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I've never understood why I should date February an issue of Horizons which is stenciled in December, run off in January, and read in March by most recipients. Nonetheless, this must be considered the February, 1981, issue, also known as volume 42, number 2, FAPA number 159, and whole number 164. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., does the December part and the Coulsons become active in January.

### In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: I reached for my destapler as soon as I saw how this mailing was put together. But I remembered the importance of the thalamic pause and pretty soon I decided that I like it the new way. It's easier to keep the entire mailing together without overlooking whichever publication happens to be at the bottom of the pile. Besides, my guilt complex is energetic enough to create trouble if I removed the three official editorial staples: I would spend the next six months or so worrying about the danger that a postal inspector would worm his way into my home, get a look at the separated contents of the mailing, and immediately bill FAPA for all the postage saved by the new method plus triple damages for my meddling or something worse. Another Remarkable Fanzine: The notes on drug humor remind me to ask about something. The basis of humor is supposed to be misfortune. So, do all the drug users who joke about drugs really consider them as bad as death, accident, degradation, and all the other misfortunes that are the basis of other jokes? Bobolings: On the proposed amendments: I'd favor equalizing domestic and foreign dues as long as the United States dollar remains weak. I favor retaining the "black ball" which isn't a blackball provision no matter how often it's called that. The instant membership provision should remain, on the theory that eventually FAPA members may become sensible to use it. I'm not strongly for or against eliminating the rule against serving as president or vice-president oftener than once every five years: the change might permit better administration for FAPA in some years but it would be yet another stagnation factor for the organization if the same persons held the offices year after year. I'm very strongly in favor of permitting new members to have four mailings for their first year of activity credits. But perhaps there should be a requirement for an incoming member to pay his first two years' dues on admission, forfeiting the second year's money if he can't renew after one year; this would discourage the habit of joining FAPA to get four mailings at low cost with no intention of ever becoming active, the original purpose of the quick activity provision. The dues increase seems necessary, unless Bruce's special fourth class rate method creates a radical cut in expenses. (My mailing arrived with only three cents in postage affixed, but that seems a bit too much of a saving so other stamps must have fallen off en route.) Or perhaps the dues should be determined by the incoming secretary-treasurer each year on the basis of current expenses, removing the need to amend the constitution periodically. I see no reason for changing the nomination procedure. If a member who seeks office won't take the trouble to read the constitution and determine proper procedure, he will probably make an unsatisfactory officer. Conacs: Learning that Lee Hoffman will be fan goh in Chicago made me briefly feel I should start making plans to attend in her honor. Then common sense came to the rescue: with six or eight thousand people attending, I'd probably get



about twelve seconds of time to talk with her, I'd be crowded out of the rooms for her official functions, and I wouldn't talk to more than five or six other fans who had ever heard of her. I don't think worldcons are any place for fanzine fans to be nowadays. Damballa: I've stopped worrying about interesting FAPA members with what I put into Horizons. Instead, I concentrate on what interests me. That way, when ten thousand words or so of an article result in three or four lines of comment in the next mailing, I have the satisfaction of knowing that one member was interested in the article, even though the 65 others evidence no interest at all. Disinformation: If I were still researching for fan history manuscripts, I would ask about the origin of the "ct" preface in mailing comments. I'd never noticed it until 1980, but I gather from this and that remark that it's been appearing in some apas longer than that. The inventor really should be identified while there are enough active fans on hand to figure out the identity. Drivel: I doubt if there is any solution to the problem of indifferent kids and indifferent parents available to individuals who want to help. Maybe the best procedure for society would consist of devoting time and money to the parents and kids who do care in an effort to prevent the entire nation from turning into boozing serfs. Dynatron: One alternative to selling the house and vainly trying to afford the purchase of a new home elsewhere would be renting the ancestral mansion and renting an apartment or house in the new location. This avoids interest and possible tax problems and also permits moving back eventually if the new location turns out to be unsatisfactory. ' ' If you think Steve Martin is unfunny on television, you should try to read his writings. I'd put him with Tennessee Williams and Barbra Streisand in the forefront of the most incompetent celebrities of the second half of the century. ' ' Art Sehnert sticks in this memory mostly in connection with the Dixie Fantasy Federation. This national organizing effort seems to have come after his southern fan group's heyday. The Echo Beach Quarterly: I watched that Australian jail television series once or twice, waiting for something else on the tube. It had the merit of performers with memorable faces, something rare in United States television, and I didn't see any car chases which was another thing in its favor. Now the Washington station which was carrying it nightly has dropped it and several episodes are being shown one night a week on a Baltimore channel. Faandomreport: I won't be joining NDAPA and I believe my reasons for abstinence are similar to those that many other FAPA members will have: most of us are beyond the first outburst of fannish enthusiasm, we find it hard to be active regularly in one apa, and joining another apa would make things even more difficult. Fantasy Commentator: It seems a bit presumptuous to put down foreign language fiction claimed as science fiction, without a thorough knowledge of the language and actual reading of all the works in question. From all I can find time to read in Quarber Merkur, I get the impression that fantasy and science fiction can be found much more frequently than might reasonably be expected in many European languages. And I suppose it could be argued that many "travel tales" were science fiction when written, if created before anything was known of the parts of Earth where they are set. ' ' Langley's self-induced slowness in reading Stapledon strikes a familiar chord in memory of the years when I left one Beethoven sonata or Brahms intermezzo unplayed in the volumes of printed music I owned, just because I hated to reach the condition of having no more first hearings



ahead for such basics of the piano repertoire. Now it's the other way around: calculations on how much great music will remain unfamiliar because I won't have time to learn to enjoy it all. ' ' The Promise of the Future's society might sound logical and efficient and all that. But it shares the flaw inherent in almost all utopias thunk'up by fiction writers: to achieve and maintain it, humans would lose almost every freedom they now possess and would endure regimentation as severe as that in an anthill or beehive. ' ' The de Voto reprint doesn't jibe with the accepted fable about lack of women in magazine science fiction during the era it involves. ' ' I wouldn't be surprised at any prices anyone paid for anything in the science fiction field these days. A dealer's catalog came the other day including among other incredibilities an asking price of \$45 for the issue of Ted White's Zip in the February, 1955, FAPA mailing, mainly because three pages contain a Harlan Ellison contribution. Flo&c: Horizons serves me much as Mike Glicksohn's FAPazine does him, as a memory jog about my own past. I would never believe some of the things that have happened to me, if I hadn't re-read them in this publication years later. Hawai'i: Leapin' lizards, someone in FAPA besides me reads The Sporting News. I thought I was unique in that respect, although I seem to remember Russell Chauvenet referring to his collection of Sports Illustrated. We become more like Archie Bunker every year. Helen's Fantasia: The Dracula-Frankenstein double bill which Peter H. Johnson tells about attending in 1938 must have been the same re-release that I saw, wrote about, and then reprinted my reactions several mailings ago. I wish I'd been inspired to go to Romania (which still looks like a misspelling to me, since I was a stamp collector before the United States changed its official spelling of the nation's name). ' ' And I believe I wrote an article about Marschner's fantasy opera for the WSFA Journal some years ago. One fact which the Wolf Trap program fails to mention is the opera's date: it was produced in 1828, long before the vampire theme became popularized in fiction. ' ' The Fig Newtons may be fiction but much of it sounds like an adaptation of Helen's own experiences in Romania. Horizons: The curse worked. I haven't seen that wonderful dealer at the Funkstown flea market since writing about him, and other dealers are mystified by the fact that he has reserved space several times and failed to show since I cut that stencil. Kittle &c: The Nebula index answers one question for me: how long I've been waiting to be paid for the story by me which that prozine published, just over a quarter-century. Llanathony: It's not exactly right to say film gets darker the longer it's developed. The longer it's exposed in the camera, the darker it comes out of the developer. Correct exposure but overdevelopment builds up contrast, leaving shadow areas little affected. There are other ways to reduce grain, besides cutting back on development which can lead to flat-looking prints: use an enlarger with diffusion rather than condenser light source, buy a slow film, choose a fine-grain developer although this can reduce overall sharpness in big enlargements, and print on a textured paper. But chromagenic films are about to come on the market which will solve much of the grain headache. They are basically color film without colors which have the added virtue of permitting their silver content to be salvaged in the development process. Lofgeornost: I feel the same about the way daily life should be emphasized in history books. This is the maddening thing about the big histories of this city and county. They go on and on about who held office, Civil War engagements,



and when the city adopted new charters. But there's not a word on such basic matters as when and why local blacks who once were scattered all over town became segregated in one small area or how many local families had live-in servants and what sort of financial arrangements existed for persons employed as domestics. Red Shift: This is the first Skippy paean I remember seeing in any fanzine. It's been a long while since I saw my copy of the book, followed the comic strip, or saw the movie. One puzzle: Was there more than one movie on the Crosby characters? I've seen tv listings for Sooky but I seem to remember a movie entitled Skippy and it hardly seems probable that a one and only movie would be named for the subsidiary character. '' Ah, those regrets for lost things from one's past. I didn't do any great amount of model-building and most of my losses involve later years. I'm very bitter over my employer's failure to turn over to me my negatives when I got out of photography as part of the job: nobody else will be able to identify them and many of them would have meaning to various local persons and organizations. Now it's almost certain that a sort of musical scrapbook which my father collected and handbound when he was young, and which I used when I was learning to play the piano myself, is gone beyond retrieval. An old aunt who had it has died and my offer to buy it back has been ignored. Misled Ptah: I wonder if there's any fan in Memphis who would like to trade a halfhour or so of time for a stack of copies of Horizons? I'd like to find someone who would look at a microfilm or two of any 19th century Memphis newspapers that might be available, for what might have been published about the death in that city of a young Hagerstown woman who was becoming famous as a pianist. I can supply her name and date of death, a city of Memphis' size probably had only weekly newspapers at the time, so it would require looking through only an issue or two after that date. '' If you feel oppressed by the Elvin pilgrims in Memphis, just think of the fate of Dick Bergeron who lives in the same apartment building where John Lennon was killed. Moonshine: It's very good to see Partial Recall continuing at last. Every time a pioneer fan goes into detail about his career in fandom, some additional morsels of information about the field are preserved for posterity. There's the additional benefit for some of us of having our own memories pleasantly stimulated, every time we run across a name or an event which we can remember but hadn't had occasion to remember until reminded in this manner. I do wish Len could have gone into more detail about his war experiences and reactions. But there seems to be considerable reluctance among many fans to write on this topic, in strong contrast to the way so many mundanes are prone to erupt with endless recollections with the very minimum of encouragement. I suppose it's connected with the general pacifist sentiments of most fans. Of Cabbages and Kings: Come to think of it, there hasn't been a surplustock sale in FAPA for a long while. Maybe the organization's financial problems could be eliminated during the 21st century if all surplustock were stashed away from now on in some safe place, then sold for incredible sums a quarter-century in the future with proceeds going to the treasury. Phantasy Press: Maybe Dan could publish now some of that material meant for issues of his fanzines that didn't materialize. Besides the intrinsic interest in anything out of fandom's prehistoric era, it would be the fannish thing to do, getting things into print about a half-century after the original schedule. And we desperately need someone to write a really big history of the prozine letter columns. Dan's extracts in this issue de-



monstrate the information that can be found in them about fandom. Later on, the letter sections offered much fannish humor and priceless illustrations of how famous fans were in their foetal stage. Neither Sam Moskowitz nor I covered this phase of fandom adequately in our long works. The Rambling Fap: Don't forget to leave room on that boat for several cannons. If things become nasty all over, the only flourishing organizations remaining active will be crime gangs and piracy might be one of their sidelines. And I can think of something else that forces the individual to get enmeshed in acquiring all sorts of expensive extras. Just go to a florist and make arrangements to send a flower to someone in another city. I did it for the last time a year ago. The special fees for this and that cured me from this form of sentimentality. SF-Horizons: Maybe it's different in England and Australia. Around here there are vast quantities of unemployed persons who not only lack "post traumatic neurotic effects" but are generally happier than those of us who work for a living. Synapse: As I understand it, a migraine headache results from malfunction of an artery leading to the brain. A sick headache can come from worry or constipation or many other causes. "I think Elizabeth Walton feared loving things, not just mentioning things, the time she thought death came to anything she loved." This pious trust that zip codes differ for thoroughfares in a city with similar names is unfounded. In Hagerstown there is just one zipcode which is common to such separate and geographically distinct pairs as Sheridan Avenue and Sheridan Drive; Reynolds Avenue and Reynolds Road; Harwood Avenue and Harwood Road; Cherry Tree Lane and Cherry Tree Drive; Park Lane and Park Road; and Columbia Avenue and Columbia Road. I wouldn't be surprised if it turns out that Speer's refusal to write out addresses in full has caused the current campaign to adopt nine-digit zipcodes. Dormouse: If it's obvious that Lewis Carroll was fond of opium, as that deep thinker Grace Slick assures us, it's even clearer that W. C. Fields had the same habit. After all, he starred in a movie entitled Poppy. Wyrd &c: I wonder if those pregnant-looking figurines from antiquity were created that way simply because men preferred plump women. A century ago, any woman with the dimensions of today's Miss America candidates would have been considered hopelessly scrawny and a probable sufferer from tb to boot. Prehistoric humans must have suffered from a constant struggle to find enough food so they could dream of women who were well-rounded from overeating. It's not different from today's fondness of some men for women with flawless complexions, as evidenced by retouched photographs and heavy makeup in movies, simply because hardly any human females have that kind of skin on the face. And if this is guessing, so is 99% of the material in a book like Sex in History involving prehistoric times. There is no way to be sure that today's primitive tribes' customs are trustworthy guides to prehistoric mankind. How can we be sure that the stone age women were constantly pregnant? Their rough life must have induced endless quantities of miscarriages. I have much doubt about these authoritative-sounding population estimates for humanity thousands of years ago. There just isn't any way to be sure since the premises on which the estimates are based might be completely faulty. How can anyone decide today who did the actual agriculture work ten thousand years ago, or if the male-female division of work differed from one area to another? In the past few years, we've learned how many things which happened during the Vietnam War were not reported accurately; can we trust any history, old or recent?



## Waiting for Harlan

Long ago, I used to run a regular feature in Horizons which reviewed FAPA mailings a specified number of years earlier. I no longer remember if it was a ten-years-ago system or some other period of time. Then it occurred to me the other day that a one-shot revival on a larger scope might be a good way to fill up most of this issue's stencils. I rooted through the jumble of old mailings on the attic and came up with the 74th mailing issued just a quarter-century ago. I didn't compare it with other mailings from the same general period to determine if it's substantially worse than the average mailing of that period, better than usual, or otherwise a good or bad choice for the purpose.

Then the next day I read in Phantasy Press that Dan McPhail plans a series of reviews of old mailings. I thought briefly about abandoning my intention, to avoid any appearance of imitating Dan or stealing his thunder. Then I decided to go ahead on the grounds that this won't be a continuing series and will deal with a later era than Dan intends to cover, minimizing the conflict. Besides, I couldn't think of anything else to write about which could be stretched sufficiently to fill up this issue.

The February, 1956 Fantasy Amateur provides intriguing contrasts with FAPA as it now exists. It lists 548 pages in the 74th mailing, which I remember as about normal for that era. Besides their fatter condition, the mailings a quarter-century ago differed from today in the fact that almost everything in them was specially published for FAPA, not genzines or publications produced primarily for other apas. I'd guess that recent FAPA mailings have had from one-third to one-fourth of their total page content devoted to the non-FAPA type of publications. In a sense, this is a reversion to the original concept of FAPA as a place where members could exchange their fanzines efficiently to one another; it was several years before the concept of producing fanzines solely for FAPA became general. But a substantial proportion of non-FAPA publications in mailings today must be partly responsible for the decline in mailing comments; it's hard for many members to think of something to say about fanzines which are primarily meant for others' eyes.

One surprise came from the roster. Nine of the 65 members in 1956 were women, even though joint memberships didn't exist as yet. It looks as if there will be no more than six women on the roster when the February, 1981, FA is published, even though the general trend in fandom as a whole has been to a vast increase in the number of women proportionately. I am also surprised to find that so few FAPA members in 1956 died in the course of the following quarter-century. Even though a few members then were approaching or in middle age at the time, I'm certain about the passing of only five of them: Martin Alger, Les Croutch, Walt Dunkelberger, Ron Ellik, and Vernon McCain. I hesitated over two or three other names, with the vague notion that I'd heard somewhere that they had died, but I may be confusing them with some other deceased fans. It's quite possible that a few of the more obscure members in 1956 are no longer with us and news of their passing isn't generally known: who has kept track of Mike May, Ray Schaffer, Jr., or Don Wegars, for instance?

I believe I had just recently returned to full fannish fervor in 1956 after the semi-gafia which I'd reposed in for about a decade so some of the members I barely remember may have been more prominent



in general fandom than I know. Even so, I can recognize many gaffed names whom I'd love to see back in fandom today. For instance, what ever happened to Maril Shrewsbury? She was the only fanzine fan known to me who was a full-time carnival employe, traveling the circuit of fairs in the midwest and somehow managing to write and publish occasionally. What's Andy Young doing these days? I seem to remember hearing about his brief reemergence at a con somewhere and word that he's still a scientist but I wish he'd become a fan again as he was when learning to become an astronomer. I count fifteen members in 1956 who are still on the FAPA roster as I type this stencil, although a few of them dropped out some time during the quarter-century and rejoined.

And with no intention of being disrespectful to the present waiting listers of FAPA, I would venture the opinion that the waiting list in 1956 had more names to conjure with. Would you believe among the 34 individuals on the waiting list a foursome like Harlan Ellison, Norman G. Wansborough, Damon Knight, and George Wetzell? Incidentally, current concern over the fact that most waiting listers never develop into longterm, prolific FAPAns might be alleviated by the fact that among those 34 waiting listers of a quarter-century ago, only Karen Anderson, Curt Janke, Rick Sneary, Lee Jacobs, and possibly one or two others ever did anything in particular in FAPA.

One ambition that I may not find time to satisfy until after retirement is a long article about Vernon McCain, including copious quotations from his writings. He is almost forgotten today, even though he was enormously active for quite a few years, in FAPA and in other phases of fandom. Part of this neglect, I imagine, derives from the fact that he rarely appeared at cons, didn't live in cities with large fan populations, and so doesn't figure in many fans' memories as someone they knew personally. He didn't write humorous material very often, perhaps 95% of all reprints from old fanzines involves humorous material, so there's another strike against him. And he didn't become conspicuous as a feuder. It's a shame. Vernon's prose didn't attain the level of that created by Lee Hoffman or Walt Willis, two of his contemporaries who have survived in fanish lore. But it was consistently high. And one of his finest attributes was his habit of expressing himself fully. His letters were long, his fanzines were fat, and if he were alive and engaging in fanac today, maybe he would be giving a useful object lesson to the fans who write a sentence or two on a topic that leave the readers with the sensation of having overheard just one snatch of a long statement. In the issue of Birdsmith distributed 25 years ago, Vernon took off on a casual remark I'd dropped in a recent Horizons and didn't stop until he'd written almost three pages on the topic. This was even more thorough than the usual treatment he gave the average comment hook. But I'm going to reprint most of it with a few unindicated deletions, both as a sample of his fan writing and because of the nostalgia inherent in what he'd written:

I'm curious about your statement that telegrams used to go faster than they do nowadays. What era are you referring to? If you are referring to the pre-1925 Morse era I must admit to considerable ignorance. I'm not a Morse operator myself and I wasn't around Western Union (or any place else) in those days. But what I do know about Morse makes it seem unlikely that transmission was more rapid then. There were some extremely speedy Morse operators but I question



whether it is possible to send any message faster by Morse than on a teleprinter. And I know nothing in the method of relaying Morse which had any superiority over the methods used shortly thereafter with the printers. It was this relaying which slowed down messages more than anything else. I didn't start work for Western Union until four or five months after they absorbed Postal Telegraph but if conditions elsewhere were at all similar to my home town then competition didn't have much to do with the speed or lack of same in transmission of telegrams. In Nampa, Postal was very definitely the weak sister of the two. Western Union had three operators in winter, six or seven in summer and four or five messengers. Postal had only one employee, the widow of a former Postal manager who had defected from Western Union after a quarrel. She was so incompetent that she found it necessary to quit after several months as a Western Union employee. And Postal had no messengers. I think they handled about 5% of the telegraph business in Nampa and the Western Union messengers used to stop at Postal on their way by, picking up their occasional telegrams and delivering them out of charity or something (they weren't paid for it, anyway). I understand that the only thing which kept Postal alive for a good many years was its quite prosperous cable subsidiary, Mackey Radio. If you are claiming that the speed of telegrams has decreased any time during the past decade then I can assure you that, on the average, at least, you are wrong. Under the old method where messages were relayed through a whole series of offices, with a different operator sitting down and typing the whole message again, service wasn't at all good. Our instructions were to tell customers their wire would arrive within an hour if in a nearby state; which was a big fat lie. A wire transmitted in that length of time was a decided rarity. I'd say the average was about two hours, cross-country. It was a system which was wasteful of labor and gave poor results. Therefore, it wasn't surprising that W. U. was in very bad financial shape in the late '40's. I expected them to go bankrupt at almost any time and was looking around for some more secure type of work. But about 1950 they completed installation of the present reperforation system which involves a large use of feedback and various electronic gadgets. Under the new system a message is punched only once and with only slight assists elsewhere (an operator in a relay office or two may have to check the tape to see where it's going and push a button to route it....in many cases even this is not necessary but the whole process is automatic) the message arrives at its destination an exact replica of the way it was originally typed. The system isn't perfect or foolproof but it is a vast improvement over the old methods. Our instructions now are to inform customers that straight wires to anywhere (cross-continent or the town 20 miles away it takes about the same) will arrive within approximately half an hour. I will agree, however, that there are delays due to the constantly increasing wages it is necessary to pay. When I went to work as a messenger in 1944 I drew 40¢ an hour. Five years earlier it would have been 25¢. Today messengers start at 85¢ and rise to a maximum of 94¢ in about six months. If the new minimum wage law goes into effect they'll get \$1.00. Other employees wages have raised by similar percentages. As Early Night Manager in Wenatchee (a position two or three levels lower than that of manager in my home town) I drew exactly twice the hourly rate the manager who hired me was then drawing. Under such circumstances it is necessary to watch the payroll far closer than in the past since the cost of telegrams has increased slightly less than 50% while wages were



more than doubling. When I went to work, during wartime, the management was pitifully pleased to have you work any overtime you were willing to. Today you have to have an awfully good reason to draw time-and-a-half pay. In part, the company has managed to compensate for rising wages with their mechanization program. The total number of employees has been steadily dropping as the equipment grew more efficient and wages rose. But where we used to keep a messenger on from six to ten pm merely to take out perhaps six messages and sweep up before he left it is now much cheaper to phone out perhaps four of the six and hire a taxi for the remaining two which constitute either death or serious illness messages or are addressed to people without phones. And a janitor usually comes in one hour a day. It's more efficient than using the expensive time of messengers who usually don't know much about janitor work in the first place, and have less enthusiasm. The economic facts of life require that the force on duty, messengers or otherwise, be geared to perhaps 15% above normal business so everyone is almost constantly busy. Any abrupt rise in business (including the nightly rush period from 4-530pm) finds the employees with more work than they can handle promptly. So messages are delayed in both transmission and delivery. In this respect I'll admit the telegraph industry has slowed down. It's no longer possible to keep a couple of spare messengers sitting on the messenger bench in reserve in case you happen to need them. The company's in a lot better health than it once was, chiefly due to some clever top-level thinking. A few years ago they juggled around the minimum allowances in such a manner that they encouraged people to send longer telegrams, gave them more for their money, increased their own income slightly, and gave their regular customers a good deal more for their money. In doing this they made the telegraph service less attractive to the once-every-six-months user but it was a move I thoroughly admire...and it resulted in those slightly-less-than-50% increase in rates I mentioned a bit back considerably less if figured on bulk rather than minimums. Incidentally, on this business of delayed telegrams I constantly hear about them, socially, at the counter from customers recalling previous unsatisfactory results, and from irate customers whose recent message didn't arrive as soon as they wished. On the theory that a customer who is ignorant of the fact is far more likely to be a dissatisfied customer than one who knows all the facts (not to mention the fact that he's flattered by the attention) I've made a habit of tracing down the reason for delay on each one of these where I hear about it within a short time after. I've found that at least 60% of all such instances (possibly the figure is a good deal higher) are not Western Union's fault. Either the customer who sent it gave us an incorrect address or similarly fouled us up or else the addressee has moved or temporarily left town without telling anyone his forwarding address. (In a surprising number of cases the addressee got the wire ok but just didn't bother doing anything about it and not infrequently later lied about the time of receipt to alibi himself.) Of the remaining instances the vast majority are due to either stupid or new under-trained employees. Very very few are traceable to the telegraph company's equipment, policies, or rules. There are exceptions of course. Remember the Nixon speech in 1952 when he urged all the televiewers to wire the Republican National Committee whether they wanted him to stay on the ticket or not? A sizeable percentage took him at his word and the worst traffic jam Western Union's ever seen resulted. Under the old system it wouldn't have been so bad since



most operators have a certain discretion about their work. But machines don't. Every wire addressed to Washington D. C. was automatically routed onto the relay office's wire to Washington. But since such traffic is usually limited most relay offices have only one such circuit. When the circuit is in use the messages pile up on reserve spools of tape and wait their turn at the circuit. But in this case not only was the circuit tied up but very soon all the reserve spools were also. While the new messages waited for space on a spool wire elsewhere were also delayed. This wasn't too serious as the relay offices have a good deal of storage space. But what was serious was that other normally urgent traffic to Washington was having to take its turn along with all the Nixon messages. And by the next morning the Washington circuit in Portland had over 24 hours traffic piled up in reserve for the Washington circuit. In the East they were able to borrow extra circuits from Philadelphia and New York to Washington to help clean it up but at this distance that was impossible. So we all received word to delay the Nixon messages until further notice and transmit only non-political messages with the Washington selector. I don't know if that is the reason or not but we can't send direct to Washington any more. All Washington messages are now routed through Oakland first.

To forestall criticism from those who think I'm the only one who ever does such things, Vernon wrote all that in one paragraph, just as I've reprinted it. He was working in Wanatchee, Wash., at the time.

Lee Hoffman alone accounted for 105 pages in that mailing. She lavished on FAPA simultaneously the first three and I believe the only issues of Fanhistory and a oneshot entitled Keep Your Cotton-pickin' Hands Off My Fanzine. Each Fanhistory dealt with a particular topic: numbered fandoms with emphasis on Seventh Fandom, Damon Knight and Jack Speer. I can't figure out any logical reason why I should quote from any particular item when all three issues contain such a wealth of fascinating material. Arbitrarily, then, here are portions of Jim Blish's memories of the individual who insisted at the time on making the first letters in his name lower case:

At the time of damon's first marriage, which took place during the biggest blizzard New York City had had since umpteen years before, Virginia and I had a seven-room house on Staten Island. Since both damon and I were free-lancing that year, he and Trudy moved in with us; there was plenty of room, and we thought it might be cheaper for both of us. For some time, damon and I shared the same working quarters; our working habits were about the same (out of bed at the crack of noon, slop around in robes waiting for the afternoon mail, give up all pretense of getting anything done before dinner, and then run the typewriter like fury from 8:00 p.m. until two or three in the morning). We had also done three collaborations up to that time, and expected that with this arrangement we would do quite a few more. (We did two.)

For a while this worked like crazy. For one thing, the wives got into a kind of cooking competition with each other, so damon and I ate like kings (and pigs). I don't think either of the women was ever declared the formal winner, but I do know that Trudy almost did for me. She cooked German style, the sauerbraten and potato-dumpplings kind of meal, and after one of these I could just barely stagger to the couch and lie down. The nights Trudy cooked, I sometimes



didn't get to the typewriter before midnight; it was all I could do to breathe. Both damon and I were thin and skeletal at the start of this contest; before it was over, you could have prodded a two-inch dent into any part of either of us.

Of course, it wasn't exactly as cheap a life as we'd thought it would be. Besides, we all developed a passion for Monopoly, which kind of cut into the writing hours. The arrangement finally broke up after an ungodly run of bad luck: damon had meningitis, Trudy had appendicitis, our first child died; damon took to calling the house "Miasma Corners".. In addition, the Knights were getting tired of living in what amounted to one room. They left, after being with us about a year, and soon after that we sold the house.

Maybe somebody is interested in those collaborations. "No Winter, No Summer", "Tiger Ride", and "The Weakness of RVOG" were all written in the same way; they were stories on which damon had gotten a good start, written himself into a corner, and given up for the time being. On the first one, he also had the ending in mind, but couldn't see how to get to it; on the second, he had an ending he didn't like; the third stumped him completely. I suggested that I try to take a crack at finishing them, and he agreed. "The Secret People" happened the other way around: I had a start on the yarn--about a quarter of the finished story--and didn't know where to go from there; damon finished that one, while we were living together, without any further work on my part, except for about an hour's conversation about damon's notion of 'neutranellos'. "Tiger Ride" was also written on Staten Island. The one yarn which damon and I really wrote working side by side, paragraph by paragraph, was aimed at Planet Stories and failed to go there even after three rewrites; it is so thoroughly and awfully a Planet story that Harry Altshuler, damon's current agent, won't even give it back to us for fear we might offer it somewhere else and ruin our reputations forever.

After damon moved to Canadensis, Pa., and I to Milford, I suggested that we try collaboration again, and see whether or not we could turn "The Weakness of RVOG" into a novel, writing alternate chapters. As it turned out, our approaches had diverged too much in the intervening years to make that possible; we had the manuscript about half written before it became evident that damon didn't like the direction in which I wanted to take it. He thought we ought to backtrack to somewhere around Chapter Three and start over again from there, and he didn't have the time for it; he was busy writing "Hell's Pavement". So he turned the project over to me, to take it where I would.

Though I first met damon when he was about fifteen (and so was I), I can't say even now that I know him well; he is not the kind of man who gushes confidences. But I have some impressions that I think are medium-reliable. For one, damon seems to me to love the truth more than anybody else I know; it seems a point of honor to him to weigh his opinions and then tell you exactly what they are, and damn the torpedoes. I think this is evident in his criticism, but it's also true in his personal relationships; though I have the impression that the sometimes brutal frankness of earlier years has lately moderated a little. He laughs easily and often; the most minute incongruities tickle him. Like many writers, he is an intellectual snob, but fools amuse rather than outrage him, which makes it easy for almost anybody to get along with him. During one period when Virginia and I were down to our last pennies, he sent us his latest story check, though his situation was nearly as bad as mine,



because he couldn't bear to think that I might be doing without beer. He won't kill anything, not even vermin, and the day an opossum came to live under his front porch you would have thought he'd been given the Nobel Prize. He wants to own a coprolith, not to use as a paperweight or for any other practical purpose, but just to be able to say he owns one. Lately he has discovered that he is a poet, which seems to intoxicate him; it is, of course, a heady discovery for anybody to make about himself; I think he is a good one, too. (Virginia, a poet herself, agrees.)

I can't put these impressions into any better order than this because Damon is a complex person and I wouldn't know which of his complexities to stress above the others. For all I know, the coprolith may be more important than the kindness, though I doubt it. As a writer, I think he is one of the top ten in science fiction, and one of the three or four most thorough craftsmen the field has; as a friend, he's one of the best.

Leeh's KYCHOMF is a wonderfully mixed up assortment of mailing comments, tiny essays, one-liners, letter quotes, and other things. One of its longer sections deals with various circumstances involving Walter A. Willis. Quoting part of it might be a good idea, in view of the upsurge of interest in WAW which the huge Warhoon issue created and the small wordage I could squeeze into A Wealth of Fable on the topic:

But what I started to tell about is this faaanmag which maligned Shel, prob'ly unintentionally. In it some neo is telling about the so-called Willis Death Hoax. This youngster claims that Shel and I were so taken in by the hoax that we were writing frantic letters to Ireland to find out about it.

The only people taken in by this so-called hoax were a few neophytes and a few people whose contact with Walt was so slight that they could reasonably believe that news of this nature might reach them in such a trivial manner.

I came in and found the card--a dirty file card mimeoed sloppily and mailed in the manner of a post card--in my mail. I glanced at it and tossed it aside. I suspect that ShelVy did the same. I cannot imagine any fan with good sense who was associated with Walt as closely as ShelVy was, accepting a piece of drivel like this as fact. For one thing, Shel would most certainly have been the first U S fan to know if anything had happened to Walt. Tell me, how could a neo in California of whom no one had ever heard, have gotten such news, mimeoed the notice and mailed it, before ShelVy who was in close contact with WAW and his family? Isn't it logical that, had anything happened to Walt, his wife would have cabled ShelVy?

I ask, how can any fan with a normal I Q and the ability to reason with any skill at all malign ShelVy to the extent of claiming that he was writing frantically to Ireland because of a clumsy item like the WAW "Hoax" card?

I know quite well that he wasn't. I got an airmail letter from him a day or two after the card arrived, advising me that he'd gotten one of the things and that it was some imbecile's idea of a hoax.

The same untruther who maligned ShelVy also claims that the WAW With the Crew Fund suffered because of the hoax and almost fell through. If it did I damn sure didn't hear about it. Nor did ShelVy, for he told me shortly thereafter that the fund was coming



along well.

I could never figure the purpose behind the so-called hoax. It could have been an attempt to sabotage the fund...if it had been successful it certainly would have. But I suspect it was just that the person who made up the cards was too young to reason out the possible results of his "hoax". And to reason out for himself the facts why it couldn't possibly be successful, and could result only in unfavorable notoriety for him.

I still have my card, by the way. That night after Lee Riddle called, I mailed it to Walt. He typed a note on the back to the effect that it was an overstatement, and returned it.

Oh, Lee Riddle's call? Well, Lee wasn't closely associated with WAW. When he got his card he looked somewhat askance at it (I think) doubting its authenticity, but since he wasn't in direct contact, he wasn't sure about the thing. So he phoned me. I assured him it was all a "hoax". I'm quite sure he had figured that all along.

ShelVy was, of course, Shelby Vick. Incidentally, the .....s which appear occasionally in these quotes belong to the originals and don't signify my occasional cuts which I am not signaling because this isn't a serious research tool for learned scholars.

Another remarkable thing about this 1956 mailing involves the titles of the fanzines it contains. It seems highly improbable that a thing as evanescent and short-lived as fanzines should have created the situation, but out of the 41 items in the mailing, six are fanzines still alive in the sense that issues with the same editor and title were published in 1980: Stefantasy, Le Moindre, Helen's Fantasia, The Rambling Fap, Phantasy Press, and Horizons. Additionally, The Fantasy Amateur necessarily has a different editor but still exists and I believe it was not long before 1980's arrival when the last issue of Grue appeared. I may be technically wrong about one of these survivals: Bill Danner normally refers to his publication as simply Stef nowadays, and I haven't dug out recent issues to see if they contain the longer name on the colophon or elsewhere. Bill is long out of FAPA but he was quite active for a time in the organization, and had four publications totaling 69 pages in this mailing. Three of the four items were letterpress, representing goodness knows how many hundreds of hours of manipulating handset type. I made one of my less-known contributions to FAPA by turning out halftone engravings for Bill on the newspaper Scan-a-graver. It cost nothing but a few minutes' time, because there was often room to insert the small photographs which Bill's page size necessitated on the drum in areas which newspaper engraving photographs didn't occupy; the plastic would otherwise have been wasted. Dean Grennell was writing The Skeptic Tank regularly for Stef in that era. Here are extracts from one column in this mailing:

You must be familiar with the way that breakfast food has long been sold by means of the clubs and premiums it fosters rather than by its tasty and nutritious qualities. When Tom Mix was alive--and perhaps for a while after his death, I don't know--the Ralston people pushed their pap with a club called the Tom Mix Straight-Shooters. It was complete with all the usual appurtenances: buttons, secret codes and passwords, hats, belts, etc. Personally I have a towering aversion to Ralston products which I intend to carry to the grave, ever since I was eating some of their bite-size shredded Ralston while reading a book and unwitting took a mouthful that contained,



along with the Ralston (no bargain itself), a well-chewed cud of discarded gum. Somehow, I've always felt that giving away pre-chewed chicle was carrying service to the consumer a bit too far.

But I digress: some time back, I found one of those old Straight-Shooter buttons and that's what bothers me. The obverse side shows a picture of Tom Mix's palomino horse who was apparently called Tony. But on the reverse side, neatly printed on the concave inner surface of the button, there is a single word, printed in majuscule Gothic, blue ink. There it sits, baffling my best efforts at any sort of far-fetched logical explanation, the single word: GUILTY.

Now, for the love of God Montresor, WHY do they have that word printed on the back? It required extra effort and expense to put it there. What possible purpose could it have served? Did it appear on all TMSS buttons? Were there others that said INNOCENT on the back? Did it figure in some sort of game the Straight Shooters used to play? What sort of subversive, Un-American group were they anyhow and why hasn't McCarthy done something about it? Or were the buttons made up by some manufacturer who used metal that had been printed on previously for some other purpose (Heaven alone knows what!)? Does it have some religious significance, perhaps as a reminder of the hopeless load of Original Sin? Can anyone shed any light on this perplexing matter?

Only this morning I passed a parked car while walking down the sidewalk and I noticed a cardboard carton on the ledge behind the back seat. It was a plain gray box, roughly four inches cubical, and it bore, on two opposing sides, the simple legend:

One Supernova Kit

Good Lord--are they releasing those to the Do-It-Yourself crowd now? I was sorely tempted to wait till the driver returned and accost him with the question, "Hey, bud--wottinell's a Supernova Kit and what do you plan to do with it?" I really regret now that I didn't because I know I'll fret about it, perhaps for years to come, as I have over that damned Tom Mix GUILTY button.

I don't remember if anyone provided Dean with an authoritative answer to his pin puzzle. Maybe his discovery has gone unnoticed since by the collectors of old radio premiums and if publicized now would increase the value of some buttons like postage stamps which have an error in design or color. Something else I don't understand is why nobody has ever produced a Dean Grennell anthology. There has never been anyone in fandom with quite his knack for verbal pyrotechnics. A certain tiredness or dilution or something crept into his FAPA writing in the past few years, but there must be enough Grennelliana from his prime to fill a hundred pages or so.

About once a year, someone in FAPA stencils a wistful wish that Phyllis Economou were still a member. Her Phlotsam's fourth issue was in this mailing. Much of it is devoted to mailing comments which would need too much glossing for reprinting here. But one article, entitled Just Phyllisophizing, might explain to today's younger FAPans the persistency of those references to her:

Movies may be better than ever, but not from where I sit rocking--and knocking. Oh sure, I see an occasional picture that sets me lilting. But where, oh where, are the thrills of yesteryear?

Now I fully realize that exalting past glories is a symptom of senility. I fully realize, also, that every word I am about to say will inexorably date me--but what the deuce? Senile I may be, but



I'm not quite as old as Tucker yet, and I'm growing younger every not-birthday.

Besides, it should be understood that my movie-going started very, very early. When I was scarcely out of rompers, my long-suffering parents discovered they could have an entire afternoon of peace every week, simply by dumping me in the Strand theater for the kiddies show on Saturday at 1:00 PM. There I would remain noisily happy, up in the "children's balcony," while features came, went, returned and departed again. There I would remain--despite parental orders to leave at 4 sharp--enthralled by the exploits of Ken Maynard, Tom Keene or Charlie Chan until Dad came prowling the aisles searching for me at five, six or whenever patience gave out at home.

What current cinematic product could have such effect? We have all become too sophisticated by far. In the early days, the movie makers knew how to take an emotion, squeeze, wring and mangle it until the viewer was a bleeding pulp. I do not remember when I last cried at a movie, but I shall never forget the Niagara of tears I shed during a scene from a now-forgotten film snuffled through back in early childhood. The situation and denouement have vanished from memory, but this one great, this tender, this poignant scene remains; a masterpiece of tragedy.

There was this old man, see, and there was this little girl, and they loved each other dearly. He was her grandfather, maybe, or perhaps he had rescued her from selling matches in the snow. Anyway, they loved each other dearly. But for some reason "They" took her away from him and put her in an Orphanage. So in this one unforgettable scene, the Little Girl is sobbing at the window of the Orphanage, her tiny hands desperately clutching the Bars, while the kind old Gentleman sadly makes his way down the path to the Gate, turning but once to look back at his small loved one with tear-blinded eyes.

Brings a lump to your throat, it does. Well--doesn't it?

Now, for sheer terror, those old-time movie-makers were unequalled. Today's whippersnapper producers and directors lack the touch of their forebears, and that includes young Al Hitchcock. What current film can cause you to tremble, blanch, shriek and shrivel with undiluted fear as did "The Cat Creeps"?

For those of you who unfortunately missed it, or were too young for such fare, I will attempt to briefly recapture a bit of the impact of that epic of horror.

There was this creepy old house, with all these creepy old characters creeping about. And; of course, a Young Beautiful Heroine, and her sweetie, the Young, Handsome Hero. So the YBH is there for the reading of her grandfather's will--they had loved each other dearly--and you can just sense that the butler is Up To No Good. At any rate, she is willed a diamond necklace--I'll tell you how it was found in a moment....that's one of the best parts!--and she's sooo very happy she wears the necklace to bed and drifts off to sleep with her hand on the glittering bauble. So back of her bed, a great canopied affair with draperies descending from the back, the wall move s. The draperies sway and this horrible claw-like hand slowly approaches the throat of the sleeping girl. Talk about suspense!

Suddenly the claw-hand grabs the diamonds and disappears! The girl wakes up shrieking, everybody comes running, and in the confusion you just sit and wring out your sweater.

Then you notice that everyone is a-pounding on the wall behind



the bed trying to locate the culprit's escape route. They batter, bang and gouge--then all of a sudden the hero touches a hidden spring and part of the wall slides back, revealing a doorway! In the doorway stands a Dead Man, glazed eyes staring, arms at sides of rigid body, and as you gasp he falls straight forward on his face--ker-plunk on the rug. Shriek! Scream! Talk about drama!

But that wasn't all. One of the Best Parts I skipped away back there. That was when they were looking for the diamond necklace. The details are hazy here, but anyway, the will said that the necklace was hidden and for some reason gave coded instructions for finding it. Something about counting grapes. So, in the middle of the night, our Hero suddenly realizes that perhaps the code referred to the library, where carved grape clusters bedecked the paneling hither and yon. So he betook himself off to the library in the wee hours and started working his way around the walls, pushing assorted grapes in search of grandpa's hidey-hole.

Well now, sitting innocuously in the library, was this sofa. Every time the nice young man turned his back to it, that gosh darn sofa would creep up on him. Two paces to the right Our Hero would step. S - l - i - t - h - e - r, and the sofa would be one pace closer to him. Talk about scared! Well, we weren't quite certain just what that sofa intended to do when it caught up with our boy, but we knew in our quivering bones it was Up To No Good. I don't remember what happened next--whether Our Hero subdued the sofa, or the sofa did him in (temporarily of course), but to my Dying Day I'll never forget that ominous, creeping couch....

On reading back, I'm inclined to think you woulda hadda seen this sofa bit to get the full impact of Mounting Horror, of Evil Incarnate, of--well, gee, you don't have to LAUGH!

In the old-time Romance department, my memories are sketchy. Such fillums were out of bounds for me, although I do remember faunching vainly to see Garbo in a passionate epic called "Inspiration"....translated by me into "Inspiritation." However, judging by the quality of their roaring Westerns, marvelous Mysteries and hair-raising Horribobbles, I would venture to say that, had I been permitted to view the celluloid Romances of the day, I would now remember them as far superior to any of the heart-throb fare offered today. I'm convinced that the romantic feats of Valentino, (before My Day, I hasten to add!) John Gilbert, Ramon Novarro, and the other Legendary Lovers, far surpassed today's tepid Romeos such as Robert Wagne, Rock Hudson, Tony Curtis, Tab Whatzizname, Rossano Brazzi--Rossano Brazzi--Brazzi--~~hmmmmmmmm~~....

Well, as I've been saying all along--Movies Are Better Than Ever!

Les Croutch's death some years ago resulted in next to no reaction in fanzines I received. Les wouldn't have been happy in today's fandom. He was isolated in Parry Sound, Ontario, and couldn't have gone con-hopping after the manner of today's majority of fans. His fanzines would have brought little response among fans accustomed to offset reproduction and professional-level illustrations in most fanzines, because Les published fanzines that looked pretty much like the letters he wrote, legible but informal in syntax and format. But I liked Les enormously, even when he occasionally lapsed into crudeness in his efforts to seem sophisticated, and if I had succeeded in going to Torcon, I had promised myself I'd make the side trip to visit whatever may remain of his family in the town which is now



better known for having produced Bobby Orr. Les had a ten-page issue of Light, his longest-running fanzine, in this mailing. From it I gather that the most remarkable of all the FAPA discussions was in progress or just subsiding in early 1956 because it contains a letter from Norman V. Lamb with this statement: "Belt with the friction-type clasp--never wore one--wouldn't chance it. Not old fashioned enough to wear a belt and suspenders too but I do like feeling secure." Maybe when I'm dead and gone and someone sums up my career in fandom in an article somewhere, the writer will decide that my most significant achievement was my introduction of the friction belt buckle topic in FAPA. That innocuous-seeming topic somehow touched an overwhelming primeval element in the fannish psyche and for mailing after mailing, there were discussions, reminiscences, charges and countercharges on this particular specialized subdivision of male wardrobes. Elsewhere in this issue is evidence of how long ago 1956 was with respect to another essential in the human male's decency. In a mailing comment, Les wrote: "Button-fly trousers are still common up here, Dean. In fact, half the trousers that I own have button flies. I like the zipper because it is neater--no gape. But watch it if you get a zipper with a poor lock--the damned thing'll slip and start sliding down." And as a sample of Les's longer mailing comments, here's one on Primal:

A lot of highly interesting crud in this issue. Warner's discussion on Organized Religion parallels my ideas to some degree only I refer to it not as Organized Religion but as Organized Churchliness. There is nothing wrong with religion, or Christianity that abolishment of the Churches and the people who manage them won't cure. We don't need Churches. We don't need ministers. But I do believe we need a return to the sincere simple sort of religion our forefathers had and that the Bible seems to teach. Sitting in a sumptuous edifice that cost enough money to feed and clothe a lot of needy people, listening to some man preach at us, is not my idea of worship, nor do I think it will get us to the Happy Hunting Ground a bit faster than if we went out into the fields or woods and with the trees and animals all around us, tried to reach a personal communion with whatever being we feel is God! You won't find your Religion by listening to somebody else and his ideas. You've got to think it out yourself and find your own way and your own philosophy and answer your own questions to the best of your ability....Capitalism is relative. Anyone with a better home, a much better job, more money than you is a Capitalist, especially if you happen to be hungry, living in a hovel, and maybe out of a job. What IS a capitalist, anyway? In my idea, it is just some guy with CAPITAL--more capital than YOU have. I've had guys call me a capitalist and say I was getting rich because they figured I charged them too much for repairing their radio! Damned foolishness, I figure. In my book every man is entitled to get as much of this world's goods as he can, and more power to him...money, muscle, brains, it's all superiority in one way or another. I don't believe in equality, because there just isn't any such thing. We certainly aren't born equal, regardless of what some people say. We are never all equal. One baby is born with more money in his future--another with better muscles--another with more mental ability. Why hold the people who can climb higher up the ladder down to the bottom rung? What would there be to work for then? If everyone was held to a common level what sense working, inventing, thinking, trying to improve oneself? I don't begrudge any man getting more than I do or



working his way up the ladder, if he is smarter, or luckier, or stronger. He's welcome to it and more power to him. But, on the other hand, I'll be damned if I believe in sharing what I've got by work and ability with some stupid clod too lazy or dumb to reach my level. If he can't get up to my level that's HIS tough luck and why should I support him? I don't expect it from those above me, so why should he? If the underdog is down because of no fault of his, such as a broken leg, or illness, then that is a different story. But how many of the so-called "underdogs" are there because of conditions out of their own control?

The Fantasy Amateur in this mailing contains much food for today's thought. Tantalizing, for instance, is an announcement of the availability of an 8 mm color film showing a mailing being put together. It was offered on loan to anyone who would pay postage. In it were Ron Ellick, official editor at the time; Don Wilson, the secretary-treasurer; Ed Cox, the vice-president; and C. Stewart Metchette who was neither officer nor member and apparently was just a drinking companion on mailing production day. Lee Jacobs offered to let anyone who had a projector see the film. I wonder if it still exists in any accessible place? I'd be glad to pay the duplicating expense so I could have a copy of my own today.

The egoboo poll results were announced in this FA. Voting was done a quarter-century ago on a ballot distributed with the November mailing. I can't remember why the change was made and I wonder if this might not be the better system, since it removes all temptation to make voting decisions on the basis of extra-fine things in the February mailing in which the ballot now comes. Votes had been cast by 33 members. My theory that the simpler the egoboo ballot, the better the chances for a good turnout seems reinforced by the fact that this poll had asked members to submit first, second and third place selections in eight categories. There were no agonizing decisions over how to split up a large number of points, and fewer overlapping categories. (Poet and fiction categories existed then, and have long since been dropped by lack of ammunition; the others were for best article writer, humorist, artist, mailing comments, editor, and publication.) Alas, only three of the top twenty FAPAns in the grand total compilations of votes covering all categories are still FAPA members.

There had been quite a bit of organizational foofaraw in FAPA going on just before this FA appeared. It announced the passing of two constitutional amendments, eliminating a grace period on the deadline for dues and permitting the secretary treasurer to succeed himself. But another proposed amendment which would have raised the membership limit to 75 had been defeated narrowly, 22 to 18. There had been a minor eruption over Pete Graham's late posting of a post-mailing meant to save his membership. Don was trying to peddle a lot of surplus stock: complete mailings that had previously been offered hadn't sold. He hadn't been able to balance the FAPA books, lacking \$11.64 which financial records showed should be in the treasury, so he admitted his urge to list that sum as "paid out for miscellaneous expenses" unless he decided to take up religion.

At this point, I have prepared a special surprise for all of you. Just as the old golden age radio programs frequently featured a celebrity as special guest star, in addition to the cast of regulars, I've decided to interrupt this essay for one special page. As a result, if you will turn to the next page, you'll start reading



## The Worst of Martin

It was Sunday morning, around 8:00 a.m., of all ungodly hours, when I noticed a slight upset feeling in the pit of. Since I've never had an upset stomach, I thought it was novel and paid it little mind. As the morning wore on it grew worse. Around 10:30 I tried a half cup of coffee but that only got my underwear all wet--I should have drunk it instead. At noon, the local doctor (?) arrived and decreed that it might be appendix or virus or sumptin. We could have told him all that! So he gave me a shot in the arm and mentioned that when it wore off around 6:00 p.m., if I still had the pains, we might assume it was appendix and head for a hospital and a blood count. Well, sir, and mam, I had a half-egg, a half cup of coffee and a half piece of toast (things are rough all over!)--friends always said I did things by halves--it would have done your heart good to see my wife cutting an uncooked egg in half. Reminds me of the story about the 80-year-old man who married a 20-year-old girl and after their wedding night the girl was asked--well, this is no place to go into that. Suddenly it's 1:30--just an hour and a half--and already the shot has worn off. Wife calls the doctor again but he's out. She informs us that they have a surgeon all ready and waiting--can't you just see him there by the 'phone, all white coat and scapel? We've been exposed to unknown surgeons before but we restrained ourselves admirably. We did not tell her to turn her surgeon loose on the Sunday roast, or shove him up her cathetra--all we said was: No, thanks! Man, did she get frosty.... Then we called this surgeon we knew who is one of the top men around these here parts. He, for the first time in years, had left the state for the day but his associate, Dr. Deal T. Aseltine, Jr., would be glad to examine. We figured nothing good could come of a name like that, but on the other hand, at that point, what else could we do?

We raced up to the hospital and signed here and there about forty times. Dr. Aseltine looked like sleepy "Joe College" and apparently all the young nurses were crazy about him--this seemed like a reasonable recommendation for any surgeon....Got there around 3:00 p.m. and they proceeded to count my blood. As you can all well imagine this didn't take long, after they found it. Come to think of it, they never did put it back. Up to this point all my symptoms indicated simply that I was a pain in the ass and nothing more--all my complaints were just a little different from anyone else. But by the time they got through with the blood count they knew something was shortchanging me--not noticing the pure cognac--and they decided I should go "upstairs". (This was said with the raising of one eyebrow misleading me for a while into thinking there was some sort of bordello above--which was all right with me since I have Blue Cross.)

Were it not for that half-egg, half-etc., I would have gone above right away, but because of my big meal we waited until sex, six! This couple of hours were not wasted, however. One joker came in with a scapel and a jug of Old Spice and went to work on my middle. This thorough clean sweep is startling on a male. I frighten myself in the shower now, being hairy only from the knees down. For a while I looked like a plucked chicken, now I look like a plucked chicken with five-o'clock shadow...After surveying the results of his efforts I began to feel real sorry for myself, and everyone related to me, and decided the least I could do is not die until it



grew in again....Due consideration of the entire area in question and a geometric approximation of the pivot gave rise to the frightening doubt: just what are they going to operate on? In order to keep abreast of things, so to speak, I put up no argument when a spinal was suggested.

It being Sunday an exception had to be made in my case. No one had planned on operating, the room was cold, sterilizer unheated. So we all went "upstairs" around six and proceeded to fuss around rather nonchalantly until 7:00--cleaning knives, forks and spoons, looking for sterile robes. "Have you seen my rubber gloves?" "No! Who did you operate on last?" This sort of continuity makes you wonder if it isn't possible to call the whole thing off. Finally the anesthetist wanders in, burps, and gives me a couple of shots. Then he starts jabbing my middle with pins.

Yes, I know The Worst of Martin normally comes out neatly with its final lines at the bottom of a page. But I recklessly embarked on this modernistic squandering of white space by the wasteful decision to skip a line between extended quotations and my own comments. As a result, I didn't know how to signal the transition back to me if a quote ended at the bottom of a page. I promise to return to my usual conservative format with the next Horizons, before I find myself enmeshed in even worse makeup traps. What happened next in that operating room will be found in the May Horizons.

Occasionally someone speculates in a fanzine about the longevity of the breed: how long the paper on which they're duplicated will remain easily handled without crumbling or cracking, how much fading of paper or ink will occur, and so on. I can't see any deterioration in the physical aspects of this mailing after a quarter-century with one possible exception. It has been stored most of that time on the attic in its original light tan envelope with other bundles above and below it but nothing to block light from reaching the sides. There's little direct sunlight into the attic and it's not very well illuminated most of the day. So storage conditions have been moderately good from the standpoint of light. But temperature extremes are frequent: it gets unmercifully hot all summer long and winter temperatures are only slightly higher on the attic than outdoors. I don't see any changes in paper color in this mailing, unless there has been fading or darkening so evenly distributed over the entire page that it's unnoticeable. I seem to detect a slight stiffening of some of the mimeograph stock which might be sheer imagination on my part or a signal that in another quarter-century it will be difficult to turn certain pages without breaking off pieces of them. The only possible candidate for serious deterioration is a Walt Coslet fanzine. He apparently used ditto reproduction and on two pages, the typing is blurred with severe show-through blobs on the other sides obscuring what's published there. But the other pages in the issue show no trace of this problem. It might have come off his duplicator that way or it might have gotten that way since 1956. I think every word could still be read if the light were better and my eyes were younger.

I haven't seen Sally Dunn's name in a fanzine for many years. Maybe she's still around under a married name and maybe she's long gaffiated. The issue of Driftwood in this mailing seems to characterize her as a few years ahead of her time. I don't believe the all-out rebellion of young people began until the 1960s, but Sally was evidencing it already. She was "a sophomore at the College of



Wooster, who, contrary to the traditional mores for the young female coed therein, both smokes and drinks in moderation and likes it." She hated people asking her "What are you taking up?" when they learned she was going to college, and "many is the time I've drawn blood from my tongue to keep myself from saying 'My bra strap. You?'" Sally described Wooster as "a militantly presbyterian school, which is nothing against Wooster but plenty against the militant asshood I was showing by coming here in the first place. No one of my turn of mind should pass closer than twenty miles. A liberal here is regarded with the calm tolerance accorded a leper in biblical times. I went in to talk to the president the other day about a letter of recommendation (oddly enough he is a liberal and says I'm not a good one, probably right too) and he told me that even he had heard about the scandal I caused in my dorm last year by not keeping my mouth shut about my views on religion. All the other liberals on campus keep their mouths tight shut on the subject, an attitude I consider hypocritical." So she was planning to transfer to one of several "noisily liberal schools so that I can finish an unknown laborer in a common vineyard." She seems to have caused considerable alarm in the mind of her more orthodox roommate who "has not yet begun carrying her long, vicious looking letter opener to bed with her but that too will come with time. All in all I'm enjoying myself hugely." Sally did one thing that made happy her philosophy professor who "is two years younger than ghod and lacks only a long grey beard": she broke her leg a few months back. But she seems to have had some effect on the student body. The other day the student chosen to say grace in a dining room had created a sensation by the form it took: "God bless this food and the hands that prepared it, please forgive them for they know not what they do."

The most spectacular cover in this issue belongs to Null-F, Ted White's FAPazine. He mimeographed his own drawing in at least three colors, red, blue and yellow, and I'm not sure if a couple of spots are the result of overprinting by two of these hues or a fourth type of ink. Registration is perfection in my copy despite the fact that it's a complicated sketch with lots of fine detail. Most of this issue is mailing comments; but one of them is long enough to be enjoyable without memory of the issue of Grue which inspired it:

I was very happy to see that you are starting a series on the long-gone pulp zines. I think they will assume a stature (to collectors, at least) up with, or above the 'dime novels'. On DOC SAVAGE, I am once again re-reading my (incomplete) collection. It strikes me that while several different men wrote the series, someone (John Nanovik or perhaps Dent) rewrote them slightly to preserve the style, which unquestionably continues up till the last 1949 issue. In fact, it is the style of writing alone that attracted me to the series, and has kept me re-reading it. Dent is mentioned only once in the zine. In the Jan. '43 issue (I believe that is the one--the first digest-size issue, at any rate), cover credit is, of course, given to Kenneth Robeson, but the lead page of the story carries the by-line of Lester Dent. This is not too unusual--Dent may well have written the series, for he was appearing in many of the other S&S mystery mags of the times--MYSTERY, CLUES-DETECTIVE, CRIME BUSTERS, etc. The editor under whom DOC SAVAGE prospered and was his weirdest was John Nanovick. He left around 1940, and I don't remember who took over, but W. J. DeGrouchy (general fiction editor for all S&S) took over around



'42, with the result that Doc got straighter than a finishing nail, and not again till 1949 departed into the realm of the fantastic. I don't believe W. J. personally supervised the mag during the war, but he took over again in '47 along with a female whom I've forgotten (used first initials only--I never realized she was a she till I saw her full name in an old UNKNOWN). The mag really went to the dogs, with first-person stories, often told by a woman. The first of the 1st-person stories had a nice prolog introducing the change, and wasn't bad. The others stank. Then, in late '48 Daisy Bacon took over, the mag went pulp, and returned to the fantastic with the last issue, which featured Up from the Earth's Center--a genuine fantasy. Unfortunately, the stories did not return to their former length as the SHADOW mag did. Originally they were advertised as "90 page novels". The last several issues featured "30 page novelettes". The changes in the mag are easily reflected in the changes of editors. There were three or four in the '40-'43 period, and the mag showed it. But undoubtedly the best were the '33-'38 ones, edited by Nanovick, illustrated by Orban (as were the later ones), and sporting some beautiful cover paintings by Walter M. Baumhoffer, who painted covers as late as '36. RGHarris did quite a few, up till about '38. Harris has popped up recently in the slicks, as another S&S graduate, Earl Mayan (illustrator of the SHADOW just after Edd Cartier) has. Emery Clarke then took over as cover artist, and loused the covers of DS with his dull-toned paintings till the zine went digest, when Modest Stein completed the job. Modest has turned up illustrating PRIZE WESTERN COMICS, and several others. Cartier did a few paintings, and one cover drawing in '48, after some "artist" creamed the mag's circulation with photomontages and abstracts. The pulp issues (three) brought back George Rozen, old-time SHADOW man, who fairly well revived the spirit of Baumhoffer, with his well done paintings.

As to Doc himself, he seemed to go through two types of fluctuating periods: changes in story types, and changes in the character of Doc Savage the man. Early stories were devoted to some form of the fantastic. Thirty-foot giants, artificially controlled....A green and radioactive meteor....A city near the center of the earth with inhabitants who mastered gravity and who killed with ultrasonics....The discovery of a city (dead) under the sea, and pills therefrom which released oxygen into the body directly, making it unnecessary to breath....Even as late as '37-'38 there appeared a story (tied into the last mentioned, which appeared in '35) called THE RED TERRORS concerning a people who lived under the sea, with the same pills, and a strange deep blue atmosphere which formed a sphere around the city to hold the water back (this was in shallow water). In '41 the Rustling Death appeared, in which a man kills with ultrasonics and infrareds. But generally speaking, the stories changed from fantasy-adventures to straight adventure, with the fantasy element debunked at the end of the novel. Carry-overs were an excess of science, perhaps, and Doc's own gadgets, which were legion, and existed until the middle forties when "Doc remembered, wryly, the gadgets with which he used to putter in his earlier days. They were of no real use to him now, but they carried sentimental value, so he still used them from time to time...."

From "debunking ghosts", Doc turned to fight mad scientists and such. Most weren't really mad--they had some scientific secret, and were terrorizing the nation for blackmail. They usually succeeded until the last chapter. Then Doc became a straight detective, who



merely specialized in the strange, which usually turned out not to be. In about '43, Doc began finding (and saving) secret war weapons, and foiling insidious plots by our enemies. This carried on a little after the war, with the hunt for Hitler. In '47, there came the new look, and the title change to DOC SAVAGE - SCIENCE DETECTIVE. Doc used less science, and did more detecting during this period than any other. This was the period of the symbolic covers, generally credited with wiping out the Street & Smith chain of pulps. In late '48, Doc returned to his old format, and finally met the Devil's helpers in Up from Earth's Center. (At the end of the story, it turned out the demon was genuine....)

Paralleling the changes in story types (which remained whodunits in one form or another--always a secret to be revealed in the last paragraph), was the growth and change of the character of Doc. Doc started out, a young man--one would think about fresh out of college, except that he never went to college (he was trained from childhood by scientists)--fresh and interested in all. He was inscrutable as to personal feelings--the story was told from an aide's viewpoint (time to mention that Doc had five aides who were Doc's closest friends, only two of which seemed to survive the war years). Doc was always looked up to with a little awe. He wasn't super-human; merely the perfect human, with one achilles foot: he couldn't understand women, and was scared of them (his aides however did not share this attitude, and usually would be found fighting over the women involved in the story). Came the war years, and the viewpoint shifted to Doc himself, who was suddenly very human, very fallible, and his aides shifted into the background. He never quite recovered from this attack of weakness, and from then on, was never quite the Doc of old. I missed the better-than-average Doc Savage of the thirties, myself.

I make no pretense at completeness in this survey. For example, the mailing contains an issue of Grue, about which it's impossible to decide if the Grennell prose or dozens of ATOM illustrations deserve the most praise. Several favorite Burbee items appear in an issue of Burblings, but he has been reprinted so often that there's little need to refresh memories about his excellencies as a writer. There isn't room to deal adequately with the 48 pages which Georgina Ellis contributed to this mailing. The Poo which Andy Young had in this mailing doesn't contain enough extended material to represent a fair example of his writings.

And I've also said nothing in particular about the present FAPA members who contributed to the mailing 25 years ago. One reason is the fact that most of them haven't changed radically as writers or publishers. Phantasy Press had at the start of 1956 Rogers covers, mailing comments, and tidbits of information about the earliest years of fanzine publishing. Jack Speer for some reason used Ker as the title of his contribution instead of his usual title, but the contents are quite similar to what we find in Synapse today, except for a smaller amount of nitpickings in 1956. Gregg Calkins was serving with the Marines when he published the sixth issue of The Rambling Fap, and he was excited about having acquired an auto just recently, not a boat. Helen's Fantasia is instantly recognizable for the writing style, but the subject matter was much different in 1956 because the Wessons were in Japan and Helen was writing mostly about that nation. I suppose the big difference about Le Moindre was the fact that it was in the mailing unlike its modern issues which always seem



to creep in all alone before or after the mailing itself. Horizons was a better publication in 1956 because I hadn't been made grouchy yet by the Martin affair and because I took the trouble to run several things in each issue instead of taking the easy way out. (It takes less time to think up one long article than several shorter ones.) The biggest change among this group of 25-year survivors must be Bob Pavlat's fanzine. He called it Contour then, used an unusual format ten inches high and six and one-half inches across, and devoted this issue to both his own writings and contributions from outsiders. If that isn't enough, how long as it been since you saw a Bob Pavlat fanzine with a cover depicting a nude (discreetly sketched in a back-turned pose)?

I don't intend to prove or argue anything in particular by all these pages. I tried to choose superior items or particularly characteristic quotations or material with appealing subject matter to reprint, and I don't want any younger FAPA members to think that everything distributed a quarter-century ago would stand up as well if reprinted. That mailing contains a few crudzines, a lot of unimportant mailing comments, and some articles which have lost their original appeal because of the passing of time. So it would be wrong to try to decide on the basis of these reprinted hunks of 1956 FAPazines if the mailings then were better or poorer than today. There was more to most mailings then, the average quality of reproduction wasn't as good as today, but it's very difficult to make judgments on literary and interest-holding qualities of the contents of mailings then and now.

All I can do is try to find a few trends in addition to those I've already cited in the course of this article. Without compiling accurate statistics, I believe a greater proportion of the mailings then were devoted to independent articles, stories, and even mailing comments so extensive that they could be regarded as disguised articles. The average age of FAPA's members was almost certainly substantially lower in 1956: I don't think any member was beyond the fiftieth birthday in 1956 and only two or three on the roster were within a few years of it. The bulk of members were probably in their twenties and thirties. It might be imagination, but I seem to detect a greater amount of energy in the mailing as a result. There was also more homogeneity on the FAPA roster. In 1956, almost all FAP. members were also active in general fandom; the only exceptions I can find are Bob Bloch, Bill Danner, Ray Higgs, Howard Lyons, Ed Martin, Jack Speer, Helen Wesson, and possibly Bill Evans; I could be wrong about one or more of them. Today, perhaps three times as many FAPA members aren't active in fandom otherwise to any great extent although they may attend cons in their pro status and mingle with many fans there. So almost everyone knew one another to a greater extent in 1956 and this must have caused members to want to read the mailings promptly and publish more regularly. I saw no evidence in a quick glance through the 1956 mailing of the familiar patter of 1980 about not having read the last few mailings and about publishing only because eight pages are required to renew membership.

But this is obviously only one way of looking at the comparison. If there's a new member of FAPA with access to a mailing from the 1950s, a comparison from that other angle would be instructive. I just don't know how much I'm influenced by my own aging, by the happier circumstances in which I lived in 1956, and by the general magic which nostalgia works on honest efforts to be objective.