

89

Here's volume 23, number 2, whole number 89, and FAPA number 83 of Horizons. Ummm, 89 issues? That's not too many, I hope. It is a Futurian Federation of the World publication written mostly by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland. The mimeography will probably be by Dick Eney again for this winter, 1961/62 issue.

### In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: I don't like the use of "blackball" in connection with the proposed amendment. This word is being used wrongly too much in FAPA. A blackball is an opposing vote cast in a situation where one such vote can bar a prospective member, not an expression of the fact that a substantial proportion of the entire membership object to the candidate. The amendment is undoubtedly necessary, because of the whispering campaign against one waiting lister. " I think that FAPA should sponsor a fan art award in order to do something for fandom, as soon as fandom does something for FAPA. A \$200 check from convention profits like the one that TAFF got would be just fine. Without such a bribe, I prefer FAPA funds to go for the purposes of the organization. Melange: I've never ridden a trolley hearse. But I spent a couple of hours recently in something nearly as impressive, the official cars of the Western Maryland Railway. They were built in 1913, haven't been changed noticeably since then, and look exactly like the grandeur in which bloated capitalists moved in the silent movies. " Comic strips are sold in two sizes. Newspapers generally use the smaller unless a certain strip attains extreme popularity with the public or a director of the publishing corporation. Digital Science-Fact-Fiction Five-Yearly: I wonder if the inevitable comment will be heard from somewhere in the audience: "I'm saving the serial to read after I have all the parts"? And I wonder if more than two or three of us oldsters remember the bluebird that is parodied on the contents page? Lee's last-minute rescue as a member would be enough to create happiness, but this publication provides an extra measure of delight. All that's missing is a series of quotations from a novel I've just read, Eric Frank Russell's Sentinels of Space. He must have had a wonderful time, cramming into its 179 pages every cliché that has ever afflicted the English language. CCon: The compactness of the writing made the convention report an unusual one. I wonder if our rapid readers managed comprehension of this at 750 words per minute? I might point out that the mention of me in connection with TAFF is misleading and embarrassing at this particular moment, when I've been listed among the nominators of Ethel Lindsay. I do contribute to TAFF in years when the list of candidates is not cluttered up with non-entities or individuals who have more cash to spare than most of the contributors. I've sent money to the last three campaigns, at least. " Can anyone explain why the Cult should have been worth all that trouble to save? The Post Office Department won't consider itself defeated that the organization survives. It would have been so easy to disband and regroup under a new name. " By chance, I glanced through some instalments of The Death of Science Fiction not long ago. They confirmed my original impression that it was almost unreadable, and I can't imagine why it made such an effect on its cre-



ators that they continue to draw the most cosmic inferences from it. Phlotsam: It's wonderful to find that one person escaped the personality pitch that Heinlein put on at Seattle. I can just imagine his consternation if he's getting reports from his spies on how all of a sudden the criticisms of Starship Troopers have stopped appearing, fans refer to him as Robert rather than Bob, and face death more eagerly, knowing that they drank in the suite of the man who predicted it. Then an embarrassed moment, the spy shuffles feet, and finally blurts it out: "That red-haired woman who walked out on you. She didn't have to go to the bathroom, after all. And she's still writing the things all the other fans were writing before Seattle." ' ' The following is a serious suggestion, even though you'll all laugh at it. Fandom needs a secret symbol that could be worn on clothing without making the bearer conspicuous, to prevent repetition of things like Wrai and Phyllis riding the same train, unknown to each other. It could be a simple symbol as a clasp pin for women. The same symbol could appear on the necktie for men who wear them, but I can't think where the informal dressers would put it. It would help when you must meet previously unmet fans at terminals, too. ' ' "What is more delightful than children of 5, 2 and six-months old?" Okay, Buck, all together, now.... ' ' The comments on Lark remind me that it's time for my lustral plea to fandom: If you write my address in longhand on envelopes or wrappers, please spell out Maryland. There is only one other Hagerstown in the nation, but it's in Indiana. Many persons scrawl Md. in a way that resembles Ind. and there's a week or more delay for forwarding. ' ' Then this remark on getting up in a cold house gives me a chance to ask a question. Does anyone know for sure which system consumes less fuel oil, keeping the thermostat at the same point 24 hours daily, or turning it down during sleeping hours? I've heard perfectly logical explanations how each method is more economical than the other. ' ' I'll try to write a letter about unions in the printing trades. There's not enough space here except to say: Printshops with unions sometimes deliver work when promised, those without unions never do; in this instance, the trimmer could probably have completed his work Monday morning if the boss hadn't wasted a Saturday doing the same thing; and it'll take a lot of worse abuses than this to make up for the homicide that was occurring in print shops before the union movement that forced the owners to create healthy working conditions. Eos: I imagine that my dismay at the possible disappearance of my unique set of memories came from that faint flicker of the flame that burns in most persons who fool around with words, the thought that Real Soon Now I'll write something based on my experience that the world will enjoy and preserve as a sort of immortality for those memories. ' ' The remarks on the Golden Rule stir up one of those very mentions, in fact. I once wrote a story that didn't sell, in which the aliens won the right to do as they pleased with earth in return for their guarantee that they would be guided by and would enforce the Golden Rule. The aliens found it the easiest cleanup of a planet's life they'd ever encountered. The Cry Is... What kind of reporters do they have in Seattle? They seem to get things right. This is a dangerous trend and one that ought to be checked as soon as possible. Grotesque: I think this is the best thing that Ed has done for FAPA in all his years as a member. It is odd how the dialog here and there sounds exactly like Keller in plots that could hardly be mistaken for him. "To show you how



serious I am, here is another forty dollars. Just kiss me again, perhaps two or three times, and let me hold you." That might have strutted right out of the pages of Amazing Stories in its first decade. Howdah: Keep watching for a Canadian production of Pinafore that was taped by the CBC. It has been programmed twice as a non-network program in this area, and should reach the west coast some day. It contains many bits of business new to me, excellent singing, and none of the usual evidence that the conductor has dozed off. I've seen only one live G&S production this year: the American Savoyards' Iolanthe. My chief memory is my careful watchfulness for the moment when they put on the wings, and complete failure to spot it. I'll die without knowing how they got there. '' I have referred occasionally to my red Olds and its cargo of Fan Quixote as Rosinante, and nobody asked what that meant. Phantasy Press: Dan has relieved my mind. I was fairly sure that my first prozine letter occurred in 1936 and my collection began before that. But I hadn't checked, and there was the insecurity provided by the fear that I might have remembered wrong and would be drummed out of First Fandom as a rank neo who just imaginad that he dated so far back. '' I'm afraid that I have nasty thoughts toward employment offices, as a result of my sole visit to the local one. I'd just quit my railroad job. I entered an office where a half-dozen persons sat staring into space and was directed to a seat. They stared until someone started to talk, they all joined in, then lost interest and stared some more. A halfhour later they finally started to throw printed forms at me. When asked what kind of work I wanted, I said I wanted to write. They firmly told me that this was out of the question because the local newspapers had the only jobs for writers in town and they needed nobody. When I left there, I stopped by the newspaper office to see the only journalist I knew, the woman's page editor of the afternoon paper. She said she'd see what she could do, and a couple of weeks later I saw her again and was told to come to work. Later I learned it wouldn't have taken so long except for the fact that she wasn't on speaking terms with the editor and had used a complicated way of getting her message to him indirectly. Horizons: In my hurry to tell the events while they were fresh in my mind, I fouled up the last page of Whatever Happened to Charlotte? Even the non-lawyers in the audience must have spotted the incorrect way I used such words as manslaughter and self-defense. Wraith: I suppose that I'm averaging two hours daily on fandom. This is somewhat more than customary during the 1950's, because fan history notetaking has been added. If I ever finish up that project, I'll be close to a nervous collapse from the combination of relief and indecision over what new use to make of this newly liberated time. Lark: Bill did such a good job explaining how speedometers work that I'm tempted to ask now what makes the automobile move. I've never understood what happens to the conservation of energy when the vehicle is on a level surface, in gear, but the motor is idling too slowly to cause it to go forward. '' I've read Slan but I may be the only FAPA member who dislikes it. I think it's back work on the same level as the Amazing Stories novels of the 1940's. '' The fm good music situation around here has improved vastly in the past couple of years. Baltimore now has three stations programming little else all evening. Two are fm outlets of big, prosperous am stations, apparently operated either for prestige purposes or to use up part of a signal



financed by background music customers. WCAO-FM is my favorite of the three because it's not only free from commercials, it also bans news broadcasts and makes no effort to tailor programs to 30 or 60 minute time segments. Washington also has three fm stations specializing in good music, but one is too close on the dial to a Hagerstown station for good separation. One of the remaining two provides the WQXR network transmissions, the third is particularly useful for its live broadcasts. A fourth Washington station now has the Capital Airlines Music Till Dawn on a higher level than when the CBS outlet carried it; mostly orchestral, but a fine way to hear all the latest releases of this type. I've been doing a good bit of taping recently, particularly the Marlowe Society Shakespeare plays. Unfortunately, I missed two fine things on tape: Italian recordings of Verdi's early opera, Araldo, and Meyerbeer's Les Huguenots. The Rambling Fap: Why do fanzines get stuck on the 30th issue? It happened to Spaceways, Oopsla!, possibly Quandry and others. Please put out three more issues of TRF immediately, to get over the hump. Exejesus: I've been introducing samples of the contents to co-workers at the office at this appropriate Christmas season. Now I'm trying to get up the nerve to assemble sufficient reporters for taping the completed portions. Celephais: Whenever I visit a place that has a custom like the changing of the guard at Ottawa, I start to worry about people who live in the neighborhood. What does it do to the nerves to have the noise of that band going down the street every day at the same hour? What happens if you're too sick to bear the noise but not sick enough to go to the hospital? How long does it take to grow to know the face of every man in the outfit and to figure out his working schedule? '' The entire travelog not only entertains, it informs. I'm sure that I'll retain at least a dozen nuggets of knowledge that I might some day put to use on a trip through the area. '' I confess to having put the John Birch Society to use. The light bulb in the office john burned out. The janitor became deaf every time we told him about it. Reporters couldn't catch up on their reading after 5 p.m., not to mention other inconveniences. I finally pasted onto the door a bulletin from the JBS which bore on its cover the words: "It is better to carry a small candle than to curse the darkness." It worked. Bobolings: I've kept my first car for 11 years, and devoutly hope that I don't get the lemons from now on, in reverse to Bob's experiences. My Olds may not be long for the highways. It refuses to start once each month, the engine temperature gauge, heater and dome light don't work, it tries to make a left turn every time I step on the brakes and the other night it simply couldn't complete the climb up the hill leading from the parking lot to the next street higher up. Salud: Of all the weddings involving aunts, cousins, and other assorted relatives, I think that the one that turned out happiest was the one between my cousin, just out of her teens, and a physician of 45 or 50. To make the prospect even more dubious, she seduced him out of his quite satisfactory first marriage. They had the perfect married life, until about 25 years later, when my cousin died, the physician's first wife made an incredibly determined effort to get him to marry her again, and he was so disgusted that he killed himself. '' One method of providing fairer jury trials would be simple: remove all cases 75 miles or further. It would cost a little more, but you go broke when you go to law, anyway. Sercon's Bane: Not a marginal note, except one that reminds



me to declare that the Philcon had an imposing quantity of FAPA members in attendance, for a regional event. There were 11 on hand by my count, and I didn't get to meet everyone, so I may be one or two short. A Bird Turned an Eye: It might have been better to wait a year before writing these. Remarkably vivid lines and very flat ones are mixed up; recollection in tranquility should make that evident later on. Alif: I'm probably a kill-joy, but I don't think the game's worth the candle, when fans use fake names to register at a hotel. Suppose someone gets shot or starts a riot, and the authorities find one-fourth of the con attendees are using names that don't agree with identification papers. It could be an awful mess to explain. ' Karen somehow gives me the impression in convention reports that she is more genuinely fond of humanity in general than any con chronicler in my experience. And I can't figure out how she transmits that sensation. Catch Trap: The G&S operettas might have subtler reasons for continued survival. It might be connected with the manner in which they snap and snarl at institutions and manners in general. A Lehar or Strauss character doesn't represent his profession or social class, somehow, as individuals do in G&S. Then too, the Savoy works are more cruel and sadistic than most light music, and they may benefit from this. I can't think of any other operetta concerned with beheading and ending with most of the leading characters totally unhappy, or songs in which contraltos complain about thinning hair. Day\*Star: A cousin commuted all summer to a Washington college, giving me enough knowledge of the problems involved to sympathize. She has no children to worry about but bucked that metropolitan traffic, which must be almost an equal evil. ' Naturally, I appreciate some unexpected support for my proposal to do some voting on waiting listers. But Marion is wrong when she says that Charles' system has been proposed previously: it goes far beyond my original idea. Too far beyond, I would say, because some fans would never become FAPA members if vote-getting were the only way to enter. This would have cost us in the past certain valuable members like Helen Wesson and Bill Danner, who were totally unknown to fans, and migrated from mundane ayjays. I still want to see just two or three waiting listers moved to the top by election each year, with the order of the remainder unchanged. This would provide the fresh blood that FAPA needs, without the risk of aristocracy that Marion mentions. But I question the validity of Marion's analogy with a college frat. FAPA is an expediency for the exchange of fanzines, not a status goal, even if some fans insist on mistaking it as such. A better collegiate analogy might be with admission to a specific college. Many colleges now have more applicants than physical facilities can handle. The administration does not admit students in order of application without regard to scholastic abilities and character. Should we do away with entrance exams and scholarships because they disturb an orderly and lengthy waiting in line? FAPA has a membership limit because too many members would mean too much work for publishers and mailings too large for convenient reading. I think the present waiting list procedure is unwise, because it insures that no new FAPA member shall be a fan with fewer than five or six years of activity in the field. I think that the newcomers should include some persons in the full flower of fannish youth and enthusiasm, in addition to these comfortably mature fans. ' I'm getting above the age



level that makes the draft a great personal threat. But in the event that I should be drafted under any conditions other than actual war, I'd probably concentrate on being as bad a soldier as possible. I haven't the physical strength or patriotic convictions that would make me useful in the service and life in the guardhouse or a dishonorable discharge would suit my peculiar ethics a little better than draftdodging or a legal fight to remain civilian. If drafted in wartime, I'd probably do my best and get myself killed through inability to put up a good fight. Null-F: The Fourth of June is outstanding for several reasons. It is refreshingly different in style from the usual antiseptic prose of the Void crew, it does not concern a party or jazz, and it conveys a genuine tang of personal experience transmuted through selectivity or imagination into something more vivid than what really happened. '' To repeat myself, I think mescaline should be prohibited because it incapacitates users so totally. A cab driver with too much to drink may still get me to my destination, but I wouldn't want to ride with one who had been indulging in peyote a short time before. '' I had meatless Fridays in the hospital, too. This was particularly bad because I dislike seafood of all kinds. Then one Friday they served vegetable soup with obvious chunks of beef floating around. My roommate that day was a devout Catholic. He ate the soup, muttering something about his right to make a mistake if the dietician had done so. '' Ackerman's fanzine page total would be quite small. VOM was his only substantial publication that lasted any length of time, and most of its issues ran to only a dozen pages or slightly more. Morajo did most of the work, anyway. '' I have just ordered as a Christmas gift for me the complete Buxtehude organ works in the bargain Voxbox edition. I'm sunk, if I change my mind about my liking for this composer now. '' If secretary-treasurers are violating the constitution and allowing waiting listers only two acknowledgment misses for all eternity, I think the practice should be broken up immediately. The constitution is quite explicit: waiting listers must acknowledge every other Fantasy Amateur, at least. It's absurd to invent a new system that seems to be costing us waiting listers of the caliber of Barry and Nirenberg. Further, I believe that the acknowledgment process is a lot of nonsense that was grafted onto FAPA just because SAPS was doing it. Phyllis Economou's checkup indicates that about half of the new members drop out almost immediately. I think that this is just about the situation existing before the acknowledgment rigamarole was imposed. So the procedure is not doing what was intended, to keep from cluttering up the waiting list individuals who wouldn't be longterm FAPA members. It would be much less work for the sec-treas and easier on the nerves of waiting listers if we substituted a simple requirement that waiting listers subscribe to the Fantasy Amateur for perhaps 25% per year to cover postage and paper. Anyone who let the subscription lapse until he'd missed two straight issues would be out. Records could be kept by a simple notation of the mailing with which each FA subscription expired, and the waiting list wouldn't drain FAPA's finances. '' The post office hasn't altered its stand on mailing information about contraceptives. The situation has always been the same: large publishing firms can afford to risk fines and to hire legal help in case they're charged with violating postal regulations, fans can't. Light-house: Even if that largescale sociological survey were taken,



and showed some results sharply at variance with a group of typical middleclass youngish persons predominantly male, you still couldn't be sure that the characteristics were those of fans or of science fiction readers. You'd have to make two surveys, the other covering stf. readers who aren't active fans, to make certain that these tendencies exist just among fans or among the general stf.-oriented public. I don't think the study would turn up anything that we don't already suspect about fandom. '' I liked tremendously the future projection of Kennedy, mourning the while the fact that it seems a century ago since people were saying such fine things about that inaugural address that I began to doubt my own sanity and to think that this might disprove after all the rule that there are no intelligent and capable politicians. I needn't have worried. '' IQ testing at the Chicon will prove nothing in particular, because too many participants will be keyed up sufficiently to do much better or worse than under normal circumstances and most of them will probably rush to get finished. But it's hardly apt to do any particular harm, and it might deflate a few egos in gratifying manner. My objection to IQ testing is that it happens in one session. I doubt that I'm unique in my varying from good to bad days for intelligence. I'm sure I'd make a terrible showing on days when I'm particularly stupid, and I couldn't repeat often a performance that I gave when a draft exam involving a mental test happened to coincide with one of my best days. I think IQ tests should be given in at least three sections, spread over a week, and the results averaged out. Even if some individuals made particularly big gains at the end because they knew what to expect, that might tell something about intelligence, too. '' Reading a novel to learn that war is hell is as timewasting as listening to a symphony to follow through its program that life in the country is pleasant. I think that messages in fiction are just frosting on the cake. I read fiction to identify with characters or to feel that I've met interesting new individuals in the ones I couldn't possibly imagine to be me. This, incidentally, is why I couldn't get much out of Blind Clarinet. It does convey several communications about the sensitivity of certain individuals to money and blindness and art. But I can't take seriously the characters who are so intense and preoccupied with the subject matter, jazz; I'd probably react the same to an epic written by an intelligent bee about life in the hive. Pothpatlaw: France must have produced even more bookform fantasy than the English-speaking lands. It would be hard to find 15,000 books in any British or American collection of fantasy. Then you stop to consider that maybe a collector with Pierre's persistence in Japan or Spain could find as many original fantasies published in those lands, and you get your sense of wonder back again all over. Vandy: Usually I don't comment on postmailings, but they're too numerous and good this time to skip. '' I don't think this proposed typer keyboard would be as good as the one we use today. It has two situations in which the same finger would be forced to strike successive letters in extremely frequent combinations of a consonant and vowel: ER and S with both I and A. The standard keyboard has only one of these awkward spots, with the same finger controlling E, D and C. I'm probably repeating myself, but anyway, the little finger is quite strong enough to be used as often as necessary, and the standard keyboard gives it only one frequently used character for each hand because the problem is that



the shortness of this finger would cause the whole hand to rotate out of good position if it were constantly jumping from one bank of keys to another. Your keyboard simply wastes that finger. 'I get one bad sinus attack every second or third year. Stuff called Sinutab is the only thing that helps me. Read the directions before taking it because there is an assortment of warnings to stay away if you have high blood pressure or are due to take a long drive that same day. 'Who are these fans who have been bragging about their IQs? One fan became famous because an enemy kept harping on his score in a mental ability test that wasn't an IQ at all. A current fan is popularly supposed to have an extremely high IQ but has made no personal claims. Degler claimed we were all geniuses. Those are the only cases of IQ flaunting that I recall. 'Juanita's description of her singing troubles sounds like a classic case history of a voice about to be ruined through misuse. I would urgently recommend an end to efforts to hit those high and low notes, then a half-dozen lessons with the best singing teacher available after making a firm understanding with him that you don't want to prepare for a career, you just want to learn how to use properly your vocal equipment. Null-F again: I love to say I told you so to fandom. As I've repeated and repeated, there is entirely too much potential substance for lawsuits going into fanzines and there will be more cases like this if fans don't keep their tempers with stencils in the typewriter. To repeat something else: there are plenty of lawyers anxious enough for business to start action on borderline stuff that isn't quite libel and it's such an infernal nuisance to be sued for libel that it doesn't matter particularly whether you are found guilty or not; that's an anticlimax. The lines above do not apply to this particular instance; I think that the Moskowitzes are on pretty firm ground in considering the quoted statements to be libel. I'd also like to point out that libellous matter is unmailable, and FAPA's official editor is justified in withholding from a mailing any publication which he thinks constitutes libellous statements. Abject Apology: I had doubted the Raeburn-Steward story of the latter's thrilling rescue of his membership, but I see that I should trust my fellow men more in the future. The Lyons publication is postmarked with a date, November 6, and it reached me November 24. Aside from the renewal of confidence in mankind, I got from it the pleasure of finding someone who agrees with me that the best vacations are those that aren't planned ahead. Several times, I've packed and gotten as far as the bus terminal ticket window without knowing where I'd spend the next few days, using the destination of the next departure as the deciding factor. 'I think that all telephones provided in new installations in this country now contain the little wheel on the underside that permits the user to adjust the volume of the bell at will. Shadow Mailing: I read it on the way back from the Philcon, keeping several surrounding passengers awake by burning my light for this purpose. There was too much jolting to take notes and I'll write directly to most of the contributors, anyway. If we get this waiting list vote system, my ballot would specialize in the individuals who have been faithful in the shadow mailings; I would even be happy to sign a petition to get them to the top of the waiting list under section 9.1 of the constitution. And I was pleased to see that Russell Chauvenet has not regressed to gafia, although the idea of a postmailing to a shadow mailing is a bit complicated for me.



## The Year the World Series Lasted Until December

Horizons will not contain this year a full-dress report on the Philcon for several reasons. I have covered one small portion of the event for another fanzine already, I may squeeze enough inspiration juice out of the pulp of my memories for another crumb or two of soggy memories to alleviate the material hunger of fanzine editors, and there wasn't as much interesting activity involved in the trip itself this year as during the exciting journey in 1960.

But I should assure some of you that I really did have a moderately fannish fall in the sense of face-to-face encounters. It started not with the Philcon but with Ella Parker's visit to Hagerstown. This was supposed to cover one day, but it got elongated into two of the things and even a respectable start on a third for one reason or another. By the time this FAPA mailing goes out, Ella will have been described in the fannish prints too often to justify my repetition. However, I don't imagine that some of the incidents in Hagerstown were repeated elsewhere, so they should be new.

There was the question of lodgings. The neighbors are less broadminded than I am about strange women who spend the night in a bachelor's house, so I promised Ella that I would find suitable sleeping accommodations in some proper place for her. Then I did nothing whatsoever in this regard before her visit, knowing that Hagerstown is not a tourist mecca and there would be no lack of choice among hostelries. Ella informed me that she preferred a motel, so on the morning of the day of arrival, I telephoned several of the things to get some idea about rates and conveniences. The proprietors laughed at me. I'd forgotten that the horse race season was in full sway in Hagerstown, and weeks ago, motels had been swamped with reservations from horse owners, jockeys, touts, and other sportsmen. Ella finally ended up in a motel five miles from town which looked pretty good from the outside. She discovered too late that there were no telephones in the cabins and no attendant was on duty after sundown. Naturally, Ella was resourceful. She found the old folks' home down the road a short distance was accommodating about the use of the telephone at odd hours.

Ella had several traumatic experiences. The most serious occurred when she accompanied a local historian and me to a small West Virginia town for my newspaper job purposes. Ella prides herself on her talking ability, and five minutes after she'd met Mr. Hicks, the historian, she knew that she faced a challenge. They loosened tremendous volleys of talk at one another all the way down. I was driving and almost steered into the Potomac River when I suddenly realized that Mr. Hicks was outtalking Ella. For the next halfhour she interrupted him courageously, time after time, only to yield to superior masculine strength of tongue. I hunched uncomfortably over the wheel on the way back, embarrassed at the monosyllables that Ella was dispiritedly uttering every once in a long while. Mr. Hicks admitted as we parted that he had had a good opponent while her strength was fresh, and he didn't gloat as much as some men would after such a complete victory.

I had warned Ella that not even for her would I miss the opening game of the World Series. But on that fourth day of Octob-



er, the gallanter elements in Washington fandom grew deeply concerned over what might be happening in Hagerstown, from which Ella had been supposed to emerge District of Columbiawards many hours before. They never made it quite clear whether they were concerned about Ella or about me. Scant minutes before Whitey Ford's first pitch whizzed through Yankee Stadium, Bill Evans and George Scithers arrived with the same look in their eye that appears when fans go traveling to rescue a FAPA mailing from a dilatory official editor. This was my first meeting with Bill and my first opportunity to determine if George is really a separate person from George Heap; I'd suspected for some time that Scithers-Heap was the first stereo fan. I turned on the tape recorder and radio in my bedroom and missed a complete world series game for the first time in a decade, prolonging the summit meeting as long as possible. I planned to listen to the taped game early the next morning, but other things intervened, and as it turned out, I didn't get to hear the first game of the 1961 world series until December 5.

The Philcon contained several firsts for me this year. It was my first actual participation in a fan gathering. Last year, I'd begged off an invitation to take part in a panel discussion because I just wanted to watch. This time, I had another reason for wanting to avoid panel participation, but accepted the invitation from Tom Purdom against my better judgment. I was afraid people would get the idea that I'm reluctant to get before an audience if I reneged for the second straight year. But it was an awful danger, because this panel focused on Jim Blish and I've read pitifully few of his stories in the past decade. If people had begun to ask questions of the panelists, my only recourse would have been to turn it into an I've Got a Secret feature, I was so concerned about this that I completely forgot to think up in advance questions to ask Jim. It was shattering to see fellow panelist Dick Eney caressing a whole fistful of neatly typed questions he'd prepared in advance, three minutes before the panel started, when I had thought of only two queries. Nobody asked me a question, I thought up as many queries as the other panelists, and all was well.

Another first was my first fan party. I didn't stay at it longer than a half-hour or so, because I arrived very late. So late, in fact, that when I rang the doorbell of the Kolchak home, the impressive quantity of shouting, singing, and unidentified other noises ceased as if I'd turned off the audio. Everyone in the house assumed I was the cops. I had imagined ahead of time that a fan party would be something like a oneshot, but I discovered that the reality reminded me more of a neofan's first issue. I prefer fans in slightly more serene condition, I'm afraid, although I was impressed by several things at the party. Among the door prizes was a small chastity belt, won by Sylvia White. She immediately remarked: "This'll be my costume for the masquerade at the Chicon!" Then there was the incident when I described the cause of my late arrival. I'd gone to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra concert. When I boldly admitted that I'd skipped most of the party in favor of a concert, and showed my program booklet to prove it, some other young fan near me took a deep breath and produced another copy of the booklet from a pocket of his panta-loons. He had also gone to the concert, and if I had the nerve to show myself as such a fakefan, he was emboldened to do the same.



act of confession. (I had had an unpleasant moment at the concert. It was my first personal experience with a great orchestra whose music I'd grown to love through the old Friday afternoon radio broadcasts and the phonograph records. So when Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, the guest conductor that night, strode onto the stage, I relaxed every muscle, closed my eyes, took a deep breath of anticipation, and waited for my first encounter with the reality of the strings which everyone agrees are even greater in the Academy of Music than when heard via electronics. The orchestra tiptoed into the early A major symphony of Mozart, and I jumped up as if I'd just seen Wetzel coming. The sound was thin, uncharacteristic, and I wondered for an awful moment if I was such a hick that I'd bought a ticket to the wrong concert. At this point, I remembered that my eyes were still closed. Opening them was a considerable relief. Only a score of musicians were playing. Hans had dispensed with all but two of the bass fiddles, four of the cellos, six or eight violins, and a few violas. My confidence in my ears returned remarkably fast.)

This year, I did not stay at the Belgravia, whose ancient and decadent splendours had fascinated me so much last year. I made for it as soon as I reached Philadelphia. But I didn't enter. From the street I could see only one dim light burning in the recesses of that vast Victorian lobby, and only one window in the six upper floors showed any sign of life from where I stood. I didn't know if the place was bewitched or simply had gone out of business. I retreated to the Penn-Sheraton, where the Philcon was held, and took a room there. I think that even Boyd Raeburn would have enjoyed the prices in this establishment's eating areas. It was 90¢ for a bowl of cereal for breakfast.

Ella Parker and I renewed our friendship. Her appearance in Philadelphia was supposed to have been a tremendous sensation but Axe let slip the fact that she hadn't gone back to England on schedule, so everyone took it as calmly as possible. I was startled to find Ackerman on hand and completely forgot that we'd been on dubious terms with one another until the second day of the event. Everything seems to be fine once again. I added to my list of just-mets such individuals as Lee Jacobs (who kept arguing that the long article in the last Horizons was fiction), Earl Kemp (whose ability to rile fans continues to puzzle me for I've found him an uninterruptedly nice person in correspondence and in person), Jerry Page, who came all the way up from the tropics and tried to sell me a copy of *The Immortal Storm*, and numerous natives of the Eastern Seaboard tribes who hadn't been in Philadelphia the preceding year. I didn't seek out Sam Moskowitz and ask to smoke a peace pipe as I'd firmly intended. He said something at the very start of the first session from the platform about a friend that made me angry, something that he hasn't succeeded in doing with any of his remarks about me.

The long weekend concluded in weird fashion. I'd wondered occasionally all summer about my courage in the first snowstorm, because of what happened last winter. There was an interval between buses in Baltimore that I spent in a building, and when I left to return to the terminal, I found the world white about me, and my shoes were naked of the safety provided by overshoes. I surprised myself by walking the two or three blocks without undue concern. There were three inches of snow on the ground when I got into Hagerstown, and I splurged on a cab to get home. It had been an excellent trip and I didn't want to mess up its ending.



## The Woman Who Taught Me Lessons

For the first time in months, I passed Grace Seymour on the street the other day. It brought back memories, a bumper crop of recollections of the days when I was noticeably younger and was taking formal lessons on the pianoforte.

As long ago as I can remember, I had always wanted a piano. I must have been seven or eight years old when I received for Christmas one of these toy pianos with a two-octave keyboard and a xylophone system of producing vaguely musical sounds. I resurrected a few old folios of piano music left over from the days when my father had operated a small dance band, and I managed to learn which notes corresponded to the keys. There was insufficient room for even my small hands to play this toy with both hands, and I didn't want to get into anything as complicated as chords. So I stuck to the melodic line, picking it out with my right hand. One slight disadvantage consisted of the absence of black keys on this toy. Each octave consisted of only the seven diatonic notes, and even the simplest music was not always written in C major. Transposition from keys containing sharps and flats was too cabalistic a practice for me, so I invented my own system of sounding the missing notes. When I required an F sharp, for example, I simply struck simultaneously the F and G. Theoretically the sound should have been the average of the two notes; in practice it didn't make too good an impression on the ear. I assume that this bit of ingenuity on my part was the reason that my parents finally bought me a piano the Christmas that I was ten years old. It cost them \$25 and I am still using it. Two of the three pedals have retired from active service and it has gradually subsided to a full tone below concert pitch, owing to the cowardice of the tuner who fears it will implode if he doesn't gradually ease the tension on the fatigued metal and wood of the framework. All the imitation ivory tops loosened one damp summer a decade ago, and the complete set of new dentures that was required then represents the only major repair bill in nearly thirty years.

Auditing is not necessary for me to recall the day it came. A cold rain was pouring down and I was not permitted to touch the piano for several hours until it had dried out and warmed up to room temperature. Those hours lasted just about as long as the entire course of my life up to that point. When the mechanism became sufficiently comfortable, the first tune that I picked out on it was Yankee Doodle, and I had to admit that it sounded much better on the fullsize piano than on the toy, because my only score of this work was in B flat. The next thing that I did was to discover the practical application of a theoretical matter consisting of the bass clef. The Wright brothers couldn't have been more proud, the day they saw the thing really flying, than I was on that night when I knew for certain that the two clefs met at middle C just as the instruction book claimed.

For several years, I picked up a bit of pianistic ability in an assortment of ways. My father coached me occasionally, I used several instruction books (with some difficulty, since one contained orthodox fingering but the other presented an oldtime code which uses an x to indicate that the thumb is to hit this note, and the figures 1 through 4 for the fingers that are generally provided with the figures 2 through 5 today), and I got help from



The Etude Musical Magazine. I read that periodical in completist fashion and encountered some troubles, attempting to adapt various recommendations to my own purposes. I remember particularly the long article that gave complete instructions for producing a rapid, even trill on the violin. It just wouldn't work when I tried to follow directions on the piano.

Eventually, it became obvious that I needed piano lessons. Hagerstown was even smaller than it is today, back in the 1930's. This made it hard to find a teacher: one of the practitioners of the trade drank incessantly, another accepted only those who were willing to take class instruction, the convent had a nun who aided the Vatican's finances by giving lessons but she wasn't allowed to come to homes and boys weren't permitted in the part of the convent containing the piano, and one otherwise acceptable teacher didn't qualify because of the persistent rumor that he made little girls take off their shoes during lessons. The local newspapers came to my rescue then, just as they were to do in another manner quite a bit later on when I needed a job. One day they carried a display advertisement bearing the picture of a woman who looked a little like Greta Garbo with just a hint of Mary Magdalene around the mouth. The accompanying text indicated that Grace Seymour might be persuaded to accept another piano pupil or two despite the amount of time she spent every day turning down offers to fill this or that engagement as a singer and as a pianist. A couple of weeks later, I made my first trip to her studio, steeling myself during the six-block walk against any carnal impulses that might arise in my newly grown self if Miss Seymour should turn out to be even more sexy and irresistible than her photograph indicated.

I needn't have worried. The picture had apparently been taken at least a quarter-century earlier and retouched with a skill that has been lost to the photographic world in the meantime. Grace was about half as tall as I was, at least six times larger in circumference, and acted as if she were nine years old. Her studio was one wall of the living room of her apartment above a grocery store. I remember little about it except the overwhelming scent of wax. She apparently waxed the floors and furniture as often as the average woman puts on lipstick. The reverse appeared to hold good, incidentally. It took some time for her to make clear to me that I had come to the right place. As an anticlimax, I took my first lesson. The first thing that I played for her was my one big achievement, the only spectacular in my repertoire: John N. Williams' arrangement of Franz Liszt's arrangement of Franz Schubert's setting of "Hark, Hark, the Lark!" Grace was frowning by the time I reached the third bar. Her only comment when I had completed the performance was a request that I should repeat it. Delighted to have received an encore so quickly, I complied. After the second time through, she took the music and held it very close to her nose, frowning mightily. She then played a few bars from it, asked me to repeat them, and suddenly gave a loud hissing sound, as if greatly relieved. "I see why it sounded like that," she said triumphantly. "You're playing in two-four time. It's written in six-eight time."

Despite this disillusioning start, I continued to take weekly lessons and soon discovered that I was already Grace's most advanced pupil, in the pianistic sense. She began talking vaguely of giving a recital. I gathered that this had been an ancient



dream, unrealized through lack of a pupil sufficiently advanced to relieve the monotony of a steady diet of the compositions of Claribel. Meanwhile, I was learning things about my teacher and her past. There was every reason to believe that she really possessed the European training in voice and piano that she claimed. She didn't practise enough to play first-rate piano but she knew how it should be done. More important, she possessed the decadent remnants of what must once have been a magnificent voice. On one visit to the Warner home, she demonstrated with *Sempre Libera* to her own accompaniment. It was the first time I'd heard opera well sung only a few feet away by a live person and I don't think I've ever experienced quite the same shattering excitement out of any musical performance by anyone since that day. Her apartment was littered with vocal scores of operas in which she had learned lead roles by memory: *Gilda*, *Lucia*, *Lakme*, *Violetta*, and a half-dozen others. Almost every page of these roles was packed and jammed with scribblings in a half-dozen hands, mute evidence of the coaching she had received. But she had apparently never won a stage role, because of her incredible eccentricities of manner, speech and dress. Her figure couldn't have helped her chances, either. She wore clothing on the street that was at least one-third of a century outmoded, in color combinations that the eye had never yet seen. She had her hair dyed every couple of weeks, always choosing a new hue on each repetition of the process. In the dog days, she protected her throat with at least two scarves, and began to wrap herself up in furs at the neck as soon as September arrived, for fear that something would happen to her larynx. She was quite vague about the nature of her past as a performing artist, but the most important engagement that I could pin down specifically was as a member of the chorus in a performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski.

She lived with her father. I had always considered myself skinny, but after I saw him I lost all self-consciousness. He was a Seventh Day-Adventist preacher of extreme antiquity, who had had a big fight with his local congregation several years earlier and had never been able to find any other job as a minister. Once he had written a musical composition: a setting of the 23rd Psalm for chorus and organ. He had published it, after herculean efforts to figure out where the notes should go in the harmonies that came so hard for the melodies that came so easily. After I had been studying with his daughter for about three months, the Rev. Mr. Seymour spent three hours telling me the complete history of this composition and climaxed the narration by presenting me with a copy of it. Unfortunately, he immediately forgot that he had done this, and repeated the oration and ceremony a few weeks later. I learned the narrative by heart and accumulated at least a dozen copies of the 23rd Psalm in musical form as time passed and his memory of previous presentations failed to improve.

Grace also had a brother, who taught piano in the depths of Virginia. "I'm just a beginner on the piano compared with Forrest," she kept telling me. "Just wait until he visits me. Then you'll hear him and you'll know what piano playing really is!" Forrest finally paid the long-deferred visit. After strong and repeated hints from Grace, my folks invited all the Seymours to the house for the evening. "I hope you can persuade him to play for us," she fretted in advance. "He's so shy." I answered the



doorbell on the night set for the visit, and I fear that I didn't give the proper attention as a host to Grace and her father. My eyes were riveted on an entirely new phenomenon. In the twilight, a great, teetering stack of music was rising up the steps to the porch, inexorably although slowly nearing my door as if bewitched. It was only a few inches away from me when I saw a glimpse of two emaciated ankles beneath and behind it. Then Grace was introducing me to Forrest, and whispering to my parents that they were in luck, because he'd brought some music, and this was sometimes a sign that it would be less difficult than usual to persuade him to play the piano. Her joy was shortlived, because when she relieved Forrest of part of his burden, she gasped in dismay. "You didn't bring the Faust Waltzes?" She was rummaging through the music desperately. It didn't seem possible that any composition could be missing from that assemblage, but Forrest said: "I know. I just learned them by heart." He was at the piano, playing them almost before he'd finished his statement. We finally got him away from the piano with food. Forrest was even more two-dimensional than his father, not quite as eccentric as his sister although this would have been too much to expect of any brother, and a quite good pianist after all. I disappointed him badly. He wanted to test my musical abilities and began by striking two notes, one after the other, in the upper regions of the keyboard. I was to tell him which was higher in pitch than the other, and I managed to give the correct answer. He then repeated the process down among the bass strings. Once again I guessed right and he had the look of a man who has just discovered a new white hope of the nation. The third part of this testing was to tell him where it's easier to tell when one note is higher in pitch than the other, when both are in the treble or both in the bass. I said I thought it was easier in the bass. He immediately lost interest in me, and Grace didn't seem as confident about my musicianship from that time onward, either.

Grace eventually couldn't resist the recital-giving urge any longer. But she faced the problem of location. Her apartment was too small for this purpose. Her father's experiences had soured her on religion so she didn't want to ask a church for use of a Sunday school room. Finally we volunteered the use of the Warner home. It was small, but so was the roster of students sopping up knowledge at the Seymour fountain, and it was not likely that many friends or parents would brave the dissonances normally found in a recital by piano students. By now, I was active in fandom, so the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph got one of its rare mundane jobs, the production of programs for the recital. I have never had my health watched so closely as in the days just before the event. Grace was terrified that something like a cold might happen to me, because I was not only her most proficient pupil, but also the accompanist for all her vocal students who would share the program. There was only one exception to my responsibilities. She broke to me as gently as possible the news that Forrest, not I, would accompany Grace when she presented the highlight of the evening, her rendition of an elaborate set of vocal variations on an obscure song entitled "A Little Bird Merry". She didn't want me to feel slighted, but she explained that her reputation as an artist and teacher depended on scoring a smash success with this song and she didn't want to risk an inexperienced accompanist.



This was my first major public appearance, except for various feats in the familiar crowd at school and at church. I surprised myself by complete calm as the hour drew near. Everyone had warned me that my hands would be shaking, but they were perfectly steady as I approached the piano for my first selection. But I noticed a phenomenon of unprecedented novelty, as soon as I began to play. The sustaining pedal kept rising up and pushing my right leg up. The harder I shoved, the more rapidly and vigorously it shoved back. I struggled through somehow and discovered what was happening. All my bad nerves had left the rest of my body undisturbed and were convening in my right ankle. It twitched and wasn't good for much the rest of the night. So I was just as happy that I wasn't at the piano for "A Little Bird Merry". I tried to relax and enjoy Grace's performance of it, knowing what formed its climax. This was a high E flat, which Grace had told me was the highest note ever written for the soprano voice. I found some high Fs in the role of the Queen of the Night just then, but she disqualified them on the grounds of being German music. The performance of "A Little Bird Merry" went wonderfully through variation after variation, and Forrest played so well that I hardly minded the absence of the flute obligato that Grace couldn't afford. And at last the cadenza arrived, an interminable dialog between the singer and the piano-vi-flute. I leaned forward as the music veered to the dominant to pave the way for the high E flat.

Then a very wonderful thing happened. Grace opened her mouth the whole way for that climactic high note and not a sound emerged. Her eyes grew as wide as her mouth and her face gradually suffused with a delicate shade of crimson while the muscles of her neck shouldered their way through several layers of fat and became visible. Still the room was filled with exactly the kind of silent music that John Keats preferred. In desperation, Grace turned to her brother, signalling with her head for him to cover up the calamity with the ritornello. Unfortunately, Forrest wasn't looking at her. He was gazing calmly at his music, peacefully awaiting his cue, a trill that followed the high note. It was an impasse. Grace made her right hand into a fist and for one exciting instant I thought she was going to clout him over the head with it. Instead she waddled in tiny, jerky steps toward the piano until she was able to reach her accompanist with a swing of the hips that almost knocked him off the bench. He realized then that something was amiss. He extended a tentative finger toward the missing note and I thought he was going to play it for Grace. But her look was as effective as the one that passed between Isolde and Tristan. He swept into the final measures of the piano part, and I don't imagine that that high note has been sung to this day. After that, Grace always insisted on me as her accompanist at recitals.

I studied with Grace for several years, but eventually it became obvious that it was a waste of money. I wasn't learning more than I could have figured out without help. Grace knew more about singing than pianism when it came to interpretative points. There was the time when I was working on the last movement of the Moonlight Sonata. She insisted that a lot of mysterious numbers in the printed music indicated changes in speed. The numbers kept getting larger and I could feel my heart racing at a dangerous rate as I attempted to accelerate beyond the powers of my fingers to function. A great light suddenly dawned on me, and a hasty



bit of musicology confirmed my supposition. The numbers were in every fifth bar of the movement. In the fifth measure from the start, the number was five. In the tenth bar, the number was ten. This continued throughout the movement, because an editor had decided to number the measures for the convenience of reference and study. Grace was quite fond of the music of Chopin, and she took it pretty hard, the day I broke to her the news that he was dead. Finally I decided that I didn't want to take any more piano lessons. This caused a tumultuous reaction in the Seymour family. The pulpitless minister invaded my father's office to demand justice for his daughter, Forrest wrote me a postal card closely packed with aphorisms and warnings about the disastrous decision that I'd made, and Grace called my home endlessly. In the end, the only thing to do to avoid a long harangue every time I encountered a Seymour on the street was to look the other way and hustle past. The father was now too old to keep up with a person of my age and Grace's inertia made it impossible for her to reverse direction in less than twenty feet of walking distance, ample for a getaway. Forrest never came back to visit again, fortunately.

I know of the events in the Seymour family in the years that followed only by hearsay. Grace suddenly began an endless series of moves from one apartment to another, always in the same general section of town. This made it difficult for me to walk to work, because I never knew when her new residence might be directly in my path. One day she went to the neighborhood shoe shop to have a heel repaired, and three months later she had married the cobbler, a quite nice individual who resembled Hans Sachs in general character, widowhood and appearance. From all that I could gather, everyone was blissfully happy except the husband's grown children for several years. Then within quite a short space of time, word came that Forrest had died and Grace's husband suffered a fatal heart attack. I never did find out what her father had done during her married years, but the daughter resumed her old life with her father, now in his nineties, and he didn't die until just a few years ago. Grace continued to give recitals on an annual basis. Just before each event, she invaded City Hall, delivering personal invitations to all the more prominent members of the municipal government to attend. The mayor actually showed up at one of them, and was so delighted by the fantastic happenings that he told the councilmen and from then on, attending Grace's recital was the way the city fathers relaxed each year from political and governmental cares.

Grace is still teaching, on a less ambitious scale. She keeps the location of her studio a secret, for some reason that I haven't been able to determine, but advertises her telephone number. It was just a short time ago that the advertising department finally threw away the engraving that had lured me to become her pupil. Best yet, the two of us have made our peace. Just after my mother's death, she surprised me on the street one night to express her sympathy. I looked at her and realized that she didn't look a day older than she did during my first piano lesson, two decades earlier. "Was it the galloping cancer?" she asked. "I'm afraid so," I said, although I hadn't thought about it in quite those terms.

Grace never tries to sing in public any more. And I haven't taken a piano lesson from anyone since my last visit to her studio.



## In One Year and Out the Other

You will read this when the infant year 1962 has already neared the stage of puberty, when Washington's Birthday sales are imminent or just past, when four more trends have been discovered in fandom and nineteen more articles have been written on what killed science fiction. But I write it before the birth of the new year, while 1961 is staggering down the decline toward its second childhood of Christmas, and so it seems like a fine time to tell you all the good news that happened in Hagerstown in 1961.

I know about the first important local news event only by hearsay, because it occurred while I was in the hospital. This city has been badly hit by unemployment caused by the closing of a couple of factories, the loss of military contracts by the airplane industry, and the decay of railroad business. The early months of 1961 were among the coldest and snowiest in memory, making things even worse for the unemployed. The Salvation Army set up a soup kitchen. A Washington newspaper heard about it, sent up a reporter, and ran a series of sensation articles about the most depression-like city in the nation. The local newspapers had been censoring all direct references to the hard times, in order not to spoil life for those who still had jobs. But when people in the suburbs of Washington started to collect food and clothing and pack it into sturdy boxes, enclosing cheerful little notes of Christian fellowship, and send them to the starving Hagerstonians, the Chamber of Commerce really got excited. The Salvation Army got orders to stop giving away soup, hot or cold, the contributions were rejected by border guards with grudging thanks, and a television crew from Washington who wanted to photograph the bloated bellies of the starving were refused visas and had to do their feature without cooperation from authorities. Lots of nice grey-haired ladies shivered through the winter and a good many kids went hungry but the outside world didn't hear much more about it.

Then came the episode that got Hagerstown even wider publicity. This time the Russians rather than the Washington press turned out to be the villains. A number of fans have asked me to write a full and detailed account of the fellow from Sierra Leone who was refused service at a restaurant and raised a big fuss because he was an important diplomat. But I didn't handle this particular story and its aftermaths. The press associations, Time, and other publicity sources failed to mention a little matter that seemed important to me: the episode didn't happen in Hagerstown, as everyone assumed, but at a Howard Johnson emporium three miles outside the city limits, and actually closer to another incorporated city, Funkstown. The local press gave the event only three paragraphs under a small headline when the diplomat made his first protest to the State Department, but later provided somewhat more adequate coverage when the AP kept sending long stories. The mayor brought the diplomat back to town as his guest after a fairly long interval devoted largely to persuading a hotel that it wouldn't hurt to serve a Negro just this once. The diplomat said diplomatic things. Things are now being done more skilfully. An Indonesian extension service supervisor spent a couple of weeks later in the year, observing how extension work is done in this county. He got a list dividing all eating places into three categories: where he



would be served, where he wouldn't be served, and where he would be served after an interminable amount of waiting. He isn't a Negro, just a dark-complexioned Asian.

Another nice thing that happened involved "Tropic of Cancer". Hagerstown has only one book store. It went on sale there, and the chief of police visited the ancient lady who operates it, after which the book was taken off sale. But the public library had a copy in circulation, not on the open shelves but available to adults who asked for it at the desk. This stumped the police chief for a while, but finally he read in the newspaper that some judge in Montgomery County had made a ruling against sale of the book there, and he put enough pressure on the board of trustees of the library to get the book removed from circulation. The director of the library handed in his resignation without explanation or advance warning a week later and disappeared, presumably in disgust. He couldn't have done it at a better time, because he's the only person who had been keeping track of all phases of the fund campaign and building plans for the new library that is supposed to be constructed in a few months. There is also a committee of church ladies who are smarter than the police chief. They pay a social call on newsstand operators every month or two, telling how all the church members in the neighborhood will boycott his store if he doesn't remove from sale any paperbacks they decide are immoral. But this is done in a quite friendly and private way and nobody even knows for sure who are on the committee.

One of the policemen had a bit of excitement one day last summer, too. He was driving around in the cruiser at 3 a.m. when he saw this boy in his early teens standing outside his home, looking as if he might be up to no good. The policeman told the boy to go inside the house and go to bed. The boy refused. The policeman tried to escort him into the house and the boy shoved back. A moment later the boy's arm was broken. This made it even more difficult to convince the boy that he should go to bed immediately, so the policeman charged him with assault on an officer and took him to the hospital for treatment. I never did hear how that case came out.

The fire department has announced plans to go out locking for fire hazards in homes. The firemen admit that they aren't going to waste time obtaining search warrants, because they are confident that the public will be glad to let them in without all that red tape. I'm afraid that they aren't going to get cooperation here without a warrant. Even the biggest, burliest firemen would be almost sure to faint at the sight of my attic and how would I get their unconscious forms out of there?

My last news item is one that isn't complete yet. The city government is engaged in a battle with the county government over politics. As a result, the city has announced that from now on, it won't appropriate any money to the library, museum, United Fund, SPCA, or orphans' home. I imagine that they would have cut off the schools without a penny, too, if school support weren't the responsibility of the county alone. Several persons have actually become alarmed about this particular bit of politics. I heard several street corner conversations to the effect that we might start losing our freedoms, if this goes on. But even this criticism quieted down considerably, after the street department began to pick up several bodies of dead dogs that became a problem after a thaw.



### Thus Far, and No Farther

About a year ago, I gave Horizons readers a report on the progress of my preparations for writing fannish history. Various questions from this and that fan and an occasional fanzine reference to my project have convinced me that I'd do well to issue a second progress report.

Let's understand from the outset that I'm behind my original schedule, but not seriously so, and the slowdown has come from circumstances, not neglect of my task or miscalculations on the amount of work needed to write the history. I got persuaded by Norm Metcalf to take on this project early in 1960. At that time, I calculated that a couple of years of fact-gathering would be necessary, and I could start actual writing in 1962. I couldn't know that before the end of 1960, I would be delayed first by my father's final illness, his death, and the problems involved in settling his estate; then by a broken hip. The hip was the real timeconsumer, of course. I didn't get a lick of work done from December 23, 1960, until some time in April or May, 1961. All the stuff on which I was working was on the attic, I couldn't get up and down the steep attic stairs while on crutches with safety, and nobody but a fan could be trusted to lug stuff from the attic to me without ruining the semi-order in which I had things. During the past six months, I've made quite good progress, probably retrieving a small part of the lost time. I think I'll be able to obey the letter of my timetable, although I may get only one token paragraph written on the last day of 1962.

At present, the notes for the fan history occupy six large looseleaf binders. By the time this Horizons is released, there will be eight binders, because two of the present company are so full they must fission almost immediately. Some pages are so crammed with notes that I couldn't squeeze another line onto them. Others contain only a few dozen words. The working method that I adopted early in the game still seems to be the only practical one: type off notes under convenient subject headings on long sheets of copy paper borrowed from the Herald-Mail Company as I leaf through old fanzines. When a hundred or so paragraphs have accumulated, cut them apart, sort them alphabetically, and paste them on the proper subject pages of the binders. I have had to alter this *modus operandi* in only one small detail. At the outset I took no notes on conventions, jotting instead a reference to where con reports and other data were published. It seemed then as if I could write about conventions most easily by direct reference to the fanzines. Pretty soon I realized that there were entirely too many references to each convention, and I've been forcing myself to plow through endless accounts of who ate where and what time which fan arrived as I come to them.

I've done almost nothing but fanzine leafing as a source for notes so far. This is the most tedious part of the task, and I think it's better to do as much of it as possible before any possible attack of laziness hits me. I get fewer notes per hour of research in fanzines than I shall when I seek information via letters and conversations. But I think it's essential for the sake of accuracy to get information from fanzines, as much as possible. Fan writings are not models of truth and precision. But if a statement appeared in a fanzine and was not vigorously contradicted in the next issue or another publication, there's a



good chance that it's partially accurate. Memories are less trustworthy for dates, the exact group of participants in this or that project, and the time sequence in which a series of events occurred. I must supplement fanzine information with other sources of information on most of my topic sheets. But it's nice to have at least a partial skeleton as a starting point in the reconstruction of the prehistoric monsters that once moved in fandom.

The most frequent question is the one that I can't hope to answer yet: how long is the history going to be in wordage? I hoped for a few early months that I could get everything into a manuscript of about the same length as *The Immortal Storm*. It quickly became obvious that this is unlikely. As I explained a year ago, fandom grew greatly after the decade that Sam wrote about; he paid scanty or no attention to many phases of fandom which I mean to cover like collectors' activities, fan customs and even the history of ideas in fandom; and my area is twice as long in years as his was, not counting my need to go back into the 1930's and trace aspects of fandom that he slighted. (Did you know that one famous fantasy figure had his amateur magazine lost in the San Francisco earthquake?) I imagine that my manuscript will stretch out to twice the length of TIS or longer. This does not mean that it'll all appear in print, or that the magazine and book versions need be the same in length. I'd like to see the whole thing appear in magazine form first, to permit the revising that corrections and additions will necessitate, then publication in two volumes covering the 40's and 50's. It is entirely too early to be sure, however. Publication is the least of my worries; Norm Metcalf is young yet and I'm sure I'll have a manuscript for him before he becomes senile.

Incidentally, my notes incorporate stuff that has happened since my planned cutoff date, the Detroit convention. I don't think I'll do any complete history-writing after that event. But it might be more sensible to bring up to the present the relation of continuing events that begin during the period I'm covering. When I write of fandom in the state of Washington, for instance, there would be no sense in trying to pretend that my readers are not aware of the fact that it reached a climax with the staging of the 1961 convention. In general, I'm trying to do notes on at least a two-for-one basis: that is, collection of twice as much information as I shall use. This will permit me to choose the most important stuff from an ample supply of facts, and I'll be less likely to toss in irrelevant items about this or that event, simply in order to get the paragraphs padded to the length that the topic deserves. But I can see already that it'll be grim, the struggle to discipline myself to write succinctly. I'm used to rattling along at interminable lengths when I do items about fan history for the *All Our Yesterdays* series or isolated and independent articles. It just won't be possible to devote pages and pages to one particular fanzine and only the most colossal personalities in fandom will find room for extensive treatment. (Along this line, I might make a request: please don't ask me to write articles on fannish history. It wouldn't be fair to my promises to Norm, I don't have time to do much fanzine writing these days, and my notes are far from complete, in any event. I plan to continue *All Our Yesterdays* because that started before this current project and I have recourse to the notes occasionally for some passing reference in an article. But let's keep them



reserved for their intended purpose, please.)

I'll never know how much time this project is costing. I've tried to make it ritualistic, in the sense that I devote at least a moment or so to it every normal day. But the time I spend in note-taking varies from three minutes to an hour, depending on the day. If I kept track, I might give it up for sheer fright at the time I'm wasting or I might drop everything else out of dismay at the small number of hours I've used for it. With a glow of virtuous perseverance, I can avouch for the fact that I've at least done a smidgin of work on the project every day since I got rid of crutches, except during two vacation weeks, Ella Parker's visit, and the Philcon weekend.

Lots of fans have offered me the use of their collections for reference purposes. I'm deeply grateful, and I'll accept some of the offers as soon as I exhaust the natural resources to be found on the attic. My fanzine collection seems to be better than I gave it credit for, but I'll definitely have to get access to files of certain famous fanzines whose mailing lists I managed to avoid for various reasons.

But I couldn't resist the urge to see just how hard it would be to track down some really difficult information. So I permitted a single deviation from my steady concentration on the first phase, fanzine fact-gathering. This consisted of an effort to learn what sort of fandom existed in Germany before World War Two. I knew of one German who had been active in American fanzines during that period, Herbert Hüssler. None of today's German fans had had personal experience with the science fiction world before 1939. They knew Hüssler was in East Germany and warned that I might get him into trouble with authorities, if he suddenly began receiving mail from a stranger in the United States. I made a few more inquiries, and in a few more weeks a letter arrived, its envelope glowing with bright Deutsche Demokratische Republik postage stamps. It was from Herbert, who had heard that he was wanted, and had hastened to assure me that reports about mail surveillance were grossly exaggerated: he is not endangered in any way by letters or parcels from the free world. I think that it will be fairly easy to track down minutes of defunct fan clubs or unpublished convention speeches, if this quick success on a really hard job can be any indication.

I still don't know why I'm doing this history work. Quite often there comes the strong conviction that I undertook the burden out of laziness: I'd been wanting to do some serious writing for paying sources but was too lazy to get started, and by tackling fan history, I made it impossible for myself to find time for several years in which my conscience would force me to write for profit. But it's just possible that I'm not unduly hypocritical with me when I tell myself that the project is the best training in the world for any future writing tasks that require great outlays of time and persistence. It's hard to think of any mundane biography or other factual writing that would involve digging like this: more frequently research consists of going through books many of which are even indexed, or legibly printed professional magazines, or a few packs of letters or a diary. I think that the nearest parallel might be certain projects of musicologists, and in a future Horizons I hope to devote a good bit of space on classical music fandom and how closely it resembles aspects of our fandom. Meanwhile, one problem is solved. I know what to save first if the house catches fire: the notebooks.



I Am a GREAT BIG Fan (j.g.)

Recently I've been reading some book jackets that tell of the abundant deeds and virtues of the authors. I've attended a good many speeches recently, before each of which the man giving the introduction showed no reluctance to cite the remarkable man whose mouth would soon open. I've been reading a few fanzines lately, too. You'll have to pardon what follows, just as some of you did in the case of Francis T. Laney. Somehow, I must get my self-respect raised to the levels to which we grow accustomed.

Therefore, my life has not been particularly exciting up to now. However, the manner in which I have lived it has caused me to become the subject of one fine sermon by a Christian minister. As a literary figure, I began early, serving as book reviewer for a national publication at the age of ten, one year after writing my first essay for compensation, and today I am paid for some two million words of fact and fiction each year. Writing letters is only a sparetime occupation, done hurriedly, but my epistles have been used as texts for students of higher learning by a representative of one of the nation's largest educational institutions. As a photographer, I prefer to show off as little as possible, but it is true that samples of my work have been requested by the Smithsonian Institution for historical purposes. That reminds me, the Department of State called upon me to assist in preventing the Third World War. I am one of the few persons who built up a four-state audience over a period of years as both musician and newscaster. At his specific request, I was the first person to meet Carl Sandburg when he was in Hagerstown the last time. Some day, I hope to complete the task of revising the English language, after beginning on that task with complete success.

Sounds pretty good, huh? Maybe I'd better do a little more bragging on each of those topics. After I broke my hip last Christmas Eve, a neighbor told his preacher all about it, and the preacher, desperate for a topic the next Sunday, now that Christmas was gone, cited me as an example of how near one can come to his journey's end (home) and yet suffer an unforeseeable failure to arrive (hit an icy spot). He didn't go into the matter of my chances of getting as close to heaven before backsliding as I did to home before sliding. My first duties as a book reviewer involved that wonderful children's magazine of a dead era, St. Nicholas. Readers were invited to write brief accounts of their favorite books. I had one about "Tom Sawyer" published and the magazine sent me a copy of Ralph H. Barbour's latest novel, "The Cub Battery", to review. I never fulfilled my assignment, refusing to read the book because I thought that the title referred to Chicago's entry in the National League and I was a Phillies fan. I don't even remember the subject matter of the essay that had been published the preceding year, but it probably had something to do with mission work, because it was a contest winner in a little weekly publication for Lutheran Sunday school scholars, and my compensation was a packet of stamps from the heathen lands. It was quite a while before I learned that the missionaries do not have the publication and distribution of postage stamps as their principal duty. The two million words per year is admittedly a guess, because I've never tried to keep track of my newspaper writings night after night long enough to arrive at a trustworthy average. But it may not be a half-million words in error, in one direction or the other. It would be impossible



to decide on the exact figure, anyway. Some of my work involves rewriting of publicity handouts. Some of these get more copying than rewriting, depending on how well they're done and how lazy I am that particular night. To say which paragraphs I have rewritten and which I have merely revised slightly would be a problem that my literary executors can decide when they begin to prepare my collected works for publication. Les Gerber's father is a high school teacher of English. Last summer, while conducting some kind of summer seminar for teenagers just outside West Cupcake, he wanted to touch on letterwriting, he helped himself to his son's correspondence for examples, and my letter was apparently on top the pile. The Smithsonian matter is a little odd. An ancient sewing machine has been in the Warner family as long as ancestral memories reach back. Now that I'm the sole survivor of the family, I thought I'd like to find a new home for it. I wrote the Washington catchall, asking if they wouldn't like to have free this fine example of pioneer sewing machine industry, and I enclosed a snapshot of it. They mulled it over for a month, and finally wrote back to say that they didn't have room for the machine but they thought they had space in their files for the picture, if I didn't want it back. The State Department assists a sister city project in which an American city chooses a city in some other land to get acquainted with. Hagerstown hooked up with Wesel, Germany. The two towns exchanged exhibits of their daily life through photographs, samples of manufactured products, maps, greetings from authorities, and similarly exciting items. The State Department financed the publication of a booklet to go with the American exhibit, and through newspaper connections I was asked to write part of it. Hagerstown lies in a narrow part of Maryland, only six miles from Pennsylvania, seven miles from West Virginia, and twenty miles from Virginia. Therefore, the Hagerstown radio stations are audible in a four-state area, even though neither of them is powerful enough to reach out more than 50 miles, and at various times I'd done a weekly piano broadcast and the evening local news summary daily over one of the stations. Carl was hired by the local Teachers Association to give a talk but the hospitality committee goofed and he found himself in the bus terminal without the slightest notion of where to go or whom to contact. He telephoned the newspaper, asking for someone to serve as his guide, and obviously meant me because I was the only person in the building who wasn't doing anything just then. (I didn't have the faintest idea about what one does with so valuable an individual, so I walked him up to the newspaper and showed him off to all the girls in the front office who tried frantically without much luck to recite for him that poem about fog and finally the telephone rang. It was a teacher who wanted to know if we'd heard what happened to their speaker.) My revision of the language took the form of changing the name of a town. It was always known as Clearspring until I discovered references on old maps to it as Clear Spring. I wrote newspaper articles on that topic, persuaded the editors to spell it as two words, and now it's like that in all the maps and postal bulletins. Flushed with success, I'm striving now to change Blairs Valley to Blair Valley, and if that succeeds, I'll try something really ambitious, like putting an apostrophe into Hagerstown.

Just for Boyd Raeburn, I'll conclude by admitting that I come from forebears famous for their fine food. My great grandfather was the best pretzel baker in the Cumberland Valley.