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In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: I don't feel too strongly about continuance of the egoboo poll to take sides on the controversy. But it would be nice if, should the results not be tabulated, the ballots were preserved for at least a year. Not just because I'm curious to know how I finish in it, but because of my historian activities, I hate to think that the outcome should be permanently lost, in the event that the results are again published regularly in future years. The continuity of the poll tradition that goes back perhaps two decades could be preserved, if the ballots were saved for tallying up in some future time when the number of votes might not seem such a major consideration. Puckle Pits: Why do so many middle-aged and respectable gentlemen turn out to be comic fans? I think this quotation might partly answer the question, although it refers to other sorts of nostalgia: "To hear the discs and see the films again is not to recall one's past; that is achieved better by pure recollection of past music and past movies. Actually to hear and see again what pleased one so much in music or in photographic imagery is, rather, to get a sharp critical slant on one's own past. That was what one enjoyed ten years ago; this is what seemed the most exciting or beautiful thing in one's adolescence. Cabiria and Male and Female and I Must Have That Man have not changed: it is we who have changed and the world we live in." Iris Barry of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library said it. Horib: Horizons has 24 pages for a more elementary reason than any mystical attraction that figure might possess for me. I simply open a new box of stencils when I'm ready to start the next Horizons and when I've covered them all with type, I wrap them up and send them off to be mimeographed. This saves running up to the attic for another quire of stencils. Like certain other members, I don't want to put any more work than necessary into FAPA activity. '' I might have agreed about the lack of a fanzine Hugo, if Erbdom hadn't won that object last year. I consider Erbdom a semi-professional publication, under the kindest possible definition and I don't think it's fair to deprive a genuine fanzine of the honor because of bloc votes from one particular clique. By their very name, the Pongs should seem more like egoboo, less like prestige, and might go as a result to real fanzines more regularly. My own frowns are reserved for the banquet scheduling. It's a selfish reaction, because my particular working schedule suffers from it, and few other fans are apt to be affected in the same way. I'll have to stay up all night on September 4 because of an 11 a.m. assignment on September 5, unless I schedule a week's vacation for the sake of a 250-mile trip. Horizons: Technically, I'm commenting on the current mailing, a serious deviation from FAPA righteousness. But I must

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Almost everyone seems to know nowadays the basic facts about how lines are cast for newspapers in the linotypes. So a mistake somewhere in the line can be corrected only by resetting that entire line and throwing away the old line. This is the basic cause for so many of the mistakes that make an entire paragraph incomprehensible. The proofreader has usually caught a mistake in the story, the corrected line has been created, and then someone who is putting the new corrected lines into that galley of type accidentally removes the wrong line and inserts a new one in its place. So the reader finds two lines that are identical except for a typographical error in one, and then a gap in the continuity of the paragraph; or a corrected line may be inserted in the wrong story, causing a line about an unfamiliar matter to appear suddenly instead of the perfectly correct line that belonged there while the old error still remains in the other story. When time is getting scarce and the typographical error has been the omission of one or more words, the man who sets the correction may cheat a little: there isn't room in that particular line for the omitted portion, and instead of going on to reset the remainder of that paragraph, he'll try to rephrase the bad line and thus salvage the lines that follow. He usually botches the job.

Whether the type is set on a linotype directly, or punched first on a paper tape for use on an automatic linotype, the man who does the setting also deserves a great deal of the blame that normally goes to reporters. Transpositions of letters within words are easy to find when they're done in the typesetting, but when the typesetters leave out words or change one word for another, it's sometimes impossible to notice the mistake during the proofreading. If you're a proofreader for the Government Printing Office or Time, you find these mistakes because everything is "read by copy". This consists of one proofreader holding the original manuscript and watching it while another proofreader reads aloud from the proof. A small town newspaper can't afford the number of proofreaders it would take to do the job this way in the rush of putting out a daily newspaper. The manuscript is beside the proofreader, he's supposed to glance at it occasionally when he comes to a doubtful spot, and he may compare the length of the manuscript's paragraphs with those of the proof, to detect any major omission of text during the typesetting. But a lot of serious small changes go through. If you've ever wondered why most newspapers describe the jury's verdict as acquittal or innocent, rather than not guilty, it's because of the consistency with which some composing room employes will omit "not" from a sentence. The AP used to put three or four extra spaces before and after "not" wherever it appeared in a story, to try to impress it on the typesetter's attention, in the pre-tape era. This particular method of avoiding the libelous sort of error is not entirely satisfactory to a lot of defendants, incidentally. Some dubious characters consider acquittal as equivalent to failure to reach a verdict or dropping a case and complain that they are getting unfair treatment when they weren't found guilty. And I believe that old Scottish law did have some sort of distinction between a verdict of innocent and a verdict of not guilty.

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explain immediately that these here mailing comments do not cover the entire February bundle because I haven't had time yet to read the entire mailing. The bundle didn't arrive until February 24, other time-consumers have been chewing away at my leisure since, and I refuse to impose upon Coulsonian kindness by giving them only a short time in which to run off stencils. So I've read the mailing in the order of FA listing, I'm commenting as far as I've read, and if I live to put out another issue, I'll cover the rest of this winter mailing in that one. BT: His Pages: Driving on snow or ice terrifies me and it's a tribute to the writing that I endured the perspiring palms that the subject matter produced to read all the way through it. So I am left with only one question aside from the natural query about how anyone gets up the nerve to face a snowdrift when he's alone in a car: Where do the Illinois highway workers get those cinders to spread on bridge approaches? The decline of coal as fuel has caused cinders to go out of fashion on Maryland's ice and snow, simply because of unavailability. '' Hagerstown's courthouse addition must have been designed by the same architect who did Assembly Hall. After the new circuit courtroom was nearly completed, a judge paid it a visit one day and discovered that he would be required to parade all the way from a far door past the spectators, jury, witnesses, and stenographers to climb up onto his bench. You never saw a courtroom redesigned in that stage of construction so fast in your life. '' Your hypothetical worker who got 16¢ out of his dollar's raise wouldn't do that well if he lived in Maryland. This state's income tax would take another three cents. If he lived in Baltimore or a couple of counties, another two cents would go for a local earnings tax. These figures may be inaccurate by the May distribution of Horizons, because the state legislature is now working on increases in the state's tax structure. Sayers Checklist: The judge probably erred about Harriet's age. Unless things are done differently in British courtrooms, the judge comments on the basis of his own notes and memory without the help of an official transcript of the testimony. He could easily have jotted down the wrong age and Harriet's attorney wouldn't antagonize him by drawing attention to the error unless it had a bearing on the evidence. Helen's Fantasia: Ronald Clyne did a lot of record jacket art during the 1950's. But I haven't run across his work in any medium for a long while. '' Ah, another potential member of my proposed Disney fandom. Over and above the point Helen makes and the things I wrote about him in Niekas, there's something else that needs saying. He put craftsmanship into modern movie making, and this may be one reason why he's resented by the crowd that think all pictures should be out of focus along with their preference for ugly loud trumpet playing and poetry which lacks anything to distinguish it from prose. I can watch a Disney production in the theater or on television without even following the plot or listening to the dialog, when they're aimed at too young an audience for me, just because of the masterful photography. Watch the Sunday evening Disney hour just once and you realize how clumsily almost all other television productions are done from the technical standpoints of accurate framing, good lighting balance that doesn't wash out highlights but keeps shadow detail, and even good sound as television sound goes. Grandfather Stories: I've had FBI visitors in my home from time

All the members of The Committee have written good science fiction and fantasy fiction. Several of them have written great stories. They wrote the stories the best way they knew how within whatever taboos and legal restrictions their markets imposed. They had some spats with editors and publishers over changes and deletions, but the short stories and serials and books that they created emerged pretty much as the nature of the themes and plots chosen by the writers dictated.

When you write a television script, you have a specific number of minutes to fill. You can't write another minute because that would interfere with a commercial and you can't write one fewer minute of script because then there wouldn't be a great enough proportion of entertainment to commercialism to satisfy the television code. Your script must be constructed in a manner that causes interruptions for commercials to be made at minor crises in the development of the events, at specific intervals. The production must be put on tape for much less than the cost of a B movie, and you can't demand too much in the way of special effects, large groups of extras, or tricky location shooting. You must aim for an audience consisting of both the kids and the grownups, because in most households there is still only one television set playing at a time and the sponsor wouldn't spend his money on a program that would cause the adults to leave the room or would inspire the parents to make the children go to bed. You cannot offend minority groups but you can't be so attentive to them that the majority group will become restless. You can't use bad language, let evil triumph over good, show the heroine being raped, or do any number of other attractive things. Script writing for television today is something directly out of those futures in which an impossible number of restrictions hampers the freedom of the individual. It is a prison for the creative person, in comparison to which the milder impediments imposed on the man who writes for magazines or books are absolute artistic license.

I came to know and like science fiction by reading books and magazines that published this type of stories. I was less happy with science fiction in the movies because of the fact that no commercial movie can be profitable on an audience of 40,000 persons, as a magazine or hardcover book can. I refuse to believe that even the best writers can break out of the fetters they'll have to put on, if they win the right to create scripts for Star Trek or any other commercial network series.

If The Committee wants to start a propaganda campaign to get more and better science fiction drama on educational television, I'll write authentic sounding letters of praise to station managers even if I've been unable to see the productions they want to emulate. I'm also willing to try to help in an effort to promote good science fiction scripts for the increasing number of movies being made for television, where the events needn't be so closely fitted to a strict length pattern.

But I positively won't try to keep Star Trek or any other commercial television series going just so The Committee can write scripts for it. If The Committee should be successful, who will write the science fiction stories that Farmer, Matheson and Sturgeon used to write and still could write if they weren't so fascinated by the bigger financial rewards that come from television?

Anyway, one of Star Trek's two network rivals in that time spot has died before the end of the season. I never saw that one, either.

Star Trek Without Eyetracks

Like everyone whose name has ever appeared in a fanzine, I have received 79 copies of a letter from The Committee. Even though these letters arrived over a period of six weeks or so, each of them begins with a breathless: "It's finally happened."

I've not followed The Committee's instructions. Up to now, I have written nothing about my reactions to Star Trek. Even now, I'm not exactly describing such reactions, because I still haven't seen any program in this series. It comes on the screen at an inconvenient time for me, my television watching consists of 90% sports events, and most of the remainder takes the form of parts of old movies, and the little description given to each episode in TV Guide has caused Star Trek to sound like something out of Junior Science Fiction Adventures.

But enough praise has been sounded involving the new series in fanzines for me to give it the benefit of the doubt, and to accept it, sight unseen, as one of the first good science fiction series ever to be offered on a national television network. Still I have made no effort to watch samples of it, and still I have not been hypocritical enough to write letters to the sponsors and the stations and the networks for the greater glory of science fiction. Now, some weeks later, I think I'm finally understanding the reasons for this inaction.

For one thing, I hate to see fandom be used. It got used at the Tricon when Harlan Ellison drew upon his popularity and personality to help his pusch for a Hugo. Maybe the short story would have won a Hugo anyway but I dislike this sort of wooing of fandom, whether it occurs when a pro has an overwhelming love for one of his youngest brainchildren, or when Heinlein buys lots of liquor at a big room party for the fans whom he ignores 364 other days in that year and 365 days in the majority of other years. I think fandom is a voluntary activity, a hobby in which each fan should decide for himself what he's going to do. Just as I object to any fan organization that tries to tell me how to participate in my hobby, so I dislike a group of pros who want to organize whatever admiration for Star Trek may exist into something that might have big commercial potentialities.

I also am unhappy about the fact that The Committee's letter didn't come right out and state the motives of personal prrofit that must have motivated its creation. The Committee doesn't ask us to write letters favoring good science fiction on television; we're supposed to push just this one example of good science fiction, Star Trek. We aren't expected to ask stations to couple their programming of Star Trek with an increase in the better science fiction movies on the late show and we aren't sought to persuade local stations to try to get television rights to legitimate theater productions with science fiction as their basis. It's Star Trek, Star Trek, Star Trek, because Star Trek and not old movies or Broadway productions provides these pros with a chance to make good money in script writing.

But the real root of my dissatisfaction with The Committee delves down deeper yet. The Committee is assuming something that may not have any basis in actuality. This assumption could be the non-existent ability of commercial television networks to offer good science fiction productions in a regular series.

Salud: Lost youth always makes an illusory return when I find it necessary to ask a question about the past. Was the mangle something customarily kept in the kitchen? In The Pawn Shop, Charlie Chaplin washes the dishes by putting them through a device that resembles but isn't exactly like the wringers on an oldfashioned washer. '' I planned to report this time on my reactions to reading at last all the Jane Austen novels from beginning to end. But I'm going to be in deep enough disgrace with a lot of people as a result of other things in this Horizons and I'd better not lose another friend just now. Synapse: Jack defends the inheritance tax by invoking an assumption: that the heir has done nothing to earn the property. Most people leave their possessions to those who have made them happiest through love or most comfortable through care or most grateful through various types of service. Would it be right to require the college student to pay income tax on the money that his parents are paying for his education? '' I know nothing about the history of typography. But I suspect that the practice of putting the punctuation before the quotation marks could arise from the slenderness of the empty space frequently given between words. We usually space twice before the next sentence when we type but the space in letterpress may not be as great as one character of normal width. This would have tended to make the gap between period and last letter of the preceding word to appear as great as the space between the period and start of the next word, if the " came before the . in the printshop, with resulting confusion to the reader. '' The typo in Horizons which you questioned was really deliberate. I fouled up a passage so badly I couldn't repair it properly without emptying the correction fluid over a whole paragraph. So I inserted "every" which is awkward but means what I intended: full information is lacking in the score about facts other than the pitches of the tones. '' Would a person born blind in one eye view the mirror reversal like a two-eyed individual? And what of the one-eyed camera, if it's used to photograph a scene in the mirror, the negative is printed like any other negative, and the print is shown to a person who doesn't know the facts behind it? '' They tore down the poorhouse here around 1952. I found some 60-year-old county budgets, in which it cost almost as much to operate as the school system. I imagine that the institution is vanishing throughout the nation, with the increasing numbers of "convalescent homes". Swamp Gas: The basic information on Star Trek is useful. It suddenly occurs to me that the best way to shut up The Committee might be to send them a spare copy of this entire mailing. '' I've finally read a Burroughs novel from start to finish, so I felt better about reading a Burroughs fan's article. There might be another factor besides Victorian customs that tended to keep all-out sex out of the Burroughs novels. Almost all his fiction came in the form of series of novels about the same major characters. Another dominant tradition of fiction in that era was that the uniting in sexual activities (usually disguised as a description of the marriage ceremonies) provided the proof that the hero and heroine had reached complete and lasting happiness. ERB might have feared that just one sizzling love scene between Tarzan and Jane or any of the other continuing characters would end the series.

another SAPS inheritance that I would gladly renounce. If we keep it, I would couple it with a new custom, that of giving the three surplus bundles from each mailing to the top three waiting listers so they'll be acclimated upon admission. FAPA doesn't need the money from the sale of these spare bundles and giving them away in this matter might preserve common-law copyright on FAPA magazines. Kim Chi: The most unforgettable thing in this bundle is the speculation that the Donaho Christmas tree lacks a tree. '' One of my few lacunae in newspaper experience involves moving the newspaper plant to another building. I understand from those who have been through the process that this is a moving day to top all other types of moving days that the galaxy produces. The local ownership has been patching up and adding to the old building so much that hardly any of the plant where I began my career remains, and I suspect that the total cost has been greater than that of a new plant, but it's been easier on the nerves than the logistics of moving all that equipment without missing an edition. Goliard: These cartoons are marvelous. Most sketches with con origins cause me to think: "Gee, that must be funny to anyone who was there." These caused me to omit the final prepositional phrase from the thought, and alter the verb to: "Gee, this is funny." The text serves to strengthen my certainty that there can't possibly be a Karen Anderson. If I knew more about androids I'd risk a speculation on the possibility that this is the explanation for such stamina, multiple abilities, and observational skill. '' The Milford notes are edifying. The silence in fanzines about what happens there had given my imagination too vigorous a workout and it's nice to know that some of the activities, at least, are capable of going onto paper. I doubt that modern science fiction is good enough to justify all that critical apparatus but I wouldn't dare criticize the institution, lest I produce a jinx on it and then science fiction really gets bad without its benefits. Bjottings: Suddenly I find myself totally unable to accept the concept of a Los Angeles fandom without a Bjo in its midst. Bjo is to me only a fascinating voice on a few hundred feet of tape, a half-dozen photographs, and tens of thousands of words written for fanzines, but just this partial and far-away awareness of her is hooked up inextricably with Los Angeles fandom. I hope the move produces fine things for the Trimbles, but I am absolutely certain that it will do endless harm to Los Angeles fandom. The JDM Bibliophile: I'm on Len's side on the vital question of what to do with the, a, and an when indexing MacDonald's fiction. I see no reason why fan publications need conform to the rules established for professional, mundane publications, when there is no good reason for such uniformity. The Moffatt system might improve accuracy, since a fannish publication doesn't get checked by so many people and might be more likely to become inaccurate in its title listing, if it relegated the articles to the end of the titles and then forgot to put a few of them in. I went through the same thing with the fan history. Pressure was strong to make it scholarly by footnotes to cite the source for each statement, full explanations whenever I used a word in a fannish sense, and full explanations of background information that any fan but no librarian would know. I yielded very little ground because I wrote it for fans, not for scholars, and intend it to give pleasure, not to impart knowledge.

er areas of fandom as the years go on; witness the Speer, Tucker, Hoffman and Hansen phenomena, as representative of the class who first joined the organization in the early bloom of fannishness. For the benefit of the few newcomers to FAPA, I repeat that I have never proposed surrendering this organization to the neos; I simply think that we should somehow enroll at least one or two comparatively new fans each year to prevent too much world-weariness. The lack of egoboo poll participation is, of course, another example of how stagnation is creeping into FAPA as the average fannish age of its members increases inexorably. Pantopon: The heresies involving Star Trek that I have expressed elsewhere in this issue were written before I realized how much was spoken about and derived from this series in the winter bundle. I imagine I'll get clobbered. In any event, this story seems close to professional quality, suffering only from the extreme speed at which its events move. I can adapt to one-minute episodes on television but not on paper. I think this is the only other story I've ever encountered about this particular fantasy world. That it holds up well in comparison to the de Camp novel is the best compliment available. The Rambling Fap: I'd like to know how the fan history is coming, too. Maybe it's going to be necessary to await the second Advent. Wraith: Despite the clumsiness of my original remarks about Oswald's marksmanship, I remain unconvinced that he alone fired the shots. On one hand we have assurances that a man can fire the three shots within this span of time. On the other hand, we have Oswald's botching of his first assassination attempt, his use of a gun which he'd owned only a few days, his inability to make preliminary tests of the angle of fire and the wind conditions, and the fact that he not only needed to go through the mechanical manipulations to fire those three shots but needed twice to reaim at a distant moving target, yet scored 66% accuracy on a target about 8x12 inches. He had either human or supernatural help and I prefer to think it was the former. '' Is anyone in FAPA planning to lead a movement to withhold Hugo awards, except when a majority of the worldcon members have cast votes? Sercon's Bane: I've had thoughts about a new television set; despite my limited use, there are some UHF things I'd like to see and colors might help me hate the bad guys on the diamond more intensely. But I've hesitated because I know I'll buy an expensive big-screen set if I make the purchase. I have this baseless fear that physical damage can result from too much proximity to a set, even though all I've read on the subject indicates that you'd almost have to clutch it to your bosom for hours at a time to be affected at all. So I insist on sitting with no part of me closer than about six feet to the screen, and this leaves the perception areas much further as a result of the collapsed posture that I assume whenever off my feet. That situation and the dilapidated condition of my nearsightedness make a large screen essential. '' The pacifist ideal need not be unanimous to work on the personal level in civilization. There are many people around me who would gladly give me a trouncing if provided with the slightest incentive and I've gone this long, at least, without physical violence by careful conduct. I think there are more reasons now than ever before why a pacifist nation can also get along. '' If memory serves, Al Fick dropped because he didn't realize the requirement of activity within six months for a new member. That is

to time. Every time, it was because the man wanted to check on someone else, not on me, but I know how Martin Alger felt about those guns. Each time I tried to peek unobtrusively around the visible parts of the house, to see if my Russian-language publications or something equally striking happened to be in sight, in case the FBI really was interested in me and was using a security check as a blind. The tensest time came when I happened to have a complete set of Psychotic sprawling atop a record cabinet. But it attracted no particular notice. '' We had a mysterious local disappearance long ago, just like that of Howard DeVore's young friend. The draft may have been a stronger factor in the Hagerstown situation, but that doesn't explain why there was never another word about the young man over a course of a couple of decades in which I kept hearing about it. Spinnaker Reach: One of those hoohaws is building up around here, over the right to buy and keep land against the right to keep some parts of the nation free from the worst effects of civilization. The Potomac River basin is in question, and it's quite likely that the federal government will win this time, because it's not only desirable to preserve it in its natural beauty, it's also necessary to maintain lots of controls so a million or more people will have potable water to drink. '' I suspect those girls who ride behind some motorcyclists are much safer there than they would be if the men weren't forced to concentrate on the handlebars and the road ahead. '' Has anyone in fandom figured out how the electronic stencil cutting works? The lines look too clean to be burned in, but the wirephoto-type mechanism seems to preclude the use of any help from a stencil-melting chemical. Maybe there's a screen whose pattern can't be discerned because of the way the paper absorbs the ink. Descant: Wonderful conreporting. For a long while, I wondered why I enjoyed so much reading descriptions of fans and their typical behavior when the appearance and traits were obviously familiar to almost everyone in the audience. Then I realized that this isn't superfluous at all as long as the writer does it perceptively, for exactly the same reasons that cause me to enjoy enormously the way Steinbeck, for instance, describes objects and events in nature that I've known all my life but had never looked at in quite the same manner. Damballa: I read some of the Nero Wolfe books during the first long hospital stay, when I got tired of answering questions about the nature of less conventional reading matter like fanzines and Goethe. But I find myself unable to recognize in this checklist any of the novels from that time, and I also am completely unable to recall any detail of the novels with the exception of one poisoning scene. Mystery novels simply leave no traces behind them, although they're pleasant enough at the time, in my particular case. '' Chuck is arguing against himself about the waiting list problem. He cites two former waiting listers who haven't produced as regularly and voluminously as we'd hoped, after becoming members, as examples of why we shouldn't vote in waiting listers. But this simply illustrates my basic point: in most cases, the fan who must wait many years before entering FAPA loses enough of his original fannish energy to slacken his participation, once a member. The goshwowishness that we had on entry into FAPA seems to survive to some extent to continue to condition our behavior in the organization, no matter how jaded and disillusioned we become with oth-

Golffinger
or: Sheet Nonsense

Dick Lupoff was writing in the last mailing about his typographical errors. It isn't probable that anyone but Dick would type gold when he meant to type gold, of course, or sheet when the obvious intention was sheet. But during too many years of professional journalism, I've been right in the middle of so many other mistakes peculiar to daily newspapers that an explanation seems in order. Understand, I never have made a mistake myself, btu there are plenty of less nearly perfect people working around me to rorvide ample material for what follows.

When you see a mistake in a newspaper, the only thing you can be sure about is that there will be more where that one came from. If you are scientifically minded, you might find amusement and instruction by trying to trace the mistakes to their causes. The first separation should be into the simple causes and the complex causes of booboos in the press. A surprising number of the bobbles came into existence only because of some improbable chain of circumstances, not because of a single individual's one-shot stupidity.

Consider, for example, the other Saturday morning when a big blank space stared in the face of the reader on one page of the tabloid school section included once weekly in the newspaper. A caption was there, describing the principal actors in the senior class play, but just white space above it. We didn't hear much kidding or criticism from the public about it. Most readers undoubtedly reacted with the thought, "Hey, they forgot to put in the picture," and let it go at that. (One nice thing about newspaper work in this generation is the manner in which television stations occasionally lose their picture while the words continue, a possible factor in the public's calm acceptance of this newspaper mishap.) But for the ideal of white space in the newspaper to get somewhat overdone that particular Saturday, this particular chain of circumstances was necessary: (a) That Saturday's edition of a syndicated column of school information got delayed in the mails and failed to arrive in time. (b) The girl who has charge of the school section didn't abandon hope of getting the column until Friday morning, after the usual deadline for the tabloid, and only then gave the girl who runs the engraving machine a picture to fill up the space reserved for the column. (c) The picture was on the machine, being engraved, when the operator was suddenly struck by an overwhelming impulse to knock off work for the day, and she didn't leave a note for her counterpart on the next shift about the purpose of the engraving. (d) Said girl on the next shift took the completed engraving off the machine and stuck it with the photograph into a drawer where it could be found easily by the girl who had put it on the machine. (e) It was a busy night in the composing room and the absence of the engraving wasn't noticed until an hour before press time. (f) A pressroom man and I conducted separate searches of the engraving department, couldn't find any thing looking like the missing picture in the envelope where tabloid pictures are kept, and paid no attention to the picture and cut in the drawer because the picture had no identifying guideline written on its back. (g) At

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Golffinger
or: Sheet Nonsense

Dick Lupoff was writing in the last mailing about his typographical errors. It isn't probable that anyone but Dick would type gold when he meant to type gold, of course, or sheet when the obvious intention was sheet. But during too many years of professional journalism, I've been right in the middle of so many other mistakes peculiar to daily newspapers that an explanation seems in order. Understand, I never have made a mistake myself, btu there are plenty of less nearly perfect people working around me to rorvide ample material for what follows.

When you see a mistake in a newspaper, the only thing you can be sure about is that there will be more where that one came from. If you are scientifically minded, you might find amusement and instruction by trying to trace the mistakes to their causes. The first separation should be into the simple causes and the complex causes of booboos in the press. A surprising number of the bobbles came into existence only because of some improbable chain of circumstances, not because of a single individual's one-shot stupidity.

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1:30 a.m., only one employe who might know could be found via telephone and he was ignorant of the whole matter. (h) Since it was too late to hunt up some other picture of similar size and get it engraved, the stereotyping foreman told me that he would have the picture running at its side moved over to the center of the page, then would put a generous border around this picture, take out the superfluous caption, and none of the readers would know the difference. (i) He then got into a jurisdictional dispute with the composing room over his right to make such a suggestion and the makeup men wouldn't make the change or let him do it himself. (j) They got too mad at each other to think of telling me about the impasse so I assumed that the trouble had been camouflaged, instead of trying to think up some other solution.

Once in a long while, a mistake of this chain-of-circumstance nature will seem to have come into existence without any possible cause. The tremendous example of this was such a big mistake and such an apparently impossible mistake that it assumed almost supernatural proportions in the newspaper building for a few awful hours until we finally discovered that it had natural causes after all. Yet this mistake, so awe-inspiring to everyone who worked for the newspaper, didn't seem particularly odd to the general public. The editorial page from Wednesday's Herald was run again in Thursday's Herald. Hardly anyone reads the editorial page and the misguided souls who waste their time that way probably decided that this was just a larger-scale mistake of the type that causes the same news item occasionally to bob up on two separate pages in one issue.

But to anyone with a knowledge of Hagerstown journalism, this was the mistake that had never happened before because the very physical conditions at the plant made it impossible. We publish there both a morning and an afternoon newspaper. The type for some local news stories and all the advertisements' type and plates are saved to run in both publications. But every page is done over again, all the AP news is changed, each paper has a different set of features, each uses its own editorial page features and columns. The Herald is the morning newspaper, and after its editorial page had been made up and stereotyped, it was necessary to tear out all the type, all the headlines and 8-point body type, the flatcast for the editorial cartoon, and so on, because the Mail, the afternoon paper, has its new editorial page made up in the same metal form. The type is yanked from a form roughly and tossed into a little cart, so it is hopelessly pied at once, even if it is not melted down again on that particular day. There was no way, I repeat, for the type and flatcast of Wednesday's Herald editorial page to survive intact. Exactly the same thing happens to the half-cylinder on the press from which the editorial page is actually printed. The Mail can't be run off until the presses are cleared of the cylinders from which the Herald was printed that morning, the cylindrical plates are melted down promptly to retrieve the metal, and even if the plate had survived by mistake it would have shown up in the Wednesday Mail, not the Thursday Herald. A practical joke was out of the question: no one or two persons would have had time to reset all that type and the proofreaders remembered quite clearly reading the page proof on the vanished Thursday editorial page, whose type moreover was there in the form Thursday morning, waiting to be torn out. The management was fit to be tied

because it was impossible to let off steam in the usual manner after a mistake--find the culprit and tell him off. You can't blame any particular person for a mistake that couldn't occur.

Maybe someone in the audience has already deduced what it took us somewhat longer to figure out. The slowness in solving the mystery could be blamed on either the high emotional temperature or uniform stupidity of the employes. In any event: After the type and engravings have been neatly packed into the form, the stereotyping process takes place to create the curved plate for the press from this flat array of metal. The flat surface is rotated into the third dimension by the intermediate process of a page mat, a heavy cardboard-like substance which is first pressed over the flat metal at great enough pressure to cause it to be dented with the impression of the type and cuts, the mat is baked to toughen it still further, and then it is bent into the proper curve, molten metal is poured against it, and the cooled metal becomes the half-cylinder that goes onto the press. These page mats are saved here for a couple of weeks as a sort of safety valve, in case the type for a complicated advertisement should be thrown away before it has finished its string of appearances; it takes only a moment to recreate from the page mat an ad that might mean several hours of type-setting and makeup work. There are no ads on the editorial page but its mats are tossed into the filing cabinet with all the rest from that day's editions because this takes less time than to hunt it out and throw it away separately each day. On that ill-fated Thursday morning, the new editorial page had been on the press, a few copis had been run, and one of the pressmen noticed a transposition of two lines of a headline over a column. He halted the press, someone in the composing room put the headline into proper order, a new page mat was made, it was ready to create a new cylinder for the press--except for one minor matter. By chance, Wednesday morning's page mats hadn't been taken to the filing cabinet yet. Someone put Wednesday's page mat into the machine that makes the press cylinder instead of the new mat from Thursday's page.

Exactly the opposite situation prevails for some newspaper blunders that impress the readers as remarkable but really came from quite simple events. Long before I went to work for the newspaper, the Herald readers had been delighted and mystified simultaneously, when they found in a full-page advertisement for ladies' lingerie a lot of anatomical details that are not normally shown in the nation's press. It created a great sensation but nobody at the plant had to think very hard to know what had occurred. In those informal years, one department overlapped another physically and reporters frequently found advertising department paraphernalia within easy reach. An artistically minded reporter had been idly doodling on the large mat that formed the major part of the advertisement. An advertising mat is a negative, in the sense that a line in the printed advertisement must be a gully in the mat. The reporter had pressed somewhat too firmly with his pencil as he released some stray overflow from his libido. In those years, no proofs were made of the flatcasts resulting from advertising mats so the portions of the illustrations not paid for by the local department store were not noticed until the papers started to come from the press. I don't know why they ran the whole edition that way, but I can guess that there was hardly anything else to do:

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When the mistake involves a word that does not even resemble the intended word, it's hard for readers to believe that the composing room is at fault. The reporter is obviously the one who got his facts wrong, simple logic insists. But the men at the linotypes and perforators have a great inclination to make these word-substitution mistakes. A local contractor organized a posse with me as the object, when in a story about a new school the builder read: "A checklist of uncompleted items has been completed. There are 20 items, most of them major in nature." It took frantic rooting into the stack of day-old copy to come up with my original manuscript and its evidence that I'd written "minor" and the man downstairs had changed the word to "major". Then there are the typesetting mistakes in which only one letter of a word is incorrect, but the mistake causes another word to appear and frequently to make some kind of sense in the sentence. I've tried to stop completely using the word "now" in newspaper work, because of the disasters that can occur when someone changes it to "not". As a result of a traumatic experience during a deer season a few years back, I also try to describe the result of firing a gun as wounded, struck, killed, or almost any verb in preference to shot. Hagerstown journalism has a built-in hazard in this respect, however. There is nothing to do but hope for the best, every time we publish a story which mentions a small community a couple of miles east of here named Funkstown.

Another cause of mistakes not identifiable as such on occasion is the complete omission of a line. This may be either a line of the original manuscript from which the type has been set, or a line of type. In the former instance, the most common peril comes when the typesetter's eye skids off a word in a given line to the very same word exactly or almost exactly beneath it in the next line. This can cause him to omit the remainder of the upper line and the first part of the lower line, all the words between the two nearby appearances of the duplicated word. The fact that he's modulating by use of a common word increases the chance that the result will have coherency. I suspect bad habits as the main source of this sort of lineskipping, a tendency to glance from the material being set to the fingers on the keyboard. The skipping of a line of metal type, on the other hand, frequently has a mechanical cause. Linotypes and perforators are frequent victims of fits in which they grow reluctant to cast into metal type a line which has been correctly tapped or punched by the operator. The assembled matrices are redistributed just as if they'd been plunged into their hot metal bath and the operator isn't aware of the malfunction.

When a news item appears twice in the same edition, it isn't an attempt to compete with television's instant replay. It usually happens because the original news story somehow found its way back to the composing room a second time, after being transformed into type once. In Hagerstown, we make carbon copies of the main stories for a radio station's use, and there is always the possibility that both the original and the carbon will accidentally be sent to the typesetters. If the two appearances of the news item are not identical, and both are news service stories about the same thing, it's probable that the trouble started in the teletypes and their linked perforators, with an assist from a forgetful telegraph editor. The AP will frequently send within a couple

of hours of one another two versions of the same story: one on the Maryland portion of its circuit because of some particular importance to this state, a similar but shortened repeat of the story on its full circuit for the benefit of newspapers in nearby states that would have somewhat less interest in the event. A busy or absent-minded man handling the wire copy may send both versions of the same story, or there may be a separate person to handle state news who will grab the Marylandized story without knowing that a regionalized statement of the same facts is going into print, too. Sometimes, when a proof is extremely bad, the proofreader will put the news story from which it derives along with the proof to be returned to the composing room, to help the typesetter to figure out how it should go. If the proof and story get separated, the story can get set a second time. In the lost age of manual linotypes, this didn't happen because a story had two holes in it after it had been set once: one hook had pierced it when it was hung on the bank where copy is sorted upon first arrival in the composing room, then it got skewered a second time when the linotype man stuck it on the hook on his machine reserved for set copy. Perforators have no hooks for disposal of processed stories and the chances are that the accidentally returned story will be carried directly to a perforator operator as the night wears along instead of going to the bank.

Mistakes involving pictures are almost always embarrassing because the transposed pictures appear above captions that have suddenly become hilarious or shocking. The most customary manner of mixingup the pictures is unsophisticated. Someone picks up an engraving or flatcast to look at it and lays it down in some spot other than the correct one. The little Fairchild engraving machines that have become so popular in small newspaper plants provide an extra built-in peril. They make plastic engravings that weigh next to nothing and can easily be knocked out of position by the sleeve of someone walking past the form. You may have seen in small printing plants how engravings are screwed tight to wooden blocks for use on flatbed presses. Unfortunately, newspaper pictures don't enjoy this form of security. Whether it's a Fairchild engraving, a metal engraving, or a flatcast made from a mat, the cut lies loose in the form after all the type has been firmly locked into place. This means that mixups can occur even after a page proof has been drawn. The Fairchild engravings are also at the mercy of the press room workers, because these plastic engravings are not in place during the stereotyping process, but are at the last minute literally pasted to the metal cylinders on the press. That's how we do it in Hagerstown, in any event. Some newspapers prefer to include the cuts when the page is stereotyped. This causes a theoretic loss in quality.

I'm no expert on big city newspaper practices. But I believe it's safe to say that some of those that seem remarkably riddled with mistakes are that way for semi-intentional reasons. Time is more important in a metropolitan operation than in Hagerstown. Hundreds of thousands of copies must come from the press and there may be competition to beat. So it's apparent that some newspapers consistently put late stories into print before they have been proofread and corrected, then insert the corrections partway through the press run or in the next edition if new editions appear every hour or two. And if you ever should be in-

volved in a hassle with a metropolitan daily because you're mentioned in a libelous way in the latest edition as a result of an error, don't set your heart on the publisher deciding to recall and destroy the entire edition to prevent too many people from seeing the offending item. Newsprint is terribly expensive nowadays. Many newspapers pay more for the quantity of paper that went into your copy than the five or seven or ten cents you paid for it; advertising pays the other bills and adds on the profit. In a big city, it would frequently be more economical to pay $5,000 or so as the judgment in a libel suit than to destroy most of the press run before the copies reached the readers.

One final sort of typographical error can be the most embarassing of all for the journalists. Someone gets a trifle careless and something not intended to be part of the news story gets put into type along with the story itself. The assistant managing editor of both local papers decided one night to help an overworked staff and cover a high school play. He wrote his review the next morning and at the bottom of it left a brief explanation to the women's page editor that he'd written nothing about the third act, because he had gone home at the second act curtain in order to see I Spy. Don't ask me to explain why the women's page runs play reviews, but I'm sure it's unnecessary to explain that the composing room ignored the four inches of blank space between the end of the story and the note, set the note, and it found its way into print as part of the story. Just the other night, I wrote an overline, also known as a kicker, one of those little lines in smaller type that are underlined and placed atop a large headline. I hit the m with my right thumb by accident as I began to cperate the space bar in order to start typing the overline near the center of the page, as a reminder that the type was to be centered. Sure enough, the man setting headlines dutifully placed a lower case m flush against the left margin, in addition to the overline itself. We've had to give up an old practice because the typesetters were unable to remember its purpose. When a strangely spelled name appeared in a story, or something else unusual turned up in a story, we used to write (correct) or (cq) after the strange word, as a warning that this was the right way to spell it or write it, not a mistake of the reporter. Soon those (correct)s began turning up in obituaries and crime chronicles and similarly inappropriate places. Related but even worse are the troubles that arise when a typesetter feels playful. Just before Christmas or on a very slow night, they have been known to launch upon creative writing of their own, in the middle of a story or at its end. They depend as a rule on the proofreader to eliminate these interpolations, and they know they can always glance at the type later to make sure it has been removed. Inevitably, something of this sort is overlooked. One fat and elderly staff member never has gotten over the editorial comments on the length and quality of one of her stories that appeared as its final paragraph. But a really nasty bit of bigotry that got into a Drew Pearson column this way attracted no notice at all among the readership. I'm not sure if this reflects on Pearson or local newspaper readers.

You can find a few more facts on newspaper mistakes in the Horizons article a couple of years ago about how pages are made up. If you want to know how reporters make so many mistakes, you'll have to wait until I have time to put out a 100-page Horizons.

Hagerstown Journal

January 17--"London calling," the girl's voice on the telephone disclosed. I winced, under the sudden fear that the telephone had turned into a shortwave radio, not an alarming event in itself but ominous if it should cause all the radios that now sit harmlessly around the house to turn into television sets and the television set to become a night club or something worse. Then the man's voice came through the receiver and it didn't sound British. Soon I learned that this was London, Ontario, Canada, but any disappointment produced by this letdown was canceled out when I discovered the identity of my caller: Ben Singer, The Very Same Ben Singer Who. Somehow, rumors and alarums about the fan history manuscript had fought their way up trickling creeks, over trackless prairies, deeper and deeper into the frozen northland, and had finally impacted against the maple leaf-covered walls of the university where Dr. Ben is now an instructor. I quickly reassured him that I really and truly had heard of him, frantically attempting meanwhile to remember how much of the pages of notes devoted to Ben Singer had found their way into my manuscript. Ben proved to have undergone at least as great a change from a young rapscallion into a sedate gentleman of culture as Ray Bradbury had accomplished in an earlier decade. He wasn't calling to demand that the fan history be suppressed but to ask how he could get a copy. He thought that fandom might be a fruitful field for investigation by his sociology students and he also needed something more explicit than his memories for a scholarly project on which he is working. I explained the sad story of the blight which the fan history casts upon everyone even in the remotest way associated with it, risked the guess that Advent might get it published sometime within a year, and offered to send him a spare carbon copy of my original manuscript, since I have only one copy of the revised and presumably final version intended for publication. I still couldn't remember if this contains much about Ben Singer and the Rabbi, Ben Singer and the Coke on the Left Bank, Ben Singer and the Import Trade, and many other anecdotes. Meanwhile, I gathered that Ben looks back with neither distaste nor longing on his years in fandom, and that's probably the best state of mind for anyone who has broken away for good from the hobby. I cringed for several days after packing and shipping the manuscript, but a letter came back a week later, calmer than any I could have written if my position were his. Ben would like my account of the second Tucker death hoax expanded enough to tell his side of this adventure. But he turned down my offer to moderate or eliminate the remainder of the passages involving him--I've made every effort in the history project to avoid the inclusion of anything that might cause difficulties today for someone because of the antics he undertook in larval stage. And Ben even told me something that Ray Nelson probably doesn't know about the Parisian Coke. I doubt that I'll ever have Ben's luck in breaking free from fandom; but if I do, may I preserve a good mental balance like his when I look at my past.

February 7--It had looked like a hectic working day, with an interview and two long meetings to conquer. And lo, the heavens opened so gapingly that a foot of snow descended upon the city,

the interview aborted because the courthouse was closed down and he didn't get to his office, and both meetings were canceled. So I sat at my desk just after noon, wondering how in the world I could keep out of mischief for the remainder of a long afternoon and part of the evening. (The cleaning woman was due at the house that day, so I couldn't simply make it a short day.) Then a telephone rang, and a moment later someone told me, "Pres Lane is dead." All of a sudden I had the biggest local obituary in several years to prepare, and a lot of things to try to straighten out mentally to my own satisfaction. Lane was a short, rather skinny lawyer with the beadiest eyes in Hagerstown. In the year of my birth, he'd helped to bring under one ownership the two daily newspapers, and had been the biggest wheel in the publishing machine almost thirty years, until the corporation was sold to South Bend interests eight years ago. He had been elected governor of Maryland once during that long span of newspaper publishing, and he might have been vice-president of the nation if he'd given a different answer to feelers from high sources during a Democratic national convention when a compromise candidate was needed. He had held some kind of interest in a half-dozen or more major Hagerstown industries during his long life and after he dropped active interest in most of them, he put a lot of money into a foundation seeking to attract more industry. He was perhaps the best-known man in Western Maryland for a quarter-century, and what I wanted to figure out was: had his life been a great one or a wasted one? The Lanes have been in Hagerstown since the start of the 19th century and had been getting wealthier with each generation, yet this particular Lane was one of the few important men I've ever known who could inspire friendship in anyone with whom he came into contact. Taxi drivers, house painters, and tavern idlers stopped me time after time in the days that followed, just because they wanted to share their pride in having served under Lane in a war or worked in one of his industries, and not one of them had anything bad to say about him. Yet he had engaged in a mysterious and endless fight for control of the Democratic party here with a contractor for as long as anyone could remember. I don't understand politics, but I kept hearing that Lane had suddenly gained the upper hand and then two weeks later I'd learn that he had lost some face, and I never did find any specific events to correspond with these fluctuations of the political barometer. This seemed like a petty occupation for a man with that wealth and reputation. Then there was the manner in which he had first come to the attention of people outside Maryland. He'd served a term in the 20's as attorney general for the state, had lost patience with the area of Maryland where lynchings were so frequent, and had tried to track down and bring to trial the men responsible for one of these lynchings. This was an unprecedented thing for any public official to do in those years, and even though nobody even got arrested, the unorthodox behavior probably was the biggest single event in his political history. Yet he never hired a Negro to work for his newspapers, and never lifted an editorial finger to campaign for improvement in the Negro's vile living and employment discriminations in Hagerstown. He was undoubtedly aware that he was contributing to substantiate the local belief in a three-generation cycle in the fortune of families: his great great grandfather had

been a wealthy merchant, his grandfather had done nothing but run a farm, his father had been a wealthy attorney, he was a wealthier attorney, and his only children were two daughters who had immediately engaged in the modern equivalent of sinking to farming, by marrying a vicar and an advertising man. I couldn't decide what I really thought and it seemed a trifle blasphemous to think too deeply about how much better this good man might have been. The New York Times called, someone higher up put a lot of flowery adjectives into the opening paragraphs of my obituary but left the remainder intact, and police were forced to reroute Route 11 traffic through Hagerstown on the day of the funeral, because of the crowds of visiting dignitaries. Almost at once, Lane began to assume legendary proportions. Someone impelled an attorney and me to dig out the test book in the vault of the clerk of court, to settle an argument about when he'd begun practising law, and he discovered that he'd never signed it, either invalidating all the cases in which he was retained or proving that he was even as a youth above the requirements imposed upon most persons. When the will was filed for probate, someone expressed surprise to me that the value of the estate was estimated at only $250,000. I suppose that he had kept only that pocket money after using the bulk of his fortune to benefit heirs in ways that wouldn't involve inheritance tax. But something impelled me to reply: "I understand he took the rest along." And my conversationalist believed me.

January 23--I hadn't been far from Hagerstown since back in the autumn, when I'd ventured into the fleshpots of Washington for phonographic purposes that couldn't be fulfilled in the more primitive environment of Hagerstown. Now I was coming back from my birthplace, Chambersburg, Pa., proud of myself for the revival of the adventure lust which had impelled me to take nearly a 50-mile round trip. It was only the second or third time I'd driven this far on Interstate 81 northward from Hagerstown, a road that was completed at the slowest rate in history and in fact required a complete resurfacing of the portion within eight miles of Hagerstown by the time the second dozen miles from this city was ready for use. Then, just as I was passing a truck at just about the posted speed limit of a mile a minute, something started to go bang bang bang behind me, and the steering wheel began to jerk convulsively, and the rear view mirror flopped on its face too fast for me to see if there was traffic behind me. But I knew the right lane was pretty well packed and I also knew that the left lane in which I was driving had no shoulder, just a grassy center strip sloping sharply away at exactly the right angle to cause me to overturn if I pulled off immediately. This was the first big highway emergency I'd faced in several years and it differed from all the others I've encountered in one way: I do not know how I got out of it. An automatic pilot apparently cut in, because I found myself halted on the shoulder of the right lane, without a scratch on my vehicle but with a severely contorted psyche and a frantically pumping heart. Eventually I decided not to walk back to town after all, and then I couldn't find anything wrong with the car. The tires had air, cautious testing showed me that the brakes worked normally so I couldn't have thrown a shoe, and the motor ran normally at all speeds. I came back to Hagerstown in baffled mood, drove to the service station that does maintenance work, and the fellow there couldn't see

anything wrong, either, on first inspection. So I left it in the intensive care ward for a few hours, and when I returned the attendant looked like someone who has found a puzzle inside the puzzle he has just solved. The tread had come off the left rear tire, completely. He told me that treads do not come off tires, and the bare carcass wouldn't hold air even if this impossibility occurred. The service station sent the tire to the Baltimore distributor to see if the guarantee provided for this phenomenon. It came back promptly with a scathing note about the folly of mixing practical jokes with the tire business. Like a parent who is determined to prove to his growing children that there really is a Santa, my friends at the service station kept trying and eventually were informed that the guarantee was still effective and the amount of the refund because of defective manufacture would be based on the amount of tread remaining. I thought the case was hopeless, but soon felt cowardly at my faintheartedness, for the service station personnel recalled that I'd bought several new tires for the car soon after acquiring it in second-hand condition five years ago. I scrounged up the guarantees, and sure enough, one was dated closely enough to the date of the dismembered tire's purchase to permit an honest measurement of the remaining tread on that other tire and I got half the price of a new tire. It is something to keep in mind as I attempt to forget the fact that the adventure removed about half of the remaining tread on my nervous system.

January 8--My normal abstemious habits around the television set were forgotten for an hour tonight. I took the telephone off the hook, pulled down all the blinds, loaded my camera with fast film, turned on the tape recorder, and attempted to salvage one last ember of an old video flame. Denise Lor was making an appearance on the last of the Garry Moore variety hours, an event that took me back nearly a decade, vindicated in a backward manner one of my pet theories, and caused me to marvel all over again at the stupidity of the network executives and their policies. When television first entered the Warner home, in the middle 1950's, I was as balky around it in most respects as I am today. However, I did make one regular exception to my rule of wasting little time on video. I fell early into the habit of watching most mornings the 10 a.m. Garry Moore program. I think I excused this aberration to myself as a means of keeping in touch with enough television to permit me to criticize it knowingly. People who learned what I was doing ascribed the habit to the personality of Garry Moore. But deep down in the secret places of the soul where conscience throws the only light, I had a sneaking suspicion all along that Denise Lor was the true reason for my electronic exercise. I don't care particularly for popular songs, Broadway show tunes, complicated arrangements of old favorites, and imitations of Piaf-type chansons, and these were the things that Denise Lor sang. But there was something about her face, the way she moved around, and the way she sang that would have caused me to write a Proustian set of novels about my reactions if I'd had time and if I could have found a way to do it without people finding out. She has the only kind of female voice I can bear in this type of music: loud, right on pitch, no vibrato, and totally free from gurgles, chuckles, strangulated sobs, but above all, staying within its natural range. Kate Smith has sung like that and her voice

has withstood forty years of professional use; Barbra Streisand makes Al Jolson seem phlegmatic and she'll not last another four years if she doesn't stop using her voice improperly. I can still listen to Kate with delight and I still can't bear to sit through three minutes of Barbra's hamming and straining. Denise, I understand, once had concert ambitions, sang with an ice show to help finance lessons, and suffered some kind of throat damage from the chilly environment. It's just as well, because she might have turned into a simpering phony like Rise Stevens if she had made it in opera. As things turned out, she either became television's most consummate actress or an unaffected, completely natural, and engaging person on the tube. On that old morning show, which was live and only partially rehearsed, she not only sang but excited me enormously by such adventures as letting Ivan Sanderson put a bat atop her head as proof that the creatures do not get entangled in feminine hair; getting mixed up into a long and continuing discussion over whether the sibilant should have the z or ss sound when she used the word "greasy" in the commercials; and sounding even more authoritative than Bess Myerson when she narrated brief fashion shows. I'd love to have tapes of the audio of a few of those half-hours, but somehow I didn't record any of them, perhaps because I assumed that CBS would never drop something as popular and entertaining as this series. Those were the pre-video tape days, so I doubt that we'll ever get reruns on television--when was the last time you saw a kinoscope? In any event, the daily Garry Moore program was metamorphosed into a weekly evening variety series and Denise was derricked except for a guest appearance or two. I watched the evening series regularly for a month, I occasionally tuned it in for the next three months, and after that I couldn't be bothered. Neither could the remainder of the viewers, apparently, for it crashed and burned after a couple of years and Garry Moore disappeared from television after having said a great many things about the reasons for getting out while he was still on top. Then another year or two went by, and last fall, Garry Moore bobbed up again, with another hour-long evening variety hour, and this one survived only a few months. The television reviewers spoke of changing tastes and the inability of Garry Moore to adapt to them, and the only program in this new series that I watched was the final one because of its special guest. She looks the same as a decade ago, still has the same husband and family if I understood correctly some allusions to her home life, and I gathered that she still has ambitions about making it big because she chose one song called "Maybe It's Not Too Late", or something of that sort. On this night, she still looked straight at either the camera or at the person to whom she was talking, not out into some indefinite area of a far wall where there was no danger of meeting someone's eyes, and she still led off the applause in the most spontaneous and apparently sincere manner since Gianni Schicchi did it first. When the hour was ended, I put away the camera, stored the reel of tape in a fireproof place, drank some soothing syrup, and lay down long enough to get over the worst of the excitement. This gave me time to think in more definite form the suspicions I'd had for quite a while. Wouldn't it be strange if it turned out, when the eternal verities are finally revealed, that everyone used to watch that morning Garry Moore

production, not because they gave a damn about Garry Moore, but because they wanted to see and hear Denise Lor? Moreover, isn't it equally possible that the evening variety hours collapsed for the same basic reason? And finally, mightn't some similar situation prevail to account for the rise and fall of many another show business and television celebrity whom everyone considers a success for his own efforts? Anyway, I haven't seen or heard the last of Denise Lor. Blackhawk had a couple of reels starring her, in a clearance sale on old television filler films. Now, all I need is a 16 mm sound projector.

February 24--I left Hagerstown's two sources of used books with empty arms and a purse as heavy as when I visited them. The stock in trade at the Union Rescue Mission and Goodwill Industries does not change very fast and it's hard to work up a sense of expectancy on the weekly visits. But even in the dear old days when J. Russell Golden dealt and traded in old books at a feverish pace, I used to notice something that still holds good. The contents of stacks and shelves of used books have strange gaps. It's as if the nation's literary histories and cultural past had been distorted somehow. Books that should show up quite often never seem to appear, no matter what we read in the textbooks and old bestseller charts and regardless of the accepted curriculum of typical American schools. There is the mysterious case of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, for instance. He led such a blameless life and wrote such moral-rich poetry that nobody doubts today the accepted belief that he was our grandparents' favorite poet and our parents' second-favorite. But in all the years I've been browsing among old books for sale, I've never yet run across a really fat volume of the poems of Longfellow. Complete editions of Spenser, Chaucer, and similarly difficult poets turn up in every degree of filthiness and every quantity of reference notes. But never is there a collection of Longfellow larger than a slim volume that contains the basic facts about Hiawatha or Evangeline. It's become a choice between two possible explanations. All large collections of Longfellow were so cherished that families hang onto them even after they've surrendered the family Bible and Texaco credit card, or Longfellow really wrote literary obscenity, this caused him to gain such extreme popularity, and in more recent times the literary historians and the heirs of the books' original owners have cooperated to destroy all the collected editions and to write a falsified account of the poet's output, so that we modern Americans won't think too harshly about our forebears' reading habits. E. Philips Oppenheim is an analogous case. He was the Ian Fleming of the early years of this century. A half-dozen of his novels in uniform bindings were in my home ever since I was old enough to distinguish a book from a kitten. His spy stories are undoubtedly oldfashioned beyond all hope of salvage today, but they must have sold in enormous quantities in the past. Why have I never seen any Oppenheim novel in a second-hand store? Of course, old textbooks are always available in vast quantities in such stores. I have picked up a smattering of knowledge of several foreign languages with the help of old grammars and first readers that someone had brought home from college and never opened again. For many years, I've hoped to learn the rudiments of Greek to help me understand the occasional quotations from the old dramatists that get quoted in the original in various books. I know

that Greek is no longer a standard subject for study by college youths, but it was in the years from which so many sedond-hand books come. Why haven't I ever found something I could use? No grammar, no dictionary, no easy reading exercises, not even a textbook on modern Greek. There are plenty of opposite situations. Thomas Mann would hardly seem to be a popular writer, yet his books show up with considerable frequency in the two local establishments. Do people buy the novels for prestige purposes and get rid of them as soon as all their acquaintances have seen them lying within arm's reach on an end table? Another oddity is the quantity of modern books about contemporary French and German authors who aren't too widely read in English translations. Why should the second volume of the letters of Rilke or two or three French-language studies of Sartre find their way to second-hand stores in a city that has no institution more advanced than an unaccredited junior college?

March 2--Maugham once wrote a novel entitled The Razor's Edge. That title came from the delicate and thin line which divides hate from love. He worked out his plot from the effect of this theme on human relationships. But I find myself possessed of the same ambivalence toward the impersonal matter of wintertime. Repeatedly, I've pointed out that I would never be happy in a year-round warm climate. I need the alternation of seasons that someone or other hymned so eloquently several mailings back. It's rarely the start of July until I begin to feel restless for freezing temperatures and the winds that make you shiver instead of perspire. But simultaneously with this admiration for winter exists the distrust of the season spawned from two broken bones caused by falls on the ice. Like a chronically ill patient who reads up about his own disease and becomes an expert on it, I've been paying more and more attention to wintertime each year since the falls, until now I feel that I could almost rouse from amnesia in cold weather and determine the correct date on the calendar by the feel of the weather. In the pre-falls days, I had never known how symmetrical the cold season is around here. Its climax is January, and the months split up nicely into pairs: December and February, November and March, each a mirror image of the other in the sense of how the weather changes as the month progresses. At least once every day during the 150 days of the snow season, I find myself calculating exactly what point I've reached in it, how many more days remain in which there may be enough ice to cause another fall, and the proportion of really dangerous to semi-dangerous weather still ahead. A January snow may create six to ten successive days when gum boots and caution are required; December is next worst from this standpoint, because even though February's temperatures are similar to December's, there is an extra hour of daylight in February, just enough to encourage ice to melt a day or two sooner. Some previously undiscovered natural law causes me to use a taxi to take out the dirty and bring home the clean laundry on exactly two of the 21 or 22 Sundays contained within the snow and ice season each twelvemonth, never more, never less, even though the total number of days when Summit Avenue is too drifted to use the car changes from year to year. The cold waves come at approximately ten-day intervals during the heart of winter around here,

and there will be exactly three Fridays, my night in charge at the office, when it will be both too cold and too icy for me to risk a trip home during a break and so I'll be on the job almost constantly for a dozen hours or longer. Not quite as inexorable is the number of Saturdays and Sundays in the cold season when I will consider myself sufficiently snowed in or iced in to eat at the corner drugstore instead of going downtown to dine, as I must do on working days, and I can guess in advance what my bill of fare will be on those particular weekend days, due to the manner in which the drugstore's edible production is confined to egg salad sandwiches and chocolate milkshakes. At least I have the option of plain or toasted bread for the sandwiches. Repeatedly in the course of the winter, I will lose my temper at one nextdoor neighbor, an elderly retired man who is so eager to serve mankind that he shovels the sidewalk very loudly after even the smallest storm at 5:30 a.m. My own shoveling operations are usually delayed until there is no longer any possibility of either more snow or a quick thaw that would melt free the sidewalk, and by that time, I feel like Scrooge because I know that my sidewalk cleaning operation is destroying the last remaining sidewalk in the block capable of sustaining thrilling slides by small boys and girls. As sure as death, three or four kids from the area will knock at my door during these snowy days and ask permission to sled down the hill in my backyard. This hill is about four feet in length and eight inches in height. After a big snow, the kids have trouble determining its exact location. There are hundreds of hills exactly like it in the other lawns of adjoining houses, a school playground with a big hill is only a block distant, and the town park is a block away in another direction with its overwhelming assortment of hills of every shape and size, but my backyard is the only one possessing a hill that suits the requirements of today's youth and after every snow I pretend I'm glad to offer this hospitality, not really wanting the commotion but knowing that if I kept them off my hill, a couple of children would immediately ride their sleds under a moving auto in revenge. My galoshes lead a complicated life all winter. I don't trust the shallower tread on overshoes, so the gum boots are standard apparel when there's any snow or ice at all. They fit into a stepstool where the cleaning woman tolerates them during unneeded days, so I am not forced to put them away and get them out endlessly, but I get myself laughed at when I carry them downtown at the start of a long day that is supposed to produce substantial snowfall before it ends. I know quite well that another severely broken bone could cripple me or could produce a blood clot or pneumonia, complications that I escaped after my first two falls. Yet I can't dislike in general the season whose manifestations are dangerous. It is still entrancing to hear for the first time in the winter that special modification of the noise of passing autos in the early morning hours to tell me without opening my eyes that the tires are passing over snow. It is always impressive to see how the birds turn up in mobs and go scavenger hunting in my back yard a few hours before the snow arrives, as if they'd just been informed of its coming. I like the snapping sound which the front porch makes when I walk across it in temperatures far below freezing. And I love to see people stare at my cold-reddened nose.

The Worst of Martin

The Youth of Man

Dr. Clifton Gray switched off his flashlight. It should have been pitch-night in the cavern, but instead it was dim, diffused with a soft haze that filled every point with an ethereal distinctness as fragile as the early South Pacific morning outside.

The balanced rock was just as they had found it the evening before, just as it had been for seventy thousand years. Dr. Gray pressed the monolith away and it teetered in an almost invisible concave.

He followed the pendulum action with sad, almost tearful eyes. Today they would leave Easter Island. Three months they had been excavating and he had found nothing but a few wooden tablets incised with a unique and indecipherable ideographic script. Other archeologists had uncovered such fragments, the museum would shake their financial head and retire him from the field. That was what hurt. Only sixty, still agile enough for exploratory work, but he would be placed at a desk in a confining office, and have to reclassify and catalog the discoveries of others.

If only he could find something to justify his trip. Dr. Gray pressed the rock again and it ellipsed in a long, ponderous sweep.

"Men of a future, far distant age, when there are no wars, no suffering, and when men truly live as brothers; when your minds have grown keen and strong with spiritual thoughts; hearken! and I will lead you to the story you seek, the tale of a mighty civilization and of this strange island lost in the vastness of a great sea.

"Concealed in the heart of the mountain beneath your feet, far below the level of the sea, is a city that has lain in darkness for many centuries. It was built for you; the first man who could learn our secret...

"There you will find a copy of our civilization, complete, as it was before the Great Flood. And you will find a pictorial key to our script...it may have given you a great deal of trouble.

"You have merely to will it and the floor of this cavern will descend to the first level."

The rock gently vibrated to a stop.

Dr. Gray sighed and left the chamber; went out into the open air and gazed at his ship.

A man from camp came up the trail. "Dr. Gray," he shouted, "Dr. Gray! We've been looking for you. We're ready to leave."

The young man looked into the doctor's eyes. "Poor old codger," he thought. "A real nice guy and interested in his work. But that's the way it goes. Get a little old, or have some bad luck, and they cast you off. Wish I could do something to help..."

The man spoke: "We could stay a little longer if you think we have a chance of finding something."

Dr. Gray did not hear him. His consciousness was far away, dwelling on the sadness of retirement. And Dr. Gray did not intercept the young man's friendly thoughts, for very few men in this age are sensitive to telepathic vibrations.

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