

#11 Autumn 1955 #11  
BIRDSMITH is published and edited by Vernon L. McCain  
908 Walker  
Wenatchee, Washington

111A. special embossed copper necklace which you will always treasure containing picture of Bloch....smiling. \$7.50

111B. hand-stitched, illuminated, motto (no home should be without one) with legend reading BLOCH IS THE ONLY TRUE GHOD. Take down those out-of-date "Home Sweet Home" and "Think, Snile" signs and replace it with this. Your choice of colors: comes in red, blue, pink and morning-after green. \$17550

111C. authentic wood bracelet with special mottos printed on the outside. Your choice, "Bloch is the only true Ghod", "Pickle Bloch for Posterity", or "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier". \$10.00

112A. lucky charm necklace of specially matched (empty) peanut shells with a divine tooth from Bloch's own mouth in the center. \$750.00

112B. flawless reproduction of painting of Bloch in mid-air (during assumption, it is assumed) complete with wings, halo, and beer stein. \$150.00

112C. miniature replica of legendary poker hand played by Bloch which revealed to His right-hand angel, by symbolic means, his imminent thrusting into outer darkness. (this angel now known as arch-fiend Tuckifer). Fits on charm bracelet

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item 112C. described on preceding page priced at. \$1.00

113A. special all-metal certificate of contribution to fund  
for preservation of Robert Bloch with YOUR name spelled  
out in genuine imitation artificial simulated rubies.

\$47.50

113B. for the ladies. special half-inch nosering which glows  
in the dark spelling out "Bloch is the only true Ghod."  
Surprise your boy-friend when he turns out the light and  
starts to kiss you.

\$17.25

113C. authentic oriental rug woven from hair-combings from the  
head of Bloch himself. (These are limited. Only one to  
a customer.)

\$50,000.00

Don't delay. Act today. Supply is limited and may not last. You  
don't want to be too late and be unable to display your special Bloch  
novelty to all the neighbors. They'll be so-o-o-o jealous. Why not  
buy in bulk and save? Special rates when you order by the dozen.  
You'll find items listed above suitable for every member of the family  
and they also make ideal birthday gifts for friends, anniversary remem-  
brances for your wife, and presents for that special couple who will soon  
be making it legal when their final divorce decree comes through.

All the above lovely selections are available from either Weyauwega or  
this publication but we suggest you order them all from us. Bloch, being  
divine, can survive without sustenance or the wherewithal to purchase  
same, but his humble servant is not so blessed so needs the proceeds  
more badly. We guarantee to mail all orders within seventy-five years  
of receipt (enclose \$25 wrapping fee with each order, please). Postage  
is paid by us!

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BIRDSMITH IS A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ROBERT  
BLOCH.

My aunt doesn't believe in mincing words but her tongue is so sharp she  
can't avoid it.

BIRDSMITH'S SPECIAL "TOMORROW WE DIE" DEPT.

from BIRDSMITH #10 (quoting yours truly) August, 1955 issue.

"...it wouldn't surprise me to see a full symphony squeezed onto  
a seven-inch disc within my lifetime."

from a story in the Sep. 24, 1955 issue of BILLBOARD describing a new  
Columbia phonograph designed for use in autos and available at \$80 with  
all 1956 Chryslers. (new record spins at 16-2/3 rpm).

"Columbia is providing a package of six seven-inch discs to be  
be marketed with the player by Chrysler dealers. Each holds up

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to 45 minutes of music and one hour of speech on a side, altho the average (for music) will be about 25 to 30 minutes. Groove width is only one-third the dimension of ordinary microgroove, but special design of the playing arm is said to keep it from bouncing out of the grooves while the car is in motion.

While performance of the phono and disk is said to be entirely adequate within the acoustic framework of a car, restricted frequency etched on the disk would prove unsatisfactory in the home."

Notice, they said 45 minutes per side!

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When I sleep and dream of Marilyn Monroe  
Then awake just to find I'm mistaken,  
I know Aristotle was right, when he said  
"It's a great life if you don't waken".  
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### 1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

CHOOOG--The best Hoffmannzine since the one-befere-last (or was it the one before that?). Anyway, it is.///I rarely seem to read anything worth recommending but I was lucky this summer. Stumbled across several good books in a row (some urchin had left them on my doorstep). There's a book published several years ago, for instance, called "Catcher in the Rye" by I don't remember who (J.D. Salinger?). I liked it. And just before that I picked up one you've probably never heard of called "Grapes of Wrath" by some unknown author. I recommend it very highly. Gee, just think, maybe I can be like Alexander Woolcott and discover a book and get everybody to read it and the author will make lots of royalties and I'll get famous and it might even be made into a movie. It is a good story. Don't know why I avoided it so many years. Also liked, though on a somewhat lower plane than these two, one of the most enjoyably harrowing novels I've read in a long time....."The Time of the Fire". Again the author's name eludes me. But if you hurry you still might find a 35¢ paper-back edition on your newsstands. You can tell it by the pretty red and yellow flames all over the cover.///And if movies don't nauseate you too much I also recommend quite highly a film called "Mr. Roberts". From what I've heard of the play I assume the movie is extremely expurgated but since I'd neither seen or read the play or novel the movie didn't suffer by comparison. It's the only movie I've seen this year I enjoyed without reservations. They're getting rarer and rarer....good movies, that is.

DELETER--all these theories about the bad wicked men who worm their ways into positions of influence, seize power, and proceed to rule tyrannically in opposition to the wishes of 95% of the populace have one flaw in common, and you did question that, although I don't think you placed as much emphasis on it as it deserves. It reminds me of a conversation I had with a close relative of mine about 15 months ago. We were discussing the Russian situation and I was advancing the theory that from the standpoint of the U.S. the best possible thing would be if a certain Russian leader were to gain power since available reports ~~xxx~~ seemed to indicate he was a very lukewarm Communist but a very ardent nationalist and it was my feeling that the best interests of Russia are not served by the devotion of the Communist party to the ideals of international Communism at the expense of any individual sovereign nation, even Russia itself. I



felt if this man ever once attained supreme power Communism might take a back-seat and, while Russia might still be rapacious, it would be a much more practical nation, one which could be dealt with and we might even be able to resume a cautious type of peace, once more. (All this was about eight months prior to the end of the Malenkov regime, remember, and, yes, if you insist on knowing the Russian leader I was discussing was Marshal Zhukov, then still under wraps fairly much). Now whether my theory was sound or not is beside the point. The conversation then took another line which I consider more important. My relative suggested that no leader would dare reverse the policies of the Communists; that if he did so he would be quickly purged. I replied that if Zhukov ever headed the government no one would ever dare purge him as the people would not stand for it, since it is universally acknowledged he is Russia's most popular man, holding a position in public esteem somewhat similar to Eisenhower's in this country. He wanted to know what difference that made, pointing out that they'd gone ahead and purged Beria without worrying about public opinion, and I replied that that was very different as Beria was the most unpopular man in Russia, having been head of the dreaded secret police for many years, a figure of terror to the average man who'd had to take the blame for not only all his own acts but many of Stalin's less popular ones also. I tried to make the point that all governments must pacify their populace to a certain extent, no matter how dictatorial....that no government can long stand without the active support of at least 40 to 45% of the population or the passive support of a much larger number. To seriously rouse the antagonisms of a majority of the people is to court revolution. He ridiculed this and questioned the possibility of the unarmed Russian populace ever succeeding in overthrowing the mighty Russian government. I wanted to know how he'd prevent it and he said with the army. Then I asked where he was going to get his soldiers. That was the question he had no answer for and the stumbling-block which prevents any government from governing without the substantial consent of the governed. In a conquered country like France or in a satellite nation such as Poland it is possible to enslave an entire people against their wishes. Unarmed, they cannot stand against armed soldiers. But they are foreign soldiers. And in the 1953 riots even the Russian soldiers showed little stomach for turning their fire on the civilians. For the most part, the troops of the satellite nations, picked Communists and all, stood by and let the fun proceed. No army can be induced for any great length of time to make war on the civilians of its own nation. No matter how careful the screening a good percentage will have the germ of the same notions as the dissatisfied populace and officers who attempt to enforce unpopular orders are apt, eventually, to provoke a mutiny and find themselves imprisoned or dead. Much quicker and simpler, though, is the tendency for the soldiers to slip away and join the civilians. Not only does this weaken the army but the civilians thereby gain weapons, evening matters somewhat. So far as I know, no ruler has ever been able to counteract this facet of human nature. Rulers, whether in a democracy or any other form of government, must keep their citizens happy, or at least not actively unhappy. My ideas tend to be supported by reports now coming out of Russia from the various Americans now being admitted to the country. Personal talks with ordinary Russians indicate the average citizen is nowhere near so dissatisfied as we've been led to believe; this condition, of course, stems from the carefully controlled press which leaves your Russian feeling complacent, but how he is kept happy isn't too important. That's why I say the sort of revolution pictured here is purest fantasy and utterly impossible.

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ELEVENTH HOUR--Admittedly society regards talking of oneself as being immature and it is considered a sign of immaturity in the individual. But does that make it immature? If it actually is a sign of immaturity surely there must be a better reason than that. I consider it somewhat a point of intellectual honor not to accept the dictates of mass attitudes unless I can discern some basic justification for them. (While, of course, attempting to steer clear of the other extreme of rebellion for its own sake). The response to that (as I learned when I reread it after running it off) miserably-written piece was gratifying. Of those who commented there seems to be pretty solid support for the subjective piece with only a few mild dissents of which yours is the strongest, so subject to inspiration ~~xxxx~~ along that line there will be more from time to time in the future. Of course, it's possible all those who refrained from commenting belong to the "don't talk about it" school but, if so, they have only themselves to blame for not registering a protest vote.

FAFHRD--This was the most interesting article on Lovecraft I've yet read.

GEMZINE--Aren't you rather jumping to conclusions in assuming that Danner is a messy housekeeper just because he is a bachelor? Some bachelor's make more of a fetish of order than the average housewife. No, I'm not one of them. But it does seem as if woman will reach way into left field for far-fetched reasons why a man should get married. I suspect they are trying to lessen discontent and murmurings of rebellion amongst their own trapped spouses. What other reason is there for every married woman getting that gleam in her eye every time she spots an unmarried man?

GRUE--I'd forgotten just how good OPUS was until that Magnus article with its liberal sprinkling of quotes brought it back into focus as a very pleasant memory once more. Odd how the memory of OPUS faded when SLANT and QUANDRY remain as fresh and vivid in my memory almost as when they were appearing regularly.

HEATHEN--re your comment on my use of the word shock....I was using it in the sense of surprise, only surprise being a bit too mild, not in the sense of discovering something unexpectedly wrong. Shock also means the moment of disorientation which immediately follows the unexpected... contact with an electric current so the word is quite apt to describe the (mildly) stunned reaction of suddenly realizing I'd been overlooking something so obvious, all this time, about someone I knew as well as I know Silverberg.

HORIZONS--My vague recollection is that Freehafer was from Caldwell, Idaho (about 35 miles southwest of Payette and nine miles from my home town of Nampa) but he might also have lived in Payette. It was all long-past history when I entered fandom and while I registered the data that he was a native of my section of Idaho, when reading about him, I wouldn't want to rely on my memory for anything more definite than that.///Ah, another admirer of untrammelled nature. I still... recall my older brother's surprised amusement about 12 years ago when I pointed to the heavy four and five foot growth of weeds in a garden we weren't tilling that year as an example of how much more attractive, to me, an unfettered banked growth was than carefully cultivated flower

beds. I'm primarily an admirer of trees (almost any and all trees) and lawns (when used as a backdrop for trees) myself. Flowers inside a house or in beds strike me as rather pitifully garish. Only when they are growing in a mass of forty or fifty or more do they become attractive, to me.

PHLOTEAM--When I was a small boy (till the age of 11, that is) my father ran his own garage, in which my brother worked. Thus two of the men in my family were mechanics and my other brother was, until last year, an electrician. Despite the wealth of information and tools thus available to me I had very little ability along mechanical lines and even less interest. However, this is a mechanical age and machines do break down. I've worked out a compromise and at first I thought yours was the same, but, while simpler, it is different. Since, in case of emergency, I usually have to summon a maintainer from some other city, there is a sizable delay usually holding up important telegrams when our equipment goes out of whack. And Western Union uses some complicated gadgets. Thus over the years I've acquired a familiarity with the innards of teleprinters and other WU equipment which follows pretty much a cause and effect basis. I'm impatient and hate to drag in someone else unless necessary. So, using the (usually completely inadequate) tools at hand I've developed a technique for taking printers apart and tracing down trouble even when I'm ignorant of the names of 99% of the parts. I've found if I take it apart piece by piece, remembering where each goes I eventually develop an empirical knowledge of each item and its function which usually, in about half an hour, leads me to the source of the trouble, which thereupon becomes quite obvious. If the same trouble recurs later I simply check the same gadget and it almost invariably is to blame, again. I would say I have 100% success in such experiments but it might be dangerous. Up until last month I never got locked into or out of anything whose lock, with sufficient persistence, I couldn't pick or at least find some way out of my dilemma. But I locked my keys in my cash drawer in the safe last month and finally, after struggling for an hour, wound up with the humiliation of having to call a locksmith. (A bit of my pride was salvaged two days later, though, when one of the operators lost the only key to her counter cash drawer and I forced my way into it in the space of about five minutes.) Similarly, I'm in the habit of similarly attacking breakdowns amongst my various sound equipment, typewriter, etc. These are simpler devices than the teleprinters and my reason for working on them myself is more parsimony than haste but otherwise the situation is similar. And, of course, when I owned cars, and before that, bicycles, I used to repair them the same way. I never will forget the first summer I owned a car. I must have had at least 25 flat tires that summer and by fall I'd replaced three with new ones. But, by jingy, I'd've taken on anyone in a contest for swiftness and efficiency in changing tires. Nothing like practice. Funny thing, after that summer I never had a flat tire again either on that car or its successor and I'd undoubtedly be back to my old butterfingers status again by now.

The second line of "Racing With the Moon" is 'high above the mid-  
///night blue', and no, I am not a Monroe fan....not Vaughn, that is.  
But I used that interlineation last issue, didn't I?



MAMBO--The Norman Browne letter reaches a new depth of asininity and confirms a suspicion growing over many months that it was in anticipation that such as Browne would eventually find their way into fandom that Laney coined the term 'fugghead'. No doubt Browne and about 300 other fans (if you want to call them that) would be only too pleased to get the entire FAPA output at a ridiculously low figure like \$5.00 without any accompanying duties. Sure, and I think it would be nice if the U.S. Government would pass a law exempting me and anyone else who cares to be exempted from paying all future taxes. Who in hell gives a damn whether Browne wants to keep up with what's going on in fandom or not? If he wants the FAPA mailings there are certain obligations he must discharge. If he's too lazy to do so then we're well rid of him. This would be an offensive suggestion even from a Grennell or Willis. Coming from Browne, whose FAPA career has been marked by a heterogenous assortment of trash and one single issue which showed some potential (mostly due to material contributed by others) the suggestion is beneath contempt. Browne is one of our most dispensible members. Browne asks "Are you going to kick people out of FAPA because they consider writing stf and earning a living more important than FAPA? These people who have graduated out of fandom into the pro world owe a debt to fandom for helping them to achieve success. Are you going to kick them out of FAPA just because they are no longer productive in fandom and FAPA?" The answer, Norman, is 'damn right!' FAPA is a rigidly limited little group devoted to the interests of a certain type person. When a member ceases being that type person he no longer retains the right to be a member no matter what his past contributions. Otherwise FAPA would be made up of two very mildly-active publishers and the remainder charter members who long since lost interest in publishing anything. Although I voted for the Speer amendment, in retrospect I don't believe anyone is entitled to an honorary membership....a remission of dues, perhaps, but not of activity requirements.///In case anyone is still in doubt I consider Willfried Meyers worth five Norman Brownes as a FAPA member, and as you'll see elsewhere in this issue I consider the Meyers membership fraudulent.///Any time I am unable to fulfill at least double the membership requirements I'll resign. It must take a singularly conscienceless chowderhead to wait to be kicked out. May I respectfully cite the admirable example of F.T. Laney and a number of others in this respect?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS--The Cult sounds like an extraordinarily sensible organization to have emerged from the brain of Vorzimer. Even sounds like an outfit I'd like to belong to but since I'd rather belong to both the British apa and to SAPS, neither of which I have time for, there's no danger in my applying for membership.

STEEFALTASY--I was two-thirds of the way through "Khartoum" before I bothered to look and see who'd written it. I dunno how you managed to get this Boucher yarn (Boucher's too timid to accept it for his own mag, is he?) but it's the scoop of the year and certainly the finest fiction piece ever to appear in FAPA. I once tried doing a novelet in which a lesbian was faced with the choice of whether or not she would undertake the task of ensuring the continuation of the human race when she became the only remaining biologically qualified person ~~xx~~ but I got bogged down in the center and on re-reading the earlier portions it seemed to me that what should have been handled with the utmost restraint and delicacy came out pretty crudely so I decided it was too tough a theme for me and destroyed it.

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TARGET: FAPA--I used to regard it as a pleasant fiction (like beanies and zap-guns) that every FAPAn skimmed through each mailing for reviews of his own zines and then later read the rest at his leisure. This may startle some, but for the first year of my membership I used to read stright through the mailing, rigidly restraining any desire to jump around in pursuit of greater egoboo. But then mailings started arriving at times when I was quite busy at the office and I gradually began slipping. Now, apparently like most FAPAns, I unashamedly work through the mailing looking for the magic word (magic to me, that is) BIRDSMITH and the comments on same, prior to reading anything else. I doubt if that was your intention but your new system of arranging material is an admirable method for ensuring that a goodly portion of your zine will be read prior to the bulk of the mailing. When each section is labelled a review of five to fifteen magazines, titles recurring over and over, about 50% of the magazine assumed the status of egoboo to be read immediately. However, I like the new method and hope you retain it.

WDA--nice to see all this over again, including the parts I missed the first time which appeared in those 'exclusive' issues.

Sorry I skipped so many zines but, as usual, these aren't reviews so much as merely comments inspired by various things, with the title of the mag hooked on for identification purposes. Lack of comment does not imply disapproval or boredom. One of my very favorite FAPAZines, for instance, upon whom I usually lavish a page or a page and a half of comment, went completely unmentioned this time.

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Liberace is the opiate of the masses.  
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TRUTH REVEALED IN PHILOSOPHY  
or, A Saying for Every Occasion

When I pause at my work for an hour or so  
And someone decries me for sloth  
I say "Many hands make light work  
And too many cooks spoil the broth".

Or when they condemn my un-giddy pace,  
Insist that I cease to recline  
I sternly warn that "Haste makes waste  
While a stitch in time saves nine".

But still my ambition they try to push;  
They seemingly just cannot see  
That a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush  
For the best things in life are free.

It's sad and it's true, I often repeat  
(to those who will listen) because  
You can't grow grass on a busy street  
Since a rolling stone gathers no moss.



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For music hath charms to sooth the save breast  
Since silence is golden, we all know,  
And movies are better than ever, today.  
Your best entertainment is radio.

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The glory of Bloch is manifest.

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#### SOME SHARP WORDS ABOUT DULL PEOPLE.

I should have restrained myself in my comments on MAIBO. Not only did I make several points there I'd intended to use in this article but I'm afraid that will rather detract from any impact this piece might have carried.

First let me state something which should be self-obvious, but apparently isn't. There is nothing in the Ten Commandments, the Magna Charta, or the U.S. Constitution which guarantees membership in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association to any individual willing and desirous of same.

It is a private organization organized by a certain group of people and designed specifically to cater to their tastes and interests. Attempts by people new to the organization or still not members to bull their way into the organization with the avowed intention of re-making it into an entirely different type group more in keeping with their own tastes is not only presumptuous and in bad taste but an unmistakable sign of stupidity.

One thing I think it would be wise to recall at this time is the origin not only of FAPA but of all its authentic members. FAPA grew out of the devotion of a group of individuals to science-fiction and no matter how far they have strayed it can be said, for all practical purposes, every outstanding fan and FAPAan of the past and present have their fannish and publishing origins in a similar devotion. (I'm aware of two notable exceptions but they had compensating virtues which overcame the lack of common background.)

Therefore, it can be stated that a true fan inevitably has his roots in science fiction. He may detest the stuff today, but without that background he lack the necessary mutuality of outlook which is necessary to a true understanding and appreciation of the peculiarly unique gestalt that is fandom and which reaches its greatest refinement in FAPA.

Just as the average individual (including many sf readers) is unable to grasp the peculiar allure of fandom and partake of it, so are many active fans incapable of appreciating the ultra-special individuality of FAPA.

For FAPA is an organization of, by, and for science fiction fans. The fact that science-fantasy is rarely mentioned in the mailings alters that fact not at all. Despite the remarkable (and admirable) leniency in its entrance requirements ~~which~~ membership in FAPA is not something to which any outsider willing to pay dues and contribute material is entitled. No matter what his willingness he is simply not qualified to discharge the obligations he incurs with his membership and which the other members are entitled to ~~legitimately~~ expect. FAPA is entitled to expect a certain level of activity already covered by a fan before he even applies for a position on the waiting list and attempting to enter without first preparing for that membership is like taking advantage of a technicality to enter a state-supported college when you have only a fourth-grade education behind you. It is unfair to other members and to yourself and debases the organization.

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Part of the present situation is our own fault. Fans have several peculiarities in common and one of these is a rather humorous delight in playing with technicalities.

Although this is one of the most delightful personalities to emerge in fandom in recent years I would say FAPA was unlucky in having Charles Wells as vice-president this year. As I said, most fans have this trait and I suspect that I rate fairly near the head of the list in having a weakness for using semantic tricks to twist meanings. But in Charles this is about three times as evident as in myself and there is probably no one in ~~the~~ fandom, certainly not in FAPA who would go to greater lengths to hand down absurd rulings which a poor choice of words can be stretched to justify but which is obviously directly contrary to the intentions of the framers of the rules. This is not meant to single Charles out as the victim. Many another FAPAN would have been the same. Co-incidence simply decreed that Charles should be in the crucial position during a year when such decisions had to be made. Charles had help in that wacky verdict which enable Perdue to maintain his membership and I don't recall whether Charles was to blame for the completely ridiculous ruling which allowed Meyers to enter, or not. But this sort of thing is not new to FAPA. The Laney ruling which split the presidency between Art Rapp and Marion Bradley in 1951 was from a similar cloth (as was the follow-up ruling when Marion declined and her half-tenure was given not to Rapp but to the vice-president).

What is new is the tremendous length of the waiting list. What was a harmless and amusing idiosyncrasy three or four years ago today becomes a callous miscarriage of justice. Four years ago we could afford to allow a non-fan who attempted to meet requirements by submitting a sloppy postmailed selection of gush about movie actors no one had ever heard of retain her membership. But today we face a different situation.

This article is meant as a plea for common sense, for a change. Technicalities can work both ways, you know, and once the waiting list gets above ten I think officers currently in power should deliberately start getting tough in their interpretation of the rules. Instead of always interpreting the rules to allow a membership to be retained if even the flimsiest pretext can be found, as in Perdue's case, start cutting members off the roll whenever they slip far enough to give even a halfway good reason. People who resort to last-minute technicalities to retain their membership are obviously not the sort of member FAPA is designed for nor the type who keeps it alive. The minimums and allowances are ridiculously low and anyone who can't fulfill them with a sizable margin both of time and quality simply isn't trying. And don't give me that lack of time business. Some of FAPA's busiest members are also among its heaviest contributors. I know from my own experience that the busier I am on other projects the more I find time to contribute to FAPA whereas my occasional missed or delayed issues usually follow a period when I had all sorts of spare time and just wasn't in the mood to do anything. Any fan so indolent that there is doubt about whether he met his requirements is a free-loader and a parasite.

In ~~RAMBO~~ Norman Browne brayed about the rights of the deadwood. The deadwood have forfeited their rights. This is not true, though, of the waiting-listers. Some of them will be deadwood, too, but as yet they haven't had the opportunity to show their stripe. So far, each of the 27 waiting-listers has conducted himself with good faith; he has not had the opportunity to do otherwise. The same cannot be said of a number of members considered in good standing, currently.

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The membership of Meyers is farcical. In his favor it can be said that he evinces a willingness to produce. The fact that what he produces is completely illiterate by FAPA standards cannot be held against him at this late date. He's now a member and nothing can be done about it. It was the duty of the officers-in-charge to weed out this type of individual before he was allowed entrance and they failed, utterly, and in part deliberately. So the rest of us are stuck with a well-meaning character completely bewildered as to why his innocuous nothings should stir up a storm. It's very simple; he's incapable of looking at his own publications with the eyes of a FAPA because he's not a FAPA and having his name on the roll and his magazines circulated in the mailing does not make him one.

Before I leave the subject of Meyers, I'd like to go into one other point. I've refrained from expressing myself about him before and probably would have continued to (since as someone said, he does indicate good will and normally one doesn't like to injure the feelings of someone with that attitude no matter how out of place his actions) were it not for his adolescent attempt to re-mold FAPA before he was even in it. It seems to me a person should be fully aware of the aims and traditions of any group and have enough time in it to be considered an established member before venturing an attempt to tell others what those aims should be and how matters should be changed.

Even when I'd been in FAPA two years I was putting forth any such suggestions or comments with the implied apology in the statement that I was a relative newcomer. I didn't intend to consider, nor did I expect others to consider, that my views should carry the same weight as those of established long-timers.

Now, with this mailing I am rounding out my <sup>fifth</sup> full year in FAPA. In that time I have missed five mailings (six, if you count one issue postmailed....premailed, actually.....without my knowledge). It is only with that long a record behind me and that high a level of activity that I now feel qualified to speak out in as strong terms as I am using in this article.

Perdue is a different matter entirely. Since Perdue frequently dwells, in his rare issues, on jazz, a subject close to my heart, I have always had an affection for Elmurmurings. Further since Perdue is a witty and amusing writer the magazine was enjoyed thoroughly throughout. And I rather admired his "think big, talk big, and ignore the tiny yapping at your heels" attitude. Elmer Perdue has every qualification for membership in FAPA, and every quality to make a good member, save one; he refuses to publish anything more than the absolute minimum and to add insult to injury he always postmails that, or at least has for the ~~10~~ years of my membership. And the latest issue lacked even the virtues of the fondly-remembered earlier issues. He wasn't even trying to produce something worth reading in this instance and made no bones about it.

Were FAPA restricted to a number below or just even with its maximum membership (as happened in late 1950 and early 1951) or even if we had only two or three names on the waiting list, I'd be among the most willing signers of a petition to stretch the rules and keep Perdue in FAPA.

But there are twenty-seven people waiting for the privilege of entering FAPA. It should be safe to say at least five of these would develop into just as enjoyable members as Perdue only much more active.

Certainly the contents of the last ELMURMURINGS, its mailing date, and Perdue's attitude indicate he has forfeited his membership rights. The officers who ruled otherwise were cheating one waiting-lister out



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of his membership. I feel the decision made by the FAPA officers was a dishonest one and that Perdue's membership for the coming year is a dishonest membership.

I could cite other instances but they occurred prior to the present crisis caused by the swollen waiting-list.

May I point out that the two first names on the waiting list are those of Georgina Ellis and Jan Jansen, both highly active publishers of general fanzines who likely are excellent FAPA prospects. And the waiting list is dotted with other bright prospects like Bob Kellogg, Gerald Stewart, and Larry Shaw.

There's been a lot of debate about changes in the rules. What I'm requesting doesn't necessitate such a change, only a change in interpretation. Take the tough attitude of an instructor in an OCS school, not the eternally tolerant one of a mother trying to train an imbecile son. We're stuck with Meyers and Perdue but for pete's sake, don't do it again. If there's doubt about which mailing date the rules allow, always select the earliest one. If an amateur publication's status is in doubt then assume it is not a fanzine. A bona fide fanzine is not too hard to recognize. And I vote we declare a moratorium on all these cases of excusing certain members from meeting membership requirements for renewal because of special circumstances. It has been used far too generously in the past and frequently with no better reason than that the signers were close friends of the beneficiary and didn't want to see them dropped from FAPA. Even in the case of a genuine emergency a conscientious person who cannot meet activity requirements should recognize it is unfair to expect to retain their membership if they cannot contribute the minimum required and voluntarily relinquish their membership to someone who can and will, while going onto the waiting list, themselves. Once we trim the waiting list down below ten it will be time to start being generous again.

Expanding the membership, changing the rules....these are inadequate since no rules can be written so clearly that they won't allow a clever fellow like Wells to interpret them to mean something completely different from intended in some unforeseen circumstance. A watchdog attitude on the part of FAPA's officers would do more to clear up that waiting list and revitalize FAPA than any combination of changes of rules.

And for the umpteenth time how about an amendment denying activity credit on postmailings...or at least postmailings which occur after the final mailing of the members year?

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She's lovely, she's engaged, she uses LAVA.

anon

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LETTER FROM LONDON

Bill Morse

I see that TIME, with its nose for news, has not failed to include for its readers the story of our leading murder case. It was a well covered trial, by court-martial, and one needed only a little careful thought to conjure up a vivid picture of what went on during the days under discussion. Hanky panky in the dar, was TIME's description of the murder of one army Sergeant by another, who subsequently married the widow.

What caused most of the stir was the fact that there was all sorts of double dealing going on behind everyone else's back. Here was one Sergeant dealing in currency, another in second-hand cars; here are wives conniving at meetings between the accused and the woman he later

married, and other Mess-members knowing what was going on, and discussing the thing behind the husband's back, with the Senior Member giving the snake-in-the-grass some very succinct advice in good army language. ("You'd do better to keep just one piece of meat on your plate.") Witnesses, female, told of day and night visits, whilst the husband was away on manoeuvres. There was no attempt to deny that there had been a killing, only that accused had not murdered, only used self-defence, and Counsel for accused was our best-known criminal lawyer, who defended William Joyce, our best known traitor.

The verdict was guilty and the sentence was Death. There will be no doubt be an appeal, and few people think he will hang, but the aftermath has been ludicrous, to say the least. Here is one newspaper claiming that the case was reopened, after an original suicide verdict, when a group of Sergeants sent a letter to a high officer; another claims it was all due to the suspicions of an army cop, now a civil policeman: this is also TIME's view, and that of the majority. Here is the Daily Express saying it is all due to the fact that we have a two-year conscription, and that it should be cut to eighteen months as a result of the murder. Here, too, is the widow-wife meditating with the brilliant logic of the Sunday tabloid: "I sometimes think that if I had never met Reg (the first husband) all this might never have happened."

I can imagine all those husbands out in Germany, sitting back in their armchairs in Married Quarters, and looking at their wives sitting opposite them, and silently wondering. Especially those whose wives gave evidence at the trial that they knew and to some extent assisted in the romance. They will, I think, wonder in silence. The average Englishman is monogamous.

It is a pleasant thing to notice that the efforts of writers of the worth of Philip Lindsay to clear the name of King Richard III are beginning to pay off at last. He has been conducting his campaign for some twenty years, now, by one means or another, and found me a willing convert as far back as 1938. Now that there is a deadly serious society dedicated to this cause, even in New York, I think we may have some results in the foreseeable future. Admitted, the coming of Olivier's film of the Shakespeare play will do a lot of damage to these aims, but it cannot kill off a live movement such as this has grown to be. Incidentally, if the film has one half of the power behind it that Olivier gave to the stage version in 1945/46, it will be a wingdinger of a film. The stage version has been recognized as setting a standard that even Olivier himself has never since bettered for sheer impact on the audience of one man's personality.

The critics have been having a field day slinging insults at the Oliviers' appearances at Stratford-on-Avon during the start of this year's Shakespearian Season. It seems that they have decided that the proper duty of a critic is to find detailed, carping, microscopic faults in everything from the acting to the colour of the tickets. Whatever else, they have certainly had their share of Olivier blood this year.

Twelfth Night, for instance, is designed as a comedy, and usually played for laughs all the way, with Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch both having a fine old time taking the Mickey out of Malvolio, who, in turn, is liable to appear as a Robert Newton type of strutting eye-roller. No doubt the critics thought that Olivier would really outdo even Newton at that sort of game, and swagger a touch short of the ham, (because the genius is always just that extra hairsbreadth short of the ham, in acting) and off they must have gone, with their reviews already written out in advance, so they could be phoned through to London as



soon as the final curtain had fallen.

What did they get? They got a Malvolio with a conscience and a soul, a controlled neurotic and a social climber, with the Puritan outlook which might have belonged to the men who burned a witch at Salem. Not at all a funny man, because he takes himself so seriously that he feels more important than his office, which is that of the steward of a moderately rich household. His desire is to be as big as he feels he should be, not realizing that he is only a cock crowing on his own dunghill.

So, when the two old drunks play their tricks on him, he is usually pictured as strutting a little at the thought that he is beloved of his employer. Olivier had him take it calmly, as a man will when he receives his just reward. Similarly, when he realised that he had been taken for a sucker by one of the oldest tricks in the game, instead of ranting, Olivier's Malvolio had a dull realisation, a resigned admission that he had well and truly bought it, and a cold determination to get his own back.

No fireworks, you see, and critics love fireworks in a Shakespeare Season, so they did not like it. Here was a whole man, perhaps for the first time in their experience, and they did not like it, because it was not what they had expected. "The Oliviers are slipping" said the Sunday Graphic. "Dull, unexciting", said the Daily Express. What did they want? A synopsis of the play, as Olivier saw it, to read before the curtain rose, as they get from the film industry? Did they want to be told why it was done this way, so they could be prepared? I think so.

Similarly with Macbeth. I didn't see this one (indeed I was lucky to see the other) but the reviews were most enlightening. Only the Times, the Manchester Guardian and Punch thought it worth praise. The others spent their time hurling condemnations at Vivien Leigh. As Lady Macbeth, said the Times, she was "Small, gleaming, and incredibly malevolent". In the same way, the Manchester Guardian noted her dominance of Macbeth in the early stages of the play, as the impetus to his ambition, and slow fading into the background as he swells to importance in the later acts, and thus "her death does not stop the play as happens if her personality is kept at full power throughout".

It seems logical to me to assume that the critics who give thought to their reviews and state why they like or dislike a thing are more reliable than those who spend their time saying everything is bad that they do not understand. Unfortunately, those who were most carping of the detractors of the Oliviers added to their sin by making quite violent attacks on Miss Leigh, who is not physically the most robust actress I have ever seen. They claimed that she is holding her husband back, and that but for her there are no limits to the extent he might not go, and that for her, he spends his time in lightweight farce. For this they evidence their appearance last year in a piece of froth called The Sleeping Prince. Actually, when I saw that particular play, it seemed that he was enjoying this romp with his wife as much as did the audience, and that both of them found it a welcome change from the unmitigated diet of heavy drama they had been having before and have had since. Certainly they tackled the Stratford Season with more gusto than has been seen there for some considerable time.

You know, what with the Oliviers and the Rex Harrisons (now in London in another piece of froth called Bell Book and Candle) and the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts starting, there are many compensations for being a Limey, besides the more usually touted ones of being a senior civilization, plummier accents, better mental agility allowing us to understand cricket and so-on.



I doubt if anyone was surprised at the results of our election. There was some doubt of the exact size of the majority, but not a great deal of even that. Now we are waiting for some sign of the new Young Men of whom we have heard so much from Sir Anthony. So far, we have had only a slight reshuffle, but no sign of all the new talent there must surely be. The neatest piece of work was the elevation of two previous holders of safe seats to the House of Lords, men who had stood down at the election in favour of younger men. In this way we have two more Tories in the Upper House who will attend regularly, and two more young men in the Commons, without having to go to all the expense and bother of fighting a bye-election, which is always a chancy thing. A most astute move, I feel.

What we unfortunately still do have is the presence of a swollen-headed, flatulent, platitudinous political mongrel. He gained notoriety as The Radio Doctor (English doctors are forbidden to advertise, by a rule of the General Medical Council) and made fat and foolish remarks well calculated to sound like profundities to the unsophisticated during his BBC contract. Campaigning as a "national Liberal and Conservative" he gave guarantees that the Tory Party would not submit to the extortionate prices of Peron's meat barons, as had the Socialists. Then, as Secretary to the Minister of Food, he mutely allowed Peron to raise the ante for Argentine beef far beyond our wildest nightmares. He now distinguishes himself with great mediocrity as PostMaster General.

In a brighter light, we have Mr Reginald Maudling, a young man with a cutting verbal style reminiscent of Bevan during the war years, but this young man is on the side of the angels, and remains cool and collected at all times. He is now doing his best to make a name at the job of Minister of Supply, previously held by Mr Selwyn Lloyd (a very smooth-talking gentleman).

Who knows? He may even get us some new airplanes. Perhaps, when Sir Anthony has completed his Parley at the Summit, he might even give us a Secretary for Air who has had some experience of airplanes, and the two of them, Air and Supply, might give the Air Force reason to believe it has a future.

The recent publication of Lawrence of Arabia's book The Mint, and the preceding issue of a "Biographical enquiry" stirred a lot of memories. I recall, in the late thirties, being told by a subscriber to the library in which I worked, that a writer called Richard Aldington "can always be relied on for a big seduction scene". At that time I was young enough to grab the first of his books I could find just to check. He was right.

I read three of them, before deciding that it was not worth wading through such a pile of neurotic bilge just for a single chapter. In each case, the hero was a frightfully sensitive type, who felt the world neither understood him nor behaved with due respect toward him. He was the son of a widowed or deserted female whose gentility was appalling, and who intended her son should not grow up coarse and nasty like other men. In one of them, at the end of World War I, wounded, he falls for a woman who will not let him take her to bed because she was seduced by a German, and her scruples would not let her go to bed with a pure-minded Englishman. He, however, is determined that now he has her she shall be his entirely, so he shows her his war wound, and that makes it all right.

In another, he is terribly hurt when his sweet little, dainty little sister is married off for her money to a rich, thirty-ish parvenu. It is much against her will, too, for this horrible creature has hair on the back of his hands, and growing from his nose and ears. But mother wished it, for the money, so it has to go through. Later, when one of his very precious school friends disclosed that he and sister had been sleeping togeth-

this is page sixteen

er for some time before the marriage, it all becomes right again because this was, quite obviously, spiritual. Two chapters later, after spending the whole of them talking to a girl wearing only a bathrobe, he convinces her that she should take him to bed, on the grounds that that, too, would be but frightfully spiritual.

That being an average Aldington story, I was not surprised that his version of Lawrence should be a squeaking and vindictive "expose", and in poor taste, at that. Lawrence, after all, made a success of his life, and his books sold by the gross, whereas Aldington's had only a limited sale, mostly to those who believed they, too, were cruelly treated by fate, and that, if only all the girls who had refused them had only realized they only meant to seduce them with great spiritual feelings, they would all have acceded. I'll take Lawrence, thankyou. The woman who likes to be seduced only if it is spiritual is not much use to a grown man. No staying power in the reckoning of years, as Ish (Earth Abides) would have realized.

I'd like to write a final and much delayed epitaph on our strike in the newspaperx staffs. We had no newspapers from London for a long time, and most of us were quite happy at the thought that there were no harbingers of doom and purveyors of scandal to be acquired anywhere. We were more than satisfied with the Manchester Guardian, when it was available, because it is a NEWSpaper. The things I missed from the regular London dailies in the Sergeants' Mess were the Times crossword puzzle, Colonel Pewter in the News Chronicle, and the baseball results and standings in the Monday Express (or would have been, had the strike lasted long enough). Beyond that, very little, and I think the Press Lords became uncomfortably aware that my attitude was that of the great majority.

This is my first appearance in FAPA. I'm sincerely honoured. I'd like to reach a level somewhere near that suggested by Redd Boggs, to whom I offer humble thanks for his appreciation. All one can do is try. -----

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This issue was mimeographed by Richard Geis, as was the previous issue. But I'm to blame for the stencils.

- v.l.m.