on how to reach it (they chose so secluded a spot that you can't even drive closer than a quarter-mile to it), the name of the Washington, D.C., organization which sponsors it, the identity of the local man who has been working with this group, and I've been too apathetic to make the contacts and find out if they're actually in operation and how elaborate it is and whether it's the mainline sort of project or some derivative therefrom. The lowest temperature ever recorded in October here occurred this autumn, nobody else on the staff thought to write a story about the unusually chilly dawn, and I didn't volunteer my statistics to reveal the fact to the populace. The critical shortage of nursing home beds got even worse when financial difficulties forced the man to close down one just outside the business district of Hagerstown, and you won't find a word about this in the newspapers, either, because I seem to be the only journalist who heard about it and when I heard about it, I wanted to do less strenuous things than get a statement from him. I wrote a few paragraphs, deep in another story, about something that could become a national scandal if a yellow enough big city journalist should get hold of it. A technical-vocational high school was built with Appalachia funds here three years ago and now the school system is talking about abandoning it and getting federal money to build a replacement. This really isn't as awful as I've made it sound for the sake of illustration: the existing building is on the junior college campus, it could be converted to part of the junior college to take care of the mushrooming enrollment, thus saving an application for federal money to expand the junior college, and the school system would abandon it only in the paper sense of turning it over to a separate entity, the junior college trustees, who happen to be identical with the board of education. But you can imagine what could be done with this story, if key facts were glossed over and a few pictures of the Hagerstown slums were published. I should have Told All, to avoid future complications. Then there was the routine obituary involved in the death of a Hagerstown service man in Germany. Death came from an accident, the news item said. I have an odd feeling that if I dug deeply enough, it could turn into a very big news story. When the body came back, I asked the undertaker about the accident, and he, who normally will give as much grisly inside information as I want off the record, wouldn't talk. From friends and relatives of the soldier I learned that they had been startled to find his body blown up. He'd been a flat sort of fellow physically and after death he'd been made barrel-chested. Someone who knew the family managed to get to the body in the funeral home long enough to verify some things they'd suspected. Bones were not where they should be in some parts of the body. Gloves were pasted on his hands. There was every evidence that he'd been roundly crushed and the accident had been described as a fall down the stairs. Maybe there's an unsensational explanation for it: a filing cabinet might have fallen down the steps when he did and landed atop him. But he was in intelligence work and nobody could even find out for sure what building he'd fallen in.

Instead of bothering about such vocational matters, I've continued most of my other hobbies. Record collecting continues to be affected by my semi-boycott of new recordings because of the refusal of the American recording industry to let the people who prefer monaural discs purchase them. I've bought a few new stereo records, releases that I just can't imagine living without. But several lucky breaks

increased the mono resources of the collection during 1969. There was the day I found a new second-hand establishment in Hagerstown, and the immediate disappointment at discovering price scales far out of line. The union mission and Goodwill Industries stores never charge more than 15¢ for a paperback but the Odd Ball Shop wanted half the cover price for everything, even when it was a coverless copy. Any textbook, no matter how outdated or small, costs a dollar or more. The store was trying to sell an old atlas by the page, cut out any map you want and pay a dollar for it, and a few of the excruciatingly distorted 45 rpm albums of classical music Capitol issued when RCA Victor pushed that speed were available at original list price in battered condition. Then on my second visit I discovered several cartons full of lp's in a distant corner of the place, saw that they sold for 40¢ apiece, and found that nearly half of them were Camdens. This was Victor's cheap reissue brand that in the early-years of the lp era offered lp editions of vast amounts of the old 78 rpm releases. The series didn't sell particularly well, and survived only in the form of low-priced new recordings, mostly mood and background music, and the original catalog of classical releases became quite rare. Some of the Camden reissues later turned up at full lp price in the Victor Collectors Series and others were never reincarnated, and by now the stereo pogrom has driven almost all of them into limbo. I picked up dozens of discs I'd wanted and hadn't bought while they were in record stores. The store had a half-dozen or more copies of some discs, almost all looked unplayed, and I can't imagine where they came from unless a wholesaler had somehow mislaid them for the past fifteen years or so. Then a mailorder firm offered for some reason a large portion of the Desto catalog for less than a buck per disc and I bought extensively from the American music which this label reissued from a long-defunct subscription series. The discs will never be used to demonstrate high fidelity equipment but the sound quality is quite good enough for me, and most of the compositions are unavailable on other labels, works of composers who will eventually gain the respect, status, and performance frequency that have come for Ives.

I've made no attempt to equip myself to play any of the new forms in which tapes are being offered. Cassettes and cartridges are doubtlessly convenient and space-saving but I can't believe that they offer any real advantage over lp discs, if the music-lover has space enough for the bulk of a turntable. Instead of trying to make reel-to-reel tapes more convenient by such packaging, I would think that the recording industry would do better to adapt the lp record to challenge the only feature that reel-to-reel tapes can beat existing records at, uninterrupted stretches of music. A fourteen-inch record playing at perhaps .24 rpm would make it easy to put more than an hour of music on each side of the disc, eliminating side breaks in everything except the minutest fraction of long acts of operas. Nor have I finished upgrading my reproduction equipment, which I started to do four or five years ago and halted when I decided I wouldn't be a journalist much longer and should save all possible money. As long as Seraphim is keeping the flame of mono with those marvelous and numerous reissues, I may never feel the urge to get the FM tuner and good tape desk that are my principal remaining needs. A small table model radio gives sound quality in keeping with the quality of most FM programming that can be heard in Hagerstown, and my old, modestly priced Wollensak tape recorder is adequate for the use to which I normally put tape: recording and playing back stuff from the airwaves, like

Natalie Wood movie soundtracks.

In this cunning way, I have made a transition to the confession I've been dreading. Movies continue to increase their obsessive power over me. There is no sense in a man of my age, who has paid little attention to movies for almost all his life, suddenly allowing himself to go to pieces this way. But it has happened, and the greater horror consists in the fact that it isn't just one special manifestation of the film art that interests me. I've become in just a couple of terrible years wildly interested in art movies, silent movies, foreign films, today's Hollywood movies, the old films that appear on the surviving late shows, documentaries, everything, even unto irrelevant matters involving the life of this or that actor. By now I can tell you more about the deaths of Paul Bern and Virginia Rappe than about what happened in Room 770 at the Nolacon. It wouldn't be so bad, if this obsession didn't have such an enormous supply of time-consumers on which to feed. It takes three or four times as long to watch one movie as it does to read most fanzines. If I buy an 8 mm version of a film for myself, I want to see it over and over indefinitely. If I can't restrain myself in conversation and mention something about the movies, I'm usually doomed to an hour-long discussion since almost everyone has opinions on the movies; if I mention Richard Strauss or Joe B. Drapkin to the same person, I don't get nearly as much response. Somehow, I've forced myself not to invest in a video tape recorder, knowing that the existing machines are overpriced, primitive, and perhaps incompatible with what will be in use a few years in the future. But the temptation to invest is enormous when I contemplate the gradual decline of movie programming on television and the strong trend to show little except color films. It's quite possible that when I finally feel safe in making the purchase, most of the scenes I'd like to own will be unobtainable because the movies containing them are no longer deemed suitable for televising.

I can't imagine what has gotten into me. If I were interested only in old movies it would be easy to diagnose the trouble as nostalgia, but that isn't the case. I didn't meet a movie star or watch a film being produced, incidents that might have explained things if they'd incidented. Curiously, I've lost interest in live drama: the local little theater and college productions have struggled without my patronage for several years and I didn't go to the legitimate theatre on either of my last two expeditions to Philadelphia and New York. The only conceivable explanation that occurs to me is the fact that all this film fascination can be handled without much effort or thinking. I see movies by turning on the television set, the public library has lots of reading matter on the topic, and it's easier to use my 8 mm projector than to show 35 mm slides or get things set up for tape recording. The general lassitude and loss of energy to do difficult things which I've referred to previously could be seizing upon movies as something that takes up so much of my time that I've lost opportunity to do many more troublesome things.

But somehow I've managed to read some science fiction. The situation involving me and professional science fiction is an exaggerated version of the fannish activities: I'm far back. I keep reading paperbacks issued three or six or ten years ago, feeling that I really should catch up on these before I tackle the new stuff, and today's paperbacks are years old when I finally remember which ones I was determined to read. The only advantage that occurs to me from this situation is a kind of immediate nostalgia accompanying the first reading of many popular stories. The mind retains just enough

memory of all the reviews and discussions of a book over the years to provide a sort of self-deception, a sense that I'm reading for a second time a book that I first encountered so long ago that most details are forgotten. Of course, I have no apparent memory of whether I enjoyed the book on that non-existent first reading, so there's a tang of suspense to accompany the fake nostalgia. On the other hand, it really is quite a mystery, why I read fifty or more science fiction books and a few science fiction magazines every year. I don't really enjoy what I read enough to justify the time involved. Time after time, in the middle of almost any story, I ask myself what I'm doing with this fiction when there is so much non-fiction and such an enormous quantity of mundane fiction that I've always wanted to read. It is a puzzle that has several possible explanations. There could be a sense of duty, a feeling that it is imperative to have some knowledge of the professional matters discussed in many fanzines, or an instinctive belief that a person who messes around with science fiction fandom must suffer the consequences, by patronizing the literature which spawned his hobby. Or I might be greedy enough to believe that I actually will get those science fiction novels I keep talking about on genuine paper some day soon, a procedure that would require some knowledge of the way modern science fiction is written in the forefront of the subconscious. Somewhere I once backed the theory that we read science fiction for the sake of the minute percentage of great moments concealed in the overwhelming bulk of crud, much as the Forty-Niners went through months of the worst privations and roughest environment for the sake of the few minutes which provided them with a few pounds of gold. Even the best science fiction has awful faults that jump up and down before the eyes of any attentive reader, and mediocre science fiction is bad to an extent that wouldn't be allowed by publishers of any other kind of fiction and still we read it. I don't feel that I'm wasting time when I listen to music or take photographs or do anything else that I do because I want to. In short, I feel toward professional science fiction just as most fans eventually feel toward fandom, sooner or later, but I stick with the stories and the majority of fans gaffiate when they get the urge. What was the old proverb about the line between hate and love possessing the sharpness of a name brand razor?

One other factor might be the knowledge that I'm squandering a resource that I would have clutched eagerly to my bosom a few years back. Maryland's public libraries got together and decided to exchange diplomatic recognition to one another. Anyone who possesses a card enabling him to borrow books from any library in the state can use the same card to borrow books at any other library in Maryland, and books borrowed from this library may be returned to that library without causing any eyebrows behind the circulation desk to arch. It had been possible in the past to borrow books from Enoch Pratt, the Baltimore library, through the Hagerstown establishment, by filing requests at the local institution, but this involves mail delays and the Hagerstown library has no complete catalog of the Baltimore holdings. And here I am, a year later, without having taken advantage even once of the possibilities that this opens. My inability to breathe freely in Baltimore might have helped to discourage me, but it still seems like a waste of a very large quantity of excellent books. I don't even patronize the Hagerstown library often enough to have known immediately that it had formally ghettoized science fiction. It adopted a policy of marking on the spine of each science fiction book a large plus mark, and has a little sign up to notify everybody about this

policy. Nobody will tell me if it is done to help people find or avoid science fiction.

Time spent on a couple dozen science fiction novels really ought to have gone to doctoring this house and its surroundings. The property is even older than I am, and betrays its age nearly as obviously as I do. At the time of typing, I'm not yet certain whether a plumbing problem has been completely solved--the plumbing in this house, that is. An enormous water bill frightened me more than a month ago. I spent three weeks fighting city hall, because there were discrepancies in the readings on this and previous bills. By the time I discovered that there really was a leak despite the fact that the previous meter had gone bad some time before and had been replaced by a new meter which was accidentally started off on a high reading, and then located a plumber who was willing to make a house call, I was in the midst of my headache cycle and the course of events from then on is distorted in memory. The plumber blamed an unmentionable feature of the bathroom as the cause of the problem, put in a new piece of machinery, and refused to return after his surgery created a new and very plain constant noise of running water. This noise has since stopped and I don't know if all is well or it's all a nightmare. The furnace also drove me close to thermal undergarments for several weeks in November. An absolutely mad repairman did not help things any. I never knew how impressively large sparks can be drawn from control boxes of oil burners, until I watched him at work or, more likely, showing off. The unceasing battle against the awesome proliferation of nature in the back yard was fairly successful this year, principally through the help of neighbors who did most of the work in return for small payment plus the privilege of keeping the kids' larger toys under the overhang of my back porch and storing some junk in the lower floor of the garages at the end of the yard. But their services did not extend to the alley side of the garages, and as I watched helplessly during the summer, vines that had previously been quite unaggressive trapped that side of the garages in an unbreakable embrace. Fortunately, no cars were trapped inside. The garages were constructed when cars were shorter. Now only compact cars can be maneuvered into the garages, for lack of alley width, and the people around here who own compact cars can't afford to pay me three bucks a month. Up to this point--unberufen--1969 has not resulted in another breaking and entering by squirrels. But I fear it is just a matter of time. Squirrels are incredibly numerous in the entire neighborhood, they are constantly running around the roofs of all the houses in search of pigeon eggs, and it is really quite nervewracking, awaiting the resumption of trouble. I've actually been losing sleep over it on some mornings when they wake me soon after dawn and I lie awake trying to figure out whether they're atop or inside the attic. During my growing attainment of complete miserliness, my sole remaining extravagance has been to continue the contract with the exterminator. It seems like a sinful waste, to write a monthly check for a half-hour visit by an exterminator. But it will mean a better chance for quick help if the squirrels do break in again, it will mean no extra fee for emergency calls, and meanwhile it's nice to have almost total freedom from bugs. I used to find one cockroach monthly in this house, summer and winter, and now one shows up at approximately six-month intervals. Some ground was lost briefly during the summer when one large and lively hornet appeared in the house each day, with awful regularity, but I spotted a crevice which was apparently inviting them to enter the walls, and plugged it.

The house needs an exterior paint job in the worst imaginable way, but I put it off in the spring until fall and then felt entirely too bad in the fall to cope with painters who wouldn't believe the true fact that I haven't been able to get some of the windows open since the last time it was painted. The place looks shabby but maybe it is a little less likely to be burglarized or given a higher assessment with such an Appalachian appearance. House painters and a bachelor's way of living are incompatible, one reason why I dread the ordeal almost as much as I hate to think of the expense involved. It is sinful to waste a week's vacation to stay home and keep an eye on painters and it is foolhardy to leave them alone in the house. One made off with an excellent pair of binoculars the last time the work was done.

The neighborhood continues to change, as most of the remaining permanent residents die off. Two went this fall. Mr. Bowers was listed in the published obituaries as being in his nineties, but I have my doubts about that. I first knew him in 1943, long before I moved down the street from his home. At that time he looked awfully old and feeble, as he puttered around the courthouse where he earned a token salary for doing little, in recognition of long years of more strenuous duties. Later I ran across a picture of him taken with other county officials who were in office at the start of the 1930's, and he looked immensely ancient, at least 80, at that time. He'd been bedridden for many years, and physicians were keeping him alive by cutting off limbs and other areas at regular intervals; there couldn't have been much left of him at the end, but that much must have been awfully old. Just last week the old gentleman who lived in the apartment house nextdoor died and this could mean major trouble for me soon. His widow probably won't stay there, it's an exceptionally large apartment, and I fear a family with several children. Even two more children will cause this block to pass the saturation point for the small fry and might make it totally uninhabitable for a person with my habits.

I don't dislike children, I get along with them as well as any adult does, but I feel that I'm being hypocritical when I turn the other cheek and don't get after them for all the harmless but annoying things. My auto's mirror outside the front passenger seat is awfully hard to adjust to just the right angle because you can't reach it while sitting in the spot from which you'll be using its reflection, and when a ten-year-old turns it around each morning to make sure she is properly groomed before going to visit her friend across the street I sense an even stronger link with the destiny of W.C. Fields. It doesn't hurt the house in the least for a small boy to practice soccer kicks or his slider off its side, but the noise can complicate needlessly the rhythm of a Beethoven string quartet. And over and beyond direct nuisances by specific children in the neighborhood, I feel more and more that it's unfair for my life as an adult to be circumscribed in so many ways by the nation's children en masse, and there's undoubtedly some interaction in my psyche between the few and the many. I resent deeply the fact that television offerings up to 10 p.m. or thereabout are deprived of certain attributes because large quantities of children are watching, and it's annoying that Saturday morning should be so sacred to kids' cartoons, because that would be an ideal watching time for me. I find it somehow wrong that I should be helpless from the retaliation standpoint when two children sit down on either side of me at a lunch counter and devote their energies to kicking me. It's probably stinginess,

rather than reason, which causes me to feel that a very substantial portion of my income is wrongly taken from me to educate other folks' children. I know how inseparable free public education is from the good of the nation and the world and yet when I calculate how many hundreds of my dollars go each year to a purpose which gave me little benefit (most of my education was at a parochial school) and probably won't be useful in the future unless I start breeding very late in life, I wonder. Surely the original necessity for free public education was the fact that this was so largely an agricultural nation, with a large proportion of the population raising and making on the farm most of the essentials of life instead of purchasing them. Under those circumstances, hardly anyone except the rich could have possibly paid tuition. But today--and again I emphasize my awareness that this is the miser's voice--I wonder if part of the public education bill shouldn't be paid by the parents, if the parents are above the poverty level? The enormous rise in the cost of schools must be harder on the low-income people through direct and indirect tax obligations than on the rich. There might be less tendency for kids to goof off during classes if they knew that the old man was shelling out a few dollars a month for these studies. The birth rate might decline somewhat, if parents realized that a third or fourth child would start to run up their bills for school quite high a half-dozen years from now. Most important of all, tuition demands on parents might lead to demands by parents for sweeping changes in education to bring down costs. I'm convinced that the present system of putting thirty or so kids in a classroom is a hopeless compromise, that gives neither the opportunity for individualized instruction that a lower pupil-to-teacher ratio would provide, nor the economies that would result by more general use of teaching machines and modern testing methods. One thing seems to be certain: it is flatly impossible for the present increase in the cost of schools to continue much longer solely through taxes.

But as I said, I'm two-faced enough to hide from kids the portion of my sentiments that finds them repressive and unduly expensive to non-parents. On the other hand, in the course of 1969 I took the serious step of dropping most of my mask at the office. I got tired of treating equally the co-employees whom I like and those whom I detest. I started to have as little as possible to do with the latter group, to state flatly my opinion of things they did when it was a choice between that action and persiflage, to speak to them only when necessity demanded, and to put on temper displays on several occasions when someone broke the typewriter I use at the office or left my desk covered with a quarter-inch layer of rubber cement. I am sure that some people in Hagerstown think that I've become crabby and mean in my old age but I consider it a form of honesty that I should have adopted long ago. It might help to get me fired, but that would be mostly an advantage, since it would end all this shilly-shallying over when I should resign. I am treating the executives as I'm treating the working class at the newspaper, you see. I seem to be getting along as well as before with people everywhere else in Hagerstown and I find it necessary to use much less hypocrisy to retain good relations with them. And I think I really have justification for feeling contempt for a lot of the people with whom I work: thefts of things left on my desk, intercepted mail for no cause whatsoever, rewriting of passages in stories into absolute lies for not a single sane reason that I can find, individuals who smoke constantly and yet refuse to work in an office where air conditioners

are in operation, favoritism on the part of management toward anyone from another city and, preferably, another state, either as employe or as subject for news, and worst of all the kids who arrive fresh out of college where they switched to journalism for the sake of getting graduated when the issue was in grave peril, and now feel themselves immensely superior in intellect, morals and experience to every resident of this city and county. I know the limitations of public officials and store managers and the town drunk quite well, but I can't bear to hear these people libeled for the wrong reasons in the kids' conversations, then written inaccurately about, and refused the courtesy of a straight correction the next day. An example was a recent election in a nearby small town. One of the journalistic hot-shots decided that the town officials had violated the law with respect to advertising the names of candidates and the exact format of the ballot, wrote a long story to that effect despite failure to find anyone else who would confirm this theory, and discovered after the story was in print that the press had confused the law's provisions for towns that use paper ballots and those that use voting machines. What should have been a straightforward correction notice, admitting a journalistic goof, was not published, and instead someone wrote an apparent news story about the coming election in which the true facts about the law's provisions were unobtrusively inserted. I can't be comradely with that kind of journalists.

I mentioned quite a few pages back that Hagerstown is growing more brutal. The best illustration of the trend that came to my attention this year is not a crucial matter, but it seems important to me. It's the growing tendency for drivers to disregard the law--almost all motorists, not just the tough young punks and the elderly women. It's almost a ritual now for the car nearest the corner to go on through the intersection after the traffic signal has changed from green to red. Drivers who cut across private property to avoid stop lights are creating an enormous problem. One shopping center was forced to put in a complex of obstructions that remind me of World War Two's tank traps to keep through traffic off its parking lot, and a state hospital just outside town must make expensive alterations in its driveway because of speeding by drivers with other destinations. Least dangerous but most annoying to me is the growing tendency for drivers who must halt at an intersection to pull across the pedestrian's walking area and stop only when the front bumper will just barely be cleared by traffic on the intersecting street. I don't know if there is any logical psychology behind this practice. It might be an offhand hope that this will bluff the other guy into halting and yielding the right of way he possesses. But it's hard on my nerves, knowing that a slight relaxation of a foot on the brake pedal could cause someone to gouge out the side of my car as I'm passing the intersection. Worse, it puts pedestrians into a real mess, and I do a lot of walking. If you walk in front of the encroaching car, you're liable to be struck by moving traffic, and if you wait until traffic begins to move on the street you're trying to cross, you may have a long wait and you'll be in a dubious position legally if you get hit. I know that these practices aren't unique to Hagerstown, but I've looked quite closely on visits to other cities, big and small, and I have never found one where it goes on as regularly as in Hagerstown.

This might have something to do with my increasing reluctance to drive. I still have the car that I acquired in used condition in early 1962, but I begin to suspect that it's not going to hold up as well as I'd hoped when I made the investment. The engine began to

complain in loud and piteous manner a few months ago and the repair shop gave me a \$125 estimate on repairs. The man was reluctant to take that much money from me for a vehicle of such an age, and I took his advice and had nothing done. It will keep running for a while, no matter how bad it sounds, he said, there is a certain loss of power which won't affect a person who doesn't drive far or fast, and policemen understand that old Oldsmobiles are noisy, he said, so I probably won't be picked up for disturbing the peace. My first car, which I also acquired from a used car lot, gave me 11 1/2 years of service until the awful evening when it flatly refused to go up the steep alley which provides egress from the newspaper parking lot. I now doubt that this current car will keep going that long, although in all fairness, my present car hasn't had the advantage of being in a garage almost every night. Maybe it'll run another year or two before a complete breakdown or unavoidable high-cost repairs, and I rather doubt that I'll replace it. Between bumming rides with people, calling a cab when I can't get a lift, and renting a car for real big trips to points unvisited by buses, I could save several hundred dollars a year and regain some of the healthy, firm tone to my nerves. Please don't suggest that I should acquire a compact car for economical operation and long period of use. I'm psychologically unfitted to occupy them after some of the things I've seen after one of those small cars encountered a big car. Meanwhile, there is the small problem of what to do about the tires, which are quite old and smooth. It seems extravagant to buy new ones that might be used only six months or so and I'd hate to die in a crash caused by retreads which I'd assumed would be adequate for the short remaining life of the car. I can't even decide whether to call a halt to the manner in which lights are going out all over the car. It's surprising, how many little lights can become defective without affecting the legal operation of a car but it's also a trifle unnerving to be uncertain after dark if I'm really guessing right when I move the lever which governs reverse, low gear, neutral, and so on, and with the dome light cut, I keep wondering if someone has dumped a body in the rear seat, whose lower area is wrapped in obscurity. One other thing really ought to be considered: the outside chance that a carless person will soon be as helpless in Hagerstown as he is in Los Angeles. Intra-city bus service is poor and the operator of this service has threatened to abandon it if he can't get subsidized by the local or federal government. Inter-city bus service is fairly good but it's less frequent than it was before the interstate highways tempted Greyhound to bypass the city on some runs. If times should grow so bad around here that patronage to and from this city falls off, it's imaginable that runs would be cut to perhaps one daily in each direction to surrounding metropolitan areas. The airport is too small for large planes to land and take off, can't be expected because it's surrounded by roads and factories, and it survives only through a one-man operation that provides commuter service to airports around Baltimore and Washington. I'd hate to spend the rest of my life in Hagerstown simply because I didn't get out in time, so I might make it a one-way ticket if I decide to go to the Boston convention by bus or bus-plus-train.

I've come this far in 1969 without losing to the year any more of my small surviving stock of immediate relatives. One great-uncle died earlier in the year, but I didn't feel much emotion about that, because I'd somehow acquired the impression that his death had occurred about twenty years ago and had written him off ever since. I

retain an unlimited sense of wonder at my grandmother, who is now 97 and seems more alert mentally and somewhat steadier physically than at any time in recent years. (One of my first memories as a small boy is listening sadly to her daughters talking among themselves on the rapidity with which my grandmother was failing after her husband's death, and how they couldn't hope to have her with them much longer, now that she was in her sixties.) She is still living by herself, does everything around the house except the heavier part of the laundry and the areas of housecleaning that involve hauling the Electrolux around, and complains of nothing physical except when her feet hurt. She is now starting to talk about flying to Michigan for a visit to one of her two surviving children, apparently thinking that she might prefer to live with that one, in case she becomes too incapacitated to keep going it alone. I'm probably in slightly better condition from the standpoint of muscles, it's undoubtedly a tossup as to which of us is more alert mentally, and I'm sure that she leads by a wide margin in respect to who has the greater keenness for life and enjoyment of the moment. But most of my remaining aunts and uncles are ailing in one way or another. One fell off a ladder and like to broke his neck and now isn't allowed to drive a car any more, after amazing San Diego's motor vehicle authorities by passing his reexamination for his driver's license so easily in his eighties. The disturbing thing about my family, after the basic problem of its meagerness, is the way most of my cousins fell upon sad days as if a curse were operative which I'll encounter inexorably very soon. Two died around my present age, both from cancer. Two others have been in and out of mental institutions, after having had particularly brilliant adolescence and young adulthood as apparently perfect persons. One male cousin got into gambling trouble just like all the heroes in 19th century Russian novels, losing all his possessions, wife, home and job in the process, and is now working at some menial drudgery with no future and no money to tempt him into resuming his vice. It's difficult to see where my cousins could have inherited these problems, because their parents and grandparents didn't suffer from the same troubles. A second cousin is worse off yet, because in his mid-40's he has been declared medically senile, is receiving social security benefits for total disability, and seems to have no chance of checking some rare physical problem that has turned him into an old man thirty years before that condition was due.

Unless something drastic is happening without my knowledge, I suppose that this cousindom taint is evidenced in me through the miserliness that I've referred to somewhere else in this undefinable piece of prose. I don't think I've ever told in Horizons how it came first to my full attention. It was a couple of days after I'd landed in the hospital with my first broken hip. I was full of morphine to deaden the pain, had been getting intravenous feeding, was convinced that everyone who breaks his hip gets pneumonia on the third day, and I still wasn't accustomed to the traction in which I had been installed or certain that my surgeon hadn't missed the mark when he'd put a pin in my shin instead of in the hip. In mid-morning a nurse who was trying to think of a humane way to lessen my miseries asked if I'd like some ginger ale. The suggestion was the first sensible one I'd heard since I'd entered the hospital, I decided that this was the most understanding woman in the world and possibly meant for me, I could foresee myself holding something on my stomach for the first time in two days, and I refused the ginger ale because I didn't intend to start running up my hospital bill on luxuries. Even

after the job-quitting decision caused me to cut down again on spending, I never quite matched that feat. (I was in the hospital nearly two weeks when I learned that it doesn't bill patients for every little bit of room service and the ginger ale tasted just fine after that.) But I occasionally display a flash of inspiration in the money-awareness category. For instance, my last stencil film wore out after a few pages of this issue of Horizons were cut and when I tested Saran Wrap as a replacement, I found myself tense and nervous in anxiety to know whether it would be necessary to use up a piece of the stuff for every stencil. Great was the rejoicing when it became evident that one piece will survive for many stencils, although it still isn't ideal--a trifle too slippery, making it hard to get a stencil covered with it through the tight squeeze between platen and rollers. Does anyone in fandom know of a slightly thicker, pulpier substitute? I also found myself this year paying bills in cash and in person instead of writing checks. I can write as many checks as I wish without paying a bank fee, under a minimum balance account, so it's the six cent postage stamps that caused the change. I enjoy the walks and I don't take checks because it would mean an occasional doubtful look from a cashier. I've refrained from using any of the credit cards that have come unsolicited, because of the thought that I might someday, somehow, be unable to pay immediately my monthly statement of account, and would the following month find an interest charge imposed on that unpaid balance. I would find myself impossible to live with, because of this outlandish penury, if it weren't confined to little things. When I decide I want something expensive, I buy it, and find it easier to write a check for several hundred dollars than to put down the four cents involved in sales tax on a small purchase at the drug store. Then again, there's the portion of my closet reserved for long-sleeved shirts that can be worn only on warm days because their sleeves are badly torn and I can't bear to throw them out so I wear them only when I won't freeze with the sleeves rolled up, but that's another story altogether.

Meanwhile, as I type the start of another decade is just days away and its imminence is frightening. I know that I haven't changed as much as the world has changed in the 1960's, creating part of my present problems, and it's quite probable that survival during the 1970's will intensify this disparity for me. I find it totally impossible to imagine myself on the brink of 1980. I can't even begin to guess about my probable circumstances, outlook, and philosophy if I pull through another decade. To the man up the street I might not seem much different in behavior today than I did in 1959, FAPA members might regard me as a similarly unchanging monolith, but I know the differences and conceivably they'll become apparent one of these years just as an egg abruptly loses its calm way of living when it hatches. I thought about writing an article such as this about the past decade instead of the past year, and then chickened out. Looking hard at the entire ten years might tell me more about the future than I want to know and could reveal more about the past than FAPA would believe.

Please erase the marginal note you have just made about my erroneous notion of when a decade begins. I'm quite aware of what the computers believe but I haven't met anyone yet who was cheated out of a year in the segmenting of his life by accepting years ending in 0 as those that start a decade, nor have I found a fan who had enough courage of his convictions to demand that the house in his block which has a number ending in 00 should be moved across the street.

The Worst of Martin

Here Today and...

...being a cumulative historical document covering our hero's past and more recent ramifications....

Modulate to a "Winkle" yawn.

What! 1945! Why the last time any agitation issued from me was during 1939. Today must be my Groundhog Day.

Those cobwebs? Well, there may be telling strands on my aj mail, but there air't no gray threads on me--'ceptin' in my hair. But that's a saga to be related....

True! That is an unenviable stack of musty smelling unanswered mail. Made an estimate some months ago: 78 letters from 52 members. Tanned with age they are, and forever forgotten. Got away from me for a week once. The mounting stack fascinated me. Never tried to put a dent in it.

No! It's not gray. That's dust on the press. It's really painted green. I built the stand myself. It's thrown together with the craftsmanship of a cabinet maker. I lapped the joints and dives, screwed, tattoed and stewed it in varnish. Sturdy little thing. I do admit that during the past fiscal year (silent press days) there has been a decrease in the number of disturbances on the local seismograph.

Feel how smooth the finish.

See how sturdy?

Ah!

Termites, no doubt.

Let's place the press on that bench and dash off a petit papier for Auld Lang Syne.

This is my type barrel. Type is kept in a barrel to faciliate distribution.

I've prosecuted the compilation of a format with disturbing irregularity before this: complete a page or two and then toss the entire mess out. The prose work comes easy during "spare" hours. Maybe I'd better mimeograph?

Admitted! For one who used to print like Hell to become Hell of a printer and mimeograph is truly retrogression. Ah! But then, after the die is caste, I have many and involved explanations....

It is written that the associations will substitute the word "Mimeograph" for "Press" in their cognomens. Grim my grin: I shall grit my last two teeth and not contribute to this deplorable dusk.

Colophon

being a spasmodic and vernal avocational embroidery of facts, dreams and aberrations of one Edgar Allan Martin: printed for him at the signe of the Lycanthrophy Presse (who necessitates new rollers and such) and Crushed Wood Cuts, at 56 Newton St., Hartford, Conn., where the latch string was purged with formal invitations: and this editione could not be sans the Devil assistance of one wife, Mary Madeleine Suzanne LeFoll Favreau who approximates an eighteenth of a ton and a quarter-century, and shews cheering abilities as type distributor... and Janine--Janine spreads ink.

Post Script

Ah! So true!..type distributor...But then "Hello." Self introduction of the cause, the reason, the what-all. My fault that it has been so long since a contribution from said Edgar A.

S'been nice meeting you all, so-long.--Madeleine.

(From the Spring, 1945, issue of Satyric, in Spring, 1945 mailing)