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Unclench the fist before it strikes the nearest wall, and relax the tension on the vocal cords before they emit a scream of anguish; think of yet another issue of Horizons with a bad key as a continuation of a fine old fannish tradition, rather than a deliberate attempt to make room in FAPA for more waiting listers. This is whole number 108, FAPA number 102, volume 28, number 1, and the November, 1966 issue. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., writes most of it and stencils all of it except portions of words where they should appear. The Coulsons are hopefully publishers again.

### In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: In hidebound fashion, I continue to refer to it in that manner although the article seems to be vanishing from the title, representing even more anguish for Harold Piser. "I received no duplicate copy of the ballot. If this happened for everyone, it could prevent some complete completists from voting. As an inveterate compromiser, I mailed in the ballot but made a photographic copy of it for possible future reference purposes." Vandy: Occasionally I encounter someone who feels it beneath his dignity or something to read paperbacks. Maybe it's a hangover from the earliest years of paperbacks when only the most obvious titles appeared in this form and maybe it's partly the result of the corner drugstores that stock little except trashy paperbacks. "Oddly, Ben Willis' reasons for quitting as school superintendent here included a situation like the land purchase for a new school in Hartford City. He grabbed up a lot of land on his own initiative and the uproar here was nearly as great, proportionate to population, as the noise people have been making in Chicago about his more recent actions. The school system here is now having a fine time with another land problem. The best location for a new school is available at a reasonable price. But a check into the title revealed that the lady doesn't own part of the property she occupies and wants to sell and she does own land on which a church was erected after the congregation bought some land without understanding just which land. Melange: It's nice to see someone else coming around to my high opinion of Ted White. But I always felt that Ted was capable of doing almost anything he set out to do. The difference now is that he's doing much more worthwhile things these days. "I have the strangest sense of temporal displacement or something, reading a few days before the Tri-con your statement that you'll see many of us there, cutting this stencil on which it's mentioned with the knowledge that I'll be there if I don't get sick or something, but also knowing that I won't get the proofreading done until after the Tri-con and then knowing that memories will be dimmed by the time the stencils are run off." Sercon's Bane: I suspect that AM radio continues by operating on a shoestring. The big city, clear channel stations are pretty big operations. But the average small station operates with just enough people to announce records and change tubes, charges little for advertising time, and probably will survive after lots of bigger businesses have collapsed. "I grew fond of The Avengers on the basis of seeing just four or five episodes. It was odd to go to an old fashioned, serious spy movie after sampling so many parodies and takeoffs on the species. But I found my enjoyment of Torn Curtain unspoiled by an



occasional fleeting thought of how different this would be if it were a television spoof. Cannonball: The little devils who turn off alarm clocks suffer from short reaching ability. Try moving the clock about three feet further away. ' It's a splendid sort of justice to think of fans like Lee tearing down parking lots for their rock collections, to get revenge for the historic buildings that were torn down for the sake of the parking lots. Aliquot: If the egoboo poll survives, it might be good to include a category that Rusty mentions, for votes on non-members who have had material in the mailings. Votes cast for non-members by accident in other categories could be transferred to the right place by the teller. ' "Classics of the Silent Screen" has also been remaindered. I got a copy from Publishers Central Bureau for a fraction of the original price. It's not nearly as plump as "The Movies" but it's a useful supplement to the larger volume. Now, do I invest in that entrancing new volume on the old cliffhangers or try to live a few more years until it comes down in price, too? ' Here's an odd thing. Rusty was a congoer and a great traveler in the old years while I sat home. But I met two of the six fans whom he lists on his never-met roster. They are Marconette and Wilson. Let's All Join Hands, &c.: Here's another example of the curse of semi-isolation. I don't know if it's the wrong question, to ask about this sudden emergence of the name of Paul Peng. I gather that it's Paul Wyszowski. But it would be nice if someone would explain if it's a nickname, or a name that should be used in addressing mail, or a sort of non-secret imaginary person like Hoy Ping Pong, or what. Bobolings: I almost owned a cat the other Friday night. Around midnight I went out to put out the garbage pail and nearly stepped on something alive. I discovered a large kitten, tied to a post supporting the back porch, with pans of water and milk, small pillows, and peanuts in the vicinity. I routed out the woman nextdoor and she confirmed my suspicions: she'd refused to allow her small daughter to take in the cat and the daughter had thought she could raise the cat out of sight on my property with the aid of smuggled nourishment and dollbaby pillows. We loosened the cat and a couple of days later I found a windowpane broken in my cellar, mute evidence that it's not wise to meddle into the activities of the youngest generation. Atomic Galaxy: These model rockets are really something. I had been unaware of how complex they are, until I ran across a local teenager who not only recovers and uses over and over his two-stage rocket but is even taking aerial pictures from it and recovering film and camera without damage. The Bugle of Dingly Dell: I share the skepticism over the findings in the Warren Report. I imagine that Lee Harvey Oswald was shooting out of that window. But I'm positive he had help somewhere. It's inconceivable, for instance, that a man who planned a solo assassination and had botched a previous attempt at a man's life should buy a rifle for the purpose that needed to be reloaded each time the trigger was pulled. Snickersnee: This is as concentrated a four-pager as we've had in FAPA for many years. I can't share the experiences, of course, but I do feel sympathy with the mood in which Bob obviously was when he wrote it. But if I talk like this to the local people I know, I'll alienate half of them and scare the remainder to death. So I try to keep my mouth shut as much as possible. (The last time I opened it was the day when all those nurses got butchered in Chicago. When someone asked me



if I'd ever heard anything as terrible, I replied that I could hardly be sure because I didn't know all the things that Americans had done the same day in Viet Nam. It just popped out involuntarily and it didn't meet with a very good reception.) Slight relief is available, I find, by listening to the CBC news broadcasts. The Canadian journalism is somehow consoling. Pantopon: I wasn't aware of the existence of the Russian fairy tale when I made that remark about a Lt. Kije situation. I meant the Russian movie that is familiar to me through the suite taken from Prokofieff's background music. The movie apparently turned the fairy tale into a satire on military bureaucracy in Czarist times. A soldier for some reason or another mentions a serviceman named Kije in a report because another name is needed to fill out a platoon or to have someone non-existent to blame for something, then it becomes necessary to continue the paper existence of this individual and he eventually wins a war or something despite the handicap of never having been. Special Report: This I shall treasure as long as my puny body and its pulpy substance survive. To be cited as one who has continuously demonstrated his interest in science-fiction would be grand enough, after I've been belabored for faanishness from so many sides. But to be mentioned in the same sentence and given the same status as Sam Moskowitz and Pat Lupoff culminates a long career in fandom. It will be downhill from now on for me, whatever may happen. Horib: Laney as a fan writer was more impressive as a whole than in separate parts. Individual sentences and paragraphs were brilliant but there is little temptation to reprint entire articles. Vernon McCain and Norm Stanley are two other good examples of fans of this type. When you think of Burbree or Walt Willis, you think of individual pieces and lots of folks get the urge to reprint favorite items. I don't think that categorizing fans like this represents disparagement of either type, but it explains why certain fans with big reputations don't seem to live up to them when re-read in samplings of total output many years later. Ayorama: Anyone who thinks that madmen are "in touch with something utterly beyond the domain of scientific knowledge and competence" should work for a couple of weeks in a mental hospital. Madness is dreary, stupid and tragic. This seems an oddly roundabout and dubious argument to use as an excuse for inducing the dreary, tragic and unpleasant physical reactions from drugs like LSD. Lundy's Lane: Garbage collecting is a fine field for investigation and there is no reason why it shouldn't occupy many paragraphs of mailing comments. The best evolution of traditional garbage collection methods known to me has been tried in a few towns. It does away with the noise and smell associated with metal cans. The city provides waterproof, heavy paper bags and simple standards on which they can be hung at the end of the yard. They're collected by trucks going through the alleys, dumped into the vehicles without being opened. The saving in manhours compensates for the cost of the bags. It won't work in cities where the supply of alleys is limited. Damballa: It is envy-making, to read of Denver's cool nights in even the worst of summer. I've probably averaged three nights weekly since June sleeping without pajama tops, twice as often as ever before in memory. Putting out missed FAPA issues leads to interesting possibilities. If I put out that last skipped issue of Horizons, would it qualify as a postmailing to the December, 1943, FAPA mailing, and could I count my string of consecutive mailing appearances as having grown sud-



denly longer? '' You're lucky to have those literary preferences when you're in the mood to reread an author's output. It takes me considerably longer when I feel impelled to go back over the output of Mark Twain or Charles Dickens. Phantasy Press: Very late condolences on the death of your parents. Don't feel unhappy over the difficulty of expressing properly your emotions in FAPA. I couldn't even start to put onto stencil how I felt in 1957 and 1960. '' Was that "Reign of the Superman" feature in Science Fiction a complete and exact preview of the famous Superman? I have seen this claimed and denied and had despaired of ever finding anyone who owned the tremendously rare documents that provide the answer. Sambo: The need to communicate isn't the full answer to why a person becomes a fan. Many other individuals seem to experience the same need to communicate and find-release in other ways: by becoming preachers, or holding interminable conversations with the nearest person or joining service clubs. Still unsolved is the matter of why some people who feel this need choose such a complicated and specialized medium as fandom for release. I still suspect that the fannish drive is not just for communication, but a combination of that with other impulses, particularly a special sort of rebellion urge that somehow doesn't express itself the easy ways, such as communism or burglary. '' I felt properly staggered at first glimpse of the fact that Sam Martinez owns 12,000 paperbacks. Then I remembered how shocked some people are at the number of phonograph records I own (not nearly as many as the all-out collectors, of course), and I imagine that the apparent frantic acquisition pace results in both our cases mainly from consistent acquiring over a rather long span of years, a procedure that can create remarkable results after a while. The John Dickson Carr Bibliophile: I'm not a JDC enthusiast now, but there's no knowing what the future may bring, so I'll remember this. However, there seems to be confusion among the JDC-fans on the meaning of bibliophile. The Fannish World of E. Mitchem Cox: Either these long titles or the underlining has got to go. '' Ed Cox and I have met? Frantic, unsuccessful effort to recall when. I don't remember him at my home or a Phillycon and if he'd been at the DisCon, he would have met Charles Hansen. '' A favorite gripe of mine is the pennypinching that results in tiny signs on multi-million dollar highways. Where traffic moves at 60 mph or faster, I think the drivers deserve at least three signs-spaced at half-mile intervals and ample in size to give a fighting chance of getting into the correct lane or using the proper exit ramp. Vukat: If the surplus FAPA bundles are sold regularly to a fairly steady list of customers, material in the mailings may no longer have the protection of common law copyright. Watch for a series of FAPA mailings to start to appear as Ace paperbacks any time now. '' This is the first I've heard of a second "non-conflicting splinter fan club" in Los Angeles. Immediately I start to wonder which of the members listed here will write the new Ah! Sweet Idiocy and tell all the facts about the conflicting interests in Los Angeles fandom. -Isomer-: Splendid writing, a good example of how much the favorite fannish art form of the travelog can be made even finer if a little care is taken and some rewriting and planning go into it. I assume, at least, that this issue wasn't dashed off quite as informally as the ending suggests. '' I remain unconvinced that even a bi-



cycle is an adequate substitute for walking, when it comes to the best way to see a strange area. In most parts of the world that we're likely to visit, riding a bicycle requires almost as much attention to traffic dangers as you require in a motor vehicle. Trill: I'd feel much prouder of my vocation, if John Boardman were right in his statement that newspapermen learn to know when a news source is being honest with them. Alas, newspapermen are non-psychic, non-telepathic individuals. If one of them did develop this remarkable skill, he would instantly quit journalism in favor of making a fortune in the stock market or at the races, by sorting out the phony from the genuine tips. "I wonder if Hank Reinhardt would have resorted to violence in the incidents he relates, if he had known that such violence could result in an end to all life on the planet. If he tries to argue by analogy between a personal experience and a war, it might be better to revise the personal experience in this form: His wife wakes him in the night, tells him that she has heard loud voices in the house down the street, she thinks that those inlaws whom Mr. Jones dislikes have come to visit, and the wife tells him to get his shotgun and go down and nip it in the bud. Finally, there is the obvious fact that if Hank Reinhardt resorts to his physical strength in such episodes, he's going to embark on an episode before long in which the other guy has more physical strength. Day\*Star: Naturally, a particularly interesting issue to me. The opera score judging dialog was funny and perceptive. I suspect that there were lots of ingroup references that would make it even more telling if I could recognize them. However, let's not be too harsh on the apparent goof created by Le Villi's failure to win the Sonzogno contest. There are two points to remember. One is that we don't know what Puccini's first opera was like when the judges saw it. The opera was revised before it finally reached the stage and it is the revised form that is with us today. The other consideration is that the contest was sponsored by a publishing house, in contrast to the imaginary competition transcribed in this issue. Today the judges would be thinking about the winning work's suitability for production at a contemporary music festival, how it might stack up as a recording without the stage business, and if the judges were human, there would be the ever-present eagerness to bring distinction to some favorite university or conservatory that had spawned the composer or his teacher. The judges for the Sonzogno firm knew that they wanted an opera that would draw paying customers in the only kind of productions Italy was likely to give it, professional ones, and they also wanted an opera with arias and tunes so that the firm could sell copies of separate items in large quantities and excerpts would begin to appear in recitals. Unless the Puccini opera was far different when first submitted, it had few melodies that would send listeners to their music store the next day for copies of the piano score or the big arias and some of its stage effects might have been a trifle difficult for Italy's smaller opera houses. "I've owned and loved for a dozen years the old Concert Hall Society recording of Poppea. It is cut considerably, not too well recorded, and makes no pretense at authenticity. But it has no countertenor and for that reason I'm not tempted to replace it with the Cambridge set. I don't know what countertenors may have sounded like in the 17th century but every instinct tells me that they couldn't have made the sipping noises of today. For that matter, I'm as willing to



believe in the authenticity of a modern performance of an old work as I am willing to guarantee the genuineness of a piece of wood that claims to come from the True Cross. Look at the way people argue today over the authenticity of acoustical piano recordings: He didn't play that fast except when he was making records; he always had that glassy tone even when you heard him in person; he didn't dare to play freely when he was making a record that would be played over and over; he pounded on each first beat because he was afraid the records wouldn't catch the rhythm otherwise; and so on. If we have that much trouble remembering how someone played a couple of generations ago, how can we presume to decide that this or that is the proper way to perform a Monteverdi opera? All we have are the words and the sketchiest of scores--not every hint about which instruments play which parts, how fast or how loud the music is opposed to go, what ornamentation and decoration was expected of the performers, the nature of the acting and a thousand other matters. Of course, we can reach some sort of decisions by referring to this textbook and that diary from the general era. But it's almost certain that performance customs in any given city were different from those in the next town in that distant time.

Walter overlooked in this review the first recording of Orfeo, which Vox issued in 1949 on lp discs and which was available before then on 78s. Habakkuk: I'm developing a guilt complex over boys' books. The local second-hand stores are usually glutted with worn copies of the old Grosset & Dunlap and Cupples & Leon editions, I never buy them, and this haunting fear becomes stronger all the time that I'll eventually want to collect them like these Berkeley fans, when it's too late. There must be some kind of powerful moral or even a clue to the universe hidden in these grueling accounts of the terrible ordeals required to listen to someone singing folk songs or popular tunes. Somehow I'm reminded of the epic struggles that are involved in making tiny children eat meals. Something is wrong in both instances, when a perfectly simple and natural sort of episode becomes an epic drama. The dissertation on new trends in science fiction reminds me of the articles we used to find everywhere on the appearance of 9th fandom, 10th fandom, 11th fandom, and so on. My attitude to the trends is like my opinion of the fandoms: grave doubt that trends or fandoms exist. Science fiction has had so few important authors that it's doubtful if there are schools of writing such as you'll find in mundania. Of course, an extremely popular novel will be followed immediately by several imitations by the fastest-working hacks. But this is not the process of literary evolution that Greg Benford is writing about. Think of the most famous science fiction authors after Wells and Verne and try to list members of the schools that you might have expected them to form. Campbell was EESmith's only scholar. I don't think there has been a true school of writing created by Heinlein, Van Vogt, or Sturgeon. Bradbury has been influential, but who else? I haven't read this latest Ellison story that everyone is so excited about, but my previous acquaintance with his fiction convinces me that he is not a stylist, he's simply someone desperately in need of an editor to break him of an extreme case of overwriting. Everyone seems confused about Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. The composer wrote a note for publication with the score, in which he emphasized that he was putting into tone the emotions created by the "program", not the objects and events themselves. Of course, he tossed in an



indifferent bird imitation and an abortive thunderstorm. But he put nothing into the second movement that sounds like a brook, he wrote syncopated music that no rustics could cope with for the third movement, the theme of the last movement sounds more like a cattle call than a song of thanksgiving, and you wouldn't hear the first birds in a real visit to the country only after 25 minutes had elapsed. The JDM Bibliophile: This response from MacDonald should be ample proof of why it's better to eulogize authors while they are alive. You not only make the author proud; you also get a lot of useful information. But I can't understand the statement that "The French publishers do not believe in series characters." Mercy, the Simenon detective stories probably hold the world's record for number of novels featuring the same detective, and Balzac is still in print, too. Minac Megillah: So far, nobody outside fandom has asked me about Andy Main. But it's astonishing, the thoroughness with which some of these investigations are conducted. Just recently, I was called from Washington for information about a woman whom I've not seen since she left Hagerstown in 1944. I explained that I knew nothing about her since then except by hearsay, and the man on the other end advised me not to worry about that fact, but instead to think real hard if I could remember any racist attitudes in my contacts with her. "I never thought I'd ever find anything good to say about motorcyclists. But I do admire them for wearing helmets and I think I'd feel safer at the wheel of an automobile if I dared to wear a helmet while driving. But while capitalism is trying to promote seat belts, the driver in a helmet would be picked up as some kind of a nut, no doubt. Synapse: But the whole point of tax exemptions for children is that their existence may cost everyone much more in the long run, even the parents. If this disguised form of baby bonus encourages the population explosion, it is responsible for increasing the enormous bill for education that taxes must pay. "You can't escape responsibility for what your government is doing" has a fine resounding sound and is absolutely meaningless in this time and nation. I hope during one of my searches for Edgar Allan Martin publications to come across some of the previous Speer publications in which he used to fuss like fury at FAPA members for describing in their publications the circumstances and difficulties involved in the stenciling and duplicating. Synapse is rapidly growing into the world's worst offender in this respect; some issues would provide the raw material for a daily instalment of a soap opera. Bete Noire: A couple of years back, I got a letter as a result of the appearance of my name in The Lionel Magazine circa 1928. The man wanted to buy model-railroad equipment made in the days when the models were only slightly smaller than the real thing. I couldn't bring myself to sell. Here's another reason for believing that I don't inhabit quite the same time stream as other FAPA members. I knew only the Peter Rabbit books by, I believe, Thornton Burgess, and never heard of this David Cory or Jack Rabbit. Two local additions to the list of odd firm names: Eastern Panhandle Credit Corporation and Ringer-Home Laundry. I no longer recall where I found the information, but I read somewhere that the one-way fare for Atlantic Ocean crossing for Irish immigrants around the end of the 19th century was only \$25 or thereabouts. If \$1 from the Mississippi to California is unrealistic, so was the original \$100 fare, outrageously high.



## The Worst Of Martin

### IT'S THE WOMAN WHO ALWAYS PAYS IN THE END

Jack rang the doorbell. He did not mind visiting a beautiful babe for a few minutes, but nothing would come of it and it was just so much extra work.

Helen was in a negligee. "Oh, Jack! How nice to see you. It's been weeks since we saw you last."

"It has, hasn't it? Bob asked me to stop by and let you know he'd be quite late home from work."

"Couldn't he call?"

"Tied up, I guess."

"Come on in, and I'll make a pot of coffee. Do you have time?"

Jack did not want to stay. He had planned on getting home early, have a long hot shower, change of clothes, and then see what he could scare up for a dinner date. But a coffee in between sounded good, and she was gorgeous company, even if she was his pal's wife. "Sure! A coffee sounds fine!"

Helen had probably forgotten how little she had on under the negligee. Jack followed her into the kitchen and settled in a corner such that she had to walk between him and the window.

She was tall, blonde, and well-built. They had been married less than a year and although Jack felt he knew Bob pretty well, he knew little about Helen. He decided he had better not let his thoughts wander. She was standing right between him and the window, talking about some inconsequential thing. Fortunately, whatever she was talking about did not require an answer. He decided he had better go back to the living room.

"Here. Take your coffee with you," said Helen.

She settled at one end of the couch. "Is your coffee the way you like it?" Helen carefully adjusted her robe so not an inch of leg was showing. She seemed to have forgotten she was not wearing a bra and the silk was equally flowing at the top. Jack could not help thinking how unlucky bachelors are, sometimes. Tonight he might have to make a half dozen calls, end up in an uncomfortable restaurant, consciously being as charming as possible, and when the evening ended, it might just be over, and that would be all.

"Is your coffee the way you like it?" repeated Helen.

"Oh, fine!"

"The way you were staring at me...."

"I think you're lovely. Really, most beautiful! I don't think I ever appreciated just how sweet you are. Bob is a lucky guy all right."

"You shouldn't talk like that. You'll embarrass me."

"Us poor bachelors don't realize what we're missing."

"Oh, from what I hear from Bob, you don't miss much."

"The sex life of bachelors is terribly overrated. Why, I haven't even had a kiss in a week."

"Poor Jack!"

"Sometimes I lack affection so much that I'd even pay for a kiss--just a kiss! Would you give me a kiss for twenty dollars?"

"Jack!"

"Seriously, just as an example, and just one kiss! If I



take some girl out to dinner tonight, what with drinks and all, it will run at least twenty dollars, and I'll be lucky if I get a thank-you."

"I shouldn't take your money--but perhaps it will teach you a lesson."

"I want you to take it." Jack put his coffee down and moved close to her on the end of the couch. "It will save me all the trouble of getting dressed and going out and banging my head on the old wall."

Helen put the twenty in a cigarette box on the table. "I should feel terrible doing this," said Helen, but leaned towards him offering her lips.

In a few minutes she sat back and said: "Now, was that worth twenty dollars? Here, take your money back!"

"I will not! It was worth every penny of it." She had forgotten the top of her robe and Jack could not take his eyes off her fullness. "In fact, I don't think twenty was enough."

"Oh, you're incorrigible!" She had adjusted her robe and started to fumble again with the cigarette box. "I must give you your money back. This is ridiculous!"

"Not at all!"

"As sweet as you are, one kiss is not worth twenty dollars."

"It is to me. Your kiss is worth more than twenty. To show you how serious I am, here is another forty dollars. Just kiss me again, perhaps two or three times, and let me hold you."

"Wow! You don't care what you do with your money." Helen was still a little flushed from the first kiss, and the more she fumbled with her robe, the more it slipped at the top or the bottom.

"It would make me very happy," said Jack. "Here! I'll put the forty dollars in your cigarette box."

Helen started to say "No!" but then he was kissing her and she was stretched out on the couch, her robe askew. There were a few moments while she struggled, a few long minutes while she forgot everything but Jack, and then she began to struggle again.

"Easy now!" she said. "Enough is enough! You've had more than your money's worth." Then she blushed a furious red.

"Don't think of us that way," said Jack. "I do want you so very much. The money is just a way of proving it. Don't move! I know you want me too. Why should we fight each other at this point?" Jack cleaned out his pocket. "Here's all the money I have, a hundred dollars and change. Please?"

It was many hours before Bob got home. "Did Jack drop in?"

"Oh, yes! We had a cup of coffee together."

"Good!" said Bob. "Did he leave my pay?"

(Reprinted from the Winter, 1962, issue of Grotesque, published by Edgar Allan Martin and distributed in the November, 1961, FAPA mailing. For the benefit of newer FAPA members, this was the issue that was denied activity credit on the grounds that it consisted of reprints rather than new material. To older FAPA members, happy fifth anniversary.)



## They Also Serve

Three or four fanzines in the latest FAPA mailing contain speculations on what might be done about the size and nearly static condition of the waiting list. Several years ago, I stopped making remarks on the topic, in the belief that FAPA had become too hopelessly congealed in outlook to change itself as its circumstances change. But there's just a faint chance that a good many members are really concerned about the situation. So I'll try something that I hadn't attempted before. What follows will be a listing of Things That Could Be Done, some of them old ideas and some of them not previously proposed. Maybe an extended barrage will stir up a fair amount of response and even some groundswells of attitude.

Of course, the problem is twofold. The interlocking aspects of the situation are the lengthy wait required for a waiting lister to get into FAPA, and the less desirable effects on FAPA itself of its almost static membership and its large proportion of members who don't contribute material of the quality that they can achieve.

The first alternative is to do nothing, to keep all the rules and traditions just as they've been in recent years. This has the advantage of not rocking the boat. FAPA is the oldest group of its kind, there are more people seeking admission than any other apa can claim, and its static condition may have helped to avoid political and mechanical crises in recent years. The disadvantages of sticking to the same course consist mostly of the large number of new members who are burned out fanishly by the time they finally join and the absence of the enthusiasm and freshness that a few members in the first fine flush of full fanish ability would create.

If we want to change something, we can change either the rules for present members or the waiting list procedures. I have a pretty good imagination, but it isn't good enough to imagine FAPA making both types of changes at once.

If we want to attack the problem by means of the membership, we could do various sorts of things. We could make activity rules more stringent, by requiring more pages per year or activity in at least two mailings per year or a given number of pages each six months or something similar. Disadvantages: the likelihood that it would cause a higher proportion of hastily produced crud and the experience of SAPS which has lost many valuable members who simply can't find time to cope with a hectic activity schedule. We could increase or remove altogether the limit on the number of FAPA members. Previous proposals of this sort have had a solidly hostile reception. We might try to revive the deadwood by penalizing a member who produces only the minimum activity in a year, requiring a doubled minimum activity in the following year or dropping him if he's inactive for six months after a minimum activity year. This might work but it might also produce a lot of nine-page publications in the last quarter of membership from those who now turn out eight pages on such occasions. We could drop the one or two members who make the lowest score each year in the egoboo poll. A German apa almost adopted something similar, an annual vote to determine which member should be dropped; it failed to pass by just a couple of votes. We could set a limit on the number of years an individual can be a FAPA member continuously to create turnover. We could require every FAPA member to submit credentials showing fanac outside FAPA to be eligible to renew each year.



- If we want to attack the problem by direct assault on the waiting list, there are several decisions to make. Shall the new rules change altogether the traditional way of handling prospective new members, or shall we combine the present system with some new methods? And should the changes apply immediately to everybody, or should we pass the changed rules now but make them effective only for new applicants to the waiting list, retaining the old system for present waiting listers? Bear in mind that any of the notions that follow can be adapted by the combination method or by excluding current wl members from them.

- Should we decide to adopt some method other than chronological time of application for admitting new people to FAPA, we could conduct balloting to determine which waiting listers we want to see admitted first. Or we could fill vacancies in FAPA by choosing the waiting listers by lot. Or we could by lottery match up each waiting lister with a member and let that waiting lister enter whenever his paired member drops out. Any of these systems would lessen the current evil, that the new FAPA member has waited the longest and has lost the most of his initial enthusiasm for membership in FAPA.

Or we could dignify the Shadow FAPA with official standing and use it as a means of keeping the waiting list restricted to fans who are really willing to prove that they'll be active. We could require a given number of pages in a given period of time in Shadow FAPA as an activity requirement for staying on the waiting list. Another method would consist of an annual egoboo poll by the waiting listers on the basis of Shadow FAPA activity, the winners getting the next FAPA vacancies. A variation of this would consist of Shadow FAPA inclusion on the FAP-egoboo poll each year, the winners going to the top of the waiting list. A milder method of making sure that waiting listers still intend to be active when they enter FAPA would consist of requiring renewal of fanac credentials outside FAPA each year by each waiting lister. (And here is as good a place as any for making a proposal that might be satisfactory to the membership even if we don't do anything about the waiting list. FAPA is prosperous enough now to offer to reimburse postage costs on Shadow FAPA mailings that go to FAPA members. I think a refund would be justified to cut down this much on a thankless task for the waiting listers. If we somehow tied in the Shadow FAPA with admission procedures, it might be wise to go further in helping to pay for duplication costs of the portion of the Shadow edition sent to FAPA members.)

There are a lot of other possibilities, but these should do for a starter. For what it's worth, I would like to reiterate that my own preference is unchanged, even though hardly anyone else in FAPA favors it. I still believe that we should combine the present waiting list policy with an annual vote on waiting listers by FAPA members. The waiting listers who placed in the top two or three positions when the poll had been tabulated would be invited to fill the next membership vacancies. All other waiting listers would retain their chronological order and those highest on the waiting list would then be invited to join as a result of any other vacancies that should turn up in that year. This would mean that even the least popular fan would eventually get to the top of the waiting list by waiting his turn, while the fans considered by FAPA members as most likely to prove congenial and useful in our midst would get admitted almost at once. I



haven't checked back to determine the exact rate of turnover on the waiting list in recent years, but everyone agrees that it now takes about five years to go from the bottom to the top. Voting a couple of people into membership each year shouldn't slow down the wait for the others by more than a year or two. If nothing is done about the waiting list, there's a good chance the wait will increase a couple of years anyway in the near future, as the list grows longer and longer.

With the best will in the world, I have tried and tried for the past five years or longer to understand the logic behind the requirement that waiting listers should acknowledge regularly receipt of The Fantasy Amateur. I know that some members are convinced that this provides a sure indication that the responding waiting listers are interested in FAPA. I reply that it does nothing of the kind, because when we had this system in effect, one fan after another got to the top of the waiting list and then did not join FAPA after all. Acknowledgment by a waiting lister of the FA shows that he is willing to write a postal card every three months or so, nothing more. If we want proof that a waiting lister is interested in FAPA, let's require him to publish a Shadow FAPA magazine or write regular letters of comment to the FAPA members who send him their magazines or contribute articles to FAPA publications. If we try to imagine that writing one postal card every ninety days is fanac, we're very confused. We might as well accept postal cards from FAPA members to the official editor every three months as a valid substitute for publishing eight pages for FAPA as activity credit. Besides proving nothing, the requirement that the waiting lister must drop a line quarterly is an unfair imposition on either the waiting lister, if he must also continue to pay for his copies of The Fantasy Amateur, or on the FAPA membership, if we're going to send out fifty copies of that official organ free each quarter to waiting listers. Finally, the acknowledgment requirement imposes a lot of extra work on whichever officer keeps track of response and inevitably leads sooner or later to a squabble when a waiting lister claims that his postal card was written but got lost in the mails. I think that annual submission of the small sum necessary to pay for four copies of the FA lessens bookkeeping, lets us know that the waiting lister has not died or gaffed completely, and is all that should be required of someone who isn't automatically entitled to any benefits of FAPA.

One point needs to be disposed of in the final lines. This is the contention that it wouldn't be fair to members who waited a long time to join, if we set up a different procedure for the future. By this reasoning, Speer and I and possibly a few others are unfair to the rest of you because we joined FAPA without waiting at all, at a time when the membership roster wasn't full. A good many other present members were required to wait only a year or two and some spouses got into dual memberships without waiting at all in recent years. Nobody has brought up charges of unfairness because of these situations. If we assume that the waiting list will continue to grow and that FAPA turnover will continue to lessen in the years ahead, we are certain to be forcing future applicants to wait eight or ten years to join. That means we must choose one type or another of unfairness, if unfairness it be. I would greatly prefer to see applicants suffer less in the future.



## O The Radiant Morn Is Nigh

I have been grouching for a long time about the futility of arguing in fanzines over subjects with which fans have no direct contact or experience. Even though I still believe that fans are not apt to contribute anything useful or even trustworthy to the Viet situation or the real usefulness of the CIA, I recognize a flaw in my stand. It's quite doubtful if most of us really know for a certainty about many things with which we believe ourselves to be familiar. Like, for instance, the town in which you've spent your entire life. This is a delicate subject just now, because I'm living in Appalachia country and I can't figure out if this means that I'm living in the midst of a poverty-stricken part of the nation.

You wouldn't expect Hagerstown to be part of the 12-state area that "has not reaped the rewards of its natural wealth." The Public Health Service has been running surveys and keeping elaborate records on Hagerstown for nearly a half-century, because its characteristics come so close to national averages. Sales Management surveys of buying power show that family income here is substantially higher than the norm for the nation. The area around Hagerstown has grown faster in the past quarter-century than any part of Maryland except the suburban areas around Baltimore and Washington. But if you happen to run across one of the maps which show Appalachia's 373 counties, you'll see that a neat and gently curving eastern boundary line formed by these counties—all the way from northern New Jersey to the North Carolina border is jolted at just one point into an ugly projection further eastward, formed by Washington County, where Hagerstown sprouts, and a couple of West Virginia counties just across the Potomac River from here. And if you come to Hagerstown for the first time with this knowledge, you will see a bigger slum area than you would expect in an average or above-average city, a startling number of empty storerooms in the business district, and a lot of other tell-tale signs.

If Pontius couldn't be sure about truth, neither can I, so I have no intention of attempting to prove the wealthy or downtrodden nature of Hagerstown and surroundings. But it might be of some interest to tell some of the things about life in Appalachia, an area that is strangely free of FAPA members in particular and fans in general.

I first heard about Appalachia when an official of the local Chamber of Commerce told me about a lobbying trip by local interests to Washington. The local delegation was trying to convince Maryland's congressmen that they wanted no part of the proposed federal aid to the Appalachian mountain area where the skyline is high and the income is low. The local group thought that conditions here didn't justify inclusion in the legislation, they were afraid that accepting a dollar from Washington would obligate the city and county to spend a couple of dollars, and they didn't like the effect that Appalachia would have on Hagerstown's general image. To attract good new industry, for instance, you must try to give the impression of a community that has some skilled labor available and is prosperous in general but still capable of absorbing just one or two more good industries. You don't want to appear to be too prosperous, because prospects will fear inability to get workers at modest salaries, yet you don't want to paint



everything in poverty hues, because then you'll get nothing but feelers from sweatshop-type mills. But Washington County became the easternmost part of Maryland to go into the area covered by the Appalachian Regional Development Act. "The pork barrel is gone," LBJ said the day he signed the bill early last year, but nobody around here believes anything that the politicians say.

If you can find one of those topological maps of the nation on which the highlands are actually raised on the paper's surface, you'll see why Hagerstown and Washington County got included. The Appalachians practically start in Washington County, in this part of the Middle Atlantic States. As you go westward across Maryland you come first to Braddock Mountain and the Catoctins in general, which are in Frederick County, the next one east from Washington County. But Frederick County is already getting economic fallout from the Washington suburban area; Frederick County didn't suffer the loss of 10,000 jobs when an airplane plant lost its wartime rush of orders as Washington County did twenty years ago; and so Frederick County was left with the great bulk of the nation and we are included among the poor white trash. Washington County contains the west slope of South Mountain, all of Fairview Mountain, and all of Sideling Hill Mountain. They aren't the Rockies but they cover a substantial portion of the entire land area of this county, they are too steep to be farmed as long as the nation can produce surpluses of farm products in its flatlands; they've never been developed properly for timber production, and in general they are useless from the standpoint of tax revenue, home sites, and a lot of other financially useful purposes. When a county can't use for most purposes a lot of its land, it's automatically in difficulties. Hagerstown itself didn't start to grow fast or to acquire a facade of prosperity until late in the 19th century when the railroads really became big things. By hook or crook, four railroads met in Hagerstown, not only providing a lot of jobs but also giving this city transportation advantages that other landlocked cities in the area lacked. You know what happened to the railroads. All four still provide freight service here, but one of those four has stopped accepting anything less than a carload lot for Washington County destinations and the tracks of another will be abandoned through most of the county after a railroad merger is approved. The last regular passenger service in this city and county stopped ten years ago; unless you want to get technical about the fact that the B&O's main line goes through the southern tip of the county, where trains stop only for extremely large rocks across the tracks. The fact that Routes 40 and 11 meet in Hagerstown helped in this century to take up some of the slack that the decline of the railroads was creating. But lots of cities are served by two major highways, and in another year or so both Interstate 70 and Interstate 81 will be complete through this area, and they meet four miles away from Hagerstown. This area has no other particular natural advantages: no natural resources worth mentioning, no port, an airport too small to handle the big planes, no colleges or universities, no exceptional tourist attractions, and not much hope that the suburbs of Washington and Baltimore will ever stretch out this far, since metropolitan complexes usually go around mountains rather than crossing them.

Even some of us know-it-all newspaper people were surprised when statistics were compiled to show that Appalachia was needed



around here. Even after you make allowance for the fact that most statistics were based on surveys several years old, it is sobering to think that nearly one out of every four families in the county had incomes under \$3,000 per year and in Hagerstown itself about twelve per cent of the families had incomes under \$2,000. In the rural areas, one out of every five adults had not completed grammar school and only about three out of five were high school graduates. You can't say that the Negro problem drives down the averages perceptibly. Only about two per cent of the county's population is non-white, almost all of the Negroes live in Hagerstown, and curiously enough in view of the segregation and lack of employment opportunities that have prevailed here in the past for Negroes, nearly half of the adult Negroes are high school graduates.

Of course, you can prove anything by statistics. The local Economic Development Commission's brochure for industrial prospects shows the other side of the picture. It lists the "net effective buying power" for the average household in the county at \$6,200. It shows a population increase of 16 per cent in the county during the past two censuses. The union situation is good: no business or industry has blamed unions for forcing it out of the community in the past ten years and no union in the same period has been voted out of existence by decertification. Turnover is under two per cent per year, layoffs average 11 per cent per year, and absenteeism runs around two per cent.

The Appalachian Regional Development Act sounds good enough. One official summary explains that it provides federal money to be used with state and local funds "for the creation of a network of development highways; for construction and operation of regional health centers, vocational education schools, and sewage treatment facilities; for land treatment and erosion control; timber development; mining area restoration; a water resource study, and for supplementing existing federal grant-in-aid programs and financing local development districts and research and demonstration projects." All that stands between this outline and actual consummation of the marvels is competition for cash within Appalachia and the red tape that several hundred thousand federal workers and at least that many computers and typewriters can manufacture in Washington.

After the fait had been accomplished, the attitude of local folks changed from the earlier desire to have nothing to do with it to the sudden realization that it's against human nature to let free government money go to waste. The concern over what the city and county might need to spend was brushed off with a sudden agreement that the local contributions could be made "in kind": spending which would exist only on paper, since it would consist of letting unused nooks and crannies of the courthouse go into service as office space for rental fees equivalent to local contributions, and charging part of the salaries paid to existing officials to Appalachia, in return for their devoting some time to helping projects.

The first thing that this area needed to do to get this particular form of disguised dole was to form some kind of local group. I regret that I missed the first few meetings of the committee, because I would like to know how the school authorities managed to get such a stranglehold on it. By the time I began to attend its sessions, about half of its members were associated in some way with education, the chairman was a career teacher, and



all the proposed Appalachia programs were designed to get money for the school system. We might have been forced to abandon the concept of public education to remedy the situation, if the federal authorities hadn't done an unexpected thing. They sent a missionary to one of the meetings to make it clear that the committee must organize formally, that it must expand its membership, and that a good proportion of this membership must consist of poverty-stricken people. This last requirement was a real stunner. None of the incumbent members of the committee could remember the last time they'd sat down in the same room with a poor person. There were hurried conferences on how to find the names and addresses of people without much money and there was a general agreement that the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in some way responsible for this astonishing regulation. (Hagerstown is probably the only city remaining the nation where it's unwise to drop FDR's name in the course of a casual conversation. The odds are eight to five that it will result in a jeremiad as impassioned and as lengthy against the New Deal and Blue Eagle as if the year were 1934 or thereabouts.)

So the rather informal small group enlarged and became formal, gaining full recognition in the eyes of the Office of Economic Opportunities which administers Appalachia funds and even hiring an executive director and three aides for him. The new group didn't think that its projects would require the full-time services of a director, but the federal people insisted on hiring one, and when hired he didn't think he needed an office staff but once again Washington was firm about the need for two or three office workers. Meanwhile, the school system was still getting all the money and doing all the administrative work.

If they did nothing else, these school-associated projects made it clear that some of us don't know how the other half live within a town. One project is called Catch Up, runs six weeks in the summer months, and is designed to give kids in the low-income families a chance to get closer to the attainment level of their schoolmates. It has just completed its second summer, with pretty good results and some surprises for the teachers hired to do the instruction. The classes are smaller than during the regular school year, giving the teachers a chance to work more closely with individual students. As a result, some teachers took the time to teach teen-age girls how to wash themselves. Other teachers in the younger classes divided pupils into two groups on several occasions, so that they could let some of the class do orthodox activities while they instructed the remainder in the best way to get rid of lice. They've made no attempt to offer just the orthodox classroom subjects during the warm weather months, because enrollment is voluntary and they've got to keep the kids' interest somehow. So field trips have been stressed, some of them unusual in nature. One teacher discovered that almost none of the children in her class had ever eaten in a restaurant, somehow arranged to use Appalachia money to pay the expense, and took all her kids to one of the most expensive restaurants in this area. It caused a big local scandal but the education people think it was worth it, if just one kid in the bunch is impelled to drive himself toward the kind of future in which he can go there to eat any time he wishes. They found one tiny Negro boy who was gradually having his personality warped



badly because he was the object of ridicule by other kids for his serious dental and jaw problems. The Catch Up people blew about one-third of the money available for the county-wide dental care program to get him back into good shape. The teachers think that the program also helped about a hundred adults from low-income families who were hired as aides. The teachers tried to instruct them, as well as the kids, in such things as how to do useful things with small sums of money and the importance of preventive care of health.

Another program conducted here has been named Headstart by the OEO in its plump handbook. (You don't realize the full extent of the Appalachia legislation until you try to lift this volume and then discover that it contains nothing but the barest of outlines of all the different programs sponsored by the OEO; details are published elsewhere.) It's solely for five-year-olds whose folks couldn't afford to send them to kindergarten. These children get a crash course in crayon techniques, shoelace-tying, and how to drink at least half the milk before spilling it, covering in six weeks the curriculum that is spread out over nine months for their wealthier peers. The teachers, parents, and public in general seem more enthusiastic about this program than any of the others, although I don't share their belief that it brings these kids into the first grade on an even intellectual keel with the ones who went to kindergarten. If it does nothing else, Headstart will probably produce free kindergartens throughout Maryland. All the politicians have sensed the public reaction and are promising this miracle if elected this fall. This county's public schools offer kindergarten wherever enough enrollments are made to justify paying a teacher. It costs \$75 per year per kid, a sum that does not meet the entire cost of running kindergartens. This sort of compromise is generally felt to be an indirect burden on poverty: the people who can't afford to send their five-year-olds to kindergarten are paying through taxes or through rent that goes in part toward tax bills the money that makes up the deficit incurred by the kindergarten program. The most logical procedure would be to put Catchup money into the general kindergarten program and reduce the tuition to a figure that almost anyone could afford, or give it free to low-income families. But the federal government won't let Appalachia funds be used for kindergartens in the winter time, just in the summer.

I scored a small victory and almost terminated my journalistic career ahead of schedule, in the Appalachia program devoted to adult illiterates. A couple of years back, the county school system tried independently to do something for the men and women who can't read and write well enough to use those skills in their work or in leisure hours. The school system set up classes, the welfare people cooperated by referring clients to the classes, the project was highly publicized, and nobody ever showed up to take the courses. I raged and belliowed in print on the theory that the fiasco resulted from advertising it as an extension course of Hagerstown Junior College. The junior college was indeed doing the work, but I felt that the very word college in connection with even the most elementary instruction in the three R's would frighten away permanently the potential students. When the basic adult education classes were sponsored with Appalachia money, the junior college again did all the work but that fact was kept carefully concealed and I was gratified to learn that more than a hundred



persons registered for the studies and about half of them stuck it out for the entire three months of evening-studies. I almost got fired one night for fussing with someone important at the office over a proposed feature story on these classes. I felt that the newspaper had no right to ruin a useful educational project by running names and pictures of these grown-up students. Of course, this position was against all the fine old assumptions that the public should be informed and that the press should use its constitutional freedom, no matter at what cost. But I felt that exercising these fine traditions could be skipped on an occasion like this, when the glary publicity would probably break up the classes instantly. I won my point and retained the job that I'm still making plans to jettison at the proper time, and eventually we did run a pretty good feature story on the class after its conclusion, using the names of only two persons who were so proud of their new knowledge that they wanted the public to know what they'd done. You'd be surprised if you lived around here at the identity of some of the persons who attended these classes. One man is a mayor of one of the smaller Washington County towns and there is the son of the biggest labor man in this area.

The Appalachian Act is impinging on this area in a quite different manner, one that required no local action. Among the ways in which Appalachia money can be spent is in building roads. The people who thought up the program believe that lack of first-class roads have played a major part in the failure of Appalachia to keep up with prosperity elsewhere in the nation. So without even asking us if we wanted it, they've started to build us a new road. It will start near the western edge of Washington County and will scoot over hill and dale all the way to Morgantown, W.Va. Now, up to now, it had never occurred to anyone around here that there might be any reason for local folks to go to Morgantown, and nobody from Morgantown is known to have come to Hagerstown in the memory of the oldest living inhabitant. There isn't anything between here and there, either, except excellent scenery. But if you'll look at a recently published highway map of the East Coast, you'll see that there is some logic in the proposal. Maryland's main east-west highway has traditionally been Route 40, which runs through the northern part of the state until it veers northward into Pennsylvania near the westernmost part of Maryland. But a couple of decades ago, the Pennsylvania Turnpike was built and traffic leaving or reaching the main population area of Maryland around Baltimore got into the habit of jumping off Route 40 about 25 miles west of Hagerstown to get aboard the superhighway by a convenient short connecting road. The Appalachia highway should pull a lot of through-traffic back into the depressed Maryland and West Virginia areas, it will give the most direct route to the Port of Baltimore for a large part of the Ohio River Valley, and it might rival Virginia's Skyline Drive as a scenic attraction. I don't advise any fans from west of the Appalachians to use this new highway en route to the Phillycon, because only three miles of it have been started so far in Maryland and communications with remote regions of West Virginia are not sufficiently developed to give us knowledge of what might be happening to the highway around far-off, exotic Morgantown.

The unasked gift of the new highway is only a mild example of



the eccentricities of bureaucracy that are associated with the Appalachia program. If you look through the published materials that are given out at meetings explaining the program, for instance, you'll find information on almost everything except the basic question of what constitutes poverty. The OEO sets varying standards for varying programs and purposes, but generally there is a figure established as the dividing point for a single person between poverty and prosperity, and this dividing point increases gradually to cover persons with dependents. Several acquaintances in their middle years have been badly shaken to discover that they are in the poverty bracket, after enjoying comfortable circumstances and solvency for their entire adult lives. But obviously, no single dividing line can cover all circumstances. The elderly widow who owns her home and enjoys good health will need less money to enjoy life than the sickly girl who has been deserted by a husband who left a lot of debts behind him. If you get irritated at the way the post office treated the last fanzine you received, you might be consoled to know that really monumental snafus occur in another federal agency. The Catch Up program this summer, for instance: the application for funds to operate it won approval in plenty of time, then just before the start of operations word came that there wouldn't be enough Appalachia money to provide funds for Catch Up this summer, then after congressmen pulled a few strings a slightly reduced grant was made, then came a violent feud between the local and federal officials over the question of whether the Catch Up reduction should be in the number of students or the length of the course, and last of all, the approved grant vanished again somewhere in the intestines of the bureaucracy and a couple of hundred teachers and aides stormed furiously for weeks until the OEO finally traced down the reason for the non-arrival of the voucher to back up their salary checks.

- Then there are the federal rules about the bylaws and composition of the Community Action Council. From long knowledge of local psychological facts, the original intention had been to keep the group small for ease in calling meetings and making decisions. But the OEO insisted on lots of representation on the CAC from persons in the poverty bracket, including residents of all major sectors of the county. By the time all races and all stages of pennilessness had been signed up, all the major welfare and governmental agencies were included, and other important people were put on, the group had grown to a membership of about 60. The officers tried to keep things moving by doing most of the real work at executive committee sessions, but someone in Washington stopped that by insisting that executive committee decisions would be effective only when approved by a quorum at the next membership meeting. You can imagine what has happened: it has been almost impossible to get a quorum.

- Of course, in theory these are necessary safeguards against misuse of funds. I imagine that the Appalachia activities here would be even less effective if such checks didn't exist, for a few of the CAC officials would be only too happy to shovel all the available money into the school system and welfare board office, thus making more county tax money available for other purposes. Fortunately, there's a built-in safeguard against this in Appalachia. The local sponsoring group must swear, avow, and cross their hearts that local spending to alleviate poverty is not being



cut in any way because of the acquisition of Appalachia money.

Is this really an answer to the problem of regional poverty? It's too early to make an educated guess. But there is one encouraging aspect to Appalachian money. It's all intended to do something to remedy poverty, while poverty programs up to now have simply tried to keep people eating and warm and healthy. No Appalachia money is simply given to the poor. Poor people who get Appalachia money acquire it in the form of a salary paid for work and that work is intended to improve things somehow, through teaching them certain vocational skills or showing them how to cope with the circumstances of a low-income life. You can get Appalachia money to try to encourage more poor kids to work hard for college scholarships by giving them a foretaste of college life and there's an Appalachia program to give summer jobs to teen-agers who dropped out of high school for lack of money, on the grounds that some of them will resume their education. I suspect that this is the only constructive approach to poverty. Certainly the past generation's giveaway program hasn't produced anything other than cries of more and more. In the very old days, before my time, the city and county took care of the worst poverty by sending the worst cases to the poorhouse. The welfare program was begun in the depression years and ever since, despite wartime prosperity and the establishment of social security, the welfare bill has grown inexorably larger. Welfare payments are now well above \$100,000 monthly, in a county with about 100,000 residents, and the head of the local welfare board says flatly that any welfare recipient will starve to death if he doesn't supplement his monthly check by the help of relatives or panhandling or petty larceny, because of the rising cost of living. A few years back, a national research organization came to town and tried to figure out what makes poor people poor in this typical city. The findings were depressing and probably accurate: first, a handful of "multi-problem families" take most of the tax money that is spent on prisoners, free medical care, welfare, and so on because these families' members are chronically in trouble in all sorts of ways and there's no apparent way of rehabilitating entire families; and second, one long-term serious illness incurred by one member of a family can throw that entire family into the poverty bracket for several generations.

On the other hand, I don't see how Appalachia will provide any help at all with one of the most dreadful aspects of local poverty: the buildings in which the poorer people live. There hasn't been an extensive survey of housing conditions here since the 1960 census. That survey showed fewer than 70 per cent of Hagerstown's housing units were in sound condition with all plumbing facilities available. Five per cent of all the housing units were listed as dilapidated, twenty per cent were listed as deteriorating. This set of statistics is depressing enough at face value but it becomes alarming when you remember that the city had experienced a big construction boom of well-built houses since World War Two. If you remove the comparatively new and expensive houses from consideration, then make allowance for continued deterioration in the past half-dozen years since the census, you can comprehend what it's like in the older sections of Hagerstown. In one block, a quarter-mile from the center of town and all-white in population, 59 out of 77 housing units are listed as



dilapidated. In the heart of the Negro section, only 21 of the 109 housing units in a block are sound with all plumbing facilities. Of the remainder, 58 are dilapidated and two even lack a flush toilet. In one out of ten housing units in this block, the number of occupants exceeds the number of rooms. The census takers listed a house as deteriorating if it has "one or more defects of an intermediate nature that must be corrected if the unit is to continue to provide safe and adequate shelter" and it "needs more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance." Broken gutters, cracks in the plaster, and need of paint are examples of defects that do not put a housing unit into the deteriorating category. A housing unit is listed as dilapidated if it "does not provide safe and adequate shelter. It has one or more critical defects; or has a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number to require extensive repair or rebuilding." Incidentally, there is no real need for a spirited campaign in TAPA to get me personally out of squalor. I was happy to note that my block's 73 housing units contain 69 that are sound with all plumbing facilities. Two are listed as deteriorating and two as dilapidated. I suspected that one of those dilapidated buildings is the garage converted into a two-family dwelling nextdoor to me; it is a firetrap in which a lot of people could die if my own three wooden garages a few inches away should ever catch fire. I no longer rent out those garages, incidentally; because of fear that a tenant might leave a door unlocked and kids or alcoholics might wander in and drop a match.

As I was saying, Appalachian money seems to be unavailable for improving the housing situation. I can't imagine myself feeling any desire to seek a better future, if I were living in one of the hundreds of badly lighted, vermin-infested, leaking, crowded slum houses or apartments in Hagerstown. Most of them are fearfully overpriced: the average rental in one of those dilapidated blocks mentioned above in the white section is \$39 for an average of less than four rooms, and I imagine that the rent figure would have risen at least \$5 over the past half-dozen years. Almost everywhere in the rundown sections of Hagerstown, incidentally, tenants are required to pay by the week so that the owners will get a bonus every third month. Maybe the problem could be made less severe if courses were offered in making simple repairs and improvements in the house at a minimum of cost. There must be ways to insulate loose windows and block up rat holes and fix loose stair treads without paying big sums for labor. But virtually all of the bad housing units are rented to occupants and there's both lack of incentive to fix up another man's building and the fear that he will raise the rent if you make it too much better to live in. A few good things are happening. The city has put up some decent low-rental housing projects and has given them good supervision to make sure that the tenants take proper care of them. But the catch here is that they are available only to families whose incomes are under specified figures, and it's hard to tell a man he should look for a better job if taking that job at an increased salary will force him to move into the slums again. Just west of the center of town, one great area of rundown houses four blocks wide and two blocks deep has been razed in the course of providing a new thoroughway and changing the grade crossings of the railroads to overpasses. City officials keep talking about enforcing the



housing code. But they never do it. They wonder where the poor people would go if all the uninhabitable houses in town were torn down and the city is already at a critical point in its finances, unable to bear the loss of tax revenue from the slum areas. One other thing disturbs me a great deal, although it'll be another quarter-century before it could happen. What will be the fate of all the houses built during the war boom, when they've reached an age of about fifty years? Unless human psychology has changed by the last years of the century, it will be almost impossible to find anyone who is willing to buy an old house. These wartime buildings are mostly too small to be cut-up into apartments, the process that has saved from severe deterioration most of the big houses that were erected by the hundred here around the turn of the century. Wartime construction methods were not too conscientious and I imagine that these properties will require a great amount of annual maintenance in another quarter-century. Even if we embarked tomorrow on a massive slum clearance program, we'd probably find new slums suddenly emerging before the municipal improvements were finished.

Maybe Appalachia has forced me to realize more fully the conditions I've always lived around. Or maybe the public at large has been inspired to speak up more about conditions that should not exist if the nation is as great as the American Legion claims. Whatever the source, I seem to see and hear more about the general situation nowadays. I wandered up into the western part of town on a recent day off to take some color pictures of a row of houses that will be razed to make way for the expressway. A man I know cornered me and asked if I could suggest any protection that he and neighbors could take against rats. Those old buildings had sheltered countless rats and already the first steps toward razing had caused rats to appear in neighboring houses that had never before been troubled. Then there was the old man who telephoned the office an evening or so later, asking us to run a story about doughnuts. I almost dismissed him as a practical joker but then I discovered that his plight was serious: he lives on next to nothing, doughnuts are a major staple in his nutritional pattern, and the price of doughnuts had just increased from five to six cents. This was more of a burden to him than adding a cent to the state sales or income tax would be to most persons. And yet there was the old fellow who visited his home town this fall for the first time in 65 years and couldn't get over the way things had improved since he was a young man and he had many favorable things to say about the way Hagerstown compares with the many other midling-sized towns that he has known. Extreme poverty is now so scarce that they tore down the poorhouse; the worst cases are simply sent to convalescent homes and cared for there for the remainder of their lives. And occasionally I think about the wealthy people of Hagerstown and how far in debt most of them are and how they worry about the increased traffic on their streets, and I compare them mentally with the way the Negroes in the Bowery or the whites on Honey Hill loaf with huge grins outside their ramshackle dwellings and I wonder even more about the effects of poverty on the human spirit.

I think it was Plato who believed that the richest persons in the land should not possess more than four times as much as the poorest people of that nation. Maybe the best compromise would be this approximate ratio, even today.



## Hail, Columbia

A couple of issues ago, I ransacked old correspondence files and ran a couple of pages of quotations. Response was hardly hysterical; but the experiment brought enough kind words to risk the same thing again. But this time, I'll stick to one correspondent and one particular season. It is spring of 1941 and Joe Gilbert is conducting a fast and furious correspondence with me. He was the biggest shot in the Columbia, South Carolina fandom that arose and vanished in such quick order but flourished so mightily during its couple of years of existence. Joe continued to be an active fan up to just a year or two ago in the opinion of one person, me. Somehow I misremembered his name and got him mixed up with Joe Gibson and it was quite recently when I realized that Gibson was another old time fan who was making a strong comeback.

I never met Gilbert, but his letter of June 29, 1941, shows how close I came:

"Gosh, you don't know how near you came to having the entire Columbia Camp--excluding Mac--on your hands this Sunday. Yeah, today. I told Harry that Widner, Rothman, and a gang of others would doubtless be at your house today, and he immediately suggested that the Camp pool its financial assets and run down Saturday night; coming back Sunday. Lovely. Harry came over Saturday morning and woke me up gently by pouring a cup of water over my slumbering head. He looked like a grin that had lost its Cheshire cat. It seems that Billy Bradford asked his grandma if it'd be okay to go to Hagerstown in the family Chevrolet. His grandma said swell. So we walked down to where Bill works, formulating plans like mad. He comes out shaking his head, and we are clutched by the chill hand of premonition. (Some cliché, eh, -keed?) Billy's grandma had called up his aunt, and his aunt said naw, she didn't think it'd be a good idea. Whereupon his grandmother calls up Billy, and tells him that she's afraid it wouldn't be a good idea, either.

"Harry and I are very gloomy for a while, then we run across Bill's brother, Dupre, and his best friend, Leland. Harry talks as only Harry can talk, and tells 'em we'll take 'em along if they can persuade Bill's grandmother to relent. One chance. We walk over to my house, I, having by this time, learned where it's located. Harry bats out a number of postals requesting art for Fan-art, and then we walk over to Harry's house. Harry remembers that there's a remote chance Hugh Robinson mite like to go, and we axe him. Nope. He's got to work on Saturday. Second chance busted. Harry then remembers that Dave Weiner has a car, and might like to see Maryland, so we go over to his house. Third chance. He isn't there. We come back to the store and phone up Lee. Is there any chance of his getting his car? Nuttin' doing. Fourth chance busted. We walk back to Harry's house, and bull around for a while. Then we go down toward Five Points, see Weiner's car in front of his house, walk over, and axes him. He has to work. Third chance gone. It occurs to me that there's a travel bureau in our town. I call it up, and talks wit' de manager. Price? Forty bucks to rent a car. I fall on the floor, pick up the phone in that prone position, and sez that I'm very sorry to have wasted his time, but nothing doing. He sez come down and see him, and he'll try to see what he can do. Boy, are our feet tired, by this time. Anyway, we can't work the thing out to our mutual financial satisfaction, so there goes our fifth chance. We stagger back home



and Billy shows up. Lawyer Dupre and associated Leland have failed. First and last chance-disappears.

"Harry borrows Billy's bathing suit, and we go swimming."

Harry was Harry Jenkins, Jr., second in command in Columbia. Fanart was his shortlived fanzine devoted to illustrations and articles about art. Mac was W. B. McQueen, an older Columbia fan, who wrote under the name of Panurge. Lee's last name was Eastman. The reference to the location of the house came from the incredibly large number of addresses the Gilberts possessed in any given brief span of time, three of them in the four months that this particular sheaf of correspondence covers.

A little earlier, the Columbia fans were discovering the telephone, an instrument that was approached with much greater caution in those days when rates for long distance calls were higher and fans' purses were slimmer. On March 10, 1941, Gilbert wrote:

"The Camp is making monthly long distance calls to fans now, and you're next on our list. It won't be in April till you hear from us, however. You can understand why when I tell you that we'd intended to call only F-scher last month; but, due to the tragic death of Singleton, decided to call up Miss Kuslan as well. Both calls were supposedly limited to five minutes. But Gilbert got a clutch on the phone-like a money-lending robot made by a Scotch inventor, released it just long enuf to let Harry and Lee say 'Hi!', snatched it back with a snarl, and talked to Miss Kuslan for 34-straight minutes! It cost me thirteen dollars, but I still think it was worth it."

That was Trudy Kuslan, of the Connecticut brother-sister fan act. She was one of the few unattached females in fandom of 1941, an object to be admired and desired and treasured all at once. I must regretfully point out that I never got that telephone call from Columbia, because, my reply reveals, the Warner telephone had been removed the previous month. I can't remember now if I was telling the truth when I said we'd had it removed because the bus route had been changed to bring the vehicle right past the door, but I suspect that economics had something to do with it, too.

Anyway, Trudy had thrown a conniption fit at the Boskone immediately after the announcement of the Singleton suicide. For months after that, fans argued about the genuineness of her emotion as vigorously as Shakespeare scholars have ever debated Hamlet's possible madness. Joe was outraged on June 21 at something a Spaceways columnist had written and charged to her rescue:

"The S. F. Cynic is malicious, unfair, and--most important of all--utterly wrong where Trudy Kuslan is concerned. I've known Trudy ever since I came into the fan field and have been fortunate enuf to be on terms of intimacy with her granted, I believe, to no other fan in the field. I know her. And I'm willing to stake my word of honor that she is definitely not the kind to pull the sort of stunt Doc accuses her of. Her grief was sincere; too sincere, probably, for the feudurians, who have been forced thru long fan wars to hide their feelings, to understand. Trudy was the very first person to inform me of Singleton's death, or supposed death, and the letter she wrote was one that I cannot believe was insincere in any way.... I, personally, would find it difficult to restrain the impulse to beat the teeth of anyone suggesting such a thing in with an axe handle...." But this loc never appeared in Spaceways. Joe withdrew it a little later when he learned that Trudy had known everything from the first, after all.