

Is this the fan club was no dead - not against postmailings in Birdsmith #1? Vol 1 #2

BIRDSMITH

Vol. 1

No. 2

Published solely for members of that sterling organization known throughout the world, wherever cultured people congregate, solely as FAPA. This is published for the 64th mailing by a member of the aforesaid organization, one Vernon L. McCain, Esquire (or at least that's what a package I recently received from Britain called me. Mimeography is done by one Shelby Vick out of his sheer respect and affection for McCain, not to mention McCain's money. Also, Shelby may or may not have attached some screed of his own to the front, back, or in-betweenst of this. I draw the line only at cutting the stencils in two to include your own comments, Shel. [Noted.]

WITH BACKTURNED GLANCE+++++

+++++at the 63rd mailing
BIRPAN KAMIKAZE--I quote from the masthead "It's Eney's fault."

BIRDSMITH--I knew that when I composed as I went and typed rapidly I tended to make a good many errors but this sets a new high. Most appear relatively harmless and decipherable; a few are rather amusing. But I would like to apologize to John Wayne and Randolph Scott, if either read the last FAPA mailing, for having said they appeared to be 'real mean' when the phrase should have been 'real men'. Also, in case anyone is wondering how I could possibly expand my record collection as rapidly as I indicated buying an average of only six LP's a month is fully justified in their suspicions. How I ever arrived at that peculiar figure is a complete mystery to me. Actually, twice that amount (although still in the same proportions, is my minimum and I frequently run over.

CHAPTER - PLAY--Is it rank heresy for me to say that most accounts of people's dens I find unusually boring? Perhaps it is because I haven't one of my own. Incidentally, when the fourth and final issue of WASTEBASKET makes its long-delayed appearance (in the next mailing I hope) it will carry what I believe is the second of these articles (counting from the time they were actually written). Since the writer of this one was a slightly insane Irishman, however, it proved more amusing than most of the rest. =====
=====I hate to disillusion you, Bob, but the only thing I recall ever finding in that spot was that copy of ASTONISHING. Could be there were other items too mundane to remember but I'm sure I'd have remembered had I come across any of the items which you obviously feel belonged there. No discarded falsies, ^{no}shopworn white balloons, not even any sheer underwear.

FANTASMITH--Hard to see why this innocuous Bradbury interview raised such a fuss.

FLOP--Might I suggest suspension of the numbers in your reviews. There are layouts which are easy and inviting to read. There are others which are just layouts (hmm, I wonder if that is the plural) and one has to exert a certain amount of effort to read. HORIZONS is a good example. But your layout has such a strong negative effect that one has to force oneself to read it and the effect is directly tracable to those numbers. Not sure what it reminds me of but whatever it is the effect isn't good.=====One interesting thing about the Mary Ford record which comes out as the Mills Brothers when played at 33 r.p.m. is that the Mills Brothers themselves once had a hit record of "Tiger Rag" around 20 years ago when they were still the

*are they actually discarded
would have or about too heavy, Vernon*

four Mills Brothers instead of the three Mills Brothers plus their father, as now. When I was around five I used to pedal barefooted on my tricycle up and down the sidewalk and up to the corner, as far as I was allowed to go, chanting at the top of my lungs "Hm-mm-mm! Ha wa shah! Hm-mm-mm! Ha wa shah" until I finally aroused my family's curiosity. I explained it was a song that was sung all the time over the radio. My folks were no more enlightened than before until one day I identified it for them on the radio and it proved to be merely the Mills Brothers singing "Hold that ti-ger!" Perhaps they can be forgiven for being a bit sloppy on their diction since this was back when most of the quartet spent the majority of their time pretending they were some musical instrument or another.

ELFIN--As one whose agnosticism probably stems more from acute and distressing boredom at omnipresent religion I can think of nothing more revolting than collecting Bibles. If you must collect couldn't you pick something mildly respectably like French Postcards?

GROTESQUE--Wish these fanzines of the future would be suspended until someone comes along who's willing to put the sort of thought and effort into extrapolation which distinguished Heinlein's Future History. Unless one can make a tour de force out of this sort of thing (like SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY) it should be left alone. Nothing so dismal as a brilliant idea which misfires.

HALLUCIANATIONS--Damn nice mimeoing here. I bet E. Everett Evans, and possibly others in FAFA, could top you on that business of percentage of their lives spent reading fantasy. Percentages are tricky things. At 23 you have in 19 years of fantasy reading in, or just a trifle over four-fifths of your life. Thus a person of 60 or over could have waited clear until he was 10 before he started and still be well ahead of you on a percentage basis. Come around again in forty years and you'll have a far better claim to the title.=====Know it isn't illegal but isn't it a bit questionable to lift things out of the papers and reprint without giving credit. number of your 'IDLE THOTS' I recall reading previously in a column in the PORTLAND OREGONIAN entitled "Senator Soaper Says" which I presume is syndicated throughout the country for use under various titles.=====Don't see how could be cheaper to check LP's out of a library and record on tape. Last time I investigated both tape and wire were more expensive, per minute of playing time, than a similar total on LP. Of course you can use the tape over and over but if you're planning to erase the selections this is only 'borrowing from the library' on a larger scale. You don't really 'have' the recordings, in the permanent sense. I plan to eventually indulge in a good deal of tape recording but it will be either items I can't get on discs, want only temporarily, or as a sorting mechanism, i.e. I have practically all the old Louis Armstrong OK's but they are hopelessly jumbled among various LP's and EP's, some issued by Columbia, others by bootleg labels. Some I have as many as three times. To straighten this out I intend eventually to take them chronologically, starting with the first one (one of the few I don't have as yet, incidentally) and take the best recording I have of each (quality is frequently substandard on bootleg records and varies quite a bit even among them) and transfer to tape. I may do the same in other cases but none of them are as aggravated as the Armstrong situation. But it won't be an economy measure. Or do you have access to some sort of extra-cheap tape?

HORIZONS--You found Gertrude's article about me frightening? I found yours about the UWF even more so. As in the case I previously mentioned one can know in the abstract about these things but it doesn't bother you much until you have some personal contact. And this account of yours is the first time someone I've felt pretty well acquainted with has recounted such experiences. Sounds like a badly written Cleve Cartmill story in its complete abandonment of logical processes of thinking for unbelievable illogic.

IRUSABEN--Personally I found the cover on #2 FANTASY FICTION to be about the most attractive ever used on any sf or fantasy magazine.

LA VIE EN FANDOM --Just one trouble with imitating Willis, Terry, is that you aren't WAW. Walt is one of those rare people who can make anything, no matter how trivial or dull, come alive. And if you'll re-examine his diary you'll find he picked out several days of unusual interest which happened to occur consecutively for his one and only excursion into diary format. If all these varied publications mean you are searching for a FAPA format might I just suggest you use your column in PEON as a model. The only time imitation works well is when one imitates himself and this is far and away the most attractive thing I've yet seen you do. It should be fairly easy to expand and adapt your methods used on the column to a FAPazine.

LARK--Don't know how a mag as enjoyable and stimulating as this can fail to inspire garrulous me to so much as one comment but there it is.

LIGHT--Personally I consider BEYOND an only slightly fancitized version of GALAXY. This isn't bad but neither is it anything remotely approaching the quality one associates with UNKNOWN. The second issue of FANTASY FICTION wasn't in the same category with #1 as an UNK reincarnation but I still rate it way ahead of any other current magazine. Wish it were on a regular schedule.===Must disagree with you. I'm on record as thinking Phil Farmer is a pretty poor writer and "The Lovers" the most painfully overrated story since Hubbard quit writing but Farmer has written one story I did enjoy (even tho it embodied some of his faults) and that was "Mother".
=====Saw my first W.C.Fields movie only a few months ago (he was before my time as a regular movie attendee). 'Twas "My Little Chickadee" which was also the first picture in which I ever saw Mae West. Picture was shown at a theatre which customarily features arty foreign films or revivals but I must say I found both Fields and West, especially the latter, quite a let-down from their reputations as clever comics. Fields was mildly amusing, but only mildly. As for Mae West, either she is so subtle that she operates beyond my intellectual depth or else she is about the most obvious and un-amusing screen star since Donald Duck. I realize it is not considered good form to praise any comic until several years after he has died or retired but, while I don't care too much for his pictures, I must say that for sheer mastery of the art of throwing away a line I can't think of anyone of screen-dom, past or present, who could top Clifton Webb. Bet he will be a prime favorite of FAPans twenty years hence.

LOOKING BACKWARD--As long as you are putting out several standard sized mags why not also enlarge this so it wouldn't be so hard to read and always getting lost among the other mags.

MOONSHINE--I tried for years to get hold of "Brave New World". Couldn't find it in a library or even buy it in a bookshop. Didn't finally read it till this winter. Personally I consider it to be one of the only two fine novels to ever stem from the science-fiction field. Other would be "Four-Sided Triangle". This doesn't mean I consider these the best stories. That honor is reserved for "Needle" (and "What Mad Universe" and "The Dreaming Jewels" if you call them sf). Personally, I couldn't see that "Brave New World" was anything like the 1984-ish horror it has always been painted. True, I wouldn't care to live in that kind of civilization but on the other hand, I wouldn't much care to live in the one we have right now if I had any choice in the matter. And the two do have some things in common. Anyway, the Utopia in "Brave New World" was such a benevolent one compared to those common in sf nowadays, and since it not only did have the people's welfare quite genuinely at heart and even appeared to make most of them happy, I actually found it a rather pleasant picture of a possible future society.

POLAROID DIARY--This is the Hoffman of yore. The lazy, musing, and inconsequential individual whom I found so tremendously intriguing when 'he' first came on the fan scene three years ago. Then came a back injury and the Hoffman who climbed out of that bed was a different person, someone who was just emerging as a BIG-name fan and influence and who from then on was always trying just a little too hard. This is the old Hoffman and I'm glad to have 'him' back. If this is what being inactive does for you, Lee, don't ever become active again. Stay a perennial ex-fan like Laney.....well, maybe not exactly like Laney.

PRIMAL--My pet peeve is people who carelessly link the Names 'Nixon' and 'McCarthy' together. Will you please tell me one thing the two have in common except that both are technically Republicans, both were simultaneously Senators for two years and Nixon actually did, in a fairly unobtrusive manner, what McCarthy has been claiming he was doing ever since, in inch high headlines?

SKY HOOK--"Letter to a Fan in 1958" prompts the comment 'wish I'd thot of that.'-----I shudder every time I see one of those F&SF endorsements by Guy Lombardo or Sammy Kaye. I suspect Boucher knows far less about popular music than he does about operas or he wouldn't be running endorsements by people who themselves produce a proct on a cultural level with the Palmer-Browne pulp AMAZING's.....(I decided part of that was unfair.... please delete the word Palmer from the last sentence. As far as I know neither Lombardo or Kaye have ever indulged in musical fakery; they've just honestly served up what is in the worst possible taste for years since they know this is what the public wants.-----You'll be missed as O.E., Redd. Since I don't yet know who will be taking your place I can safely say that I strongly doubt that he (or she) will give us the same quality service.-----Speer himself provides the answer to his own arguments here.

As he says, increasing perfectionism tends to make a persons efforts more and more infrequent until one is no longer in fandom. The normal ~~fan~~ must make a living or go to school and fan in his spare time just cannot produce both quantity and quality (speaking relatively, of course). And let's face it, a great deal of the kick from fandom comes from egoboo. And it goes much more readily to the person who produced a great deal of mediocre stuff than to the peffectionist who produces one really fine item each year. How many present day fans would recognize the name D.R.Smith for example. Sure there are the exceptions like Walt Willis who need nothing

more than a first draft. And there's Redd Boggs whose secret for combining quantity output and activity with perfectionism I'd like to steal. But for us ordinary mortals the choice must be made. When I entered fandom I had the habit of writing a first draft of every letter and then revising it in a second and final typing. And I'll admit to being proud of the result. I felt, and still feel, I wrote good letters. But I hadn't been in fandom three months when I found this practice had to be jettisoned. Had I continued it I should have had to give up all non-fannish activities except my job, or remain forever on the outskirts of fandom. I continued to rewrite anything planned for publication, for a while, but I soon found this was unnecessary and too time-consuming also. Time is my scarcest commodity and the results in polishing, impressive as they may be, don't repay me for the time spent. After all, why kid ourselves, fanzines are amateur publications, published and written by and for amateurs. If we want polished writing we wouldn't read fanzines in the first place..... not when there are libraries full of the greatest writing in history available to us all. No matter how much we polish there are few of us (I'd say none, but remember Ray Bradbury used to be a fan) who could ever bring our work up to a similar level of writing quality. Basically in fanzines we are exchanging ideas.....ideas that usually have no place in ordinary publications. And a first draft usually gets the idea across almost as well as succeeding ones. I'd like to rewrite each article and each fanzine contribution a couple of times before it sees print. I'd like to rewrite each letter at least once. I'd like to dummy my fanzines and carefully use correction fluid on each strikeover. If each day had 100 hours and life were paced to match I would do so. As it is, my writing sees print in its first crude form and my fanzines are designed for the ultimate in simplicity and ease of production. Perfectionism is alluring but that way lies the road out of fandom. Maybe that would be a good thing and I'll not argue that probably we all will get there eventually but when I abdicate from fandom I wish it to be voluntary, not because I've so over-perfected my products (as Bob Johnson did ORB) that there is no longer a place for them or me in fandom. This doesn't mean that there is never any place for perfectionism in fandom where I'm concerned. I expect the fourth issue of WASTEBASKET to be rather sad compared to #2 and #3 but if and when WASTEBASKET is ever reincarnated under another title I intend to lavish all the care on it that I did before.....but it probably won't appear more often than annually.=====To avoid distributing type was our biggest single reason for buying a linotype. If we'd only known.....===== "Communism does work"? Depends upon what you mean by Communism. Marxian Communism seems to have flopped pretty dismally when it has been given a chance. The form of collectivist imperialism with strong capitalistic overtones which masquerades under the name of Communism in Russia and Yugoslavia today appears to work after a fashion. Just how well would be hard to say. Not well by our standards, but then results of our brand of capitalism, when applied in other parts of the world have not produced the standard of living we associate with it.=====How come do people who live in the same town write you letters?

SOMA--Reminds me of a mundane ayjayzine. Beautiful in appearance but nothing within.

STAR ROVER--"Dear Madelaine:" weeps for inclusion in some subzine. I howled over this until the people in the next hotel room must have thought I was a werewolf who'd forgotten to unlock his door before the change. This is probably the funniest thing I have ever read in any fanzine, whether a fanzine or sub. Surprisingly, like last years bester humorous piece "Redd Boggs,

Superfan", this appeared first in an apazine.

TARGET: FAPA!--This is the most un-Eneyish Eney-zine I've yet seen. (Rhyme unintentional. Readable both in text and mimeography. The sober constructive element perhaps can be simultaneously be brilliant and witty, perhaps, but how many brilliant and witty people ever bother being constructive and sober where something like fandom which exists solely for the fun of it is concerned.----Any red-blooded fan would prefer Hoffman or Mahaffey? Can't we be more original than that? After all, when it reaches the point where a girl can't move two steps at any time of the day without making eight other fans move simultaneously then the whole thing is getting a bit ludicrous. At least that's what I saw happen at the NORWESCON with Mahaffey (admittedly a terrific dish) and reportedly Hoffman is submitted to the same. Of course if there were enough luscious young femme-fen to go around that would be another matter. But that would be the millenium, I fear.

UNASKED OPINION--Do you actually find the processes of birth so revolting that the title "A Womb With a View" strikes you as being indecent and offensive? And, even so, can you see anything objectionable to taking Hubbard's theories of the busy little foetus curled up storing all the memories of his parent's acts being poked fun at under that rather obvious title (so obvious in fact that two other people who had no access to WASTEBASKET later used the identical term in kidding Hubbard). Birth being a normal process I, personally, can see nothing repulsive about it and thus find it as good a subject for fun-poking as anything else.

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 "Timbuktu, and Tyler too!
 =====

Wanted -- Membership in the JARS

I freely admit to being a person of slightly peculiar tastes. And, being a hedonist at heart I like to pander to these tastes. However, since they are unusual, this sometimes becomes difficult. For instance, I read science fiction regularly for over five years and only once in that space of time encountered anyone else who took it seriously enough to read it regularly.....and he confined himself to one magazine. Having something one enjoys very much and being unable to communicate that enthusiasm to other sympathetic ears can be a most frustrating experience.

As mentioned in the last issue of BIRDSMITH I am also a jazz enthusiast. This isn't quite so rare. Even now, being a jazz devotee is still considerably more acceptable and respected than being a science fiction fan. I run into people who are interested and informed on the subject; I even have a brother-in-law who is very much a fan of pre-1940 jazz. But it still tends to be lonesome work....especially under my present circumstances. When I was living at Eugene there were several jazz-conscious individuals who lacked the will and/or finances to compile their own collections who would frequently drop in to browse through my collection.

But, while I can keep an amount of discussion re stf with various people going via my correspondence, FAPA, and subzines while I am on the road, I have no such outlet for my jazz interests. I am even denied, for the most part, the passive art of listening to a disc jockey who spins the type music I enjoy. The jazz jockeys seem to have gradually disappeared and the art of multi-dubbing now reigns throughout the kilocycles. About the only program which features jazz which can be picked up in these parts is Jimmy Lyons over KGO. Once a six-night show it is now confined to Friday's and

Saturday's. One of Lyon's sponsors is a San Francisco music house which, among other things, is the local distributor for Mercury records. Mercury is most active of all labels, at present, in issuing jazz but most of it is tasteless tepid stuff. However, praise flowing freely from his lips, Lyons plays about six Mercury records to five of all other labels. Here the situation isn't much better. The other records are confined to local groups such as Dave Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan (luckily these two happen to be the best two modern groups currently around), people who are appearing in San Francisco soon, and particular favorites of Lyons, chiefly Sarah Vaughan and Woody Herman. Lyons used to work for the latter. Result is a hodgepodge of indifferent modernism. Since this is a school of jazz for which I have only limited sympathy it doesn't appeal tremendously to me. When, on very rare occasions, Lyons does play something more than six months old he always picks an item which has just been reissued, presumably since his sponsor would have it in stock and thus be able to make a sale if anyone wants it. This program is definitely designed for one primary purpose and that is selling records, not entertainment. There are a lot of old records by favorites of mine which I don't own and which I'd enjoy hearing over the air but these Lyons never plays, only new or reissued stuff which I doubtless already have bought myself if it's anything I care for.

The other jockeys around here are no better. Only other even semi-regular one is a guy in Seattle on KING who considers himself a blood-brother of Lyons in that they have almost identical tastes and he even managed to also come up with a sponsorship by the local Mercury distributor so his program sounds like a replay of Lyons.

As a jazz collector I realize there are many more of the breed scattered around the country, although the largest concentration is in the East. And for every collector of bop there are ten who collect dixie. (As I explained in the last issue I fall in between the two extremes) This is for two reasons. The average jazz collector is older than the average jazz enthusiast and has been around longer. He tends to be more conservative in his tastes and thus clings to the older styles. Also the older records are scarcer and thus are a more enticing lure to a collector. (This is a rule which holds true in any type of collecting. Ask Coswal.)

Thus the radio shows, featuring the most easily available records for the most part, are just the opposite of what the collector would enjoy.

So why can't the jazz collectors band together in the same sort of fraternity as science fiction fans? There is a great deal of similarity between the two interests. Well, the answer is they have, to a certain extent. But unlike sf fans they haven't much in common except this one interest. It may sound like a cliché, but the one thing jazz collectors have in common is their liking to listen to jazz and collect jazz records. One jazz enthusiast is apt to find another pretty boring in other respects.

This also happens among sf fans but much less frequently. Jazz fanzines would be pretty silly and futile since they would have to resemble the effusions of the organs put out by the fan clubs organized around some personality like a crooner or baseball star. Hero worship is neither very stimulating nor entertaining, except to the hero involved. Unlike sf which stimulates a host of little-related side activities and thus gives fandom a life of its own, jazz fans can have only one legitimate outlet and that is in producing jazz. The logical way to do this is to produce their own, but it is far more difficult to become a good amateur musician than to become a good amateur writer. And if good enough they would be jazz musicians, not collectors. Someone once remarked, with considerable insight that all jazz collectors are frustrated musicians.

This has not completely stymied the collector in his production of music. In the late 30's when old jazz records were considered unsalable the jazz

collectors spearheaded a movement similar to what the sfans did with their publishing houses a decade later. I believe the Commodore Music Shop was first. They purchased the rights to reissue, on the Commodore label, famous and scarce old records owned by the majors. The majors were canny though and, in line with their dog-in-the-manger roll refused to completely sell rights to what they had treated for years as utterly worthless. The same procedure was followed by the United Hot Clubs of America on the UHCA label and the Hot Record Society with the HCS label. As in the sf field the big boys soon moved in, however. As soon as it became obvious that there was a market for old jazz records the majors quit releasing rights to these old sides. Fortunately, they did enter upon a limited reissue program of their own.

Many jazz collectors, like the sfans, then started their own labels and contacted the musicians direct, recording new items. Again this stimulated the majors into fresh efforts in the jazz field.

Recently a somewhat less admirable, but still welcome practice from the collectors viewpoint, arose. This stemmed from a legal peculiarity that no musical performance can be copyrighted. The practice was not completely new but previously it had been chiefly confined to putting out bootleg copies of big popular hits. Several jazz collectors decided to dub from old 78's onto tape, and from there to LP, scarce old jazz records which had been long unavailable in any form and probably would never be available on long-playing records. The best of these was a label aptly titled Jolly Roger.

I doubt if any collector wasted too much sympathy on the major companies who were making such fabulous profits from Rosemary Clooney and Perry Como that they couldn't be bothered making these priceless old performances available. The artists involved are another matter and it is a definite black mark against the bootleggers that no attempt was made by any of them to make even token payments to these people whose work was being sold. The songs themselves, however, are protected by copyright and most of the bootleggers saw to it they paid royalties to the publishers. Dante Balletino of Jolly Roger was an exception, and lived to regret it.

Columbia, which has the largest jazz catalog of any label, by far, launched the counter-attack, in collaboration with Louis Armstrong, now a Decca artist. Balletino, who, unlike most bootleggers, operated openly, was sued by Columbia for invasion of property rights and by Armstrong for unauthorized use of his name and picture (ironically, under the law, Armstrong could not sue for unauthorized use of his voice or trumpet, however). The suit was won fairly easily and as a special punitive measure Balletino was slapped with a penalty payment of triple royalties to music publishers whom he had been ignoring. This was chiefly to discourage other bootleggers from moving in. The second biggest outfit, Jazz Panorama, who had been paying royalties to publishers was in a much more secure position but voluntarily went out of business when the Jolly Roger suit was lost. Columbia had launched a tremendous reissue program to try to swamp the bootleggers, and since winning the suit, the program seems to have dried up in a suspicious manner. Jolly Roger had issued seven LP's of Armstrong alone. Columbia countered with four 12" LP's from the same period (although most of the selections used were different). This was followed by a four volume set of Bessie Smith and a three volume Bix Beiderbecke set. Next on the list was to be a four-volume Fletcher Henderson issue and four volumes of Mildred Bailey but it has been over a year since the Beiderbecke records appeared simultaneously with their successful court decision over Jolly Roger, and all is quiet from the Columbia front.

Bootlegging is not completely dead but it now is done on a much smaller and more furtive scale.

However, all the things mentioned above, all the devices by which the jazz collector has become active in his field represent abandoning his amateur status and turning professional, even the bootlegging is a form of professional activity. And I have no particular desire to make my living as an adjunct of the jazz field, in any way. I'd have no strenuous objections if the opportunity were placed in my lap to have a profession associated with something I enjoy so much but I have no real desire to abandon my amateur status. What I am looking for is a form of activity as distinctively amateur in this field as fandom is in relation to sf.

And since FAPA seems the most rewarding endeavor in fandom, so how could a similar organization work in the jazz field?

Well, as I pointed out jazz fanzines would have to be confined to hero-worshipping and obscure points of historical interest. Besides I doubt if many jazz fans have the taste and/or ability for writing which seems prevalent amongst sf-addicts.

And, after all, why fool with the printed word, anyway? Sf is predominantly a form of printed fiction so it is only natural that the amateur corollary involves writing and publishing predominantly. But jazz, as in all other forms of music, even those which carry their life in manuscript form, is basically an aural art. You may, if you're a rarity, read it in manuscript form or read about it in magazines dealing with music. But for the most part you listen to it, and to a lesser extent, discuss it. Both of these deal primarily with sound so what is more natural than to make this amateur organization one which deals with the recorded word or music, not with the printed effort.

A few years ago Shelby Vick tried to start a fanzine and organization called WIREZ. It failed for several reasons, one being Shelby's attempt (through reasons of economy) to follow the chain-letter principle. The biggest reason, however, was that a recording medium does not basically suit itself to an avocation which is chiefly appreciated through the eyes.

However, I think Shelby's idea, with a number of changes, could be adapted in another field. Hence, the title of this piece. I would, indeed, very much like to have membership in the JARS, which has nothing whatsoever to do with Mr. Kerr's product, but instead is the jazz equivalent of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. JARS, of course, stands for the Jazz Amateur Recording Society.

Now that such an idea has been born let's see in what respects it would differ from FAPA, besides the obvious one that you listen to it rather than read it. First the membership must be smaller. I don't know how long the average FAPAn takes to read his mailing but I get through mine in one heavy evening of concentrated reading, each time. This involves a bit of skimming where some of the duller magazines are concerned, of course. I found to my sorrow in my early fan days when I was trying to correspond with various people by wire that skimming is very difficult if not impossible in this medium. And all of my correspondents had a depressing habit of putting on some record or radio program when they ran out of ideas rather than taking the sensible method of turning off the machine until they thought of something further to say. Without exception, these recorded interludes were things to which I would never voluntarily submit when tuning my own radio.

I would judge I probably spend five or six hours reading the FAPA mailing. But a 15 minute spool would normally be the minimum for any JARS member, obviously, while for something really worthwhile most would use at least a half-hour spool each time. The old standbys would probably be contemptuous of anything less than an hour and there would be a

few Hoffman and Boggs types who would fill the mailing with three or four different spools each time. For this reason I should say the SAPS limit of 35 members would be much more realistic for this type of society than the FAPA setup. In fact, it might be more practical to limit membership to 20 or even 15. At any rate, no matter how circumscribed the membership is, it becomes obvious that no one is going to be able to work completely through a mailing in one night. More probably it would be spread over a period of two or three weeks, or even longer. Even if some mechanical genius rigs up his taperecorder to run faster, I doubt if he'd enjoy hearing the music playing at a higher pitch much.

Oh yes, how is all this recorded? On tape, naturally. As indicated in recent FAPA discussions tape is definitely superior to wire and discs aren't even in the running in this sort of thing, for myriad reasons.

Since I don't yet own a taperecorder myself, I can't say just how the speed problem would be handled. Obviously some sort of standardization is necessary. I know at least three different speeds are used in tape recording and as far as I know all recorders are not geared to handle each. Some sort of standardization would obviously be necessary.....probably on the middle speed which is, I believe, $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet per second. There is also the problem of Twin-Tracks recorders.

The chain-letter setup used in WIREZ is doomed from the start. Here FAPA and SAPS must be imitated. There must be a separate and identical copy of each tape for each member. Here we run into one of our most difficult problems. How does one go about making 15 to 35 copies of the same tape? Actually that's not as tough as it sounds. True, most people don't indulge in the luxury of more than one taperecorder, but neither does the average person keep a mimeograph around the house. But the new fan, especially if he joins an apa usually winds up as the proud possessor of a mimeograph or some similar machine which cost more than \$100 when new. I've investigated and been unable to find any second-hand tape recorders. None seem to have filtered through yet, but they will eventually.

However, while the multi-recording problem can be solved (in two possible ways.....(1) having the member record from one master tape to another recorder for each roll, slow but adequate or (2) having the club chip in and buy a professional machine for transferring from a master tape to many others at the same time. This would be kept in the possession of the O-E, of course, and each member would mail in his master tape, together with the proper number of blank tapes or else money for the O-E to purchase the slave tapes) there is another item which must inevitably require that our JARS member must be somewhat more prosperous than the average FAPAN. One can produce a FAPAZine, given the basic materials, for ~~xxx~~ a moderate sum. I suspect \$10 to \$25 is the average. But recording tape is far more expensive than mimeograph paper and I imagine a typical JARS issue would run between \$50 to \$100 per person, even allowing for only 15 members. When you add this to the price of one or more tape recorders it makes a somewhat more expensive hobby than FAPA. We have a number of high school students in FAPA. Few of them could afford membership in JARS. However, since we are primarily interested in record collectors, most of whom sink far more than this into their hobby, this is not an insuperable obstacle.

How to equalize the expense is the biggest problem. Actually when one considers that each tape can be reused over and over there is no apparent reason why anything more than the initial cost of your recorders and first issue should be necessary. After that you simply take the tapes you have received, in the last mailing, record over top of them and send to the O-E.

The only expense would be for postage and dues. Unfortunately, it wouldn't work out that way. How many FAPA mailings have as many magazines as there are members? Thus when our hopeful young JARS member went to make up his

second issue he'd find himself quite a bit shy of the number of required tapes. Now we must deal with deadwood. Despite G.M. Carr this isn't a very serious problem in FAPA. But in JARS it would be a measure hazard. Even a person without the slightest interest in jazz could accumulate quite a large amount of valuable tape which could be reused in other ways at no expense to himself other than his initial dues if he joined and stayed in a year without contributing anything, providing we followed FAPA regulations. There are a number of ways around this, none of them too good. You could find the average amount of a years mailings and make each individual deposit that amount which would be forfeited if he dropped from the club. The second year he might have to cough up an additional amount if he was contributing less than average and this would be redistributed among the more active members to reimburse them for the extra tapes they'd sent him. I'm afraid this would make the club even more of a rich man's hobby and completely impractical. Or you could set a requirements making it mandatory that each person contribute to each mailing. But how would you enforce it? The only way I can think of would be by dropping them whenever they failed, and that would quickly deplete the membership. And that would entail making each tape the same length as all others. It seems to me that the super-productive ones should be allowed to do so if they wish but that it isn't fair to make them shoulder the entire expense. And one of the chief delights of FAPA is the freedom allowed by it. Perhaps the best plan would be to allow the O-E to bill each person for the amount of tape being mailed him and delay the mailing until the amount is received. Credit would be allowed for the amount of tape each person sends in in his own contribution and also for blank tape which the less active members might send in from time to time. This would tend to equalize things all around but would make for a tremendous amount of bookkeeping on the part of the O-E. And there would have to be some provision for dropping a person if they didn't pay up within 30 days of receiving their notice, or some such deadline.

Probably because of the factor of it taking longer to absorb the mailings, each mailing would go out every four months instead of every three in FAPA.

Alright, assuming all difficulties have been met we come to the really interesting portion. What is going to be on the tapes? Well, since this is the Jazz ARS which we are discussing, the rather obvious answer is jazz. However, it is as impossible to define jazz as science fiction....no one agrees on just where either starts or stops....and besides this society is in imitation of FAPA, so obviously we'll allow tremendous latitude. In fact, as in FAPA, the obvious step is to allow them to fill their tapes in any way they choose.

This in some cases will doubtless result in tapes where there is no music, whatsoever, but devoted entirely to the member in question gabbing about anything he chooses, lecturing on some fine point, or rereading some article which did not have general publication. While I could be wrong, I don't think you'd be bucking copyright trouble here, as you would in FAPA if you chose to reprint it. Some tapes would be strictly music; others would be about half and half. But I suspect that most tapes would be mostly music interspersed with a little chit-chat about the pieces involved and whatever the member thought interesting, rather like the way a radio announcer does. In fact, what it adds up to, is each fan his own disc-jockey just as fapa makes each fan his own publisher and editor, allowing much more freedom than any prozine, or in this case, any radio station.

Since, as noted, jazz fans have much less in common than stf fans I suspect the tapes would stick much closer to the subject of jazz than our fapazines do to stf and fantasy. Not that there wouldn't be wanderings

afield. But I suspect they'd be rarer. For instance, I doubt if any jazz fan would include a discussion of science fiction in his tape, as I am including a discussion of jazz here in my fapazine.

Partly the society would exist for sociability, discussion, exchange of ideas, etc. However, the basic idea and the goal for which everyone would hope would be the inclusion on tape of some rare jazz work which is absolutely unavailable in the stores. Few, if any, jazz collectors have collections so complete that there aren't a few items they'd sell their souls for. And most of us have four records we want to obtain for everyone we own. Of course, there are stf collectors like Coswal who obtain magazines they never look into. They want them for possession's sake only, as part of the collection. And there are jazz collectors who are interested chiefly in having the original disc, no reissue or later version wanted. But most of us are primarily interested in the music and it is for these that JARS would be designed. Except that it might possibly be less convenient for playing, we'd just as soon have it on tape as on disc, no matter what speed, so long as the music is the same, note for note. For us, each JARS mailing would be a delightful storebag of mysteries, each handful of which may yield up unbelievably precious treasures. True, most of it will fall into one of three categories --- what we already have, what makes pleasant listening, but isn't worth keeping, and what we just plain don't like. But there's always a chance the next spool may have a clear as crystal recording of that legendary record for which you've been searching for years.

Naturally, all tapes received would be the property of the member so he could retain what he chose. But with the expense of replacing so many tapes I should imagine there would be few members who would save and store every JARS mailing, as I understand many FAPans and SAPS do.

Taking FAPA experience as a guide I think it would be interesting to speculate as to the type of member JARS would have. They'd doubtless vary greatly. There doubtless would be the Laney type (of ACOLYTE, not insurgent, fame) who has been collecting jazz for many years and has a good many priceless items which he would include, a bit at a time, with great nonchalance. There would be the Boggs perfectionist type, who would spend endless hours slaving over his tape recorder, cutting and splicing, until he had produced some sort of symphonic medley dubbed from numerous three minute pressings. There would be the old-timer who was one of the founding fathers of the club and a rabid jazz enthusiast who later became disillusioned but stubbornly stuck to the club, sneering at all the innocents who still share his former passion and including nothing but Hindemith and Bartok on his own tapes. There would be the high school kid, who has two cheap fifth hand recorders neither of which will maintain proper speed and who invested his summer's savings in a membership. This kid is in love with the idea of JARS but hasn't bothered in getting the fundamental knowledge of jazz which is necessary. Having sunk his all into a JARS membership, he hasn't the money to start a record collection, much less purchase old scarce items. So he uses whatever comes to hand. His first few tapes are filled with scratchy nine-year old records by the Andrews Sisters, Al Jolson, and the like. He's heard these referred to by his grandmother as 'that awful jazzy music' and they are definitely 'old' (after all, he was just starting to school when his folks bought them) so the JARS members should be delighted at his providing them with these 'scarce old items'. The members will gnash their teeth in silent frustration and suffer through it. After all, their rules allow them to do nothing about it and who has authority to say the Andrews Sisters don't sing jazz? Besides, a number of them will remember they themselves didn't do too much better when they started. And certainly the youngster isn't hopeless. After a few mailings he'll begin to get wise and even develop a little taste. He may switch to recent Tommy Downey

and old Glenn Miller sides. It won't be too long before he's bubbling joyously with discovery of the Benny Goodman 1935-1938 band and reprising records of it from some LP album. All the others will already have it in their collection but they'll remember back to their own discovery and reflect the youngster is learning. By the time his 30 months is up he'll probably have discovered Bix, or Dizzy, or someone else who's never been a commercial success. He'll probably be out of college before he can afford full-scale collection but if he's done a bit of judicious pruning from his JARS tapes he's already got a nucleus of scarce and wondrous things to build on, although he has to be careful and not take too much since he must pay for the tape to replace it. Then we'll have the Purdue type who discovered jazz in its infancy (perhaps I'd better explain here that with the exception of Laney I'm not accusing any one of having the views about jazz indicated by their names but am only translating their apparent views about sf into another field) and swears that nothing worth listening to was recorded after 1935. He even feels Fletcher Henderson departed a bit too far from the straight and narrow by playing arranged jazz. There'll be the Carr type who has her own ideas about the proper way to prepare a type and gets quite disturbed when her methods aren't universally adopted, the Searles/Bradley type who is unhappy about the discovery that all jazz lyrics were not designed for lullabies and makes dire threats about calling in the postmaster only to retire in haste at encountering universal opposition. There'll be the Bing Crosby fan who insists because Crosby started out as a jazz vocalist with jazz outfits everything the groaner has ever done is grist for the mill. One thing you can be sure of....all his tapes will be Crosby until the criticism gets too heavy. Then there'll be the hotshot from New York (also occasionally encountered in Los Angeles and other large cities). This kid has plenty of leisure and spends most of his time hanging out in jazz joints generally making a nuisance of himself to the musicians. He brags in JARS about his friendship with them, bludgeons some of them into saying a few words for the microphone and tries unsuccessfully to get them to make verboten non-union recordings for his JARS tapes. There'll be the cafe owner or radio station owner who does have some pull with the musicians and does come up with something recorded expressly for him occasionally.....the radio fan who records everything remotely jazz-like from his radio and manages to secure some succulent and otherwise unobtainable morsels from live pickups.....the avid JARS member who gets a job with one of the major labels precisely for the purpose of sneaking down into the files with his tape recorder to record the dust-gathering masters of some long ago session which left a few sides never publicly issues. These probably will be consumed more avidly than anything else.....the patronizers of bootleggers (like myself) who manage to get unusual and horribly recorded items to pass on.....but for the most part they would be the scarce early records. Programming would vary from member to member. Some might try to pace it like a radio program. Others will grab whatever is handiest. Others will try to pick representative and scarce items from an artists career. Myself, I think I should try to take one artist, start with his first record and play everything he made. This of course would take a long time in most cases so I'd have to probably include about four full hour tapes in every mailing if I hoped to ever conclude my project.

Why did I pick jazz as the subject of this recording society? Well, obviously because I am quite fond of jazz and because it was the lack of same that inspired this idea. Why not a general recording society that would include everything and everyone? Well, why is FAPA the Fantasy Amateur Press Association? Because of a mutuality of interests and a special type personality are required.

How about classical music? Yes, I'm also fond of classical music. However, I am not yet an aficionado in that field. And, while I realize many of the finest performances are on 78's, as Danner remarked in this mailing, I can't really get excited over the matter. To me, classical recorded music more or less started with the advent of the LP and there is such a fabulous storehouse of treasure available in new or reissued LP's of which I'll never be able to buy more than a fraction that I can't really worry my head about those clumsy old 78's.

There are other disadvantages to the classical collecting recording society, I believe. So many of the works are so much longer that they would take an entire tape to themselves. Where here is the chance for programming, interspersing of spoken comment, and all the other devices by which one's personality is impressed on ones contribution and acquaintance and camaraderie are built up. If one is to just have musical selections thrown at one, some of doubtful worth, why not set up a commercial body to select items with a professional critic to do the selecting and not worry about effort oneself. Also I could never be too attracted to such a society since I know full well half the members would crowd their tapes full of opera excerpts.

No, you can join the Amateur Recorders of Classics if you wish. I can see where it has possibilities.....chiefly in capturing outstanding radio performances. I'll stick to JARS.

Not that I have any idea that it will ever come into existence. Frankly I doubt the practicality of the whole idea. But I consider it a very nice daydream, a subject for a FAPA article, and it would be a nice group to belong to if it were already in existence. But then I don't even own one tape recorder at the moment. Just a beat-up old wire recorder.

Incidentally, FAPAns might be interested to know that I once contemplated a one-shot for FAPA which would have been recorded. Owning a wire recorder and planning to buy tape recorders in the near future (which I haven't yet done) I also contemplated buying a disc recorder for special uses and to complete the set. Most disc recorders will record both 78 and 33, some microgroove and I understand some also record 45's. Then came the big idea. Despite what one member had said about his lack of sound reproducing equipment I found it impossible to believe that any FAPAN (save possibly for those in Korea) wouldn't have access to some type of recorder or phonograph. So my idea was to make a master tape of items I thought would be of unusual interest to sf fans and then circularize each member requesting to know if he had access to a tape recorder, or (2) wire recorder, or (3) LP phonograph or (4) 45 phonograph or (5th and least desirable) old-fashioned 78. Upon his reply I would have then dubbed him a personal copy on whichever he had which was highest on the list. I thought of sending out as a regular part of the mailing but decided sorting would be too hard on Boggs and besides this isn't strictly speaking within FAPA's rules. Contents would have been the same but the copies were not identical. So I figured I'd postmail. Well, I never got all those recorders so the idea fell through. Anyway probably a number of FAPAns would have failed to respond. However, had I done it, I wonder how Coswal or any future historian would have recorded my 'method of reproduction'.

/...dunno about 'method of reproduction'. Vernon, but if you insisted on collecting tapes instead of books, and listening to tapes instead of reading, I can foresee one unpleasant aspect: pretty soon everybody would be referring to you as a 'tapeworm'.../