This is the last issue of Horizons before its editor, Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U. S. A., becomes a senior citizen by some standards. It's volume 44, number 2, FAPA number 167, whole number 172, dated February, 1983. The Coulsons do everything except the writing and stencil-cutting.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Its front cover almost caused me to revert to my long-ago status as a stamp collector. I hope it's only my fevered imagination that causes me to worry lest this beautiful display of postage stamps cause most of FAPA's surviving active membership to resign in favor of tweezers, hinges and approvals. '' I haven't seen any petitions yet, so I gather that all those ATMs on the roster portend a lot of lost members for reasons other than philately. Someone with spare time would do FAPA an immense service by a recruiting campaign for new waiting listers, like the one Andy Andruschak accomplished several years ago. If nature takes its course without such assistance, FAPA could find itself with fewer than 65 members by the end of this year, creating further inroads on already eroded page totals for mailings. Cloud Chambers: Dave Langford's horror story about the terrible ordeal of moving caused me to wonder something: if there's some sort of exact ratio between a fan's age and the probability of a changed address for that fan over a twelve-month period. As an individual grows older, more possessions accumulate, psychological factors work for stayput habits, and job seniority may militate against moving. But I wonder if the declining moving rate shows a uniformly steady movement as you survey older age groups, or if it is irregular with little change during a fan's twenties, perhaps, then an abrupt decline in frequency in the thirties and a gradual leveling off for older fans. Disinformation: This argument that legalized drugs would reduce crime created by their illegality was advanced a half-century ago to end Prohibition. Alcohol now has a role in a vastly greater number of crimes annually than occurred before Repeal from alcoholic causes. If other drugs were legalized, consumption of them would increase so enormously (because they would presumably be cheaper, would be more readily obtainable, and would appeal to those who are currently avoiding them because of lawabiding habits) that the drug problem would be infinitely worse than it is today. Moreover, a substantial percentage of all persons who use cocaine, marijuana, and so on indulge because they're illegal and legalizing one group of drugs would cause millions of persons to turn to worse things which would remain illegal, solely because it would be a gesture against the law. Another Remarkable Fanzine: Wouldn't the psychotherapist who declined to treat a client's fetish and instead introduced him to a woman with the same problem incur the Hlavaty wrath? If the mind doctor won't permit the client to receive the treatment he has sought help for, isn't that as serious an interference in the client's life as my desire to prevent people from using illegal drugs? Lines of Occurrence: Bob Shea obviously hasn't had much experience with dogs, particularly certain bitches immediately after bearing pups, if he thinks dogs don't eat dogs. '' WOOF is the rediscovery of an ancient fannish custom. Several of the earliest worldcons resulted in special issues of fanzines distributed together, much like this recent procedure. Hawai'i: If that's the correct spelling of the place name and fanzine, what's the right pronunciation? I've heard the w pronounced as a w and as a v and

sometimes not pronounced at all. Dormouse: If the March Hair was wearing a dress, that was probably supposed to clue in readers to the fact that he was perverted, like many hairdressers. '' Watch out for newspaper photographers when taking time off for non-existent illness. One Washington County man lost his job some years ago when he pleaded illness so he could go fishing, and a journalist who was looking for a photograph which would symbolize a lazy summer day snapped and published the fisherman's picture. '' The conreport gives the strange impression that it describes things which happened in United States fandom back in the 1940s or 1950s. So much other material about Australia in fanzines from down under gives the same impression of applying to North America as it was decades ago: more rural area, smaller congregations of people, not so many extremely large cities, for instance. Mutterings from the Teapot: I've heard the same theory advanced to explain Greek legends borrowed to account for an abnormally large number of superstitions associated with South Mountain, a northerly spur of the Blue Ridge about fifteen miles east of Hagerstown. A 19th century woman filled an entire book with them, calling it "South Mountain Magic". The underground railroad had a main line running through that mountain and some people today suspect that the legends were deliberately manufactured by abolitionists in order to keep people from wandering through the mountainsides after dark and seeing things they might report to authorities. Philosophical Gas: It's interesting to get this favorable report on Charles Ives from an Australian. I've wondered for a long while if his music would mean as much to me if I didn't have the old melodies he quoted so often as an integral part of my listening background. Apparently it's something like Bach: you can appreciate the good music he wrote even if you don't know from lifetime experience most of the chorales which play such a big role in Bach's organ and choral works. '' And if John Bangsund's recording of the Britten Serenade he likes so much is the one with Barry Tuckwell playing the horn, he's listening to a semi-Hagerstonian. Tuckwell has founded and is conducting a new group, the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, based in Hagerstown, although a deputy does the conducting of part of the rehearsals so Tuckwell can continue to do his job in Australia, too. How Tuckwell got involved in Hagerstown is too complicated and unbelievable a narrative to go into here. The Society of Editors Newsletter: The printers' union seems more energetic or less discriminatory or something in Australia than in Hagerstown. For years the proofreaders for the local newspapers tried off and on to get themselves included as part of the union local to which the composing room workers belong and never succeeded. It's a dead issue now because proofreading jobs were eliminated when the newspaper switched to computer terminals for story-writing and every writer was expected to turn in a properly proofread collection of electrons. Phantasy Press: I hope the illness which hit Dan as he was finishing this issue will be long forgotten by the time this Horizons gets distributed. I also hope Dan didn't let the sniping by one or two fans worry him sufficiently to have an effect on his health. Too many people are criticizing when they have nothing to criticize, simply because they are consciously or unconsciously imitating the media which plays up criticism to the exclusion of almost everything else nowadays. '' One highlight of this issue for me was the photographs, with their uncannily fine reproduction. Amazingly, I met personally three of the four fans pictured this time, Speer, Sullivan and Ackerman. '' I never drew and wrote my own mag-

azines during the Depression. But I found other ways to further my interests without spending much of that remarkably scarce substance, money. I liked to keep score as I listened to big league ball games over the radio but scorebooks were expensive. So for a long time I ruled enough lines on plain paper with a pencil to create my own scorecards. I also discovered that blank music paper was cheaper than printed music, so I fell into the habit of writing melodies I particularly liked onto blank staves, picking them out at the piano from memory as I went along. Nobody had ever told me that it's not too difficult to train the ear to transcribe heard music onto paper without using the piano as a gobetween. Spirochete: I use a basic, generic alarm clock. It doesn't turn on a radio or play cassettes or project the time onto the ceiling or play any other tricks. It's so simple that you can't even set the alarm in both directions: you must turn the dial in only one direction and I'm never able to remember which direction is the no no. So I've fallen into the habit of changing the time which can be done in either direction when I want to waken earlier or later than usual. Perhaps my worst moment of 1982 came the morning I got up an hour later than I'd meant to, because I'd absentmindedly turned the time back rather than ahead a half-hour the night before. I thought this was the decisive moment, the one that symbolized my incapacity to take care of myself, the official beginning of a giddy plunge into inbecility. So I think I'm going to buy one of those $89 things in which you can hardly find the alarm clock amid all the other functions, so I can set the alarm in either direction. Basic isn't always better, I know now. Lofgeornost: Isn't there a trade publication or two for hotel and motel managers? Maybe an article on the problems science fiction cons create for such institutions would be better circulated in such a periodical, and a supply of reprints of such an article could be kept by bidding committees for future use. '' I've been buying video tape much faster than I'm using it, just in case a tax is imposed. I have a good backlog now, and I shouldn't need more open reel audio tape for a long time, because I have stacks and stacks of stuff recorded on audio tape at 3 3/4 ips which I can dub at 1 7/8 ips to free half of the reels for other purposes. On the VCR copyright violation matter: nobody seems to mention the fact that some older movies shown on tv should be copyable without breaking laws, because they must be in the public domain by now. Sticky Quarters: I hope this issue is circulating widely outside FAPA. The Eric Mayer article is too fine to be restricted to 65 recipients. The "psychic life support system" which fanzines represented for Eric during a bad time in his life must be an experience many of us have had but haven't defined or described as well in print. '' I've always thought a genuine fan was one who was creative in some way. It could take the form of publishing a fanzine or writing for fanzines or creating illustrations or putting on cons or organizing a local club or corresponding or collecting or several other forms. Creativity didn't enter into simply reading science fiction stories or sitting at a con to hear panels and speeches or attending local club meetings without participation in programs. I can't think of any particular reason why good conversation shouldn't be creativity but I can't count it as accrediting a person with active fanhood. '' If Gregg Trend thinks revivals of Big Band music is taking refuge in the past rather than accepting the present tastes of youth, wouldn't the same objection apply to all the movies and television programs and record reissues which have been based on rock music of the late 1950s and the 1960s? '' I can write a loc in less than a half-hour

if conditions are favorable. It takes longer if the fanzine is so devoid of comment hooks that I must leaf through it again and again in search of other things to comment on, or if I must look up something, or if mundane matters are worrying me while I'm writing the loc. '' Bill Danner used to manufacture mimeo ink by mixing printers' ink, which is much cheaper, with some substance I can't remember. '' Apparently stencil wax causes the rollers of typewriters to become too slippery to do their job properly, eventhe rollers which are supposed to be stencil-proof. I've used film or cellophane over stencils for many years to minimize the problem but the wax must ooze through pores in the transparent covering or something. I used to run a half-dozen or more yellow second sheets through the typewriter several times after cutting stencils in an effort to absorb some of this residue and it seemed to help to some extent. Fapamentary: Leslie F. Stone was living somewhere in the Philadelphia area, and attending an occasional con, the last I heard. She might know about her lost stories. Horizons: This is an appropriate place to sound a warning: it's possible that I won't be able to correct even the worst typographical errors in it much longer. My vision problems make it almost impossible for me to see the typing on the stencils without a dangerous amount of eyestrain. Unless I can figure out a method of giving more contrast to the letters cut in the stencils, you may be forced to guess at the meaning of some obvious mistakes. Detours: It isn't what Stephen King writes that causes publishers to offer him millions for each book. It's the public'spurchases. He is now a Big Name and a novel published under his name will sell many times more copies under his name than the same novel would sell under a penname. '' I joined several years ago the group of those who don't hunt for comments on their FAPAzine as soon as a mailing arrives. I suppose the change came partly because I no longer care as much about the opinions of others, partly because spare time became too scarce to waste a half-hour every three months in this manner. Vainomoinen: I doubt if the Vietnam memorial caused any more complaints and criticism than the Lincoln Memorial or the Washington Monument did when they were erected. But today every reporter and broadcaster and feature story writer in the land is so intent on building controversy where none exists that very minor amounts of criticism get built up to enormous proportions. Bobolings: Bob's reading preparation for attending the worldcon resembles what I used to do before going to one of the things. Sometimes I suspect that the drudgery of reading a half-dozen paperbacks and prozines was part of the reason why I stopped going to worldcons. '' There are many, many more fans today than ever before. So even though there have been some important transformations of fans into pros in the past few years, I believe the proportion of fans who begin to earn their living by science fiction is smaller than it used to be. '' I can't remember any fuss with Sam Youd. He withdrew a manuscript he'd sent me for Spaceways but there was no acrimony involved in that, just regret on my part because it was a fine one. But I believe Youd is the only British fan who made it big as a pro without retaining at least a small amount of fanac and contacts with old friends in fandom. '' Don't forget The Fantasy Amateur among the oldest surviving fanzines. There are a few oldtimers outside FAP A , too: the NFFan, current name of Bonfire, and Bill Danner's Stef, for instance. Raw: "If I possessed a soul that could rise at the last from my dying body, would it not dissipate in air?" Louisa Mae Alcott once claimed she saw that happen when a member of her family died in a darkened room. I read it in a combined biography

and collection of letters about and by Louisa Mae almost a half-century ago as a boy. Just a year or two ago, I finally found a second-hand copy of the book for my very own. But it has submerged itself in the kipple of a spare bedroom and I can't find it at the moment to quote her very words. Zed: I hope Ted White has a tough mind. The description of his nitrous oxide adventures terrifies me. I know that if I mistook the malfunctions of my incapacitated brain for significant intimations of death or parallel universes, I would stop whatever was causing it totally and instantly, on the theory that the next such experiment might produce total schizophrenia. The Rambling Fap: Some day, I wish someone would write an article complaining about the insipidity and idiocy which prozine authors imparted to their male characters in the 1940s and 1950s, when they were supposedly creating such unrealistic female characters. For that matter, what would the feminists think of those old pros, if the male villains who were so despicable and conniving had been female characters? Even today, I see mean remarks being published about characters like Richard Seaton, but nobody ever seems to continue with the conclusion that Dr. E. E. Smith made his hero behave that way because he considered men inferior by nature. '' There's no reason to feel scruples about complaining to me about the liberal bias of the media. I think I could endure it if it were confined to the news programming. But it even permeates the comedy and drama on the tube. Even the sitcoms are that way: policemen and doctors are invariably idiots or criminals, only divorced people or couples who have shacked up without formality of marriage are happy, the occasional married father is depicted like all of the Marx Brothers concentrated into one. Gegenschein: I wrote a loc recently on this issue when a copy arrived separately so I won't repeat or contradict those remarks here and now. Flying Apazine: The poster on the front cover wouldn't have been very useful. There was nothing underground about Christ's preaching or followers during his lifetime. There were no licenses required for doctoring or winemaking or food distribution during his lifetime. There's no reason to think Christ was physically a "typical hippie type", there's only one case of his going into the desert instead of the repeated instances described here, virtually all of his lifetime was spent in rural areas and in villages too small to have slums, and I know of none of those who followed Christ in his lifetime who would be characterized as "disreputable'. '' The science quiz also seems to suffer inaccuracies. More than one planet has rings, we know now, and not even Dean or Hubbard ever believed "a dropped object gains its total speed at once". Seven Views of Jerusalem: Every time I receive a fanzine that deals solely with cons, I feel a trifle nervous, wondering if it signals the start of complete conversion of fanzines to con stuff and nothing else. Outside of that mad thought, I enjoyed very much this detailed narrative of a con. Long conreports are increasingly rare nowadays and they have the special virtue of containing, as a rule, lots of bits of information which haven't previously been transferred from oral communications to paper and ink. Maybe I don't receive enough fanzines nowadays to receive a complete picture of the conreport situation. But I suspect that many cons come and go without being chronicled anywhere in print except in the most succinct and superficial manner. Only the largest cons seem to be preserved in full or in part on recording tape nowadays. All the hundreds of attendees have memories of what happened which will both fade away and blend inextricably into memories of a dozen other cons those individuals have recently experienced. As a result, many bits of information are in

danger of being as permanently lost as if the cons had happened hundreds of years ago. I encountered this problem in a milder form while taking notes for A Wealth of Fable. It had been easy to find extensive information on the cons of the 1940s in fanzines. But as long ago as the 1950s, several Phillycons and some of the annual cons in New York City had come and gone without extended descriptions in fanzines. I don't know how a modern fan historian would go about writing a year-by-year account of some of the better known regional cons of the 1970s, for instance. Program books should be available and some fans who took pictures may have dated them. But how many Rooms 770 have occurred in the past few years without leaving permanent traces, for lack of participants who write frequently and lengthily for fanzines? Yr Llygotwr Llwyd: I've contended for some time the short time given a new member of FAPA to produce activity is wrong. I'd prefer to see a new member governed by the same rules as those who have been around a while. The distinction was made originally to discourage individuals with no intention of being active from getting four FAPA mailings for the low sum at which dues were then set. But the net effect on the organization is the same if two new members come and go without activity under current rules or one new member fails to produce under the old system. Besides, moochers could be discouraged by the simple expedient of requiring a new member to pay two years' dues upon admission to FAPA, non-refundable if lack of activity caused the individual to be dropped before two years' mailings had arrived. Brighton Rock: The refusal to prosecute when someone does something wrong isn't confined to fandom. It's responsible for much shoplifting in the United States because many clerks and even managers don't want the hassle and possible false arrest litigation when they see petty pilfering. The Hagerstown art museum lost one of its best directors when the trustees refused to allow him to go to court over the case of a janitor who had been swiping moderately expensive prints and selling them. '' I'm not sure, but I think Pierre Berton was a celebrated Canadian journalist or freelancer. Axe must have reprinted this from some mundane publication or other. I think he found fandom via Les Nirenberg, who published a fine fanzine in Canada which seems almost forgotten by now. Multum Est: Ahrvid Engholm has lots of company in the United States, if he finds it difficult to write English. One set of statistics puts at 60,000,000 the number of United States residents who are totally illiterate or are classified as "functionally illiterate" because they can't read better than the level deemed proper for a twelve-year-old child. In about a quarter century, the United States' standing among the most literate nations in the United Nations has dropped from 18th to 49th, so obviously the language becomes more difficult all the time to learn. The Gallup poll recently asked teen-agers several simple questions about geography, and the replies were almost as discouraging. Only 55 per cent of girls between the ages of 16 and 18 could name the ocean on which Oregon borders. Only 24 per cent of all the teenaged girls could name both Kansas and Missouri as the two states which Kansas City covers. Boys did only slightly better. Nearly two thousand persons graduate from high school in this county each spring. Just at a guess, I'd estimate that not more than ten per cent of them can read and write English well enough to hold any job that requires the two skills to be utilized extensively and correctly. I doubt if more than half of them can read and write well enough to fill out a job application unaided or follow instructions in moderately complex terms like a tax report form.

Tired and Retired

Only half of the title is technically accurate as I type this midway through December. There's no doubt that I'm tired. But on paper I'm on vacation from the job, although I've worked my final day at the office. Maybe it's typical of the doubts that assail every phase of modern life that I can't be sure when I can consider myself officially retired, out of the three possibilities: the final day of work on November 30 or the last day of vacation on December 31 or near the end of January when I stop getting the vacation pay I earned during 1982's work.

Whether I've actually begun retirement yet or not, some things are becoming clear that were previously cloudy and other matters are becoming evident after having been previously in an unsuspected condition. For instance, I'm surprised to find myself so far free from cataclysmic mental or physical reactions to the concept of retirement. Then there's the fact that instead of the spare time which I thought would be the greatest benefit of retirement, I have discovered that the release from pressure and obligations is much more meaningful. But I'm still in suspense over one important question: how much I'll change as a result of retirement. I know I was a different person in many ways soon after becoming a journalist from the individual I'd been earlier in life.

On the last day I worked, a trifle more than forty years had elapsed since I'd first been employed by the Herald-Mail Company and not quite forty years had come and gone since the day I began uninterrupted full-time employment there. I agonized long and hard over the question of whether I should retire at the end of 1982, upon reaching the age of 60, when the company pension would first offer a decent retirement income, or if I should try to endure working life for another two years during which I'd accumulate more pension credits and would save more money to add to my investments and would be eligible for social security immediately upon retirement at the age of 62. There were excellent reasons to do it either way. If I retired at the end of 1982, I would be spared the risk of getting fired during 1983 or 1984 or quitting the job in a temper and thereby losing the company pension. If I'm fated to die before long, I could do so with at least slim satisfaction in the form of having had a short period of freedom from a regular job before death. The trauma of changing from a working to a retired life might be easier to handle now than when I'm two years older. If I've been right in feeling myself near the verge of a nervous breakdown from working problems, it would make sense to get away from them as soon as possible, avoiding that particular threat to a continuing normal life. But two more years on the job would mean a larger salary average on which pension benefits would be based, I would get 94% of full pension instead of the 90% due those who retire at 60, and not only would social security start at once but it would produce larger checks because of greater recent income. Working two more years would have enabled me to smooth out the manner in which investment income reaches me, currently somewhat large in certain months and scanty in others. At 62 I could have enjoyed certain senior citizen discounts and benefits from various sources immediately upon retirement, although a few of them are offered starting at the age of 60. There were a few columns I particularly wanted to write and hadn't had the opportunity to create them by the end of 1982, a possible source for the long-missing Civil War issues of Hagerstown newspapers I never got around to investigating, and a variety of other

bits of unfinished business which I could have easier gotten off my mind in two more years of work.

Naturally, I heard a lot of advice. I didn't keep statistics, but I'd guess that I had almost exactly the same number of warnings not to retire until the company demanded it, mostly from individuals who are still working in their late sixties or early seventies, and instructions to retire at the first possib le moment, principally from persons who had done so themselves. There was also an approximately equal number of inspirational accounts of persons who had retired early and had lived in bliss and usefulness to mankind for another two or three decades, and horror stories about men and women who had attended their retirement parties and dropped dead within a few minutes or at most a few hours of getting home. At one point, I became so confused that I went through the obituary columns of the local newspapers' back files over a period of several months, tabulating information I could glean from all obituaries which described the late lamented as retired and also pinpointed the year of retirement. I accumulated about a hundred lengths of survival after retirement and was gratified to some extent to find that both the average and the median were about seven years. However, my statistics were suspect for a couple of reasons: the absence of retirement information on many deceased persons whom I know to have been in that status at the time of death, and the probability that some of the retired persons who had lived only a year or two after leaving the job had retired when they did due to poor health, which left them incapable of working any longer.

Sometimes I wonder if a ridiculous factor could have been the one that caused my decision. Almost six years ago, when I calculated that just 300 weeks remained before I'd reach the age of 60, the age at which I wanted to retire early in 1977, I began to keep a countdown on the back of a file folder. I wrote 300 in its upper left hand corner. Each week thereafter, as soon as I'd turned in my quota of five columns for that week, I crossed out the number and put beneath it the next lower number. The folder became useless around 1980 when it began to come apart at the crease from too much use, so I tore off the back cover and put it inside a new folder, continuing the weekly subtraction of weeks on it. In June of this year, I had to decide one way or another, because the company expects six months' notice on retirements. I looked at that dogeared and soiled piece of folder with its neat rows of gradually lowering numerals, changing in color every 25 or 30 changes in numeral because of changes in ballpoint pens. Then I went to the personnel office and announced my decision after changing the number on the document from 28 to 27.

So I didn't chicken out of retirement at 60, as I'd always feared I might, and so far I'm glad about the decision, no matter what its motivation may have been. When I left the office for the last time on the last afternoon of work, I didn't feel the emotion I'd feared, just a sort of numbness and a strange sense of wondering if it really mattered one way or the other. My voice had been at its normal pitch and decibel content on the final day, a good clue to unexpected calmness, because my voice usually betrays nervousness which I can conceal in other ways. Since I would be going back to the office several times during December to take care of various matters, I didn't say goodbye to anyone on the last day of November and only one girl in the front office was sufficiently overwhelmed to kiss me. I made arrangements to have my vacation checks mailed to me, turned over the keys to my desk to the personnel manager, picked up a copy of the afternoon paper at the reception desk, and at 2:10 p. m.

cast off the ancient shackles of employment by walking out the side door of the building. I walked the four blocks to my home, did a few chores in it, then drove to the mall and got something to eat at the restaurant in McCrory's. By now I sensed euphoria replacing numbness in my psyche, and I imagined it showed visibly on me because several persons in the mall who were perfect strangers smiled as we passed. Moreover, the waitresses in McCrory's, a cheerful accumulation under normal circumstances, seemed happier than usual at my appearance. I thought of the hundreds of meals I'd eaten there with the onus of the need to return to the office for a while looming over the plate and cup, and decided this was the first fruits of retirement, the new ability to go home after eating. En route to 423 Summit Avenue, I stopped at the service station I always patronize for gas. "You've got lipstick all over your face," Mick advised me.

But forty years of captivity by capitalism can't be forgotten within a few days. About a week after the last day on the job, one of the newspaper executives encountered me on the street and stopped me. He asked if I would continue to write reviews of local musical events with payment to be arranged at so much per concert. I declined and ten minutes later my stomach had exploded and I sensed a clammy perspiration sprinkling my wrinkled brow. Somewhere deep inside me, a shrill scream from conscience was informing me that I'd failed to obey instructions from a higher up and I'd be fired. Reason failed to soothe the somatic consequences of my exercise of my new independence and it was three days before the stomach had reverted to its usual level of performance, which isn't much to brag about under the calmest of conditions.

During this first month of combined vacation and retirement, I have hardly noticed the extra spare time. For one thing, I'd come to associate lots of time with December during the past few years when I've taken my vacation in that month. For another, there have been an improbably large number of loose ends to be tied up in connection with retirement. Christmas preparations were necessary and here I am stenciling Horizons when I could be watching Coronation S treet or making the rounds of Goodwill Industries stores in the Cumberland Valley. But during the last months on the job, I thought more often about the freedom from pressure which lay ahead than of the extra time, and now, this far into retirement, it's the same liberation from obligations, appointments, deadlines, and similar matters which I'm most grateful for.

It might sound like gratuitous complaining about a job which supported me for forty years without a layoff or a pay cut, but the temptation is too strong and I must feel a bit sorry for myself in this respect. For two-thirds of my entire life, I've been essentially on call on a 24-hour, seven-day basis, in the sense that I never knew when a telephone call or a knock on the door would bring unexpected labors to me. Moreover, it has been impossible to walk down a Hagerstown street or shop at a store in this area or dine in a public eating place without the risk of someone stopping me to ask me to do something connected with the job or to complain about something in the newspapers. I know highway maintenance workers, policemen, and certain other classes of workers are as liable to getting called out at all hours and on days off as I am, but most of them get overtime pay or compensatory time off when it happens. I've been a straight salaried employe for many years and when I was working on an hourly basis, I doubt if I got paid more than a dozen times for the thousands of hours of overtime work I suffered. Since I emerged

from my teens, I haven't been able to make a firm commitment to accept an invitation to someone's home or to plan a trip out of town or to look forward to watching a World Series game, without the knowledge that something might turn up at the office which would destroy my intentions. Moreover, during more than half of my working career, my regular hours were mostly evening and nighttime work. I usually started around 3 p. m. and finished at midnight except on occasions when I was expected to stay until the morning paper had gone to press at 2 a. m. or later. This was a six day week during about half of my journalistic career, too. Eventually during the 1960s my regular hours began earlier and ended earlier and in 1971 when I was switched to column-writing I could control my hours of duty to a considerable extent. But by then the damage was done. I'd missed the last ten years of the golden age of radio, to all intents and purposes, because I was home only on Saturday evenings. The whole era of live television came and went without me as a viewer, for its prime-time manifestations, because of working hours. I could see only one televised baseball game a week, as a rule, on Saturday afternoons. I was mildly interested in professional football during the first half of my working life, and because night games were rare and I left for work in the middle of the afternoon each Sunday, a whole season might pass without my having heard or seen a game from start to finish. I managed to attend a movie occasionally on a working day until downtown theaters abandoned weekday matinees, by going to the 1 p. m. show and hoping the feature would not last more than two hours, but I found my pleasure spoiled by anxiety about how I would be able to make my rounds with the late start on the job that this entailed. Most of all, I'm bitter about the fact that the job prevented me from enjoying major holidays from start to finish with my parents during the last dozen years both were living. I had to go to the office every Easter Sunday from 1944 onward. There were only two or three Christmases in those years that permitted me to spend the entire holiday with my folks, in the rare years when December 25 fell on a Saturday. Thanksgiving forced the family meal to be rushed early in the day because I always had to leave for work. Holidays had always been extra-big occasions in my home and I don't know which was worse, the need to spoil them on account of work as it was happening, or the memories I don't have of the full special occasions I couldn't enjoy with my parents.

I've never been a joiner, fortunately, so the fact that my hours virtually precluded membership in anything didn't bother me too much. The only organization that I might have liked to be part of was the local manifestations of Masonry, virtually the only organization in Hagerstown whose main purpose isn't the promotion of drinking and carousing. I liked what I saw of Masonry from covering the non-secret parts of some of its big events and from doing some photography for the local orders. But it was futile to consider asking if I could join because almost all the Masonic events would conflict with work hours.

But it hasn't been just the demands on my time that created so much job pressure. Never for more than a few days at a time in all those forty years did I have the type of work which came to me without effort. My job always required me to exercise incentive, imagination, getupandgo, and similar nasty things. I wasn't paid by the word or inch but my value to the company was measured in part by the amount of news I could dig up for nearly thirty years, and after that came the different but equally awful onus of thinking up ideas for

columns. It occurred to me in these last years that I might have felt capable of working until I was 62 or 65, despite all the other problems, if I had duties which wer more mechanical in nature and provided me with an effortless and constant supply of things to be done, like writing headlines or rewriting stuff that comes through the mail. However, a month or two ago I was talking to a retired worker on the Winchester, Va., newspaper, who also got out before mandatory retirement age. We were comparing notes on motivations for leaving the job and he listed pressure as one of the biggest for him, too, even though he had the comparatively automatic, well-supplied task of handling AP wire copy.

One of the awfullest aspects of the past decade was the general impression both in and outside the office that column-writing is a pleasant and easy task, something like the way Eliza Gant viewed her son's efforts to write novels. Eugene wrote longer manuscripts than mine were but I can sympathize with his exasperation with that attitude. Part of the problem with the ten and one-half years of full-time column-writing was the limitation on subject matter imposed not by the dictates of higherups but by space and time circumstances. I was supposed to write locally inspired columns of about 1,000 words each, five per week, forty-eight weeks per year. (In that sense, I didn't get a holiday during my final decade on the job because I was expected to turn in the same number of columns even if the week contained a holiday.) I couldn't write on topics or situations which might undergo major changes any day now because frequently a week or longer elapsed between my production of the column and its appearance in print. A lot of potential subjects for columns were useless to me because they couldn't be covered in a thousand words or couldn't be stretched out to fill a column. I couldn't risk any subject matter which might come up in the day-by-day news sources in the immediate future, because a reporter might write a story on the same general topic before my column saw print. You can't imagine how many good ideas for columns were aborted at the outset by such considerations.

I should have foreseen a stranger problem involved in column-writing in time to forestall it, but I was too stupid. Writing 240 columns per year, one year after another, leaves you unable to remember all of them. After about five years, I began to have problems with certain ideas for columns because I found myself unsure if I'd already written a column on that topic or had merely thought about writing such a column. On other occasions I'd be midway through writing a column when I'd get the impression that I've already read this one somewhere, and then I would twist and squirm mentally, trying to decide if it was a deja vu experience or a genuine memory of a similar column written years ago. If I'd started in time to keep some sort of record of column topics, a lot of indecision would have been spared me. But by the time I realized what a good idea such a record would be, the published backlog was too great to go back and catch up.

Something else about column-writing pressure changed about halfway through the decade, too. During the first years of full-time columnist assignment, I enjoyed a sort of fatalistic confidence about the creation of five each and every week. If I hadn't had an idea for even one column by Wednesday, I didn't worry very much, on the theory that tomorrow or the next day I would suddenly think of two or three subjects and I'd get something in the mails I could use for another and the fifth would result from an idea advanced by

someone who buttonholed me on my way to work. As it turned out, I lived hand to mouth in those years, never able to create a cushion of a few extra columns but always coming up with my quota before the week ended. But the last five or six years have been terrible because I lost that confidence in fate and began to worry myself sick on any day when I couldn't create a column. In fact, I fretted so dreadfully that I gradually accumulated some extras in the form of columns which I'd created but didn't turn in because I didn't like them; these I saved in case of emergency. By the end of 1982, I found myself with eighteen unneeded columns, either typed out or in the form of complete notes, along with useful ideas for at least that many more columns on which I hadn't done all the necessary research or thinking out.

So there has been for years this awful need for column ideas, one that was in either the front or the back of my mind during almost every waking hour. I couldn't read for recreation without thinking about the possibility that I might somehow adapt something in this book or magazine for column purposes. There was no real division between working hours and non-working hours because I'd long ago realized I couldn't produce five columns by thinking about columns only during a certain part of the day. Even during vacation weeks, I would keep some paper in my pocket so I could jot down any inspiration that might come to me about subject matter. And now I'll never know if I would have run out of subject matter if I'd remained on the job for another year or two. I haven't the slightest idea what I would have done if a week had come and I had only three or four columns ready. Curiously, it wasn't until about a year ago that I discovered a new way to get column ideas in case the need became direst. It consisted of going into the stacks at the local public library and inspecting every volume on the shelves in any of the non-fiction areas. Sometimes it would take an hour or longer, but I never did it without eventually happening across a volume that gave me an idea for a column, either because its subject matter suggested something to me or because I found in it something of local relevance.

One exasperating thing about this constant search for column ideas was the obviousness of some of them when they finally came to mind, columns that were quite easy to write once thought of. For example, I was frequently impressed with the great interest in ancestor-hunting around Hagerstown. But there would have been nothing novel about a column dealing with the large number of people who insert advertisements asking for information about great great grandparents or spend days in local library departments containing church and family records, or do genealogical work for a fee. Then one day it came to me: why not write a column on ancestor-hunting in the distant future when distant descendants of people living in 1982 will be trying to dig out information on them? Once thought of, the column could be written with little or no research, by filling it with listings of resources which will be available in the far future but can't be used to locate people who lived around here in 1800 like telephone directories and city directories, and resources available for long ago which won't be as helpful in the far future (fewer people find their way into church records in the late 20th century, more types of government documents are protected by secrecy regulations, and newspapers don't publish nowadays many small items about the unimportant people in the community as they did long ago). One column I wrote three years ago is still mentioned by an occasional person to me today and it was even more obvious once I thought of it: a survey of the things local drivers do while waiting for a red light to turn

green. Apparently this column touched some primeval instinct deep in the heart of Hagerstonians, because I got more reaction to it than a normal three months' output of columns all combined. Once the idea occurred to me, all I needed to do was spend some time at a few downtown intersections and try to be unobtrusive with pencil and paper as I noted the habits of each driver as he sat at a red light: some of them drummed fingers on the wheel, others alone in their vehicles kept their lips moving in apparent self-conversation, there were drivers who made faces and a surprising quantity of those I observed utilized the waiting time to caress the car seat or the door or some other portion of the vehicle within easy reach as if it were a human of the opposite or even same sex capable of being aroused to sexual passion.

I didn't write polemical or exhorting-type columns very often. But in the last year on the job, I had the satisfaction of seeing some changes in the city which quite possibly were abetted if not inspired by what I wrote. Before the interstate highway system existed, state authorities had decreed the removal of parking from one side of the streets which carry Route 40 traffic through the shopping and business district of central Hagerstown. Nearly a quarter-century ago, the interstates were extended to this remote frontier of the West, taking through traffic off Route 40 and bypassing it around the edge of Hagerstown. But the ban on parking on one side of those two main streets continued long after the main reason for it had vanished and so I finally wrote a column early in 1962, summing up this peculiar state of affairs and estimating the number of added curbside parking places which could increase the attractiveness of the downtown section to shoppers, if the old ban were rescinded. A couple of weeks after the column was published, a local organization sounded a call for restoration of parking in the very same six blocks I had proposed as best suited for the change, and gave the same estimate of new parking slots that I'd estimated, which makes me think it wasn't a coincidence. The state agreed to a test of the idea and by now it has been adopted on a permanent basis. Then there was the case of Hagerstown's steam engine. In the mid-1950s when the Western Maryland Railway was finishing its conversion to diesel power, it presented the City of Hagerstown with a fine steam locomotive and helped with the very difficult task of moving it into the biggest local park where it could be permanently displayed as a memento of the device that transformed Hagerstown from a sleepy village to a medium-sized city that has occasionally come close to bustling. For a while the park maintenance men kept the locomotive spick and span, and children were permitted to enter its fenced-in compound and climb around it on a regular basis. Gradually the locomotive was neglected. By the time I wrote my column, some of its metal panels had rusted so badly that holes were appearing, the glass in the cab had been shattered, and it was otherwise degenerating rapidly. In this instance, there was a gap of about two months between my column (which had urged railroad hobbyists to get together and work out a volunteer maintenance service to the city) and the city's announcement that it was turning over the locomotive to a railroad buff who will not only restore it but also try to revive the visits for kids and even make an effort to establish a little museum of railroad memorabilia on the spot. I would like to attribute to my modesty the fact that I'm not going to brag about the third triumph, but the bitter truth is that I can't remember its exact nature, only the fact that I counted up one day my year's successes and they stood at a grand total of three.

It is too soon for me to be able to claim full enjoyment of the end of this column material burden. Habits acquired over such a long

span of years can't be shucked off overnight. I still catch myself reaching for a pencil and paper when I overhear a conversation or see something unusual or read a particular item in the newspaper, to make a note which might be the germ for a column. But at least I'm able to go through a week without wondering if this will be the week when I start to find myself no longer capable of turning out the requisite quantity of columns. The best comparison I can make is to the summer vacation weeks after nine or ten months of school, a delicious freedom from obligations whose rapture I'd almost forgotten in the decades since I last attended classes.

I'm still not free from the nuisance of the telephone because the newspapers haven't published yet anything about my retirement and a lot of people continue to call me about matters related to work. In theory, I could tell these callers that I've retired and they would say oh, I see, and hang up, but in practice it doesn't work out that way. Sometimes I think people memorize what they plan to say before calling a journalist, because my explanation that I'm retired has no effect on most of these callers; they go ahead and make their spiel at great length, just as if I could do something about whatever matter they're bringing to my attention. But it's terribly nice to get up in the morning with a sick feeling and not to need to take radical measures of one kind or another in the form of either pills or willpower to get myself to the office no matter how I feel. And to makematters worse about my job in recent years, I've grown increasingly subject to an anxiety complex about meetings, concerts and similar events over which I have no control. I would find myself beginning days or even weeks before something I must attend, fretting whether the streets and sidewalks would be dangerously icy that night or if I'll have one of those sick headaches which make it almost impossible to concentrate on what I'm hearing or if a Julie Andrews movie will be on television at the same time as the event.

So one of the very few specific plans I've made for my retirement is to avoid getting myself into any activity or circumstances which would force me to be at a specific place at an established time. In the final weeks of work, I resigned from several committees and organizations in which I had held membership. I want to be able to attend a recital or a lecture on impulse, not as a result of arranging to do so weeks ahead of time. This applies to fanac, too. While I'm in this mood, there will be no attendance at the kind of cons which require reservations and other preparations long ahead of time, although I could conceivably show up at an occasional con where I can have a reasonable expectation of finding accommodations simply by showing up. I don't mind such things as a FAPA deadline, because that is not a date on which something must be done but a date by which I should do something whose actual performance I can accomplish at my will. I don't want ever to get involved in writing a regular column for a fanzine because it would probably end up like most such ventures have been in the past: a frantic postcard from the editor asking unexpectedly for another column within forty-eight hours. But I do hope I may feel the impulse to write more articles for fanzines after the retirement settles down into its regular routine.

I suppose it's too much to expect that I might undergo a strange transformation into a human being as a result of retirement. But I'm resigned to the probability that I'll be thinking differently and behaving in other ways eventually, if I live long enough to make such a transition. I hope I don't revert in all ways back into the kind of person I was before I went into newspaper work. Soon after I became a

reporter, I began to lose the awful self-improvement urge which had forced me as a teen-ager to read so many books that bored me, listen to so much music which I hated, and study recesses of ancient history or previously unexplored areas of math which couldn't have any conceivable relevance or usefulness in my life. Maybe it wasn't a case of post hoc, propter hoc and I might have stopped trying to make myself cultured and smart if I'd taken that job at Fairchild Aircraft which I was considering when the newspaper work opened up. All I know is that I feel loathing which I'm afraid I don't keep out of my face when some well-meaning person suggests that maybe I'd like to take some junior college courses, now that I have plenty of time, or invites me to improve my fumbling fingers by signing up for one of the handicraft offerings which the city parks and recreation people are staging this winter. I found that I forgot virtually everything I had tried to learn when I forced myself to study things that were reputedly good for me but didn't actually interest me. Going to work for the newspaper also seems connected in some way with the gradual loss of interest in reading professional science fiction, although it took a long while for the full effects of this change to show up. The long hours on the job served as an excuse when I found myself failing to read everything in every issue of the prozines I continued to purchase for a while, and then I blamed the reduction in output by old favorite authors for the fact that I wasn't buying as much science fiction as I'd once purchased. I suppose it wasn't until the early 1950s that I had to admit to myself that science fiction no longer had the attraction for me it had possessed before I took up journalism. I've wasted a lot of time and money, buying those stacks of paperbacks and hardcovers and back issues down through the years at flea markets and yard sales and putting them away to read after retirement, if it turns out that the old thrill of science fiction never comes back.

One change I hope very much will occur is a return of the optimism and naivete that I had before reporting supplanted them with cynicism and pessimism. In a newspaper office, there's no escaping the preoccupation with the worst in people and the dark side of events which are alleged to boost circulation. Moreover, it will be harder to get back into my old way of looking at the world and its people because of the existence today of television. The ballplayers I adored as a teenager didn't need haircuts or fidget during the National Anthem or say things even an unskilled lipreader can guess, because my main acquaintance with them was through the printed word and radio announcers. Sometimes I think a television network should experiment with coverage of baseball games with just one camera, using a wide angle lens, somewhere behind home plate. The viewer would see the game much as the fan in the grandstand does, without the super closeups that magnify the pimples and spitting on the tube, and baseball might be even more fun to watch on television than it is today.

This isn't the proper time or place to describe in detail some other factors that were involved in the decision to retire now. I've not kept secret the fact that I've been very unhappy with some things about the management and employes of the local newspapers. Rather than burden you with a tedious list of petty grievances which have accumulated into a monstrous complaint, I would rather indulge in a more generalized jeremiad, the despair I've been feeling over the fact that journalism hasn't benefited from genuine improvements in its newspaper manifestation during the forty years I've been part of it. What follows holds good for the nation's newspapers in general,

for the most part, even though I'll describe the trouble solely in terms of the newspapers in the city where I've had my experience. It isn't very nice to realize that my life's work has been spent in a field which seems to be in very real danger of approaching either extinction or such radical changes that it will become unrecognizable in a few more years. But that's the maddening thing about newspapers during these years when science has made such enormous changes in almost every phase of life. The newspapers have utilized many of these technological advances to transform the way the are produced, and yet the end product is just ab out what it was four decades ago, if not worse.

Consider a few of these changes. In 1943, Associated Press news reached us by teletype and the stories which came out of the teletypes were transferred into type by linotype operators. Both teletypes and linotypes have given way to computerized ways of doing things. The news appears on a terminal screen when the proper buttons are pushed and it's transmuted into print by other devices unknown in Hagerstown forty years ago. But the Hagerstown newspapers publish today just about the same amount of AP news that they did four decades ago, and I believe a smaller percentage of it is genuine news because various considerations have caused the newspapers to have their pages dummied by the editorial workers instead of allowing makeup men to toss in the stories wherever they'll fit around the ads, and it's necessary to use a great deal of non-timely AP features for inside pages which are dummied the day before publication. Much the same holds good for pictures of national and international events. In 1943, they arrived in the form of cardboard mats ready to go to the stereotyping department, coming by mail, so most news pictures weren't printed until 24 hours or more after the news they involved. Now AP news photos come out of a magical machine which can put a print in Hagerstown less than an hour after the photo was taken. But here again, there is little gain in timeliness. In the old days, if there was a big news story, Baltimore's AP bureau would put picture mats on a bus for us and we'd get them only a couple hours after they were available to metropolitan newspapers which had wirephoto and less timely pictures would go inside. I doubt if even twenty per cent of the "news" pictures published today are fresh in the sense that they involve something which happened only a few hours earlier; makeup considerations force heavy reliance on stockshots or pictures that came the previous day.

Local news coverage has suffered badly from deadline changes. In 1943 and for quite a few years after that, the afternoon paper covered local meetings, accidents, and other matters up to perhaps 11:30, had a noon deadline for local stories, and was on the streets by 2 p. m. Now the paper goes to press about an hour earlier, on the average, and the local news deadline is a couple of hours earlier unless something foreseeable is happening which can wait a little longer. So morning sessions of criminal court, the before-lunch deliberations of the county commissioners, and many other matters don't show up in print until the morning paper appears the following day. The morning paper has a similar problem, often failing to tell about the latter part of the longer mayor and council meetings because the local news deadline was at hand, and rarely covering fatal accidents or serious fires if they happen after 7 or 8 p. m. Midnight used to be the local news deadline for the morning paper and it was easier to publish stuff which broke after that deadline because a delay in press time for the morning paper didn't mean the same consequence of missed buses and late home delivery which afflict the afternoon pap-

er. An unimportant example of how local coverage has declined is tne music reviewing that I did so many years. For the first two decades, when I attended an evening concert or recital, I would mentally write the review on my way back to the office, so when I arrived there at 10:30 or 11 p.m. I could type it out quite rapidly and have it finished by the time the linotype men had finished their lunch break which ended at 11:30. A couple of hours later, copies of the morning paper containing my review would either be coming off the press or the page plates would be in place, waiting for the wheels to start turning scon. In the past few years it has been different: I have been under instructions not to bring in any music reviews until the following morning, when I turn them in and under exceptional circumstances, they have been appearing in the morning paper the second day following the event, more frequently on the third day following or at an even greater interval.

This December marked the third anniversary of my first acquaintance with actual use of the computer terminals at the office, although I'd learned to use them some weeks earlier in the fall of 1979. That should be a long enough time for me to get over initial uncertainties or prejudices against this method of writing stories. But after three years' experience with terminals, I am more convinced than ever that they are a backward step for newspapers of the size of those in Hagerstown. Early in 1982, I finally stopped the practice of writing all my columns at home on the typewriter and copying them onto the terminal at the office, and began to imitate most of the other journalists by writing directly on the terminal. I found no appreciable difference in time consumed, either way. It took just about as long to write a column originally on the terminal as it had required to write it on the typewriter and copy it off. It's somewhat difficult to be sure if others in the office are slowed as much as I am by writing originally on the terminal, because the fine art of goofing off while pretending to work seems to come closer to perfection all the time in all fields of labor. But as best I could judge, watching both employes who had been on the job before conversion to terminals and some young, recently hired individuals who have never known what it's like to write news stories on typewriters, I'd estimate that the terminals have increased the time needed to write stories by 50 to 100 per cent, depending on the individual. No matter how familiar you become with the terminal, its built-in handicaps can't be overcome: the fact that you never can see more than about 200 words of what you've written at one time, the frequency with which the entire computer system gets shut down for repairs at unpredictable but frequent intervals, the time-consuming accidents when your finger brushes a hairtrigger key you didn't mean to touch and you must stop writing and make whatever manipulations are necessary to restore order, the caution one must exercise in making changes in something already written because the original wording will vanish and you're sunk if you hurry and eliminate the wrong passages, and many other matters.

Somehow, newspapers have adopted advanced techologies which have no particular usefulness and have ignored other modern techniques which would be a big help. Late in 1982, the Hagerstown newspapers put a dish antenna on the roof and began to receive their AP news as it bounces off a satellite. The local papers described this satellite as being 33,000 feet in the air in the story telling readers about the new method, but I consider that too cautious an estimate of its orbit. This is impressive, no question about it, but it's meaningless in the sense that it does nothing to improve

the quality or the quantity of the AP news reaching Hagerstown or the speed with which it arrives. All it is reputed to do is provide an eventual saving from the costs of the telephone company cable over which the AP service had previously been received. There has been a genuine reversion for the other direction of AP news. During the early part of my working career, the AP teletype in the Hagerstown newspapers' newsroom had a keyboard. When something happened in the Hagerstown area which seemed worthy of inclusion on the AP report, anyone in the newsroom who had a few spare minutes would type it on the teletype keyboard, sending it to all newspapers in Maryland receiving AP service. If it was a big enough story, the Baltimore bureau would also feed it to one of the larger circuits covering newspapers in a much wider area. Today, the AP keeps an employe in Hagerstown to serve the function that local reporters once provided, and she gets her stuff to Baltimore by means of a terminal. But now there is a delay because the news from Hagerstown to Baltimore doesn't go automatically onto the wire as it is being sent but must be held in Baltimore until someone has looked it over and decided when to send it.

Telephones are an example of unused technology. In 1943, the telephones in the office weren't possessed of a dial or pushbuttons because the Hagerstown exchange still used number please girls. Now the office telephones are pushbutton devices which enable reporters to bypass operators on any kind of calls anywhere. There are direct lines to much of the surrounding area in adjacent states, so it isn't even necessary to dial area codes for most long distance calls. There are provisions for automatically switching incoming calls from your extension to another one if you'll be at someone else's desk for a while, each telephone can answer calls that ring on many other extension, and so forth. But these miracles of communications save at the most a few seconds and meanwhile, there has not been one iota of improvement in the basic problem of using the telephone to collect news, the low volume and poor quality of the voice you hear from the receiver. In the noise of a newspaper office, the difficulty of distinuishing between similar-sounding words and comprehending the consonants if the person on the other end spells out a difficult name is enormous. The telephone company can provide equipment which amplifies the incoming voice to the volume and clarity you'd expect from talk on a portable radio. Using such equipment to gather news would improve enormously the accuracy and speed of reporters, but I have never heard of any newspaper anywhere making it available for the average reporter.

A comparison with newspapers' chief competition in the news business can be very bad for an old worker suffering already from a what's the use depression. In 1943, I doubt if anyone in Hagerstown had ever succeeded in picking up over the air any of the rare experimental telecasts, there was no FM broadcasting for the general public, and almost all AM radio listening was done on large sets plugged into the wall at home or in the office. Portable radios existed but there were no transistors yet so their tubes made them large, cumbersome, and in need of so much power that their batteries were large and expensive. Moreover, the broadcasting industry in the United States was severely restricted in its news coverage by the size and weight of its remote transmitting units for on-the-spot reporting and the inability to make recordings by any means except cumbersome transcription discs. Consider what has happened to broadcast news in those forty years: the onrush of television whose newscasts have been increasingly facilitated by such developments as satellites,

color cameras and receivers, video tape, and community cable systems, while radio which in 1943 was limited to an announcer reading the news through static can now offer staticfree reception via FM, the actual voices of the people involved in news events via audio tape, and radios small enough to slip into a pocket which can obtain excellent reception on nearby stations. Meanwhile, in the same forty years, newspaper readers haven't benefited by even one development comparable to any of those which have revolutionized broadcast news. There are obvious reasons why a newspaper can't publish moving pictures or put out a new edition twice an hour. But the newspaper industry could have made a greater effort to improve things. I've never understood why newspapers don't use boldface type throughout for easier reading; there's no reason other than tradition why a newspaper shouldn't run on its front page all the lastminute news as it reached the office without headlines, editing or fancy format arrangements, to save part of its contents from staleness; it wouldn't be hopelessly expensive for newspapers with color presses to convert to all color for their news photographs; and there are more radical changes that might be worked out to try to stop the deadly decline in the number of surviving daily newspapersin the nation.

One thing I've missed very much is extras. The Hagerstown newspapers last published a genuine, 100 per cent real extra on the night Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death was announced. The end of World War Two resulted in an extra in name, but that event had been foreseeable for so long that most of the material in the extra had been set into type and stereotyped long in advance, leaving only the main story about the return of peace to be set when the event finally happened. There were semi-extras the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated, because it happened just before the afternoon paper was ready to go to press and they made over the front page a couple of times as the events developed. But the old style extras are obsolete. It's harder now to get workers and machinery into operation unexpectedly than it was when only a handful of men could create an extra in an hour or so. Moreover, the boypower is lacking to get extras to the public, if they were published. For that matter, it's more difficult to buy the local newspapers in Hagerstown if you don't have them delivered daily to your home. It used to be possible to pick up the newspaper at hundreds of corner groceries and other neighborhood establishments which no longer exist. There isn't even anyone hawking the afternoon paper through the downtown blocks any more, a strange contrast to the years when dreadful feuds erupted among the men and boys who stood on corners or wandered the streets, trying to make perhaps one cent per sale.

I don't think the experiments which have been conducted with home computers are the proper road for newspapers to take, if they are to transform themselves into publications which dispense with presses. A businessman here and there will have the time, patience and knowhow to sit down at his terminal and call up on it the things he wants to read from among a listing of what's available, the procedure which is being tested here and there at great expense to all concerned. I don't think the general public will ever be willing to go to that much trouble to read the news, even if every home eventually has a computer hooked up to outside lines. Open reel tape recording, for all its advantages, is almost dead because the man on the street couldn't be bothered to put two reels on spindles and slip the tape around the heads and capstan, so eight-tracks and cassettes which can be used with one simple operation within the capabilities of the 20th century American have taken over. Electronic newspaper distribution must be as easy and foolproof as possible. I

suspect that the VCR will figure in whatever system eventually emerges. Home video recorders haven't developed so far in a way that would make my idea practical. But they are evolving rapidly. Maybe even the less expensive models will possess in a few years an ability found today only on a few expensive types, the capability of projecting single frames without "static" lines and of advancing one frame at a time. With the power to do this and the existing ability to make recordings unattended which almost all VCRs already possess, it would be possible for a commercial television station or a cable channel to transmit in a few seconds an entire "newspaper" on the hour or halfhour: one page per frame, thirty frames per second, recorded in homes by the timers on the VCRs, and ready to be played back with the aid of the memory and rewind button whenever someone in the family wanted to read the news and ads. The transmissions would be too brief to annoy persons watching the station or channel for entertainment. Advertisements on the newspaper pages or a fee for unscrambling the pages electronically would take the place of the money people now pay for their newspapers.

Meanwhile, back in the present, I must cope with several matters during the start of retirement. There is, for instance, the question of what to do with quite a few boxes filled with stuff from the office. There was never enough space in the desk and file cabinet drawers assigned to me, so over the years I've dragged home anything I might need at some future time in connection with the job. At this point, two principles, first principles in fact, collide. I don't want reminders around the house of a job which I came to detest, but I've never thrown away anything in my life without regretting it and wishing I had it back eventually. I could use the space in those boxes for books and magazines. But some of the things I saved might have flea market value in a few more years, if I hang on that long, and I suppose there's always the one chance in a thousand that I might someday find myself doing some sort of writing for pay in which these reference materials would be useful. The best procedure, I imagine, will be to do nothing for a few months about the stuff, and see how I feel at the end of that time. I keep thinking of some things I did throw out from work and shudder. I had at one time an almost complete collection of the employe publication of Fairchild Aircraft from the war years, for example, and tossed it into the wastebasket one night when I was running out of space at the office. As far as I know, that publication isn't available in any library or historical group's library, and it's a goldmine of information on wartime Hagerstown, on the activities of its biggest industry, on many local residents, and I destroyed the collection.

Then there's the question of how stingy I should be from now on. Recently I was reading Marion Davies' autobiography and came unexpectedly upon the statement that "Harry Warner wouldn't spend a nickel to see an earthquake." It hurt, but I ruefully acknowledged to myself that it was basically accurate, before I realized that she was referring to another possessor of my name. No matter: I've always been cautious with money. I have never accepted a credit card or a charge account, and the only thing I've ever bought on credit was a special situation. I'd just emerged from a long hospital stay when my auto conked out and I needed a replacement. I'd used up most of my non-invested money on expenses during incapacitation and finance charges at that time, more than twenty years ago, were less than the interest I would have lost by disturbing investments. I've always believed in paying cash to avoid overspending current income, and I have also been very scrupulous about reinvesting investment income

instead of spending it. One of the more traumatic moments in my life came several years ago when I finally found myself unable to pay taxes on investment income solely out of my newspaper salary; it seemed an awful extravagance to dip into this sacred portion of my income to satisfy the federal, state and county governments. If I hadn't been such a conservative individual where money was concerned, I might be much more comfortably fixed today. Time after time down through the years I felt occasional impulses to put part of my savings into stocks. If I'd done so regularly for a long enough period, the chances are very good that I'd possess much more invested resources today, since Wall Street held to a generally upward course over the long run. But maybe it's best this way, because my worrying habits might have driven me into an early grave or an institution if occasional setbacks for my stocks had added themselves to all the other things I worry about.

So I've tried to get most of the things I badly wanted during the last two or so years on the job, just in case I find it impossible to persuade myself to spend money after the weekly paychecks stop coming: the VCR, the new television set, some expensive records I'd hesitated over buying for many years, new water pipes throughout the house, and last of all, another auto. My 1967 Oldsmobile which I'd been driving for the past ten years needed this fall new tires, very expensive work on its brakes, and a sympathy card for its transmission which was emitting clanks and bangs to warn its end was approaching. The last month I owned it, I drove very little, walking and riding the bus most of the time, to see how much I'd miss a car of my own. I got most of the places I wanted to go but I had a nasty feeling of being trapped because public transportation is bad in Hagerstown, could get worse, and at my age I can't count on being able to walk a couple of miles to a destination too much longer. So I purchased a 1977 Volare, sadly bidding farewell to my thirty-year-old tradition of driving nothing but Oldsmobiles. Used Olds are impossibly expensive in Hagerstown and it seemed foolish to blow two or three thousand more dollars on a used car just for the sake of resisting change. Barring an accident or some defect which hasn't shown up during the two months I have owned it, this new used car will presumably serve as long as I need a car. I've had only one difficulty with it so far. The nice man at the used car lot showed me how to drive a Plymouth and the original owner's manual was in the glove compartment so I didn't look for trouble. But after about a week, I realized abruptly while driving I couldn't find one important item anywhere on the car, and I didn't know what I'd do if I needed it in a sudden emergency. I got home safely, looked at the manual,and it said only that this item is not in the exact same place where it was installed on previous years' models. I have little false modesty but I just couldn't force myself to go back to where I bought the car and admit my inability to find for myself such a basic ingredient in any auto. After two more days of experimenting and looking, I succeeded and was rewarded with a resounding honk. The button for the horn is invisible under the flexible material that covers part of the steering wheel and if it isn't pressed at just the right place, nothing happens. I'm not the kind of driver who honks at every passerby he recognizes, at all the women he'd like to get acquainted with, at every driver whose technique at the wheel displeases him, and at every bumper sign which he considers funny, so it hadn't occurred to me that I didn't know where the horn mechanism was situated for quite a few days.

At that, I shouldn't have serious financial problems at first, unless inflation runs wild immediately. My company pension is less

than half of the salary I was receiving in this final year. But the lowered income from the newspaper company should enable me to retreat to a lower income tax bracket, which will reduce the amount of money I must pay in taxes on investment income, and this factor, I think, will make the pension equivalent to at least half my salary, perhaps a little more. When social security begins, if both the social security system and I survive another two years, that taxfree income should make up most of the remainder of the missing salary income. Besides, retirement will permit painless economizing in a number of ways. I've already saved a substantial amount on auto insurance because I won't be using the car for work any longer. Now that I need do no more telephoning from home in connection with the job, I can change my phone service from an unlimited number of calls to a billing based on the number of calls I make and this should cut the average bill in half. I've already noticed a big difference in gas consumption since I'm no longer making all those trips between home and office, not a great distance but dotted with frequent red lights and yield right of way situations. The only extra expense which retirement will bring is in medical and hospitalization insurance which the company paid in full for employes. I arranged to continue it and to assume the moderately high monthly fee myself, because it's good coverage and I'll need it until I become ineligible by reason of death or arrival of medicare age.

Back in the spring, I spent a lot of time going over all spending in each of the past couple of years and comparing that with the income which retirement would provide. No matter how many times I rechecked the totals, I found I'd be able to save an appreciable portion of retirement income in years when I didn't encounter some very large unforeseeable expense. Typically, I've been worrying about that prospect, too, afraid that I somehow overlooked something in the calculations despite being very careful. Unfortunately, one old idea about how to cope if finances became a serious problem after retirement no longer seems like something to be counted on. Both Doubleday and Harper & Row have publishing plants within a few minutes' drive from my home and they periodically need proofreaders. You'd never guess it from Horizons, but when I really want to do so, I can be a whiz at proofreading and in fact used to make myself very unpopular by challenging anyone who had just read a proof that I could find at least one more mistake in it and, usually, making good my boast. I'd imagined for quite a while that I could always get a proofreading job if more income became imperative during retirement. But now I'm almost certain my eyes wouldn't stand up to the strain of a full day's work with proofs so that's probably out. I'm rejecting at least for the time being some offers to write for pay. Twice in the final weeks on the job, I turned down offers to do books. A Virginia firm that goes around the country publishing picture histories of cities wants to do it for Hagerstown and offered me the job of collecting the art and writing the text. A local man who has spent many years collecting information on a minor American artist and has run all over the nation to photograph all his paintings he can locate is finally ready to turn his research into a book and wanted me to write it. Neither project would have paid me sums comparable to those that Bob Silverberg is getting for his new books, and I said no, with thanks. As you might surmise, I'mworrying already whether the day will come when the money for this work would be important to me.

But, at least, retirement should reduce sharply the nuisance of people expecting me to do a lot of literary work for nothing. I

don't ujderstand it. Parents don't ordinarily ask their children's teachers to come around to the house each Saturday and spend eight hours giving them extra tutoring without charge. Members of the congregation in a church attended by a plumber don't expect him to repair free their blocked up sewer line just because they're acquaintances. But journalists seem to be fair game for anyone who wants something written or revised and doesn't want to pay to have the job done. I've been asked to turn hopelessly inappropriate manuscripts into polished articles suitable for publication in Reader's Digest, to write term papers for students, to write on speculation biographies of various individuals with the promise of receiving a tip if it became a best seller, and since I've been writing a good many nostalgia columns and have been mistaken for a local historian, things have become even worse. A few days before the program book for the first concert of the new Maryland Symphony Orchestra went to press, a representative called and asked me if I would contribute a history of symphony orchestras in Hagerstown. This orchestra has fully paid musicians, paid conductor and assistant conductor, paid rehearsal hall, and otherwise is thoroughly professional with a budget of several hundred thousand dollars per year, but I was expected to donate my services, including whatever time would be required for research, probably twenty hours or more, and the article itself. Then there was the acquaintance who had taken up ancestor-hunting. He asked me one day if I would look through the local newspapers for 1893 and find his grandfather's obituary. He knew the year but not the month and day of his ancestor's departure to join the great majority. Now, it is conceivable that I could have done this in a few minutes, if luck caused me to start looking at the approximate time when the death notice appeared. But in 1893, local newspapers didn't publish all the obituaries in one particular spot on a specific page each edition. If I started looking at the wrong time of year, the job could have run to eight or ten hours to inspect each column on each page of more than 300 newspapers. Fortunately, I could utilize the truth when I told him I couldn't do it: my vision problems have caused me to give up using microfilm readers except when I know exactly where to find what I need and I can copy off the information in a few minutes' time. I think I've donated enough time and trouble in nearly a half-century in fandom to prove that I don't mind giving away my services in circumstances where it's appropriate. But I don't think I should have been expected to volunteer my writing or editing in mundane circumstances where someone else should have been doing the work himself, or paying a free-lancer who specializes in the work.

But old age might be causing me to feel that way, more than ideals. Midway through 1982, I was in a local home taking notes on a very old local high school yearbook for nostalgia column purposes. The people had offered to lend it to me, but there's always the danger of being blamed for damaging something on loan so I made a house call. The large television set was playing and turned up rather high. Both the man and the woman kept up a steady stream of conversation over the television sound, partly directed at one another, partly at me. Their dog kept moving around the room; the lady explained that some people he liked and some people he didn't like but it turned out that he couldn't make up his mind about me. I was trying to take notes and respond to conversation and preserve the integrity of my ankles while mentally tuning out the television's audio when I turned a page and saw among the individual pictures of class members one showing a long-dead cousin as she was a very beautiful teen-aged girl, which shook me up. At that moment, I realized how much I'd changed. Twenty years earlier, this situation wouldn't have fazed me in the least and today I was on the verge of screaming. It was one more example of how I can't take it any more in journalism.

The Worst of Martin

More Gluth

Parts of Jon's weighty "History of the Dark Thousand" are always worthy of review and coaing.

During that highly uncritical period when practically no advancement was made either scientific or enpnelogikal--for that matter--the years 1900-2000, old style, a number of curious habits and customs are noted.

In sections of the "civilized" world credit operated mehcanisms were available, apparently every few yards, from which a product called "cigarettes" could be extracted. Cigarettes were made from a weed (tobacco) aged and flavored in a barbaric and totally unsanitary manner and rolled into paper tubes. These were inserted in the purchaser's lips and ignited--the furthest terminal point, that is. Then by sucking, clouds of unsavory smoke could be introduced into the pleural cavity.

This irritation of course gave rise to violent fits of coughing. Extended use inured the user to evident irritation but shortened expectance considerably. Kon states that use of this virulent drug was available to children as young as 30 or 40 but this is considered by other peraeon students as most unlikely. As Hrld states: "How barbarian can you get?"

While preparing this review I brought the matter of tobacco to the attention of feelow Jaak ag Gs. He found the matrix amusing for a few moments and said: "Jesezl bopin burph!"

What else can one add to that?

Elsewhere Jon reminisces on his lecture tours and the amused doubt his listeners expressed over the books on "musical instruments". Jon is convinced that during that dark period individuals "played" contraptions they called "instruments". These, apparently, can be likened to a person playing a single line from a symphic. Actually making the sounds himself on this "instrument". I know your first question is: "Fer what?" At least you can accept this possibility. The objective of this conditioning is difficult to accept.... It appears that great numbers of simmiliarly trained individuals gathered and "played" simultaneously on their various "instruments". The results being a symphic.

Ah! You can't imagine a composer not writing directly for the symphicon. Perhaps Kon's hypothesis will help you believe: "They didn't have one."

(Reprinted from the summer, 1953, issue of Grotesque, written and published by Edgar Allan Martin. Meanwhile, I believe The Worst of Martin has either reached or approached the immediate vicinity of its twentieth anniversary as Horizons' most popular outside contribution.)