

Nobody but future fanzine indexers will want to know that this is volume 30, number 2, FAPA number 111, and whole number 117 of Horizons. It might be easier to think of it as the February, 1969, issue. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., is responsible for the stenciling and the publishing is handled by the Coulsons. Portions of this issue have been pre-recorded for presentation at this time.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Seventy-two million people voted in the latest presidential election, and look what we got. That should be reason to believe that a greater number of votes for FAPA officials won't result in anything except more frequent repetitions of the nuisance of petitioning back onto the membership list people who forgot to vote. "I for one do not intend to stop the annual talkathon about the waiting list. Why is it proper to vote instant membership for someone not even on the waiting list, and yet refuse to make constitutional provision for giving instant membership to someone on the waiting list two or three times annually? I was among those who petitioned Bill Rotsler back into the organization, and I did it for the same reason as I want to see voting for some waiting listers: because we ought to mix accessions who come to us because non-members want to get in with accessions who both want to get in and are wanted in by most of the existing members. Self-Preservation: Mrs. Mish, mentioned elsewhere in this issue, got astonishing results from just this sort of amateur digging, which is supposed to produce nothing of interest if you don't belong to the archeologists' union. It makes me unhappy to think how hard it will be for our own way of life to be reconstructed by digging in the far distant future, now that sanitary landfills and incinerators are destroying the old custom of tossing the trash out the pantry window. Honque: The closest I've come to watching someone go through a glass door was during the 1964 presidential election. The BBC sent a television crew to Hagerstown, to depict election day in a typical small American town. They spent the day at balloting places, then after the polls closed, they came to the election board offices, where results are first-phoned in, then carried in during the evening. The cameraman aimed at the big glass door leading into the courthouse, and one politician saw it as she approached with her boxes of official forms and records. She was so intent on being photogenic that she didn't open the door. The crash like to knock a couple of radio stations' remote control units off the air, but the glass didn't break. Politicians aren't very effectual around here. "The past couple of winters, I thought I was beginning to grow as sensitive to cold weather as Boyd Raeburn. The first chilly nights caused me to shiver terribly in bed. I don't heat my bedroom, and sleep beside an open window throughout the year. Then one glorious day I happened to hold a blanket up to the light, and found it almost transparent. Endless repetitions of dry cleaning had thinned out the blankets so badly that they weren't very insulating. I bought a new blanket and a quilt and now I sleep with my socks on only two or three nights per winter. "How does the mystic state of mind differ from the normal state of mind of an animal? "Let me hasten to assure younger members of the audience that I don't care if people mix up their tenses. Jack Speer refers to an admonition I addressed to him when he was showing other fans how their grammar differed from that approved by one authority or another

er. I listed various spots in Speer's latest fanzine to show how easy it is to find things in any prose that are counter to some stupid rule or accepted "correct" use of English. Dynatrons: I don't worry about the population explosion. I think it's a temporary thing, occurring in a transition period during which humans are surviving longer as a result of medical and health advances, before this better survival rate induces people everywhere not to breed as fast as they used to, now that it's no longer necessary to have a half-dozen children to be sure that a couple will live until maturity. The birth rate has been at a recent low in the United States for many years, and it's seriously high only in a few undeveloped lands. Heck, only a half-century ago, everyone was bewailing the fact that schools were consolidating at such an expanding rate that soon there would be just one monster school in every state, and school buses were multiplying so fast that they would transport even children who live within spitting distance of their classrooms. 'I thought I spotted a sudden increase in the number of deaths when Hagerstown's water was fluoridated. But it seems pretty much a futility to try to keep the chemical out of a water system, when people in that community are apt to get substantial quantities of fluoridated water anyway in such forms as drinks bottled in other cities, canned goods, and the like. 'Wouldn't Pigpen have been the most suitable write-in candidate for the presidency? Politics might spoil Pat Paulsen, Snoopy, and the others suggested. 'I'm sure I don't get my real self across in Horizons and there's going to be even more fakeness for a while than in the past. Up to now, reticence and some hypocrisies have resulted from the thought that I don't know what life will be like for me in the future, and I might eventually regret too much soul-baring if it might be read in the future by some wrong person of whose existence I'm not now aware. To this has recently been added a special situation in fandom that has made me a little more cautious; please don't ask details because it'll probably be two or three years before I feel more than half-safe. Diaspar: I'm not so sure that the youth protests and peace movements and hippies and so forth are the significant thing right now. They get the publicity because they are colorful or involve a certain amount of violence. But I'm very much afraid that the real significance almost never finds its way onto the 11 p.m. news or into the local newspapers: the growing number of people who are determined to turn the clock back a century or two. They will have fewer compunctions about backing up their opinions with bullets if they feel their time has come, and these people aren't going to grow out of their opinions, as most of the intent young things do. Do you really think the opposition to gun control laws comes from people who like to hunt or are anxious to prevent their wives from being raped while alone in the house? Why do you think Wallace got almost one-third as many votes as either Nixon or Humphrey, when he got off to a late start, had no grassroots party organization over most of the nation, couldn't afford much television time, and lacks a really strong personality? An awful lot of people in this nation are as willing today to follow the first compelling fundamentalist bigot as a great many Germans rallied behind Hitler. I'm frightened to think what could happen if another Huey Long or Billy Sunday comes along, now that television and modern propaganda techniques are available to spread the word. Warhoon: The obvious danger in reading only non-fiction is

that it may be much more removed from reality than fiction. I'll take John O'Hara or John MacDonald as describers of the world as it really is, in preference to any vulgar or learned journalism or social studies. Dickens wrote about people who would be long dead if they'd ever lived, and yet they are more real to me than most of the celebrities whose biographies I've read. ' Of course, the obvious trouble with using science fiction as social satire is that it ages so quickly and the author's purpose flies so roughly into your face. Now that the public is talking about LSD, we get a lot of science fiction stories dealing with drugs in the future, and I get the impression that they're just revised stories about the present and that the author is failing in an effort to get across a moral unobtrusively. ' Even if Willis is putting us on, his column is superlative this time. ' I've been trying desperately to think of an 18,000-member convention. Conceivably, certain religious rallies could qualify; doesn't one of them fill Yankee Stadium every year? I also get the impression that the American Legion's annual convention could reach that figure, if you counted the local veterans who join in part of the activities like the parade and drinking. Aliquot: Shucks, Rusty, you're just losing your neofannish glow, when you find yourself failing to finish reading a FAPA mailing right away. Wait until you've been around fandom as long as I have, and you too will have four piles of unread and uncommented-on fanzines blocking the way into your bedroom and a whole drawer filled with urgent correspondence which you know very well you'll never answer, plus an all-encompassing sense that I've been through this before, every time you find a discussion starting in fandom on any topic at all. ' Funny thing: when I was a little boy, I always thought that the Pooh books were only meant for rich kids. I must have seen an advertisement for an edition which cost much more than the books I normally received as gifts, or something. To this day I haven't read them, and I don't think I ever expressed interest in them before Christmas, more's the pity. Qasar: It's strange, how fandom has solidified certain things about the worldcons into changeless rigidity, and still hasn't come up with a method of handling the costume ball that can be repeated year after year. Couldn't a committee be selected at a worldcon to work out a system, just as the business sessions have produced committees for other problems common to every worldcon? ' Baltimore fandom could hardly be imaged as blank-faced. Not when it has provided such sharply etched faces as those of Henry Andrew Ackermann, with his unusual method of getting inspiration for writing fiction, or George Wetzel, the only fan who ever tried to lighten my burden by writing letters of comment for me. Moonshine: My guess is that the fake conreport was a collaboration split among all the people named in the editorial. ' I find myself growing impatient to see the JDM Master Checklist. I've been reading much more of his work this year than ever before, and his reputation has mushroomed tremendously in my estimation. But I still don't care for the Travis McGee books. I've never known anyone like that, and I'm too much aware all the way through the McGee novels that they're fiction, for that reason. Horib: It's good news, about the Zero-derived paperback. Moreover, it gives encouragement to my theory that Ace will soon get around to reprinting FAPA mailings. Could we dare hope for the first hundred mailings in a matched boxed set in time for the Christmas trade this year? ' I'd feel much better during orbital flights and real space trips of the future, if there were a rescue ship available, ready to go up on a day or so's notice

if something went wrong. There are probably good logistical reasons why this would be very expensive and difficult to arrange, with existing fuels and complex flight considerations. But I don't want to see anyone die in space, and besides, a harrowing case of slow death for a group of astronauts because of some minor mechanical problem might set back the space program for ten years--it would produce a congressional protest that would shake up the whole administration of space flight efforts, the public would scream that man wasn't meant to go into space, and just look how much delay resulted from that fire during a training program that killed several astronauts here on earth. The Vinegar Worm: Tremendously funny and bitingly accurate. I suspect that a future civilization would be able to reconstruct part of the Ellison anthology if it had only this fanzine and a little knowledge of the other writings of the authors parodied. I hope someone gives Harlan a copy of this at a convention, right out in the open where everyone can see how he reacts. ~~THE UNCLUE~~ SL/SL Different: I'm sure that the struggle to come will have all the awful fascination for the belligerent animal that man is which is possessed by almost any conflict between such dramatically opposing forces. Someone has told me in secrecy that already the New Wave is forming its own counter organization to oppose the Second Foundation. It will be known as the Futurian Federation of the World. As for me, after reading this essay by J. J. Pierce, I have decided to stop worrying and to learn to love the bem. Vandy: Has all the Bradbury fiction been reprinted? I understood that he'd disowned some of the stories in Dark Carnival, leaving that rare volume as the unique source for them. 'I used to enjoy tape correspondence, but it has gone the way of typewriter correspondence in the critical shortage of spare time. The chain tape has some advantages that one-to-one tape correspondence lacks. You hear from up to a half-dozen people, you're obliged to talk for only the time it takes for one section to run past the recording head, and the tape comes around to you only at long intervals. But someone always breaks the chain after a few go-arounds. 'A Washington station has been running The Man from UNCLUE nightly now that the series is in syndication. I watch it perhaps twice weekly and wonder why it didn't create a subfandom like The Avengers. Maybe the vintage season was too short. The early episodes were too slow-moving and toward the end the writers ran out of originality. One strange thing I noticed: almost invariably, if a helicopter appears in an episode, that episode is unbearably bad. I can't imagine any connection between those two facts, unless it's that the good episodes played the humor too straight-facedly to permit spies to use such a conspicuous method of going places. 'One reason I watch sports on television a great deal is the fact that they're usually presented live. Film and tape are used for almost everything else, and when you're watching a live game you don't have the sense that all this happened long ago. Of course, much of the olympics was taped, but nevertheless, I fell deeply and hopelessly in love with Debbie Meyer. It's terrible to realize that I won't see her again for four years, and that by 1972 I might be too old to take up the affair again where fate has left it. Esdacyos: Rule No. 1 for anything involving doctors, medicine, or hospital has been for me: keep the eyes closed. This started long ago when I keeled over on the street a quarter-hour after getting a shot in the arm, just from thinking about the experience I had witnessed. By not looking, I didn't mind a bit the afternoon in the hospital when they drilled

a hole in my shin so they could insert a pin that would keep the hip poised at the proper angle in traction. Of course, even closing the eyes doesn't preclude the danger that you'll get upset by something you hear, particularly that most dread word of all from the surgeon: "oops." ' ' I tried to check back on old incoming-mail tallies, and could find nothing to indicate that this past summer and fall did not produce an all-time record outpouring of fanzines. Whether you calculate by any index, like size of fanzines or number of fanzines or quality of fanzines, I suspect that all previous records were wiped out, except for apa publishing. There does seem to be a minor depression in apa activity. ' ' So, another member with a slight peculiarity in the heart rather than in the head. I'm tachycardiac, a fact that my doctor hadn't bothered to tell me until it turned up in a draft examination and sent me to a dictionary from which I emerged with a lot of worries. Apparently it's not too dangerous, as long as I don't abuse the heart. ' ' Was Clyde Crane Campbell a Gold penname? I'm sure this Campbell had stories in prozines long before the story which Gold later told about in some fanzine or other as one of his first, Trouble with Water in an early Unknown.

Helen's Fantasia: All we need to revolutionize ayjay publishing is the combination of a copying machine that can use any type of paper and a cheap home model of that copying machine. We already have an expensive machine that uses any paper and a \$19.95 home model. If that combination develops, I imagine that there'll be a tremendous spurt in popularity for small-membership apas, the kind where you can write more frankly and can get along with the rather slow production rate that copying machines give. Sercon's Bane: With my inability to recognize people, it wouldn't take all that disguise to fool me. It's not that I have trouble remembering names; I just don't have the ability to file away a face mentally clearly enough to recognize it to a certainty later on, until I've had months of frequent contact with the individual. You can imagine how many misunderstandings this produces in a town of Hagerstown's size. Cacothies: It never occurred to me before, but new fanzines with mysterious titles really ought to tell how to pronounce the titles, so reviewers could try to hyphenate them accurately. ' ' Continuing the series of awful personal revelations, I might as well admit that I am unable to participate in office pools. If I stake even a small sum on a sports event, I'm unable to enjoy it as a game. I'd rather enjoy the world series without thinking about my chances of hauling in the loot. Heute: If the constitution ever undergoes a complete re-writing, that reference to "legibly reproduced" should be improved. It has discouraged me from half-formed intentions to include in Horizons 8 mm copies of this or that item which would illustrate the text. It would take only a few seconds to run off enough copies on a movie camera, but it might be wasted work if an official editor decided that something which required a strong magnifying glass or a jury-rigged slide for projection is not legible. Tape recordings are presumably not eligible for FAPA mailings, under the wording of the constitution. Bobolings: The remarks about the sense of direction were interesting. I don't think I've seen much about this sense in writings on secret powers of the mind, yet it obviously exists for many animals and some humans seem to have it in a less dependable degree. Is it the working of the subconscious, or whatever mystery we dismiss by the word "instinct" or a genuine psi power? Can it be improved by practice or hypnotism? Synapse: Shucks, Jack, if

that poem had been published in some neofan's first issue, you wouldn't be that respectful to good old Fran Key. You'd start out by calling the opening sentence almost as needlessly complicated as Warner sentences. You'd call the title confused because the poem is about a flag, not a banner. Then you'd decry the redundancy in "dawn's early light" and the ambiguity of "twilight's last gleaming" after asking why the poet didn't use the simpler noun "gleams". I suppose you'd also point to the impossibility of the stars being bright when the whole point of the poem is that the flag was invisible during the night. Let's not nitpick only among the fans, at a time when the government calls on all patriotic citizens to end all forms of discrimination. Trill: The courts here don't interpret the law as requiring a suspect to have an attorney on hand when he makes a statement to police. But it's no longer possible to get admissions on the record with a simple statement by a policeman that the defendant was advised of his rights. He is required in Hagerstown to read a written summary of his rights, then to sign a waiver in which he states that he understands those rights and is making the statement voluntarily in full knowledge of said rights. Even so, a defense attorney can tie up a trial for half a day by arguing, for instance, that the defendant's education did not qualify him to comprehend completely the meaning of the words he had read. But I have noticed an enormous difference since summer in the attitude of juries. Chicago apparently soured a lot of conservative, solid citizens on policemen and there have been some not-guilty verdicts that were unimaginable a year ago. Attorneys are getting bolder, too. The assault cases involving prison inmates ran into all sorts of trouble because the jury panel originally drawn for that term of court included two guards at that prison. Both were excused before the jury had tried any case of any type, but the defense attorneys apparently argued that there could have been an influencing on the remaining jurors' minds by having chatted with the two who were excused. Sam: The bus tours aimed at showing hippies the suburban horrors they must avoid tickle me enormously. Next, will we hear about light shows falling into official disapproval among the flower children? It would be logical: the light show could be considered for the in generation what pornography is reputed to be among the godly, because of the danger that the things viewed at a light show may satisfy the cravings of the hippies for the experiences that they really should be obtaining from drugs. ' ' The main problem in combining TOFF and TAFF would be that TOFF couldn't adopt TAFF's principle of raising funds on both sides of the ocean. You couldn't expect Japanese fans to plunk down cash to vote for American fans of whom they've never heard, since next to no United States fanzines reach Japan.

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The Worst of Martin

Erotically Erotetic Eulogy of Eroticism

Scene: Daddy and Blondie lounging on a lounge in the lounge of the week-end cruise ship to Venus... (Note: All implied is applied outside the Heavyside...ED)

"They're as smooth and cuddly as peaches, Blondie."

"Remember what I told you, Daddy. Look but don't touch."

"Never saw finer ones in my life."

"I'm too lazy to move."

"Now, Blondie, don't change the subject.... You know what a

trip to Venus is...."

"Read any good books lately?"

"Have a little pamphlet with me that might prove of value."

"Mean--it might give me ideas?"

"I hope so."

"Maybe I'm a cynic but I don't believe in pollen."

"Incredible! Pollen is the staff of life."

"What? Now is that nice?"

"Blondie, I bet you don't believe in Santy Claus, or--"

"I believe in Santy Claus."

"And what's your name?"

"Oh, daddy, do you really mean it?"

"Before I commit myself, let's go back to the--er-pollen."

"Now, you're changing the subject."

"Don't be silly. They sort of run together."

"I don't like sports. Running gives me palpitations."

"Palpitations and tremors are possible sans coverage of space."

"Oh, daddy! Such a suggestion!"

"Maybe I'm wrong. I suppose you'd like to play checkers."

"Do you know any other games?"

"Press--I mean, chess."

"Entails thought, daddy. What about a quiet bout of strip poker."

"Hardly necessary from where I sit."

"Oh, dear, and I'm too lazy to move. What do you suggest?"

"As if you didn't know!"

"Oh, so we're back at that again."

"Yes, Blondie. And we're going to stick at it until I get what I want."

"You're determined, daddy?"

"I don't think you should call me 'daddy' until the act is culminated."

"But, daddy, even though I care for you, don't you think it'll be too much for you? You're going too far!"

"As far as I can see--"

"I'm still too lazy to move."

"That's the whole trouble with you."

"Perhaps. But we should wait a while, and think it over."

Besides, I much prefer it in the night."

"Where's that?"

"Oh, daddy."

"I want it now."

"You're so manly and insistent--really, I'm weakening."

"I bet you say that to all the boys. Blondie--you're lovely, you're ravishing. I'd love to rav--"

"Oh, daddy!"

"I was going to say that I'd love to rave about you to all the boys. But I won't unless you're a sport and go through with it."

"Daddy, you're so convincing. I'm afraid I'm going to acquiesce."

"Will you really acquiesce, Blondie?"

"Yes, I'll give in."

"Oh, you darling! Our trip to Venus is complete. Here's my book. The Pollen Cocktail is on the third page. Make it a double one!"

(from March, 1942, issue of Satyric)

A Wreck of Old 'Sixty-Tight

The Germans have the word for it: unberufen. My subconscious keeps muttering it every time I begin writing one of these wandering summaries of a year. It seems advisable to utilize a word normally employed to forestall some disaster which the speaker is congratulating himself for avoiding. FAPA's constitution makes it advisable to sum up the year while it is still about ten per cent incomplete. Do I fly in the face of vengeful fate, which might slap me down dead before December 31? If that happens, wouldn't my posthumous deflation of reputation get off to a galloping start, as all FAPAdom realized that I'd bungled again, trying to pretend I was looking back on a full year which I hadn't even lived through.

But waiting until the May bundle for this chronicle would be much bolder an assault on the fitness of things as they are, because I usually try to put the old year firmly out of mind each January 1, and by the time the spring Horizons gets stenciled, I've forgotten most of the events. Hardly anything happened in 1968, in any event, and I'd hate to think of wasting day after day next spring, trying to remember things that never happened.

Unless something happens in the next five weeks, I'll begin 1969 without having consummated the violent and profane departure from my job which I've dreamed and planned for the past three years. I have a couch, like Dick Geis, but every time I use it, I drop immediately off to sleep, so my own dialogs with myself occur while I'm up and around, most frequently while I'm writing a loc or covering a complicated murder trial. I wish I could run out of arguments for or against quitting, and settle the matter, once and for all. But it goes on endlessly. You haven't, I tell myself, accumulated the sum in investments which you've always set as the minimum you'd need for abandoning your regular job safely. But you arrived at that goal when you couldn't get more than a safe three per cent on your money and now you can depend on five per cent or more. Yes, but you'll have that much money by 1971 at the latest, unless your circumstances change somehow, and are you going to let a couple of people panic you into throwing away your carefully worked out arrangements for financial security? Sure, only I might have that much money by 1971 if I quit today because I can always free lance with fiction or give piano lessons or agree to take pictures for the attorneys who can't find a photographer who is ready and willing and able in Hagerstown. But look at it this way: if you quit today, maybe things at the newspaper will suddenly take a turn for the better, and if you hold the job a little longer and this happens, you might be happy working right up to retirement age, and even if you didn't save any money out of your salary, you'd have at 65 the maximum social security benefits and the company pension and interest would have given you twice the amount of savings you think you need to live comfortably. Of course, all that might happen, but won't I feel silly if I find myself dying a few years before retirement and devote my last thoughts to the way I failed to enjoy a life of leisure the past decade or longer? You'll be so scared if you know you're dying that you won't have time to accuse yourself of being greedy, and has it occurred to you that we might have inflation after you walk out on your job, real inflation, the kind that makes you pay \$100 for a loaf of bread, and how many weeks will you survive then? Why do you want to bring up such nasty things without admit-

ting how easy it would be to put most of the money into rental properties if the economic weather brews up a big storm and take it for granted that income would grow almost as fast as inflation dropped the value of the dollar? Hah, now you've betrayed a secret fear when you talk about owning houses for rent with all the endless time and bother involved in being a landlord; isn't that proof that you're casting around for something to occupy your time because you're scared of getting restless for something to do when you have no regular job? You're a fine one to talk about secret revelations when your sentences are getting longer and longer to try to hide the fact that two lives of leisure wouldn't be long enough for me to do all the things I've always wanted to do, and besides, do you....

In intervals of silence, I also think about the letter from Billy Pettit, who gave me the most detailed and exciting facts I've ever seen on how much it would cost me to live in various European nations, where I might be much happier in retirement if life in this country begins to grow even more dangerous; the question of whether I should include an automobile among my retirement plans; and the fact that I'd better not be too confident about free lancing income since I haven't tried to sell any science fiction for more than a decade, might have lost the touch over that interval, and then there is the probability that I'll be blacklisted from the biggest paperback and prozine markets, if Wollheim and Pohl think they got unfair treatment in the fan history.

If 1968 produced no decisive event about my job, it did give every indication of being the year for the first volume of the fan history. I've been disappointed too often to relax in confident knowledge that the battle is won. But it does look as if the first volume will be published early this year, unless Advent falls into a spacewarp or all the printers in the nation forget the secrets of photo offset. At the year's start, I thought I'd done all that remained to be done on the manuscript, only to find a lot of hours occupied as the months went along on final proofreading, checking up on doubtful matters, and chickening out on certain passages which I no longer have the temerity to put into print as I wrote them. I'm fairly satisfied with the final form of the manuscript. There are certain things appended which strike me as too elementary, but Advent hopes to find a brisk business with public libraries and suggested a brief glossary of fannish slang, some explanations which fans wouldn't require, and other minor changes. I hope the fan readers won't find their knowhow offended by inclusion of these basics. Essentially, the book will be the same as the manuscript which I completed three and four years ago, so naturally there's a gnawing at my conscience, telling me that I should have rewritten the whole thing to determine if I could do a better job with several more years' experience behind me. The biggest worry involves some contributions I've been making to fanzines in 1968: the revival of All Our Yesterdays in Quip, the Willis biography in Warhoon, and a detailed discussion of the Phil Stong anthology in one of the Couch fanzines, for instance. Will fandom in general assume that the Advent volume will deal with everything in equally full manner? Some fans will be terribly disappointed, if they don't make allowance for the fact that there are economic limitations for the publishers and time limitations for the historian. It would require a dozen volumes equal in size to the Advent book, to cover all the matters it describes with thoroughness similar to the fanzine contributions.

Please don't mess up the margin at the top of this page with a check mark so you'll be reminded to ask when the fan history will be extended to cover the 1950s. I can't answer such a question just now. Some things are obvious: I can't hold a job, write a loc on almost every incoming fanzine, and produce a second volume of fan history, without devoting all my spare time to fanac and probably ending in deep gaffiation out of fannish surfeit, somewhere in 1969. Much of the source material for that second volume is on hand, but quite a few months of digging would be necessary before I could write a word, and perhaps another six months of spare time work on the actual writing if I abandoned loc obligations. Advent has said nothing so far about a second volume and I've been afraid to remind them about it; just guessing, I suspect that sales of the first volume would have a lot to do with their interest in a companion.

The most exciting and distinctive thing about 1968 was the fact that this was the year when the squirrels got in. Horizons has already published the less sordid details of the unlawful breaking and entering of the attic last spring. Only a few of my closest friends in fandom know, however, that another invasion, far more terrible in nature and scope, coincided with the World Series. This time, they were not only in the attic but in the area between the attic floor and second floor ceiling. Between a roofing repair firm and a pest exterminator, the squirrels retreated again, but I'm not at all sanguine about prospects for sleeping after dawn and unviolated cartons of prozines in the winter ahead. Suffering from squirrels is very nearly as bad as having a black eye. People keep laughing even though one fate is as painful as the other. I hate to think how much I've spent this year on two roof patching jobs, visits by the exterminator, and the insulation of the attic remains unrepaired to this very moment on the theory that it's no use to spend money on that until a permanent victory is achieved by one side or the other in this struggle to determine whether this shall be considered a fanac retreat or an unusually large hollow tree.

Curiously, nature has smiled on me in another way this fall: I was glaring at the trees which line this street, angry over the knowledge that nothing can save me from the annual ordeal of cleaning up the autumn leaves. As luck would have it, the trees put off the duty of shedding their leaves this fall, for several weeks after the customary time, even though there was the normal amount of October wind and a near-record cold snap late in the month. This illustrates how dangerous it is to find excuses for accomplishing some necessary physical activity, because the second week in November produced a heavy and very wet snow. About eight inches fell on Summit Avenue, on the trees along the avenue, and on the leaves that belatedly clung to the twigs and branches. That was one of the very rare mornings when I fixed my own lunch at home, because my way downtown was blocked. Almost every tree had lost two or three of its heaviest, strongest limbs, under the weight of all those snowflakes glued to the leaves. I estimate that the number of leaves for raking this fall has been cut by 25%, it will be at least four or five years before the natural growth of trees will restore their autumn leaf production to the former quantity, and since most of these fallen limbs seemed to be those at the lower levels of the trees, I am able to walk much greater distances now before a tree branch knocks off my hat. If this was an act of providence specifically meant to ease my labors, I am grateful, but I

find it hard to interpret the purport of another storm effect which the fates brought to me. I have no trees on my property, except an old walnut tree at the end of the back yard which has been strengthened too much by its practice in standing erect under the weight of squirrels to suffer damage from wet snow. However, the storm that lamed so many other trees also busted two wires which run from the rear of my house to poles in the alley behind the property. One is the antenna for the AM radio, and the other is a power line. I wouldn't have felt so disturbed when I noticed their collapse, if it hadn't been for the fact that I had had this AM radio turned on, and it was functioning perfectly. I could conceive of a broken antenna wire becoming, through some coincidence of electronics, an equally efficient signal-searcher of a shorter length with its free end swinging gently over the upstairs back porch. But it didn't seem quite logical that the radio should continue to play, since it is plugged into a house current socket in the wall. I called the power company, trying to sound casual when I explained to them that a power line was down but there was no need to hurry to fix it inasmuch as it was still providing power. Four men, one searchlight, and a large truck made repairs about ten o'clock that night, and I never did find anything in the house that was affected by the power failure. The radio antenna has not been repaired. There is always the faint hope that it will eventually rub open the insulation on a live wire and then function as a squirrel disposal.

I feel quite bad about the fact that the year is ending with no contribution to my record of attendance at fannish festivals. I had no intention of going to the Baycon, but hoped to get to a couple of regional cons. But one thing and another came up, and I saw next to nothing of fans during 1968. My stay-at-home habits were firmed up a little more, if possible, by the gradual acquisition of what I believe to be my first genuine neurosis. I am growing deathly afraid of driving. It looks as if it'll be public transportation or stay home, unless I can snap out of this phobia. I used to run down to Washington once a month or oftener, to shop or go to a movie or just to get back in the United States. After I stopped that, I made a regular circuit of the Goodwill Industries shops and Union Rescue Mission stores within a 25-mile radius in search for books and records. I've visited some of these places only once this year. By now, I feel strong reluctance to drive across town to the shopping center and find myself wishing I took the dirty linen to a laundry a couple of blocks away, so I wouldn't have to make a two-mile round trip each Sunday to the woman who does it for me. I can think of two possible reasons for this reluctance to drive. There was that awful moment on Interstate 81 when a rear tire tread came off, related in Horizons about a year ago. It was a very narrow escape from a serious accident, and it preys on my mind. Or I might simply have become more miserly than ever and may be demonstrating this progress by imagining I'm afraid to drive when I'm really unwilling to buy gas and oil. There's no doubt that I've cut down on my spending for all non-essentials in the past year, partly without intending it, partly because it's good practice in case I find myself living on drastically reduced income soon. Whatever the cause, the car presents a problem now. Insurance and tags cost about \$100 a year, and depreciation might amount to another \$200. For \$300, I could ride taxis quite a bit and rent a car on the rare occasions when I had to go some distance where Greyhound

has never gone. Then I'd be ahead by all the money that now goes for fuel and repairs and maintenance. But just about once every month, the job involves a trip which would be impossible on short-notice without a car of my own. The latest of these came just the other day, when the Maryland State Roads Commission finally relented and completed the section of Interstate 70 between Hagerstown and Frederick which had caused this state to be a laughing stock and topic for curses on the part of drivers all over the East and Midwest. Its neglect had caused this twenty-mile stretch to be the only undualized section of highway between Washington or Baltimore and points a thousand miles or more westward. Seven people per year have been killed on it, on the average, for the past couple of decades, there were 180 serious accidents on it from the start of this year until the day I-70 was opened to traffic, and this carnage resulted mostly from the fact that a Maryland governor lived on the Eastern Shore, the other side of the Chesapeake Bay, wanted to develop the tourist industry to fishing towns, and arranged for construction of dual highways over there. I drove to the ceremonies on Route 40, survived the trip without hysterics, then did something nobody in Hagerstown believes. After photographing and recording the sights and sounds, I drove back to Hagerstown not on the new dual highway but by a series of back roads that doubled the time and distance but avoided almost all the traffic.

One minor exception to the onrushing stinginess was my decision to join a book club, after all I've inveighed against the things. Several attributes of the Nostalgia Book Club provided an unbearably seductive lure. Most of its offerings are volumes at prices considerably under the list price, containing the sort of thing that makes their purchase in hard covers advisable, because they'll be used too hard for good survival prospects if I wait and hope they'll appear as paperbacks. Despite its name, the firm also offers records, some of them not available through normal channels. But best of all, it promises freedom from computers, because they would be out of place in a club with that theme. Instead, you are invited to paste order forms on a postal card, or fold them to put them in a small envelope, or do anything else that would be too much for an imposing computer to cope with. As my new membership bonus, I took something I'd almost bought at a considerable price, just a few months earlier: the book and lp record with complementary contents and identical titles, The Glory of Their Times. A baseball fan, Lawrence Ritter, carried a tape recorder all around the nation to salvage the voices of the old diamond heroes before it was too late. Excerpts from their reminiscences are on the record, and the book contains longer versions of the things they told him. Ritter was too late to get people like Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb, but he included some people who were in the big leagues in the 19th century and one or two whose careers didn't end until I was following the box scores. His creation makes me feel more strongly than ever that baseball is the most distinctive thing America has produced, and perhaps the only completely good thing remaining in the nation today for which man is responsible. My first purchase proved to be a very sound investment: Anita Loos' A Girl Like I. It fits in with my recently acquired passion for the movies, particularly pre-sound films, for she was a pioneer script girl. I don't know how much truth may lurk behind the outrageous anecdotes she relates, but some of them are unforgettable, like D. W. Griffith's intention to flash

an announcement on the screen during one of his first love scenes, telling the public that Miss Gish's mother had been present during the filming, so Lillian's reputation as a decent girl wouldn't suffer from her acting ability. There's a Richard Strauss story that is new to me--backstage, he was on his way to the podium for the start of the second act at a gala performance of Rosenkavalier, happened to notice Anita's husband making a telephone call, and even though the man was a total stranger, Strauss told him to finish his call and return to his seat, waiting until he was comfortable before resuming the performance, so nobody would miss a note. I don't care for the treatment she gives Fatty Arbuckle, but maybe she knows more than I do about what happened in the drunken party that ruined his career. There's a totally different explanation of Mayerling, which she claimed to get from Frau Sacher during a visit to Vienna. And if you're frantically trying to remember why the name of Anita Loos seems vaguely familiar, it's for two reasons: she wrote Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and invented on her own head the first wind-blown bob.

Everything considered, I suspect that 1968 was harder on Hagerstown than on me. If I'm wrong about this, at least the wear and tear hasn't been as visible on me as on the city. Hagerstown continues to be plagued by the same basic problems it has had ever since VJ-Day. It was a small town that got bloated by airplane-building contracts during World War Two, and it is much more difficult for a city to resume its former dimensions than to enlarge them. What pre-war prosperity Hagerstown had came largely from the fact that as a railroad center, it attracted diversified small industries. The replacement of the railroad by the highway as the most popular method of moving people and things cost Hagerstown that advantage, and ever since, its leaders have been frantically trying to retain war-time gains instead of seeking ways to adjust to a smaller scale of existence. The business community does everything in its power to encourage creation of new industry and establishment of new shopping centers, without paying attention to the baleful existence of empty stores and abandoned factories that make whole blocks an eyesore. City and county government are kept under unendurable pressure by the prosperous segment of the community, who can afford higher taxes, to create water systems, educational facilities, civic centers, industrial parks, and other prestige or luxury items which the bulk of the public simply can't afford to support. (I don't mean to criticize education; I mean such things as a tremendous propaganda campaign to establish in Hagerstown a four-year college, in a county with only a hundred thousand residents, whose principal city is only an hour's drive from the University of Maryland and only twenty minutes away from a state teachers' college, with a junior college that has a smaller freshman class this year than last year.) A municipal effort to get rid of dilapidated housing culminated in scandals involving the chief building inspector. The last two chiefs of police have been fired for causes that were never announced. Three owner-ships in two years have failed to provide a sound operation for the biggest hotel in town and the motels that have taken away its business are now in agony because interstate highways are taking away much of their business. Parking meters now extend into the residential blocks outside the business area, yet Public Square, the heart of the shopping area, provides free parking spaces because merchants don't want to drive away business. The city doesn't dare raise tax-

es to meet the rising cost of municipal services--its property tax rate is already three times as large as it was in the 1950's, resulting in a flight of industry and merchants outside the city limits; the county is almost as bad off, even though it has been raising its property tax and has introduced an income tax. Debt service on school bond issues, a county responsibility, now is higher than the entire education bill was, just a couple of decades ago. It's an illustration in miniature of what is happening on the federal level, of course, the result of the fact that there is no limit to the ways in which government can spend money while there is a limit to the proportion of the public's wages that can be taken to pay the bills. That limit, 100 per cent, isn't in sight yet, but in my working career, deductions from wages for tax purposes have grown on the average faster than one per cent per year, and if this goes on, even a form of government that took all wages would not be able to cope with the demands on it. How long will it be until this fact emerges from one of the electronic brains that are supposed to solve all the nation's problems?

The year didn't mean the end of the city, county, or nation, but it brought death to entirely too many people in my circle. My scanty stock of surviving relatives was reduced again. But the most mysterious death of the year was that of Mary Mish. I wish Truman Capote would drop by and investigate, because he might find a long book in what happened one summer night just across the Potomac on the West Virginia shore. Mrs. Mish was the only real historian in this area, as distinguished from people who copy down lists of names off church registers or disguise their antique collections as historical research. She grew up in Washington, where her father was a big name journalist. Schliemann, the fellow who proved the truth behind the Troy legends, visited her home when she was a little girl. She had followed his lead by digging up lots of evidence about how Hagers-town's founder lived and worked, simply by using a shovel around the house he built in the swampiest part of Western Maryland. He was a fur trapper, not someone who liked swamps for no reason at all. On that night last summer, Mary Mish kissed her husband goodnight, he went upstairs to bed while she remained downstairs to do a few things and the next morning, her body was found under the bridge a few hundred feet from her home. Mr. Mish and the authorities were convinced that her mind had snapped suddenly so there was no spectacular investigation. I don't believe it. I don't think a person is apt to go mad and jump over the side of a bridge in that manner, without some preliminary symptoms. I am absolutely positive that if Mary Mish knew something about her health or had some other genuine reason for suiciding, she wouldn't have done it that way. It just wasn't in character. She would have taken sleeping pills and left a note so that her husband would have found her, or she would have driven down that road as fast as she could and rammed into one of the big trees at a sharp curve so it would look like an accident, but a person of her sort wouldn't have jumped from the end of a bridge where a stranger would find her, from a height that might not have proven fatal if she'd landed differently--she didn't fall into the water itself. But what explanation was there? The house was crammed with valuable old things and there are some slightly unbalanced people in the antique and history field around here. It was late at night, it is conceivable that a stranger bent on theft or someone who knew the contents of the house might have begun to pilfer on the assumption everyone had gone upstairs, and panicked at finding her on the first

floor. But there were no marks on the body other than those created by the fall and her husband hadn't heard a sound; her wristwatch stopped only three-quarters of an hour after he left her, so there wasn't time for a complicated chain of events. She knew the river-side too well to wander on that spot, if she'd felt ill and gone out for a breath of air and fainted. Her clothing wasn't disarranged, so she could hardly have been mugged. Her age and her whole self make a tryst ending in tragedy utterly unthinkable. We'll never know, I suppose, any more than we'll ever know who was the woman whose body was found years ago under the next bridge over the Potomac upstream. Mary Mish was a very good woman, who had been much kinder to me than our limited contact and disparity in age and background made probable. She'd had a tremendous blow years ago, when her son became the last person to die in Washington County under the wheels of a trolley car, and she'd conquered the blow so completely that it wasn't fair for her to die in an equally senseless way.

On the brighter side, Hagerstown got through the year without racial disturbances. There are probably a variety of reasons why violence hasn't occurred here up to now. The Negro population is small, for one thing, and composed mostly of old folks and infants since most of the young Negroes are sensible enough to migrate to civilized parts of the nation. Then there's the fact that looting wouldn't provide very dramatic evidence of black dissatisfaction in Hagerstown, because it would be so difficult to distinguish between looted areas and the parts of Hagerstown that hadn't been disturbed. There was some excitement at a nearby prison after the King assassination, which metropolitan newspapers defined as rioting in Hagerstown. But it happened in an institution a half-dozen miles away, and it was apparently confined to a half-dozen inmates who got revenge on a couple of guards and then smashed up the more fragile features of some cell blocks. They convicted three men on assault charges growing out of the episode but haven't tried any riot charges, perhaps because Maryland law requires a dozen participants to recognize rioting and most of the prisoners seem to have done nothing but cheered. Things looked ominous for a day or so when Wallace gave a campaign talk in Hagerstown. Several busloads of anti-Wallace people came up from Baltimore or Washington, two people were fined for creating a disturbance during his oratory, and there was a lot of milling around in the street of the Negro section one night. But the storm passed by. What the future will bring, I can't guess, but as of now, Hagerstown's Negro people look and act cheerful. That's no true of the Negroes I see in bigger cities or, for that matter, of the white people I see anywhere. Housing integration continues to make slow progress here. I notice that the 300 block of North Prospect Street, where I lived as a boy, is now a mixed neighborhood, and there's a Negro gentleman in the 200 block of Summit Avenue. This is the biggest problem for the Negro in Hagerstown, finding a decent place to live. Maryland has finally made mixed marriages legal, most kinds of work are available to the Negro if he argues hard enough for the job and can learn to do it, but the old barriers against escape from the ghetto as a place to live are only partially down.

As usual, I had a bitter fight during 1968 against music, which continually attempts to absorb all my interests and to take all my time. Acquisition of new records slowed down, partly because of my semi-boycott against the recording firms that refuse to issue mon-

aural discs. I wonder what would have happened to photography as a hobby, if when stereo cameras were the subject of a major push, more than a decade ago, the manufacturers and film-makers had phased out old-fashioned equipment which showed only a two-dimensional image? Of course, a lot of hobbyists would have given up photography, in favor of some other pastime that didn't force them to revise their methods and abandon their investment at the whim of a combine of industry. Photography survived splendidly after the stereo boom died down to the intense activity of a few hobbyists. But the record industry undoubtedly broke seventy-four anti-trust laws in its determination to make monaural records obsolete. After more than a decade of stereo lp's, they were still selling more monaural discs than stereo, whereupon they killed monaural recordings and are now filling the high fidelity publications with wails about how classical record sales are dropping and popular music sales aren't rising. I've been patronizing Seraphim, the Angel Collectors Series, and a few other holdouts, plus imports from the more sensible European manufacturers. Stereo is fine for certain purposes, particularly chamber music where a monaural disc doesn't allow the listener to distinguish properly between the two first violins' lines, unless one is recorded at a higher level than the other. But the kind of music which most people prefer profits least from stereo, and I suspect that a careful survey would show listeners unable to distinguish between stereo and monaural nine times out of ten, anyway. Why else do we have the little light on FM tuners, to show when a station is broadcasting in stereo, or the people who chatter in one room about how much they're enjoying the stereo that is playing in the next room?

But it isn't altogether a war to the death against the planned obsolescence in the recording industry that has slowed me down. Soon after I got home from the first and worst broken hip, I discovered a reluctance to get acquainted with newly acquired records. That's plagued me ever since. During the dozen weeks in the hospital, when I had no opportunity to hear any music except the junk played by local radio stations, I grew almost frantic for the opportunity to hear my favorite records. I played some of them in my head from memory, a wonderful test which I recommend to anyone who has the courage to determine how attentively he really does listen to music. If you can't hear specific nuances and can't always be sure what is coming next, you're letting music wash over you while your mind is elsewhere, instead of really allowing it to soak into the ears and proceed from there on a direct path to the brain and emotions and maybe even a few glands. Eventually, I got home, and rejoiced in all those old-vinylite friends, and ever since it's been hard to feel toward recently acquired records as I do toward those I had before that accident. I didn't long for the ones I've bought since 1961.

And there's one minor hindrance to record-buying, besides. All of a sudden, I can't find any source of steel shelving strong enough to hold records safely. Montgomery Ward used to stock just the right thing at a reasonable price, but now that firm and the others which I've visited supply only shelving that lacks the back and sway braces which provided rigidity to the older models. I bought one of the unbraced kind and it's begun to tilt frighteningly at a time when it's only half filled. The posts and shelves have plenty of perforations through which I could thread strong rope or wire in an effort to provide added security. But I hesitate to do this, lest I do it wrongly and damage a lot of discs in a complete collapse when the wires come untwisted or the rope snaps under the strain of time's passing. If

anybody out there knows a source of the reinforced type of shelves, offered by mail order, I'd be most appreciative of details. Appearance of the things doesn't matter too much since they go into an unused bedroom which nobody else sees. But the shelves must be deep enough for twelve-inch records, and there can't be too great a distance from one end of each shelf to the other, so there won't be too great a pressure on discs at the extremities of the rows if they lean a trifle.

By a supreme effort, I forced myself to spend money for UHF reception, toward the end of the year. This was an exciting gamble. Hagerstown is perhaps 65 air miles from the nearest UHF transmitters, and mountains stick up untidily into the path of the signals from most of those nearest transmitters. The city itself is filled with hills and dales, and in fact one block in the slums is known as Potliquor Flat because of both a folk custom and its unique lack of topological inclines. So the television antenna people don't make any promises if you ask about a UHF antenna. They point out that reception won't be good at one house and will be excellent at the next house in a block, on identical antennas at the same height. You can hook onto the cable, which offers three UHF stations, but the cable ignores several other UHF stations and I didn't want to assume a new financial obligation, anyway, just in case I do start living on a modest budget. So I took the chance, had the UHF antenna installed, and was gratified to discover that I get UHF reception as good as any I've seen in Hagerstown with a rooftop antenna. Six or seven channels come in quite well, there'll be another in about a year when Maryland starts its ETV network, and one of the Hagerstown radio stations is planning a UHF television outlet. So the impetus to more television-viewing that nudged me last year when I acquired the color set found new vim and vigor this year with all this new programming to explore. A Washington channel offers most of the NET stuff and originates a lot of serious programming of its own. Another Washington channel specializes in the foreign movies which are almost never shown on the VHF stations in this area. The UHF stations in Pennsylvania also give me a greater choice of sports watching. The new antenna should also be some protection against the time of movie famine that will arrive next fall, when CBS begins its late night "variety" trivia, preempting the hours which two VHF channels available here have been giving over to the cinema. I hope I'm not betraying ideals or anything equally terrible by spending more time at the television set. If I lived in a big city or in a foreign land, I tell myself, I wouldn't be here so much because I could sop up live culture or see interesting first-run movies.

Something interesting has become evident in the course of this year. Bookhunting expeditions at local second-hand stores have produced for the first time a steady supply of science fiction paperbacks. I don't know what this may portend. Have science fiction readers up to now been reluctant to give the books after reading to the charities but are now unleashing their holdings because of disgust with science fiction? Or is there some sort of second-hand time lag that causes a steady stream of a particular kind of book to begin flowing only after a given number of years from the time a big supply of such books hits the newsstands? Or did other people always beat me to these things in the past, until suddenly I've become the only Hagerstonian interested in science fiction and too stingy to buy new titles off the newsstands? Whatever has happened,

for the first time I've been buying science fiction paperbacks, and a few hard covers, much more rapidly than I can read them. The backlog must extend to a hundred or more titles by now, so it's a comfort to know that I will still be reading science fiction for many months after the awful moment when my miserly tendencies become so strong I can't even force myself to purchase second-hand copies for a dime apiece. I've been reading many much-publicized science fiction volumes of the past decade or longer, which I'd missed when they first appeared. This has been like old times, because for the first time since adolescence, it has been possible to discover the classics which many other people have been raving about in print for years. It is somehow more impressive to read a book for the first time when it is famous. I can't remember being very impressed with all those celebrated stories in Astounding of the 1940's, because when I read them, they were brand new to everyone. When I was in my teens and had my first experiences of Merritt, E.E. Smith, and the other old classics, I felt an extra thrill of recognition as I reached sections which I'd encountered particular praises for. Now it's been happening again.

Simultaneously, I'm not so happy about the rapid dwindling of the remaining time in which a great many science fiction stories will stay out of the limbo of impossibly bad guesses. It seems inevitable that someone will have landed on the moon before I review another year. I'll be using the tape recorder to keep a permanent record of the first trip to the surface of the moon and will feel all sorts of vindication for long-cherished confidence that man would make the trip. But just think how many stories, particularly those from an earlier day, will become mere curios after the first men walk on the moon's surface. We'll feel embarrassed after that landing, every time we run across a story in which beams blast into atoms the spaceship before it lands, the tale in which the moon's surface turns out to be wildly different from astronomers' conjectures, all the fiction in which some sort of life exists on the moon's surface. A lot of other science fiction stories about the moon will have only a brief respite, until more exploration occurs in the next few years to settle the fate of the stories which locate the lunar civilization beneath the surface and those which postulate a hole all the way through the moon, and many another narration which seeks to convince the reader about the nature of the things that aren't obvious to the first men on the moon. I don't mean to say that I'm a complete skeptic about what's up there. I've always clung to the belief that intelligent life on the surface of a satellite or planet might be the exception rather than the rule, since it would be so much easier to cope with nature under the surface where temperature changes and radiation create lesser problems. But obviously almost all the stories about life on the moon will be wrong, since they contradict one another too badly for many of them to be simultaneously correct.

The only consoling thought about this forthcoming decimation of science fiction is this: I'll probably not have to watch the completion of the process as it involves all the potential habitations of the solar system. Unless there is a stupendous breakthrough in science, it's awfully doubtful that any member of FAPA will live to know all the details about whatever forms of life exist throughout the solar system. Many of us should find out the truth about the moon, Mars, Venus, and perhaps even some of Jupiter's moons. But it's hard to imagine man getting a thorough inspection of Jupiter itself, the outermost planets, or even Mercury, until an awfully long time goes

by, unless technology suddenly comes up with matter transmission, extra-good insulation materials, and preferably some first-rate robots. And I wonder what the effect will be on science-fiction readers, when the time comes that the solar system has been thoroughly explored, and an endless delay stretches out ahead before men can reach the stars? Will it mean a big revival of interest in science fiction, the knowledge that there are no new geographical frontiers to conquer for generations to come? There's no use kidding ourselves: the distance between the stars may be too great for any form of life to travel without the most extreme sacrifice like the passing of generations aboard a star ship.

I've been fairly fortunate this year in finding sets of mundane books. I finally found a set of Kipling, something that has been strangely elusive in view of the extreme popularity of this writer, and just now I'm fighting the good fight in an effort to prevent my purchase of an enormous set of Bulwer-Lytton which I'm almost certain I would never read, once purchased. Several times in the course of the year, I've run smack into a problem of book-buying ethics. Several purchases have turned out to be, upon examination, books that almost certainly were stolen from public libraries, or at best, borrowed and not returned because of the death or incapacitation of the borrowers. I know that public libraries unload on occasion books they no longer need. But I'm quite certain that the Cumberland, Maryland, Public Library didn't discard a virtually new copy of the collected short stories of Faulkner, which had been borrowed only twice according to the slip on the flyleaf. Books from the library of an expensive school for boys near the edge of Hagerstown have been turning up with suspicious frequency. In such cases, is the purchaser obligated by philosophy or ethics to mail back the books to the original owners? Or should he assume that they've been gone long enough, from their dusty condition, to have been replaced by the institutions if they really were volumes that shouldn't have been deshelfed? I don't imagine that police keep records of books taken from public libraries. But I can foresee a lot of raised eyebrows if someone ever looks systematically through the books on the attic, not knowing that I didn't get them direct from the institutions whose names are stamped on the title page.

One confession must be made, lest I fail to Tell All in this searing confession of my year. I no longer have quite the reading endurance that I once reveled in. In the past couple of years, I've acquired a tendency to become quite drowsy when reading too long without interruptions, or when the reading matter is less than enthralling. I find myself suddenly unable to remember anything about the past two pages, or catch myself spending two minutes on the top of a single page, and in extreme cases, I may fall into a sort of semi-doze during which I'm not doing anything but am aware of any noises that happen to be occurring and retain some comprehension of how much time is passing. Maybe it all comes from failure to choose reading matter wisely enough, or I could require more sleep at night than I needed when I was middle-aged, or there could even be a lack of general energy resulting from failure to eat as much and as wisely as I should. Eyestrain could also be a factor, because I'm definitely in need of bifocal glasses by now. It takes a quite good light now for me to read comfortably with the glasses on and the paper a normal distance from my nose. So far, it's been easier to take off the glasses when reading in dim light, but this is probably not ideal from the optical standpoint. I hope I don't turn in-

to one of those dreadful old men who nod and catnap no matter what they're doing. It's encouraging that I no longer feel any tendency toward highway hypnosis, but the increasing terror that engulfs me behind the wheel has probably driven away the occasional urge to yawn and blink more rapidly. Moreover, I now possess two absolutely certain methods of attaining sleep when it really is desirable. One isn't practical except on weekends during cool weather. A football game will invariably put me into a deep sleep, not the semi-awake somnolent condition that results from reading. If insomnia occasionally seems to be a bed companion, all I need do is turn on the bed light and begin to read one of the photography magazines I keep within reach from my pillow for this very purpose. Ten minutes are usually as effective as an overdose of sleeping pills. (Remind me sometime to tell in detail the last time I was high. It came from too many sleeping pills, and they in turn derived from a doctor's determination to find out if I was epileptic through study of my brain-waves. Briefly, I was unable to fall asleep while hooked in to the instrument, so the nurse kept feeding me sleeping pills, and when they finally worked, the effects didn't last long for I roused in a half-hour and was ridiculous for the next three hours. I felt so stupid, when I thought back on my actions, that I've been prejudiced ever since against the benefits of narcotics, alcohol, banana peelings, and glue.)

The only good thing connected with my job that occurred during the year was a fairly effective freedom from the late hours on Friday, which used to be a 12-hour day for me when almost everyone else had the day off and I performed most of the editorial work unaided. I got promised that this would end with the coming of spring, then it started up again spasmodically again in the summer; I bleated and whined as loud as I could, and it hasn't resumed since. But Friday seems to have taken on a permanent symbolism of headache, stomach cramps, and bad temper for me, even though I now needn't create them in more severe form than on other days of the week. I still wake on Friday morning with that premonition of agony ahead that plagued me for four or five years, and I still haven't forced myself to begin rising earlier in the morning and retiring earlier at night, now that working hours are fairly regular throughout the week. On the other hand, for the first time in recent memory, staying up later than usual has begun to take on again an aura of excitement and delight, rather than an association with unwanted work. This might be helpful the next time I get to a worldcon; until now, a worldcon had seemed to me like an ideal place to kick off the traces and run wild by indulging in the daring act of going to bed at midnight, while all the other fans were obviously wallowing in the rare chance to stay up long past midnight.

And at least once or twice during every day on the job, I caught myself wondering why I'm doing this instead of trying to write novels. Years ago, I published in Horizons one chapter from a novel which I think would still sell with some revisions to cover changed world conditions. Ackerman agented the original version of it, and Larry Shaw was considering it when Ackerman gave up his agenting and Larry's magazines folded. He gave it back to me at a Phillycon, I tossed it into the attic, and I could either rewrite it from memory or find it in little more than a month. More recently, Horizons contained the first chapter of a proposed novel about fandom which I have no intention of finishing but am certain I could convert into a mundane novel with a minimum of changes, basing the new version on

journalists rather than fans, and introducing for spice a slightly decorated version of the celebrated Peggy Ann Bradnick abduction that set mountain folk into a tizzy a few dozen miles northwest of here a couple of years ago. Then there's the mentally plotted novel about a few people on Mars, which I'd like to write as a science fictional equivalent of the spirit and general attitude of Davis' Honey in the Horn. None of those three manuscripts would be hard to create, since most decisions have already been made mentally. But when can I get them written? I'm too tired and frequently too upset when I get done a night's work to feel like doing something more strenuous than fanac at the typewriter. I could get up early enough for free-lancing before work each day, but then could I face the typewriter at all at night for the sake of fandom? I've even wondered if I could get rid of my self-consciousness in front of a tape recorder sufficiently to dictate the stories, then find some starving local typist to put them on paper for a pittance now and a share of the proceeds if they sell. Then there's that book on Meyerbeer that I've dreamed of writing. It couldn't be done without a few months of digging through European libraries and museums, but Maryland has liberalized inter-library loans, so I might be able to create some specimen chapters in the easier areas from what's available at Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library, and try to get a publisher's commitment on those that would justify my making the trip. I've considered all such major writing plans as pipedreams for several years. But now that the fan history seems about to be published, an event which will materialize another pipedream, the other projects don't seem so impossible as they did.

Photography is another matter that was badly neglected in '68. I managed to make 8x10 prints of half of the black-and-white photos I took at Nycon III, but didn't succeed in finding opportunity to project on a screen the color transparencies which I've seen only in a dinky hand viewer's unsharp optics. I even abandoned the routine of taking a portrait of each fellow worker at the office. They are coming and going so fast that I can't spend that much money on film. But the world of the future continues to arrive sooner in photography than in most fields, and I'm surprised that so few fans are interested in anything more advanced than the most elementary snapshot cameras. Recent months have produced, for instance, the first genuine automatic focusing cameras. We've had slide projectors that refocus themselves once they're focused at the outset and aren't moved to a different distance from the screen. But the cameras go far beyond this sort of thing. One movie camera focuses automatically after you point it at the feet of the people whose picture you're taking. Another uses invisible rays to achieve the same object. I know they don't sound very probable, but they're here, the former at a quite reasonable price for amateurs, the latter in expensive equipment designed for professionals. I imagine that still cameras will adopt this feature before long, but we'll still need a photographer to tell the camera what it should focus on, of all the things within sight. It also looks as if electronic shutters will become standard in most good cameras: they're the kind that stay open as long as the light requires, a quite different thing from the automatic exposure systems that can be found in even low-priced cameras, because the latter have a limited range of shutter speeds and frequently leave the photographer with no control over aperture. I'll probably invest in another innovation, although this one is so simple and unscientific that nobody knows why it

didn't appear a half-century ago. Heath, of all people, marketed it, although it has nothing even remotely resembling electronics. It's called the Color Canoe and will probably ruin the market for machines that cost dozens of times its price but do the same thing: turn out color prints in a big hurry by using tiny quantities of chemicals at high temperatures. It consists simply of one container which you fill with water of the right temperature, to keep the chemicals at the proper height of warmth; and a curved thing on whose concave side you lay the printing paper, pour in a few ounces of chemical, lower it partway into the water jacket, then rock it from end to end like a cradle so the chemical will slosh over all the print on a regular basis. It can also be used to make black and white prints of large dimensions without the space and nuisance created when you must have large flat trays and many gallons of liquids to cover those 16x20 or larger prints.

I probably could have created during the year the first Cumberland Valley Futurian Society, if I'd so desired. Fans and semi-fans are popping up all-around me, coming closer and closer, and every time I check on the furnace, I look into all corners of the basement to make sure one hasn't undergone spontaneous generation down there. I've lost track of Steve Badrich, Hagerstown's only other fakefan, now that he's enrolled at Michigan State. But a bnf in Zane Gray fandom suddenly came into the open only six miles from Hagerstown. He isn't an all-out science fiction fan but reads quite a bit of the stuff and has some fannish contacts through his interest in certain borderline novelists. There's a NFFF member in Chambersburg, Pa., my home town, and I feel guilty every time I receive a ballot from him, at the knowledge that I've made no overture of friendship for another year. Bee Bowman is pretty far down the valley, in Waynesboro, Va., but she seems much closer than she really is, simply because of the name of her city, which is identical to the much closer Waynesboro in Pennsylvania. Other fans and borderline fans are showing up in various Pennsylvania cities not much more than fifty miles away. It's hard to guess what the effect on my fanning would be, if we did take the trouble to form a club for those within easy driving distance of one another. I'd probably be accused of raiding the recruiting grounds of the Baltimore and Washington clubs, but there must be a good many of us around here who would attend meetings that didn't necessitate driving into a metropolis or suburbs thereof. After all these years, could talk and socialization serve for me as the substitute for fanzine publishing and article-writing which it has been from the outset for many other fans? Or would regular face-to-face confrontation with fans cause me to snap out of this non-attendance at the cons which I could easily reach? Would I plunge enthusiastically into clique-forming, insurgent revolution, and the other activities of many club fans, after having kept on fairly good terms with most elements in fandom during all these years of typewriter contact? I'll probably find out, if just one or two goshwowboyoboy fans should bob up within a few miles of Hagerstown; I sense that the area is ready for some kind of meetings, and I'm thankful that there are no hostilities around here that could be imagined capable of holding a worldcon.

The NFFF's teller occupation, incidentally, is more exciting than you'd imagine. For one thing, I'm still immature enough to get a jolt when I open an envelope and find a ballot signed by Roger Zelazny or Wallace West. Then there's the personal stature which I gain in the eyes of the mailman every fall. All of a sudden, those envelopes addressed in obviously feminine penmanship begin to flood

in, and soon I catch the mailman casting sly glances at me, as if to wonder how after all this time I've finally learned how to get them all interested. For two straight years, there has been a very close contest in the directorate election, and if it weren't counter to NFFF policy, I'm sure that the newszines would stir excitement all over fandom by reporting regularly on how the contests are progressing. So far, I've resisted the urge to play god by waiting until all the tabulations are completed, and then cast my vote, just in case my own ballot could swing things deliberately. Quite often this or that NFFF member will enclose a brief note along with the ballot. Sometimes it's a hello from a long-separated correspondent, occasionally there's a bit of egoboo from someone for something I've done in fandom, and once in a while, someone makes a constructive suggestion about election procedure. I simply transmit these to the hierarchy, since as a simple teller I do nothing but save the expense of data processing for the organization.

Of course, this year I was on the other end of tabulation, by participating in the Nielsen poll. I've read conflicting versions of how this organization does its rating activities, so I suspect that Nielsen doesn't reveal everything, lest it provide too much ammunition for critics and too much imitation material for competitors. I lasted only a week, although I'll probably never know if this was because I didn't do it in satisfactory manner, or because I was chosen for a supplement to the established Nielsen families who do the watching for ratings month after month. My TV diary was inscribed with so much baseball and movies and so little anything else that I undoubtedly disturbed somewhat the ratings for that week, if they counted me at all. Or maybe I was dismissed without two weeks' notice because I failed to write anything on four lines in the viewing diary that follow the instructions: "Use the space below to give us your thoughts about TV." I know that many people are inarticulate and do little cogitating, but is it possible that anyone who watches television at all could summarize what he thinks of it sufficiently to squeeze the thoughts into four lines? If nothing else came from the experience, I acquired another number. This one is second-longest of all I've collected, yielding in complexity only to that on an insurance policy. If FAPA should have a secret agent with access to the Nielsen archives, he could find out what really happened to my handiwork by looking up the contribution from Nielsen Family, 1042 1 A 5060 19 043 12 D.

It's a good thing that nobody asked me for my thoughts about FM during the year. It's sickening, how a promising entertainment field has sold out to the lowest common denominator of money-grabbing. I note that the average FM radio station loses money and it's no wonder, now that the great change has come over the dial. The good music stations are nearing extinction. Washington has one remaining, where it used to have four or five. There's still one in Baltimore, but the last few times I listened to it, it was still using the same pre-packaged tapes that it was playing a decade ago, so with that enterprise, it'll probably convert to playing daily all recordings in print of how Mama socked it to them at the Harper Valley PTA. I have seen arguments that the FCC is to blame for this situation, by requiring AM stations with FM outlets in large cities to program independently most of the day. But the transistor radio must have shared in the villainy. It so completely destroys the benefits of FM reception that exist on halfway decent receiving equipment--better sound quality, lack of interference between stations

adjacent on the dial; and the probability that the people listening will be at home where they can pay some attention to the broadcasts. Now I can't understand why the broadcasting industry continues to press FM at all. Under the new conditions, there's no particular reason why a station should have an unprofitable FM outlet at all. If the FM spectrum were closed down to commercial interests, and used instead by a federally controlled national television channel plus one or two FM outlets, supported by a small tax on radios, we might have the benefits of government broadcasting without the liabilities that they create in nations where there is no competitive commercial broadcasting. In another year or two, there ought to be enough satellite-launching knowhow to make possible such a national network without strings of earthbound transmitters.

The loss of culture on FM has joined another fine arts disaster for me. The local museum is going to pot. It never was a Corcoran or Metropolitan, of course. But it provided annually for quite a while a half-dozen concerts by little known but capable musicians, a series of old movies, interesting regional art and photography contests, an occasional lecture, and the like, all free since it's supported partly by endowments, partly by tax funds. But rising costs and different philosophies on the governing board have been changing all that. The current director doesn't give a damn about photography and showed it by hanging every entry in the latest competition, with natural reactions of disgust among the capable picture-takers. The musical events have subsided to an occasional University of Maryland offering whose quality resembles that of the recent football teams sponsored by that center of learning. The trustees now sell memberships in the museum as a means of evading the provision in the charter which forbids charging admission to anything in the building. You don't pay to get in, but you don't attend and usually don't even know about some of the events, like the old films, unless you're a paid-up member now. There is a program of docents, horrible people who threaten to make it impossible for a museum visitor simply to wander around looking at what's all over the walls, without listening to a lecture on why tempera lost favor to oil as a medium for paintings some years ago. It's pretty hard to imagine the new regime permitting some entertaining things that were offered in the past, like an enormous display of circus lore. There is also some slight possibility of conflict between the museum and public library. Everyone expected it to flame into carnage when the library began to lend reproductions of great paintings to the public, but the truce continues on an uneasy basis.

If all this sounds as if the year left me dissatisfied, I've done a faithful job of chronicling the more printable features of 1968. Job dissatisfaction and some minor health problems must have distorted my outlook on things in general, to a certain extent. But it's also quite probable that I'm seeing things more clearly after more practice at observing. It's something like the old management-labor picture: first the management proves itself to be impossibly brutal bastards, so a union forms to alleviate the situation and soon labor proves itself to be impossibly brutal bastards. Dover Beach is too popular to be referred to in intellectual circles today, but it still says some awfully valid things about the way life and the world appear when you try to look at them closely. I'll have to try to pick out the good guys, no matter how badly they're outnumbered, stick as close to them as possible, and resign myself to the fact that Sturgeon's Law may apply to the galaxy in general.