If I've calculated correctly, this is the 100th major fanzine from the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph. It's volume 18, number 3, whole number 70, and FAPA number 64, to which can be added the 30 issues of Spaceways to bring the figure to the century point. In recognition of this situation, Horizons has turned a trifle gray this time and can now be read without washing one's hands. This is the spring, 1957, edition, published by Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland. Hagerstown is fully protected by the copyright laws and may not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without written permission.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: I want to thank my many friends who voluntarily gave me such high ranking in the egoboo poll. (If you haven't received your money yet, be patient; my checking account has been almost overdrawn.) Remarkably enough, I can't find much to fault in the oo this time. I applaud the firm stand on billing the cost of postmailing and the new ruling on removing reprints and letters from the activity list. My own impulse would be to go further and give no activity credit to the editor for reprinted material, except when it's a genuine case of anthologizing, as in the Fanfare and Imagination! collections. One slight quibble: couldn't we have a less arbitrary system of abbreviations to show the status of memberships in the roster? The F, X, and most of the other symbols are hard to remember and might be replaced by genuine abbreviations. A Fanzine for Harry Warner, Jr.: I don't think that Larry could do anything nicer for me than this, unless he and Lee should some day name a horse for me. Isn't the Manichean Heresy the theory that God can't end evil, though? Dire Juggernaut of Doom: I have an urge to see again the very first movie that I attended whose title has stuck in memory: "The Lost Patrol" which starred Richard Barthelmess, or however he spelled his name. It was a World War One epic, filled with splattering windshields and gushing oil from aerial machinegun battles. I also enjoyed a bit later "Journey's End" but remembered only the title until I read the play; then the episode with the captured prisoner and the occasional observations through the periscopes flashed back bright and clear. Chapter Play: To become really repelled by hotel banquets, go to work for a newspaper. The food is generally second-rate, it takes just about one hour to go through the meal, and the dull people sitting beside you expect conversation. I always skip the meal and merely cover the post-meal talks, unless I see that I'll mortally insult someone by turning down the invitation to break bread. '' You've mixed up the immaculate conception and the virgin birth. The former refers to the conception of Mary, not that of Jesus; it became dogma in quite recent times, because of theological paradoxes involving original sin. In any event, it does seem to be possible for a virgin to conceive, and there's been a big fuss over a reputed case of this in England quite recently. However, the child will always be female under a do-it-yourself system. '' I suspect that most of those 135,000 persons who joined the Roman Catholic Church last year did so simply because they were Protestants who married Catholics and found that conversion simplified such things as the religious upbringing of the children. I suppose that the Roman Catholic proportion of the national population will drop steadily in the future, now that it no longer is enlarged by the great waves of immigration from Cath-

olic nations of Europe that occurred in the early part of this century. Horizons: It may not work, but I'm trying a new way to ease the inequality between the upper and lower margins in this issue. New developments, a ceaseless desire for change, dissatisfaction with the status quo, that's Horizons for you. Revoltin' Development: The ranks of the peasantry who drive autos without knowing how to shift gears include me. This demolished to some extent a local legend that knowledge of gear shifting is necessary to get a driver's license. Despite the diehards for the gear shift, that mechanism will probably be as obsolete as the crank for starting the motor, in another six or eight years. I have heard about many accidents involving no-gear shift autos, caused by a passenger inadvertently stepping on the gas pedal while entering or getting out. But that's human stupidity, not mechanical inadequacy. Nothing is simpler than to get into the habit of moving the lever into neutral, whenever it's necessary to stop the auto while the motor remains running. I do it even when halting for a traffic light, to protect against the million-to-one chance that I'll get absent-minded and shuffle my feet around before the light has changed. It would take a mighty coincidence for a passenger to step on the gas pedal and knock the lever into drive position, simultaneously. '' You're so right on performers' salaries. I read somewhere that there are only five or six men in the United States today who make a living solely out of playing the piano. All the other pianists supplement their revenue from this source by teaching or accompanying or appearing on television or directing orchestras or doing some similar labor. And the local civic music group pays only $1,600 for the annual concert by the National Symphony Orchestra. After agency fees and transportation are deducted, that is less than the average daily wage of most bricklayers. Freddie the Fireman: I hope that this was intended to be as hilarious as it sounds: "....Larry Shaw, whose tastes in music almost parallel my own. Now." '' The fantastic new address of L. Shaw Ltd. is an obvious example of nature improving on art. A Fanzine for Richard Eney: Don't use too much of that spray on records; improperly applied, it can be harmful. Most of my dust-on-records problems vanished when I invested $1.49 in a plastic cover for the Garrard to keep dust off the turntable. Bandwagon: Maybe we should call this the General Products Amateur Press Association. Horizons converts to that firm's paper with this issue; too many stencils and too much ink on hand to invest this time in GP's stencils and ink. '' Never, never, never invite Santa to arrive in a helicopter, working as you do north of the snow line. The helicopter deal was tried a couple of times in Hagerstown. Each time, it snowed and the pilot couldn't see well enough to be sure he wouldn't hit power lines on the way down and Santa stepped out with a green face. I'll say one thing: no Santa's hand ever shook so vigorously as he waved it at the kiddies! Retail merchant psychology is interesting. In Newark, which must be comparable to Hagerstown in most ways, you bring in Santa on a big shopping night; locally, he's welcomed on a Sunday afternoon because merchants are afraid that buying would be curtailed if arrival occurred during store hours. '' I've seen the "Built in the Black Forest by elves" on several German autos, and I have an uncomfortable feeling that it's some kind of a joke that I don't comprehend. '' Most of us probably don't reveal in our normal activities all of the scanty amounts of intelligence that we possess, much less our unorthodox viewpoints. I stopped working

crossword puzzles during spare time at the office, when I found resentment arising from my ability to complete most of them rapidly. Sambo: I proposed originally that initiation fee for the FAPA, two years ago. At the cost of consistency, I'd like to reverse my stand. To be significantly helpful to the treasury, it would need to be at least $2 per member. (If we get ten new members per year and set the fee at only $1, that means about four cents more per bundle to be spent by the organization. But a mailing that weighs enough to go into the next higher parcel post fee bracket costs as much as 18 cents more to mail.) Two years ago, we didn't require waiting listers to write letters every three months or to be active within the first six months of their membership. If we keep piling more expense and effort on new members, the quality of the waiting list is apt to suffer drastically. I'd say that continued increases in dues would be the sensible way to meet the threat of the deficit. The dues represent only an insignificant part of the money that an active member spends on the FAPA annually, after all. '' The fallacy in your unorthodox minister's theory lies in the fact that different people have entirely different concepts of good and evil. Under this system, a conscientious person who once swiped a dollar from the petty cash box might go to hell while the leader of a pogrom who was sure of himself would end up in heaven. The Hasty Stopgap: Sight unseen, I'd be willing to risk buying a British-made portable typewriter to the American product; in most mechanical devices, you get a better buy in European than American products, dollar for dollar. Burblings: I view with alarm this campaign to wipe out grade crossing accidents. I'm a firm believer in them. The idiots who drive in front of railroad trains at grade crossings hurt nobody but themselves and any passengers stupid enough to ride with them. If this natural elimination process is tampered with, these same idiots are going to get into multi-auto smashups in which quite sensible persons also get killed. '' Time passes fast. Just the other day, the newspaper got a letter to the editor referring to Albert Hitler, and now Elmer can't even remember how to spell blitzkrieg. The Rambling Fap: The constitution does so tell when the mailings go out. Easy way to remember: February is the only month that starts with the same letter as FAPA. The FAPA bundle goes out in February and every three months thereafter. '' If we take trucks off the roads, how are we going to supply people in the thousands of towns that have no railroad or water transportation? '' Louis Russell Chauvenet used to represent French accent marks by striking over with the (and), an ugly but clear way to do it. '' You mean that the authorities put in roads before people move into new developments in Utah? That's not Utah, that's Utopia. Around here, they don't spend the money for roads until a section has been built up for about five years, apparently suspecting that they can persuade the residents of the new area to buy helicopters to avoid the mud. I Protest!: I shall sing no sad songs for William Clyde. If he took time to produce this ineffective means of complaining, instead of doing the practical task of scouring up enough signatures to keep him in the FAPA, he couldn't be really anxious to retain membership. Exile: A dead loss to me, except for causing me to realize that Hector's last name is cadavres spelled backward. Lark: Even with professional equipment, I should think that tone controls would be desirable for home use. Acoustical properties of the room and the listener's own hearing mechanism often make necessary deviations from the theoretically exact sound reproduction. '' Liberace

cost me a chance to hear a recital. Jean Fenn was supposed to sing here this winter. Then she signed to do a television series with Liberace, and Civic Concerts Service had a big fuss with her over this action, and she canceled all of her contracts with them. So, no Jean Fenn. '' I don't like taxis, either. I probably haven't spent my own money to ride in one for ten years. But they're unavoidable when I have a newspaper appointment somewhere and my car is blocked in by other vehicles on the company's postage stamp parking lot. '' Here's what prompted my remark about the fidelity of network broadcasts of good music: "....while telephone circuits have been developed which pass the full FM range, the AM stations and networks seldom purchase lines with any better high frequency response than 10,000 c.p.s.; much oftener an 8-kc or 5-kc circuit is used." That appeared in Fawcett Book No. 232, entitled "Hi-Fi Manual." So maybe we're both partly right. '' The last steam locomotive has disappeared from Hagerstown. Its last day attracted three railroad officials, four railroad workers, one model railroader with a movie camera, and me to attend the rites. It's strange not to hear the things puffing through the night. Le Moindre: The Germans claim that the most beautiful thing in the Bible comes near the beginning, when Eve says: "Adam, wo bist du?" I see no particular haunting quality in that or in "Jesus wept." Gasp!: Can't the FAPA get little green stickers from the post office, which attest to the parcel's lack of commercial value for out-of-country mailing? They gave me those things to paste onto tapes for Jan Jansen. Gavage: Maybe it was different in general fandom; but in the FAPA the flying saucer and the Bridey Murphy topics received much respectful attention. At least three FAPAns, including me, have seen the former. But hasn't the latter legend been completely demolished by identification of the character as a woman who lived in the same block? '' Why did Courtney take a deep breath before the final bar of his bagpipe solo? The bagpipe music comes from a reservoir of air in the bag, not directly from the player's lungs. '' It would take a lot of space to explain exactly how much good Toscanini did, and why. In the briefest possible summary: He was a domineering, effective person with genius, at a time when almost all other dominating personalities in the musical world were men with only the most meager talents. I didn't care too much for Toscanini's conducting after the New York Philharmonic Symphony days, feeling that his early eccentricities had turned into bad habits; but his absolute insistence on music above self was the best thing that has happened to the cause of good music in this country. The anecdote is wrong if it means that Toscanini insisted on playing scores as written; anyone with ability to read a score can discover this by listening to any of his recordings. But he realized that a sudden impulse by a performer to change a note was not apt to produce better results than performing the notes that had been produced by months or years of effort by the composer. Anyone who feels that whims are better than craftsmanship may continue to listen to bop, for all that I care. Fanalysis: Watch out for those "...another hour shot to hell" signs. I used to keep one in my desk, but it occasionally slipped into view while the wrong persons were near. '' Grand-dad had the prairie, all right. He also had an employe structure of either slavery or near-feudalism, the lynch law, and so little concern for his grandchildren that the nation's topsoil is about two-fifths washed away already. I'd rather die owning

nothing, which was precisely the amount that grand-dad took along. Delephais: The surveys in Hagerstown are hardly the type which can have results affected by knowledge that they're being made. For instance: Research to determine how many families are thrown how far into debt when one member contracts a long-term illness. Or a study of the incident radioactivity of the city's brick buildings, correlated with the families that have had quite a few cancer cases, to try to spot any relationship between the two. '' As long as the giant corporations try to maintain a semi-monopoly on the market, by such means as their Brand Names Foundation advertisements, I'm going to continue to lowercase things like deep freeze and coke. Sundance: This near-perfection in a FAPAzine and complete lack of commentable matter are a frustrating combination. I am left with no resource but to ask what kind of shells do they get that oil from, did you know that Songs of the Pogo are advertised in Musical Quarterly, the nation's most erudite musical journal, and my office's favorite temperature pun says that many are cold but few are frozen? Wraith: That encyclopedia article about the French horn doesn't give exactly the right impression. I've never heard a valveless horn. But any French horn produces a soft, muffled tone when the hand is inserted into the bell to alter the pitch. I've heard Brahms' horn trio played with a modern horn used as a hand horn, the kind the composer preferred, and I much preferred the latter's sound. '' Can anyone supply a glossary of the Hornblower titles? I'm completely confused by the variation in titles between book and magazine versions or American and British editions for some novels. So I've hesitated from trying to get the novels I need from the British Penguin lists, for fear of accidentally ordering a lot of duplicates. Target: FAPA!: I acknowledge the necessity for building atomic bombs. But I've never been able to understand the reasons for choosing the first two targets. If the intent was to show the frightful power of the new weapon, to force an early end to the war, a sparsely populated area would have done just as well, and would have represented the military equivalent of a policeman's first shot into the air when trying to stop a fugitive. If the purpose was to kill as many Japanese and destroy as much property as possible, there were larger Japanese cities than Hiroshima and Nagasaki; in fact, the geography of the former cut down the bomb's effectiveness. I'm afraid that the United States' reputation may have suffered irreparably from the way things went, and that Hiroshima may help to determine Asiatic attitudes toward this nation for a century to come. Null-F: Did you know that Willis Conover is an old-time faaan? Torrents: Why don't you ask your Danville postmaster if he has received advice to open your mail? He would probably be truthful, and either you'd have a relieved mind or fandom would have fresh evidence about one of its members. '' I'm interested to know what H. Spencer Lewis thinks that Christ learned about Mohammedanism. I'll bet that Jesus was told to come back later. '' Christ apparently made no effort to get his teachings preserved in written form because he was convinced that he would return to earth in a few years. His confidence in this second coming undoubtedly conditioned his teachings in many ways. His advice on celibacy and giving away everything would hardly be practical on anything except a short-term basis. Light: If that "wet cell character" becomes too annoying, I can think of one remedy that would have poetic justice. Does anyone remember a World War Two story entitled "Address Unknown"? '' Les, my boy, you'd better get more active. Horizons

has picked up two or three total issues on Light during the past year. '' What was the significance of "Guide" immediately under the magazine's name on the front cover? Phantasy Press: I somehow doubt that a foxhole digger will give soldiers much protection in the nuclear wars that may come. On the other hand, if significant experiments toward gravity control were going forward, I suspect that that magazine wouldn't have been permitted to publish an article about them. Are you sure that the article didn't refer to devices that overcome the problems involved in accelerations and turns in extremely fast planes, often measured in gravities? '' What are the sky watchers going to do if the nasty old Russians hear about the spotters and decide to send their bombers over during the hours of darkness? '' Maybe, if the membership is dead set against another dues increase, we could require a higher dues from the members who just barely make up their activity requirements: an extra buck or two for those publishing only eight to twelve pages per year, for instance. It would create a nice kind of vicious circle of greater expense and more activity, of course. Birdsmith: The long article about movie stars means about as much to me as many articles I've written about music must have meant to most FAPA members. I've never seen a Marilyn Monroe movie. I saw one in which Grace Kelly appeared, "The Country Girl," and I was bored to tears by Kelly, all of the other members of the cast, and the utterly inane plot. '' I hope people didn't think that my listing of Myers' bad examples of English was meant indirectly for other FAPA members. I don't expect letter-perfect grammar in the FAPA, where most writing is unrevised and spontaneous. But I do look for it from a person who is screaming loudly about the extent of his education and his job as a teacher of high school English. The "of" is unnecessary in "outside of our borders." '' You overlook one source of music; the short wave bands. Maybe reception isn't so good in the western half of the nation. But around here, my disintegrating 1936-model Philco brings in the BBC and several other European short wave services much more consistently than the Baltimore stations on the long wave bands. You don't get high fidelity on the short waves, but you might pick up a lot of musical oddities that you won't find elsewhere. '' The Morse column is again wonderful. The poor guy who tried to change a military regulation reminds me of my first weeks as a newspaper worker. After desperate struggles, trying to remember what linotype operator put which number on his galleys of type for identification purposes, I suggested that the name of the linotype operator could be used, instead of a number. I almost got fired for trying to sabotage the American way of journalism. (About six years later, they followed my suggestion, incidentally.) Fapesmo: Here's another one that got read without undergoing any marginal notations, and I hate to pass the good magazines by with no comments. The only remark that occurs is to wonder what you meant about reverting to 24 pages in Horizons. If it wasn't sarcasm, we're in different worlds of if, right now. Grotesque: To get rid of old magazines, use your printing press and gummed paper to create imitations of addressograph products, with a phony name and address. When finished with magazines, slap a counterfeit label on each, then scribble beside the label: "Delivered by mistake to Martins," and dump them in the nearest mail deposit box. '' We have a Holland-born band conductor in Hagerstown. He was recently honored upon an anniversary. After a half-dozen persons gave talks eulogizing his abilities and accomplishments, he was asked to say something.

In his broken English, he mumbled modestly: "I'm sorry, but anything I might say would be repetitious." Trufan: The Faparade idea is noble, but it isn't going to work. FAPA members just aren't that energetic, Ray; you'll be lucky if you get a ten per cent response to your request for autobiographical material. If you provided a questionnaire and a stamped return envelope you might get a fifty per cent response, nothing better. You might try something simpler, more practical, and really more valuable to the members of the organization: a publication that gave full data on each waiting lister just about the time that he became eligible to join the FAPA. So many new members are just names to me, nothing more, because of my lack of general fan activity; many other FAPA members could also use orientation on the personality and history of the new acquisitions. Remembrance of Things Past: Another good anthology of fan writing. However, Imagination! derived much of its appeal from intangibles in format and overall atmosphere that can't be translated in a dittoed reprint. For the benefit of the children in the audience, I might point out that however sophomoric and forced the material in Imagination! may seem today, it was quite important as an influencing force in the history of fanzines. Up to the time of the LASFL project, almost all fanzine writers had used either high school publications or prozines as models for their attitudes and writing styles. Imagination! introduced, however clumsily, a badly needed note of flippancy and made a strenuous effort to imitate the more skillful sort of prose that prevailed in slick magazines of those days. If Bill plans to continue this series, I would suggest the use of footnotes or a glossary at the back of the publication, to explain some of the more mysterious remarks. I'm quite puzzled by the Amelia Reynolds Long letter, even though I must have known once the nature of "Omega" and how it got to wherever it went. Century Note: It's nice to see another fan acknowledging the benefits that fandom can work with the individual. " Redd Boggs belabors his main thesis a little too much toward the end, but that is the only flaw in one of the best pieces of literary criticism I've seen in the FAPA. This review should be proof of the importance of writing at length when you're writing about a novel; it's almost impossible to say anything intelligent in a couple of paragraphs. I didn't read the Heinlein novel in question, but it's probably just as well. Heinlein is the most exasperating author in science fiction to me; he leaves me with the firm impression that this guy could write the finest fiction in the world, if he'd just take a bit more time and effort into it. First person narration is coming back into style? That's a very old-fashioned way of telling stories; maybe we're having a general literary revolution that will cause the magazines of the 1930's to be praised for their living contents, and the stories written in the decade after World War Two will become the old-fashioned duds. " I think that DAG is worrying too soon about his six-year-old tad. Not one child in a thousand of that age exhibits any evidence of sanity, and the cowboy mania is a relatively harmless safety valve. Qabal: I don't understand much about politics, but it seems to me that the delegates to the Democratic convention might have realized a bit ahead of time that they were expected to nominate a vice presidential candidate. " DAG, if you ever get down this way, there's a wonderful cliff for sign-painting just this side of Harpers Ferry. A baby powder firm painted an advertisement there in the 1880's that's finally disappearing, thirty years after the firm went into bankruptcy. You have about 80,000 square feet of

cliff canvas. Take along a half-dozen strong men and five hundred feet of strong cable to permit you to dangle in safety. '' I'm doing a miserable job as a hermit. I've met nearly as many FAPA members as the gregarious Grennell. Ellik, Perdue, both Shaws, Speer and Tucker, plus waiting listers Derry, Hickman, Hevelin and Madle. The Directory of 1956 Sf Fandom: A very fine publication, which will undoubtedly cause agonies of indecision over whether to keep it with the mailing when filing away or in a more accessible desk drawer. I assume that subtle humor was intended for such entries as the one for Perdue. Stefantasy: Don't blame W. Mildew for the corduroy pattern that is vaguely visible in these engravings. The Scan-a-graver was slightly sick the day that I made them. '' This is as good a place as any to say that Horizons is free to any waiting lister who wants it. I don't see much sense in mailing it to anyone who isn't energetic enough to ask for it. Fafhrd: If any European can provide me with a copy of that Russian prozine, I'll be glad to do an article on its contents. '' Emery tries to cover too much ground in two pages. It would be better to concentrate on one or two books; trying to sum up a story by saying that it has a "commercialized survival pattern" conveys absolutely no information or opinion. And it would be nice to spell correctly the title of C.L. Moore's famous novel. Helen's Fantasia: If my good intentions don't abort, Helen will have specimens of stencil film and scan-a-gravings by this time. '' Whatever was used to color the upper balloon is potent stuff; it sank through every page in my copy, while the lower balloon didn't leave a mark. '' Aside from the moral question, there's a serious difficulty in the philosophy of "My country, right or wrong," the difficulty of finding a referent for "country." When many elements in the nation are at cross purposes, is "my country" the President or Congress? Is it the Atomic Energy Commissioners or the twenty-five million persons who voted for Stevenson? Is it the majority of the people in the Deep South or the Supreme Court? Or look into the past: was it the tiny minority who fought the American Revolution or the larger number of persons who were indifferent and how about the Americans who were loyal to England? It's an unnecessary guide in the time of war, when deviation from the course it recommends is treason, and hardly specific in time of peace. Gemzine: I didn't reply to that question about being in love because it was meaningless, not because it was personal. It was exactly like asking if I'd ever been hungry: the term is semantically useless without a context.' Obviously, I've never been in love in the peculiar manner of Emily Dickinson, whose poem inspired the whole matter. She was a lesbian who addressed those little verses to a girl friend. '' I know of no church that seeks "to establish and enforce standards of morality." Churches tell their members not to sin but they don't make any effort to enforce that advice, presumably fearing that income would drop if fear of the consequences of their sins didn't keep members coming to services. '' I can think of any number of reasons for speeding in autos, other than subconscious obedience to the advertisements about power. It could be the American way of reacting against authority, by breaking the speed laws; it could be the Freudian death-wish. The speed mania afflicts Americans with mechanisms which don't possess significant amounts of horsepower: motorcyclists in general seem more afflicted with the desire to go as fast as possible on their rickety little contraptions.

The Barely Moving Finger

Soon I shall be the subject of a whispering campaign, if I fail to write this article. When conversation lags between two fans, and they cast about desperately for a new topic, one will remark: "Hey, have you noticed that Warner hasn't sold anything lately? There's one dirty old pro who's all washed up." I wish to hasten to forestall such assumptions, by announcing my retirement from the field of writing for the prozines. This retirement must be considered with the same small quantity of sodium chloride that has frequently proved useful when operatic divas and Red Sox left fielders have announced their retirement. It might be temporary, if I suddenly want something badly and need extra cash, or if a stupendous story idea overwhelms me. But as of now, I'm serious about it, for reasons that will be evident before long. And it occurred to me that some outline of my career as a dirty old pro and my reasons for leaving that field might interest FAPA members. Most of the persons in this organization have either made money out of science fiction or have striven to do so, at one time or another. This article is not intended as a rebuke to the first group nor as a warning to the latter people; what has held good for me won't necessarily apply to anyone else.

I suspect that my history as a writer of fiction would have been quite different, if it hadn't been for the fiction contest that Thrilling Wonder Stories sponsored back in the late 1930's. I grew enthusiastic over the chance of winning a prize and appearing in a prozine, simultaneously. In a theoretical sort of way, I had realized before then that fresh and blood persons wrote these science fiction stories, and that the magazines paid money for them. But this contest brought home to me those facts. For the first time in my life, I tried to write a piece of fiction. It was an account of two men in a rocketship. One guy murders the other and stuffs the corpse into a little life rocket, shooting away the body in this emergency craft to dispose of the evidence. The recoil caused by the life rocket's departure knocks the big rocket ship off course, and the murderer doesn't have enough spare fuel to get back on course. End of the murderer, end of the story, end of a life that for me had been reasonably free from frustrations. Because I sent in the story to the contest, and a few months later the magazine announced that I had won second prize in the contest. Second prize consisted of that one-paragraph announcement, involving no money, no publication, no engraved certificate. A guy of whom I'd never heard before, named Al Bester, won first prize, the award that meant money.

Well, I thought, I came close to winning, anyway, and now that I've had all this experience as a budding author, it should be a cinch to sell a lot of stories. So I started to write science fiction stories on the professional level. Looking back, I'm sure that I don't know where I found the time. These were the days when I was publishing Spaceways, maintaining a large correspondence, trying to earn a living in more orthodox ways, and suffering the smothering sense of the war and the draft. In fact, I apparently didn't have time to remember what I'd written about, because I can recall the themes of only a few of those stories. One was entitled "Weapons from Nowhere," I recall, and had to do with a bunch of weapons from the future that landed in the middle of a contemporary war, and another involved the accidental evocation of Erda by a mild little man strolling in Central Park and humming

themes from "Siegfried." But there were no more prozine contests to be entered. And these stories came back promptly from the prozines, rejected. Something was wrong, I soon realized.

Now, I am not sure if my predicament was unique, or common to all budding authors, or simply stupidity rather than a predicament. I'm firmly convinced that one paragraph of advice would have shown me the source of the trouble; whether I would have accepted the advice and started selling is a matter for further conjecture. I read several books about fiction-writing without finding the advice that I needed. I got a hint from Campbell, when he wrote about one submission: "I'd accept this, if it were a story." But nobody told me in plain enough, blunt language the fact that is so self-evident at this late date. I simply didn't know the difference between an idea for a story and a plot. I was basing fiction on ideas, some of them quite novel and intriguing, without building plots up from the basis of those ideas. I'm not certain when the truth began to dawn on me, but I think that I began to gain awareness when I found extreme difficulty in writing stories longer than three or four thousand words. But just about the time that the truth began to burrow through the tough layers of stupidity in my mental processes, the desire to sell fiction began to wane. There was a natural disgust with myself, for receiving that unbroken chain of rejection letters and rejection forms. The war was coming to an end, giving me the desire to take more interest in things outside myself. My salary had finally climbed to a point which lessened the desire for extra cash. So I read another book on writing fiction, and took the all-or-nothing plunge. Some time earlier, while teaching myself French, I had picked my way through a simple little novella which most French students encounter: "Le Roi des Montagnes," author's name forgotten. It's a story of a jolly gangster in 19th century Europe who kidnapped wealthy travelers. I used it as the framework for a novel about a pirate who lurks in the asteroids, preying on space travelers. Startling Stories liked the plot outline and a sample couple of chapters. I spent very uncomfortable days after submitting the full manuscript. It came back, with a very kind letter. I still think that it might have sold, if the editor had been in a better humor on the day he glanced through the manuscript. I was inexperienced with my pacing, dragging out interminably the action, but this was not a fault that would have taken much time to bluepencil.

Well, I decided, I'll apparently never sell a story to the prozines. But there's no philosophical reason why I should worry over that fact, any more than I fret over the probability that I shall never be the first-string quarterback for the Cleveland Browns. Several years elapsed, during which I read virtually no science fiction, hung around on the very fringes of fandom via the FAPA, and learned how to make pocket money by selling non-fiction to the syndicates and press associations. Germs of stories kept trying to force their way to my attention—gimmicks in the form of a time travel paradox that I hadn't seen in fiction, attention-arresting opening scenes for long stories, intriguing possibilities of what a certain kind of person would do in a specific future situation. There came a time when I ran dry of non-fiction ideas, temporarily, and dashed off a couple of stories on the basis of these stray notions. They came back, but slowly and grudgingly. Gold, for instance, returned the one that I sent to Galaxy, telling me to rewrite it so it would be like Somerset Maugham's "Red" and resubmit it. I stilled the impulse to request a really hard assign-

ment, tried to follow instructions, and failed as completely as I had foreseen.

I suppose that I wrote two dozen stories, some of them very short, during those years of rejections. After a time, I began to grow alarmingly superstitious. When typing up the final manuscript, I would decide that by setting the left margin on some particular figure, I might break the peaceful flow of rejection slips; this may have been a dim reflection of my knowledge that editors normally like big, wide margins to allow plenty of room for penciling in changes. There was a time when I sensed some hidden importance in the envelopes that carried the stories to the magazines. I must have tried out every kind of envelope available in Hagerstown, at one time or another, in an effort to find the model that would bring good luck. And eventually, the desire to sell fiction got twisted around in me. I no longer wanted to make extra money, I didn't really have the desire to see my name appearing in the prozines; it had simply become a challenge to me, as idiotic but as real as the challenge which a model builder faces when he tries to achieve some particularly ticklish design.

So everything after that first sale has been an anti-climax. And the circumstances surrounding that first acceptance were a bit odd. I ran across an article in a writers' magazine, in which some pulp hack gave his own mechanical formula for selling. It was expressed in a single page, and was simply the essence of the plot construction methods that are outlined at much greater length in most textbooks on writing. This guy recommended dividing your story into thousand-word sections, and doing two things: put near the end of each thousand words a climax in which the hero gets himself out of trouble, and make sure that each of these climactic passages is bigger than the one concluding the previous thousand-word section. The thousand-word business was specific, a reminder to the author not to dawdle along the way of his plot, and this helped to insure that the final climax, in which the hero gets out of an inextricable predicament, would come at the proper time. At this period in my life, the newspaper office in which I work was undergoing a particularly severe battle in the never-ending war of the thermostat. Half of the people in the office are cold all the time, the remainder are too warm all the time, and the thermostat gets more use than the watercooler. I noticed how tempers flared and writing efficiency lowered for everyone, even the high temperature addicts, when the room grew really hot. And I had read somewhere a theory that the dark ages descended upon Europe because of an increase in mean temperatures for several centuries, sapping energies and incentives. With tongue in cheek, I decided to write a science fiction story in which the conspiracy against civilization would center in the most unlikely of all places, the weather bureau. I wrote a thousand words a day, according to that formula. The result was so extremely pulpish that I couldn't resist an ending in which the heroine was chased across the ice pack by wolves. I sent it to Ackerman, having decided to try his agenting abilities. Lowndes bought it almost immediately, changed the title from "Not So Unkind" to "Cold War," and published it in Future. I think that Lowndes must have realized how dangerously flippant my approach to the story had been. Because it finished first in that issue's poll for the best story, and announcing the results, Doc said: "I'll bet Harry is as shocked as I am." Lowndes pays upon publication, and by coincidence, the check arrived at a time when I badly needed something to distract me from a situation

that had made me thoroughly miserable. I conjured up the memory of an old rejection, a story about a future in which whole worlds created by sideways-in-time use of temponautics are given to winners of quiz programs. Lowndes bought that one immediately, too. I thought that it was a much more sane story than the one about the weather bureau menace, but the readers voted it only into third place in the issue. After that, just about half of the fiction which I sent to Ackerman sold, calculating either by wordage or by titles. I don't know how the stories fared with the readers, after the first two. I bought a magazine to read the poll results and letters from readers about the first story. I glanced through a magazine in the newsstand to get this information about the second story. I didn't bother to take either action about any succeeding story. That's as good an indication as any, on how quickly my interest in being a dirty old pro had waned.

So now we come to my retirement, at a rather earlier age than the retirement of Shakespeare or Thucydides, from the particular field of writing that I've been talking about. I think that this ties in quite nicely with the remarks Martin Alger made about the poor financial rewards for the entertainer; in fact, it could be an object lesson about the perilous earning capacity today of any person who prefers to express individuality in some way that involves free lancing. In theory, the money you earn from selling science fiction is a fine supplement to the income from your regular job. Theoretically, if you're prolific, you can kick that regular job to one side and devote yourself entirely to producing science fiction. But it doesn't work out those ways. I'm a reasonably rapid writer. Using spare time, and not giving up the other spare time activities which interest me, I can average 500 words of completed fiction per day over an extended period: this means either creating or retyping into final form 1,000 words of fiction per day, on the average. If I sell half of it to the pulp magazines, the total income will average $5 per day at the lowest prevailing rates, $20 or $25 per day at the highest rates that a writer can expect today. The gain to me is immediately cut almost exactly in half by three unavoidable slices into that income: the agent's commission, the federal income tax, and the state income tax. To make a living out of science fiction, I would be forced to grind out at least 3,000 words of created manuscripts daily, or 6,000 actual typing words daily, assuming that I started to sell every word that I write and that a fair proportion of it went to the better-paying markets. Theoretically, a comfortable income would be possible by writing less fiction and selling it only to the three high-paying magazines. But there are lots of writers in circulation today, and none of them has yet succeeded in appearing every month in these three magazines. If I were as young as Bob Silverberg, and didn't have fifteen years of seniority piled up at my regular job, I might be tempted to try to make a go at selling to the prozines on a full-time basis. But on a part-time basis, it can turn into a blind alley. It has its dangers, too. One more very small sale in 1956 would have caused me to lose a substantial sum, because I ended up the year on the verge of the next higher tax bracket. Sale of another novelette to Galaxy last year wouldn't have produced a cent of disposable income; it would have gone entirely to taxes.

So I'm going to try to resist the impulse to write pulp magazine science fiction for a while. There's that novel which is awaiting completion. After that goes off to the wars, I'm going

to make a concerted effort to sell to the better-paying markets. If I can sell ten per cent of my output to the quality markets, the income will be approximately equal to that which has been resulting from the sale of half of my science fiction stories. And the prospects for stepping up this free-lancing income will be vastly greater, and I might even find myself enjoying the egoboo of publication in the big circulation magazines.

But more important, I think, is the fact that this attempt should provide me with badly needed discipline. My writing habits are atrocious. Mainly, the problem is lack of patience. I rarely take the time to plot a story before starting to work on it. My system has been to think up an effective opening and a dramatic conclusion before putting a word on paper, then improvise between those two boundaries as I write. Occasionally, a great masterpiece of fiction has been created in just this way, but it almost never results in a story for which commercial magazines pay big money. Further, I can't force myself to revise, in the ordinary sense. Sitting down with the first draft of a story and marking in with a pencil the changes that should be made for the final draft is the most exasperating task that I have ever encountered. Most of the fiction that sold to the prozines underwent revision in a less tedious manner: I put the first draft away for a couple of weeks to simmer, then typed the final draft impromptu from this first draft, making alterations from instinct rather than from notes. In several instances, I rewrote stories completely from memory, rather than take the trouble to make notes on radical changes that had been necessitated by a change of plot or character in midstream. All this is much less work than the plodding way of improving first drafts, and an occasional genius can get away with it: D.H.Lawrence, for instance, worked in precisely that fashion. But I am not D.H.Lawrence, and the more stringent demands of the quality markets should impel me to subject myself to this literary discipline.

One of the intriguing things about writing fiction is the thingsthat it can reveal to the author about himself. By the time a story appears in print, I'm usually able to stand back, look at it dispassionately, and discover where the primary impulses derived for many of its features. For instance, in most of my published longer stories, there's one quite obvious Freudian symbol: something circular or roughly circular, barring the hero from penetrating to the heart of the mystery. In my very first sale, "Cold War," that's how the weather factory was designed; in another novelette, the whole Midwest was cut off from the rest of the nation by a barrier behind which the telepaths were flourishing; the same symbol appeared in smaller format in the Galaxy yarn, as the manky, and in a British-published story as mysterious circular creatures that turned out to be money. It's now reached the point of causing me to sit back mentally and wait while writing a story, until that symbol has bobbed up; there's a certain relief, when I know that it's out of my system. I had no difficulty in determining the origin of the basis of this nearly completed novel: it's a clear reflection of how the world has seemed to change around me, both because of the normal altered outlook that comes from emergence from adolescence and because of a specific event a couple of years ago that produced a mental revolution in me. I hope that nobody has noticed a really alarming clue to me in these stories. My heroines almost invariably undergo a certain distressing experience in the course of their adventures. I'm not going to go into

details in print, because in the wildly improbable event that I should get married, my wife might someday run across this article and start to worry. I'm pretty sure that it's a clue to pronounced latent psychopathic tendencies. If they ever burst into full bloom, and you read about me in the newspapers, don't forget that you first heard about it in Horizons.

One more reason for my increasing dissatisfaction with writing for the prozines is the amount of editing that occurs. This is not to be considered as a thrust at Larry Shaw; the last I heard, Ackerman had never tried to peddle any of my stuff to Larry, so I obviously can't know how he operates. But the changes that have been made in my stories impress me as being mostly unwarranted, arbitrary and contradictory in nature. The worst instance occurred in a story that wasn't particularly good to begin with; the editor chopped about one-third of the total wordage, then made changes in almost every other paragraph, utilizing grammar that would make a second grader blush. Fortunately, he didn't buy any more stories. One editor sticks in profanity every couple of pages, another one removes anything that I wrote which sounds even vaguely like a dirty word. Title changing seems to be a favorite trick; my original title rarely survives. Curiously and perhaps significantly, "Rattle Okay," the novelette that sold to Galaxy, is the only Warner epic which seems to have gone into print with no editorial alterations. I didn't compare the published version with the manuscript; but if Gold tinkered, he did it in such a skillful way that the author couldn't detect the patches and snippings. Understand, I'm not outraged because I think I can write better fiction than the prozine editors; I'm complaining on the grounds that most of the editing seems to be done simply to allow the editor to go home at night with the knowledge that he's been changing the manuscripts around as editors traditionally do.

Other discoveries in the course of this apathetic prozine writing career: Galaxy seems to be the only prozine that sends a free copy to each contributor. I've had to do some diligent searching in newsstands to locate copies of several obscure prozines in which my work appears. If is the only prozine that remembers me in December with a Christmas card. No prozine has sent me advance proofs on a story; several of them apparently don't see proofs in the first place, judging by the number of typographical errors. Nobody in Hagerstown has connected me yet with the writer who appears occasionally in the prozines, although I've had several close calls; I'm trying to keep it secret because I have enough trouble already with people who know I write for the newspaper and want me to collaborate with them on what they believe to be a magnificent idea for a story. Something that appeared in a prozine was apparently mentioned on one of the network radio or television programs based on science fiction dramas; Jim Avery, my old Spaceways co-editor, scribbled a note recently, telling me that he'd heard about me in this manner. Does anyone know the full context? Biggest check for any one story came from Galaxy; smallest income was from "Curtain Going Up," which Spaceway did not pay for, a rather snide trick, after already having stolen my fanzine's title. And I still don't know whether I'm supposed to report on income tax returns the total amount paid for each story or the amount that I receive from Ackerman after he has deducted his commission. I've been reporting the latter sum, and it's going to be embarrassing if some revenooer comes gunning for me.

Auto/mation

My unkind remarks about sports cars in a recent Horizons did not produce the reaction that I had foreseen. Instead of threats of violence, petitions to send me to Fiji, and suicides, there was only a stunned silence, broken by an occasional unbelieving mutter of distress in one or two fanzines. At the risk of producing additional trauma in these shaken minds, I would like to look more thoroughly at the whole question of automobiles, the general problems which sports cars are a courageous but inadequate attempt to solve.

In the first place, too many persons are pointing accusing fingers at Detroit, as if the factories there had somehow hypnotized the great American public into purchasing the kind of automobiles that constitute the bulk of the sales in this country. I don't like standard automobiles, for their appearance or most of their mechanical attributes. But the cause and the effect are being mistaken in many quarters today. Nothing would please the auto manufacturing corporations more than to produce a smaller automobile with less horsepower and none of the complex trim. They would sell it for the same figure that they now get for today's autos, and corporation profits would be bloated in spectacular fashion. Unfortunately, the automobile has become today the most conspicuous of all the "conspicuous consumption" that Veblen defined in "Theory of the Leisure Class." As long as we have capitalism and the system of keeping up with the Joneses and such human failings as pride and avarice, we're going to show off our wealth by wasting money on utterly useless things. That was Veblen's major premise. When he wrote, this conspicuous consumption was exemplified in the upper classes by such things as extremely elaborate dress for women, grand tours of Europe, enormous houses, nasty little lap dogs, and similar items. By 1957, the national economy has changed in many ways, and while conspicuous consumption still is evident, it's being expressed in different ways: a 25-room house costs too much to build and keep up for anyone except the extraordinary rich, for instance. Now, there was a time early in this century when the mere possession of an automobile was conspicuous consumption. Autos weren't necessary in those days, when it was safe to use a horse-drawn vehicle on the highways for short trips, and passenger train service was more than adequate for longer journeys. Those early automobiles were almost completely functional, and some people today point to them as examples of good automobiles. However, the times changed. By now, it's really quite difficult to get along without an automobile: travel is involved in more and more jobs, population growth has caused a smaller percentage of the population to live within walking distance of stores and factories, many towns have no passenger train service and little bus service. The automobile as such can no longer serve as an object for Veblen's conspicuous consumption, so the American public does the next best thing: it encourages through its purchasing the manufacture of automobiles that are loaded down with features representing a sort of secondary conspicuous consumption—lots of chrome, weird fenders, non-functional bumpers, more power than can be safely used, wasteful width and length, all the other bad features that FAPA members have been complaining about. Unless some new expensive merchandise should turn up to replace the automobile as a means for wasting money to prove one's financial status, I can see little hope for popularity of a really functional automobile.

Now, some persons with enough will power to resist the impulse toward conspicuous consumption are cheering for the sports car as the salvation from the Chevrolet wilderness. I admire their willingness to go counter to the mob, but I don't think that their own direction is leading them out of the wilderness. To repeat the things I said in a recent Horizons, the sports cars are not different in ways that correspond with reality. It is quite true that they are made with better craftsmanship, permitting them to stop, start, turn corners, and park with better mechanical abilities than the average Detroit auto. But most of those merits are unrelated to the present demands of driving. The much-praised cornering ability might be nice to think about. However, I probably turn an average of ten corners daily. At half of them, I must halt completely because of a red light or boulevard sign; at two or three others, I must slow to a crawl because pedestrians are in the way or traffic just ahead is blocked up. Better cornering on the basis of two or three useful corners per day isn't much of a contribution to the welfare of the driver. The sports car can take sharp curves in open country safely at higher speeds than the Detroit automobile. However, the laws of physics are the same for the operator of the sports car, whose reflexes have not been improved by his foreign-made auto. If the other side of the curve contains a passing auto or a cow, the sports car is going to travel more footage toward the obstacle before the driver reacts, because of its greater speed. The ability to get away quickly from a standing position is useless in normal driving conditions; it only brings the vehicle to another halt a block further along a half-second sooner. There certainly is no need to belabor the point that Detroit's automobiles already have entirely too great ability to go rapidly; not one mile out of a thousand on the nation's highways is built well enough and contains sufficiently little traffic to permit safe driving at the speeds that the Detroit automobiles can produce.

What's the answer to the automobile problem, then? I think that it might lie in the direction of many apparently minor changes in conveniences and design which could be introduced without proving that Veblen was wrong, after all. Singly, they might sound insignificant; taken together, they would produce a lot of improvements in safety and ease of driving.

So many things about the automobile—sports car and Detroit car alike—are essentially the same as on the Model T, apparently so sacrosanct that nobody realizes their primitive nature. Headlights, for example: they've grown brighter, they have curved lenses instead of the old flat glass coverings, and the beam can be directed straight ahead or downward, but basically, they're the same inefficient effort to fulfill two lighting jobs simultaneously. Lights are needed for night driving for two different reasons. It is necessary for the driver to have illumination on the highway ahead of him, to reveal objects that may lie in his path, and it is necessary for his own automobile to be visible to other drivers. The front headlights, aided slightly by the taillights, attempt to serve as a compromise means of achieving the two goals. However, the light cast on the road ahead causes accidents by blinding oncoming drivers. The light that reveals the existence of the auto is not of a nature that makes it easy to judge the distance or speed of the vehicle. I see no reason why the lighting system can't be completely revamped. For illumination of the road ahead, it should be possible to contrive some type of indirect lighting, to relieve the blinding of oncoming motorists. To signal the existence of the auto might be a system of neon tubing outlining softly the height and

width of its body, much as an occasional small diner advertises its existence along the highway. Such a contrivance would ease the danger caused by misjudging rather dim nearby headlights for more distant, brighter headlights on the auto approaching you as you're preparing to pass a vehicle. And you'd get warning much sooner that you're overtaking a vehicle on a dark night. I grant that indirect lighting for the roadway ahead would probably make it impossible to illuminate the highway ahead for the same distance as present-day headlights achieve. But I submit that it is the lesser of two evils. In fast driving at night, it is quite often impossible to stop within the area of useful headlight illumination, even now. Experiments to create more reflective road surfaces might help to extend the distance which indirect headlights would illuminate. For every accident caused by dim light, I think that two or three would be avoided by the disappearance of blinding glare.

Windshield wipers may seem to be a minor item. But they're virtually the same today as they were when glass windshields first appeared. Plastics are available in so many consistencies that it shouldn't be hard to work out a transparent rod and wiper that would end the flickering before the driver's eyes. There is little excuse for the mechanism that causes wipers in some automobiles to slow to a near-halt when the vehicle accelerates. The wipers require so little power that it should be simple to provide interchangeable blades, including a scraper for use in snow, and to arrange a really rapid wiping gear for use in cloudbursts.

Automobiles are the only common machines today that refuse to acknowledge the existence of the sense of hearing. Your typewriter rings a bell, to warn you that the end of the line is near. A movie camera ticks audibly every time a foot of film is exposed, and some models give another signal when the spring motor is nearly run down. Your telephone has a whole arsenal of buzzes, sirens and bips to provide information on how the call you've just placed is getting along. But the automobile driver, who should keep his eyes firmly fixed on the road ahead, must rely on vision for such matters as the manner in which his auto is functioning. It's essential, but dangerous, to glance occasionally at the dials to make sure that your motor isn't boiling hot, that you still have oil pressure, and that you haven't accidentally edged twenty miles per hour above the speed limit. The driver would be relieved of such matters, if a small bell or two were hooked up with these indicators. If it tinkled, the driver would know that his oil pressure gauge had dropped down to zero or that his engine heat was edging 212 degrees or that he'd gone over the speed at which he had set a control on his speedometer.

Such a bell would be audible only to the driver. But there is also a vital need for a really loud noisemaker in autos, entirely different in sound from the horn, for signalling an emergency. A high-pitched whistle, loud enough to be audible a quarter-mile away, and restricted by law to emergency use, should do it. It could be sounded when an auto stalls in the path of traffic, and is likely to be rammed by fast-moving vehicles before it can be shoved onto the berm. It could also signal the need for help in case of mechanical failure on a lonely stretch of road at night, where too often passing motorists assume that you've pulled onto the shoulder for a purpose entirely removed from fixing the auto. A shrieker would also prove valuable when a private auto must run red lights and boulevard signs because of an emergency;

the horn has been abused by so many wedding parties and sports fans that it's not very effective. Automatic cutin for the shrieker in case of an accident, as I suggested several issues ago, would be helpful in the growing number of instances involving a one-car smashup which knocks out the driver and isn't noticed by passing vehicles for hours or days.

From the safety standpoint, we've lately had much publicity on the value of safety belts. I don't deny their usefulness, and I admit that it's a blind prejudice that prevents me from wearing one. My trouble is an animal-like fear of being trapped in a wrecked auto by the safety belt and unable to loosen it because of broken arms or semi-conscious condition, while the vehicle is on fire. A couple of local telephone workers further shattered my weak confidence in safety belts by narrowly missing extinction last winter; at the foot of a mountain, they saw a huge truck careening down the long incline, skidding out of control toward their auto, couldn't drive out of danger because of traffic in front and behind, and couldn't jump out because of their safety belts. The truck missed them by inches. I suspect that contriving doors that don't resemble pilot ejection mechanisms would be more valuable to the motoring public than safety belts. But that is beside the point: for every injury that is lessened by a safety belt, I think that two injuries could be made less severe if drivers and passengers wore crash helmets. These helmets wouldn't necessarily take the form of the monstrous things that stunt men wear for movie thrillers. Professional baseball players can now obtain a liner that fits under the cap and is hardly noticeable; it's been credited with reducing potential skull fractures to mild concussions or mere headaches when batters are beaned. This sort of helmet wouldn't insure immortality if two autos collided headon while going one mile per minute each; it might save long spells in the hospital in the more frequent cases in which less violent accidents cause head injuries.

The steering wheel is another automotive feature that has been unchanged since the turn of the century. It's deadly to the driver, because its shaft must be strong and rigid enough to do disastrous things to the chest or neck, in a collision. With power steering already upon us, it should be time to replace the wheel by a simple stick, much like the airplane pilot's device, back in the 1920's, geared to permit either the delicate adjustments of direction needed in normal driving, or the abrupt turns of the wheel required for parking and corner-turning.

More and more, the most disastrous thing that can happen to a driver is to suffer a stalled auto that can't move under its own power. If it happens on the open highway, even in broad daylight, there's awful danger of a smashup before it can be pushed off the main highway; in the city, it can snarl traffic for a mile during a rush period. Danner, Grennell, Raeburn, anyone—could cars be designed with somewhat improved electrical systems that would make it possible to move the vehicle a few feet with an electrical motor, when the gasoline-powered motor conks out? If the electrical system could provide propulsion for just fifty feet before the battery was drained, it might save many lives and much machinery.

And in this subtle, sneaky way, we return by way of the battery and electrical system to my old longshot, solar power. It is dangerous to argue by analogy, but in the case of scientific progress, I think that analogy can frequently be valid. It is

usually the case that a new application of some device can be quite clearly foreseen, several decades before it comes into actual use: the intervening period is caused by the need to improve and perfect, not the need to discover new laws of nature. Back in Civil War days, Matthew Brady and the other battlefield photographers must have longed desperately for the ability to record in moving pictures the things that they photographed as stills. Now, in the 1860's, it was easy to figure out how to take and project movies. The phenomenon of persistence of vision was quite well known. But there are no movies dating from the Civil War. The obstacles were insurmountable. How can you take one photograph after another in such rapid succession when you must prepare, then develop immediately, the wet glass plates that make fairly brief exposures possible? Where will you find plates that will register images at even faster exposures necessitated for movies? What light source would be powerful enough and cool enough for use in a projector? It took several decades to bring about flexible film, wide-aperture lenses of short focal length, fast emulsions, general availability of electricity, a dozen other photographic improvements. They were inevitable, given a continuing national interest in photography, but they couldn't be provided overnight. So, today, I admit that solar power has rather modest theoretical limitations, but I think that another ten to twenty years will see those limitations riddled with loopholes and detours. Consider radios: In 1927, would any ham have believed that by 1957, he could purchase a receiver which requires no power source except the illumination of a 100-watt bulb for loudspeaker operation? You can buy such a radio today from General Electric, if you're willing to pay the price; it runs 250 hours in absolute darkness, and for ever under that 100-watt bulb's illumination. So, in another twenty to thirty years, I strongly suspect that solar power will have made more practical strides. It may not power automobile manufacturing plants, but it may quite possibly be powering automobiles, and even tomorrow, I think that it could be keeping your auto's battery charged. Solar power might also make possible a sharp reduction in the bulk and weight of auto batteries, enabling the vehicle to carry a fully charged spare battery at all times as a guard against sudden battery failure.

Here in Maryland, we have had a few tentative suggestions that U.S.Route 40, the state's principal east-west highway, should be illuminated at night. The legislators and road commission people boggle at the cost. But night illumination of highways would serve an infinitely large number of safety purposes, and I think that the deal could be swung financially by interesting the hucksters. If we're going to have signs along the highways--and we certainly have them, these days--we might as well require the advertisers to serve a useful purpose. Legislation that requires an advertiser to illuminate a quarter-mile of highway for every sign he maintains ought to get the major roads lighted in a year or two. If it came out of the money that now goes to sponsor television programs, it wouldn't cost anyone a cent.

And finally, can't we start a campaign for FM receivers to be offered in automobiles as factory-installed equipment? So many drivers would want them, I'm sure, if it weren't for the nuisance of tearing out and replacing everytime a new auto is obtained, on a custom-installed basis. FM radios in autos might be useless in the wider open spaces of the West, but I believe they'd sell very well in all areas that enjoy access to at least a couple of FM transmitters.

Whither Wollheim?

The Higher Ire:

I don't know how many persons in the FAPA have been fortunate enough to go through life without receiving anonymous letters. The unsigned letter is a thing that angers me out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. And there's no real reason to pay great heed to the mail that arrives without a clue to the identity of the sender; it's basically no different from the rumor that you hear without being able to pin down its source. Fortunately, my experience with anonymous communications has been limited to three pieces of mail, and I'm quite proud of the fact that I was on the receiving, not the sending, end in every case. The first was quite harmless, and must have arrived at valentine time a dozen years ago. It was one of those poison drawing valentines, and it made me furious for three days, but I am pleased to report that it must not have done any good to send it, because I have completely forgotten what personality trait it called attention to. The second may have been a joke or fully serious in intent: it was a poison pen letter which covered four pages, describing in detail what a lousy announcer I was, back in the days when I was doing a five-minute news broadcast from the newspaper office daily over the local radio station. It was almost too illiterate to be natural; I suspected a couple of co-workers of forging it, but I'm not sure that they could have made it quite as consistently moronic as it sounded. (The fact that some of its contents were undoubtedly accurate descriptions didn't bother me particularly; in fact, I retained that broadcasting duty for two years longer than I should have done, before the press of other work became so great that I was forced to abandon it. I just didn't want to quit in the face of the anonymous letter.) The third anonymous communication came just two weeks ago. I'm still sizzling from this one, which was really nasty and a bit too personal to describe here. This was the only one of the three which contained any clues to the sender; two idiosyncracies in the way the envelope was addressed and stamped have given me a fairly good basis for identifying one person with it. But herein lies, I think, the true brutality of the anonymous letter: not its contents, but its subsequent effect on the recipient, who must fight the temptation to wonder every time he sees a friend or acquaintance: "Did he do it?" And it's a consolation to realize that no anonymous communications have reached me from fans, during my two decades in fandom.

The Open Mouth:

In case you're wondering how to fill a page or two of your FAPA publication, here's a suggestion: Tell us your nomination for the most astonishing thing that exists in the world today. I don't mean the most beautiful or the most complicated or the most impressive. For the honor of most astonishing, I would be inclined to settle on Wagner's Ring operas. The music of Wagner knocked me for a loop when I first heard it, sounding like the greatest music anyone had ever composed. The faults became evident when I heard Wagner's music repeatedly, read books about it, and got better acquainted with the work of other composers. But its latent witchery will not let go, once it grasps you; you may fight the music, but it's always there, awaiting its time to come back into fashion. The Met broadcast of the Ring operas overwhelmed me very nearly as much this winter as when I first heard

them, in spite of the fantastically rapid clip at which they were conducted and the intolerable amount of monitoring the dynamic level in the Met broadcasts. It is now customary to look upon Wagner as old-fashioned. But paradoxically, I think that the big secret of the fascination of the Ring operas lies in the up-to-dateness of his characterizations. His gods, dwarfs, giants, and humans are fabulous enough not to be dated, just as Homer used legendary characters to delight the Grecians. So, in Das Rheingold, the first scene in the abode of the gods contains a discussion about the fort which is almost identical with 1957's sales pitch by realtors: The little lady should talk hubby into buying a place of his own on credit, so he won't go chasing around as he did before he had responsibilities, and she can always blame him for lack of foresight if he can't keep up the payments. Loge is a perfect example of today's public relations man. Right now, Broadway contains a smash hit which is a slightly modernized version of Siegfried: Li'l Abner is just as strong, brave, dense, and afraid of women as Wagner's hero, and even has the same dwarfish little father. The music in recent years has been badly vulgarized by the Met's second-rate conductors, the influence of Stokowski, and its use for high-fidelity purposes; in fact, the late Furtwangler met a uniformly sour reception among American reviewers for his recordings of complete Wagner operas, because he followed quite literally the directions in the score, causing critics to speak of his tamperings with the tempo and other "liberties." Properly played, the music is as astonishing as ever. Wagner got so much out of the interval of the major seventh in his melodic passages to suggest the grotesque or ugly that more recent composers sound grotesque or ugly every time they use it. I'm inclined to agree with whoever cited, as the most lovely moment in all music, the moment in Gotterdammerung when Waltraute says about Wotan: "Er gedachte, Brunnhilde, dein'." And there's never been a composer who held a candle to Wagner in making transitions, even by the very simplest of means: Brunnhilde's last entrance in Gotterdammerung is almost frightening, through the simplest of means—a sudden replacing of the complex turmoil in the orchestra from the previous scene with a simple statement of music symbolic of the passing of the era. Further, you must remember that these operas are the core of the entire Wagnerian revolution in the way things were done in the world of entertainment. The manner in which today's theaters have their seats installed, the attention to acoustics, methods of voice production, mechanics of the construction of musical instruments, staging methods, a dozen other aspects of today's theatrical life are the result of Wagner's activities. You may not like his music, but it's pretty potent stuff.

By George:

I'm getting too old to attend Washington's Birthday sales in the apital city. It would be easier to go down for unexciting, non-strenuous things, like the FAPA assembly sessions. But I decided to risk life and sanity for one more time on February 22. I found the new dual highway toward Washington no longer than it was the last time. In six years, 23 miles of the road has been built. During the same period of time, Ohio has built a dual highway from one end of the state to another. The day started auspiciously with my discovery of a comfort station whose existence I hadn't suspected, though I've parked outside it many times: a lovely little brick

building cunningly secreted behind some trees and shrubs near the point at which Massachusetts Avenue encounters DuPont Circle. I am considered insane in Hagerstown, because I prefer to park in the vicinity of DuPont Circle and walk to the downtown shopping district in Washington. I can't make people understand that this stroll, probably a mile and a half in length, is just what I need for relaxation after the torture of driving for nearly two hours in heavy traffic. This year, the Washington's Birthday sales do not seem to have caused quite the turmoil of most such events; this is probably because the holiday for government workers falls on a Friday, inspiring many of them to take trips out of town over the three-day holiday. I saw only one store into which customers could get only by waiting their turn, and there was only one other establishment in which it was impossible to get close to the counters, once inside. At a photographic shop, I invested $3.98 in a little table viewer for color transparencies. The clerk warned me that it wouldn't work when I tried to turn it on, because the bulb always shakes loose in shipping and must be tightened by the purchaser, but it behaved just fine when I got back in Hagerstown and tried it out. For slide display, table viewers are so much more convenient than projectors that I've never been able to understand the popularity of the latter when a large audience isn't on hand. I stopped in a few record stores. Several of them were selling tremendous piles of Camdens for $1.49 apiece, and it took a great deal of willpower to refrain from purchasing several of the complete operas that have reappeared on this label after many years of existence in the RCA Victor catalogue. I own the operas in modern recordings, better-sung for the most part, but the Camden Alfredo and Azucena are better than any of their modern interpreters. Fortunately, another store distracted me with a table filled with even more interesting bargains, albums that had been dropped from the catalogues or had suffered rubbing and rips from frequent handling. I obtained for $2.98 the one-and-only recording of Spontini's La Vestale and the ancient Vox lps for the St. John Passion for the same price. All during the day I noticed a curious fact: the clerks in Washington's stores become much more courteous and attentive when they're rushed, while in Hagerstown during heavy shopping the clerks grow panicky and brutal. I made a traffic cop furious by absent-mindedly forgetting about the walk signs at 14th & G Streets, and going across as soon as the lights governing vehicles to my left and right turned red; I kept peering in every direction to try to locate the motorist who was inspiring the frantic whistling, and was halfway down the next block before I realized that he had been trying to get the attention of a pedestrian, me. I went by a different route to return to DuPont Circle and the auto. On the way back, I got stuck behind a brand new Cadillac which didn't move faster than 20 mph at any time, and passing in the late afternoon traffic on that congested, hilly road was impossible for the next fifteen miles. I had a headache that night.

The Circle of Zero:

It's finally happened. My checking account balance has gotten stuck on a zero as its final figure. Now I can face the world with some measure of confidence in its essential reality. I opened this checking account near the end of 1949. It must have been 1951 when I began to grow annoyed at the failure of my balance to end up in a zero. Inevitably, there were 47¢ or 94¢ or some other odd figures at the end of the current figure, never a convenient 20¢ or 70¢. I

can recall only two or three occasions when the balance ended in a neat zero. Each time this occurred, the simplicity that this introduced into balance-calculating vanished with the next check, which required a sum ending in some figure other than zero. It was a situation against all the laws of probability; every tenth check should have produced a balance ending in 0, on the average. It was about this time that I began to notice that the same situation prevails in other financial matters, quite apart from my own. Bank statements, the daily condition of the United States treasury, the daily maximum and minimum temperature, such sources of figures end in a 0 pitifully rarely. There seemed to be several possibilities. Something might be completely wrong with the modern system of mathematics, causing the results of addition and subtraction to be weighted in favor of numbers that end in digits other than 0. I hate arithmetic in all its phases, and I hesitated to broach this suspicion publicly. It might turn out to be well-founded, and even though I would become famous as the fellow who identified the flaw in Arabic numerals, I'd need to go through the agony of getting acquainted with calculations in Roman numerals. Another possibility was even more disturbing, the danger that the numbers racket had intruded into American life so completely that nature was following the dictates of gamblers and turning out figures that appear to be random through their conclusion in some number from 1 through 9. Of course, I thought, it might be human nature: bank clerks might fear that nobody would believe the accuracy of their accounts, if the total assets of a bank ended neatly with ten cents or fifty cents, causing them to take two or three cents out of their own pockets and put them into a savings account to make the figure end in 13 or 53 cents. Then it happened. The 428th check that I wrote since opening the checking account, paying for some records on February 8, brought the balance to a figure ending in 0. And the 0 has prevailed ever since, to my infinite satisfaction. Five consecutive checks written since then have been for sums ending in 0. I've saved a significant amount of time in subtracting to obtain the balance, and my worries about sinister forces at work in the world of finance have been allayed for a while.

Unions Now?

From time to time, a FAPA member mentions the findings of a consumers union. It's usually done with the attitude that this settles that. I admire earnestly the idea of an organization devoted to determining the value of products that are offered to the American public, but I have strong doubts that the existing groups are able to do a reliable job on the more complex merchandise. For example, cameras are a prime target for consumer research reports. Usually, these reports concentrate on two things: the resolving power of the lens and the accuracy of the shutter speeds. These are two important matters, but I submit that they aren't enough to guide the prospective purchaser of a camera. The reports never reveal, for instance, whether the resolving power has been tested with focus set at a variety of distances; but every lens has a zone of focus in which it is perceptibly sharpest. Acuity is never mentioned in these reports, although it is perhaps more important than sharpness in delivering good enlargements. Moreover, lens tests seem to be done with the lens out of the camera; this gives no clue to such matters affecting the lens' performance

as the stability and accuracy of its mount and the camera's ability to hold the film evenly and precisely at the proper film plane. In the smaller cameras in particular, a thousandth of an inch of misadjustment in these matters can throw a lens into a condition of second-rate performance. Accuracy in the shutter speeds is important, but I never see in the consumer union reports any reference to a shutter's ability to hit its proper speed after disuse for some time, compared with the way it works after a dozen pictures have been taken on the same day. With some cameras, this is immaterial; the instructionsthat come with the Graphics, for instance, recommend cocking and releasing the shutter a few times before taking a picture, if the camera has not been used for a day or two. But it is difficult or impossible to exercise the shutter on some cameras whose film transport and shutter cocking mechanisms are interlocked to prevent double exposures. Too, the tests are silent on the important matter of temperature: some types of shutters grow sluggish as soon as the mercury drops a bit, others behave beautifully until the temperature approaches zero. I don't think that any consumer organization gives American-made products the shaking test to which high-quality foreign-made cameras are usually subjected by the factory: a systematic jolting and jostling that simulates in a few minutes the handling that the camera would receive in several months of normal use. If there's a badly fitted or weak piece of mechanism in the camera, it will often show up after this testing, or a cheaply constructed camera will simply start to fall apart. I have never seen a consumer group give a report on a miniature camera's film-scratching potentialities; yet this is one of the matters which can be discovered only by using the camera, and a tendency to create small scratches by a badly fitting pressure plate or some other peculiarity of construction can make a camera worthless for any prints larger than snapshot size. Nor is there any systematic report on the slowest shutter speed at which a camera can be safely hand-held. This is a matter about which the advertising literature is usually silent, and it varies sharply from one camera to another, depending on the way the shutter release button functions and the ability of the hands to grip the camera properly. (Parenthetically, it is the one great flaw in the famed Argus C-3: the release button must be depressed quite a distance, and the fingers of the right hand cannot hold the camera in the steadiest conceivable fashion, because space must be allowed for the shutter-cocking mechanism to rise when the release is pressed.) And I suspect that the consumer groups issue their findings on the basis of testing one specimen of a new model camera. This might be a safe procedure with imported cameras, which normally undergo tremendously thorough shakedown procedures at the factory. The Linhof factory, for instance, reputedly devotes sixty per cent of its entire space and facilities to quality control. But the cheap foreign-made cameras and most of those produced in this country must vary considerably in quality within the same model, simply because tolerances are so tremendously close in precision equipment. It seems to me that consumer product testing is a field that the federal government might legitimately enter; it's hard to imagine a privately financed organization doing the thorough job that would be required to supply all the necessary facts about the quality of performance by a camera, an automobile, or a baby carriage. It's also hard to think of any government activity that would provide greater eventual savings to the taxpayer and purchaser.