

I started reading the prozines in 1933. So I can't escape the feeling that this is one of their stories, because I must identify this as the August, 1979, issue of Horizons. It's also volume 40, number 4, FAPA number 153, and whole number 158. Horizons is typed on acoustic typewriter by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A. The Coulsons do the mimeographing.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: It's sad to think that Harry Andruschak won't continue as official editor. I've suggested by letter an effort to find someone else in his general area to take over, so he can help out in ways that don't require the purchase of gasoline. I wonder if some of the turmoil over the egoboo poll would subside if one basic change were made in reporting the outcome: stop the time-honored custom of totalling up each member's points in each category to obtain an overall winner. This omission would reduce the impression that the poll is so all-fired important. The change would also end any suspicion that this or that category was included or skipped in a particular year to improve someone's chances of becoming overall champion or vice versa. Meanwhile, I don't see why a new member who hasn't seen all four mailings in a year should consider himself unqualified to vote. Freshness of memory causes stuff distributed in a year's last two or three mailings to influence long-time members the most anyway. Ayewonder: The narrative of Leigh's film debut seemed strange in a fanzine. That's no criticism of its quality, which is high, or its appropriateness, which is total, but rather a reflection of the way I've read prose very much like this so often in books about the beginnings of the career of so many superstars of the movies. I'm not sure if I hope Leigh goes on to the fame that caused those books to be written, because not many individuals can survive the strain of stardom without a lot of ill effects. The copyright article should have been about ten times as long, and more specific in the effect of the new copyright law on specific habits of fans. For instance: is the custom of noting in a fanzine that all rights revert to contributors valid under the new law? If it is, does this mean that anyone who wants to reprint that fanzine fifty years from now must track down every contributor or their heirs? Is it possible for a fan to take legal action against another fan for infringement of commonlaw copyright, if they've had a fight and one of them has published a portion of a loc in his latest issue? Does commonlaw copyright cover apa mailings? Can the Star Trek people really enforce their efforts to prevent fans from writing new stories about the series' characters without permission? There are dozens of other fannish situations that should be clarified for copyright purposes. Horizons: The start of the first complete paragraph on page 3287 makes even less sense than the minimal amount normally associated with my FAPazine. Substitute "rock" for "recorded" in its second sentence, to improve things a trifle. Synapse: Speer speaks of the Rosenblums in the present tense, but J. Michael is dead. Read "The Way the Future Was" by Frederik Pohl to learn as much as anyone could possibly want to know about the Futurians, including Judith Merrill's inclusion among them. They must show a different set of The Waltons episodes in Speer's parallel universe. I have a recording by Nora Bayes of "When You're In, You're In, in Indiana"

which mentions quite a few prominent men of its time, but not Errol Flynn. ' ' Speer is inconsistent if he doesn't nitpick in personal encounters in Albuquerque as he does in FAPA. He needn't interrupt conversations or testimony, but instead should follow the same procedure he adopts in FAPA, taking notes and then unleashing his collection of suggestions at the end of conversations or trials. If he doesn't, one of two situations must obtain: FAPA members use the language worse than the average person, or Speer hasn't the urge to risk alienating people important to his social standing and vocation. ' ' And he really should learn how to spell Sam Delany's name before issuing verdicts about his spelling abilities. ' ' Huckleberry Finn is a sequel which is superior to what came before and somewhat better known than The Return of Tyme. Mumble Gutter: I envy Tim's ability to remember all these things about a serious accident. My second bone-breaking fall was particularly bad from the memory standpoint. I don't remember the actual fall so I'm not even sure if it was a slip as I crossed the street or something committed by an auto. All I can remember immediately after it is trying to crawl from the middle of the street to the safety of the sidewalk, then after another blackout the voices of two men with southern accents who were trying to halt passing cars so they could get someone to call for an ambulance and wondering if nobody in Hagerstown cared about anyone else. The worst thing is that I never was able to identify my two rescuers and thank them. ' ' Of course there are dangers in production of nuclear power. But, unless the nation can reduce its power consumption far enough to supply it solely with water and wind power until solar power becomes reality, what are the alternatives? Continue to rely on oil, whose reserves will be exhausted so soon that chaos and misery more serious than those that a nuclear accident would create are inevitable before the end of the century? Or revert to coal, killing and maiming miners and dooming everyone to the threat of respiratory troubles? Or go after the shale, destroying most of the remaining environment in several states and leaving too little water for humans to survive on? ' ' I don't use the term "broad" to refer to a woman. But wouldn't it be fair for women to stop using demeaning terms to refer to men? I resent it when a woman speaks of me as a "guy" and I don't care particularly for "fellow" either. Sometimes I feel it's time for the counter-revolution in sexual equality to begin. Damballa: I realize that lots of FAPA members like Chuck aren't particularly interested in the topics of the long articles in Horizons and read little or nothing in them. But I started several years ago to pick such subjects because I felt justified in writing on topics that interest me, getting some opinions and memories into permanent form, after so many years of trying to write on subjects which most FAPA members were apt to take an interest in. I'd felt that I'd paid my dues in FAPA over the decades in that way, and was entitled to pamper myself in old age. ' ' I bought that Sony tape recorder and drove almost half the distance between Hagerstown and Three Mile Island when tension over the problem with the nuclear power plant was most extreme to make the purchase, as an act of defiance against all the idiots who were believing what the newspapers and television newscasts were saying about the situation. ' ' A price of \$25 for a fanzine with juvenile Bradbury material is a bargain, the way fanzine prices are escalating. One dealer's catalog arrived recently with a section devoted to Canadian fanzines. Many issues with no

particular bibliographic interest and not possessing extreme virtues simply as fanzines are listed at prices that would have bought entire boxes of fanzines a few years back. Copies of Les Croutch's Light from the late 1940's are on sale for \$6.50 each, for the most part. Canfan from the middle 1950's are for sale for prices ranging from \$7.50 to \$15. I repeat the prediction I've made several times before: within a few more years, the rarer fanzines will assume the status now possessed by the rarest comic books, will bring the same enormous prices, and will become status symbols for those who possess them. '' That was a long while ago, but I seem to remember that my doubt about evolutionary theory as applied to exposed throats applied to today's mammals, not the dinosaurs. If survival of the fittest were the whole story, surely those key veins on human throats wouldn't be right on the surface where even a minor accident or attack can open them. '' I feel today as Chuck does about hanging onto the house despite its inflated value on the real estate market. But I can foresee a change of mind in the immediate future if current trends continue. It used to cost \$30 to fill the fuel oil tank; now it's more than \$100 each time. Not many years ago, six or seven per cent was as much as I could get from investments, but now I would realize more than nine per cent on money I would invest if I sold this place. My insurance bill has more than tripled in the past five years and it's going to zoom again when this house reaches its 75th birthday soon. My assessment was up 30 per cent this year. If things go on like that, I'll think seriously about some other address after retirement; the huge cost of moving might be paid back in savings on heating within the first winter or two, if I chose a location with less contrast between hot and cold weather. Yhos: Heaven help mm us, Art Widner doesn't seem to have suffered even the slightest change in his style in the 34 years between issues of Yhos, and even the typeface looks familiar. But he is at my mercy in one respect. I can destroy his place in the fannish book of records for longest time between issues, any time the evil prompts me to put out the 31st issue of Spaceways. It's now 37 years between issues, if I should do so tomorrow. Waiting for the End of the World: Full agreement on the importance of recognizing the fact that one is not really anything special after all. However, there's another important angle: the fact that the same holds true of other people. Just as bad as expecting too much of oneself is the bad habit of condemning every neighbor, every book, every office holder for not being the ne plus ultra of perfection. '' I'm very much afraid that Ken is right about Last Fandom. I've noted that the neoest fans today are understanding when I admit to not having read this or that new book but they just can't conceive of my failure to watch Saturday Night Live or go to the most publicized science fiction movies. '' And I don't know exactly what it signifies, but outside FAPA my best source of good pictures taken by space probes is antique shows. Almost always, at least one dealer will have a few good NASA pictures for sale for slightly more than you'd pay to Uncle Sam for them. '' I don't feel that Horizons should be held in sacred trust by each FAPA member and immolated on a funereal pyre upon his death so nobody else will read it. Lending mailings is a long established fannish practice. What disturbs me is when my apazines turn up in the mundane world. I know of one state university with a five-figure student body that has an extensive file of Horizons in its library. There's some reason to believe that one government

agency has files of FAPA mailings. It's something like wiretapping: I don't think I ever say anything over my telephone that would be seriously harmful to me or to others, no matter who heard it, but I still would be uncomfortable if I knew that unknown persons were listening in to everything I said over the phone. Phantasy Press: Here's another good friend which had been among the missing entirely too long. '' The reprint of the nickname dictionary brings to mind the fact that fans don't think up alternative names for other fans as much as they used to. I suppose it's tied in with the general decline in myth-making that I tried to emphasize in A Wealth of Fable. And I think I still maintain my status as the only fan with a good longevity record who has never had a nickname which people speak out in the open. '' The Pavlat-Evans fanzine index gives 1932 as the year when Siegel's Science Fiction began. So it seems doubtful if Cosmic Stories and Cosmic Stories Quarterly should be dated as far back as 1929: would it be likely that ardent young fans would let three years elapse between their first carbon-copied fanzines (the index doesn't guess at the date for CS and CSQ) and their next more ambitious publication? Detours: I wonder if there is a simple explanation for the weariness that Russell finds in A Wealth of Fable. Joe Siclari asked and received my permission to change all the don'ts, doesn'ts, aren't, and so on to the full two-word form. I didn't see at the time that it mattered. But now I've begun to wonder if the more formal-sounding, stiffer impression given by the transformation of the contractions may have had a greater effect on the book's impression than I'd thought it would. '' I can worry about the darnedest things, including the possibility that either us or them will decide to push the button and send up the intercontinental nuclear missiles at the moment Skylab is coming down, in the hope that either them or us will think the weapons are just part of the debris until it's too late. '' I too feel that the Ellison anthology was severely overrated. In fact, I suspect that Harlan's entire reputation is in grave danger of decomposing after he's no longer popping up at conventions and getting into squabbles with fans. Cyril Kornbluth might be the closest parallel in the past. Now Leaving on Track 9: I listen occasionally to Paul Harvey, partly because he crams so many items into a few minutes that I learn some things I don't find in the newspapers or from other newscasts; partly because it does me good to hear someone whose opinions are mostly so different from mine. Incidentally, it was a Hagerstown man who started that whole wheat-for-gas idea. The Hog on Ice: American education may be failing, but I suspect there's a bigger problem than that. I'm convinced that the people in this nation are on the skids mentally. Maybe it's alcohol that is causing it. There are occasional birth defects of a gross nature which are blamed on drinking mothers. But I wonder if more subtle but more general and widespread deterioration in the race could be resulting from the stupendous increase in drinking by women during almost a half-century since Repeal. Men have always drunk a lot, ever since this continent was colonized, but comparatively few women hit the bottle heavily and steadily until after Prohibition ended. The change can be found in such an elementary situation as babysitting. The age at which children need sitters seems to go up all the time. Early in this century, parents normally trusted children at the age of six or seven to stay alone in the house and take care of their smaller sisters and brothers. Moonshine: One thing could be accomplished, pending an actual start on writing a history of Los An-

geles fandom. Why not do xeroxing immediately on any old documents like minutes and correspondence that may turn up, and entrust the copies to some fan with proved stability? Every year that passes makes it harder to find originals of this sort, and foresight now in this way might preserve a lot of stuff until whatever future year produces the actual writing of that history. '' The last solar eclipse was hard on me. After seeing and hearing conflicting instructions on safe eclipse-watching, I decided to write a newspaper column on the topic. I felt fairly sure that I had my list of methods and precautions correct according to authoritative sources. (Apparently the only safe method consists of grossly overexposing some large pieces of black and white film, developing them fully, binding two pieces together in a sandwich with tape, and taking brief looks through the double thickness. Color film doesn't contain the silver that seems to provide protection for the eye.) Then I worried myself into a tizzy because someone at the office decided to hold the column and run it less than 24 hours before the eclipse so it would be timely. That meant there would be no way to publish a correction, if a dropped line or a misprinted word converted the column into wrong and dangerous instructions. As it turned out, Hagerstown's skies were cloudy all during the eclipse. Incidentally, I remember watching as a boy a near-total solar eclipse, which must have been in the early 1930's, through a piece of smoked glass for a long while and it caused no ill effects even though this is supposed to provide no protection at all for the eye. Bobolings: The Ma and Pa line didn't come close to Hagerstown. I'm sure I've read somewhere that some of its trackage is still in use, but I forgot to hunt at the library the book about Maryland which might have contained the reference, before tackling these stencils. I suppose Bob has seen the fine new history of the Cumberland Valley Railroad published this spring. Not even I am old enough to have worked for that railroad, but I feel a personal interest in the book because some things hadn't changed by the time I went to work for the Pennsy on duties involving the old CVRR tracks. '' Ricky Slavin called me to ask where she could find a copy of All Our Yesterdays. I think I treated most fans gently in that book, but Ricky figures in it just twice in rather uncomplimentary manner. I considered advising her that all copies had been recalled because the binding's glue contained vegetable elements which grew too close to a nuclear reactor, but somehow found courage to give her correct advice. I expected a telephone call from an attorney, at the very least, but nothing happened. Llan-anthony:umm It's a strange thing, but in all the vast wordage committed to paper about energy-saving devices, you never find anything about the heat loss caused by high ceilings like those in the state library. If I were sure I'd stay in this house longer than the three winters between now and retirement, I'd have a false ceiling installed under the eleven or twelve foot ceilings in the first floor. But the cost of doing it probably would be as great as the fuel economy in just two or three years. '' Sometimes I think libraries have money to buy anything except books. Those in this general area are putting more emphasis all the time on their record collections, their films, even the art works they lend to patrons. So help me, one small library near here has been building up a big collection of jigsaw puzzles for its children's department. Maybe it's farsighted, to insure the survival of the institutions even after the last borrower has forgotten how to read.

The Society of Editors Newsletter: It's only a matter of weeks now until electronic editing and typing columns onto a computer terminal catch up with me. I'm dubious about the real value of the changeover, at least for an operation the size of Hagerstown's newspapers. Mainly, I remember how another changeover less than two decades ago was supposed to create all the wonders of convenience and speed that the computer is expected to provide. That was when automatic linotypes which ran off punched tape were installed, wire service news began to come simultaneously both as words and as little holes in tape, and local news was set by being typed onto a typewriter-like tape puncher instead of directly onto a linotype keyboard. The tape caused the linotypes to spit out type at unparalleled speed, all right, but all sorts of practical drawbacks developed: the need to assign someone to roll the tape from the wire services, the inability to detect a malfunction in a tape-puncher until some of the tape had gone through a linotype, the need to keep someone hovering over those automatic linotypes, all the extra links in the chain. I fear that electronics will provide a complete new set of difficulties, no matter how much more efficient it may theoretically be. And the more the publishing industry converts to electronics and cold type, the more professional publications look like fanzines published in the mid-1930's. Notes from Arinam: Don't feel bad about forgetting facts about Caesar. I've just read a Milton Berle book in which he describes querying people in Rome about Caesar. Most had never heard of him, although some thought they knew where he was residing. I wish I'd read that book before writing all that stuff about television ratings, incidentally. Berle wrote it when most television programs were sponsored by just one product which was closely identified with its program, and he gives examples of how sales of products featured on the commercials rose or fell with no apparent relationship to the ratings of those programs, more evidence that the ratings don't necessarily reflect the really important matter to advertisers, how much effect television exerts on the success of their products. Past, Present & Future: Didn't F. Orlin Tremaine get into trouble at one time for buying too many of his own stories? If so, the unpublished Van Lorne manuscripts could be those that he wrote before his superiors called him for it. '' Another possible way of forming that Wede byline could have been the initials of siblings or husband-wife or any other pair with the same last initial. Were there any individuals in early prodom whose initials were W.E. and D.E.? And maybe I'm imagining it, but I do believe I remember the quotes from Death Creeps the Moon which are reprinted here, although I can't have read that story since the late 1930's. I read most stories in the prozines at least three or four times back in that era, so maybe repetition has engraved much from them into a semi-accessible part of my memory. The Arkham Anchorite: I get the impression that much work of this sort on the paperback field is badly needed. It's easy enough to get a rough idea of what has been published by readily available sources. But I doubt if even the publishers of paperback lines keep coherent records on such things as cover changes for reissues. And by now I suspect that the identity of many cover artists is permanently lost. Notes from Arinam: I keep forgetting that Roy usually has more than one issue with the same title in a FAPA mailing. '' When and why did the custom originate of ignoring anything a FAPA member says about official business in a publication, requiring it to be written in a letter to an officer? '' I've ordered from both Marboro

and Publishers Central Bureau for many years without encountering a lengthy snafu. I remember only two times when something went wrong. Once I received a large batch of sex-oriented books from Marboro out of the blue, after I'd placed no order for quite a while. I simply mailed them back and that settled that. The other time, PCB got my mailing label on an order meant for someone in Texas and vice versa. I readdressed the package to him and when he didn't return the favor I explained to PCB the circumstances, and the firm promptly sent all the stuff I'd ordered without question. '' I feel encouraged about Mars. I've been claiming that there's more water on the planet than astronomers admit because otherwise those apparent watercourses would have long ago been wiped out by drifting sand. Now I see that scientists are talking about the discovery of oases here and there. Maybe I'll live to hear them grant the existence of running water after all. '' Inflation comes when the amount of money increases faster than productivity. Governments are mainly responsible for today's inflationary tendencies. The federal government simply prints up money faster than taxes bring it in. Food stamps are a money equivalent, increasing enormously the demand for food products. Millions of people on the government payroll don't produce anything except typing on paper, holes in data processing cards, and the like, and receive salaries which are used to put further strain on the amount of things produced. Government spending causes most young people to be non-productive during the first half-dozen years of their maturity when they're strongest and healthiest, best able to produce, so they stay in schools instead, consuming all the while. '' I'm not sure if the proposal to withdraw money from savings institutions would have its intended effect against inflation. Much of the money in savings accounts goes to finance new construction through mortgages. If there's not enough money for many people to get mortgages, there's a sharp drop in the amount of new construction, causing the value of existing properties to rise even faster than its present gladdy pace, and inflation becomes worse than ever. '' Sometime, Roy should find a way to sit in on bull sessions of politicians and hear the tales they can tell about the media personnel, none of which gets into print, either. APA-VCR: Come to think of it, here's another fannish field in which we need to know more about the law. I'm thinking in particular about model releases. Does the owner of a video tape recorder need to get them from people he includes on his homemade cassettes, if he intends to send copies of his tapes to a number of persons in a club like this one? Orange Calendulas: The Co-evolution Quarterly reprint was fascinating. Now I'd like to know how the astronauts cope if they start to cry or suffer a severe sneeze while in space. And the Voyager Bulletins are as exciting as a space opera. '' '' The FAPA constitution seems to forbid the inclusion of waiting listers' publications in mailings. Among the qualifications it lists for inclusion in a mailing is: "They represent to a substantial extent the work of the member who sends them in." It also says that "mailings distribute to its members material written or published by members". The Best of the Limerick: I got stuck after about ten pages and didn't read any further. Most of the limericks on those pages aren't funny and seem to have been written by people who were looking for an excuse to use a dozen or so words related to sex. There was a time when a radio comedian who uttered "Brooklyn" set studio audiences into convulsions of laughter. Now these words are supposed to be hilarious or titillating, no matter how they're used. I didn't laugh at "Brooklyn" or like these ditties.

The Worst of Martin

WHEN THE WORST COMES TO THE WORST

The world was being stretched as if it were a piece of taffy. All the time it was getting longer and thinner; and I found that the thinnest part was under me. Finally it broke, and I fell through onto an infinite expanse of concrete floor, which I judged stood for Space. At the same time I happened to look up and saw the two ends of the world dangling over my head--but only for a moment, for the two large hands which held them immediately clumped them together and began to mold the mass into a sphere as if they were making a snowball.

When the hands had made the world once more perfectly round, they set it down on the concrete floor and disappeared. I then climbed back on the world and sat down. I was bored, but I would have been content had it not been for my face itching. At any rate, I did not want to be disturbed again--but I was. An attendant came along and motioned me to get off. I did, and he then proceeded to roll the world away. "What's the big idea?" I said. He pretended not to hear, so I said, "Where are you taking it?"

"Has to be put away for the night," he finally replied gruffly.

I watched him roll the world into a sort of barn, close the big doors, lock them and then shuffle off into the night. Everything around me was bleak and cold. There was nothing but the gray cement floor stretching in every direction as far as the eye could see. There was nothing to sit down on. Finally I lay down on the cement and tried to go to sleep. It began to rain.

IN THE BLACK FOREST

The Black Forest is full of brass gears. At night in the forest these gears begin to turn. Their well oiled and perfectly adjusted teeth interlock with a soft click. This clicking sound of the interlocking of the brass gears in the Black Forest goes on all night, but during the day these gears just lie idly on the ground.

One day a golden haired girl came running through the Black Forest. She was pursued by two dark visaged men. The intentions of these men were not honorable. Fearing disgrace, the golden haired girl looked about as she ran for some means of protecting herself, for it was evident that they would soon overtake her, and what was worse than death would result.

She was almost about to collapse from exhaustion and distress when she espied one of the brass gears lying on a mound of moss. No sooner had she seen it than she stopped, picked it up, and turning, flung it with all her might at the foremost of the two dark men.

It struck him between the eyes and he fell heavily to the ground. But the other dark man came on the faster.

As there were no more gears in the place, the golden haired girl had nothing else to do but run on.

Printed by the Ooftish Press at the sign of the Dormant Fishhook.
Thank you!

(From Whacky, in the fall, 1941, FAPA mailing, probably by EAMartin)

In Pen Mariam

When I was a little boy, before I had discovered that I could become a famous fan simply by working hard at being a hermit, I used to travel regularly. Every summer, my parents took me to Pen Mar several times.

Pen Mar was an amusement park on the Western Maryland Railway, atop a big hill or small mountain about sixteen miles east of Hagerstown. To me, it had the status during the late 1920's and early 1930's of the Left Bank, Coney Island, and Ultima Thule combined.

We had no auto and always went to Pen Mar on the train. The Western Maryland's local passenger station seemed like Grand Central to my naive young eyes, with enough space for scores of people to sit awaiting the steam cars to arrive, a newsstand, complicated looking ticket offices, and all sorts of other modern marvels. In actuality, it wasn't too big a building but its architecture was so passenger stationish that it got on the National Register of Historic Places in time to save it from the pulverization that has afflicted all the other passenger stations in Hagerstown, and when the city police department took it over a few months back, the exterior was preserved in this way from the remodeling that was inflicted on the interior.

Sitting in the train as it prepared to leave the local station was the first big thrill of each Pen Mar trip day. I loved to watch those jet black little cinders already sifting through the open passenger car windows and embedding themselves on the red plush of the seats. Those plush coverings of the seats seemed awfully expensive and luxurious because local buses had some sort of cheap-looking leather substitute covering their seats and the trolley cars had a sort of cane covering for the seats that weren't plain boards. It was also fun to look through the window across the street to the long row of little frame houses inhabited by railroaders. Many years later I ran across a photograph of some of those Foundry Street houses taken during the Farm Security Administration survey of poverty in the nation, taken by Arthur Rothstein, a quite celebrated photographer. It's good they attained this sort of immortality, because all of them eventually were razed to create a wider street. But they weren't poor people's houses by any means and I keep wondering how many of the other famous FSA photographs were taken in the Depression under similar misapprehension and ever since misinterpreted.

The ride to Pen Mar was lots of fun, even including a modest tunnel at one point. Once my father told me when the train slowed on one of the steepest mountainside grades that we might all need to go outside and push if the train couldn't make it to the top solely by means of steam. I believed him and it was several years before I stopped girding up my miniature loins at that point on the trip.

The train stopped just below Pen Mar Park in a maze of sidings. You walked from there up a gently rising path to the park itself. The first thing you encountered was Blind Otho. He was a squat, antique black man who sat at this spot all summer long with a tin cup in front of him, a sign announcing I AM BLIND tucked into his hat, and on his lap an enormous volume of his braille Bible. Blind Otho kept his fingers moving over the bumps on the pages and his lips kept moving in an inaudible mumble. Everyone assumed that he was reading it, although I can't remember ever seeing him turn a page. He would interrupt this activity every time he heard the clink of a coin dropping into his cup. Immediately he would reach in and run

his fingers around the edge of the coin before it stopped quivering to make sure nobody had been cheap enough to give him a penny. I have asked various people in recent years but nobody seems to know if Blind Otho remained on that spot day and night throughout the entire season. He was never visible in Hagerstown during those months but there were no black families in that area and segregation was such an impregnable principle at that time that it's hard to imagine him boarding with whites in the Pen Mar area. In the months when Pen Mar was closed, Blind Otho liked to wander through downtown Hagerstown, still mumbling words nobody could make out. People generally agreed that he was a deep thinker. He was such an institution that at least one area newspaper ran his picture after his death, a tribute that blacks almost never achieved in that era. All the volumes of his Bible were bequeathed to the local library, whose staff didn't have the least notion about what to do with them. I saw them several times in the basement where seldom-used stacks were stored in the years that followed but I don't know if they survived the move to the new library building.

The park itself wasn't really big compared with amusement parks in metropolitan areas. But there was plenty of grassy open space for strolling and it had the best assortment of amusements to be found anywhere this side of Baltimore and Washington.

There was its miniature railroad, for instance. The Fleigh family of Hagerstown maintained and operated it. They must have done it because they wanted to make kids happy because they didn't need the income: one member of the family took leave from a good-paying job on the Western Maryland Railway each summer and others among the Fleighs had a prospering auto agency in Hagerstown. At first, the tracks simply ran into the woods surrounding the park and stopped so patrons rode forward on the outward journey and backwards when the engine reversed direction. But by the time I started to go to Pen Mar the track had been changed into a loop in the sylvan fastnesses, and there were additional improvements like a little tunnel and a bridge over a stream.

It never occurred to me until long after the miniature railway was no more, how potentially dangerous it was and how the combination of providential attention and the Fleighs' carefulness must have prevented serious accidents or even tragedies. The little locomotive was only three feet tall but it worked just like a full-sized steam locomotive. The train attained a fairly good velocity on the straightaway. The cars which were open at the sides and covered only with flimsy cloth at top were usually overcrowded with kids and even adults. When Pen Mar had its big days, the Fleighs even had two trains operating simultaneously. If the tracks hadn't been kept in good condition, it's quite probable that a derailment could have split a lot of young heads open because sturdy trees ran quite close to the tracks most of the way. A faulty valve might have been disastrous to whichever Fleigh was in the engineer's seat because there was nothing to intervene between him and an exploding boiler. A car filled to capacity must have been heavy enough to have amputated a foot if anyone had tripped while running alongside the train. But as far as I've been able to determine, nobody was ever seriously hurt in the occasional derailments. Once a head-on collision was barely averted when one Fleigh was fiddling with a balky mechanism and forgot there was another train in operation that day.

Curiously, I have no memory at all over another major feature at Pen Mar, its roller coaster. Everyone else old enough to rememb-

er the amusement park talks a lot about the roller coaster. But I don't recall ever riding it, and even looking today at pictures of it fails to produce any recollections. I would suspect that I was so frightened by a ride on it that the whole thing self-annihilated in my memory tank, if it weren't for the fact that I have excellent recall of another traumatic circumstance, the all-out nausea that I suffered following every ride on the merrygoround. Just the other day, another possible explanation came to mind. The roller coaster may have seemed like a trivial anticlimax not worthy to be remembered in comparison with my rides on the Pen Mar trolley. I'm not sure how often I rode it but the vehicle itself was unforgettable. It rattled, jerked uncontrollably, seemed to capsize on every curve and passengers had the firm belief that this hill would be the one on which the brakes would finally give out. Pen Mar isn't more than five or six hundred feet above the valley below it, I suppose, but some of the approach slopes are excessively steep and the people who laid out the trolley's route didn't waste time and money designing a course that would avoid the worst climbs. What causes a handful of moments to stick in the memory permanently, out of the millions of moments in the past? One such is the rainy night when we arrived alive in Waynesboro after the trolley ride, my parents bought me a coloring book in a little store which was ready to close, and its proprietor engaged in a long conversation with us even though it was time to lock up. On the other hand, I can't remember such a basic fact as how we used to get home from Waynesboro or why we took such a suicidal method of getting out of Pen Mar sometimes.

Just the other day, I was on a bus and fell into a drowsy spell in which I was thinking of nothing in particular. Suddenly something remarkable happened: I imagined myself back in the fun house at Pen Mar. It was uncanny: I could see again things in that little structure that I couldn't remember under other circumstances, and I had the mad impression that I might go all the way into that fun house if I allowed myself to dwell concentratedly enough on a visit to the past something like the experiments in Time and Again. I snapped out of it hastily. I might be happier back in 1930 or thereabouts but I had sense enough to realize that I would be more likely to find myself split off from reality in 1979 than actually transported in time, if I let myself go. The whole experience was unsettling and yet alluring. I don't think I've described it properly here; the best way I can summarize it is to say it was something like an enormously elongated deja vu moment, based on real experience.

But the strange moment symbolizes the way the fun house was my favorite part of Pen Mar. In other parks, it would have been the penny arcade, but for some reason it was rarely called that at Pen Mar. It had penny-in-a-slot devices which must have been extremely old even five decades ago, the primitive form of movies provided by pictures on a stack of cards which flipped over one by one for perhaps fifteen seconds of action. I wasn't allowed to watch some of them. There was a booth where you threw darts. Once I made such a wild pitch that my dart hit one of the enormous electric light bulbs which exploded with a tremendous bang. Most of the adults in the place scampered for cover, assuming that revenueurs had begun to shoot it out with the purveyors of illegal beverages at the edge of the park. (The way it worked involved a large sign advertising a soft drink. You followed the arrow to a man who had the soft drink for sale. But if you had the right gleam in your eye or an excessive

number of large coins in your hand or the soft drink salesman knew your purpose from past encounters, you were directed to go back in to the bushes where his brother had a fresh stock of the soft drink and if you passed muster with his brother, you could purchase an unsoft drink.) I was wild about a game requiring two to play, each controlling with levers a realistic figure of a boxer with ability to dodge or to land blows on his opponent and score a real knock-down.

Then there was the thrill of pumping to get a drink of water. There were still a few homes in Hagerstown in my boyhood where water was pumped from a well but I didn't know their occupants well enough to use them. But I can still feel in memory the exciting moment when the pump handle stopped swinging freely and began to offer resistance, positive proof that a moment later ice cold mountain water would gush into the cup.

Not strenuous but never failing to delight was the sort of pavilion which everyone called the overlook, and the binoculars on it which cost a nickel to use, I believe. From there, you got a tremendous view of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and even a glimpse of West Virginia on clear days. The test for really perfect viewing weather was the ability to make out the time on the town clock in Chambersburg, about 15 miles away, through the binoculars.

There was a restaurant building where the fifty cent dinners were so fine that people still talk about them today. But I don't remember eating in it too often. More frequently, we did as many other families did, took along a picnic lunch and ate it at one of the tables that dotted the park. Yes, I realize now that the railroad could have increased the profits from its restaurant if it hadn't made it so easy for people to bring and eat their own food, but commercialism wasn't fully understood in the first part of this century, thank goodness.

The amusement park wasn't the only attraction in that area. A mile up a steep and rough road stood the High Rock observation tower. It gave an even more spectacular view of the valley, because the rock was perhaps three or four hundred feet higher than Pen Mar and the observation tower was a three-story edifice that must have given another forty feet or so of altitude. Here is another personal mystery because I can remember my mother refusing to accompany my father and me when we climbed one Sunday to the top level of the rickety structure. So I must have acquired somewhat late in boyhood the acrophobia which gave me problems for quite a few years. I've managed to subdue it now for ordinary activities, although I still feel wobbly when I must climb an exterior staircase of any height. Hardly anyone tried to walk that steep road but there were horse-drawn taxis available. As far as I can remember, I never visited yet another observation tower. This one was a bit further from Pen Mar, on the highest point in Washington County, more than 2,000 feet above sea level. It used to have the distinctive name of Mount Misery but since has been renamed Mount Quirauk, pronounced Keerock. A strange episode occurred there in later years. When FM broadcasting began to spread after World War Two, a local AM station operator, Grover Crilley, decided to go all-out. He not only installed the most powerful FM transmitter then in use in Maryland, but he also built a large broadcasting studio on Mt. Quirauk beside the transmitting tower. He had read about the limitations the telephone lines imposed on the fidelity of FM broadcasts transmitted from a distant studio and devised this method of achieving perfect sound.

On the night of the grand opening FM broadcast from the new studio and transmitter, several buses filled with Hagerstown's best choir and other musicians went to the mountain to sing and play. The next morning, Crilley had visitors from the United States Army. Fort Ritchie, which at that time was an important link in the military communications network, is only a mile or two from Mount Quirauk and the government controls some of the surrounding land, including the only road into Mount Quirauk. The military men firmly explained to Crilley that it was all right for radio station announcers and engineers to use the road, since they were few and could be checked out for loyalty, but there was no way that the army was going to permit all manner of other people like musicians to travel in such sensitive territory. So the first program broadcast from that studio was also the last one. Eventually an engineer or two moved in and used the studio as living quarters.

I was too young to enjoy some of the other features of Pen Mar. The dance pavilion meant nothing to me at such a tender age. There was a bowling alley just alongside the park although not part of it, but I doubt if I ever entered it. Children often set pins but never bowled in those years. There was a flourishing tavern just outside the park boundaries after Repeal, but neither of my parents drank in public and rarely in private. I didn't know how to swim so a swimming pool near the railroad station was also useless to me, but the pool suffered so severely from a chronic leak that it didn't survive many years, anyway.

Nevertheless, I was always thoroughly tired out when the time came to watch for the arrival of the train that would bring us back through the night to Hagerstown. We lived during most of those years on North Prospect Street only about four blocks from the Western Maryland passenger station, so we usually walked home, a trek that completed the process of leaving me in a state of perfect exhaustion by the time we reached the house. But those Sundays at Pen Mar invariably had a final feature on a delayed basis. By late the next afternoon, I would begin to sneeze, my nose would start to water, and sometimes I would feel scratchiness in the throat. This marked the start of the inevitable Pen Mar cold. The germ theory of infection was pretty well understood in my boyhood, but people around Hagerstown attributed such colds to Mountain Air. It was generally assumed to be entirely different from the air in lower areas and responsible for such manifestations as those colds.

When you're a child and do the same thing for several summers in a row, that unchanging activity extends over perhaps one-third of your entire life, one-half or more of the part of your life that you can remember clearly. So Pen Mar seemed by the time I was twelve years or so of age to be an unchanging, dependable, eternal oasis in an otherwise altering world. Nevertheless, other boys in my neighborhood who knew of my devotion to Pen Mar used to tease me by telling me ominous rumors they'd allegedly heard about the amusement park and I couldn't quite convince myself that it was all a pack of lies. In actuality, signs of trouble ahead were looming up.

For that matter, Pen Mar had been changing all along. Like so many commercial parks, it had been created by the railroad as a gimmick to increase passenger train business. The railroad had been completed from Baltimore as far west as Hagerstown in 1872. Before the end of that decade, railroad officials had acquired a lot of land, had installed the first High Rock tower, had constructed a pavilion for picnics, and had made other improvements. But at the

start, there seems to have been no thought of having an amusement park there. I went through local newspapers published in the last years of that decade, and the general tone of articles about Pen Mar seems to indicate that the railroad hoped to attract to the park mostly the upper crust from Baltimore. To that end, a few years later a huge resort hotel, the Blue Mountain House, was constructed not far from the park. But by the Gay Nineties, the park had begun to attract the hoi polloi in huge numbers for picnics and reunions. Excursion trains prospered mightily, and the railroad seems to have made no objections when the first amusements began to appear in the park around the turn of the century. Ironically, the conversion of the park to proletarian purposes was accompanied by a big boom in the popularity of many immediately surrounding areas for vacationing or summer homes by the wealthier portion of the population of Baltimore and even distanter points. Communities sprang up like Blue Ridge Summit and Monterey just a few miles from the park. Joan Crawford used to spend vacations between movies in that area. The Duchess of Windsor was born up there although there is a nagging tradition that her mother was running a boarding house instead of enjoying the status of the idle rich at the time. It was such a favorite spot for foreign diplomats attached to legations and embassies in Washington that the annual used book sale of the Blue Ridge Summit library still disgorges every year a substantial quantity of books in every imaginable language from the area's attics and cellars. By the time I was old enough to go to Pen Mar, the park was bloated with many thousands of visitors on special days. Each summer there was a Lutheran Day, a Waynesboro Day, an Odd Fellows Day, and so on. Just before the season ended, the most gigantic turnout of all showed up for Everybody's Day.

But the automobile was coming into its own at the same time. Family cars enabled much larger crowds to enjoy Pen Mar, bringing to the park those who lived unreasonably far from public transportation. But the more autos that rolled up to the park, the fewer passengers on the excursion trains. The railroad derived little or no revenue from activities at the park, since there was no admission fee and all amusements were operated by private enterprise for a modest fee to lease space. Railroad officials were also being plagued by the beginning of the long decline in passenger train use in general, not just the Pen Mar excursions.

The other day, I saw an advertisement the railroad published to lure people to Pen Mar Park on Independence Day in 1929. There were five excursion trains each way between Hagerstown and Pen Mar that day, adult fare was only 65 cents, and goodness only knows how many excursion trains were operated from Baltimore, not to mention the regular runs between the two cities which stopped at Pen Mar. Only ten years later, the switch from rail to tires for reaching Pen Mar and the fact that private autos made it possible for the public to reach other places on outings more easily had changed everything. The park had been leased by the railroad to private operators, it no longer ran excursions from Hagerstown, and there was no longer enough regular passenger service to permit Hagerstown residents to enjoy a day at Pen Mar and get home that night. 40's arrived and the United States got into the war, gas rationing made it impossible for most persons to drive their own autos to Pen Mar and virtually no public transportation to the park survived. By uncanny coincidence, almost simultaneously I conceived utter loathing for two different railroads for two separate reasons in March of 1943.

A long series of nasty adventures involving my job with the Pennsylvania Railroad managed to disrupt temporarily my Caspar Milquetoast nature long enough for me to quit in a turbulent confrontation with my boss. And up on the mountain, the railroad annihilated Pen Mar Park almost as abruptly.

Nobody has ever been able to give me an authoritative explanation of why the railroad decided on its blitzkrieg. Maybe there would be lower taxes if the Pen Mar Park facilities were no more. Perhaps the railroad feared that squatters would move into the deserted structures and then inspire newspaper sob stories when it became necessary to evict them. Or there might have been concern that someone would set fire to a building on a windy day and cause a major forest fire to start in that heavily wooded area. Whatever the reasoning was, workmen had everything annihilated to ground level in a single day. They started early in the morning without publicizing their intentions in advance. Nevertheless, word of mouth communications throughout the area permitted enough people to get to the site to permit salvaging of some souvenirs; the workmen apparently permitted anyone to carry away anything he wanted. It all happened so fast that newspapers didn't hear about it until it was all over. I was too busy detesting the Pennsy to feel the all-out rage that many persons around Hagerstown, Waynesboro, Chambersburg and Baltimore expressed for the Western Maryland. Others must have felt that the razing, barbaric though it was, somehow was appropriate, a symbol of the end of an era, the translation of the war spirit in Europe and the Pacific to destruction of what remained at Pen Mar of a happier, older world. The debris was hauled away and all that could be seen to remind people of the happiness they had once experienced at Pen Mar Park were the adjacent bowling alley and tavern on private land which hung on a few more years.

But only the ferocity of the final ending of Pen Mar Park was surprising. Nobody had seriously believed it would ever again prosper. And most of the other amusement parks in this general area had not survived as long as Pen Mar. Conomac Park at Williamsport, near the point where the Conococheague Creek joins the Potomac River, had closed down previously. Braddock Heights Park, near Frederick, a trolley-sponsored park, had once offered almost as many attractions as Pen Mar, but it was reduced to an observation tower and two or three concessions. Mont Alto Park in nearby Pennsylvania had been taken over by the state, its amusement aspects vanished. In a way, the decline of parks operated by transportation companies or other entrepreneurs and the rise of public parks financed and operated by municipal, state and federal governments was a fitting symbol of the way the nation was changing from the old private enterprise philosophy to the habit of letting the government do things.

Not long ago, I read an entire book written about one home run. The author, wondering if something as improbable as the Bobby Thomson home run could be fully explained by natural processes, began a long effort to find if there might be a metaphysical explanation. He interviewed many participants on the Dodgers' and Giants' rosters at the time, some of whom actually comprehended his purpose. The book doesn't settle the matter definitively, but the author found one sign at the end of his investigation which seemed to hint at partial justification for his belief. Now, after that March day in 1943, Pen Mar Park was at least as dead as Marley was, perhaps more so since there is no door knocker around here with a picture of Pen Mar Park on its knob. I didn't visit the spot where the park had

been between my final boyhood trip there and one afternoon in the early 1960's when I drove up for a sentimental look. I couldn't have found the actual park site without someone to show me, because the railroad sidings were gone and nature had converted that manicured park site into a wilderness hardly distinguishable from any other part of the uncleared mountain. The buildings had been wooden structures with no foundations to be traced with the eye. The paths were so overgrown that whatever gravel may have remained was invisible. I could hardly squeeze through the thickets to the edge of the hillside where the overlook had stood, and it was impossible to get a clear view across the valley. I couldn't even feel nostalgic or unhappy about the situation, because there was nothing to moon over.

But something unprecedented had been happening. Pen Mar Park was as alive as it had ever been, in one sense. A Pen Mar fandom had erupted spontaneously. It must have begun the moment workmen got the last structure down to ground level in that spring of 1943. It had been expanding ever since, propagated first by the people old enough to have visited Pen Mar Park in its prime, but contagious enough to taken up by youngsters who couldn't remember Pen Mar Park. Less than six months after the park was razed, the first meetings were being held toward bringing the park back to life. Thirty years after the razing, there had been no apparent progress toward that goal but Pen Mar fandom was still as determined as ever and considerably larger in numbers.

One meeting I attended in the early 1970's was typical. Perhaps a hundred persons turned out to see a slide show by a Pen Mar fan who had been specializing in collecting Pen Mar postcards and had copied all of them on 35 mm film. More than half of the persons present, I would guess, hadn't been born or were mere infants in 1943, but those younger persons seemed more knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Pen Mar Park than the ones with real memories of it. I was staggered by the comments during the slides. Postcard pictures had been taken of crowds at the park in the 1920's, and persons in the audience had succeeded in identifying many or most of the dozens of persons pictured on them. A postcard showing the restaurant produced the news that one fan had tracked down the present whereabouts of several of the posts that used to stand in front of it to keep vehicles from blocking the main entrance. Someone else had additional titbits about the merrygoround: its beautifully hand-carved horses had turned up in Alaska to the amazement of a Hagerstown soldier stationed there in the late 1940's, but now some of them had somehow returned to Germany, where they had been created.

All through those years, you could hardly find a public sale bill that didn't list at least one or two Pen Mar souvenirs. The benches in particular must have been breeding, judging by the number that were advertised for sale. Antique shops began to get imposing prices for such esoterica as Pen Mar creamers (little containers with a distinctive park proving them to have been used in the restaurant) and the postcards underwent astonishing inflation in value.

Once there was a terrible false alarm. A lot of politicking and pressuring when the state of Maryland was planning a new park for the western part of the state succeeded in interesting authorities in establishing it at Pen Mar. The state actually bought a lot of land in the immediate vicinity of the old park. But the railroad after blowing hot and cold refused to sell the park site

to the state. A new park was unthinkable without the view, and there was the additional problem of how authentic a Pen Mar Park would be on unconsecrated ground. The whole matter became academic before long. State park authorities wanted water recreation in any new large park, there was no way to provide it easily at the Pen Mar site, so the state scrapped the whole idea and constructed their new park at another point perhaps twenty miles away. Some Pen Mar fans may have been happy at the outcome in one sense: a big state park at Pen Mar would have necessitated a lot of road-widening work to provide easy access from the Baltimore and Washington areas, and that part of the mountain wouldn't seem right with wide highways.

Meanwhile, a Hagerstown attorney named Jack Berkson had practised his enthusiasm for the environment by doing a lot of useful things toward preventing the old C & O Canal along the Potomac from becoming destroyed through a land grab which some interests sought, turning the federally owned strip of land over to anyone who wanted to evict nature and replace it with commercial developments. That accomplished, Jack found himself suddenly chairman of a committee established when the county commissioners decided to build a few small parks meant for local residents, in distinction to the big ones which the state maintains for tourists and persons from distant parts of Maryland. Jack achieved miracles and by the time he had accepted a federal job in Washington and moved away, the new county park system was so successful that the county decided to add more parks. So the county accepted ownership to that state land at Pen Mar, cleared one corner of it, put in several picnic tables, and it had a Pen Mar Park. And then something as inexplicable by normal cause-and-effect as the Thomson home run occurred. The railroad decided it was willing to sell the original park site after all. The county got state funds to pay for it. I don't think any of us believed it. Pen Mar Park was resurrected in theory and soon would be with us again in fact.

I should point out that the event was much more dramatic than I've made it sound because I haven't gone into all the rises and falls of hopes about the park site. Once the railroad had seemed on the verge of giving it away and then a newspaper editorial criticizing a grade crossing angered officials and they backed down. Another time, legal obstacles appeared insuperable because nobody could find the deeds and it appeared that the railroad hadn't owned it in the first place but had leased it leaving some 300 heirs of the original owners to be tracked down. Another mess developed when the railroad became part of the Chessie System midway in the negotiations, bringing an entirely different set of authorities into the picture.

Not even the most hidebound Pen Mar fan wanted the land turned into a new amusement park. The amusements had always been the frosting on the cake, and the county couldn't possibly handle the crowd control and other problems that concessions would create. So with remarkable unanimity, everyone agreed with the plan the county drew up for use of the site: a scenic park with a new overlook structure and another building in which mementoes of the original Pen Mar Park could be displayed. I was blessed with a massive shot of egoboo when they asked me to say something at the meeting in 1975 where the land transfer was formally enacted; all I'd done was write some newspaper articles on Pen Mar over the years and talk up the desirability of a new life for the park at every opportunity. Besides, the real stars of that meeting were the very same Fleigh fam-

ily that had run the little train. This time, they contributed ten thousand bucks toward creation of the park.

While the new park was being prepared, something occurred that symbolizes splendidly how strange and strong the Pen Mar fascination can be. A girl attending Hood College at Frederick about two dozen miles from Hagerstown had heard people talking about Pen Mar and decided to choose it as the subject for an honors paper in her history classes. The more she researched, the more interested she became. Before she quite knew what was happening, she had a manuscript and pictures in quantities large enough to fill a book, and she decided that she had to publish a book about Pen Mar. She did, 250 pages in length with a full color cover. Some persons thought she was crazy to saddle herself with a room full of books which she wouldn't finish selling until her grandchildren were in college. So the entire first printing sold out in a matter of days. Even an ardent Pen Mar fan like me had to wait for an entire month until a second printing could be rushed through to meet the demand.

Almost as amazing as the revival of Pen Mar Park was the way things began turning up for the museum building. Because of the prices Pen Mar memorabilia bring in antique shops, there had been concern whether there would be anything to put in the building, for lack of county money to pay for stuff. But people were so overpowered by the Pen Mar spirit that they became generous. The most unexpected things were donated. Who would have expected the receipt book covering the years from 1906 to 1910 at the penny arcade to have survived, or the ring won in the contest for the fattest baby on Mother's Day in 1924, or a table used to hold trays in the restaurant? I almost bawled when I saw for the first time in four decades the enormous stained glass window from the restaurant bearing PEN MAR in giant letters; someone had rescued it on the day of the razing and somehow it had survived the breaking peril ever since. There was the dispensing gadget used to sell tickets to the pony rides.

There's not much doubt about the authenticity of such things. Pen Mar was so thoroughly photographed down through the decades that it's hard to think of any nook or cranny of its facilities that aren't visible on a picture somewhere, and hundreds of photos were offered for study to the authorities planning the new park. They made it possible to put up the new overlook pavilion with the identical design of the old one (except for one minor detail, the provision of a ramp at one end where steps had existed. The ramp qualified the reconstructed overlook building for federal and state money under some obscure provision involving access for the handicapped.)

One thing that seems not to exist is a photograph showing the entire park and its buildings as it was early in this century. A wide angle lens would have enabled someone to get almost all of it on one piece of film by climbing to the top of the overlook pavilion but apparently nobody ever thought to do that. However, older residents of the area could remember exactly where everything had stood. So vocational school students in Hagerstown built a model in miniature of how the park had once been, for display in the museum, and the county put up little signs on the exact spots each structure had occupied. They even embedded a couple of rails at the right distance apart to show where the little train's route had begun.

Of all the wonderful phenomena that went on during the park's

reconstruction, none was more time-defying, preposterous and dramatic than the vision someone had about music for the dedication program. The Penn Aces had been the band that had last provided music for dances at Pen Mar back in the 1930's. So, the proposal went, the Penn Aces should provide the music for the park's reopening almost a half-century later in 1977. People have gone to the loony bin for less wild proposals. But it was no more staggering than the thought that Pen Mar Park might be born again, and this notion became just as real as the park itself. The band had eight members when it was hired in 1931 by the Pen Mar management. Six of those eight played dance music on the May day in 1977 when the park reopened. Some of them were a trifle out of practice and I imagine that the band sounded a bit less fine in 1977 than it had in the 1930's. But I have a tape of that dedication, and the music they made isn't much worse than some of the earliest jazz records, cut before jazz groups had polished up their intonation and unanimity of attack. Zel Smith, who was the band leader in the 1930's, is still playing clarinet with the town band in Waynesboro. Unfortunately, the interviews I own with him and another old Pen Mar musician are on cassettes and I don't have a cassette recorder in operating order just now, so I can't refresh my memory of their anecdotes by listening to them now. But Zel always has claimed that he was ahead of his time, playing a swing type of music in the 1930's while the less hectic style of dance music was still preferred by most bands. He remembered the trouble that the band had with girl singers at Pen Mar: not temperament or romantic escapes but the girls' difficulties with their singing during the moments when train whistles passing the park made it impossible for them to hear the band for ten seconds or so.

One of the toughest decisions of my life involved the matter of whether I should go to the park's reopening. I decided against it. Since I no longer write news stories, I wasn't needed in my journalistic capacity. In a way, I wanted desperately to be there and I felt as if I were somehow being unfaithful to the past by staying away. But everyone was predicting that a thousand or more people might overload the parking facilities at the park for the opening, I hated to get involved in that, and more important, I wasn't sure how the event might affect me emotionally. I exaggerate a lot about my senile condition, but I feared that the old associations might cause genuine senile emotionalism to get the best of me in front of all those people. So I didn't go that day, and instead of a thousand people they had 3,500 on hand for the ceremonies. It was quite an afternoon, from all accounts. The man who wrote the news story for the Waynesboro paper had been a tickettaker on the Pen Mar merry go round when he was a teenager. Some people drove to Pen Mar in the same automobiles which they had used when the amusement park was alive, thanks to their antique auto hobbies. After the original band had finished its concert, several of its members joined a group of younger musicians and played for dancing on the turf.

But instead, I went up there a few days before the reopening to look and marvel in company of the county parks chief, who wouldn't tattle if I started blubbing. I didn't. I suppose that awe was my major emotion. At first, I also felt a considerable amount of confusion. When you drive to the park site, the road brings you to the other end of the park, the end opposite to the end where the railroad train deposited you. So when I stepped on the sanctified Pen Mar soil again, I felt disoriented and the park didn't look right. But when I'd walked across it to the new overlook pavilion,

and looked back, the universe had returned to its wonted order. As I'd anticipated, the park looked smaller than it had in my boyhood, and the absence of man-made things over most of its greensward was unsettling at first. But the county parks people, who are totally untrained in the science of park management and have no imported experts to help, had done a marvelous job. They'd taken out just the right number of scrub trees, leaving some big ones in the approximate places where memory and postcards indicated they should be. I suppose some of them are the original ones and I would have thrown my arms around at least one of them to greet it as an old friend, if there hadn't been so many workmen around and if there weren't so much attention paid nowadays to what appears to be unusual forms of sexual activity. The view from the overlook was hazier than I remembered it but that could have resulted from a trick of memory or an unusually hazy day or from a general increase in the pollution level nowadays. The view itself was different because of so much residential construction in the valley below since I stood on the structure's ancestor. That ramp bothered me a bit, not because it's different, but because I suspect that a wheelchair occupant who isn't careful and takes too rapid a pace down the slight slope toward the pavilion could go whizzing up that ramp and pop right through the railing, then describe an arc that would deposit him about two hundred feet further north and five hundred feet further down on the floor of the valley.

I picked up a couple of fragments of milky stone which I thought could conceivably be left from the original surfacing of a Pen Mar path, although I don't remember exactly what substance was used on them. And I made a minor discovery, a barely visible section of a large pipe barely poking through the soil at one point. Nobody else seems to have noticed it up to that point, and the director thought it might be part of an original drainage system.

So I wandered around and thought about the Thomson home run and wondered if Pen Mar could benefit from whatever incalculable forces resulted in the pennant for the Giants. So many things are inexplicable: the fondness of young people for Pen Mar lore, the uniqueness of this venture (many old amusement parks have been converted to other recreational purposes in recent years, others have regained some of their original élan after falling on hard times, but Pen Mar seems to be unique in the nation as a park restored after decades of complete extinction). Something curious became evident only later: the new Pen Mar Park has so far enjoyed freedom from the vandalism that plagues most of the area's parks. As far as I know, nothing has been swiped from the museum building, the signs haven't been defaced or pulled out, and there hasn't even been any disorder there serious enough to attain publicity. It's true that there was one big threat before it opened. While workmen were preparing it, they couldn't help notice how much traffic went up High Rock Road, which dead ends where the observation tower used to be and has only a few houses between the park and its end. Before long, the occupant of one of those houses was arrested. He'd been conducting a thriving business in drugs until the park ruined his isolation. He thought someone connected with the park had tattled and threatened to burn down everything. But nothing untoward happened.

Then the day after that pilgrimage to the new park, another omen was bestowed on me. I started to sneeze, my throat got scratchy, and in 48 hours, I had a cold, exactly like the ones that invariably followed Sundays at the amusement park. Is mountain air different

from what we tieflanders breathe? Or did the bacilli who were active in the 1930's at Pen Mar tell their children about what an easy mark that scrawny kid is, and did their children transmit the information to their own children, and did this bit of knowledge continue to be passed along from generation to generation until suddenly I returned, older but still recognizable, causing as much jubilation as the Spaniards who explored the New World and fulfilled the old tradition that pale men would someday arrive? Or are the colds I catch from going to Pen Mar somehow just another part of whatever ineffable secret lies behind the Pen Mar syndrome, as actual although hard to understand as the various features the blind men felt when they ran their hands over the elephant?

That unexpectedly large opening day turnout was followed by a remarkable outpouring of people to Pen Mar after the excitement of its reactivation had died down a little. Despite the creaky roads, a lot of organizations have begun to stage picnics there. After a couple of months had elapsed, I looked over the visitors' registers kept at the park for anyone who wants to sign it. I didn't try to verify the claim of park personnel that they had found in them addresses from all forty-eight contiguous states. But it was obvious that Pen Mar Park was attracting lots of people from far away, more than could have heard about the park's reactivation. On one day, I found signatures from Tennessee, North Carolina, Florida, New Hampshire, and California. On another day, people were there from Ecuador, Chile and England, and I don't know why this eruption of foreign visitors happened just then. Several big names in television were signed to a register, but I'm not sure if they were someone's idea of a joke or perhaps the real McCoy; Jean Stapleton's home and summer theater are only a couple of dozen miles from Pen Mar. A few visitors scribbled little notes on the registers. One man and wife wrote: "We met on the train to Pen Mar 50 years ago today." I liked very much the one that said: "Peace and Cumberland Valley." A Florida woman wrote: "The place Dad talks about." Someone from Bayside, N.J., wrote: "Lots of old memories are here." A Baltimore woman's remark is impressive if hard to understand: "You can't go home again--can you?" But the greatest compliment to the local parks board was the note from a Lake City, Pa., resident: "Buy Lake Erie."

Admittedly, some of those Pen Mar visitors visit the park sort of unintentionally. The Appalachian Trail, a famous hiking route that hovers around mountaintops right straight down the eastern part of the nation, runs right past Pen Mar, between where the sidings used to be and the overlook pavilion. The park is too new to be mentioned in most of the guides to the trail, and I'm sure it surprises a lot of hikers into stopping and looking around because they fear they've tacked too far to starboard for inability to find mention of something of this size in their guidebooks. The trail had little or no existence in this part of Maryland when Pen Mar was in its heyday, which is a shame, because I'm sure I would have gotten a big kick as a boy if the signs which now exist at the edge of the park had been there in the 1920's and 1930's: one points in one direction and says simply "Maine" while the other points the other way and advises "Georgia".

While nobody expects a continued restoration of the old park, it's beginning to look more and more as if another old structure may come back to life again. People on opening day enjoyed dancing so

much that a mixture of old-timers and new-timers provided music on another Sunday or two that first summer for the restored park. For the past two years, dances have been held on a more frequent and regular schedule at Pen Mar. They're supported by voluntary contributions from the dancers. Some of them have outdrawn the completely free rock concerts which are staged weekly at the much more accessible City Park in Hagerstown. But there's no real dance floor at the park. So an ad hoc committee has started to raise money to rebuild the dance pavilion and it looks as if the project will succeed at no cost to the county. In this case, the reconstruction probably won't be as precise in its imitation of the original structure, since the thinking is to provide a pavilion that could also serve for meetings and other events besides dances.

So far, there's no indication that my own pet idea will become reality. But I still have hopes for it. I'd like to see the Western Maryland Railway resume its excursion trains to Pen Mar. There is no reason why it can't be done, despite the complete discontinuance of regular passenger train service on that line. The railroad keeps enough rolling stock in operating condition to enable railroad fans to stage one or two all-day trips each year from Baltimore to Cumberland and even beyond sometimes, to photograph fall foliage, relive the old excitement of traveling on the rails, and sometimes to go down old spur lines that once served mining operations in the westernmost part of Maryland. I'm sure there would be enough patronage to justify excursions, particularly from the Baltimore area. County officials who must make frequent trips to Baltimore in connection with efforts to get state money for this or that purpose were complaining for a while that the people down there didn't seem interested in their applications for highway construction money or a site for a new jail. The Baltimore officials kept asking questions about how the Pen Mar project was coming along because they'd either visited Pen Mar when young or had heard their parents talking endlessly about it. Baltimore had a big amusement park or two early in this century, but Pen Mar seems to have been particularly favored by people in that area.

Something else that remains to be done is the completion of research into the park's past. There are many uncertainties, despite the thoroughness with which Pen Mar fandom has preserved memories and facts. For instance, I've been unable to determine who gave the park its name. As you might suspect, the name comes from Pennsylvania and Maryland. But the name wasn't attached to the area as soon as park development began. The stop was still listed as Waynesboro Station by the railroad for some reason (it's a half-dozen miles from that city, but it might have acquired the name because that's where railroad passengers could transfer to the trolley if they wanted to go to Waynesboro, which had no passenger train service). A lot of recent articles about Pen Mar and Judith's book have relied on an essay written by someone years ago on Pen Mar's origins, and I've discovered through local newspaper files that the chronology in that essay is wrong. The error enabled parks authorities to announce at the reopening that it marked the 100th anniversary of the original park's opening, but there's a lot of newspaper evidence to show that it was 1878 before anything in particular was done to attract the public to Pen Mar and full-scale improvements didn't occur there until 1880, when the railroad decided to close a park it had been operating near Baltimore and move its equipment

into the mountains. Maybe it's something I could do after retirement if my vision and ambition haven't given out completely by then. The main source of information would be old newspapers, and the task won't be particularly onerous: only the publications in Hagerstown, Waynesboro and Frederick are apt to have published much about the creation of the park, they weren't published oftener than weekly at that time, they normally confined local news to one page, so finding all the references to Pen Mar could be done in an afternoon or two with microfilms at the libraries in those towns.

Then there's a different kind of matter yet to be solved. Is it possible that the Pen Mar immortality is confined to the park's 47 acres? Or is it conceivable that the entire resort area in that part of the Blue Ridge Mountains is destined someday to revive just as the park has done?

Once there were scores of places where people could spend a few days or a few months in the Pen Mar area. Boarding houses, hotels, and guest homes dotted the mountainside. Most of them are gone, now, some razed, others destroyed by fire. There's no longer many private summer homes maintained by wealthy people in that vicinity. I suppose the private auto was mainly responsible: businessmen who used to commute between their jobs in Baltimore or other large cities and the mountain every evening or every weekend to get away from the heat or crowds eventually found they could achieve the same result by taking drives in their autos, without the expense of a second residence. The coming of the military in the form of Fort Ritchie seems to have done harm to the resort business, too, bringing too many people and too much traffic into the once quiet summer resort area.

But there are those who think the mountain will again prosper someday for resort purposes. I know one man who lives in Blue Ridge Summit who is convinced that the area could become another Aspen, and he has connections in the artistic world which increase the possibility that something will come of his dream. The scenery there isn't on the large scale of the Rockies but it has its merits, and for festival purposes it has the advantage of being isolated yet only a comparatively short distance from the major cities in the Northeast. In fact, if the local tradition is correct, the whole area became a summer resort complex almost spontaneously, as a result of the Civil War. This tradition is based on the fact that both armies marched through that general area after Gettysburg. Some officers are supposed to have admired the scenery so much that they returned to build summer homes there after the war. In truth, there seems to have been no significant number of substantial homes built there until after the war, and of course the coming of the railroad would have coincided very well with this theory on how the resort began. (The Western Maryland, incidentally, ran into a problem when it was laying tracks across the mountains. Its charter permitted it to run only in Maryland, and the lay of the land was such that detouring a short distance into Pennsylvania at one point would save immense amounts of construction expenses. Pennsylvania refused to permit the railroad to run even a short distance on its side of the Mason and Dixon Line. The railroad solved this problem in a forthright manner by laying its tracks in Pennsylvania anyway. Nobody in Pennsylvania had the getupandgo to tear them up. Maybe it was someone connected with the railroad who chose Pen Mar's name as a belated manner of softening a trifle the blow to that state's pride.)

If you'd like to know more about Pen Mar and you don't live in

this part of the nation, you have a problem. I think the restoration was unusual and important enough to have been chronicled in some such place as Preservation News, but I know of no national publication that has done an article on it. I doubt if the Schlotterbeck book is available far from Hagerstown, because too many people around here bought it up. You can see exactly what Pen Mar was like when it was brand new if you live near a library with a file of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, because it ran a full page of sketches made at Pen Mar together with an article in its October 23, 1880, issue. Another possibility is postcard dealers at flea markets. I've never collected postcards but I get the impression that those showing scenes in and near the city where the flea market is held bring the highest prices and those from far away are normally sold quite cheaply. Hundreds of different pictures from Pen Mar and surrounding area were issued over the decades, many of them were mailed to friends and relatives by visitors in vast quantities, so it's very possible that the Maryland section of a postcard dealer's stand in Oregon or Texas would contain at least a few Pen Mar postcards. (If you don't want them but you see them and they're cheap, buy them for me and I'll trade back issues of Horizons for them. There are many Pen Mar postcards I don't own and would like to have, but the prices around here have gone completely out of sight. And incidentally, there's another Pen Mar mystery involving postcards. I've always understood that before color film was generally available in the 1930's, full color postcards were achieved by handcoloring of black and white photographs. But I've heard elderly people describing how well they remember the red or blue or whatever garment they were wearing the day when they happened to be at Pen Mar when the postcard photographer happened to be there and immortalized them on penny postcards. Maybe it's memory colored by the sight of the postcards. Or maybe the photographers occasionally took postcard pictures with the "one-shot" cameras which achieved color reproductions with black and white film by taking three pictures simultaneously through three filters, creating negatives which could be used by engravers to reproduce the natural colors.)

And if by wild chance I should actually inspire some fan to visit Pen Mar Park, I should warn that he'll probably get lost unless he goes by way of the Appalachian Trail. The roads in that area are so confusing that I still get lost about one out of every three times I set out for a destination somewhere in the vicinity of Pen Mar. The local newspapers published a little box containing instructions on how to reach Pen Mar, the day before the reopening ceremonies, and those instructions were wrong. There are signs at a few places along the roads which point to Pen Mar but you can't be sure if any given sign refers to the park or to the remains of the community, which are in slightly different locations. Just a few weeks ago, I heard about a woman in Blue Ridge Summit who had recently discovered that her father had been the manager of the California labor camp to whom John Steinbeck dedicated The Grapes of Wrath. I went up there to get material for a column about her, stopped at the library to ask directions to her house, and I would estimate that the people there spent five minutes giving me full instructions on how to reach without getting lost her home which was not more than a quarter-mile distant. I think this somehow involves Pen Mar Park's refusal to adhere to the normal limitations of time and probability, and I wouldn't be surprised if some multi-dimensional nexus is bending the roads into another space-time continuum.