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It's preposterous but true: this is whole number 105, FAPA number 99, volume 27 and number 2 of Horizons. The February, 1966, issue is stenciled and mostly written by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A. Dick Eney is not responsible for either the opinions expressed herein or the condition of the lower case i key on this typewriter. I'd get it fixed, if it weren't such a splendid defense against forged letters and fanzines.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Even if dues are down for a year, we're likely to continue to have a substantial bank balance. Wouldn't it be sensible to put most of the money into a savings account and pay most of the bills with each quarter's allotment of dues money? This would produce eight or ten bucks per year that could be spent on some sort of luxury we don't now enjoy like an annual gift to the official editor for doing the really hard work. Horizons: It was horrifying to find a paragraph from the fiction in this issue reflected in the worldcon reports from London. The pages were stenciled and mailed to Eney before I could possibly have been aware that a professional would echo my imaginary professional's statements about the overwhelming literary importance of science fiction. I put the words into my character's mouth in the faith that no real writer would say such asinine things, and I didn't intend to reflect views that I didn't know someone held. Target: FAPA: That oblique sowing area in British farmland worries me. I can think of two conceivable explanations. Perhaps when the British practise crop rotation, they change the direction of the rows, hoping for more uniform depletion and restoration of the elements. Or it might be a simple habit of putting the outbuildings near the margins of the tract where this sort of cultivation produces less distance for the crops needing most frequent attention. Pantopon: Are you sure that you have a deja vu feeling about the space program? It strikes me as radically different from almost all the science fiction stories, which rarely told in any detail about this sort of practicing for the long hops. Offhand, I can remember only one story that dealt with the first few miles of outer space. It was Fando Binder's "Set Your Course by the Stars" in Astounding around 1938, I believe. Its gimmick was the first spaceman's failure to get where he wanted to go because he found the sky a solid mass of glowing white stars, once he got outside the atmosphere. The Phineas Pinkham Pallograph: Old-time radio isn't entirely lost. Rusty and many other FAPA members are living where they can get the powerful Canadian AM stations that produce a lot of new programs quite similar to the American radio fare of the 1930's: dramas, interviews, musical varieties, and so on. In addition, CBM in Montreal has been presenting at 8 p.m. Mondays what is billed as rebroadcasts of actual programs from the old days. They cheat a great deal by relying on commercial recordings rather than off-the-air dubbings, but it's still interesting and I'm bitter over the working hours that have prevented me from slipping home even to put it on tape most weeks. New Year's Resolution: I hope I live long enough to visit that country store. My father worked for a wholesale candy distributor when I was little, so my knowledge of the subject is somewhat better than that of the average person. I find it hard to believe that changes in candy fashions are caused by changes in kids' tastes. I know that it's more expensive to make candy than in the old days, but the old favorites survived so long that their disappearance must be due in part to bright young candy manufacturing executives who feel they must make changes to justify their positions. Ayorama: The best thing in this mailing is Bill Morse's comment to Greg Benford on people who don't finish college. ' Once during a conversation I told someone that

loss of it or sight. This shocked everyone around me and I felt slightly frightened of my own words a moment later. I was taken off by my FAPA remark about hearing aids have caused me to wonder about the proper choice, after all. Curiously, I trust my ears more than my eyes when faced with a situation like an encounter with someone whom I've forgotten but should remember. Normally I can find his identity by his tone of voice more readily than by his face or gait. Gary-Lou a Go-Go: I always leave some autumn leaves on the lawn over the winter, in the belief that this will provide many vitamins and high-energy proteins to the turf for the next growing season. However, one hard winter I overdid it and was forced to clean off a thick blanket of autumn leaves when the snow and ice melted in late March. People from all around asked me where I'd gotten the autumn leaves and the street department couldn't figure out if it was proper to clean them up out of the gutter then or wait for next fall. Anyway, the lawn stays nice and green. Sercon's Bane: Why is the grand jury idea complex? Under such a system, an obviously unfounded blackball would be considered by the committee and turned down, period. Without the grand jury plan, the petition comes into effect, the waiting lister is dropped, there is a brawl in the next mailing, and the waiting lister is voted back into place. This is less complex? The Vinegar Worm: The vanity presses are sad traps for the untalented writer, of course. But I wonder if the writer with only slightly greater talent, just enough to sell to the third-rate publishers, is any less to be pitied? He does not spend any money to get his book into print. But he does use up hundreds or thousands of hours in writing the book and his cash return is rarely more than a few hundred dollars. Unless he has a complete certainty in his literary greatness, is the return for the labor much less a sop to his ego than an outright expenditure to a vanity press? Strangely, nobody has pointed out that Wollheim has been involved in a matter involving publishing ethics before. There was a lot of eyebrow-escalating in 1940 when he asked writers to give him without payment stories for his two newazines, Cosmic and Stirring Science. That time, authors weren't given any hope of getting paid for those stories but were promised preference when the magazines could afford to buy fiction. Damballa: One minor drawback to the motel-type con with everyone at the pool some newcomers might be less willing to try to mix with the fans under those circumstances and the cons' usefulness as recruiting grounds might dwindle. Maybe it's different with some persons, but I'd never have the nerve to intrude in such an environment, while I wouldn't hesitate to horn in on strangers who were standing around a hotel lobby. The pleasures of re-reading are indeed manifold. There was a time when I re-read almost everything except the longest books, within a month or two. That ended when reading tastes expanded beyond the reading time limits. But it's a wonderful way to feel completely a part of a fictional world and to fix many things about the story firmly in the permanent memory cells. Celephais: Daddy Warbucks made his fortune originally in World War One munitions, I think. Somewhere on the attic or in the cellar must be a book I want to retrieve someday, a collection of extremely early Little Orphan Annie strips that were old even when I acquired it as a tad. It included the first escape from the orphanage, I believe. The conscience hurts because I didn't send cards or condolences or anything during Bill's physical time of troubles. But I was only vaguely aware that something had put him into the hospital and didn't know what a prolonged siege it represented until this mailing arrived. Bobolings: If Bob doesn't mind skiing on unnatural snow, there's a slope that manufactures it every cold weekend at Braddock Heights, barely 50 miles from Washington. It's hard to be sure what changes are justified on ac-

activity credit rules. The custom under fire, that of giving activity credit for the simple act of cranking a mimeograph, is a relic of the mundane ayjay philosophy that publishing is the goal, away from which FAPA has moved through the years to the understanding that something creative is the important goal. And yet, are we criticising this custom simply because we dislike this one aspect of the activity customs, or do we concentrate on this one because there have been no recent awful examples of someone who does nothing but cut stencils like a stenographer to gain his page credits? If I were to try to hang on in FAPA with the least possible effort, I know that I'd find it much easier to spend less than two hours copying off eight pages of a manuscript I'd dredged up from somewhere, with a three-line colophon at the top of the first stencil, than to struggle with running someone's stencils on my mimeograph. What if this eight-page manuscript is an article or story that some other hanger-on wrote, and both of us claim our minimum activity requirements because he wrote it and I published it through the stencil-cutting act? Then there is the probability that some day soon, we'll have a ruckus over some member's attempt to save a membership by spending ten minutes scrawling a few doodles onto eight stencils, labeling them as modern art, and distributing them through a mailing. I feel we should delay any changes in the rules until we've discussed the whole activity procedure, not just the one angle of it. Tentatively, I'd go along with a rule against credit for mimeograph-cranking only if it were combined with a much sterner attitude toward the definition of editing and compilation in publications composed largely of outside material or reprints. '' One reason why War of the Worlds wouldn't cause a big panic now: most people would turn on the television set to find out more about the invasion, instead of going hysterical at once. Asp: Strange, but as I grow older, I become slightly more gregarious. For instance, almost invariably I sit down next to a bore or a chatterbox at a lunch counter instead of avoiding him as I used to do. I think that I'm experiencing people nostalgia. '' Why do girls play basketball so badly? It is pleasant to watch women playing tennis or swimming. Maybe the trouble involves the different way women throw balls, perhaps something in women's makeup prevents them from cooperating in team sports. '' Coffee is one of the few things in the galaxy that I feel myself a total master of. I drink three or four cups in an average day. But I can fall asleep easily after drinking coffee, during summertime I frequently substitute something cold for coffee at most times without suffering, and when my physician ordered tea as my beverage during my first hospital stay, the complete and abrupt drought didn't upset me, then when five weeks later I decided to switch back to coffee because I had trouble coping with sugar in traction, resumption of coffee produced no effect on my nerves. Ankus: I would like to submit ten top BNF names, but I hesitate because I can think of several standards for the choice. Do I pick the BNFs for their current activity or with respect to their entire careers in fandom? Do I count those who have done more in prodrom than in fandom in recent months? And how do I approach the concept of BNF: the amount of notoriety that the individual has obtained in fandom or his value to fandom? Poor Richard's Almanac: Steve Stiles' discomfort when he was caught on a train without matches symbolizes the most important reason for anti-tobacco drives. So many persons are unable to sit through a movie, listen to a symphony, or do similar things without suffering the need to walk out and smoke a cigarette. This would be just as bad to me as kidney trouble and I can't understand why the health people don't lay more stress on this nuisance aspect of cigarettes. The Beginning of &c.: Is "subway" to New Yorkers a word that means either the vehicle or the area through which it plies its trade? This summation of the great subway incident seems to

use the word in both senses and it is still not clear to me whether the man chased the woman down one of the cars of the train or down the tunnel. -- Isn't the fate of apa-f a commentary on a whole philosophy of municipal fannish life? New York City traditionally splits its fans among several groups so those with matching tastes and interests won't be meeting with the rest. Los Angeles somehow manages to remain essentially a one-club city, where a wild diversity of interests are somehow held by the same group. So the smaller split groups in New York occasionally come up with spectacular achievements through unadulterated mind-meshing followed by complete exhaustion, while Los Angeles fandom doesn't reach quite those heights but is numerous enough through its unity to encounter a condition of hibernation on only the rarest occasions. Different: This tells us more about the decline of science fiction writing than about the history of one Harry Bates story. How could anyone expect a prozine to last if a writer faced the meddling of not one but two Gernsbacks? And what kind of an editorial policy is it, when such an elaborate form was drawn up, on which it didn't occur to anyone to leave room for the matter of whether the story contained a believable and live character or two? Bates himself tips off the whole thing in his remark about the old Astounding Stories which was so bad it is remembered with amused affection today like the pranks of a mischievous child: "I had to rewrite or drastically edit everything that was used." Palmer rewrote almost everything that he didn't write himself. Hamling bought one of my stories and twisted it into such a hash that I hardly recognized it. So it goes. This isn't editing, it's mincing. Synapse: I doubt that a San Francisco newspaper isn't proofread. The big city papers often, however, put unproofread stories set just before deadline into the new edition, then replate after proofreading before the press run is completed with the corrections inserted. -- My special interests mean several advantages in the eastern part of the nation. I can get play-by-play accounts of two or three times as many major league baseball games here than I could receive in other sections of the nation. Cities are close enough to one another to provide FM reception from a lot of stations. There are hot and cold sections of the year, something that my subconscious seems to need. I can get access to almost any published literary or musical work in less than two hours at the Library of Congress. It is possible to survive without an automobile when I don't feel like driving. -- Who says there must be something unexpected in humor? We laugh at the absent-minded professor because we know that he'll forget. -- Why shouldn't Ruth Berman refer to the shades of Sir Arthur? If Christmas could have three ghosts in the Dickens story, a living person deserves at least equal rights. -- I used to think we should try to be first on the moon, because Russia would claim the entire satellite after landing a man there and would refuse to permit other nations to land men there and war would ensue. But by now I've realized that exactly the same course of events is likely to ensue if the United States or Portugal or any other nation gets there first. -- Speer does dubious things in this issue, for a person who keeps growling about the way others write. In the third paragraph of the comments to Martinez, he refers to Poe in past and present tense in successive lines. I know some purists who would wince at his use of "above" for "more than". "If Tolkien only sold the first British publication rights" comes pretty close to taking liberties with the modifier. "The word's misspelling" is as redundant as "from whence". -- If Speer and Boardman have attempted to outdo White and Eney for boring fusses, they're off to an excellent start. Ten Years in the Red-Light District: Sorry, but Paul Krassner's Realist would be an anticlimax in Los Angeles after Fandango and the VOMs with VoMaiden covers. Persian Slipper: The

compulsion to fill up the last lines of a stencil is odd, indeed. I wonder if we owe it to the sense that it is extravagance to let part of a purchased commodity go to waste, or to the traditional format of newspapers and most magazines? Neither is a really logical reason: the extra penny or two you get out of your stencil is used up in the ink consumed by those final lines and fan publishing media don't require work to leave lines blank, like a printer's page form. "You hit an exposed nerve with those remarks about fine movies. The local museum has been showing them all winter, free, and by evil fate they are screened on Tuesday, the one day of the week when it's hardest for me to rearrange working hours. Masque: It was hard to imagine what Bill Rotsler could do for an encore, after all the adventures chronicled in FAPA about a year ago. But he has come up with the most unexpected topper of them all, in the form of asking a girl to marry him. I have no doubt that this issue of Masque will bear in fandom the same role that Werther fulfilled in German literature for the best part of a century and I hope that Bill comes out of the experience as much improved in philosophy and abilities as Goethe did. Otherwise, it's hard to think of much that can be written about this publication, other than the obvious platitude: it's superb. Spiane: A continuing puzzle is the failure of fans to produce these interesting articles about pros during the lifetimes of the subjects. There's rarely if ever anything in the memoirs and anecdotes to which the author could object if he were still living. The Bok memory articles will obviously be followed by a freshet of EESmith memoirs. Obviously, writing these things without waiting for the death of the topic would have a couple of benefits: the subject would experience egoboo while his ego could use it, and the readers could arrange to meet the subject if he sounded interesting. "Grit still appears on local newsstands, although I haven't looked through an issue in many years. It's curious that it failed to become part of the childhood of both Ray Bradbury and Tom Wolfe; just think of the publicity it would have received from them. It has a fannish connection, incidentally. Rich Frank, who published several short stories in neatly printed booklets as The Bizarre Series, was or is a key figure in the editorship. "The cost difference between words and pictures in a newspaper depends on what you mean by cost. Locally, we spend more money on transportation, engraving plastic, film and printing paper, to run a picture than to fill the space with type that could come from AP tape that is otherwise discarded. But if we ran no pictures, we'd have to hire more people to get and set all that additional type. "That remark comes from Hamlet: "'Tis the sport to have the enginer hoist with his own petar". At this point, Speer will point out that the professor of English at the University of Connecticut ruled in 1879 that the form of the verb should be hoisted and that the dictionaries do not agree with the spelling of two nouns. Speer must be right when he says that such bad writing slows down reading, because lots of people still haven't finished reading the play after all these years. Kim Chi: Maybe Dan Curran would like to compare notes with the Hagerstown preachers. A couple of summers ago, they staged their annual inter-denominational picnic, and after a lot of prayers and mutual fellowship involving this miracle of tolerance for various creeds, lightning struck in the same meadow, shredding a tree only a few feet from their lunch baskets to smithereens. "The latest rumors around here say that the Watts riots were a staged thing, designed to increase television saturation in a part of the city that had not had enough sets in homes to satisfy the firms that advertise over Los Angeles stations. "Add things that make you feel old: a conversation in a record store where one teen-ager was trying to convince another that they used to make records that broke if dropped.

The Most Happy Fan

"Yes, I know Xav's secret," I told Jim Hearn. "And I'll let you in on the secret, if it means that much to you. But knowing the secret won't do you any personal good."

Jim's eyes bulged. "How the hell did you find out?"

"Mostly by accident. When Xav paid me that visit last year, I showed him something in an old issue of Fanac and that did it. But I'm warning you, it's better for you if I keep my mouth shut about the secret. You couldn't possibly imitate Xav. Money won't help, the secret isn't anything you can learn in a school, you couldn't even inherit the thing he has going for him."

"Stop trying to be so evasive. I'm man enough to admit I've been wrong all along, sniping at Xav and treating him like a dog. Now that I've seen the light, now that I'm admitting I want to be like him, you don't have any business trying to make it all that mysterious. I'm at least as intelligent as Xav. I know I can be hypnotized, if it's something that must go into the subconscious. I'm fixed well enough to spend a lot of time working to follow his pattern. I'd say that I'd even sell my soul to the devil, but Xav is too nice a guy to have done anything like that. Funny, I'd have never said that about him a few years ago."

"You sure wouldn't." Now it's going to be something like a play, whose program says that act III begins three seconds after the curtain for Act II, because I must delay the rest of this conversation until I relate some of the background to it. Everyone knows a good bit about Xavier Wyse, but almost nobody has been around fandom long enough to have seen him enter the field, rise to great heights in it, then continue his fanac while assuming important roles in other phases of activity.

Of course, many fans remember him best as XYZ, because that was the natural shorttype that grew out of his name. It's impossible to find the first reference to him as XYZ (or as xyz, because it's slightly easier to type it without holding down a shift key) because Xav entered fandom almost imperceptibly. I think that I first heard about him at the Discon, but that was my first worldcon and I was excited enough to remember things wrong. In fact, I can't even recall for sure the name of the New York area fan who mentioned Xav's name to me in a pancake emporium; he was the one who always carried a motor scooter in the trunk compartment of his automobile to enable him to go for help when the car broke down. This New York fan, whoever he was, wondered as we chatted why Xav hadn't made the convention. I asked about the odd name, and my new acquaintance explained that it rarely turned up in fanzines because Xav was one of those fans who was never heard from except at large cons. Fakefan, fringe fan, whatever you want to call him aside from confan, that was Xavier Wyse.

I also admit to failure to remember which of the many New York clubs he joined a couple of years later. He'd been an inconspicuous member of this group, whichever it was, for quite a while when Jim Hearn on one of his infrequent trips East spent a few days in New York fandom. Jim may have been half-drunk when he went to the meeting, or he may simply have looked for more adulation than he got. Whichever the true explanation, he published upon his return home a scorching article written and published in an odd format. Each page was divided down the middle by a vertical line, each paragraph to the left of the line corresponded to the paragraph on its other side, the left side was devoted to the experiences of Jim at that particular meeting, and the righthand column told the simultaneous events involving Xav in the same room. Jim's efforts at chatter or argument had died after brief and

useless lives, while most of the club members were clustering around Xav, obviously victims to his personal magnetism and immense store of friendliness. Jim put on a few concluding paragraphs in conventional format to draw a moral: the New York fans in this particular group were hopelessly provincial despite big city addresses, because they adulated a fan who never did anything in particular while shying away from a visitor who could tell them many interesting things about the fannish culture of a distant state. I thought that this article would have been much more effective if he'd pounded home this point without the personal attack at Xav, who had not been prominent enough to merit such a barrage of invective.

But if any of us feared that the unprovoked assault might cost us a promising neofan, we were relieved by Focal Point. It was just after the third revival of that frequently moribund fanzine. Cal Demmon, who had switched places of residence another dozen or so times, was back in New York at the time, serving as interim fanzine reviewer, and his commentary on this Hearn article was cheering. He'd asked Xav about it and Xav had said that he had neither read the article nor had any intention of reading it, because he wanted to stay friendly with everyone.

That was typical of Xav, fandom soon discovered. Living like a hermit, I didn't become aware as soon as most fans how rapidly he was building a reputation on an invisible foundation. For a little while, I wondered if it was a Lt. Kije situation, because everyone agreed that Xav was rapidly becoming a bnf but nobody could cite a real reason for this status. Then I finally got to another Phillycon, met him, adjusted quickly to the knowledge that he really existed, and began to understand why he was acquiring so much egoboo. He was a nice guy, a terrible understatement but the description that popped out of everyone's lips when Xav was mentioned.

"I'm a little out of my element around here," Xav told me in the lobby after I'd spotted his name on his badge. "All those talks about stories I've never read and the panel about old fanzines that I never heard of. Why, I guess I was pushing a plow when those came out."

I suspected a trick of some kind, a fake farm background, because plows are no longer pushed on farms. But when I tried to probe this apparent weakness, Xav grinned in that wonderful way, pulled me down on an adjoining chair while he sprawled comfortably in the overstuffed furniture, saying: "We were still pushing plows when everyone else had them going by motors. I came from the poor white trash and I'm not ashamed to admit it. I guess I saw early on in life that I wasn't going to have some of the advantages that other kids were getting. So I've tried ever since to go around to the back door and come in that way. As long as it gets you to the same place, I mean, why be stuckup and insist on using a front door you can't use? When I went crazy about science fiction movies, and someone told me about fandom, I sat in a corner at a couple of meetings. I saw that most of the fans were carrying chips on their shoulders, looking for fusses, scowling at everyone, not really enjoying their hobby. I didn't have a big collection and I can't write long articles about the inner meaning of Poul Anderson's novels, so I figured that I'd try showing the friendliness and good time that I really do feel when I'm around fans. Some fans tell me it's paying off pretty well."

Xav's pattern as a fan was already established by this time. He was a real authority on science fiction in the movies and on television, although curiously he had no interest in monster films or in comic books. He claimed that none of the kids in his county had been smart enough to understand the comic books when he was young, so I suppose that he just didn't want the real comic book fans to feel bad because he felt the things unworthy of his attention. In one way, Xav was typical. He was a

fakefan in the sense that he never paid any attention to fanzines. His work in a machine shop involved a lot of closeup squinting, and he claimed that he would go blind if he tried to focus on tiny metal objects just beyond the tip of his nose all day, then wrestled with badly mimeographed or dittoed fanzines by night. But if he disappointed some fans by his refusal to enter into fanzine fandom, he delighted them by a more endearing trait, his loud admission that he never read science fiction magazines or novels. "If I turn on the news on television, I see something more scientific than anything they're putting into print these days," he'd say, "and then I can leave on the tv and pretty soon there'll be science fiction on the late movie. I just save my money. I didn't see enough money when I was little to waste on books that I'll never read."

Eventually, of course, Xav did get involved in fanzine fandom deep enough to take high rankings in popularity polls. It was a one-shot session at a wild party that provided the motivating force. Xav had a little too much to drink, and insisted that he didn't know how to type so he couldn't contribute any remarks to the half-finished stencil someone shoved at him. But he was just uninhibited enough to take the ballpoint pen someone handed him, and while the fans clustered around to see Xav's long-delayed fanzine debut in the form of a written chatter, he pulled a real shocker. He drew a little sketch instead of scrawling the inane stuff that the others had put onto the stencils. He didn't know much about stenciling techniques and the ball of the pen was so coarse that the small detail blurred and frayed, but a couple of caricatures of fans at the party took form in a matter of seconds. It was the first time anyone had known that Xav could draw, the first time anyone saw the neat little X he put in the lower right hand corner of the stencil. Nobody knew at the time that it was to be an artistic trademark as famous as WR or ATOM. When pressed for an explanation, Xav said that he had never drawn in fandom because he knew his best style was something like the old Cruikshank illustrations for the Dickens novels. The wonderful fellow was afraid that the sharp faces and untidy backgrounds that he loved to draw would make fandom think he was criticizing it or making fun of it. Of course, we went wild over this new style of fan art and the more deadly the exaggerations in the face of a sketch of a fan, the more proud that fan was to hang it in his own fan den.

Meanwhile, Jim had been following Xav's rise to fannish favor with a sort of fascinated loathing. Jim's 87-page worldcon report, longest ever to appear in a fanzine, didn't attract as much comment as the six minutes of 8 mm movie film that Xav had taken surreptitiously during the same event. "What can I write about such a monumental achievement?" was the only comment anyone made about Jim's tremendous essay, while fans paid an unprecedented honor to Xav by ordering copies of the little film (exposed by existing light when nobody knew the camera was around, yet never embarrassing). Jim tried a direct approach by challenging Xav to argue out the philosophy behind non-reading of the prozines by private correspondence. Xav didn't even answer the letter. When mutual friends later queried him about it, Xav explained that he was afraid of getting in an argument, and he was having too good a time in fandom to risk that. Besides, he had undertaken a new form of fanac that was occupying all his spare time. He'd bought a tape recorder to go with the camera and without expensive synchronizers, he was creating marvelous little movies: "portraits" that consisted of five minutes of closeup movies of one person, capturing him in every mood and making you feel that he was almost as nice a fan as Xav because of the careful editing Xav did on certain footage; silent and sound productions of original science fiction stories (Xav swore that he made them up as he went along without even preparing a script), and then the ultimate in personalized correspond-

ence, tape recorded letters that simply oozed Xav's outgoing, completely honest and engaging personality, mailed with movies taken specially for the illustrations and reflections that they provided to the contents of the tape. No matter if Jim claimed that fandom was idolizing a fakefan who was getting egoboo without working for it; anyone who got one of those carefully wrapped packages treasured it both for the content and for the thought of the uncounted hours that must have gone into taping a letter without dead spots and splicing a film without padding. It was the tape recorder, rather than the camera, that provided Xav's first breakthrough into recognition as a creative guy outside fandom. To simplify his tape recording activities, Xav had designed and built a little tape editor roughly analogous to the movie editor that he used on his films. The tape gadget was such a simple and obvious thing: just a tape head and enough electronics to get the signal amplified for earphones, a framework on which the reels could be hitched, cranks to turn the reels, and an ingenious little attachment that stamped a tiny arrow onto the tape. No motor, no controls, no loudspeakers or provision for hooking into an external amplifier, and extremely low fidelity sound. But you couldn't buy anything like it for tape-editing, when you found the right spot on the tape by seesawing it by hand across the head you pressed the lever and the arrow was printed on the proper track, not at the point where you wanted to splice but a short distance away, and then on a separate little block you lined up the arrow with a cutout of an arrow, pushed down the blade, and the tape was cut at the exact point. Xav made a couple of duplicate tape editors for friends, one of whom took him aside and had a serious talk, Xav unwillingly got into touch with patent attorneys, sold the rights to the Sony people, and you know how they sold tens of thousands of the things before other manufacturers could go into production on imitations. Xav kept working at the machine shop, even though it brought him five years' income, two bucks for each \$19.95 editor.

The only difference it made in Xav's fannish career was his new ability to attend every con, even the smallest regional events. Jim appeared at about half of these events, and the tension was quite nerve-racking when the two were in the same room. Sooner or later, we believed, even the happiest and most contented fan would lose patience with a basically okay but completely different individual who loved to brawl in person or in print. To accusations that he was imitating Sturgeon's affectation in his refusal to answer letters, Xav grinned at Jim, with a short reminder that Jim hadn't answered the three tapes he'd sent over the years in an effort to establish friendly relations again. Xav was married by now to a pretty nurse, whom Jim ignored blatantly at one Midwescon and pursued vulgarly at the following Westercon. All that Xav said was: "Well, I'm glad he doesn't hate the whole family all the time." Then Jim sold an excellent short story to one of the few surviving prozines and thrust his triumph in Xav's face. Xav staggered everyone, but Jim most of all, by replying that he'd already bought that issue and was glad to know that Jim was among the authors.

It created a sensation. In the hubbub that followed Xav's statement, you could hear bright remarks about betraying the fine ideals of fakefandom by purchasing a prozine and signaling the complete collapse of the prozines as an institution by doing this memorable thing. Jim's new status of authorship was thrust back into the middle distance by the out-of-character acquisition of a prozine by Xav, and then almost in the next breath, Xav admitted why he'd broken his perfect record of non-purchase of the prozines. He'd written under a penname the novel in that same issue. From anyone else, we'd have suspected a fanciful and unfounded claim. But Xav didn't lie. Besides, there had been a mild hubbub in fandom over that novel during the two weeks since the issue

appeared. It contained Tucker-style allusions to fanciful names and events, disguised as fictional people and happenings. But the style was fresh and different, the fans and fans-turned-pro didn't seem likely candidates for the authorship, and we'd been having a rough time attempting to unmask the real author. Xav even explained then and there his reason for making his writing debut under a penname. He was so busy with fandom and the job and the editor, so he'd rattled off his first attempt at telling a story into his tape recorder, and he'd put the name of the girl who transcribed it onto the story as author. Nobody ever did remember when Jim had disappeared during all this.

This and later stories seemed peculiarly suited for television and movie versions, perhaps because that's Xav's first love in science fiction. If the income from production rights to several of these novels didn't make him rich, at least it left him and his wife fixed for life. He stayed out of Hollywood, although it probably wouldn't have turned him into a greedy fellow as it has done for less naturally nice individuals. Curiously, he was indirectly responsible for the disappearance of one slang term from fandom. "Filthy pro" would have applied to him in the jesting way that it has applied to many other successful fans, in a much greater than usual degree because of his consistent record of success. But fans couldn't bring themselves to apply those words to Xav even when he and they knew they were meant affectionately, and it seemed ridiculous to call a filthy pro others who had only normal amounts of income from activities that had been evolved out of fanaticism.

By now, Jim had almost gaffed. He didn't show up at many fan meetings. He still wrote for the fanzines but he avoided the prozine critiques and theorizing about science fiction stories that he had once produced in a steady stream. Inevitably, such writing would have gravitated naturally toward this or that concept or plot or narrative gimmick of Xav and Jim didn't like to think about Xav. Jim didn't look too well, either. He had the hangdog appearance of the guy who always backs the wrong horse at the track, when we ran across him in a second-hand store in this or that big city. He still collected, vigorously, specializing in magazines and books published before Xav had become a pro.

The episodes that led to Jim's change of attitude toward Xav are not really suited for publication in a magazine whose circulation is limited only by the restraint of its recipients in disposing of their copies. Without mentioning a lot of names, I can dispose of the point with a brief and somewhat distorted outline: Jim got badly into debt, a certain alleged fan friend squealed to a creditor about the true value of his collection, bankruptcy proceedings didn't go as Jim had hoped, and just when it appeared that Jim would lose both his treasured collection and his mundane reputation, things suddenly began happening to straighten out the tangle. When Jim finally learned that Xav had been the guardian angel, he was pretty much in the same position as Saul at the time that Saul became St. Paul. Xav was as close to unhappiness as anyone in fandom had ever known him to be when the truth leaked. He was not unwilling for his goodness to be known, but he was afraid that the truth would spoil Jim's pleasure at getting out of such a bind.

The two didn't become buddy-buddy. Too many memories existed for either to act completely natural in the presence of the other. But Jim hung around Xav whenever opportunity permitted, in a manner that would have driven to distraction anyone with a less even temper than Xav. You could see Jim staring at Xav whenever they were together. A neofan might have interpreted it as an unnatural sexual interest peeking forth, but most of us knew exactly what it was: an ordinary person studying an extraordinary individual as closely as possible, in the hope that understanding might bring about the same extraordinary qualities for himself.

Jim had no success at all in understanding through observation. He tried various expedients. For a few weeks he went around with a smile on his face that looked as if it had been placed there by a permanent wave machine for the muscles. He spent one entire summer in the smallest town he could find in his home state, living a simple sort of life like that in which Xav must have grown up. When Jim bluntly asked Xav how to obtain this joy through goodness, Xav acted embarrassed, Jim later told me, and said that he supposed it was just something that came naturally and couldn't be taught.

I got rather shook up when Xav dropped in unexpectedly on me. It must be the same feeling that a country preacher gets when he looks up midway through a sermon and sees the president of the United States sitting in one of his pews. And I had no real intent to dig out the secret of Xav's success, nor did I attempt to hide the fact that I had unearthed it. Xav didn't seem to mind in the least. He just expressed his sympathy that I would never be able to follow the same path to happiness in fandom that he had blazed, asked me not to spread the word indiscriminately lest it come to the attention of mundania, and told me the names of the small group of fans who were already in the know.

And now we are back to the start of Act III, which I promise will be quite brief. I was telling Jim that a person who had Xav on his mind as much as Jim did might possibly figure out the truth unaided, just from the clues that we all knew and from logic. This was a mistake, because Jim had obviously been straining himself almost beyond the endurance of his sanity to do this very thing, unsuccessfully, for years. So I thought he deserved to know.

"After all," I asked Jim, "don't you realize how the edge is taken off fanish pleasures by certain things in the fanzines? A neofan reads a passing remark about himself and broods over it until it drives him out of fandom. Or a fellow gets a distorted idea about his writing ability because he had an article published in a fanzine that was hard-up for material and he tries for the next decade to make a living out of his typewriter."

"Yes, but other convention fans never pay any attention to fanzines and they haven't had the good time that Xav has enjoyed."

"And most of us settle for writing letters on the typewriter, because it's a little more trouble to do them on the tape recorder, and we take snapshots instead of making home movies so we don't get involved deeply in the fields that Xav struck gold in. Then there's the prozine writing. Every new author is a mishmash of the styles and themes of a dozen other authors. Xav had something new to say and he said it in a fresh way."

Jim jumped up. "You mean that I should have deliberately avoided all these things when I came into fandom? Xav has been the fan of the century because he was smart enough to stay away from influences and petty fanzine conflicts from the minute he first heard about fandom? But what ever gave him the idea? And why doesn't he just admit it and tell others to do the same thing?"

"It's not that simple and it wouldn't work," I said sadly. "Human nature is human nature. Even the most extreme convention fans nibble in other phases of fandom out of curiosity. Xav had an advantage. It was his poor childhood and an aspect of it he's never told about. It gave him an advantage we'll never have. That old issue of Fanac I showed him--it had a cartoon that was funny even though this was the Fanac published in Sweden, not the original Carr-Graham newszine. Xav pretended to skim through it when I handed it to him and said something telltale when I asked him where in the world he had learned to read Swedish. It turned out that he can't read Swedish and consequently why he was delivered from temptation in fandom. He's illiterate."

The Worst of Martin

(I've mislaid the publication from which I've serialized the reprint of the story and it's too cold to hunt for it on the attic in December. So the republication of the ending will be postponed three months and selections will be substituted from the November, 1954, issue of Grotesquette, written and published by Edgar Allan Martin, Berlin, Conn.)

Abberations...In an effort to insure complete confusion the last page was typed first--and thusly backwards. I know it shows. But I'm lefthanded...The spelling is quite open to censure. The hour being as it is--and the product of many consultations with FAPA mailings on the subject of home brew, seeing as it fizz--I beg benign considdeation. A burp for the Great Ghod Beer...Everyone has a formula on how to make home brew--what I've been looking for is a foolproof formula on the subject of bourbon. I hear somewhere that one needed copper tubing--this I've acquired. Now what do I do? Who has the recipe?

From some chasm I recollect the formula for Jinn, I mean, Ginn; but who can afford the C_6H_4 etc.

I might have proffered it in the last dispatch for weeks have slithered by I'm certain--but stenciled (and I swear by Yuggoth my dextrus is clean) on the sidewalks on Stamford, Connecticut, in so many places as to concern the constabulary was the expression: "Martians Go Home"; in yellow paint. Things may be read into this.

My nebulous plans had been for only two pages. At this point I ciykd expound on the subject of obscene lyrics or limericks (I could also expound on the value of a lesson in typing), as so ably amplified by the collection Hal Shapiro and I shall soon kiss in deathless print. All donations sought! Don't let the fear of identification with the product hold you back--I'm taking all the credit.

I wish my landlord would let me play with my mobiles after 10 o'clock too...

Sure I collect Concert Hall Society and American Recording Society reirds O gave evert sanoke tge--and now in Schlitz, er, English--Society Records--have every sample they ever released. Have a fine collection of addresses and P. O. Boxes to keep everyone happy... This is also helpful when running three or four memberships in the Science Fiction Book Club, etc.

This ether has a new perfume in it.

One thing about the Hartford Public Library, there's no fee when borrowing records. They get even with you, though: borrow 40 or so 45 rpm and be a day late. It's five cents per day per record. It's a goodly collection of records for those with a touch of "cultural lag": everything from Beethoven to Bach and Bach again to Ghrams...She had a daring gleam in her eye the day a Debussy came in...There are a few modern things, all marked: "Gift of the Publisher".

This is the 69th mailing...How admirably I have restrained myself--up to now...Divide 69 by four and you have--er--well, the number of years Fapa has been faping...This arithmetical process reminds me of a joke about midgets: it seems that--well, damn it all censor, where is the time and the place?

The 69th Mailing

You mean that's all there is to it?... "Even the ambassador from Mars is here"--Einstein...Tell me, if Kinsey can do it why can't anyone else?...I always said she had a lovely skin--look at this binding...When they start dropping atom bombs I think I'll go away...I know because I saw Him...You're not the only person with an autographed bible...I'm not fat, that's my money belt...That's a fair question--let's see

now--oh, yes, I never made a graven image...They laughed when I sat down at the piano--no wonder, there wasn't any seat there...

will never come again.

So a delegation arrived from the Egyptian Archaeological Society and initiated excavations in Woodlawn Cemetery. The never ending nerve these New Yorkers objecting to having their relatives hauled East for scientific study...

says the beast with two backs

I've seen better heads on a glass of bheer...A yo-yo three stories long...All ho to the Ghreat Ghod Spheer...I was so lazy this summer--the only person with a self-winding watch that ran down...Here we are, nearly income tax time again: deducting 400 for church--my, how those nickels add up...She's getting married? I didn't even know she was pregnant...Banana production this year exceeds that of the corresponding period a year ago by approximately 12% and indicated earnings for the first quarter show an improvement--are you getting yours?...No wonder she won the free-style--she used to be a street walker in Venice...The spirit of '69...Honest, you're a brick...

Music--Lights--Dialogue

Well, it's certainly grand to be here with you again...at this point I'm beginning to feel like one of you--I don't know just which one of you I feel like, but I feel like one of you... This may sound all very cosmopolitan but I'm a farm boy actually... Just a back-house philosopher...Remember many happy days on the farm--like the day paw hitched the bull to plow--"I'm going to teach this critter", he said, "that there's something else in life besides romance"...And another time, paw sold the cow 'cause he gave no milk... I've traveled, however, as a violinist...I played in Austria, Frankfurt, Knockwurst, Rome, Paris --in Paris I think I fiddled around the most...Ah, those sidewalk cafes: there you don't pay the cheque, they throw you inside.

I'm saving my money, someday it might be worth something...Astomahawk is what if you go to sleep suddenly and wake without hair there is an Indian with.

Got a communique on bourbon construction: the way to test bourbon is to pass 69 volts through a liter of the stuff. If the current causes a precipitation of lye, tin, arsenic, iron slag and slum, the bourbon is fair. If, however, the liquor chases the current back to the generator, you've got good bourbon...

Meet the Lady from Venus

- Drinking Vool and Etraqqevec

- And Passikuulic, too,

- In a broken down

- Venusian town

Just south of Rushabee.

- Know I drank a bit too muchly

!Cause I started turning blue

- And I took a rich

Venusian witch

- Right back to Earth with me...

Meet the lady from Venus,

She's loaded with charms

From the top of her heads

To the tips of her pnarms (*)

- She may sound like a frightful

Something Addams would draw

But what you girls got

She has a little bit more.

(*) Venusian: similiar to toes (the "p" is silent)

In One Year and Out the Other

I have the uncomfortable sensation of *deja vu* as I begin to type this nostalgic backward look at 1965. Maybe the sensation originates in nothing more mysterious than the fact that I might have used the same title before in *Horizons* or some other manifestation of fannish letters. But the possibility and the vague sense of familiarity are quite appropriate. The year just concluded wavered constantly between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Every day had a lot in common with thousands of previous days and yet time passed and some changes came that I took in stride with more ease than an old man normally adapts to novelties.

I ended 1964 in deep depression over the job and wrestling with the problem of whether I should quit it. I think that I decided in the course of 1965 to quit the job and yet I'm not quite as dejected with it at the end of 1965. The slight improvement in attitude toward work involves the circumstances in which the new editor finds himself. Now I realize that the hiring of a new editor was only one in a series of policy switches and procedural differences. If I'd been named editor, I'd be at least as dissatisfied with my duties as I am today, because the office contains few of the opportunities or responsibilities normally associated with it. What the editor once did is now split up among the editor, the assistant executive editor, the executive editor, and one or two even more awesome higher powers. If I have even less power than the editor possesses, I have a less dreary routine to do, so I no longer feel the bitterness over being bypassed in that promotion.

But during 1965, I've done some of the things that are appropriate on the part of a person who fully intends to quit a regular job and survive by a complex combination of free-lancing, income from investments, and maybe a landlord status. The front bedroom upstairs now contains an air conditioner that will make the second floor fit for human life in the summer months, an investment that was needed before I could think of turning the house into apartments. I've switched some magazine subscriptions from office to home, another encouraging sign. (They come a day sooner if addressed to the office and they are also more likely to get stolen before I can grab them.) I've done some stockpiling of household supplies, a step that should be useful in case reduced income produces a time of troubles for a while. And one development at the office has fit in nicely with the growing conviction that I don't want that particular job much longer. The management is reducing its pension plan by amounts equivalent for each employee to the increases in social security benefits. In my case, the pension from the company due me at 65 is no longer large enough to be an incentive for hanging on grimly to work that bores me. Future employee contributions to the pension fund are reduced sharply but there's no compensation for the seven years we paid at the higher rate needed for the previous expectations. Moreover, if I read the booklet about the pension plan accurately, I can get back all my money if I vanish from the journalistic world before the age of 45.

In fact, by now I believe I've solved most of the problems, financial and psychological, involved in getting along without an outside job with one major exception. Maybe someone in FAPA can provide a simple solution for the remaining puzzle. How can I assure myself of help in case accident or severe illness incapacitates me while I'm alone in the house? This is not a serious problem while I'm working for the newspaper. The people at the office would send out a rescue team before the night was over, if I should fail to show up for work through the week. My laundress would probably call some neighbors if I failed to make the

Sunday noon pilgrimage in the interest of sanitation on schedule, so that provides protection during the two-day weekend when I don't work. As a result, there's not a great danger of waiting for help longer than 24 hours, under present circumstances. But living alone without a regular job would be a different matter. Mail would pile up but there would be the chance that the trouble would come during one of those inexplicable postal interludes when little or nothing arrives for two or three days. Mail is delivered only thrice weekly and it's so dark on the back porch where the milk is deposited that the milkman might not notice unopened containers in the box where he leaves it. Days frequently elapse in which I don't use the car, so its failure to move from one spot at the curbside wouldn't be remarked by neighbors. Several relatives have volunteered to act in a fail-safe capacity if I'd like to telephone them every day that I'm able to do so, but this could be an infernal nuisance for busy signals, trips to the grocery, bathtub visits, and similar complications. The only way out that is even half-satisfactory involves the corner drugstore, which is open every morning in the year. I could buy a newspaper there daily, asking that my name be written on it each morning as a check against my non-arrival, but I have a strong urge never to look at a newspaper again after I escape the Hagerstown daily; or I might get into the habit of breakfasting there, where the bill of fare is extremely limited and dull.

The year just concluded has been like previous years in another literary respect. Once again, the fan history has not appeared in book form. There can be little doubt that fan history cringes under a curse of indefinite origin but obvious purpose: someone up there somewhere doesn't like the idea of all the follies of our past years getting more perpetuation in a reference work than they already possess in back issues of fanzines and memories of old fans. It took countless years for the Moskowitz history to embrace the luxury of hard covers. All FAPA knows of the Warner-Metcalf venture into fan history publishing. Now Advent seems to have felt the influence of this fannish fate. Quite early in the year I sent back to the publishers the final revision of the manuscript for the first volume of the history, the account of the 1940's, and a lot of pictures for illustrative purposes. From then until December 6 I heard absolutely nothing about the fate of the project from Advent or from anyone else, until a couple of lines appeared in Skyrack: "Advent will not publish Harry Warner's Fan History or the revised Tuck Handbook until next year." I must hasten to admit that I made no effort at all to demand progress reports. The situation now is different from conditions when I was waiting for Metcalf to do something because this time a signed contract exists, making it unnecessary for me to feel duty-bound to hunt another publisher, and because this time I'm sick and tired of fan history. If Advent publishes that first volume, I suppose that I'll get the second volume written somehow, more rapidly and less carefully than I would have written it before the Martin and Breen adventures caused my belated change in attitude toward fandom.

On a pleasanter note, I finally have arrived at the end of a year in which I really did acquire the new audio equipment I'd been threatening to buy for many years. Records now spin on a Thorens turntable, beneath a Shure cartridge, in place of the creaky old Garrard changer and the antediluvian GE cartridge. The resulting impulses go through some Harman-Kardon electronics that cost me a sum that still makes me perspire whenever I think about it, and emerge through two AR-3 speakers. I've broken all the rules about relative investment in speakers vs. the rest of your audio equipment. But after a good bit of listening, I've decided that these speakers are the most compatible with my ears. Maybe I could get used to the astonishing kinds of sound that emerge from the

gargantuan speaker systems that use up half your living room and all your income for the next two years. But I might decide after this effort at ear-training that I like natural sound after all and these Acoustic Research speakers convey it better than anything else I've heard, not to mention their subsidiary virtue of a five-year unconditional guarantee. Some day I must tell the story of how I got these speakers, which are too heavy for my hips to risk lifting, up into the house and onto their stands without help from anyone. Unfortunately, I'm cheating with these stencils, cutting them in mid-December and pretending that the year is already ended, so I can't be sure if I'll have a new tuner and headphones before 1966 arrives. It depends on whether I accomplish one more listening expedition to the wilds of Washington sound showrooms. The headphones would be requisite if I should rent out half of the house to another family. The ancient Meissner tuner still produces fairly good sound but gets stubborn spells and I have the strangest premonition that at any minute it will suffer a convulsion that will send some raw power through the transistorized pre-amp and amplifier, and Mr. Harman and Mr. Kardon are quite graphic in their descriptions of the apocalyptic things that this would do to their powerful little 80-watter. No decision yet on whether I want a tape deck. The little Wollensak produces a decent sort of sound on a modest scale. But if I should postpone my retirement for several years, I'd like something capable of saving for me things I'm now missing over the air with greater fidelity and fewer restrictions on program length.

Sneakingly, I let drop the fact that I now have two speakers in operation. However, I still am not a believer in stereo. About 60% of the stereo music to which I'm exposed sounds undistinguishable to my ears from a mono sound source played through two speakers, and most of the remaining stereo distracts me from full enjoyment of the sound for its very directionality. The only stereo recordings that I've been purchasing are some chamber music selections, where the directionality is helpful in keeping the two violins sorted out in the ear or for keeping polyphonic lines more distinct than they are normally when performed by instruments with little variety in tone colors. I do find that use of two speakers on monophonic signals gives a pleasant increase in the firmness of what is heard and makes it possible to choose a much larger variety of listening spots without moving the speakers.

It was a pretty good year for record-buying. I made no sensational purchases of vast quantities of old discs, which is just as well, because I have increasing trouble finding time to listen to discs frequently enough with the collection of its present size. But treasures in small parcels have turned up with some frequency at the Goodwill Industries and rescue mission stores in the area that I scour. There was the climactic moment when I found all of one Mozart symphony and most of another in Strauss-conducted performances on old Polydor discs. Probably the biggest bargain was acquisition of an unplayed set of the 78 rpm version of the Schnabel Trout Quintet for a nickel. Another record didn't interest me very much in itself but I treasure the memory of the suspicion that it awoke in the clerk. It was an old Edison ten-incher by Frieda Hempel. These hill-and-dale recordings are three or four times thicker than normal 78 rpm discs. The clerk was certain that I'd somehow contrived to stick two or three records together so I'd be billed for only one. She broke at least two fingernails trying to find the joining spots along the edge, held it up in desperation to the light at every angle to locate the evidence of fraud this way, and accepted my money only after a conversation with the cashier. Less happy is the news that it was another year in which I failed completely to bring any order into my 78 rpm discs. I can't find what I want, except on the rarest of occasions, among the

singles, and I haven't been able to find enough empty storage albums to provide them with even this limited amenity of storage. The other major project involving the 78s, that of getting most of them on tape, has also failed to happen. I keep telling myself that I should wait until I know about the high quality tape deck, to avoid the need to do it all over again later. Meanwhile, there is the danger every Tuesday of a cleaning woman catastrophe involving a shelf or two of these fragile discs that makes their transfiguration onto tape quite urgent.

One unhappy thing about 1965 was its failure to take me far from Hagerstown very often. Speer conjectured recently that I am afraid to travel because I might have a serious fall and find myself with no real friend for scores of miles to help. He is only partially right. The actual problem is a little more complicated: I have this nagging suspicion that I might experience occasional blackouts too brief to be perceptible except when they occur when I'm engaged in some physical activity that betrays them. The doctors ran all sorts of tests with this in mind and found no reason to believe that it's so. But there's still no other explanation for the severity of the injuries that came during my two falls: my reflexes are as good as those of the average person and it seems reasonable to assume that I would have broken at least one of the two falls by instinctively throwing out my hands. With this in mind, I've adopted the habit of walking in a manner that produces comparatively little danger in case I should suffer a power loss for a half-second. Jaywalking is out, so is crossing a street when there is just enough time to evade an oncoming vehicle, I don't get close to a precipice or unrailed stairway, and I drive only as much as my job and irresistible restlessness require. A half-second blackout in busy traffic might be more dangerous to others than to me. So I hesitate to get involved in long driving projects when I can get out of them. This means at least partial dependence on buses to get anywhere and Greyhounds have developed the habit of giving me a sick headache. It is obvious that the Greyhound vehicles are constructed in such manner as to provide a limited amount of injection of carbon monoxide into the passenger compartment, because no other stratagem would deaden the emotions of passengers enough to prevent a mutiny on almost every run. About three hours after boarding one of these land vessels, I come down with the headache which lasts for six or eight hours and this is another discouragement to lots of travel. To complicate matters in 1965, I did not take a vacation during the spring or summer, in the belief that I might accumulate enough getup and go to make that long dreamed-of trip to Europe. Then some bad health in early summer provided a good reason for seeing America first, and in the end I didn't see any of America that was more than a hundred miles from home base.

Bad health is an exaggeration, because mysterious health would be a more accurate description. Tremendous headaches began to strike, two or three of them each day. Headaches of normal severity had always given me trouble, the sort that can usually be traced down to tension and relieved by aspirin and rest. But these headaches smirked obscenely at normal painkillers, they were so much worse when lying down that I had to sit or stand throughout them, and they were as frequent in the middle of the night, rousing me from sleep, as when I was in the middle of a hectic day. After a couple of weeks, I got scared enough over self-diagnoses which usually pointed to a brain tumor and went to the doctor. He poked, shoved, and pulled various parts of me, told me it was all nerves, gave me some expensive pills to soften the torment, but warned that the only permanent relief would come if I quit my job. After about a month, the headaches stopped as abruptly as they'd begun. The tumor has magically turned into some kind of sinus infection in my

imagination. The only other exciting thing about health during this year has been a slight increase in the number of bellyaches. But all the adults in my circle of acquaintance suffer from pains in the tummy at an accelerating frequency, and mine behave pretty much in proportion to stress and emotional strain.

So I didn't get to any of the fan conventions or conferences during the year. It was the worst twelvemonth in a long while for lack of fannish conversation. Unless some encounter has slipped the memory, I saw only two fans in the entire year. One was Steve Badrich, the local teenager, who went off to Michigan State in the fall to begin enjoyment of a scholarship. His efforts to get a good scholarship accounted for his failure to blossom out into real fanac in Hagerstown. Or at least that is the charitable interpretation of his failure to do more than buy a few fanzines and pay me some visits. He didn't come right out and say that he was trying not to do anything that would lead him down the path that I had followed. The other visitor was William Clark, a Washington area collecting fan. His name wasn't familiar to me, but he'd formerly belonged to the Washington fan group and we have many mutual acquaintances elsewhere in the fan world. He regaled me with wonderful stories of the unbelievable things that happen in the world of collecting fandom and the stranger inhabitants of that subculture. Bill specializes in Burroughs, Frederick Faust, and some other lines that are alien to my reading experience, but he nevertheless jostled around considerably the little imp that used to impel me to collecting. It wouldn't take too many other adventures to start me off again. In fact, the day after his visit, I purchased a second-hand copy of Tros of Samothrace that I'd been hesitating over for months because I didn't know whether I wanted to tackle Talbot Mundy.

Otherwise, I'll remember 1965's fannish aspects mainly for the ebb and flow of the fight to keep up with loc obligations. For two days, I was caught up on all comments on fanzines. On all the other days there were at least a few fanzines on hand awaiting comments, and the end of the year saw the unloded pile at its greatest proportions since the last hospital stay. But toward the end of the year something occurred that brings promise of less future trouble in keeping up. I can't read Swedish at all, but when a fan over there sent the latest issue of his Swedish-language fanzine, I wrote a letter of comment on it. Two weeks later, he told me that I'd written more extensive comments than anyone in Sweden. It wasn't really hard: illustrations were material for some remarks, I could guess at the subject matter of certain items because of proper nouns or other words that looked similar to English or German words, and some of the reviews used English titles for the books and films discussed. This adventure gives me the hope that I'm finally sufficiently practised in the loc art to begin writing them without reading the fanzines commented on. It will save enormous amounts of time. Perhaps eventually I'll reach an even higher plane of efficiency that will make it unnecessary for the fanzine editor to send me a copy of his magazine as a basis of the loc, so that the time and labor elimination can be broadened.

There was some progress in another hobby, photography. After more than a decade of taking 35 mm color slides, I finally acquired a projector late in 1965. This automatically throws me far behind in a new task, because now I should get into some kind of order an enormous number of slides that I've filed chronologically over the years. When I saw them only through a little plastic viewer, there was no incentive for grouping by subject matter or bringing the best ones together. The projector is a gift that cost me nothing but probably made me liable for some photographic expenses. I'm so pleased with the showing of these slides that I suddenly want badly a couple more lenses for my Contax. The 21 mm super-

wide angle lens is available in new condition for a decent price, now that Zeiss Ikon has discontinued production on the Contax. I haven't seen good prices advertised on the 135 mm lens that I also want in new condition, but maybe a weekend in New York City would turn up either a new one or a used one with an ironclad moneyback guarantee. My conscience hurts for my failure to do any moviemaking in the year. I believe that I ran only one roll of film through the 8 mm movie camera, despite a lot of good intentions and increasing interest in amateur moviemaking. The introduction of super-8 movie film may have contributed to this neglect. The new width depressed me mightily because of the possibility that it may drive the old 8 mm system to oblivion. It is so limited an increase in frame size that there's little merit from this aspect of the change, and the drawbacks are severe. You can't backwind the film in the little coffins where Eastman Kodak markets it, and nobody seems inclined to manufacture super-8 cameras with the non-zoom lenses that I prefer for greater sharpness and ability to focus closer. At the office, I finally broke for good the umbilical cord that binds most press photographers to the flashgun. I don't think that I took more than a half-dozen pictures during the entire year with flash. The company bought me a new Mamiya C-3 twin-lens reflex for my exclusive use during the year, and this is a camera totally unsuitable to existing light work because it's so hard to focus accurately in light conditions that strain the powers of the groundglass finder. But I used the Contax in some circumstances where the rangefinder worked fine and a groundglass would be only a blur. The greatest triumph was a first-rate print from a handheld flashless picture after dark under streetlight so dim that I developed the film in DK-60A at 92 degrees.

Good proof of increased interest in movies can be found in the fact that I went to a movie theater twice in the year, double the recent annual average. Both visits were pretty much the result of impulse and I had the impulses at the right time. Cat Ballou was a much finer picture than the advertisements and reports of friends had indicated. It's a sort of takeoff on the traditional gimmicks of westerns, a shade more subtle than the spy and intrigue takeoffs in current television series. The Collector was another sleeper. I suspect that the version shown in Hagerstown was cut considerably in sections dealing with what had made the guy the way he was. Nevertheless, it was a laudable defiance of the old rule that bad deeds must be punished. I walked out of the theater wishing that he could get his hands on Donna Reed for a few days. As explained previously in Horizons, I also watched somewhat more television this year: an average of perhaps a half-hour each week over and above sports, which amounts to addiction in comparison with previous tv watching habits. After sampling a lot of programs, I continue to believe that television is either inadequate or superfluous when it tries to deal with serious matters and non-fiction topics. Almost invariably, it has nothing to offer that cannot be supplied more permanently and in greater detail by printed pictures and books. The only television fare that I can bear, aside from live sports, is the frothy stuff that all the wise people inveigh against. I fell hopelessly in love with the girl in the Dodge Rebellion commercials and one of the things that makes 1966 worth waiting for is the news that she may star in a new series of modern Perils of Pauline.

This was the first year in which I began to be mistaken for a public library. I've begun getting the most remarkable advertisements, obviously because of appearance on a specialized mailing list. Dover Publications, the best reason known to me for believing in a divinity, began in 1965 to reprint the old Schubert Gesamtausgabe, and I signed up for it. This is a project that would normally interest only libraries, conservatories, and such institutions. But the volumes are not extremely expen-

sive, I love Schubert's music very much, when the announcement came I was feeling as if I should keep on working indefinitely and this would mean a bill once a month for a year and a half to reckon with, so I signed up. Maybe a bit of background would be advisable: During the nineteenth century, a lot of production of complete works of composers began, together with elaborate series of publications devoted to music of a specific nation or period. The output of a composer differs from that of a writer, in that his work appears in smaller editions, much of it remains in manuscript, and typographical errors are not as easy to detect in published versions. Many of these monumental projects were faulty in one way or another. The Bach editors, for instance, piously retained the original clefs in which Bach wrote his music, creating agonizing difficulties for modern musicians who aren't at home in the old movable clefs. Some of the other editors failed to include important works that had been mislaid somewhere, or didn't go back to the earliest reliable sources. Nevertheless, this sort of project is like many efforts to publish the results of research into fantasy and fandom: it is necessary to do it poorly first, so that the faulty edition can become a scaffolding on which to build a better complete edition. Right now, a brand new complete edition of Schubert is in preparation. But I wouldn't want to spend the sums that the new volumes will cost and it might be decades before the job is finished. These bulky big volumes reprinted from the original edition of Schubert are more than good enough for me, despite the known inaccuracies in transcribing from the manuscripts and the lost Schubert works that have been found since the original edition appeared. I already owned some of the music, but much of it is in eyewrenching small format and some of the songs already in my collection are not in the original keys, so I don't object to the duplication. Schubert is one of the few composers who haven't risen and fallen in my estimation over the years and it's fitting that the composer with this special place in my affections should be the first to be represented in his entire output in my house. It remains to be seen if any shelving in Hagerstown will withstand the combined weight of the set when the final volumes arrive.

Meanwhile, I wasn't the only person in Hagerstown in 1965. There were a few things happening here that attracted considerable attention, over and above the normal procedures which Norm Clarke has been telling you about. It was a year in which blind men kept getting into the news. Hagerstown has only two who have enough getup and go to loaf around in the downtown section every fair day. Morris Berger achieved the impressive feat of bringing all the fire apparatus in the city to the courthouse three times in the course of the year. He likes to linger in the corridor, just inside the front door, leaned at an improbable angle against a wall near the corner, with his cane stuck out as a sort of flying buttress for support in case he dozes off and begins to sag. Three times, that cane as if possessed with a malignant life of its own crept unobserved along the adjoining wall, found the fire alarm mechanism, got a firm grip on the lever, and pried it up to set the bells ringing. Charley Morrison is the other blind fellow. He interrupts his loafing for several hours each afternoon while he hawks the afternoon newspaper. At least once a month, he had the whole downtown section in a turmoil. Once he vanished from sight, in plain view of dozens of persons in Public Square. It was quite like the beginning of a certain famous novel by Tolkien, until they found him at the bottom of a cellar whose sidewalk door had been open. They carted him off to the hospital and he was back in his routine the next day. A little later, he got into a fight. The proprietor of a hat-cleaning establishment got angry at him for blocking the doorway, there was an argument, and then blows. Charley

lost the battle but won the war. They hauled off the hat cleaner to a psychiatric center to determine what made him take on someone who was blind, he didn't like confinement, snuck out, and was found a few days later frozen stiff in a huckleberry patch. Most recently, Charley had a headon collision with an 80-year-old woman of such size that it took one policeman and two healthy passersby to pick her up and haul her to the hospital for renovations. You can say what you want to about the lungs of Sam Moskowitz, but I'll pit Charley against him any time. The paper-selling cry is the only sound that can penetrate to the circuit courtroom, which defies the noise of the largest trucks and ambulance sirens.

In that courtroom, I heard perhaps my favorite quotation of the year. A mountaineer had been hauled in as defendant in a case involving a young lady and her fatherless infant. He had not hired a lawyer, the court in Maryland does not appoint attorneys to represent indigent defendants in paternity cases, and he was attempting to conduct his own defense. When Judge McLaughlin asked him if he had any witnesses to call, the defendant looked the judge straight in the eye and said: "Sir, I would never permit any witnesses to what we're talking about today." These paternity cases (which used to be called bastardy cases, but got their name changed by softhearted legislators) are so likely to produce something new and different in the way of testimony that I often sit through them, even though they aren't used as the subject for news stories. There was a witness for a defendant who had a theory new to my experience. He admitted that the defendant and the complaining witness had spent a considerable amount of time in the back seat of the car he was driving at just about the date that logical arithmetic made crucial, but he was supremely confident that the man wasn't the father. "I saw quite a bit of moving around back there," he said, "but I knew that as long as I could see something in that rear view mirror, everything was all right, and sure enough, they never went completely out of sight."

The neighborhood continued to look the same on the outside but the cast of characters was different. After the near-complete freedom from children in the apartments nextdoor that lasted through most of 1964, I found a motley assortment of children of all sexes and sizes living nextdoor during most of 1965. One little girl developed such a crush on me that it's just as well there weren't many fan visitors to Hagerstown. But by now that romance has been shattered. She was inexpressibly disillusioned when she found that I objected to the dismemberment that she and a young friend were inflicting on my garage, the side walls of which are shaky enough to be pried loose by healthy small girls with plenty of time and persistence. I haven't even been allowed to order any girl scout cookies since this happened. On the credit side, one of the men newly moved into this apartment building undertook without coaxing or warning a deforestation program that was badly needed on my property. Trees of all sorts had sprung up voluntarily in a score of places around the foundation and in the yard, and they'd somehow grown too big for me to tackle before I realized what was happening. I lived in mortal fear that he would chop himself down while he was deflowering this virgin forest, but he emerged from the task unscathed and it's awfully nice now to be able to walk out of a door or around the porch without bumping into a nest of robins or colliding with a trunk that has grown two inches in circumference in the past week. Alfred Hitchcock really should film a horror movie about trees, for they can take charge of an area much more firmly than birds. I didn't get around to making some planned improvements around the house such as storm doors and a coat of paint, but this was only partially the fault of my Hamletish tendencies. Scrooge had more to do with it, because this was the year

when all Hagerstown properties got reassessed and I didn't want this one to look much better than its former appearance. It's pressing my luck to brag this soon, but maybe this restraint and a long story quoting a state official who said nice things about the supervisor of assessments did the trick. So far, no bad news has arrived.

Hagerstown underwent two changes that delighted me. It acquired a real book store and a new library building. I was half-sorry to see the new library structure rising, because I spent so many happy hours in the grim old library building that was so conveniently located nextdoor to the newspaper office. But when the new one finally opened, I discovered that I felt nothing but revulsion for the hopelessly cramped, dim and antiquated structure in which I'd gotten my first tastes of the adult literary bill of fare. The new one is two blocks from the office and four blocks from home, just a good walk. It has teletype communication with Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, making it possible to get immediate answers to complicated reference questions and speedy service on interlibrary loans. There's even a parking lot, an elevator to take you from the parking lot to the stacks, and a feature that will be valuable if I continue to have falls, no steps to climb anywhere so that wheelchair readers can use the library without assistance. Marboro opened the book store in the shopping center. A time of tension is now in effect, for patronage does not seem to be overwhelmingly heavy and I fear it won't be profitable. But meanwhile it is wonderful to be able to get almost any of the remaindered offerings without waiting for them to arrive by mail order, to browse in the only large paperback display in town that is not besmirched by allegedly pornographic books, and to be able to inspect important new books before deciding if you want them. Until Marboro took pity on us, we had only a microscopic book store in the downtown section run by an old lady who never gets around to unpacking books her customers order and never has anything on the shelves that anyone could possibly want.

My skimpy stock of relatives suffered a fresh loss in the year. An uncle died, and as I type these stencils another uncle has just undergone surgery of a sort that is fairly hard on a man of his advanced age. The death of the uncle left my grandmother with nobody to live with except several daughters and she refused to move in with any of them. So in her 93rd year she is living alone and liking it, and apparently thriving despite the predictions that she would suffer some sort of awful accident in the first few days of this new kind of existence. She has about the same opinion that I hold of nursing homes and I doubt that she will ever enter one as long as she has the legal right to refuse the change of abode. So now I'm reduced to one grandmother, four aunts, and a handful of insignificant cousins, as far as blood relations are concerned, plus four uncles by marriage and some second cousins whom I probably wouldn't recognize if I passed them on the street. It is the sense of losing all family ties that is really hard on me, much harder than the fact of maintaining a solitary residence in a big house which some persons seem to consider so awful. I didn't really come close to the most obvious method of changing both situations. But I was flattered at finding myself one Sunday morning the subject of what amounted to a proposal. I emerged from the conversation in unscathedly single condition, because while the girl is very nice there were such problems as nearly twenty years of age difference, two small children, an incomplete divorce, and her alarmingly expensive tastes. Maybe it all came about because her small daughter rains blows on my stomach every time she sees me and her mother has found this to be an infallible sign of affection for a good person. Fortunately, my abdominal wall is stronger than most other aspects of my physiology. Once, early in the year, I made the mistake of greeting this child while I was standing rather

than sitting. She couldn't reach as high as usual to show that she still approved of me. For a few days, I thought that the problem of whether I'll ever marry had been settled, once and for all.

Throughout the year I was both impressed and disappointed by the new accomplishments of science. The disappointment involved the fact that people of my generation continue to be cheated, in a sense, by science. Of course, we know that science progresses at an ever-accelerating pace and that the increase in knowledge during this year was two or three times as large as the amount of knowledge gained by mankind in a typical year a few decades ago. Just the same, I was born just too late to enjoy the thrills of the impact of science on fundamentals in my environment. That is, during the miraculous thirty years before my birth, my parents saw the first airplanes fly over Hagerstown, they experienced the timid arrival and later conquest of the automobile on local streets, radio was discovered, an operation became a relief from pain that people wanted rather than dreaded as a last resort, the movies were inserted into the American way of life, electricity became something that could be used in any home or office in a variety of ways, and a dozen other scientific marvels became part of everyone's daily life. Since I became aware of what was going on around me, the new marvels of science have been used in ways that I know about but don't actually touch and see daily. Television is the only real innovation of recent decades that is comparable in this sense to the telephone in the home or the fountain pen. I wonder if the next generation will again get the direct impact of science that I missed? I would imagine that this will happen: it is obvious that urban congestion and travel problems will force radical changes in the way we live and get around, whatever else space travel may be doing, it has a good chance of forcing a breakthrough in power sources, and tentative experiments with quick-freeze of the dying for later treatment with future surgical and medical techniques might be the start of a completely new way of traveling in time for most fatally sick persons.

But science did impress, as acknowledged above. I didn't feel so depressed about the photographs of Mars as many persons did: after all, this apparently dead planet is exactly what the space travelers always saw in the old science fiction stories before landing among wonders that weren't apparent from the distance. The orbital flights in the Gemini's seemed tame in one sense during the year, but I followed them quite closely for a special reason: because of the suspense over the survival of the pilots and the effect that survival today will have to speed the day when manned rockets will go to the moon and the planets. Undoubtedly, a complete blowup of an orbital flight that caused the death of someone inside would have a serious psychological effect on the public and could cause the policy-makers in Washington to slow down things for a year or two until people forget the tragedy. So I was tense during each of the orbital experiments and relaxed when they ended, knowing that the real space travel of the future was closer to reality.

Non-scientific new experiences were rather scarce during the year. I enjoyed my first ride in a long, long time in a steam locomotive-drawn train one day during the summer. On impulse, I drove up into the wilds of Pennsylvania and went for a round trip on the East Broadtop Railroad. This claims to be the last narrowgauge steam train still maintaining a regular schedule in the East. It was a commercial freight line until just after World War Two, then went broke. A salvage company bought it, and one official of the salvage company just didn't have the heart to melt down this prehistoric transportation complex. They shined and polished everything, put up one sign every 100 feet on every road within 100 miles of the railroad to point the way, and tourist response was

gratifying. The round trip covers only about 14 miles, but you can ride in a parlor car that President Cleveland used to ride in and you can even look at his picture on the wall, much more pleasant than having him there in person, I'm sure. There is a great deal of freight train equipment standing on the sidings for inspection and the owners are gathering quite a bit of trolley car stuff, too. Something else new in 1965 was membership in a local fan club for the first time. I joined the Washington Science Fiction Association, although the Friday meeting date comes on the day that I'm normally in charge at the office and unable to get away to attend. This leaves me with almost no fannish worlds to conquer. For a time I boasted that I'd never been a waiting lister, but I understand that I'm down for membership in one of the smallest and most stable apas and I'll probably stay there for quite a few years since only death can release people from membership. So far, I've never been blackballed in fandom, but maybe the time is coming for that experience, too. For a while, it looked as if I were about to break my pernicious habit of wearing flannelette pajamas in the cold season. But the first cold snap in December sent the new ones back into the bottom drawer of the dresser and once again I sleep without fashion and without shivers.

There were some interesting new acquaintances from time to time. One was an extraordinarily old fellow who is a survivor of a breed whom I had believed extinct: the men who used to run the concession stands at Pen Mar Park. This was Maryland's most famous amusement park in the first third of this century, perched on the mountaintop a good day's hike east of Hagerstown. He warned me when I visited him in a rest home that he was in the best of health except for the need to go to the bathroom every 45 minutes. But we had such an interesting talk that two hours later, he confided that he'd just skipped the trip and would have one of the aides change him after I left. He must have been a tough one when young, because he ran the billiard parlor, but he insists that the only trouble he ever had was once when two young men almost had a fight. Another fellow met for the first time during 1965 is a distant relative of the other new friend, in a sense, because the second man has a special talent: he builds parks. The county has been trying to establish a system of parks because the population has outgrown the city-operated parks and the governor comes from the Eastern Shore, so there's no hope of new state parks until his term runs out. The county tried a summer youth program with groups of high school boys working to convert the wilderness into parks. Then they tried to use prisoners from the county jail to do the work, paying volunteers a few pennies an hour. Later they put the roads department to work after the other attempts didn't succeed. Still we had no parks worth getting your feet muddy in, until this fellow was observed fleeing at a rapid pace from hordes of creditors. He took the job with the understanding that we wouldn't publish anything about it, and so far, his new occupation has gone unobserved by firms trying to collect. He is incredible: he can't work under anyone's supervision, it's no use to give him helpers because they can't keep up the pace that he demands, so all by himself, he goes into a thicket or forest that the county has purchased for park purposes, and with only a truck and hand tools, the trees go down in one day and a fence goes up the next day and a square half-acre of brush is burned out the next morning and on the following day an enormous quantity of fill dirt appears magically to level out the ground and two weeks later the county has a new park where people can have picnics and pitch horseshoes and park on turf solid enough to pull away from. Everyone was anxious to see what he would do the first time the weather became so bad that he couldn't work outdoors. We found out. He spent the first day with a windy and cold downpour indoors, making signs to post at all the new parks that he had built.