

It is spring, 1954, and it is also volume 15, number 3, whole number 58, and FAPA number 52 for Horizons. This is published for FAPA members on the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph, by Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: My thanks go to everyone who voted for Horizons or me in the poll. I still don't see any reason for both best editor and best publication classes. Helen's Fantasia: I wouldn't have let the National Amateur's comment on Fantasia upset me. I'd have taken from the comment simply another proof of the essential worthlessness of all general ayjay groups. They're composed almost solely of people who like to tinker with printing presses, rather than people who care anything about writing. The general ayjay people with any brains usually wander eventually into the FAPA, like you and Danner. It's symbolic, that the NAPA retains the Gilbert & Sullivan office of official critic. The FAPA, copying its constitution from older ayjay groups, used to have such things. But the critics were forgotten when it became obvious that FAPA members could form their own opinions in print. Anyway, it's astonishing, what some people can find objectionable. The local paper was publishing a series of articles on outstanding high school students, a short while back. One woman complained of smuttiness in one of the articles, vehemently enough to cause the general manager to address a note of reprimand to the editorial department. The deplorable part of the article which caused the fuss went like this: "Pat has a boy friend who is attending Randolph-Macon. So, she plans to enter a college in that part of the country next fall, in order that they may see each other occasionally." Skyhook: Gallup polls must be worse than useless, for questions which aren't obvious off-on situations. I grant their usefulness, if they ask how you plan to vote next week. But can you imagine how many ways people interpret a pollster, when he asks if they've done recent reading "of a serious nature"? That particular poll must have been inaccurate. It showed one out of six Americans had done recent serious reading. Just about one of every six Americans is in school and must do serious reading; the poll would indicate that only school students read seriously. If I were asked whether I approve of McCarthy, I don't think I'd be able to answer yes or no. "If I thought television offered things as far above the Dragnet level as Shakespeare stands above Greene and Chapman, I'd watch it religiously. I don't think it does. Obviously television programs and Life occasionally let something slip through that interests the intelligent person. But it's a needle in a haystack proposition. I think it's more sensible to spend my time on books than on television; on little magazines rather than Life. When you defend television, please remember that it's almost sure to get worse as it goes along. The few things of some value today will disappear gradually as the hucksters find expenses mounting and sponsors more eager for the biggest audiences. That's what happened to radio. Only ten years ago, you could hear two solid hours of chamber music on the networks Sunday mornings. I don't think any such thing is left today except for the E. Power Biggs organ recitals carried by a handful of stations. The NBC broadcasts at Sunday noon by the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra included such esoterica as a complete Mahler

symphony cycle, long before records had made that composer popular. Such a thing is inconceivable today. Radio has partially escaped from this cultural blind alley by the formation of smallish fm stations which struggle along on a limited audience. Television isn't likely to enjoy any such luck, because of the higher costs of operating stations and the impossibility of satisfying an audience by simply playing records. '' Does Lee Hoffman sit around for weeks composing those letters? The writing is almost too fine to be spontaneous. She refers to the Savannah business section as uptown. That brings up a distinction I've never been able to understand, between uptown and downtown. Have the words any special shades of different meaning? Mencken doesn't give a clue, though he mentions them for other reasons. In Hagerstown, the shopping district is always downtown to old-timers around here; recent arrivals in town often say uptown. In Washington, downtown seems to be used to refer to the older and principal shopping area, while uptown may mean anything from the new stores around Dupont Circle to the suburban centers like Bethesda-Chevy Chase. In Washington, psychology may enter the situation. The bright and airy uptown streets and buildings contrast with the monumental piles of The Hecht Company and Woodward & Lothrop which squat so grimly and unchangingly downtown. Maelstrom: What do those prostates-rights people do when the doctor insists that a certain type of surgery is necessary? Lark: There's not much I can do about the vertical imbalance of Horizons' mimeoing. My mimeo is so antediluvian that its (sorry) studs are spaced incorrectly for contemporary stencils. A few of these extinct stencils came with the mimeo, and for a while I cut off the tops, stapled them to the tops of similarly decapitated modern stencils, and all was well. But that became too great a nuisance. So with a few rivets I created a new set of properly spaced s-u-s on an old stencil top, hooked it to the machine, and now secure modern stencils to that. It saves compensating but throws the typed portion further down the page than the adjusting device on the mimeo will help. '' My own opinions on contemporary music have been purposely omitted from the articles. I wanted to get reactions to the articles without complicating matters by causing reactions to my opinions. '' I don't believe the current Vanguard people have any connection with the Blish outfit. Chapter-Play: One local theater manager was growling the other day about his trouble with three-dimensional projection. He was getting along just fine until the afternoon when a reel produced nothing but blankness from one projector. They stopped everything, and discovered that the image on this reel had separated from the film base. The tissue-thin surface was simply loose, all the way through. The distributor insisted that it hadn't happened because such things can't happen to film. A technician found nothing wrong with the projection equipment. '' I hope there's significance in the fact that the Oldsmobile odometer stands at 76594 miles and not a furlong has been used to visit fans as yet. The Inadequate Time Machine: Why be content with the stock posturings of publicity stills in that collection of movie scenes? Take your own pictures while you're in the movies of the scenes which make the horses look particularly handsome. You can do it with any camera whose lens has a speed of at least f/4.5, a shutter that will work at one-tenth of a second, and the fastest film available. Sit close enough to the screen that it fills your entire view finder, and don't worry too much about your hand shaking

when you take the picture. The image is on the screen for only 1/50th of a second or thereabouts. Have the film developed a bit longer than normal. Stefantasy: Studs seem quite logical to me. The more complex the mechanism, the less likely it will be operable by slow-working brains. We've just installed at the office a rather intricate device, AP Wirephoto. The receiving unit contains four studs compared with two dials. The dials are used as a volume control for the loudspeaker and to adjust the gain. The studs are there because a person can't do what they're designed to do: start the motor, throw the cylinder into phase with the transmitter, throw in the clutch that causes the cylinder to move laterally, and operate the mechanism that opens the light-tight compartment in which the wirephoto paper gets exposed. A spaceship will probably be more pushbutton than controlled. Light: I've seen another movie, the second in six months. This was "Thy Neighbor's Wife," which I can recommend with a few reservations. The director is also the principal heavy and does too much mugging. But the story is a delightfully simple tale of adultery in rural Europe, and there's a wonderful score of background music from Ma Vlast, reproduced better than any sound track I've heard in years. Lark's Appendix: This seems to be true confession time for mimeographers, so herewith my own procedure: I use any medium-priced stencils, without the film tops. These are Royal Blues, made by The Heyer Corporation, Chicago. I put a yellow second sheet of ordinary dime store paper beneath the carbon sheet when typing. This makes a black impression possible even though I type very lightly, with a staccato touch. My only other gimmick is close attention to the typer's keys. I brush them thoroughly before each stencil, and use a pin on the letters which fill most rapidly three times per stencil—once at the start, again half-way down the page, and finally about fifteen lines from the end. The Rambling Fap: People who write burlesques should give hints about the inspiring material, except when they're based on things as widely known as Alice in Wonderland. This one had me completely bemildred until I happened to read a certain Ballantine book. Birdsmith: Next time you get caught without correction fluid, you can improve the appearance of the pages by cutting narrow strips of scotch tape or envelope flaps, and pasting them over the offending words. A blank space results, which looks better than struck-over x's. ' ' If Spaceway bought a Warner story, it's news to me. One advantage of belonging to the FAPA seems to be this thing of finding out that I'm about to receive a check. ' ' Fanzine material might be published with opus numbers attached, like musical compositions. That would distinguish between early and late writings which get published about the same time. ' ' The picture of a stuffed shirt that you've drawn looks to me like a portrait of a person with good manners. The real stuffed shirt is the person who acts like a person with good manners at the wrong times. He demands formality when the need for it has ceased because of long friendship or circumstances, or he attempts to visit every art exhibition in order to be seen in museums, not because he finds art satisfying something within him. Egad!: Yngvi is a good, old Scandinavian name. L. Sprague de Camp unwittingly let it loose in fandom when he wrote "The Roaring Trumpet." An otherwise obscure character in that novel kept yelling insults at Yngvi from a prison cell; it runs in my memory that Yngvi himself never did appear on the scene. All fandom immediately was plunged into combat over the repulsiveness of Yngvi or its

absence. '' So many feminine fans who have fathers are active these days, and conventions are such hectic affairs, that I am quite sure that some gentleman will go through fandom with gun one of these winters. Shadowland: The presence of this fanzine gives a wonderful lift to a mailing. When I prepare to read it, I am not oppressed by the thought that I won't understand 25% of the contents, won't be interested in 35% of the material, and won't agree with whatever is left. I know that good writing won't be spoiled by eighth-grade art work, that the references to people and events will be intelligible to a person who isn't particularly active in fandom, and I don't even finish reading the joke column with a sense of duty accomplished. More, please! St Jr.: On the other hand, I am heartily sick and tired of this sort of publications from Bullard and Day. They've been hanging on in the FAPA year after year, producing little more than the bare minimum in quantity and not enough quality to remember. Publishing bad imitations of the style that Burbee has perfected is forgiven to eager beavers who have just joined and want to jump right in and participate. When it keeps coming for years without noticeable improvement, I begin to wish that constitutional provision for retaining members by petition could be expanded to work in the opposite direction. Carrzine: When you publish reprints, why not identify the source? This one doesn't interest me, but other persons might want to know where to find more of the same. '' Obviously, you don't think "guilt" and "innocence" are legal terms, and you don't seem to be using them in the religious sense, either. That leaves nothing but the type of personal convictions about a person's actions that leads to lynch law and anarchy. This is just another manifestation of your refusal to accept the fact that the McCarthy issue isn't one between the United States and Russia. It's an issue between liberty and tyranny. The same tyranny that exists in Russia, if transferred to the United States, would make life just as unpleasant here as life is in Russia today. The remarks that you make and quote indicate that you don't realize how easily it could happen here. "A man who contrives the death of another person is guilty of murder," for instance, or "'A man ultimately lives down attack. If he is any good!'" It's exactly that type of wild generalization that made the world of "1984" so horrible, that made Hitler's anti-Jewish campaign so successful, and that fill the Russian newspapers and textbooks today. '' Those remarks about the way churches in this nation have "no authority to interfere in anything" sound pretty naive. '' Weren't you fussing about bad spelling a year or so ago? I jotted down a few things from your mailing review this time: labled, egotism, compell, pornagraphic, employee, Sears-Roebuck, News Week, McNeill, reactionarys, camoflage, Ingersol, judgements, infalliabile, infalliability, and a few others for which I can't decipher my notes with surety. You'll find a couple of them in the dictionary, but you misused them. Grue: Three-way chorspondence sounds like a fine deal. I wish I'd thought of it back in the days when I was starting and trying to hold together chain letters. We used to have about ten people to the chain, and the meeting of minds was spectacular in every case. But somebody would always fail to pass along the bundle of letters, after one or two rounds, and with a large group, it was too much trouble to track down the guilty party. '' The article about why people are fans should be set aside

keep telling me that I should buy hardcovers because the paperbacks will fall apart on repeated readings. But none has disintegrated for me up to now.

My main supply of paperbacks comes every month or so, in the form of an order to Book Mail Service, Box 363, Jamaica, New York. By purchasing at least five bucks' worth of books at a time, you need pay no postage or wrapping fees, and there is no sales tax for persons who live outside New York State. This firm is a fantastically efficient outfit. In three years of patronage, I've ordered hundreds of books from them. Up to now, the firm has never sent a book that I didn't order, has always sent every book I ordered or accompanied the shipment with a letter explaining why something was missing from the bundle, has invariably back ordered and shipped as soon as possible anything that was out of stock, and has kept its eye open for copies of anything which was out of print when I ordered it. I just received the long-unobtainable Barnaby volume, which Pocket Books deleted from its lists years ago, and which I had first tried to get last autumn. Book Mail Service supplies catalogues of the major soft-cover publishers, prepares extra lists of good things in the less widely distributed lines, and stocks everything in the field, including such esoterica as Modern Library College Editions, and British volumes like the Pan reprints. Buying by mail saves you from askance glances at the drug store over the covers on the volumes you've chosen, and makes it possible to obtain the many titles that get snapped up almost as soon as they hit the stands.

I pad out this source of supply with an occasional purchase from local displays of paperbacks. Usually these are new releases which are so intriguing that I just can't wait. Usually, I keep about a score of unread paperbacks on hand. This provides me with some choice of reading matter when I'm ready to start another, and neatly fills one desk drawer. I don't allow the unread stock to pile up any further, however; if I started to buy everything that interests me, I'd be in a terrible mess.

As a rule, I'm reading three paperbacks at any given time. I don't know whether anyone has ever sounded the philosophic depths of this question: whether it's better to read one book through before starting another, or to keep several in the reading stage at all times. I incline to the latter opinion. It seems to help me to retain the contents of each in my memory, if I spread the perusal over a longer period and turn from one to another frequently. Possibly this is caused by the need for more frequent pondering on what I've read up to now, every time I open a partly read volume. One of these three in-the-works paperbacks is science fiction, and stays at my bedside; it's reserved for bedtime reading. Reading in bed is a vice which I'd resisted all these years, until just a few months ago. Getting to sleep was proving to be a greater and greater problem. I discovered that I could get to sleep about 45 minutes after going to bed, regardless of whether I lay motionless in the dark or read during those 45 minutes. So there was no point in wasting that time, and it provided a long-wanted opportunity to keep up with contemporary stuff, something I hadn't been doing for five or six years. The other two paperbacks are almost always scientifically divided: one is fiction, the other non-fiction. I read them out of bed, during spare quarter-hours at home. As a rule, I can get through these two out-of-bed volumes in a week; the bedtime reading may

vary from three or four nights for a brief Ballantine volume to ten days of nights for one of the fatter anthologies. Because Saturday is my day off, and more reading time is available that day, I like to get started on a couple of new books on Saturdays. So, if the fiction volume on which I'm working happens to be a long novel, I accompany it with a brief non-fiction book, or vice versa; two short books won't last a week, and two thick ones often spread out too long.

My hardcover reading is restricted pretty much to books about music. Books about music, I said; not books about singers or composers or conductors. Books about music itself seldom sell well, and often wind up in remaindered lots, so I seldom am forced to pay the frightening prices that are charged for new books on abstruse subjects these days. Mellers' *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, for instance, has been going for \$1.98 lately, against a list price of \$7.50. It takes me about a month to go through a hardcovered book about music, getting most of this reading accomplished on Saturdays. This may sound as if I'm not interested enough to read rapidly. But remember, these are mostly volumes which can't be thoroughly comprehended without frequent reference to the index, to other books, or to scores.

I'm one of the nation's freaks, a person who doesn't even leaf through magazines very often. I read from cover to cover each month only one professional periodical, *The American Record Guide*, and that's so small that it takes little more than an hour for careful, every-word reading. I usually go through the record review in *The Saturday Review* in the last issue of each month with care, and I read *The Etude* for the articles that interest me. Except for an occasional prozine—maybe a half-dozen annually—that's about all. At the library, I glance hurriedly at *The Nation*, *Musical America*, *Hobbies*, and the *Maryland Historical Society Quarterly*. That's all, even when I'm idle, bored, and other magazines are handy.

Even though I'm engaged in newspaper work, I never read newspapers during the week, and it's been years since I glanced at *Time* or any of the other weeklies. Sundays, I read one or two newspapers fairly thoroughly. It brings up to date my knowledge of world happenings sufficiently to get me through another week of chatter with people who insist on talking about the news. I look hurriedly at the local stories in the local newspapers, to make sure that I don't waste an hour on a story which has already seen print, and I usually try to skim through the advertisements of the *Washington Star* two or three times weekly, to keep abreast of any record sales, special book offers, and the like.

As most persons in the audience should know by now, I'm not in close contact with fandom these days. I read everything in the FAPA mailings. Occasionally a subscription fanzine gets lost and seeks refuge at 303 Bryan Place, but I don't even acknowledge its receipt, in order to discourage the editor from sending me more, and in the process having conscience twinges for two or three months.

All of which may sound like a hopelessly unbalanced literary diet, a hopelessly mixed-up melange of dilettantish fare and senseless systematizing of the verbal menu. But the method works out pretty well in practice, however foreboding it may sound in print. It does insure my reading a lot of books and a comparatively small amount of strictly ephemeral stuff, it doesn't cost much, and it expands my knowledge in several directions at once. About the only

intentional thing about the creation of this plan consisted of a determination to keep both fiction and non-fiction represented at all times in my reading consumption. Otherwise, the system evolved by trial and error. In past years, I've tested various other reading schemes which I rejected for one reason or another. They've included deliberate re-reading of about one-third of every book to get more out of the important parts; choosing books from recommended reading lists; specializing in some particular writer or subject until I'd read everything available in town on this theme; and letting one book lead to another by digging up some volume mentioned or strongly suggested by the latest one I'd read. Such things are good, theoretically, but all ended up by turning into a sort of invisible censor over my reading time.

However, I still find that I can divide my book consumption into volumes read for pleasure-while-reading, books read in order to get more pleasure out of future activities, and books read out of a sense of duty. Naturally, most fiction and a small amount of non-fiction fall into the first category. Some of the best stories in the world, the kind you just can't bear to put down uncompleted, give a tremendous but solely transient pleasure. The second category includes the majority of non-fiction. I can't say that I particularly enjoyed the reading of that Couperin book, but it will help me to enjoy more fully the music of Couperin for the remainder of my life; a volume of literary criticism may not be enlightening when read, but may make a novel or short story as bright as day. The last category comprises the smallest part of my reading. I haven't read a book about journalism for ten years, for instance, but several volumes on photography would probably fit into this classification, because it's part of my job in addition to being a hobby. During recent months, the only other reading in the duty field has been a half-dozen historical novels by Van Wyck Mason. Flowing through this trash was the most distasteful and dull reading I've done in years. But I'm planning to try my hand at novel-length fiction myself, and it's usually easier to learn a new technique from a bad, successful novelist who gives the public what it wants but lacks the ability to cover up his methods from the probing eye of potential novelists.

During the past year, I'd call Simak's *City* the best science fiction that I've read. For non-fiction, I might recommend Benn's *Mozart on the Stage*, a small book that is packed with things that clear up obscurities in Mozart's four most famous operas; and Rourke's *American Humor*, an Anchor edition that is closer to being a fine brief history of American literature in general than its title would indicate. Fiction? Well, you may have overlooked Henry Morton Robinson's *The Great Snow*, even though it's available at two bits, because of the cover and blurb. Actually, it's an astonishing combination of symbolism and adventure, in the form of a houseful of people reacting to the greatest snowstorm on record. Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* intrigued me, because a principal idea in the book is one that I've never encountered elsewhere in literature as a main theme. Lots of books have been written about people whose fascination by unworthy people have led to ruin; Thackeray, writing a century ago, in Victorian England, boldly based his book on the assumption that the young hero's infatuation for a silly, evil girl was perfectly justified, because the hero enjoyed chasing her even though aware that she wasn't worth it. He comes out of the chase unscathed and marries another.

Opus 2021

The first two articles in this series concerned composers who might influence the future's music because of their special innovations. Stravinsky did away with all the lares and penates of Romanticism, Schönberg created the tone-row technique. This time, the text for the sermon will be Bela Bartok. He didn't have any specific axe to grind, but has cut his way into modern music by more subtle and orderly methods. He provides a good chance, too, for me to say some things about the whole question of dissonance that you won't find in most writings about contemporary music.

Virgil Thomson, who isn't wildly enthusiastic about Bartok's music, made a very profound observation in "Music Right and Left" when he spoke of the astonishing way in which Bartok makes his "often rude and certainly deliberate discordance of sound acceptable to so many music lovers of otherwise conservative tastes." I know several local music lovers who wouldn't think of listening to the late Stravinsky, for instance, because the sound is too modern, yet are perfectly happy with the grating sounds that emanate from a Bartok program. I find it much easier to get accustomed to the most uncompromising Bartok music—that which he wrote during his middle years as a composer, rather than the earliest or last works—than to be comfortable with something as old-fashioned as the sound the orchestra makes at the cadence which climaxes the final monologue of Salome in Strauss' opera. Bartok's dissonances sound inescapably bound up with the music, once a composition has become familiar. No matter how many times you listen to that Strauss passage, the dissonance jars after one of the most extended lyrical phrases in all music.

To avoid using technical terms, I might compare the laws of dissonance with those of etiquette. As the years have passed, it has gradually become proper for composers to use dissonance in freer manner, just as the older ideas about the proper method for one person to meet another have changed. Today, nextdoor neighbors do not ignore one another for years, because they haven't found a mutual friend to introduce them to one another, but the average person still doesn't go around striking up confidential conversations with total strangers. In music, the older textbook rules about preparation of dissonance have been largely junked; at the same time, listening psychology hasn't changed enough to permit the composer to use any discord without rhyme or reason. Some composers do, undoubtedly, but seldom make names for themselves; just as the girl who starts chatting with every boy she sees often comes to a bad end. It is no longer necessary to follow strictly the old laws about restricting dissonance to cases where they are created by stepwise movement of voices, by the movement of one voice under a suspension in another voice, or by the logic of the sequence. But that doesn't permit anarchy.

Every time you go to a concert where the orchestra plays Beethoven's first symphony, the program notes tell how scandalized the conservatives of the day became when they found it opening with a discord. You listen to that first chord and it doesn't sound discordant, and you think that ears have grown more tolerant in the course of 150 years. Actually, what caused the tongue-clucking in Beethoven's day was the fact that he began with a seventh chord right out of the blue, and it wouldn't have been con-

sidered a scandal if he'd put it into the second measure, with proper preparation and resolution. Only a few years earlier, Mozart had introduced dissonances into his C major string quartet's slow opening passage that are more extreme than anything in Tristan, without creating nearly as much of a ruckus. The ear accepts them, because they come about by the orderly chromatic rise and fall of the instruments over a steady, pulsating bass.

I think that the reason for Bartok's success with many music lovers is his ability to substitute new methods of making dissonance sound logical and inevitable, for the old, discarded rules. Listened to out of context, his chords would be almost unbearable, but their surroundings cause them to be music.

For instance, contrapuntal passages are frequent in Bartok, and his use of dissonance paradoxically makes them pleasanter listening than the counterpoint of Beethoven or Bach, in that it's less difficult for the ear to follow the progress of the voices. A highly consonant passage in counterpoint, like the Lydian mode slow movement in a late Beethoven quartet, causes the voices to blend almost inextricably. The very presence of dissonance separates the lines of sound in Bartok, and the ear accepts the dissonance because it's coming from the clear forward motion of the music. When Bartok simply writes a melody against an accompaniment figure or harmonizes it with simple chords, he explains away his dissonance in another fashion: by persistent use of some type of dissonance. It may go as far as to put the accompanying figure into a different key from the melody it accompanies, it may consist of accompanying the tune with piercing major sevenths, but he keeps it up long enough for it to become an inseparable part of the music and to accustom the ear to the result.

The difficulties of Bartok's music are also eased by the fact that he's extremely conservative in matters of form. Almost all of his major works fall into the conventional patterns—a slightly varied sonata form, the rondo, theme and variations, or simple ABA pattern. The only pattern difficulties that the conservative music lover may experience lie in Bartok's occasional adoption of what's generally called the "arch" or "bow" form. It's not mentioned in most of the musical appreciation books, but is quite simple to understand: the themes appear, build to a climax of either complexity or intensity, then reappear in reverse order. It is popular with modern European composers, though it's hardly new. It's pretty close to the method Dvorak used in the first movement of his cello concerto, and could be applied to the prelude to Tristan.

If you want to get acquainted with Bartok, I would recommend starting with the string quartets. They're readily available on Columbia records in superb performances, they're the very quintessence of Bartok's musical message, and their dissonances aren't quite as hard on the ear as the percussive piano music. I'd recommend the record containing the third and fourth quartets as a starter. The third is the briefest, although one of the most uncompromising in sound. Constant Lambert in Music Ho! called the fourth quartet "the musical equivalent of navel gazing on the part of a philosopher," but it's the best possible demonstration of what I've been trying to say about Bartok's methods, with a crystal clear slow movement and a fourth movement which makes a string quartet sound like a whole orchestra played by demons.

Next time: Sibelius.

Whither Wollheim?

Something is worrying me. On each recent visit to Washington for shopping purposes, I've been increasingly disturbed about Christmas cards. When I saw them on display in January, I assumed that stores merely wanted to reduce their inventory. When they remained on sale in February, featuring a discount, I racked my memory and couldn't recall any previous year in which stores had acted that way. Last month, Christmas cards were still being offered at all kinds of bargain prices, as if the establishments were closing out their stocks. I have a nagging feeling that Christmas card salesmen are going around to the stationery stores, putting a hand up to mouth to keep the conversation from reaching anyone except the proprietor, and revealing some reason why stores would do well to get rid of Christmas cards. Maybe it's something as vague as the universe running out of Christmases, maybe some advertising agency has prepared a gigantic national campaign to introduce a substitute for Christmas cards, maybe the end of the world is practically at hand and nobody but a few Christmas card manufacturers are in the know. Les Croutch suggested writing a story about it, and I was about to do so, until last week, when a Hagerstown store put on sale at 50% discount its entire stock of season's greetings book matches. That depressed me too much to try to pretend that the situation is fictional....Twelve years ago this coming autumn, I folded Spaceways. But I'm still getting an occasional piece of mail addressed to that magazine. Just the other day arrived a listing of second-hand science fiction magazines, huckstered by James Brook of New York, addressed to Jim Avery and me, in care of Spaceways. Incidentally, Avery came through his years of association with me better than anyone dared to hope. I had a letter from him about a year ago, at which time he had just emerged from a second tour of duty in the Navy and had taken a job on a Richmond newspaper. He's raising a family and occasionally reads a science fiction magazine. Another former FAPA member has also made his whereabouts known to me after a long silence. How many can remember Raymond Washington, Jr., the mad genius of Live Oak, Florida, who specialized in Japanese poetry and humor? He has settled down at a peewee town called Thomson, Georgia, where he too has succumbed to the lures of journalism, doing most of the work on a country weekly. He is married, and the father of only one child, in contrast to the more spectacular paternal reputation of his namesake, George. Most of the years between his FAPA days and now were spent in the Merchant Marine for livelihood and working with dianetics as an avocation. He has thrown away his gangplank and his Hubbard, and to journalism he has added a new-found interest in theosophy, of all conceivable things. And while it's old home week, one of the FAPA's officers might try to lure back into this organization J. Michael Rosenblum, once a highly valued member from England. He's resuming activity in rather large fashion, helping to put out a fanzine, acting as a big wheel in a civic fan club, and patching up communications lines with old correspondents again. Like practically everyone in the fandom of the early 40's except me, Rosenblum is raising a family, has inherited his father's realty business, and seems to be a fine combination of solid citizen and liberal thinker. His experience is excellent proof of the greater tolerance for ideas that exists in Great Britain. I can't conceive of any

of the Mennonites around Hagerstown who were conchies during the last war retaining enough personal popularity to make a living in this type of business. They're branded for life outside of their own sect....Note for any future research men: I've fallen victim to two prozine title changes so far. Cold War was originally entitled Not So Unkind. Cancer World was known as Metastasis when it left my protective platen....Can any fan in or out of the FAPA use plastic halftone engravings for his fanzine? I can supply them now. The local newspapers have installed a Fairchild portable engraver, and I'm operating it an hour or so nightly. The plastic comes in eight by ten sheets, and unused areas can be salvaged horizontally but not vertically. That means that I could put photos for fanzines onto the cylinder when making engravings for the newspaper which don't occupy the entire vertical area, without being accused of wasting plastic. For the benefit of printers in the audience, the resulting engravings are 80-screen, flexible, and much thinner than an ordinary metal engraving. At the plant, we paste them directly onto the cylindrical pages on the press. I see no reason why they couldn't be backed up to raise them to the proper height for use on a hand press. I can supply them with a piece of two-way adhesive tape attached to the back, for fastening down purposes, or simply in inadulterated form. Please don't ask me to make engravings of drawings, since it is not possible to make line cuts with this machine, nor really big engravings, and remember that the engraving will emerge exactly as large as the photograph....We've also installed a microfilm department, and are doing away with bound volumes of newspapers. This reawakens my old ambition to get the older prozines and fanzines onto permanent film before they crumble into dust, Bok's confidence in the future disintegration of his poorer work notwithstanding....Remember how Eney or something in Washington was complaining two years ago, about not being able to buy 78 rpm records? Only a couple of weeks ago, I stumbled onto a store that was still bulging at the rafters with them: 3,000 classical albums, and tiers of singles, all at 60% discount from original list price. Probably only Marion will know what it signifies when I proudly crow over finding there rare and long out of print discs by singers like Elena Gerhardt and Ria Ginster....Speaking of records, can any audio genius in the audience tell me what went wrong with RCA Victor's "jewel-lite scanner" idea? That was the feature on the more expensive Victor phonographs, utilized for a short time just before lp's became distributed, which eliminated the needle altogether. The phonographs used what the advertising copy called a "magic tone cell" in place of the needle. That ended altogether needle wear on the record, was supposed to cut down on surface noise, and was alleged to have several other advantages. It got lost in the lp shuffle before many performance reports could be issued. But it strikes me as a good way for eliminating practically the only purely mechanical device left in the reproduction of music, if the smaller groove and slower speed of modern records aren't incompatible with the idea....Russian fandom must be growing by leaps and bounds. Four Continent Book Stores issued another catalogue of new arrivals from Russia in January, I promptly ordered every volume on it that was or looked like science fiction, and my check came back. Everything had been sold on my list before my order arrived....These two pages were supposed to contain a story. I didn't get it written in time.