



DECEASED

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OUT OF MY LIFE AND MIND

-- Norm Clarke

My Ten Years in FAPA and How They Flew

It isn't exactly ten years to the day, or even to the mailing; but it was in late '58 that I became an Instant Member (thanks to Gina) and it was sometime in early 1959 that I sat down and began (again, thanks to Gina) to cut my first Fapish stencil. ("So what have you done lately?")

I don't mean this to be an article along the lines of, "Oh, what a greybeard Fapan am I"; for ten years isn't such a long time, by FAPA's standards. Marion Breen, for example, probably still thinks of me as an upstart neofan, or "little neofan," as she likes to say; and to Warner, Speer, Perdue (and some others) I am an upstart neofan, if indeed I am a "fan" at all. (I don't mean that that is what those gentlemen necessarily think, but simply that, by comparison...) No: ten years in FAPA isn't a very long time, at all. In fact, I guess what this article will concern itself with is what a short time it's been.

The decade has gone by so quickly that, for one thing, I haven't yet got around to writing all the terrific stuff that, you know, I've been meaning to write. That brandonization of Jurgen, for instance: I know I have an outline for it, lying around someplace. Come to think of it, it's probably stuck inside my copy of Jurgen, which is also lying around someplace. Yep, that will be a good one. Then, too, there were the parodies of entire Fapazines that I had planned (oh, am still planning): like, say, Horizontal by Harry Warner, which of course would be in the form of a 24-page drunken oneshot (one-man oneshot, that is). Can't you just see it? I can.

Ten years hasn't been enough time for me to settle into a predictable FAPA groove, either. During the first couple of years of our joint membership, Gina and I were strictly minac publishers: eight pages (between us) like clockwork, very August. And then, for the next two or three years -- for some mad reason or none at all -- we became veritable Publishing Giants. Oh, how the Descants hundered from our presses in those hyperactive days! Sometimes two mailings in a row! Fiction, Poetry, Articles, Mailing Comments, Layout&Makeup... even artwork (mostly done by the babies Gina and I had acquired along with, and no doubt because of, our joint membership). That wasn't very long ago, was it? And then came the Queebshot Years. There's not much to say about them except that they're over. Well, they were fun for a while; and apparently those Queebshots were quite influential, too. I wish they still were: that is, I wish other spans would quit oneshotting too. Oneshots have been run into the ground, even when they're not stilted, forced, unpleasant. Anyway, that was it: we oneshot for years; and from -- from the last Queebshot -- until just lately, nothing.

There were, I think, two reasons for that: 1967 and 1968. 1967 was, of course, Canada's Centennial Year and also the year of Expo. It was a wonderful year in Canada, and one that I wish I had been able to tell you about while it was happening. But it seems that there was so much going on that I just never had time to sit at the typer and try to get some of it down. I regret that. Now, 1967 was also the year of my musical rejuvenation: I spent most of my time working, rehearsing or jamming with various rock groups and musicians, most of them of appalling youth. There was a great feeling of optimism and enthusiasm

in me that year: for some time before that, I had been growing more cynical, disillusioned and generally Old Farty in my musical outlook. Let's hear it for 1967: it was, as Boyd Reburn and Frank Sinatra say, a very good year.

And then came ~~The Depression~~ 1968. That year started with the news of the deaths of Ron Ellik and Lee Jacobs. What a hell of a beginning that was. I suspect that it may have been as a result of ~~gazing~~ dwelling morbidly on Lee's death that, sometime in the early spring, I began having Heart Attacks. Twice within a week, I insisted on being taken to hospital, gasping and fainting. Not a thing wrong with me, the doctors insisted, but suggested I should consult my family doctor. I did, and he gave me a long story about The Funny Tracks Our Minds Play On Us Sometimes, diagnosed Nervous Tension, and told me to Relax. So I tried fiercely to relax; and I suppose I succeeded somewhat, for I get fewer heart attacks these days (I cut away down on smoking -- almost involuntarily, for cigarettes taste lousier all the time, I find -- and at one point I even quit drinking; but that was a mistake). Actually, I don't suppose it was solely Lee's death that so affected my (mental) health, but I'm sure it played a large part: I did consider him a close friend, you know. Well, anyway ... then all those groovy and enthusiastic young musicians I'd been working and jamming with in '67 suddenly became disillusioned, cynical and almost Old Farty as the music scene in Ottawa generally went to hell. Groups were disbanding, gigs were scarce, the Hit Parade (which had showed some promise in '67) reverted to slop and gibberish ("Simple Simon Sez," "Yummy Yummy Yummy, I've Got Love In My Tummy"); and even the good old Glenlea, scene of much joyous jamming the previous year, became a Drag for various reasons. No-one wanted to sit in there any more ("Shit, I don't want to play 'Hold On, I'm Comin' again'"); and when anyone did sit it, it was with an expression of boredom, cynicism, Old Fartiness. And then there were the other depressing events of the year: the assassinations, the American political scene, Czechoslovakia, all that. 1968 was a bummer, folks; it was certainly (to me) no year for carefree fannishness.

So here it is: 1969. And here I've been in F&P ten years; and here I've sort of got away from How The Time Flew. But it does seem an incredibly short time since I was writing, in F&P, about The Beat Generation and Allen Ginsberg; and about my career as King of the Pool-Saxes: (playing 'Honky Tonk') and the coming of The Twist; and of course it was just last month or so that I wrote my first real Convention Report (about the TriCon). Perhaps if I were Terry Carr, I would write a list of predictions of things I'll be writing about in F&P during the next decade. Or maybe I should let Terry do it. Say, Terry Carr, what do you think I'll be writing about in F&P during the next decade?

"Oh, about eight pages a year."

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The New T&F

Betty Kujawa, meet Ted White. You remember, the guy who used to rail against 'conservatives'? The one who used to sneer at Birchers and D&Rs and Legionnaires? Remember him? An, but that was before he became a successful writer. Remember, he used to starve a lot, and had to get his Pepsi money in desperate ways. But now his Status has changed. He has a vested interest in the Status Quo ... status Quo of the science fiction industry, I mean. Dig Taw in Nulf 43: "To identify science fiction with ... peaceniks ... would probably not lend dignity to either ... Sci-Fi would suffer. Further, the division of prodom or fandom over this political conflict strikes me as dangerous and not to our best interests." What does Taw mean when he says "our" best interests? Why, he means his, of course. It's stiff.

and writers get smeared with the name of "peacenik" (ugh) or are otherwise identified with anti-war sympathies, well, the bottom of the science fiction market might fall out, and Tew might find it difficult to sell his, uh, stuff.

And to think that that same guy, in the same place in Nulfr, pompously calls for "some real thought on the question" of the Viet Nam war. Some "Real Thought", got that? And Tew's so-called thought is that "the division of prodom or fandum could be dangerous." Dangerous Good god! Out of the multitude of dangers that loom over the Asian bloodbath, all Tew can see, or say, is that, perhaps, 'SF would suffer." Oh, wow.

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Why The Young Should Not Drink Beer

The claim that beer is mentally and physically harmless has yet to be fully substantiated. Along with certain pleasurable sensations, beer can also produce feelings of dizziness, nausea, inco-ordination, and even "hangover." And on some occasions it can even precipitate severe unconsciousness," says Dr. Annie Laureate, a dropout, and further notes that, after drinking beer, some people imagine themselves to be ten feet tall. This prompts them to commit acts of aggression, or to make advances towards decent women. "Furthermore," says Dr. Annie (who is a good sport, and not the fuddy-duddy you might suppose) "the chronic use of beer, ale, and similar substances has been clearly associated with 'alcoholism' and things like that." As for physical ill effects, the doctor says, "The idea that you can't be hurt by beer is nonsense. If you take a large enough dose of beer or anything else you could very well get a stomach-ache."

The claims that beer does not lead to the use of whiskey and even "Martinis" need further study and consideration.

It is true that most beer drinkers do not become hopeless alcoholics. But it is also true that most alcoholics have had a glass of beer at one time or another. We must consider that.

A haunting question is: how many additional alcoholics and "rubby-dubs" would be created if social approval led to millions of Canadians drinking beer in taverns on Sunday? It is a sobering thought.

In sum, it must be admitted that our studies of the effects of continued use of beer are still incredibly muddled. We hardly know anything; and, frankly, we are frustrated as all hell. If only, for example, we could definitely establish a connection between beer and cancer. Oh, well ...

We can say, and indeed we feel that we must say, that until prolonged and hard-headed research has proven this exotic brew harmless, we should steer clear of it. Yes. I think that sums our position up rather well.

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My Life In The Ingroups

I'm not going to start off with all that self-analysis crap and all. I mean, you all know all about me, and what I'm like. But, for the record, I want to set down the facts of my career in the fannish ingroups. First, of course, simply being fannish is pretty Ingroup, in itself -- that is, if you're really a fannish (or "faanish" which is the fannish way to spell it) fan, or 'faaan,' as I am. Now I'm not going to go on and bore you with a lot of stuff about how I read my first Edgar Rice Burroughs story when I was three, and how I went around thinking I had a Cosmic Mind, and all that crap. Let us merely say that I was extremely precocious, and at the age of eleven was ripe for the fannish experience.

It was when I saw my first copy of Cry that I was swept into the way of life

(or 'goddam hobby,' as we call it): I saw that there was more to fandom than just reading reviews of Ice novels. Out there, or "In" there, there was a whole world of neat things like F.R.P., and S.E.S. and the Cult, to begin with, and I immediately got on the waiting lists of those fannish "p.s."

It bugged me that I had to wait around so long, though, so, to pass the time, I started writing things for the fannish fnz (as we sometimes call fanzines, for short). I wrote a short satirical poem that was published in The Pointing Vector, and followed that triumph immediately with a slashing fannish satire (a putdown of the N3F) that was rejected by Ted Pauls. So there was nothing for it but to publish my own zine (in order to see my slashing satire in print). I called my fanzine Burbac! (a fannish reference), and mailed it out to all the fannish fans I knew, some two hundred and forty of them.

I am not falsely modest, so I must say that my fnz (as we sometimes call fnz) was a great success. Within a week after mailing it, I got a loc (as we call letter of comment) from Harry Warner, in the course of which he reminisced about other fannish fanzines he had known, with which he compared mine in a favorable way, it seemed to me. Ed Wood also wrote, as did several others whom we also heard from ("WHF").

My second issue, or "ish," came out a bit later than I had intended, and was the final issue (as well as the fannish, or anniversary Issue), because I had "gaffiated," as we say. That is, I had burned myself out; and also I had decided that publishing a general fanzine (or "genzine," NOT to be confused with gunzine or Grennell fandom) was not the answer. The In Thing seemed to be to start one's own apa (amateur press association," even though some "pros" are often in them ... "pros" are professional writers ... of science fiction, usually).

I called mine Teenyapa. My reasons for this choice of name were twofold. Firstly, it was a little apa; and secondly, all the invited members (it was strictly invitational) were, or were soon to be, teenagers. That gave us a certain orientation, right there. Dan McDean (my good buddy) and I got together and invited the proposed members we had decided on after much deliberation; and they all accepted, for none of them belonged to any other apa; and the next thing was to agree on a topic that we could discuss in our group. We argued about this, in carbon-copied letters, for many weeks. Some of the invitees -- the great majority, in fact -- wanted to discuss Sex in all its aspects and ramifications. The more mature Charter Members (Dan McDean and I) wanted to discuss Rock Music and Psychedelic Experiences. We got a lot of resistance from the sex crowd, until we pointed out the subject of sex could be tied in with the subjects we had proposed. And so, indeed, it turned out.

The first mailing was distinguished by a long and profound article by Dean Dayne, entitled "After Bananas -- Socks?" which touched upon related subjects such as boot fetishism and the Ringo Starr Nose Cult. The first mailing really Set The Tone For What Was Yet To Come. (You may have noticed my usage of Capital Letters in many places, and wondered about them; well, if you have to ask, you'll never know, ahahaha! It's just a fannish Thing, that's all.) Anyway, this apa of mine went on for several weeks, and undoubtedly would be going on still had not Dean B. Deanby (who was Official Additive at the time) had to go away to Camp (no pun), and lost the roster and mailing list. Also, I had been invited to join S.E.S. and the Cult, where I now do all my fanning (until I get into F.R.P., at which point I will give up all else, of course.)

All in all, I must say that my two years in fandom have been rewarding; and I have learned a lot. Without false modesty, I think I may say that you'll be hearing more from me. I may also say that I have several good ideas concerning the way in which fandom ought to Evolve, and that you may well see some changes made Real Soon Now (as we say).

Cook Me A Pome, Baby

Boyd Raeburn has bruted is about (though perhaps not so much in FAPA) that I am something of a Gourmet, and even a Gourmet Cook. It is not exactly a lie -- for of course Boyd tells the truth a lot -- but it is not exactly accurate either.

First of all, I detest the word "gourmet." I cannot encounter that word without an immediate mental image of someone who pours Cooking Sherry over his Spicy Hamburger Mixture which he then proceeds to burn in his Barbecue Pit, in the course of a Cookout. In other words, when I hear "gourmet," I think "roob."

I would prefer, actually, that you think of me as an epicure, or a gastronome. But that's not precisely it, either. What I am is a guy who likes to mess around in the kitchen; and I am also a guy who likes to eat good food. The two don't necessarily go together. That is, I do not not always enjoy, or even finish eating, the masterpieces I create in the kitchen. Gink, of course, will eat anything except snails (and my escargots Bourguignonne are not without merit; mainly, I use a hell of a lot of garlic).

For years, my only specialite was spaghetti with meat sauce. How I shudder now when I think of the vulgarity of it! Oh, the basic were all right -- garlic, onions, tomatoes; but the excesses were in my handling of the herbs and spices. Essentially, my method was to Throw Everything In: thyme, basil, oregano, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, bay leaf, chili peppers, black pepper, white pepper, cayenne pepper, and sometimes Tabasco and/or curry powder, as well. I did omit cloves, though, which I thought was rather wasteful and discriminating of me.

But it was Carol Carr who opened my eyes to the virtues of simplicity. When she and Terry visited Sylmar E. in November, '64 (or '65?), Carol offered to take over the kitchen and "whomp y'all up a mess o' pasta," as she put it in her quaint Bronx accent. And then she prepared a meat sauce that provoked gasps of admiration from all present. Shortly after returning to New York, she sent me a postcard containing The Recipe, here reproduced without permission:

"1 lb chop meat
4 small cans tom. sauce
3 onions
 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb mushrooms
oregano
garlic powder (or real of course
as Jonny wd say)
red peppers
salt
oh -- bay leaf which I forgot!

Chop and cook onions. Chop and add mushrooms.
Cook till soft. Add meat, cook till grey or
purple or whatever. Add tom. sauce & spices.
Simmer till hungry."

Well, I followed that recipe for a long time. But, with apologies to Carol, even that beautifully simple sauce has been further -- I hesitate to say "refined" -- reduced so that now, apart from the meat and the tomato sauce (or

tomatoes), the only things I use are one small onion, very little garlic, a heavy sprinkling of sweet basil, and salt. Red peppers are optional, and may be added at table by the individual (along with grated cheese, of course). And then there are times when I prefer my pasta prepared simply al burro: that is, with nothing other than butter, Parmesan, and a grind or two of fresh pepper.

However, it was when we got our new stove (our first one had cost us about fifteen dollars in a secondhand store in 1959, which gives you some idea), about three years ago, that I began to take a more than passing interest in cooking. Cookbooks began to accumulate rapidly, as did recipes clipped from magazines. Often I would roll out of bed and go immediately to the kitchen, where I would remain until evening ("I work and slave over a hot stove all day, and what thanks do I get?). But I'll spare you a recitation of all the Wild and Exotic things I attempted. Many of them were, at best, flops; and, at worst, disasters -- especially those I served to guests (hi, Lupoffs!), for I tended to grow ambitious when people were coming to dinner. Then, too, I tended to sample a lot of the wine and cognac that were absolutely essential ingredients in the impressive creations intended for visiting trenchermen; and then I would tend to say things like, "Whoops, I forgot to add the heavy cream, didn't I? Oh well, you can pour some on your plate."

But, after all, there are some things I can Whip Up (as we say) with no problems; and they are fairly consistent in quality. By that I mean that Raeburn has been known occasionally to roll his eyeballs in ecstasy; and at other times, well, at least he does not sneer openly. My greatest successes are unquestionably in the production of soups; and the most magnificent of these is the one I have christened potage Normand (after its inventor, yer proud&humble servant). I was forced to name it, thus, after observing the bewilderment of guests when I presented it to them as 'onion soup.' It is not Onion Soup. The classic (French) onion soup is a dark and earthy and aggressive concoction, stickily laden with strands of melted cheese. It is all right, mind you: I myself order it occasionally in reputable restaurants.

But potage Normand is a light and golden delirium, brushing the palate reddeningly with the subtle contrasts of several varieties of onion (red, Spanish, silverskin, scallions, perhaps even a bit of leek or snippets of chives), a trace of thyme, the suspicion of garlic ... oh, but it is a regal broth. And it is, in addition, the greatest hangover cure I know. It is my great dream someday to open a Soup Kitchen Supreme near the Salvation Army flophouse, in order to bring joy and a variety of religious experience to the holy rubbies of By Ward Market.

And that brings me neatly to a crashing anticlimax. There are some other things I can put together well enough: a passable cassoulet Provencale, some respectable chicken Kiev, a carbonades de boeuf that is, in its modest way, a gustatory delight. And there are other soups I love to make, also: notably tomato&orange soup, cockaleekie, oxtail, and even a surprisingly delicate garlic soup ("Take 24 cloves of garlic ...").

But after potage Normand there is nothing left to say. Except that when I put it on the market, in packaged dehydrated form, I expect you all to buy it in wholesale quantities and make me the extremely wealthy person I ought to be.

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Whatever Happened To?

Every now and then I get a thick envelope filled with newspaper clippings, posted from Willowdale. These clippings are always interesting to me, whether they be accounts of the latest arrests of Toronto rock bands or glimpses into the world of High Society in the Canadian midwest (Toronto) as seen through the pince-nez of McKenzie Porter (who never wears a white shirt before 5 p.m., or drinks coffee with his meals, or associates with the sort of people who drive rusted 1963 Pontiacs, wear windbreakers and suck ice-cream cones in the street). Well, anyway: a few days ago a thin envelope arrived, bearing the familiar return address. It contained only one clipping -- actually a full page from the Toronto Star, dated June 11, 1969. I looked it over in some puzzlement for a moment. One side of the page contained nothing of much interest to anyone; and the other side had a feature story -- the one I assumed Boyd intended me to read -- whose headline was "I'M POOR BY CHOICE -- IT'S MORE FUN" SAYS A MAN WHO LIVES ON \$25 A WEEK. Well, okay, that was sort of interesting, but hardly so fascinating as to have warranted being sent specially. Then my eye caught the byline.

"By Norman G. Browne," it said, "Special to The Star."

How does that grab you, Seventh Fandom buffs? Yes indeed, it was the very same Norman G. Browne, as I now realized by a closer look at the accompanying photographs (one of NGB rolling his own cigarettes, another of him looking into a store window on which is marked "SAVE ~~THE~~ HERE").

Probably half the current members of F.F. will recall the name of Norman G. Browne, if at all, with a feeling of vague association with 7th Fandom, a publication called Filler, and some sort of Fued (sic) with ... was it the Derelict Insurgents? And perhaps a quarter of the present membership may never have heard of NGB at all. But there are some who will remember him rather well: Dean Grennell (or "Doug Graves"), Jack Harness, Dick Bergeron and MGB perhaps, Bib Silverberg surely. Perhaps Browne is remembered best as a colossal Ego, an Ego of such vast dimensions as to be remarkable even in fandom, where self-effacement has never been a commonplace characteristic. Well, let me quote from an article entitled "Norman G. Browne, Fan," (written by Norman G. Browne) which appeared in the Feb. 1953 Variations (Browne's genzine):

"In my first year, I progressed from a non-fan, to a fringe-fan, to a neophan, and finally to a master-fan. Who knows how far I will go on my second year? Would anyone deny me the ambition of becoming a BNF or a super-fan?"

As I recall, in his second year he had firmly established himself as a BNF. At least, he had to his own satisfaction, for he referred to himself as a BNF whenever possible, which was most of the time. He arrived in Toronto -- from Vancouver and Winnipeg, where he had begun his meteoric rise -- and almost immediately began to irritate the local club members to such an extent that three of them -- Raeburn, Steward and Kidder -- undertook the no doubt joyous task of Blasting The Hell Out Of Browne in various Canadian fmz of the time: Fie (Harry Calnek), Wendigo (G. Ellis), CanFan and Gasp! (Steward) and a skimmy oneshot sort of thing called Bas (Raeburn). In effect, this onslaught actually drove brown out of fandom.

I met NGB, briefly, in Toronto in the late fall of 1954; and he seemed pleasant

and harmless enough, rather than the egomaniacal monster I had been led to expect, though still not exactly the sort I'd be likely to have as a Good Buddy. Mostly, I felt rather sorry for him: he was being zinged mightily by the jolly VolDesFen, and he seemed, for all his vaunted ego, totally unequipped or disinclined to fight back (though he did make some half-hearted attempts, and even, I learned later, informed Boyd that he had an ally in me). Well, I returned to Ottawa; and some time later I got a letter from Browne in which he said he was quitting fandom. One line was "fandom is just sublimation, a substitute for sex ..."; and he added something to the effect that he was having "a LOVE affair, Egads!" I imagine that that was the last, or almost the last, that any fan heard from Norman G. Browne. And so now here he is, in the Toronto Star. What has NGB been doing lately? Let him tell you:

"When it comes my turn to be upgraded, I'll pass, thank you. I'd rather stay poor -- it's more fun. And please don't pity me, you should envy me. Hell, I pity you I live on a maximum of \$25 a week regardless of my income (...) If I got a job paying \$100 a week and moved up to a standard of living comparable to my income (...) I would continually be compromising my values and my integrity at work in order to keep that job (...) But that's the fun of being poor. I'm free to work or not work.

"... I pay \$15 a week for a room and kitchen, \$2 for tobacco and extras and the rest pays for two good meals a day (...) My pride and joy is cooking up a pot of pork hock stew.

"Had I been born 20 years sooner, I might have been a hobo. Had I been born 15 years later, I might have been a hippie (...) but since my age is 36, I'm too old (...) Nor do I take drugs. My mind is already open. I don't need to (take) anything to open it for me.

"I can get a kick out of the fun people you meet when you're poor. There is a restaurant (where) it's possible to ... talk to a homosexual, a bisexual, a male prostitute, a female prostitute, a religious fanatic, a preacher and a missionary. It's the only place I know where it's possible to get saved and seduced at the same time."

And then NGB goes on for many paragraphs talking about welfare, etc., and that The Government should do about Poor Folks: "As a poor man, I am very curious about how this money would be given to me (...) I worry about how much the government is going to pay me and how often." And, finally, he concludes, "Please don't call me a social parasite. A lot of people grow very rich by exploiting my labor (...) When they start the war on poverty, I'll be right in there fighting -- but on the other side"

And that, fanhistory fans, is Whatever Happened To Norman G. Browne, once a self-styled master-fan, BNF, Pillar of Seventh Fandom. I wonder how he'd feel to know that his name still lives in fandom 1969?

I wonder what he does for egoboo.

--njc

This is Descant # 16, as far as I can tell, coming to you from that pile of ~~444~~ Involuntary Deadwood that is collectively known as Norm & Gina Clarke, who slumber at 9 Bancroft st., Sylmer E., Pa., Canada. Once again, alas, there are no mailing comments, but in the past year or so, Perdue's and Demmon's stuff was tops.
