

HORIZONS



Austerity hasn't struck Horizons. It's just that I forgot that there were no covers to hand, until it was too late to petition someone to do one for Horizons. The uncovered issue is whole number 101, FAPA number 95, volume 26, number 2, the February, 1965, issue, and why is it that November to February is such a short span of time in my thoughts compared with the other quarterly skips on which FAPA is dependent? Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, wrote and stenciled it. Mimeographing is by Dick Eney, who would want to be absolved from responsibility for my opinions, except that I don't think that I'll have anything to which anyone would take violent exception in this issue.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Who would have thought that things would have quieted down to this extent? My only reaction to this issue will hardly defile the silence. (It is merely a smug satisfaction over the fact that the universe conspired to give two consecutive mailing deadlines very late in the month while I was having particular trouble finding time to cut stencils and read the magazines. Spinnaker Reach: The safety-touchback distinction involves which team supplied the impetus to put the ball into the end zone. Thus, a team passes from its own end zone, the ball is intercepted around the ten yard line, the guy who caught it is hit on the goal line, fumbles it into the end zone, and the team that passed originally recovers. It's a touchback, because the impetus altered after the pass was thrown. " At least one former FAPA member, whose temporary communist leanings are always being reviewed by old enemies, got enough security clearance to do civilian work for the U.S. Air Force in a fairly important capacity; I'm told that he made no effort to hide that chapter in his life. " Best line in the mailing: the comment about Rotsler's adventures as "different from anything my ancestor, Gov. Bradford, could have imagined." Helen's Fantasia: I always assumed that Martin was named for Poe and I'm sure he spelled Allan that way. " One unfulfilled dream is to purchase the best available map of Japan, study every thing on it minutely, and after days of this research to discover that there is a Japanese town with a name that has the l sound. It would replace the Marie Celeste as the unsolved puzzle of the century. Jesus Bug: Without taking sides in a con site dispute, I must point out the one factor that will operate strongly against New York's hopes. Inner circle fans mostly prefer the smaller, more intimate type of convention, and no matter how wonderfully the New Yorkers planned and conducted a worldcon, it would be a monstrosity big one for sheer geographical reasons. At the same time, I dread so much the thought of spending several days in Baltimore, even almost three years in the future, that I wouldn't want to say anything to hurt the chances of New York or any other city. " Has anyone ever done research on what causes certain given names to enjoy sudden popularity in the nation? After the obvious cases of movie star and presidential family influences are set aside, it's hard to explain. The Barbara situation, for instance: the only possible cause that occurs to me is Stanwyck and I don't think she was that popular at the time. Allerlei: Fans in big houses seems to be turning into a real trend. The Silverbergs, Economou, my own miserable self, the Breens, and several others come to mind immediately. This is the kind of nonconformism that appeals strongly. " I once saw a fanzine apparently stenciled and published between a wedding and its consummation, so the suspense over the imminent childbirth was not too hard on me this time. Besides, a local Mrs. Malaprop once stunned me by describing a visit from a pregnant mutual friend, whom she described as giving her the firm impression that the bottom had fallen out. It took

delicate prompting to make sure that she was referring to the spirits rather than the physiology of the young lady in question. '' Bullies have been browbeating the weaker and reserved boys since long before integration. I'm not certain that there's any way to escape it completely, except by residence in a town where the tough guys are so few that they rarely display their personality. I had only one real scare in my tender years. A large new boy in the neighborhood imported a buddy and the pair of them surprised me in an alley, shoved me into a garage, shut the door, and prepared to teach me a lesson. Providentially, some other kids in the area saw it from afar, and brought reinforcements. I don't believe that it left an engram but it could have contributed to my reluctance to get buddybuddy with new acquaintances. Crime Stalks the Fan World: Nothing but praise goes to a perfectly conceived and brilliantly executed project like this. So many good old fanzine items go unreprinted because they weren't written by one of the dozen or so fanzine writers with superfame. The only suggestion that might be made is: footnotes for any reprint more than a half-dozen years old would help immensely. By the next time someone gets around to resurrecting these stories, 20 years from now, there may not be any of us left with good enough memories to spot all allusions. One baffles me, the mention of Ed Connors. Wasn't there an Ed Connor who was active in midwest fandom around that time, and is the use of this name an accident or private joke? Deadwood: All manner of things occur imperceptibly during the moments when the teams glare at one another before the ball is snapped in American football. An offensive lineman may try for five free yards by twitching in an effort to draw a defense lineman offside without getting caught. The defense may shift position because the team with the ball has adopted an unexpected formation. The offensive signal caller may change from the play ordered in the huddle, when he looks over the defense or notices someone on the other side looks tired or limps slightly. But I don't like football as much as I once did. More and more, it looks clumsy compared with the precision of baseball. Ballcarriers who fall flat while changing direction, ends who drop forward passes that are right into their hands, fumbles on the most routine handoffs, aborted punts when there's no danger of the ball getting blocked happen entirely too often. '' George Locke surveying mountain peaks in an effort to decide which one contains a castle enclosing a convention is one of the unforgettable images conjured up in this mailing, on a par with that of Busby and Rotsler staring uncomprehendingly at one another's unbearded faces. Synapse: This account of a trend toward liberalism would be more interesting if it told something about the development of its writer. Would Jack Speer write today Black & White as he did in the era that he describes with an allusion to VAPid writings? '' I can think of another ambition for the man who becomes president: to hope that future historians will not discover the methods through which he achieved the presidency. '' Why haven't you bought a copy of my fan history? You wouldn't ask questions about the Spectator Club if you'd read about the group in that widely publicized work. '' Photographers don't use long handles to hold their cameras because their eyestalks aren't quite long enough to permit them to use the viewfinder at such distances. '' For precedent's sake, it's a good thing that Walter was given a membership rather than top rung on the waiting list ladder, after reinstatement. It isn't impossible that the time may come when FAPA membership changes occur less frequently than once every year. If that stagnation occurs, 13 persons could keep the top man out indefinitely despite repeated overriding of their blackballs. Warhoon: I can't think of a topic more charmingly appropriate to the Aufgeklopft title of Lowndes' column. But I believe that Beethoven used the term to refer to his own mood, not to the compositions as such. '' I used to

feel about fan organizations as John Baxter does, that they breed trouble. However, in more recent years I've come to think that the real situation is that fans are basically touchy and argumentative people, whose squabbles involve organizations frequently simply because the groups provide a convenient way of making enemies. My current distrust of organizations is confined to the way they delude a few useful fans into the wrong power-seeking paths. Certain fans get the notion that they can acquire real control over other fans by official posts in organizations; when they eventually discover that they've done nothing but tie themselves up in a lot of unappreciated work, they often gaffate with consequent loss to fandom as a whole. Of course, John is mistaken about the consecutive history of local fan groups. I doubt that there are a dozen city groups that can trace back the ancestry to before World War Two. '' There are two reasons for including the address in a newspaper story about a suspect or convicted man. It is in line with the journalism tradition of making every effort to be specific by inclusion of as many facts as possible in the small available space. It also prevents much confusion in a large city where there may be a dozen or more persons with the same given and family names and even middle initial. Even Hagerstown is large enough to have many name duplications. This poses a major problem when a bum is hauled into court and the only honest way to list his address would be: third abandoned packing case from the railroad tracks beside the stockyards. Cadenza: Entre nous, I could let you in on one substitute for the construction, "between you and me," which you say can't be replaced by anything shorter. What's wrong with "finish" as a synonym for "finalize"? My own attitude toward grammar is that it's bearable if it isn't obtrusive, but too much emphasis on it betrays a repressed desire for complete conformity. '' I would think that someone high enough on that hill to see the dancers in a line would think they resembled the tiniest of gartersnakes rather than a dragon. '' Isn't it likely that one-way streets, cloverleaf interchanges, and similar things cause the distance from one city to another to vary from the vice versa distance by a mile or so, in some city combinations? '' There would have been no need to go through the usual procedures of law to give D. Bruce Berry what he deserved. Mailing a copy of that Jennings publication to the judge before whom Berry had appeared would have done the trick. '' I accept the convenience of high rates of interest on heavy risk loans and short term obligations. But I see no humane reason why we don't require every advertisement for time payment merchandise or loans to specify the rate of interest represented by both the interest and whatever "service charges", "life insurance", and so on are included. Incidentally, nobody has ever succeeded in making me understand who absorbs the loss when instalment-purchase merchandise is repossessed. There must be numerous instances in which a refrigerator, for instance, is sold for a given figure, repossessed, later sold to someone else as a demonstrator or something at a cut price, and that cut price plus the payments of the original purchase don't equal the original total price. Damballa: This November was the first time that I ever voted a straight ticket. The only thing that would have induced me to vote for a Republican would have been public and frequent refutation of Goldwater and the philosophy for which Goldwater stands. '' I don't believe that fandom has this tradition of asking permission before reprints. There is a tendency to ask for an okay if a fan wants to reprint a complete article or story that appeared just a short time before in another fanzine. Most of the continental European fans are polite enough to ask for translation rights. But they apply to editors rather than original

writers. My attitude is that I don't mind who reprints what, with a couple of reservations: reluctance to see myself represented in certain publications of dubious mailability, like some Cult publications, and a strong desire to have stuff more than a year old plainly labeled as to year of original publication. If I write something in the heat of anger and don't recall it before it gets mimeographed and mailed out, I deserve the consequences and I trust fans to have the intelligence to understand that my opinions may have changed since writing older items.

Masque: The Fitzgeraldiana brings back to memory those wonderful carbonzines of Kteic's greatest years. Fandom should drop everything else long enough to make a strenuous effort to retrieve as much as possible of those wonderful hundreds of pages, before they vanish as totally as the lost Mozart compositions and Eldon K. Everett. "I couldn't agree more about the badness of the custom of putting the dead on display. I yielded to the insistence of relatives to look at both my parents in the casket and have regretted it ever since. But I've deliberately and successfully to a great extent forgotten what I saw then, just as I've managed to forget the exact dates of their deaths: why torture myself for no useful reason on two days out of every year?" "Maryland, My Maryland" possesses such extreme awfulness that I can't turn my attention to the less pressing dismalities of the National Anthem. One Maryland governor spent most of his two terms trying to stir up Marylanders to do something about the unsuitable tune and nasty words. Descant: Has anyone figured out why even the tinkest ears can usually recognize when an interval between two notes is a perfect octave? I can understand the meshing of overtones providing the ear a clue when the two are sounded together, but I don't see how the ear catches the relationship when they are played one after the other. "In the first grade, each child sang a song and joined either the robins, bluebirds, or larks, three choirs whose order of excellence was not otherwise identified. They organized the sparrows when they heard me." Around here, it is customary to reveal the details of the troubles in the testimony of divorce cases, not in the petition. In fact, all the lawyers were grumbling when one of their brethren inserted precisely what names his client had been called by her husband, when he entered the suit. Entropy: Remarks on a previous page apply to this, too. The front cover, however, frightened me: it captures entirely too fully the spirit and body of the circumstances that obtain on my own attic. However, there are some errors of fact in this issue, and when mistakes turn up in something so impeccably done, they are quite likely to be taken for gospel truth by future generations of fans. For instance, the repeated references to T. O'Connor Sloane as a nonagenarian. He died on August 7, 1940, at the age of 88. Jack Darrow was not "one of the biggest of the Big Name Fans" except to those whose only acquaintance with fans came through prozine letter columns. He always seemed to regard fanzines as something that weren't worth bothering about and he seems to have been utterly bored by the only worldcon he bothered to attend. "The need for footnotes also exists here. I'll bet that half of the FAPA members today don't realize that the old Boggs and Hoffman addresses lurk in the Tucker reprint. Asp: I own a cat now, I think, at least in the opinion of the cat. The house nextdoor, subject of an item in the last Horizons, has undergone additional upheavals in the past three months, resulting in a homeless, familyless condition for a fine maltese cat. He has moved into the spacious quarters under my front porch, doesn't seem to mind the fact that I wake him up on the two or three nights weekly when I don't get home until after 2 a.m., and requires no attention except the modest demand that I dig a tunnel so he can get out when the gap behind the porch steps gets snowed shut. The little girl next

door claims she owns the cat, but admits that her father won't let her feed him or allow him to enter her house, and I notice that the cat scoots away in a hurry when he sees her coming. ' ' The most useful function for that Hugo committee would consist of bimonthly reports on the best magazine stories and books published during recent weeks. The reports would give the busier among us an idea of what it is wisest to read while the stuff is still for sale on the newsstands, a summary of the recommendations could be published when the nomination forms are distributed, and fans wouldn't be limited to these items when making their nomination choices. ' ' When someone asks me about fandom, I simply say that "It's amateur journalism," decisively and without offering any explanation. If done correctly, this shuts up the other fellow, who gets the impression that amateur journalism is a topic that everyone knows about and then doesn't want to admit what he believes to be his own exceptional ignorance of the field. The Rambling Fap: The State Roads Commission removed parking from one side of the two streets that take Route 40 traffic through Hagerstown, some months ago, to permit three lanes of motion. All of us sat back, resigned to someone getting killed by the suddenly speeded-up rate of traffic. When the death came, it was a pedestrian who got squashed by a young, healthy drunk with superb reflexes and none of these under testotalers has hurt anyone yet. The guilty driver, characteristically, told the judge that he intended to give up driving. He didn't offer to stop drinking. "The stuff offered for sale awakens my sense of plunder from long slumbers. It's probably a useless worry, but I keep painting this mental picture of some publisher or other getting a distorted picture of my ability but an accurate knowledge of my interests, and offering me a job with a pro-zine. I'd feel awfully unhappy to be forced to refuse because I haven't read enough of the classics of recent years to recognize manuscripts too obviously patterned after them. Ankus: The specific item in FAPA that entertains me "enough to be worth the trouble of membership" is Horizons. This is egotistical beyond all description but truthful: an apa to me is inextricably tied up in the concept of doing things in it, and it has never occurred to me to consider publishing a penalty to pay for the hope of finding things in it to entertain me. I enjoyed FAPA still more when time permitted me to do all the mechanical work on Horizons, and I hope someday to return to this procedure. Vair-ner: My dreams continue to be extremely short and usually dull but I did have an exceptional one the other night. I thought that I was about to cover a court case, the bailiff told me the name of the defendant; I said, "Oh, that's the poor woman who had to kick the little boy to death," and I walked away because it wasn't worth covering. ' ' If local experience is any criterion, election returns were never so inaccurate as they've been since television took over. The pooled broadcasting returns missed the correct votes on the presidential candidates in this county by circa 1,000 and 1,500 votes; the local newspapers had the total right for one candidate and missed by only three votes for the other, when the official tally could be compared. Spiane: If Cult associations bar one from FAPA membership, I might say goodbye, too. I am not nor have I ever been a member nor have I ever gone voluntarily on the waiting lists, but there was one official FR that listed me in some sort of special category because I'd written letters of comment on most recent Cult publications. By methods that I prefer not to disclose at this time, I got my name out of there in an appropriate hurry. Minimag: Are those phone patches by radio hams legal? I know that they're done all the time, but I wonder if special permission for them exists like the exemption coin collectors possess from the gold-hoarding edicts. Self-Preservation: Ugh, dreams again intrude into the marginal comments. The fatal tailspin is a recur-

ring, vivid one that embarrasses me as soon as it's over for its Freudian overtones. ' ' I'm waiting to see how the South commemorates Appomattox. In a newspaper column, I hinted that criticism of local centennial programs, to the effect that they celebrate pain and death, could be shut up if this area organized a program to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the war. But the Maryland Civil War Commission somehow seems to feel that its job is done. ' ' It looks as if Harlan should have tried to promote interest in his writing among television executives, rather than fans. An urgent bulletin says that Outer Limits is a goner, and good riddance, I think. The Bull Moose: One of the matters that I always mean to ask about when it happens, and always forget, concerns blackened out passages in fanzines. We never are informed if the censorship was wrought by the publishers or by FAPA officials, and it would be nice to know for the record. Of course, it's usually possible to figure out what was supposed to be hidden. Included In: This new profiteering on tapes and records of old radio programs has begun to annoy me, no end. I think that it's a fine hobby, to collect what has survived from the old days of the airwaves, but not to sell copies of the stuff at five to ten times the cost of duplication. There are places where you can have small quantities of lp records produced for less than \$2 apiece, not counting the cost of any art on the jacket, and it's nasty to ask \$10.50 for old Crosby material, or the sums that Bill Thailing is demanding for tapes. I have no delight in squealing, but I have become convinced that it's time to break up the wild profiteering by telling some networks, artists, and agents what is going on. All sorts of contracts are infringed by the unauthorized duplication of these programs. Allerlei: I think that I'm fond of Meyerbeer, although it's admittedly a risky statement when I've never heard a really complete performance of any of his operas. The closest I've come was a drastically abridged Italian Radio tape of The Huguenots that didn't run much longer than three hours. From what I can gather from scores and the things I've heard, Meyerbeer is something like Aida: lots of fine things with extremely banal items constantly recurring. I suspect there will be a big Meyerbeer revival some day, and I'd love to write the full-scale book on him that the English language badly needs. ' ' Lester del Rey once claimed control over the frequency of his heart rate, so maybe he knows how to handle this alpha frequency. Perhaps this rhythm accounts for the free fall sensations I get from the passageways to one or two New York subway stations tiled in tiny black and white squares. Sercon's Bane: I've never heard of a migraine headache starting in the shoulder. It's supposed to be the other way around, with tension from the headache sometimes affecting muscles elsewhere. Bobolings: If marriage brings out long latent FAPA instincts like this, there's a temptation to try it myself, just to see what it would do to me. I can see that the names on my egoboo poll ballot will change considerably this time, as a result of the resurrection of such as Rotsler and now Pavlat. Lighthouse: Walt Willis mentions something that recalls an old idea of how to give myself immortality. He speaks of the man who put his initials across Irish hills with acorns. My thought was to attempt to create some kind of sensational picture by planting otherwise worthless mountainside land with trees whose leaves take on specific hues in the fall, according to variety. It should be easy to get reds, browns, and yellows, together with greens from evergreens, for at least a week or two. Then it would be nice to die in the knowledge that some future generation would suddenly see the grownup trees forming for airline passengers each autumn a man thumbing his nose at the skies. Of course, our descendants might chop down the trees, but there is always a good chance that forested areas will be rare enough to justify preservation at any cost, as the population continues to expand.

" This is a natural way of leading into the fact that the Mrs. A. Leroy Doub in question could quite possibly be related to Elinor. Moreover, the name Doub is now preserved for all eternity locally because the county has assumed jurisdiction over a patch of wooded ground formerly owned by the school board, which has in turn bought it from the Doub family, and it is known as Doub's Woods County Park. Nobody is allowed to enter it just yet, because there is a tremendous hole in it whose existence the county didn't suspect until it had accepted the school people's generous and deliberate offer. They've asked the public to help figure out how to fill it up and nobody has thought of anything that will do the job within the lifetime of those now active. " This discovery of uncompleted fan manuscripts many years later is one that will never burden fandom from my standpoint. My bad habit of writing only one draft of most of my fan stuff makes it impossible for the universe to contain any preliminary versions, notes, or other unpolished Warner manuscripts. And my peculiar sort of character causes me to finish anything that I start, no matter how badly it turns out. Those that even I can't bear to inflict on a fanzine get destroyed, not filed away. But I would like to get my hands on a lot of fanzine items that I wrote to meet the needs of a fanzine editor who needed something immediately, and then gaffiated before publication. I'd like to get my ideas on the next subfandom, Disney fandom, into print, but if I do, Bob Jennings is bound to publish my articles on the topic that he got in great haste three years ago. " Surprising, to read Lewis Grant's statement that Chicago keeps away from catastrophes so well. Wasn't there a fire once? The Vinegar Worms. I received one of those Bantan advertisements, so I suppose that the remainder of the description of the Forum Publishing Company's catalog is true. It seems rather late in the day for anyone to write imitations of Tarzan. But it's strange that in all this Burroughs revival, nobody has called attention to the Bomba books for boys that were so obviously Tarzan derivatives and must have sold pretty well a generation ago, to judge by the number that were in the Cupples & Leon (unless it was Grosset & Dunlap) catalog. I believe that there are a dozen of them packed away somewhere on the attic. The memory of them is somewhat hazy, but I believe that Bomba was somewhat younger than Tarzan, never encountered a Jane, and showed none of the racial superiority implications of the Burroughs slob. " Maybe there's an object lesson in the outcome of the Leman-Boardman feud. The majority of fanish disputes spring up from causes that are either blundered or misunderstood and only rarely is it possible to discover what happened, before the first cause has been forgotten in the heat of the fuss.

Vandy: The billboard industry has begun a sales pitch about the safety factor provided by outdoor advertisements. The commercials cite an unidentified survey that showed that billboards cause drivers to look to both sides of the road, not just dead ahead, so they sometimes see possible accident causes in time to react. The same commercials also say that people don't notice beautiful scenery from automobiles unless billboards are in the vicinity to attract the eye to the wonders of nature. " In Maryland, it's illegal to have fireworks sent to your house by express, even if you intend to shoot them off in one of the nearby areas where they're legal. However, there is some hope that this state may unload its idiotic movie censorship board. A test case has been started, reputedly on the instigation of the censors themselves, who may be getting tired of a thankless task. " Maybe modern methods of teaching reading do save time for the first graders. But I'll bet that the kids in later life waste much more than the time they saved at the age of six in the form of those agonized efforts to look up things without a good knowledge of the order of the letters in the alphabet.

That Bleak November

One day last August, the editor called me into his office on a particularly rushed night. "Do you want my job?" he asked.

I assumed that someone in the family had taken sick and he needed a leave of absence. But he told me something that had not yet begun to percolate through the news room, giving it the distinction of a really top secret. The editor was about to be promoted to the job of executive editor of the two local newspapers and someone would be needed to take over his duties on the morning paper for which I have toiled so many years. I wasted no time making up my mind. "No," I said. "You have more sense than you've ever shown before," he answered. It was the first time in years he had said anything nice about me.

The editor's job on a daily newspaper in a medium-size town like Hagerstown is not like the image that the job possesses in movies, or in college journalism classes. The editor does some editing but mostly he fixes things when they are going wrong, tries to figure out what to do in the totally unprecedented circumstances that occur two or three times each day, and tries to keep his patience with all the crackpots in seven counties. The hours are enormously long, the editor misses the direct contact with the life of the city that the subordinates enjoy, and up to now, no editor has ever reached retirement age without dropping dead. Only two years before, the afternoon paper had lost its editor in ten seconds as he was walking through the local Newberry's dime store. These and many other reasons had caused me to decline the offer without thanks, and now I changed my mind. For the first time I realized that there were some modest compensations to the evils of an editorship, that I hadn't recognized when unobtainable. The job pays more than I make and might hasten by several years the financial independence that I've long pursued. If the editorship went to someone else I would run the risk of finding myself subordinate to an individual whom I disliked. More important, perhaps, was the thought that I seem to get more and more tired all the time of running my legs off after news, lugging a camera through storm and heat, suffering the blame for all the things that go wrong without a specific scapegoat, and enduring the barrage of telephone calls at my home during non-working hours that implore me to provide instant and thorough coverage for a dinner meeting or award ceremony. The editor must sit around the office almost all the time. I was always a bit grateful at my good fortune when the new editor of the afternoon paper soon grew into the habit of keeping milk of magnesia in his desk drawer. But now the sedentary life appeared in a vision with luring as well as distasteful consequences.

So I told the editor that I'd changed my mind and I did want his job and except for one tremendous glare he said or did nothing more for a long time. Weeks passed and I'd begun to think that maybe I'd dreamed the whole thing. Then I got instructions to show some getup and go, if I wanted to be considered for the editorship. I should present my case to the publisher. I did. He seemed pleased that I'd finally taken care of this amenity and instructed me about the ritual that has been devised by the company when thinking of promotions for anyone above the level of janitor. I don't think it wise to go into detail on what happened next, because there's always the chance that someone out there in fandom might take a potshot at me by forwarding this issue of Horizons to someone who doesn't understand the frankness with which we normally express ourselves in FAPA. So let us synopsise the proceedings into the simple statement that I was interviewed in a manner that still gives me shudders and unexpected changes in the higher echelons of the company occurred to change the editorship situation considerably. The editor con-

tinued to be editor, the original executive editor who had been assumed to be spurlos versunken in the depths of California journalism returned to his local duties, and I heard nothing more than rumors about the future situation. My main reaction was that of exasperation. Suspense over the future of my job had become a quite nervewracking thing that made it impossible for me to concentrate quite as much as I prefer on such things as enjoying a vacation or cutting stencils for Horizons. I wasn't sure how I'd react, whichever way the decision went and I wanted very badly to know what was going to happen, to get the doubt out of my mind. But it wasn't until November that I discovered the decision. The publisher took me into his office, told me that there had been some forty applicants for the job with the air of a man who didn't realize before how many idiots there are in the world, and said that they had chosen someone else to be editor. I suspect that he braced himself for some sort of violent reaction from me, but nothing happened. I was relieved that the suspense had snapped and my only other reaction was that of slight annoyance that he wouldn't reveal the identity of the new editor. It would be announced to the full staff within a week, he said.

I developed a roll of film, made a print for the next day's newspaper, decided that I might as well go out and get some supper, and suddenly I found myself raging with a white anger that hadn't existed a moment earlier. I probably created it unwittingly when for the first time I began to realize that someone else in Hagerstown might become editor. There were a half-dozen possibilities, most of them currently working for the newspaper, one or two others employed in public relations work elsewhere in the city but with journalistic background. I know what a condescending, half-scornful attitude the whole community takes toward several men who were in major positions of responsibility at the newspaper before it was sold four years ago and have since been supplanted by other men but have accepted the demotion and hang onto their lowlier jobs. I felt that I couldn't bear to live in Hagerstown if something of the sort were now happening to me: the city editor is not the exalted individual that the general manager and the advertising director were, but I didn't want to topple from even this lowly pedestal. I got to the bottom of the stairs, stopped for a moment, wondering if I should turn to the right and tell the publisher that I was quitting immediately, then went straight ahead and out onto the street. It was a raw, foggy November evening and I felt clammy. I always perspire annoyingly when I get worked up over something. I took out of my overcoat pocket the letters that I'd been trying all day to remember to mail and headed for the mailbox on the corner, knowing that I'd better not try to eat until I'd simmered down enough to give my digestive processes a fair chance.

Kenny Taylor saw me almost as soon as I emerged from the building. He is the victim of some obscure physiological condition that causes him to walk with great difficulty something like a kangaroo, slurs his speech, and does not help his mental processes. There was a slight tie between us, for we'd been neighbors the last time I was in the hospital. Kenny's nose had started to bleed and wouldn't stop bleeding, and local tradition says that this is invariably fatal. The hospital stopped the nosebleed after several days of dogged effort but Kenny had learned that the combination of his physical condition and high blood pressure made it essential for him to retire from his vocation as newspaperboy. He had gotten out of the hospital at about the same time as I did, sold the route, refused the welfare checks that everyone had assumed he'd need, and was enjoying life for the first time in retirement. Kenny, a trifle older than I am, spends most of his time at the Antietam Fire Hall, en-

joys nothing more than a lot of kidding about the way he must walk and talk, and asked me to make sure he got to the fire hall safely. I took him down the street, suddenly aware that here was a simple soul who had faced a crisis analogous in a way to my own and had made a decision, involving the very same source of livelihood. Halfway to our destination, he stopped. "I almost fell down that hole the other day," he said, pointing to the steep steps leading to the offices of a real estate man who inhabits the only partially explored lowest level of the business district. This strengthened the bond, because I had been rather nervous that week about that very spot, inasmuch as I had published a front page picture of the worst eyesore in downtown Hagerstown and the owner of it is the very same real estate man who had reacted violently. I assured Kenny that I had a good hold of him but he still didn't resume the walk and I began to feel sorry for someone who couldn't remember what he wanted to do for more than a few moments. I tugged gently at him and he pointed at the mailbox. "You forgot to mail your letters," he reminded me. I walked back to the mailbox, got Kenny safely to the fire hall, then walked around the block four times, thinking hard and rather confusedly. I knew that sages like Rick Sneary say that things very rarely happen to me, something had definitely happened, and it was very important that I make the most of this occurrence, for there was no telling when the next critical point in my life might come along.

Instead of a full meal, I decided to limit myself to a steamer and a cup of coffee and a slice of pie. The steamer is supposed to be native to this part of Maryland; at least, the Baltimore Sun got no complaints when it ran a feature story on the phenomenon a while back, claiming that it is unknown elsewhere. It is best described as predigested hamburger. Strangers encountering it are usually advised to eat it with closed eyes the first time or two. Donna, the most interesting waitress known to me at present, served me. Outwardly, she looks as if she were about to graduate from junior high school, with a face that is so innocent that Disney animals look sophisticated in comparison. She is short and has the straightest hair that any woman has ever possessed, an affliction that causes recurring cycles of rebellion, adoption of extreme measures to cause it to remain curled for at least an hour or two, and eventual recognition of the fact that this is the way that God wants it and that he is serious about having his will done. But somewhere inside this unimposing physical superstructure I'm pretty sure that there are both Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, battling for ascendancy. She is married to a slob, halfway separated from him, has a small daughter, and is fighting the good fight against the overwhelming temptation to take one of the easy roads leading away from the nasty mess that her life has become. Apparently this situation comes through to other people besides me. "Most of my customers smile at me," Donna says. "I'm sure I don't know what they think it's going to do." Donna Anna appears when there is a mixup over whether a sandwich should be toasted or another girl allows the pan to run over while making coffee. Donna is shift leader and takes her responsibility much more seriously than if her father had been skewered by a man she mistook for her lover. She is much less noisy than the original Donna Anna but her absolutely flat chest surges and billows in the most alarming manner and the manner in which she tosses a clean towel over her shoulder remains graven in the memory for months. Donna Elvira appears whenever an old friend from pre-marriage days sits down at the counter or the policeman assigned to the corner decides he should get off his feet for a while or she must work during her time of the month and seems ready to do anything to get out from behind that counter. I used to worry about Donna Elvira, but now I know that this

half of her personality is not quite strong enough to cause a disaster and that it always gets shoved out of sight in plenty of time. If there is a deity, I hope that Donna's own particular dissolute gets punito as soon and as painfully as possible, and that Donna will immediately find someone who will let her lead the one life that would make her happy: a ticket to the races and \$6 for the parimutuels every sunny weekday of the year. On this particular evening, Donna told me that I looked skinnier than ever and the food, such as it was, also made me feel slightly better.

Back at the office, I surprised myself by acting so normally that nobody sensed that a crisis had arrived. It was my night to work late, and during the last two or three hours of those nights, there is not much brainwork to do: just proof to read, an occasional reference to the teletype to make sure nothing late is breaking, and finally a grim struggle with the composing room foreman to try to salvage something out of the makeup that the front and back pages were intended to have and which he has proof positive can never come into reality. Those hours that night provided me with the decision that I needed so badly. It was a decision to quit.

The next day, I began to survey my possible futures. I knew that they were more numerous than would be the case for a married man or a person with such complications as a lot of debts or poor health. Kenny made me realize how alluring idleness was, all of a sudden. I'm not rich enough to end my working career before my 42nd birthday, and yet it might be possible to achieve a miracle, if Kenny had done so. I can live on a low budget, for a variety of reasons. I owe nobody a cent, have no dependents, prefer the simplest clothing and food, the house is mine, and the cost of living in Hagerstown is not excessive. On Saturday I reckoned up my financial situation. It was precariously close to giving me a chance of stopping work and surviving on income from investments plus whatever sums I might obtain by a small amount of freelance writing. It would mean selling the car, buying books and records only on the greatest of occasions, looking the other way if I happened to see a woman who would make an ideal wife, and above all, avoiding broken hips. In less than a quarter-century, my problem would be ended because I would be either dead or eligible for social security. But I was not certain how my psyche would react to a situation in which I couldn't spend money when I want to. As things are now, I don't waste much money but on the occasional times when I decide I really want something, I buy it without the need to worry about whether I can afford it and I usually get the expensive model or make. A rise in the cost of living or worsening health a few years after this kind of premature retirement could leave me in a serious trouble.

But there was another way to get the same result. This house is much too big for one person, except for consideration of the storage requirements of a person like me. At only a slight cost, it could be adapted into two apartments. I could confine myself to one apartment, rent out the other, and the income from this rent would be the difference between a precarious balance and some leeway in my finances. The space problem wouldn't be too bad: I could retain rights to either the attic or the cellar, and there is the huge two-level multiple garage at the end of the yard that I haven't even started to fill up. Other people in the house would be a sort of insurance against sudden sickness or accident to me, if my intact condition weren't guaranteed by my habit of daily appearances at the office where my failure to show would instantly be interpreted as something wrong. However, the apartment idea also had a monstrous defect. My way of life is rich in decibels. The typewriter

bangs away an hour or so daily and would get more use if I didn't tire myself out on the other typewriter at the office. It's hard to imagine life without a halfhour or so of piano playing every day. There is the record collection. Time differentials make it possible to listen to baseball, basketball, and football for six or eight hours at a time in season. The problem could be mitigated by earphones, typewriter cushions, and the like, but hardly solved altogether. Besides, those hospital and convalescent home stays taught me the virtues of privacy and the sublimity of having complete peace and quiet available when desired. Only by the most improbable of chances would I find as tenants an individual or a couple who made little racket themselves, didn't object to mine, and could live beside the air conditioner mentioned in the previous Horizons.

Another job in Hagerstown? Well, I don't know how to do anything except work for the newspaper, and there is no other publishing company in town. The unemployment total here has been high for years and this fall things have grown much worse: a strike at Mack Trucks, the biggest local employer, is in its second month and may run many weeks longer, there is talk of a merger of two railroads that would throw hundreds of railroaders in and near Hagerstown out of work, and Fairchild has built a fine modern factory near Washington in favor of which it will undoubtedly abandon its local operations within a year or two. You can always get a job as a salesman around here but I'm sure that my personality doesn't cut me out for that sort of job, and the firms that are always looking for salesmen are the ones where I wouldn't make half the money that the newspaper now pays me. A strenuous effort to support myself generously by free lancing would be the only genuine local recourse. And I don't think this kind of vocation would appeal to me. It's easy to guess what would happen. By hard work, I'd earn x number of dollars during the first six months, and I would drive myself much harder during the next six months to obtain x plus 500 dollars, to reassure myself about how I could increase the income any time I wished, and then the second year I'd work like a dog in the hope that I might earn enough to add to my savings in addition to supporting myself, and the final situation would be as unfortunate as if I were selling vacuum cleaners with a quota hanging over me. No, my mental makeup is the kind that needs an income that won't change in ratio to the amount of time and effort that go out.

Move somewhere else? I have no doubt about my ability to get a decent newspaper job almost anywhere in the nation, but the work is pretty much the same everywhere and the agony involved in getting intimately acquainted with another town in order to be a good reporter in it quickly became obvious. Try to retire in some area where living expenses are dirtcheap? This plan presented the fewest objections of all, except for the intangible ones about how homesick I might get and how likely might be some kind of serious trouble or breakdown with no income of great proportions in a strange area. I just haven't the guts to expatriate myself without a preliminary personal look at the people and living conditions, and I doubt that there's any place in this nation where there is the combination of a fine environment and low expenses. Once again, the hobbies enter the picture. It's frightful, the amount of time and effort that would be involved in moving the records and even the bare minimum portions of the fannish lares and penates necessary to continue in this way of life.

When I was a little boy, I had a Lionel electric train. At that time, Lionel had just introduced a new automatic feature. Even longer ago, when you wanted to reverse the direction of the locomotive, you

pushed a little lever that stuck out of the front, but now the locomotive automatically reversed direction each time it was restarted after a halt. This sounds strange, but in practice it worked quite well: if you wanted to stop the train and then resume progress in the same direction, you simply gave the tiniest flick of power to the engine with your switch after the halt, then immediately restored power fully, and the mechanism had gone through its reverse cycle without budging and now was moving forward again. But my own particular locomotive did not operate quite right and repeated trips back to the factory and several dissections by my father never traced the cause of the trouble. Every so often, when power was turned on, the poor thing would sit there, clicking frantically, its mechanism shuttling back and forth a couple of times a second, never settling down long enough to permit motion in either direction. This was something that hadn't been disturbed in my memory cells for a decade or two. But in those next few days the analogy between me and that long-ago toy suddenly popped up unbidden. (Simultaneously, it occurred to me for the first time that this faulty mechanism could conceivably have had a bad effect on my mental processes, for I've been plagued most of my life with occasional situations in which an unimportant decision paralyzes me totally and foolishly, preventing me from taking either of two possible actions for an absurd length of time. Putting things down on paper sometimes eases one's mind; say a little prayer for me as you read.) I wanted to quit, but I wanted to know before I quit what course of action I intended to pursue. Calculating probable income and the minimum of expenses without a regular job succeeded in killing some time, inquiries into the cost of installing a new bathroom and making other changes in the house provided some additional work for an idle mind, but a decision couldn't be postponed much longer, or the failure to act would constitute a decision of sorts of its own. And of course, there was always the thought of the road not taken. What would I miss, if I didn't wait and see who the new editor might be, what sort of person he proved to be, which changes he might contrive in the news department? What if the management decided next year to combine the morning and the evening paper, leaving no editor for the morning paper to worry about at all? Or suppose the new editor proved incompetent or got an irresistible offer from the Christian Science Monitor after six months on the job?

While the direction reversal mechanism buzzed unavailingly, a few things were happening around me. The telegraph editor quit, so that removed one possible new editor. He'd wanted the job, too, and had remained in the employment of the Hagerstown newspaper only because he thought he might get it. He was one of the two men under whom I positively would not have worked. Vocal scores of Elektra and Daphne came from a German fan with whom I'm avoiding the high cost of commercially imported music by a trade arrangement. They were the only things that could possibly have distracted me from the main concern and they were also a mute memento mori of my fortunes, for even at the bargain trading cost, they would be out-of-reach luxuries on a sharply reduced income and suddenly I didn't think that I could face a future that didn't contain the hope of someday owning the Strauss operas that I still do not possess. And something else that I'd been trying to forget continued to nag at me. During the early fall, I'd bought a first-rate turntable, tone arm, and cartridge as the start of a replacement of my extremely old and feeble audio equipment. Now I couldn't afford the other components, if every dollar must be watched and it is quite obvious that my present equipment will become totally useless in the foreseeable future, as transistors assume complete charge and the vacuum tube types that are now hard to find become unobtainable.

The announcement of the new editor was fumbled, with respect to me. The company decided to inform the staff by little chats with each employee instead of calling everyone together and saying it once. The official who conducted the little chats thought that the publisher had told me the name of the new editor, the other members of the staff assumed that I'd known it all along, and as a result I didn't find out about the new boss until I learned by accident, some days after everyone else in Hagerstown was aware of the identity. It turned out to be someone nobody had ever heard of before, from Akron. It also developed that the editor whose job I was supposed to get won't be executive editor after all. He's getting another duty that is close enough to a step downward to deflect in his direction any whispering about promotions going astray that might have been aimed at me. As far as I know, I'm still city editor.

As you must have guessed by now, my decision was to make no decision, a procedure that pretty well typifies my life up to now. I want the rest of that audio equipment. If Donna can fight the good fight in the teeth of such temptation to take one of the many easy ways out, maybe I should emulate her, at least for a while. Besides, it occurred to me two weeks later than it would have entered the mind of anyone else that conversion of the house to apartments would be more expensive than I'd calculated. The pantry is the only suitable place for installing a bathroom downstairs and I'd forgotten about the sketchy construction of this portion of the house, apparently added after the main building went up. The temperature in the pantry during the winter averages ten degrees under the outside air, and a great deal of insulating or rebuilding will be necessary to prevent frostbite during certain modern rites.

The new editor won't take over until after the first of the year, several weeks after the typing of this. He has made one visit to Hagerstown. I was covering an odd murder trial that day. It had been moved here from Anne Arundel County, where too many people had been emotional about the attempted rape and slaying of an 83-year-old resident of an old folks' home. The police had full confessions from two men, each of whom insisted that he did it alone and unaided, and the two had equally convincing knowledge of certain things about the crime that a non-participant couldn't have been expected to know. But finally the FBI managed to determine who was lying by analysis of hair, blood, and semen specimens left by the murderer. The innocent man is in a boobyhatch and the guilty one is now awaiting sentencing for first degree murder. I was introduced to the new editor while I was writing the story, shook hands, and went home to find the new issue of Double:Bill awaiting me. While leafing through it, I remembered suddenly that it wasn't the first thing that I had seen from Akron that day and for the first time I realized that I'd not even taken the time to look closely at my new boss. He's reputed to be knowledgable, easy-going, and was liked by the other employees who were more attentive to what was in their presence that night. But there is no getting away from it: of the two things that came from Akron to Hagerstown that day, the fannish one interested me much more.

So now I feel a little like the character in a Stendhal novel who never learns for certain if the confusion that he was in one day was really the battle of Waterloo. I think that I've met a crisis and I hope that I did the sensible thing rather than following the instinctive and emotional course of action. There is some consolation in the thought that I can always change my mind if things prove unsatisfactory a month or a year from now, in contrast to the nonreversible nature of an immediate resignation. But there's also the dully painful recognition of the fact that I may have doomed myself to vegetation in the easy and nonproductive way of life, that this was my one big chance to escape and that I stayed in prison. It's a heck of a thing to know that you'll be eligible for social security starting in the year 1984.

All Our Yesterdays

A fandom that is not battling the post office is as hard to picture as a Cato who said, "Who gives a damn about Carthage, anyway?" It would probably be possible to find the first faint grumblings from fans about postal service in the earliest letter columns, when a fan had got his magazine through the mail with a torn cover or stained edges. Several stories of fantasy interest were involved in fights about mailability, long before fandom became an entity. However, it was not until the 1940's that these preliminary skirmishes threatened to develop into pitched battles..

Generally, it is possible to distinguish between two types of related postal troubles: those that the post office initiates without prompting and those that someone in fandom instigates or threatens to create. Other postal troubles are quite mild, comparatively, and are accepted by most fans as part of the workings of fate. Thus, there was little protest when FAPA's coup with jiffybags, designed to prevent mailings from arriving in shredded and partial condition, proved effective for only six months, after which clerks and delivery men throughout the nation showed their adaptability to new conditions by acquiring the ability to rend the new armor asunder.

The earliest case in which a fan became famous for joining forces with the forces of censorship in the post office goes back to 1944, when Langley Searles threatened to send FAPA publications that offended him to postal authorities. Ackerman called it "moral blackmail" when Searles announced: "If I see any pornography, pictorial or otherwise, in mailings subsequent to that in which this number appears, I shall promptly send the offending publications, with the proper information, to the postmaster general." As we shall see, it was many years before anyone began to carry out in systematic manner this threat.

One great difficulty has always involved the fact that the post office doesn't like to rule in advance on the mailability of anything. Speer found that out around the same time when he attempted to determine what would happen if a lithographed illustration for *Le Zombie* were mailed and someone squealed or a copy were inspected. He got this ruling from the Post Office Department in Washington: "The law does not require the Post Office Department to make a ruling as to the mailability of matter that is not in the mails or that has not been deposited for mailing. The dispatch by postmasters and postal employees of matter deposited in the mails constitutes no guarantee of its mailability under the postal obscene statutes. Those statutes are criminal laws and one must of course accept full responsibility for depositing any matter in the mails which is in violation thereof." Another hint of the future climax came when the whole matter got laughed into temporary oblivion, because someone claimed that the cover of an E. Everett Evans publication depicting the progress of mankind from the caves to future glories was a hidden glorification of homosexuality.

A little later, however, fanzine editors began to experience real, rather than threatened, postal complications. Ever-lovin' Max Keasler first lost NFFF support for his fanzine, then found the post office also threatened to withdraw assistance from it. The June, 1951, issue of *Fan Variety* contained pages that authorities described as "material of questionable mailability under the postal obscenity law". Max went underground, claiming for FV the distinction of being the first border-run fanzine, but a little later he changed the title to *Opus*, just to be on the safe side. Portland, Ore., publishers ran into difficulties at much the same time. Forrest Davis' *Incinerations*

was denied mailing privileges at least once, possibly twice. There are conflicting stories, but apparently the fourth issue achieved the ultimate distinction of being so bad that Rog Phillips refused to review it in *Amazing Stories* and the fifth issue included several Christmas cards with attributes that someone in the postal service disliked, perhaps the length of the teeth on the infant Jesus getting liquid refreshment. This was the year in which Russ Watkins tried to organize through his fanzine, *Dawn*, a "censor crusade" to clean up fanzine productions. He was shouted down by fans who preferred the freedom of the press, but warning words were sounded, like Bob Silverberg's: "There are certain fanzines published now which are in very bad taste. One of them was just stopped by the post office department." Silverberg emphasized that he was dead set against an official fannish censor. Will Kirby approached the problem from a different tack. He mailed part of the edition of the first issue of *Spaceslip* to prominent fans in care of the fans' postmasters, enclosing extra postage and asking those notables to forward the publications if they thought they wouldn't harm the fans. All that happened was that some fans never did see that issue, whose contents were innocuous in the extreme. This little event is trivial in itself, except as a sample of how things can happen before history is ready for them.

The 1950's were marked by intensification of the troubles, involving new fans and slightly different circumstances. There was the issue of *Spicy Stf. Stuff* that disrupted the Detroit Science Fiction League. Mothers of some of the younger members saw it and persuaded their heirs to resign. However, all was not lost, for in a rare burst of cooperation, the postal inspectors suggested exactly what words must be removed to permit its mailing. It dutifully appeared in a 1953 *SAPS* mailing, with the offending words blacked out, and readers invited to submit 25¢ for a separate list of the missing words. Nan Gerding, of all people, had difficulties when postal authorities in Washington sat on the 14th issue of *Nandu* for three months, before finally approving it. Fortunately, Nan had already sent out most copies of the edition the preceding year, so most fans weren't unduly delayed. As entities, *FAPA* and the *Cult* were in difficulties a little later. A nude on the cover of a *FAPA* publication was the crisis for that organization. Dick Eney, then official editor, was allowed to send out the mailing, with that item withdrawn, and was forced to submit the following mailing for inspection. B. Joseph Fekete was annoyed no end when the post office began to confiscate all *Cult* material addressed to him, stamping it "subversive material". The big episode involving the mails of this approximate period is one that is best left untold as far as names and specifics are concerned, for protection of and against individuals who are still up and around. Suffice it to say that a thoroughly unpopular fan slipped into the custom of going to the authorities about every fan with whom he engaged in a dispute. He was finally silenced by becoming the target for something of the same sort. There is probably no truth to the legend that various fans helped out by subscribing to certain publications and ordering certain other articles in his name at a time when he was under the closest scrutiny.

There appeared from time to time proposals to do something about the intolerable strain on the nerves of fans that the post office created. In 1957, for instance, Larry Shaw urged fandom to secede from the post office. This would have consisted of organization of an underground railroad for dissemination of fannish letters and publications. The ultimate goal was to be a climactic emergence into the open, simultaneously with complete destruction of the entire government postal service, by im-

pregnating the mite into an entire edition of Life. Unfortunately, some clod took seriously a much less radical proposal in the early 1960's. This concerned Vic Ryan's fanzine, Bane, which published an Alan Dodd article, "You, Too Can Be a Post-Office Robber". The post office wouldn't have gone much deeper in the red even if every reader had adopted the intolerably laborious tactics that Dodd pretended to propose to obtain a second use of a postage stamp. But Ryan was closeted for a time with a postal inspector and then was required to visit a United States attorney, in order to escape with nothing worse than a warning. Perhaps it was a similar adventure that caused Mike McInerney to write his celebrated definition of a mailman: "the lowest, sneakiest, most conniving, cheating, rotten, good-for-nothing creature that ever crawled around in the slime of this or any other world in the vast infinity of space or time."

Somewhat later, the first reference to fanzines in the Postal Bulletin that is known to me appeared in the 22534th issue of the leaflet that goes daily to all postmasters. In typical detail, it is directed to "all postal installations" and instructs postmasters that:

"1. Fanzines. Effective August 1 next, postmasters in installations lower than first class are instructed to mail inspection copies of so-called "fanzines" to the nearest first-class post office. A "fanzine" is: a. normally mimeographed, hectographed, lithographed, photooffset, carboncopied, printed, or otherwise reproduced, except for those that are created on the typewriter; b. not to be confused with school publications, except in instances where the postmaster cannot determine the category, under which circumstances he shall forward to the Procurement Division, Bureau of Facilities, five copies of Form 5984.1. 2. Postmasters shall not contact the district attorney, state's attorney, or equivalent authority without express instructions from regional headquarters in written form, properly countersigned, because of the great proportion of unobjectionable "fanzines". 3. It is not necessary to write 'letters of comment' on these 'fanzines' as some postmasters attempt to do in accordance with instructions conveyed by small v's on a list contained on some interior page. All postoffices, including those above, below, and at the level of second class post offices, will receive within seven days an ample supply of two-volume sets of instructions on when these 'checklists' are to be construed as requiring first class postage."

Immediately recognizable, behind the stern directive, is the fine Italian hand of Walt Brandt. He had quit fandom once in typically emotional reaction to hearing an old, sad story, that of the former No. One Fan who had been indicted by a grand jury on five counts after a letter that he had written to a correspondent got into the wrong hands and what this famous fan considered "private matters of mutual erotic interest" almost cost him five years in prison or a \$5,000 fine or both. Deepseated fannish instincts made it impossible for Walt to remain gaffed very long, and innate good humor quickly caused him to realize that this particular storm had blown over for the fan involved with consequences not much worse than a lot of worry. But Brandt became obsessed with the desire to do something about the post office difficulties. He began in 1965 his research into the past fannish history of the topic, compiling a thick sheaf of accounts of episodes that I have not attempted to cover: lawsuits that grew out of statements distributed by mail, the frequency with which a good fan attempts to live down over the years the indiscretion of running to the postmaster or a lawyer committed as a neofan, the inordinate delays to which fanzines are subjected before delivery to destination while magazines of national circulation paying far less for postage on a per-ounce basis are hustled into mailslots on a

precision schedule. At either the London of 1965 or the following year's convention, the then unknown Brandt heard a couple of veteran fans reminiscing about the Will Kirby-Spaceslip episode. Brandt went home, wrote down everything about the event as he remembered it, and filed it with the remainder of the episodes in his bulging dossier. But he couldn't get it out of his mind. He had long intended to publish a fanzine of his own, was about to repeat the experiment that Kirby had tried so many years ago when he had a fuss with his family, and moving into a small room in a boarding house, found it necessary to dispose of his collection. Brandt sold the older fanzines, as a spacesaving measure, could find no market for those who had emerged in the past couple of months, and was about to burn them when one of the great fannish ideas occurred. Now that he no longer contributed to the expenses of his parents' home, he had more money to spare. He put several score recent fanzines into new envelopes, bought new postage for them, mimeographed a letter denouncing the editors, and mailed one copy of the letter and one fanzine to the postmasters of a number of American cities chosen at random. Of course, he had carefully scanned each publication to ascertain its harmlessness; those that contained even borderline items, he destroyed. Puzzled fanzine editors in several parts of the nation received requests to visit their postmaster, because a few of these gentlemen had not trusted their ability to deduce the true meaning of straightforward prose and poetry and had feared some unmailable subtleties lurked behind the apparent contents. In this manner, Brandt's actions became known, the cities in which fans had been subjected to this needless embarrassment were listed in a dozen fanzines and the postmasters there were almost at once receiving almost daily new issues of fanzines, always accompanied by letters asking the authorities to act on the non-existent obscenities and subversities therein. From this manner of revenge on a few postmasters, it was an easy and obvious step toward the extension of the mock denunciations to authorities at post offices large and small, throughout the land. The Postal Bulletin item appeared at this point.

Even as recently as last year, controversy continued to rage over the ultimate wisdom of the new craze for baiting the post office. But with the arrival of the 1970's, fandom throughout the nation seems to agree that the benefits have outdistanced the disadvantages. There are a few diehards who contend that we would be better off with larger fanzines than are possible when a hundred or more copies of each issue are reserved for challenges to postal authorities to find non-existing iniquities. However, the added expense that has been placed on fanzine editors may well be balanced by the greater amounts of spare time given to fans who can read the fan press output in half the time, and there has been a substantial saving through the cheap postal arrangements offered by Washington authorities two years ago in a glaring and unsuccessful attempt to bribe fandom into laying off. We have lost at last count 23 fans to the postal service, but those who have sold themselves for rewards promised if they can find something unmailable in fanzines might have begun new clubs back in the old days. Three postmasters were in the top 25 of fandom at the time of the last fall poll. Less cheering is the obvious degeneration in moral tone and purity of language in the fan press today: too many fanzine editors have taken advantage of the fact that they can write whatever they please and nobody will pay attention to denunciations of them. I leave for a future historian the matter of what success Brandt obtains in his most recent effort to break up fan feuding.

(Preprinted from the third volume of my fan history published by Advent)

The Worst of Martin

After Many a Year....

I'm an inveterate no-letter writer as you know. I appreciated your last note/fanzine which had some news about yourself besides the warning that it was the last until you heard from me. I do hope you'll consider this an answer.

Last October we moved from a few furnished rooms in Hartford to a brand spanking new ranch in Berlin (American Zone). From dismal smallness it is a great change. We keep feeling someone will wander in and explain there's been a mistake--that we'll have to go back to the furnished rooms.

Everything we own has been stored since 1943--when last the draft for me. Too little furniture and too many crates of books and sundries. Never have I seen so many sundries. An attic full--'twill take months to unpack and sort. Fun, though, somewhat like being an archeologist. We find so many things we didn't know we had we're beginning to wonder if we raided the storage. Like one night discussing the need for at least six good pony glasses--luckily we unpacked another box. You guessed it--I had to buy the glasses.

Of course, in the meanwhile, the place looks like it was designed by Frankenstein and furnished by the Collyer brothers. Lots of true American antiques--or early Sears-Roebuck.

A new house as I'm rapidly discovering needs a wide variety of accoutrements: screens, storm windows, double-paning in the picture window (26 feet of glass ceiling to floor), insulate in the cellar, stop that leak, tote that grading, get a little drunk and--ah! wrong missal.

Normally, during the summer we go hiking along the Appalachian Trail. Spend a couple of weeks in the AMC network in the White Mountains--under the impression that a vacation is a "change". Seeing as how we stay under a wet rock the balance of the year it's a shocking change. Well, betcha this year I'll get my "change" building a patio or the like.

But still I claim my intentions are honorable--as far as correspondence is concerned. So do let me hear from you--good, bad or indifferent. At least a note, a postal card--hello! Are you there? I don't hear a word!

I have a feeling this issue of Grotesque is destined for great popularity and success--three people already have stated it is completely ridiculous.

1064th Mailing....

Martian Windbagg (Georg Authaus)--Pretty clever, lithoing the zine on the back of Martian sandpaper. Never could read Martian. Tried to put it to the traditional use but found that sandpaper is sandpaper is sandpaper. Out Damned Spot (Lemuel)--That's what I said. Asteroid Belt Notch 3 (Sznumx) Maybe that's poetry in the Asteroid Belt but it's more like pidgen Univ to me. On the second page, for example:

Kithem waluit perith wahh

Hilder mayem wold enathh

Horif perth in tothick xem

Walla yee in perinem.

Now, most of you have been right there. We know the "Mayem wold" would never "walla yee in". The inference is ridiculous. You might as well say a "Jusha berin" would "ferig wahl". Which is quite a famous joke. In fact, I never fully appreciated the intended pun until I saw Bilton Merle at the Crater Club, Earth Moon, one night. It was a marioin-smoker, and--well, maybe this isn't the place to go into such stories. They're really "out of this world", to coin a cliché. But

you see what I mean about Sznumx's poetry. Further on there's misspellings:

Zashimun id lilka purkin.
Mus ig bon a yerrli ferkin.

I'll bet he can't even pronounce it. Methuselah (Speer) Known as Old Jack, affectionately. They say he's been around an aeon. No one could be that old--Vol. MMMMMCCCLXXXIII No. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$. He must be passing off his own grandpa as himself.

More Gluth....

Parts of Jon's weighty "History of the Dark Thousand" are always worthy of review and coaing.

During that highly uncritical period when practically no advancement was made either scientific or enpnegolikal--for that matter--the years 1900-2000, old style, a number of curious habit and customs are noted.

In sections of the "civilized" world credit operated mechanisms were available, apparently every few yards, from which a product called "cigarettes" could be extracted. Cigarettes were made from a weed ("tobacco") aged and flavored in a barbaric and totally unsanitary manner and rolled into paper tubes. These were inserted in the purchaser's lips and ignited--the furthest terminal point, that is. Then by sucking, clouds of unsavory smoke could be introduced into the pleural cavity.

This irritation of course gave rise to violent fits of coughing. Extended use inured the user to evident irritation but shortened expectancy considerably. Kon states that use of this virulent drug was available to children as young as 30 or 40 but this is considered by other peraeon students as most unlikely. As Hrld states: "How barbarian can you get?"

While preparing this review I brought the matter of tobacco to the attention of feelow Jaak ag Gs. He found the matrix amusing for a few moments and said: "Jesezl bopin burph!"

What else can one add to that?

Elsewhere Jon reminisces on his lecture tours and the amused doubt his listeners expressed over the books on "musical instruments". Jon is convinced that during that dark period individuals "played" contraptions they called "instruments". These, apparently, can be likened to a person playing a single line from a symphic. Actually making the sounds himself on this "instrument". I know your first question is: "For what?" At least you can accept this possibility. The objective of this conditioning is difficult to accept. It appears that great numbers of similarly trained individuals gathered and "played" simultaneously on their various "instruments". The results being a symphic.

Ah! You can't imagine a composer not writing directly for the symphicon. Perhaps Kon's hypothesis will help you believe: "They didn't have one."

Classified....

MARTIANS--WHY WEAR A IMUSS? Latest invention will keep your eyes from falling out at the improper moment. Are you embarrassed by falling eyes? Ears? Nose and throat? Are you past your prime? Falling back on the old Imuss? Do you rattle in the clinches? Make the change now. See Ligg the Imuss expert. Do it today!

(From the summer, 1953, issue of Grotesque, FAPA publication of Edgar Allan Martin in the years when FAPA paid attention to its constitution)

Fanzine by Trial

Several pages in this issue were originally destined to contain a dissertation on the concept of trial by fanzine. This would not have treated the concept with nearly as much honor and respect as several FAPA members have suggested that it deserves. But on an occasion so devoted to good fellowship and cheer as Christmas Eve, how could I follow this course of action? (It is true that Christmas Eve means to me the night when I first learned how to break a hip, but I bow to the majority emotion.) Scrapping the original intention leaves me with some space to fill. Maybe it will be possible to salvage something from the basic notion of the law, by some observations on recent court cases that I have observed.

Court reporters in Hagerstown were disappointed a year ago when a change in the official procedures ruined the pleasant interludes of paternity cases that used to season the bland fare provided by tedious larcenies and manslaughters by automobile. The paternity cases were removed from criminal to civil court and were to be heard in privacy, maybe because they threatened to outdraw the Baltimore Colts. However, by force of habit or reconsideration, the old procedure has returned and I got to hear two complete and one partial paternity proceedings the other day, sandwiched as they were into intervals of a day mostly devoted to a couple of assault cases cum jury. I don't even need to take notes on paternity cases in the course of my work, because we don't print news stories about them. Maybe the non-publication tradition arose from the fact that accidents are news only when they have just happened.

One case teetered precariously between humor and tragedy. The girl might have come out of a novel: the daughter of a pair of rural residents who had seldom allowed her out of their sight, somehow she had found opportunity to get married five years ago, her husband vanished after three months leaving a note to the effect that he didn't approve of married life, the parents had doubled their scrutiny of her, but a year ago, the manager of a farmers' cooperative in the nearest town had telephoned her to come up and cook some squirrels for him, she'd gone to his apartment to tell him that she was too nice a girl to do such things and she was pregnant before she got out of there. I got the impression that she hasn't been allowed out of the house since, except to go to the hospital to have her twins. It was the man who provided a denial of intercourse the likes of which nobody could remember. He admitted that the girl had come to his apartment, that they had started kissing, that other procedures involved in necking had followed, that both were getting very excited. But then, he said, he discovered that her breasts weren't real ones, or rather that her real breasts were almost lost in contrast to the false front. Immediately, he said, he lost all interest and couldn't possibly have had intercourse after that disillusionment. But he'll pay \$14 per week for the twins.

The fellow in the other case had as his star witness the man who was driving the auto in which the girl said that things happened. The driver admitted that the defendant and girl had gone into the back seat and remained there for ten minutes as he drove them home from an exciting high school football game. But he claimed that it was impossible for intercourse to have occurred. The judge asked what barrier might have existed in that auto to prevent a procedure long sacred to back seats. Nothing, the witness continued, "But I was watching them in the rear view mirror. I knew that as long as I could see both their heads, they couldn't possibly be doing anything wrong. Neither head went out of my mirror for a second." It was twins that time, too, and \$14 a week. The going rate for just one baby is \$10. I leave it to more ex-

perienced moralists and philosophers to decide if the wages of sin should be more than \$3,600 higher for the gentlemen who become parents of twins, when the moment of pleasure is no greater, qualitatively or quantitatively.

A. E. Van Vogt stories about monsters running loose among feeble mankind never impressed me very much. I'll never bother to reread them again, as a result of the descriptions of one peaceful Saturday morning in Hagerstown that I heard a couple of months ago in court. The case derived from the robbery of a discount store on the edge of town. This had been no normal, harmless breaking, entering and pilfering by local characters. It was a job carefully planned and almost flawlessly executed by professional gangsters who used the latest models of expensive cars, walkie talkies, sledgehammers, and extremely dangerous weapons. There were three of them and they made only one mistake: somehow they had decided that there was no night watchman at the store. The watchman had somehow sensed that there were lethal men at work when he spotted them, whispered a couple of words into a telephone, and got out of there fast. The police trapped the trio who reacted in three ways. One man surrendered instantly and completely, another shot it out and was cut down by bullets that have begun a progressive degeneration of his central nervous system that will leave him completely paralytic in another year, while the third ran. These were men with long records, the sons of criminals with longer records, and the courtroom was bristling with burly federal, state and county law enforcement men, just in case the two healthy ones decided to make a break for it. Nothing happened, except a series of statements from the witness stand that made my spine twitch and tingle as the Vogt stories are supposed to make me react. The burglar who fled, leaving behind a whole wheelbarrow full of money, heavily armed, and knowing nothing of the surroundings, had followed railroad tracks for a while. A freight train came along and he considered jumping it. The engineer and fireman saw him, stared at him, and he stared back. He disappeared into heavy brush and they decided that they'd been traveling too fast for him to leap aboard. Covered with brambles, he emerged at a fertilizer plant not far from the store he'd fled. It was now dawn and he was tired, disheveled, lost, and desperate. He could guess that news of the escapade and word that one man had escaped would be getting through the neighborhood by now. The first person he saw was an early-arriving worker at the fertilizer plant. The fugitive did nothing more dramatic than ask him for a drink of water and directions on how to get to the bus terminal. The worker supplied both, assuming that the man was a tramp. The criminal found the road leading toward the center of Hagerstown and followed it until he came to a tiny restaurant patronized almost solely by railroaders, owing to its isolation. He asked to use the toilet there; it seems not to have occurred to him that it would be safer to go back into the bushes. In return for the favor, he bought and drank a cup of coffee, and left without incident. The girl in charge telephoned police, the moment he was out of there, and almost collapsed when she saw him halt and look back at the restaurant several times as he started to walk away. Something in her attitude must have warned him, because although he didn't return, he did get off the road about the point where it turns into a city street and cut through a back yard to reach an alley. The occupant of the house was standing on his back porch, smoking, when the deadly man came trotting across the lawn. The intruder stopped and looked straight at the old man. The old man said: "Hi!" The stranger replied: "Hi!" I hate to think what might have happened if the old fellow had started to scold him for trampling near the iris. Through the alley, the burglar reached a cross street that would lead him to the

downtown area and bus station. On this street he saw one of the few remaining neighborhood stores that stock everything in Hagerstown--food, clothing, household supplies, toys, and so on. He realized that he would be giving himself up, if he tried to board a bus wearing the clothing in which he'd staged the escapade. He entered the store and found another elderly man on duty. The burglar's nerves were getting frayed by now, for he did several unwise things when he went about buying some new clothing. He said he didn't want to waste time so he did not take time to hunt a pair of trousers to fit, explaining that he was in the habit of rolling them up at the cuffs when they were too long. He also refused to let the old fellow take the time to wrap up his old clothing, after he'd changed in a secluded corner of the store. Once again, some instinctive common sense saved the life of a Hagerstown resident, who just acted as natural as if this were accepted conduct. Outside the store, the burglar stopped a passerby and again asked directions to the bus terminal, because he was a bit confused by his meanderings. The passerby was a talkative man who happened to be walking downtown to a destination only a block from the terminal. "Why don't we walk down together?" he proposed. There was nothing to do but assent. Then for the first time a Hagerstown man did an utterly foolish thing: this talkative fellow didn't know about the fugitive, hadn't seen the police who were by now swarming through this neighborhood, and after the two had walked only a half-block, he asked the stranger to excuse him for a moment, because he wanted to repay five dollars he'd borrowed from the man who lived on this corner. It was perfectly true but so apparently flimsy an alibi to get to a telephone that the fugitive would have started shooting in any television program or detective story. This one didn't act in the cliché style. The moment the talkative man entered the house, the burglar started to run. Meanwhile, for the past couple of hours, the officer on desk duty at headquarters had been taking reports from residents of the area about the suspicious man. His tour of duty ended at 9 a.m. Instead of doing the sensible thing, return home and get sleep, he got into his own car and began cruising through the neighborhood where the search was being conducted. He almost ran down the burglar. The arrest was made with ridiculous ease. In court, the burglar was asked if he wanted to say anything after he was found guilty. He gave a little shrug of the shoulders, put his palms up, and said: "What is there to say?"

In recent years, Hagerstown has been inheriting more and more big cases removed from the court of original jurisdiction, partly because we now have two circuit court judges living in Hagerstown and a full bench can be assembled with only one judge forced to drive. Thus, we had in the fall term a peculiar sort of murder case. A woman in her 80's living in an old folks' home in Annapolis had been murdered after an unsuccessful attempt at rape. The Methodists who ran the home, the wealthy people who lived in the general area, and the police were almost equally agitated by the brutality of the murder. When we learned that we'd have the trial here, I attempted to find out something about the killing, and ran into all sorts of silence among normally cooperative law enforcement authorities. They told me that I'd find out why they didn't want to give out information that might make it impossible to get a good jury in a reasonable amount of time. As it turned out, the defense chose a court trial, but I still didn't learn the real situation until testimony began. Two separate and distinct individuals, with equally bad records, had confessed to the killing and each of them stoutly denied that the other had had anything to do with it. Moreover, various evidence made it obvious that only one person had been responsible. Both men reenacted the crime for police in a way that seemed to

prove that the old woman had twice been assailed and garroted, on the basis of their acquaintance with certain things that the cops had discovered after only the most strenuous efforts. Both men were Negroes, so the authorities couldn't charge the white man and let the dark one go as a proof of Maryland's liberal tendencies. Both had been in Annapolis right along, so neither was activated by a desire for transportation, the thing that often causes someone to confess to a serious crime that he didn't do and will later prove that he didn't do. It required in the end the help of the FBI to show which suspect should be indicted. An analysis of semen stains and hair fragments in a comb dropped near the body could have come from only one of the two men. If the other one was hoping to become a burden on society, he succeeded, because he is now in the booby hatch.

One recent case had the special spice for me of a defendant who is a former co-journalist. This gentleman was briefly the only male social page editor in the history of Hagerstown's newspapers. Even more briefly, he had been a photographer for the newspaper, ending that activity when the management discovered that pictures weren't the only things he was taking. He has been in jail most of the time since then for various escapades. But he'd finally been released on parole and had settled down in a little house just outside the battlefield town of Sharpsburg, with his wife and children, bought a brand new Cadillac, had a quantity of name cards printed identifying himself as a specialist in public relations, and earned his living by helping his father to build houses. One night, the burglar alarm went off in the farm machinery shop at the edge of another nearby town, Boonsboro. It is supposed to be loud enough to waken the entire town, but apparently the consciences are so clear in that community that everyone slept right through the howl, except the auctioneer who resides directly across the road. He went exploring in the building, after telephoning the owner. Everything seemed to be in order, but the alarm continued to squawk and suddenly a man jumped up from behind a counter. The auctioneer grabbed him, they tussled for a moment, the intruder slammed the auctioneer against a door so hard that the auctioneer—outweighing the intruder two to one—ended up on the loading platform outside, and the burglar fled. The owner arrived at that strategic moment and shot several times at the fleeing figure. My friend might have gotten away scot free, because the auctioneer had never seen him before, except for one little clue. He had such pride in those name cards that he carried them everywhere and they had all fallen out of his pocket during the tussle. There was some other circumstantial evidence that the authorities thought highly of: a state policeman hurrying to the scene passed the Cadillac going in the other direction toward Sharpsburg, the vehicle was soon located parked outside its owner's house with a hot motor, the police were not allowed to enter the house until they threatened to use dogs and teargas, my friend was found to be suffering from a gunshot wound, there was blood on the honeysuckles through which the man had dashed, and the auctioneer instantly identified him. However, my friend stoutly maintained his innocence in thought if not in deed, with the explanation that he had been a little nervous lately and just didn't remember anything special happening that night. He is back in the penitentiary, but he is at least free from worry about how his wife will find support during his absence. She is a woman of no apparent origin who sat attentively during most of the trial, even testified about the rude way in which the police had disturbed the rest of her and the children that night, then when it became obvious how the verdict would go, she struck up a quick acquaintance with a member of the audience. They walked out before the trial ended, arm in arm, and haven't been seen since.