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Horizons. Nobody will ever know how close I came to omitting the name of this fupid stanzine from the last issue, so it gets mentioned first of all this time. This is the February, 1971, issue, volume 32, number 2, FAPA number 119, and whole number 125. Most of it is written and stenciled by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, United States of America. The Coulsons are the second unit directors.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: The bulk of the mailing comments must wait until next issue. The delay is partly the result of the situation described on another page, partly because West Coast distribution of FAPA mailings to someone on the East Coast whose mimeography is done in the Midwest creates a problem around Christmas. I'll run the mailing comments next issue, after I've had time to read the mailing. But meanwhile, some things should be said about the proposed constitutional amendment which just can't wait until May. I had nothing to do with the proposal published in this FA. But everybody in FAPA should know that I've favored for many years some such procedure that would combine the chronological system of choosing new members for FAPA with the selection of some new members because we want those particular people. I imagine that the vote on this amendment will be quite close, whichever fate it meets. But all the arguments for retaining the present system of handling the waiting list seem to me to boil down to the same basic bones of tenet: this is the way we've always done it, so it's the fair way. Some thought would show that the amendment would not be the radical change from FAPA principles that its opponents may consider it. FAPA was the first ayjay group whose original constitution implied some measure of selectivity in membership. Every other apa known until then had had an unlimited membership. FAPA's founders knew there were more than fifty eligible fans at the time of its creation. They handpicked a lot of members by asking them to join at the outset. The establishment of a waiting list whose members would become FAPA members solely on the basis of date of application was not the result of a Solomon's deep thought or a referendum of the FAPA membership. Jimmy Taurasi couldn't think of any other way of handling a situation that wasn't covered by the constitution one day in the 1940's when he suddenly found 51 fans wanted to belong to a 50-member organization. Inertia caused his makeshift procedure to become the unchanging way of doing things. But even with this traditional way of handling the waiting list, which finally got written into later constitutions, FAPA has still chosen its members from time to time, instead of watching them drip through the hourglass as time passed. Every time you or I sign a petition to save the membership of someone who failed to publish eight pages or pay dues by the deadline, we are exercising precisely the same invitational selectivity that the proposed amendment would provide; the person for whom we petition is no longer a FAPA member and usually is not even on its waiting list and we jump him into the organization over all those other fans who have been waiting months or years to join. The only real difference is that the present petition system requires fewer votes than the added method would provide under this amendment. Then there have been occasions when FAPA deliberately went looking for members, and its officials or Establishment deliberately handpicked the people to invite into FAPA. This last happened in the late 1940's, when the membership roster had vacancies

after a series of internal problems. Invariably, FAPA has thrived mightily immediately after a group of people came into the organization without waiting list delays. I believe the last time we got this kind of fresh blood was in 1951, when there were a half-dozen or more vacancies and bundles were as small as 116 pages. Would FAPA have ever had members like Lee Hoffman, Bill Denner, Walt Willis, and Ever-Lovin' Max Keasler, if they hadn't had the opportunity to join at that time of instant membership? The fresh blood produced spectacular results. By the end of 1952, FAPA had a 479-page mailing containing such delights as a 69-page issue of Bill Rotsler's Masque, a 46-page Sky Hook from Redd Boggs, and Bill Evans' 40-page reprint of The Road to Fame, proving that those instant new members did something to prod older members into high caliber productivity. FAPA's golden age came along a few years later. I don't think it's right to say you want big mailings or want small mailings; what you really want are good mailings, and I can't believe that anyone in FAPA today would complain about the 600- and 700-page mailings of the late 1950's, if they recurred with the quality which ruled during that period. (In one four-year survey made by Bob Pavlat in 1959, he counted 508 pages of FAPA publishing by Lee Hoffman, 536 by Ted White, 347 by Andy and Jean Young, and 312 by Bill Evans.) And if anyone out there feels that all these relevant details from FAPA's past are blots on the organization, that he still doesn't think some members should be chosen by vote, I would ask him to examine his own conscience. Ask it, and demand an honest answer: Did he ever accept an invitation at a con to a closed party? Did he ever mention in a conversation that cons are growing too big and he prefers the small ones where his kind of people are most likely to be found instead of a lot of strangers? Did he ever attend a non-con instead of the worldcon for that very reason? Did he ever cast a ballot for Hugo nominations? If he ever published a general fanzine, did he solicit material for it from certain people whose writing he admires in particular? If he's a prominent fan, and gets a lot of mail, does he respond most promptly to letters from the fans he likes best and those who write the most interesting letters? Does he buy paperbacks from the newsstand indiscriminately, or does he choose those which have been recommended by reviewers he trusts and those by favorite authors? Can he think of any consistent reason for voting against this amendment, if he hears affirmative noises from that conscience? As for the actual language of the proposed amendment, I would have preferred a flat selection of the top three vote-getters each year, without the requirement of twenty or more votes. But maybe some present waiting listers will want in badly enough to prod lots of members into returning those egoboo poll ballots and I'm confident that the quick membership possibility will put some really energetic new fans on that waiting list with similar results. I suppose that the officers could rule on what happens in case of ties in the voting, but it wouldn't have hurt to cover that in the amendment. In any event, I feel that this is the most important constitutional decision FAPA has faced in a dozen years or more. I'm convinced that FAPA will die violently, if the status quo isn't shaken up through such a change. Don't think we can go on stagnating like this forever. Eventually, a crisis will arise. All of FAPA's previous crises were overcome because members cared enough to go to a lot of trouble to rescue a mailing or recover the treasury or pacify someone who wanted to go to court. The way things have been the past six or eight years, I don't think anyone would take the trouble.

Middle Age of Aquarius

This was to be the year in which I broke this silly habit of capsulizing the twelvemonth in the winter issue of Horizons. It is a silly procedure, now that fandom has grown so extensive that I'm reluctant to speak as freely in FAPA as I once did. Some mailings reach strange destinations and revelations that I used to make for the limited FAPA audience aren't as advisable when there's no telling who will be in the eventual audience. So I can't do a really thorough job in these narrations of the year any longer, and yet if I stick to the reasonably safe matters, there's the nagging suspicion that it's all too dull for FAPA.

However, I find myself doing it again, for a better reason than usual. The ill health that has been plaguing me for many months would be coming to a head if it weren't situated in an entirely different part of my body. A week ago, I thought that an operation was only a dozen hours or so in the future. Then a reprieve came for a couple of weeks, if circumstances don't worsen during that interval. If I don't get Horizons stenciled as soon as possible, it's apt not to get stenciled at all, if there really is an operation coming up. It's not the extremely serious kind of operation, as things now stand, but it'll throw me out of action completely for a while and it's hard to be sure how much longer it will be until I feel able to cut two dozen stencils again. Besides, I remember vividly how I filled almost all of an issue of Horizons with the account of my hospital experiences after the first broken hip. If I have the operation and get over it in time to cut stencils before the February mailing, how could I resist the temptation to do the same kind of article and bore FAPA more completely than any ayjay group should be bored at the start of each new decade?

Meanwhile, I'm frightened enough at thoughts of an operation to have no ability to think out sensible material for this issue of Horizons. I don't want to waste the time that would be required to dig out the file of an old fanzine and fill Horizons with reprints from it, as I've done a couple of times in the past. This sort of rambling about the year is easy to write without research or agonizing intervals to decide what should come next. It's the best way I know to fill as quickly as possible the stencils that will keep my FAPA appearance record unbroken, if the body doesn't break down completely ahead of schedule. Besides, even if these pages represent living in the past, they have the virtue of concerning a much more recent past than the eras that I find myself thinking and writing about too frequently. I like the philosophy of one young enthusiast for Hagerstown area history. "I don't want to live in the past but it's silly to ignore it," he says. The only thing I think should be added to that philosophy is the observation that there's so much more of the past than there is of the future that it really deserves to be written about quite a bit.

If it hadn't been for the physical problems, 1970 would have been a good year for several reasons. One favorable thing is my remarkable expansion of interests and fields of activity during the year. I hate to brag, but here I am, at the age when most people are paying more and more attention to fewer and fewer matters, I'm still finding new things to get excited about. There might be dark, nasty causes for this, of course. Aaron Copland was asked recently why he virtually stopped composing and became a prominent conductor during the past decade. He did it to prevent himself from competing

with his younger self, Copland explained. Maybe I'm subconsciously substituting new interests for some old ones so I won't notice how I can no longer concentrate as intently or pick up key factors as rapidly as I once did. Then there's the added wicked undercurrent implicit in the fact that many of these new diversions are not of the type that involve extreme intellectual procedures. Maybe I'm copping out, avoiding the things that require thought in favor of those that can be handled with nothing more complicated than reacting. But still, the issue isn't definitely resolved in favor of galloping senility and I don't worry too much about these new things that fascinate me.

For instance, there used to be only one person in fandom who admitted to a passion for the Broadway musical, Bill Donaho. Now there are two. After I'd spent the first 46 years of my life ignoring, scorning, and belittling the things, I've found myself drawn to them with increasing fervor in the past dozen months. Health has saved me from the ultimate ignominy of enduring the five-hour ride to New York each weekend to see a couple of shows. But I've been listening to lots of lp original cast albums, reading about the lore of the American musical comedy, borrowing from the local library's modest stock of scripts and musical selections, and intently watching TV Guide for listings of film versions. I can't explain this very well. I don't really adore the music, which has such terrible limitations, the plots are usually predictable halfway through the first act and don't stand up too well under repetition, and I don't try to catch show people on the late night talk shows because they seem as phony and unbearable in their own selves now as they did before I got interested in Broadway musicals. The only thing I can think of that might explain the interest is the energy that oozes out of most musical comedies in enormous amounts. It's hard to find anything these days that doesn't behave as if it were old and tired, and it's so nice to hear someone singing at the top of his lungs or see a chorus jumping madly about.

And yet I passed up an opportunity to meet Julie Andrews this past summer. I suppose it was for fear that something would happen in a face-to-face meeting that would ruin permanently the magic that she creates, the aura of something special that has survived the carefully contrived image that the publicity people have built up and some of the unfortunate casting she has suffered. So here I sit back in the hills, knowing her only as a face on the screen and a voice on vinylite, wondering endlessly what her life would have been if she'd become a concert artist instead of a stage personality. I don't know too much about how voices are trained for musicals, but I hear concealed within her delivery of those tunes an imprisoned magnificent lieder and melodie singer, someone who would have been unforgettable in approximately the repertoire that Maggie Teyte used. I also hear the voice of someone who has worked as hard as any human vocalist can work to do what she does to this kind of music, a voice that is as completely under the control of its owner and as flexible for these specific purposes as any singer of greater music needs to be among masterworks. It's probably too late now to make the conversion to the kind of singing that is done on the concert stage, and yet I keep wondering what kind of records I'd buy if a sudden case of double chin or crosseyedness should force her to make the vocal conversion.

Then there's my new love for travelogs. I hope this isn't a symptom of an oncoming attack of wanderlust, all that I would need

to put the final finishing touches on the destruction of all hope of getting everything done within three months of when it should have been done. Maybe fandom is to blame for this new obsession. It isn't often that we get nowadays the travelogs that once filled so many fanzine pages, from the terse one-page summaries of what happened when one fan went to visit another fan in a different city to the serialized book-length narratives of goodwill tours of fandom. So I read as substitution something like Emily Kimbrough's And a Right Good Crew, very mundane but better than nothing in its description of how a few semi-prominent Americans did some canal-boating in the United Kingdom, or Travel & Camera, which is little more than a monthly advertisement for the tourist industry but does contain lots of lovely pictures and endless lists of restaurant and hotel accommodations. I read those lists as avidly as Tom Wolfe ever devoured pages in telephone directories. Somehow I've refused to allow myself to order those year-old Fodor guides to the most obscure European nations that Marboro Books keeps offering at cut prices, but I imagine that in a few more months I'll be unable to resist the thought of all those pages of lists of where you can buy silks and how much to tip the man who helps you climb a volcano.

So there are two new interests that are definitely presentday-oriented, and with that much proof that I'm not completely obsessed with the past, I suppose it's safe to admit that old time radio is threatening to become an ever-greater gulper of spare time. I look at those long lists that Joanne Burger types of what the NFFF tape bureau will dub for me at a pittance and I try not to order practically everything immediately, but it's a hard renunciation. Then an oldtime fan, Gerrge Jennings, comes up with an old radio fanzine and I want to write an article for it about the baseball play by play announcers of another day and another article speculating on whether the non-network personalities that made individual stations famous still survive in large quantities of recorded programs and I know if I start that kind of old radio fandom activity, I'll be hooked totally. George provided, incidentally, the biggest surprise and largest emotional jolt of my year. He sent a tape after receiving a letter from me, didn't give any indication of what was on the tape, and I liked to collapse when I put it on the machine and heard the Lum and Abner Christmas episode emerging from my speaker, infinitely finer in fidelity than I'd been able to hear it when I strained to catch every word and sound effect on December evenings a whole civilization ago. (Speaker, I said: old radio programs are sacred and I refuse to play them through the speakers on which I occasionally use stereo records when for some reason I am not playing mono recordings. An entirely different speaker is sacred to old radio shows.)

But maybe I shouldn't feel so defensive about an interest in non-intellectual matters. If I feel superior to the average person in any way, it's in my ability to find pleasure in things. It is horrible to think about the youngsters who yawn at the moon landings, World Series, Auber overtures, Humphrey Bogart movies, chocolate ice cream, beagles, and a thousand other things that can make life good if you don't try hard to be blase. Even worse are the academic types who will listen to no poet but Pound, look at no photographs except those of the latest genius of the charred-transparency-montage school, speak to nobody who has not had at least eight years of graduate studies, and won't admit their one true passion, making lots of money. If I were a born leader of men or gifted with the infinite patience of a scientist or the sole support of a dozen starving

grandchildren, I'd feel guilty about frittering away all this time on getting acquainted with some of the things the world contains. Instead, I keep wondering why with all these exciting real things within reach some people are either bored by practically everything or can enjoy only the way red crawls into yellow on a rug while drugs have their intellects befuddled. Crawling colors must be tiresome after they've crawled for a while.

I'm still working for the newspaper, although two or three more months should see me possessed of that minimum sum I've always set as the safe point for retirement. It wouldn't be wise to quit at this particular moment, because hospitalization insurance would be terribly hard to get as a private individual in my present state of unhealth, and I imagine that there would be some kind of waiting period after an operation before I could convert the insurance that goes with the job to something I'd pay for myself. It has been a dull year journalistically in this area. The only local events that gained widespread attention were blown out of all proportion in a classic case of how the American press can ignore the facts in the desperate search for items that fit what are traditionally accepted as the interest-attracting qualities.

I'm not sure how much of the nation heard about the great Dargan school strike. It got enormous amounts of time and space in Baltimore and Washington television and newspaper programming, and apparently won at least limited coverage on several days over a much wider area. So the local press ran around in all directions striving not to let the big city papers get too far ahead on coverage of events only two dozen miles from Hagerstown.

Dargan is a village of several hundred residents in a part of this county that has been economically depressed ever since Prohibition ended. It has had for a long time a two-room public school of its own in which children were taught through the sixth grade. Older children have long been bused to the nearest high school, ten miles or so away. The occupants of Dargan have been divided since time began into two opposing groups, a permanent split that made it impossible for OEO programs to be extended to that area.

Midway through 1969, the county school board decided to close down the school at Dargan, the smallest building still operating. One faction at Dargan exploded, on the grounds that this school had been operating since long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. The other faction automatically was happy about the decision to bus the elementary children to the large school at Sharpsburg, eight miles away. The group that wanted to save the school called all the newspapers and television stations in the Baltimore-Washington area and told them that the school board was going to slaughter these innocent children on the highways. The big city journalists somehow managed to find Dargan, were given a tour of the area's roads, and went home and wrote the most preposterous things imaginable about roads which weren't at issue at all because these were the roads that buses were using to take children to the Dargan school itself. Particular attention was given to a bridge on one of these back roads. Pictures showed a clearly visible line down the side which the journalists described as a crack which would undoubtedly cause the span to split asunder any day now under the weight of a school bus. This actually represented the point where a new section of bridge had been constructed a few years back to provide a wider crossing for greater safety of motor vehicles. The school people tried to find a way to make the reporters under-

stand such things as: the only highway at issue was the eight miles of Harpers Ferry Road from Dargan to Sharpsburg, because any children who had been walking from their homes to Dargan School would be permitted to continue to walk there, where the bus would pick them up; that some people in Dargan were anxious for their children to be transferred to the larger school with its more elaborate educational program and in fact several parents had requested and received permission to transfer their children from the small to the large school a year or two earlier; that there had never been a school bus accident on the area's roads, which are demonstrably safer by accident statistics than those in many other parts of the county. The miracle that would have caused the press to tell both sides of the story did not occur. Finally, when the county commissioners hinted that they might be persuaded to rebuild Harpers Ferry Road, taking out some of its curves and widening it, the school board agreed to operate the school for one more year.

This brings us to the summer of 1970. The road had not been rebuilt, although reconstruction was about to start on one mile of it. Part of the delay resulted from unwillingness of land owners in the area to grant the needed rights of way. The school board turned the deed and keys to the building back to the county, proving it had no intention of providing another reprieve. A Dargan delegation tried to get the governor to appeal and when he refused to act they picketed in Annapolis for a day, found the news coverage poor of this picket line, and abandoned that pitch. The dissident group announced that they wouldn't let their children go to school if the school at Dargan wasn't operated, and contacted those metropolitan journals and tubesters again. I haven't ascertained whether it was a journalist or a Darganite who conceived the idea of conducting their own school outside the building when the school year began. Whoever thought it up hit the publicity jackpot. Vast quantities of photographs appeared and the public over a wide area saw a whole community defying the establishment to save its school. What the press and tv failed to point out was: more than half of the children who had gone to Dargan School enrolled at Sharpsburg and attended there regularly; of the minority of students who were attending unofficial classes on the lawn of the building, some were ringers in the form of five-year-olds who would have gone to kindergarten which is not obligatory and had never been operated or even requested at Dargan, and children from two families that had moved into Dargan during the summer and had never previously attended Dargan School; and both the school board and county commissioners had offered full cooperation to the Dargan dissidents if they wanted to operate a private school, offering them the building for this purpose without charge as well as assistance in getting the private school certified by the State Department of Education, which has sole authority in this matter. When the weather turned chilly, unidentified parents broke into the locked building and the unofficial classes were held there despite no trespassing signs.

At this point, the school and county authorities were becoming a trifle annoyed with the publicity and the minority of Dargan dissidents and the whole matter. So they refused to do what the parents were counting on for the next big publicity blast, have them arrested for truancy. Week after week dragged by, a few parents chickened out and started to send their children to Sharpsburg, the leader of the dissidents tried to get the state's attorney to call the grand jury into special session to investigate the situation and met no success,

and finally the big city hotshots began to weary of the Dargan story for lack of new developments. Finally, late in November, the parents who still held out were hauled into court and their waning hope for some kind of dramatic punishment vanished utterly when the judge suspended the small fine he imposed on each of them on condition they started to send their children to Sharpsburg in another two weeks. This dull denouement apparently didn't get much publicity, and even though the deadline hasn't yet arrived, everyone seems certain that all the kids will be going to Sharpsburg by then.

If there was a story in all this it was the manner in which the men and women old enough to know better were inciting impressionable children to flout the law and authority for trivial reasons. They broke the compulsory school attendance law, they were guilty of trespassing, they committed breaking and entering, they knowingly furnished false information to the press, and I don't doubt that at least one or two of these kids will turn out bad because he'll grow up with a desire to emulate his parents' contempt for education and civilized ways of doing things. I don't object to a person defying the law when there is at least a possibility that the law is being enforced in a discriminatory manner or that it is a law that has survived into an era where it should no longer be on the books for changed conditions. I think it's terrible when the media egg on this sort of lawless behavior by people who are celebrated throughout Washington County for the frequency with which they have recourse to lawyers and warrants when their feuding results in someone's barn getting burned down or a dispute over ownership of a patch of land. (Maybe someone with particularly good memory can recall the case of the farmer who insisted on leading his cows through the only street of Antietam Furnace every day and was hauled into court by people who considered this a lessening of the dignity and cleanliness of their street. Life Magazine ran a picture and the national news associations sent out little items. This was the same crowd in an earlier stage of the same feud.)

I'd hoped that the coming of a television station to Hagerstown would provide some improvement in local news coverage. But it didn't. The owners decided that they couldn't get along on purely local advertising to supplement their income from national accounts so they set up coverage of news from a four-state area stretching out from 40 to 75 miles from Hagerstown in various directions. In half-hour newscasts divided between national and local news, plus some sports and weather stuff, there wouldn't have been much time for purely Hagerstown events without this regional coverage; with this effort to attract viewers from far away so ads can be solicited from such outposts, there is rarely time for more than one or two brief Hagerstown items nightly. The only welcome thing that the station did during its first full year on the air was to telecast the Hallowe'en parade. This is the largest Hallowe'en parade anywhere in the East, lasting between two and three hours and attracting crowds estimated somewhere between 75,000 and 100,000 each year. For no apparent reason, the local press has all but ignored it in the past few years; this year, for instance, coverage consisted of two photographs, and a listing of prize winners, about one-third the space given each spring to the Memorial Day parade at Antietam which lasts a half-hour and sometimes has three thousand spectators. But the television station went all-out. It imported the mc from a network games show as color man, persuaded the city to augment street lighting in the area where cameras would focus, and swept all the

prime time network shows from its schedule that Saturday evening so it could telecast not only the parade but also the hour or so of preliminaries like the crowning of the queen. The telecast was unexpectedly good. This isn't a big operation at the local television station but even my limited knowledge of the calling told me that they were achieving all sorts of difficult feats. A nighttime parade is supposed to be one of the worst headaches for even the big stations, for reasons that have to do with depth of field for camera lenses and color shifts under the mixed illumination and other problems. It looked pretty good to me, and they threw in all sorts of artistic electronic wiping devices and superimpositions. The audio struck me as every bit as good as the networks achieve for their Thanksgiving Day parades coverage, and the networks prerecord a lot of their bands, too. The game show celebrity was clearly patronizing at first, then seemed to get genuinely interested as the limited supply of pretty local girls was skilfully spaced out where they would attract the most attention. He made only one minor goof, assuming that the pride and joy of the fire department in a nearby community was an antique fire truck because it was rolling behind a collection of ancient autos.

Now, I hadn't intended to watch much of this. Since the newspaper stopped running a general news story on the parade, I haven't gone to it. Over the years, I'd seen too many of these parades, had been in on too many of the planning sessions, had seen behind the scenes, and I'd come to feel for the event pretty much the same repugnance that a high school biology student is apt to develop for cats. But I turned it on so I wouldn't miss the complete catastrophe that I half-expected this difficult assignment to create for the small station's staff and I found myself unable to turn it off. A most unexpected thing happened. I was again watching the Halloween parade as I'd first seen it when I was maybe six or seven years old. As it appeared on the television screen, it was just as inaccessible as it had been the first time I stood along the sidewalk. I could see nothing behind the scenes from my chair in front of the television set, just as I'd been unable to move from that spot in the crowd. The illusion became even more uncanny when an accident of placement for the wide angle camera placement caused just enough of a lunchroom to be visible to make me imagine that this was really a different lunchroom torn down a dozen years ago. The parade used to come down West Washington Street instead of North Potomac Street and the screen showed just enough of the lunchroom and not enough of more distant buildings to give the impression that the parade was back on its old line of march. I'm finally learning a lesson, about how too much familiarity can spoil friendship for things as well as some people. It's just as well I didn't jump at that chance to interview Julie Andrews.

This was a quiet year from the standpoint of fandom. No book about fan history appeared to give egoboo, no trophy was awarded to snap me out of black moods, I didn't feel well enough to go to any cons, except the Oakcon if you count one so dominated by comics fans, and I didn't start to write those novels that I've been wanting to get out of my system. The only real novelty provided by the year with relation to fanac was the way my desk got out of control. All through the years, I'd succeeded in keeping it fairly clear. This year the inroads sickness made into spare time and the tremendous growth in fanzines were too much for me. The surface of the desk is hardly visible anywhere. Much of the piled-up stuff has been

there so long by now that I know I'll never respond to it in any way. But I haven't even had the time to sort out what can still be answered and to take the rest to the attic for additional fallout insulation. During one recent week of vacation, I managed to cut perhaps four inches from one of the stacks, by writing a lot of locs, and the evenings which I'm devoting to the stenciling of this Horizons will almost certainly cause that stack to bloat again to its former height. I managed to write a bit more for fanzines this year than I'd done in most recent years, on the theory that I ought to show appreciation somehow for the Hugo. But unfulfilled are some good intentions about more elaborate projects. I got perhaps 20,000 words written on that projected introduction to fandom, and was so dejected by what I found in it on re-reading selected parts that I didn't have the heart either to finish it or start over. My intention of supplying material for lots of fanzines by raiding back issues of Horizons for stories and articles aborted for lack of time to dig out those back issues. You'd think that I would at least take the ten seconds every three months necessary to put each new issue of Horizons in a stack containing all the back issues, but I've never done it.

And it was the last year in which I can conscientiously goof off on the fan history for the 1950's. If I'm reasonably intact after these physical problems reach some kind of denouement, I'll have to get to work on it in 1971, to have the manuscript ready when Advent wants it. It's going to be much more difficult to write than All Our Yesterdays, because the most frequent complaint made about the published volume is the brevity with which it treats each matter, and there is two or three times as much raw material to be covered in the following decades: three or four times the number of cons, the emergence of fandoms in numerous non-English speaking nations, the whole faanish movement, the rapid growth of subfandoms, and the general growth in the number of fans and clubs and fanzines. There is only one real bright spot in this dark picture. If I can get the manuscript written, I won't have any particular fears that the work will be wasted. I never quite believed that All Our Yesterdays would ever see print, knowing that nobody had ever tried to publish anything devoted to fandom in such elaborate book format. But it came out, and it has sold well enough to make it obvious that I can get the sequel published if I can get it written. Even if Advent should lose interest, I wouldn't hesitate to finance publication costs myself, in the knowledge that I'd be almost certain to get my money back through sales. I wouldn't have dared take the risk on All Our Yesterdays. Incidentally, I still don't know how many copies it has sold. All I've seen are gross income figures which I can't translate into sales through ignorance of what discounts dealers get and what proportion of copies are purchased direct from Advent. But it has more than paid expenses, the first edition seems to be nearly gone, and I'm sure that if Advent shouldn't want the sequel, I could make arrangements with one of the numerous small printing houses that handle small-edition projects like high school yearbooks and church histories. I've never understood why the vanity presses continue to make such a killing when the people who patronize them could do so much better by patronizing the legitimate firms that just publish and don't make lying promises about promoting.

I've done my best to pay more attention in 1970 to the professional manifestations of science fiction. There was hardly a day in the year when I didn't have a partially read science fiction paperback within reach and I must have gone through fifty or more novels

since January 1. From time to time, I even felt the impulse to read some prozines. But I've long known the folly of yielding to unreasonable impulses, so I was stern and firm against the momentary temptations. I regret having read most of those science fiction books. There isn't anything sensational about the nature of my occasional happiness with a book, because my tastes coincided pretty well with those of fandom in general. I thought *The Left Hand of Darkness* every bit as fine a novel as its two awards and most of its reviews indicate. Both *Hawkshill Station* and *To Live Again* struck me as not too far behind the LeGuin novel in quality. Several anthologies and collections gave a great deal of pleasure. But perhaps four out of every five of these reading experiences were mistakes that I kept making for no real reason, in full knowledge of the enormity of the odds against my finding exceptional merit in a book that the bulk of fandom had scorned or ignored. The closest that I came to a discovery in the year in that sense was Paul Taborski's *The Cleft*. Unless I just didn't notice a lot of reviews, this book didn't gain much fanzine attention when published about two years ago. I almost didn't read the copy I found in a second-hand store because the blurbs seemed to shout warnings that here is yet another of those hopeless efforts to describe people finding their only real pleasure in promiscuity. Actually, it's a delightful novel, not a significant one in any way, but a quite wise one when you read between the lines. It's the tale of how a crack appears in Manhattan Island and keeps growing and this geological fault is neatly counterpointed by various sorts of splits from reality and from the marriage partner to whom one should cleave and from humane forms of behavior. Thorne Smith had a good chance to write something like this if he'd lived a few more years and decided to write a novel whose plot wasn't improvised as he went along. I also read during the year an older novel that wasn't snubbed by fanzines when it appeared but doesn't receive as much mention as it should when articles refer to big, satirical novels about the near future: *Limbo*. I wish desperately that Kubrick would translate this book into a film.

The supply of second-hand reading matter has been gradually improving in Hagerstown. This year didn't offer the climactic experience of the AAUW book sale, which occurs only every 18th month and brings out real treasures. But a high school class held a used book sale to raise funds and somehow liberated a lot of unused books from the nearby Doubleday plant, and that event put a lot of recent fantasy hardcovers into my attic for minor pittance. A downtown hole in the wall shop that used to stick quite closely to antiques has been gradually converting to used reading matter, and this compensated for the fact that the big used magazine emporium, *The Odd Ball Shop*, was open only a few days in the entire year. This is quite a mysterious enterprise, operated by people from the Washington area. It remains closed for six or eight months at a time, opens for a week or two, shuts up again, and never advertises so you can get in only by walking past once or twice a week. Prices are stupendously high on much of the stock, such as a flat \$1 for any used textbook, no matter how old and battered it may be, but if you look you can find some bargains here and there.

This was the year in which the video tape recorder seems to have finally begun to enter the status of something people are using as a hobby. I've heard about only one instance of fannish utilization, by members of the NESFA. But I see one in operation in Hag-

erstown once in a while. A 4-H club was using one to help the kids improve their delivery for an oratory contest and school teachers were experimenting with one at a local high school; where only the pans from one speaker to another betrayed the fact that this was being done with only one handheld camera, no auxiliary lighting, and no editing. I haven't seen any color work with these amateur machines yet but the black and white pictures seem to be excellent, as clear as you usually get on reception of a local television station. I know I'm going to want one eventually, but I hope to wait another year or two to see if the equipment is miniaturized even more. It would be quite a burden for me to lug around as I get older, in its present size and weight. The machines I've seen in Hagerstown are the open reel type, but apparently there are good possibilities in store. Ampex has announced a cartridge-type home video recorder that can run on flashlight batteries and appears to be only slightly larger than a good quality cassette tape recorder, yet offers up to a half-hour of playing time per cartridge.

My reawakened interest in movies thrived splendidly during the year that is now concluding. I saw quite a few real live movies, in addition to wasting entirely too many hours enthralled by old ones on television when I might have been doing more useful things like writing locs. But my pleasure in going to the movies in theaters was muted a trifle by the probability that those theaters may not be there much longer. Hagerstown has three in its downtown section, that have been slowly losing the fight for patronage against the drive-ins. I can't bear drive-in movies, because of my hatred of automobiles. Now two back-to-back theaters have opened on an indoor basis nextdoor to one of the drive-ins a few miles north of town, and I fear that this competition will do in the downtown theaters that are among the few surviving links to old days in Hagerstown. (Two of the three are the ornate, elaborate movie places that made an effort to be elegant; the third is quite plain and spartan inside but looks quite fancy from the outside.)

Tell Them Willie Boy Was Here was probably the best of the new movies I saw this year. There were moments when its parallel to today's situation was stated too literally even though the dullest and sleepest spectator could have guessed the connection with less dialog concerning it. I really doubt that the heroine would have kept that comb within reach and used it so frequently among all her problems. But they were small blotches on an otherwise splendid little tragedy with some contrasting moments of comedy that seemed to accentuate the grim background exactly as Shakespeare used to do it. M*A*S*H had received so much praise that I was rather belligerent in attitude to it. I ended up by respecting it as a good nose-thumbing at a lot of things that are held near and dear when they really shouldn't be. The football game near the end was a complete disaster, as far as the overall effect was concerned: it seemed too much like a steal from John Goldfarb, Please Come Home, and served to prove only that even football isn't quite as productive of bringing out the worst in people as war is. Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice suffered from the purely personal fact that I get so absorbed in Natalie Wood that I can't be bothered with paying much attention to anything else in a film which includes her. As far as I could judge, it was a reasonably adult movie until the incredible copout of the denouement. Not even the final scene, which seems to say that loving couples are a good thing even though they're sometimes not mixed between the sexes, could make me forget the milktoastish way

the bed quartet scene ended. But far better than any of these or the other movies I saw in theaters this year was a short subject that couldn't have lasted more than eight or ten minutes. It was a revival of Walt Disney's Brave Little Tailor. It made me realize all over again what a stupendous genius Disney was in the medium, and how consistently and completely all his imitators and successors have failed to approximate the level which he attained. Even the colors are somehow richer and more varied in a cartoon from Disney's greatest years. There is a genuine plot with beginning, development and final climax, not just a series of chase scenes or variations on one character bopping another physically. The crowd scenes and the way the rooms are furnished contain a marvelous wealth of detail and originality. I don't know what's keeping me out of Disney fandom, unless it's the knowledge that it's a terribly expensive fandom to take part in.

For that matter, so many publications reach me from the Other Fandoms that I feel myself constantly drawn in many directions at once, and this isn't good for a person who is already under various other strains. I'm only on the periphery of mystery story fandom, because I receive only the JDM Bibliophile and rarely buy books by anyone in this general field except MacDonald. But I like the individuals whom I've encountered in mystery fandom and can easily imagine myself switching over to it if science fiction fandom should become too pro-centered or drug-oriented or otherwise uncongenial. As mentioned some pages earlier, old radio fandom is another temptation. Then there's Zane Grey fandom, to which I'm exposed pretty regularly by the fact that its founder lives only a half-dozen miles away. I can enjoy Grey as some people enjoy Burroughs, I can't bear to read ERB just as many people find Grey unreadable, and as long as everyone remembers that there are tastes which depend to large extent on early literary experiences, nobody should feel scornful toward anyone else. Still, it's fun when Grey fandom and Burroughs fandom get into big arguments over which writer is better known to the general public or sold the most books. There even seems to be a Natalie Wood fandom somewhere on the outskirts of the only true fandom, if I may judge by a little advertisement in a recent issue of the Dallascon Bulletin. I also have been supplying jokes to a cave fanzine and have received a few rock music fanzines and people keep mistaking me as a superannuated comics fan.

Meanwhile my home town isn't as prosperous as fandom. Hagerstown turned out to have fewer people in this year's census than it possessed a decade earlier and the county as a whole showed a much smaller population than most experts had estimated. People are getting out of Hagerstown to avoid city taxes, and some of them are not stopping in the nearby countryside but moving on to nearby surrounding states where they can commute to work and enjoy certain tax advantages. Besides, I get the impression that Hagerstown itself is slowly being dismantled and closed down. Several blocks vanished a few years back for grade crossing elimination. Dozens of houses have been torn down in more recent years for slum clearance purposes. Quite large downtown buildings in fair condition have been razed to create parking lots. When a new office building is erected, it is customary to tear down three office buildings to make room for it. The city bus service was discontinued during the year, Western Union cut back on its weekend operations, restaurants and drug stores reduced their hours of activity in many neighborhoods, and nothing in the city seems to be really thriving except its hospital and schools.

It's uncanny to take a walk after dark in Hagerstown nowadays: almost nobody but a few bums and wandering juveniles is on the sidewalks, hardly any business establishments are open or even have a display window illuminated, and even the street lights that always symbolized the business section are gone. The city's engineers have all sorts of statistics to prove that the new mercury vapor lights spaced a hundred feet or so apart actually provide better illumination than the old incandescents did on poles every ten feet, but my eyes must filter out the rays in which the new illumination is richest because I can't recognize people when I finally pass a few after dark as I once could do. The most preposterous thing about all this is the remarkable series of adventures befalling the biggest building in downtown Hagerstown, the large hotel in the town square. It was sold at public auction three or four times in the course of the year because of various financial problems, each time bringing less and less. It's true that there are a lot of mortgages and encumbrances against it awaiting the purchaser, but it still seems odd when nobody will offer more than \$30,000 or so for an eight-story hotel with business offices at the bottom and television studios on top. To give you some idea, one of R. U. Darby's refurbished railroad passenger cars was put up as security for a loan involving the hotel at one time during the course of the year. Darby himself, the man who offered real mules and canned battle smoke for his Civil War promotions, the man who sold Jackie Gleason an old passenger car, the man who won a gunbattle with a big city thug in downtown Hagerstown, the man who got even deeper in debt than anyone had previously succeeded in going in Hagerstown, Darby disappeared one sunshiny day. There were so many clues scattered around his offices that people have a sneaking suspicion that it was an indictment for fraud rather than another thug who caused him to vanish. If anyone with a little beard and a steely glint in his eye begins to renovate old passenger cars in your city, you'd make a lot of creditors in Hagerstown happy by dropping a postcard to the local constabulary.

My neighborhood is deteriorating gently, almost imperceptibly. This month several people in my block will decide it's easier to leave the garbage cans sit on the sidewalks all the time, instead of carry them to and from the back porch on collection days. Next month the same people will begin to put their garbage in pasteboard boxes instead of in metal tins. The little fenced-in patch of land at the back of my yard is again cluttered with a load of junk someone dumped there at dark of night and I'm contributing to the general disintegration of Summit Avenue civilization by letting it stay there, on the subterfuge that I'm not in physical condition to wrestle the gate open into this enclave and then lug the stuff a half-block up my sloping yard onto the sidewalk on a collection day. I'm in no shape to pack and move even if I could get up enough energy to sell this house and buy another in a better atmosphere. I have no idea what the house would bring today, but the assessment on it hasn't been raised for more than a decade, which indicates either a failure of property prices to inch upward in this area as they have done in most parts of the county, or a decision by someone that there's no point in stirring up the press. The people who live in this area are likeable enough but I can't get used to the new custom of seeing a police car or sheriff's vehicle stopping somewhere in the block two or three nights a week. The riots that hit Hagerstown this summer didn't get within six blocks of my home. But if they

resume next summer, this block could be vulnerable. It's the same street with a different name that runs through the black community, and if rioting spills out of its incubating blocks, there's a clear, direct route to this block which might be just far enough from the bulk of the policemen to be considered a good place to raise a ruckus. I don't mean to insinuate that Hagerstown's racial problem is like the situation in many metropolitan and deep south cities. The Negroes in Hagerstown make up only five per cent of the total population. Unless very large numbers of outsiders should be imported, the real danger is that a few blacks on the rampage might infuriate so many whites that a real pogrom might ensue with disastrous effects to the nation and world as a symbol of what poor white trash will do if it has the safety of numbers. Authorities handled the situation very well last summer, simply sealing off the area to prevent people from hustling down there and trying to help the policemen. But it would take only a small effort for a bigot to start something that could get completely out of hand: just driving through certain parts of town with a public address system on his car and urging everyone to hustle down and put those folks in their place. That's the nightmarish possibility, because I'd estimate that one out of every three white males in Hagerstown would be delighted to shoot, beat and burn in the spirit of the good old lynch days of his grandpappy.

I must hastily add that I've done my part toward the greater dilapidation of Summit Avenue. The house has gone unpainted for yet another year. In the spring I decided to wait until fall when I could arrange to have the house painted during a week of vacation, as a safeguard for the contents of the house. Then the fall came and I find the physical problems involved in getting up in the morning entirely too great for engaging painters; I'd have to rise and shine at 3 a.m. to be completely able to withstand the rigors of their 9 a.m. arrival on the job. So I can only hope that nothing gives way as a result of rot or termites over the winter. There's a slow leak into the attic when the wind is right and the raindrops are a certain dimension but it falls onto one of the rare unoccupied spots and the people who inspected the roof never submitted a report so it must not be in too bad condition. Still, some missing slate helps to reinforce the general image of the neighborhood. At this time of year, my uncleaned lawn also provides another realistic detail, but all those autumn leaves are there for a purpose. It might not be scientific to think so, but I believe in the value of autumn leaves as a lawn builder. I leave them there all winter long, removing only enough to enable the soil to get enough air and rain, and in the summer my lawn is so green it almost hurts the eyes. The lady next door insists that it's the accident of someone having used a high grade seed when the house was constructed, but she might be jealous for inability to know the secret of keeping the lawn healthy. Next fall, I may lie down in a large pile of autumn leaves and stay under it all winter, in the hope of finding their rotting byproducts equally good for human health.

I continue to drive the same car, which I've now had for eight and a half years. A rust spot is quite alarming on one side, but even if it gets rusted completely through there won't be any bad effect on its operations in that particular spot, so I'm not having it tended to. As usual, I'm unable to comprehend the workings of mechanical devices, particularly with respect to their repair. During 1970, there was one occasion when the car wouldn't start and another occasion when it wouldn't stop. It cost me a dollar to have repairs made

on the day it wouldn't start: the trouble proved to be a dirty contact on the switching mechanism activated when you move the hydraulic drive dingus from drive to neutral. I paid \$2.25 to find out why my brakes had deserted me as I was approaching a very busy intersection at a moment when the light was extremely red, but this larger sum is partially explainable by the fact that I had to make two trips to the service station to have the brakes attended to: the first time, they thought it was insufficient brake fluid, and when I had another Happening after driving away with newly restored brake fluid level, I returned and left the car there overnight and the next day they informed me that the brakes had needed adjustments, and were tightlipped about what they'd done, apparently fearing that some rival would offer a better price than their \$1.25 for making this adjustment. In view of this, I can't comprehend why it should be so inexpensive when a vehicle won't perform one of the two functions that are absolutely essential in any well-ordered scheme of transportation, and yet I must pay much larger sums for work that is comparatively frilly, and results in no noticeable difference in how the car operates, like oil changes and antifreeze and grease jobs. My present intention is to try to drive the car another two or three years and then get out of driving altogether. I'm convinced that the private auto for non-essential purposes is doomed, that we'll have gasoline rationing in another five years, unless the electric auto manages to catch on. I feel a sentimental preference for the steamer, but nobody has succeeded yet in explaining to me how a steam auto could be ready for instant use at any time.

The record collection continued to grow at a modest rate during the year. The Seraphim reissue series destroyed any illusions I might have had about owning enough records already. I've been trying to acquire most of these reissues, in the belief that they'll go overnight just as the Camdens did, even in the case of records that largely duplicate stuff that I own on 78 rpm discs. They're cheap and it's so much easier to put on one lp than a half-dozen heavy shellac discs. During the year I also completed my collection of every release in the Louisville Orchestra series of contemporary and American works. It wasn't a very good year for finding old 78 rpm albums. The only real stroke of luck caught me at a second-hand store without transportation, so I was limited to as many albums as I could carry away on two feet. When the opportunity came to return, the item that I'd been forced to leave behind for lack of muscle, the enormous album containing the old Stokowski Gurrelieder, was gone. It would have cost me only a quarter. It wouldn't have done at all to pay for it and ask the clerk to put it behind the counter until I came back, because clerks in all second-hand stores are convinced that many things in their keeping have enormous worth if they only knew real values, and a customer who seems so anxious for something that he'll pay now and call later is automatically identified as a person who knows what things are worth and therefore should be charged ten times the normal fee for anything he buys because he's sure to sell it immediately at a twenty-times profit anyway. It shouldn't be necessary for me to express my opinion of the quadriphonic recording proposal, the kind that provides four channels of sound which are supposed to give you the complete illusion of being in the concert hall with speakers behind you as well as in front of you. I yielded to stereo, not because I think stereo records sound very good, but because they sound even worse monophonically and the mono record seems to be completely dead. But I am not going to have

any speakers tricking me behind my back. I don't want the concert hall illusion. I want to continue to be aware of the fact that I'm in a room of my house, for much the same reasons as I would rather use caffeine than LSD when I feel in the mood for a drug. One thing which I approve heartily is the Dolby noise reduction technique. This strikes me as the most important advance in the recording arts since the development of electric recording: slightly more important than the lp disc, infinitely more meaningful than stereo. I have stereo records which satisfy my ear almost as much as good monaural records, thanks to the Dolby reduction in the hiss and other background sounds that were magnified when stereo began to cause the stylus to produce impulses through movement in more than one plane. As you might imagine, neither the recording industry nor the music magazines have gotten themselves particularly worked up over the Dolby technique, because its benefits come to the owner of record-playing equipment and tape playback machines with no need to scrap most of the stuff he already owns and purchase replacements, and a simplified form of the Dolby electronics can even be added at a moderate cost to any good tape recorder for obtaining its benefit in making tapes. Incidentally, it is now ten years since I last sorted out my records into good order: by composer alphabetically in the case of one-composer discs, by category and by performer alphabetically for most of the other records. Those that I put into order at that time are still in apple-pie array but nothing acquired since is in any particular place and it's becoming a trifle hard by now to remember where a given disc is. There's something else to catch up on while recuperating from leprosy or fallen amputations.

Photography as a hobby stopped dead during 1970. The Contax whose strap busted as 1969 was ending still isn't back in shape. I got the case fixed, shot a roll of film to make sure there was more wrong with it than the bent lens flange, but I have done nothing about getting the camera repaired. The Voigtlander served on a few occasions when I felt absolutely compelled to take a few pictures. I almost got back into the movie-making habit, running half a roll of Kodachrome to welcome the first hints of spring, but still haven't shot off the other half of that roll. Lack of time, later bad health and the ever-present association of the camera with the job done me in. Curiously, the job and the camera are hardly associated any longer by now. The newspapers have virtually stopped using local pictures, except when it's inevitable.

One more of my dwindling stock of relatives died in the course of the year. That leaves me with one grandmother, one cousin, one aunt and one uncle in Hagerstown, and a small assortment of aunts, uncles and cousins scattered elsewhere throughout the land. My grandmother seemed to gain her second wind as she reached her 97th birthday, and now behaves considerably more spry than at any time in recent years. She occasionally thinks wistfully how nice it would be to be 85 again, and finally has begun to admit that she is growing a trifle deaf, when she sees pictures and glasses vibrating from the turbulence set up when conversation around her is kept loud enough for her to hear. Otherwise, she's amazing, continues to predict her imminent demise just as she's done almost daily since she reached her late 60's, and would be totally happy if I would only go over to Germany and see how the rest of the family over there is doing. She claims that I should get a ticket for Hasslecastle, which I've tentatively identified as Kassel in Hesse unless it's Hesse in Kassel; I'm not much stronger on European geography than she is. She would also

like for me to spend a few days in New York City, inquiring at all the jewelers' about the health and welfare of a member of one branch of her family who hasn't been heard from since he went to work for a jeweler somewhere in that metropolis in 1904. On the whole, I think I'd get along much better on the quest in Germany, even though nobody has heard from the relatives in Europe since about 1880.

I should have mentioned while lamenting the possible demise of downtown theaters another unhappy entertainment trend during the year that bothered me a great deal. It was the near-epidemic spread of "two-way radio" over the dial during the evening hours. KMOX, which used to give me so much pleasure when the Heaviside Layer made its nightly move, is now almost unlistenable because so much of its evening programming is turned over to these abominable hours of people telephoning the station and talking briefly with an announcer. I suppose some people enjoy this for the same reasons that some persons read letters to the editor. But radio-by-telephone or newspaper letter sections are equally overwhelmed by cranks and pressure group representatives, so there's no real hope of getting insight into how the majority of the public feels. The letter section occupies only a small portion of newspapers and I never read newspapers anyway, but a station that goes for this kind of programming simply devastates everything else it used to offer for one-fourth or one-third of its entire broadcasting schedule. The announcer is almost always one of those unbearable individuals who pretends to be neither polite nor insulting, the people who call in never have anything remotely resembling an idea, there is frequently all sorts of trying cases out of court by anonymous accusers and a judge who hasn't heard both sides, and even if the miracle occurs and someone articulate calls in with a real thought in his head, there's never enough time for him to express it fully before he's cut off so the next guy can have his turn. I try to be fair about it, and listen a couple of hours the first time this blight strikes another station, and I've never found exceptions to all these rules. I've actually found myself tuning occasionally to the top 40 stations when there seems no other escape route on the dial. For something else is afflicting radio reception in Hagerstown. The Cuban stations are gradually getting stronger, unless we've been in a long period of lots of freak reception. Sometimes for a week on end they blanket the lower frequency part of the dial. I don't know if they're really upping their power or if Castro is unobservedly navigating his island close enough to the mainland to qualify for Department of Health, Education and Welfare benefits, but something is causing Spanish announcing and music to drown out a lot of nearby stations. By the year's end, I've been having recourse to WSM, the Grand Old Opry station in Nashville. It has some limitations, but where else can you hear songs like "Thank God and Goodbye You're Gone"? Or get a glimpse of country music fandom in its most extreme form? At 2 a.m. the other night, for instance, the announcer was talking about Grandma Potter, who was in the hospital. He guessed that she must have something wrong with her, else she wouldn't be in the hospital, but he knew she'd be listening and so he played one of her favorite songs. I didn't write down the title, but it might have been "I Got a Rose Between My Toes Running Through the Garden of Love to You, Dear". I thought about the unification that must exist in a community where a clear channel radio station played country music at that hour and the hospital permitted patients to listen to it at the same hour and I decided that the year wasn't a total loss, after all.

The Worst of Martin

After Many a Year....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1064th Mailing.....

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

Aithem waluit perith wahn
Hilder mayem wold enathh
Horif perth in tothick xem
Walla yee in perinem.

Now, most of you have been right there. We know the "Mayem wold" would never "walla yee in". The inference is ridiculous.

(from the summer, 1953, issue of Grotesque, by Edgar Allan Martin)

Music, My Rampart

It's been hard, hard, to read all these long reviews and discussions of rock records in today's fanzines and restrain myself from writing the same sort of things about the kind of music with which I'm most familiar. Restraint has been advisable because it's quite obvious that hardly any of today's younger fans are as interested in the kind of music I like best. Someone really should legislate a name for this kind of music, incidentally. "Longhair music" would be a neat description for it, in view of the way tonsorial fashions are going. But "noncommercial music" might be the most accurate definition in the light of current developments in the record and concert industries.

But the more petrified members of FAPA might feel a sliver-sized amount of interest in non-rock music and might possibly pardon this method of filling a few stencils. The only criterion for what follows is: were these records among those I played during my last week of vacation, when I wasn't sure whether an operation was necessary immediately?

Here's the rather elderly Angel lps of Bellini's *I Puritani*. I imagine that if Bellini were living today, he would be accused of following the fashion set by *Lady in the Dark* and several other psychological musicals, because he was so fond of heroines who have a screw either loose or missing altogether. Bellini loved to write music for sopranos who are obsessed by a deathwish or walk in their sleep or split off from reality, every time the pressure of their surroundings becomes too intense. *Norma* used to be my favorite among the Bellini operas I know, but recently *Puritani* has come to mean more to me, as I grow older and begin to feel frightened rather than excited by the barbaric things in *Norma*. Italian librettists often based their plots on worlds of if, circumstances which resemble superficially the world we know but differ from it in some key manner without a scientific or metaphysical explanation. The result has ranged all the way from an Elizabeth I of England who commits suicide when peeved by an unhappy love affair to *Manon Lescaut* dying of thirst in the desert "near New Orleans". *Puritani* shares this relationship to fantasy fiction, and the more literally minded critics get all worked up over such things as the way a bunch of Cromwell's followers start the day by singing a fully harmonized hymn with organ accompaniment. But we fans with cosmic minds can grasp the insignificance of such carpings. This recording contains lots of sections where the singing so perfectly fits the music that I feel impelled to squirm, if nobody is looking. There's the magnificent long duet for bass and baritone that takes up most of the fifth side. All I used to know of it was the concluding three or four minutes, *Suoni la tromba*, on an ancient acoustical Victor Red Seal, and the discovery of what leads up to this was one of the great moments in my career of music-listening. The one weak spot on this recording is the singing of Giuseppe di Stefano, the tenor, whose style is simply wrong for the music. Bellini obviously was writing for the kind of bel canto singing that was based on the legato and subtleties that the castrati had possessed. I don't think that any tenor has ever lived who could sing Arturo's entrance passages the way Stefano tries to sing them, without sounding as close to gasping as this tenor does by the time he has launched into the second stanza. And if the great upward sweep of the voice and tension on Arturo's "*teco allato potro morir*" in the last scene sounds here like the very embodiment of a genuine

desire to die at a loved one's side, I can only dream of how it might have sounded more than a century ago when the castrati were dying out but teachers and singers could still remember their technique and pattern their full-sexed voices after them. I can even imagine a television production of I Puritani or a movie based on it making a favorable impression on the public. Despite its flaws, the libretto does produce some genuinely dramatic moments. There's something basically genuine in the first act when the guileless heroine asks someone she has just encountered to try on her bridal veil and to help her fix her hairdo, ignorant that the stranger is a condemned queen awaiting her death, and the bass-baritone duet mentioned earlier develops the characters quite well by some probing into the psychology of why the villain behaved as he did when he decided to let that queen escape in the bridal disguise she'd inadvertently assumed. I've never seen a vocal score of this opera, and even if I saw one I still wouldn't necessarily know if my instinct is correct when it tells me that something important has been dropped from the very end of this recording. Just at the moment when all seems lost, permanently, including the heroine's reason and the hero's life, a messenger rushes up with news that the war is over and a general pardon has been granted to the defeated, and suddenly the opera is over after the briefest equivalents of hurrah. It was so customary for Italian operas of that day to wind up with something brilliant and I feel certain that there was a tenor-soprano duet or something similar that prevented the conclusion from sounding like something cut to fit the pages available to a paperback book's budget.

I don't know if John McCormack ever sang in Puritani, but he probably would have come closest of any 20th century singer to doing it as I imagine it should be done. I own five or six McCormack lps and perhaps fifty of his 78 rpm discs. If I had to give up all but one of them, I might hang onto LCT 1036, which was in the Victor catalog for a while during the early part of the lp era. It is a pioneering record, in a sense, because it contains barely thirty minutes of music, just about the amount that the industry has settled upon in more recent years as suitable for its popular music releases. But Victor's unpredictable engineers seem to have permitted their attention to wander from the task at hand when they were dubbing the old recordings for this lp version. They forgot to filter out all the upper frequencies in order to get a one decibel reduction in the surface noise and their reverberation devices seem to have suffered a power failure which prevented the voice from sounding as if it came from an amusement park's hall of echoes. What we get is just about what you can hear on an unworn 78 McCormack disc, and in one selection, O'Brien's The Fairy Tree, something more is offered, an uncannily real-sounding reproduction of the human voice that is more convincing, less recorded-sounding than almost any recording made yesterday. Maybe they were lucky enough to find an unused master, since this was one of the McCormack records that wasn't produced in such vast quantities. This particular lp was a big news event to McCormack fandom when first released, because one item on it had not been commercially released in the 78 era. McCormack was the last imaginable candidate for the role of Wagnerian heldentenor, but he recorded late in life a couple of pages from the second act of Tristan. It was a shrewd way to satisfy whatever whim impelled him to record Wagner because it is quiet music. But it makes you wonder what might have happened if McCormack had been born a generation later and could have utilized the miking techniques that have enabled other

singers with medium-sized voices and very limited acting abilities to have themselves included in complete recorded versions of operas through miking techniques. This record contains a couple of odd foreshadowings of procedures that have become notorious in more recent years under somewhat different circumstances. We read today a lot about the evils of song-plugging and about the way a new song's fate depends on the whim of a singer. I suspect that McCormack did with completely pure intentions the first fully effective job of plugging a song so well that two whole continents became wild over it. Back in 1907, McCormack was hunting for a song that he could make distinctively his own. He tried out a manuscript in his rooming house, just as great musicians try out compositions when Hollywood depicts it on the screen, and liked it very much. It was I Hear You Calling Me, which a few people in FAPA may have never heard of, a song that everyone, concert artist, church soloist, talented young daughters, lovesick swains, but everybody sang incessantly in recitals and concerts and musicals and parties and parlors for the next thirty or forty years until most people stopped making music themselves. You can get some idea of how successful McCormack was with it by the fact that he was forced to record it five times. Before tape, you see, extreme popularity of a recording invariably doomed that particular recording to become barren eventually, because it wore out under the strain of begetting copies; every 78 rpm record had been indirectly pressed from the original master recording, after a couple of intermediate generations. The other foreshadowing is in the McCormack recording of Adeste Fideles, also included on this lp. We've had a scandal over a popular singer's changes in the accepted melody of The Star-Spangled Banner and we've had Barbra Streisand proclaimed as a genius for making alterations in the second verse of Silent Night's melody. But here's John McCormack, almost fifty years ago, introducing some passing notes and other small variations into the tune of one of the most familiar of Christmas carols, the second time through.

We hear a lot nowadays about the way rock music is reflecting revolutionary sentiments. But it's quite hard to find a rock lp so singlemindedly devoted to this procedure as the opera, Andrea Chenier. I have two recordings of it, and would welcome advice on how I might insert Renata Tebaldi into the Seraphim records or sneak Gigli into the Cetra set. It was the Cetra discs that I played during my suspense because nothing in the Gigli-Seraphim set is quite as great as the bristling, wild defiance that she puts into her final "Son io!" as the jailer calls her to the guillotine. The Metropolitan Opera Company has done many odd things during its history, but the year it chose this opera for opening night must have been the weirdest. I hope that none of the upper crust who gathered for that social event really listened to the things that are sung in the opera, from the long opening denunciation of the Establishment by Gerard to the denouement in which it becomes obvious that within every rebel is concealed the beginning of a decadent old conservative. I wasn't around for the French Revolution, so I'm only guessing, but I get the impression that this opera catches its tumult even better than A Tale of Two Cities. You must be much more attentive to catch the important little things in the opera: the countess' amazement at the demonstration against her when she even bought herself a special gown for almsgiving, or the heroine's laconic explanation of how she survived when so many other aristocrats perished: her maid sold herself to assure her survival. Gerard's big aria sounds like

the dialog that used to be flashed on the screen in silent movies, when read in the translation that accompanies the Cetra set. But I can assure you that the music makes the Italian equivalent sound like a very significant message, as the lackey who became a big shot in the revolution realizes what is happening to him because he is still subject to human failings: "Once I enjoyed hatred, vengeance, in my alleged purity, innocence, strength. A giant I thought me. I am a servant. I've only changed masters. A servant, obeying violent passion. Ah, worse! I kill and tremble. And as I kill, I weep. I was first to hear revolution's cry throughout the world, and united to it my own. And now my faith is lost, and dreams. How glorious once was my path. Restore conscience to the hearts of men! Consolation for the suffering, the beaten! Create a worldly Eden! Change men into gods, and love all humankind in one embrace! Now I renounce this holy creed. Hatred fills my heart and love it was that altered my being."

Unfortunately, I bought my copy of Bernstein's recording of the Ives Second Symphony before Columbia packaged it with a seven-inch lp on which the conductor talks about the music. If anyone out there has that bonus disc and could dub it for me on tape, I'd be eternally grateful, assuming that I survive long enough for the adverb not to be exaggerated. This was my first real acquaintance with Ives' music and I still prefer it to all the other Ives works that I've since acquired on discs. It seems to be generally accepted now that Ives was the one all-out genius among American composers, and it might be significant that he was almost the only major American composer who was not somehow tied up with duties at a university or conservatory. It could be coincidence or it could be a demonstration that a vital something goes out of a potential genius when he starts the lecturing and administering and thinking that the academic life entails. A lot of American composers have done things so far-out that even Ives would have been shocked or uncomprehending, but their pioneering always smacks somehow of too much intelligence at work. You can't imagine one of the professors of music, no matter how talented, writing a symphony that starts with a transcription of an organ piece composed during his youth, proceeds with a sonata form movement into which a familiar gospel song and a college tune are neatly fitted, then offers two slow movements, one right after the other, one of them borrowed from another early organ work, and ends with a fast movement in which a tune that has been trying and trying all through the symphony to emerge finally blares forth successfully: Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean. It works. All this seems as genuinely American to me as Thomas Wolfe's novels, and not just because I recognize some of the borrowed materials; in fact, when you remember that the borrowings include fragments from some very famous German symphonies, you must look for other explanations of the native tang of the music. I still can't understand after many hearings why the final dissonance is so timid and quick to vanish, after the boldness with which Bernstein has handled everything up to then, but maybe those engineers were busy again. I know all about the pathos of Mozart dying while so young and Beethoven growing deaf and Schumann so mad he imagined angels dictating melodies to him, but I still feel that the most touching thing in the history of music is the 77-year-old Ives listening to the music he had composed fifty years before on his maid's little radio in the kitchen because he couldn't bring himself to go to the first performance in Carnegie Hall.

It shouldn't be any secret by now that Vienna is the golden city

in my imagination. Up to now, I haven't gotten closer to the city itself than the Chesapeake Bay or possibly the Staten Island Ferry. But nobody could have ever respected Samarkand half as much as I cherish Vienna. Quite possibly, my mental image of the city bears some influences of diverse elements like the back lot of Twentieth Century Fox, little houses that used to stand along the model railroad tracks under my Christmas tree, bad sketches by 19th century illustrators, and the Austria pages of my old postage stamp collection. But it's the music associated with Vienna that really gets me excited and fires that imagination. It can inspire me to do things that would be utterly beyond my powers under other circumstances. For instance, I once paid a quarter at a second-hand store for a 10-inch lp of music performed in typical Viennese style. When I tried to play it, the disc refused to track at any stylus pressure that I dared risk with my cartridge. But that record had something related to Vienna in its grooves and the imperative need to hear it caused some sort of instinctive mental operations to impel me to hook up the tape recorder, then play the record at the rarely used 16 rpm speed on my Thorens while recording it at 3 3/4 ips. It tracked all right under the milder velocities created by the slower revolution of the platter and then I played back the tape as often as I liked at 7 1/2 ips and wondered why I can't be resourceful when I really need to be. In any event, I can play without subterfuges a wonderful Erich Kunz disc, "Vienna, City of My Dreams". This is not one of his famous series of recordings for Vanguard, but a solitary Kapp release. It's schmaltz to be sure but I love it. "Dort, wo ich glücklich und selig bin" emerges from the first song and I immediately seize it as a direct message to the effect that Vienna is the only place where I would really be happy. I listen to Kunz singing "Mei' Mutterl war a Weanerl" and I nod knowingly and approvingly at the Viennese dialect and his thick Viennese accent as if I really had any way of knowing that this is the authentic sound of how the ordinary folk talk in Wien when they aren't trying to sound formal and educated. "Im Prater blühen wieder die Bäume", Kunz sings, and instantly I smell the blossoms and taste the beverages and pastries mit Schlag and right down the street walks a girl looking exactly as Maria Schell did a dozen years ago. I think of all the snide articles you read in this country about Austria, the only nation that even the Russians decided they didn't want after they had it, and instead I think how deprived the United States is because it doesn't have someone like Kunz, who is as famous as an opera singer as a singer of light music and as a folk song specialist. Some of the songs on this record first became known to me in a tiny album of two 10-inch 78s as sung by Lotte Lehmann. But even her great art couldn't overcome the handicap of an accompaniment which consisted of one piano too distantly miked. Kunz has the Wiener Schrammeln and the Wiener Volksoper Orchestra (for the operetta selections) and that kind of accompaniment is a must in this kind of music. People tell me that I'm crazy not to jump on a plane and visit a city that fascinates me so strongly. But it's just as well that I've waited. I enjoy it this way, and maybe if I last a few more years, my eyesight and hearing will deteriorate a little more and when I eventually do get there, the reality will be subdued and blurred enough for my imagination to fill in the ideal Vienna to supplement what I can see of the real city. I don't really want to hear its auto horns or see its modern apartment buildings too clearly.