

H O R I Z O N S

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JR

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On the eve of his first worldcon, Harry Warner, Jr., began to stencil this issue of Horizons. A journalist should be specific, so it were well to include the fact that this is volume 24, number 4, whole number 95, FAPA number 89, and the August, 1963, issue. Duplication is by Richard H. Eney, cover is by Jean Rose, and the other ingredients are made by a hermit in Hagerstown, Md., at 423 Summit Avenue.

### In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: It is risky to remark about the size of the mailing, because I don't want to rock a boat that is just the right size for me. But others may prefer big bundles and I would suggest to them contemplation of the fact that virtually everything in this bundle is the work of someone who has been in the organization at least two or three years. As I may have hinted before, it is high time that we devise a way to get some waiting listers admitted before they approach fannish senility. The Vinegar Worm: Daddy must have helped Nancy with that essay, but it would still be nice to read her report of a con. '' The folksong should annihilate all folksongs, their singers, their collectors, and their fans, if widely enough circulated. It contains everything that any folksong has ever possessed. I'm sure that the last hootenanny would occur several minutes after someone like Bruce Pelz provided adequate music and Les Gerber sang the result for the first time. '' The date of Dorcas Bagby's reputed death is so close to April 1 that I suspect a hoax in the worst of taste. If fans are going to try to invent hoaxes, they should do something more imaginative than to spread a false rumor of the death of a person who cannot very well speak up and throw the lie back into their teeth. Null-F: Is the lack of clear Democratic-Republican divisions in municipal and county politics a general thing in the nation, or a phenomenon confined to western Maryland? In elections in Hagerstown and for county offices, the traditional party affiliations are retained on the ballot but there is almost none of the usual associations of the well-to-do and conservative elements with the Republicans and the workers and liberals with the Democrats. In the smaller incorporated towns of the county, candidates for mayor or councilmen do not run under party affiliation. One town has two parties, Popular and Citizens; the others use no labels at all even if a mayoralty candidate backs a specific group of councilmanic candidates. '' It's oversimplification to say that the same verb in French expresses both to love and to like. Aimer is used in both senses, but the French have a half-dozen other verbs and constructions that are used regularly to express like. Moreover, the use of love as a synonym for like in English is nothing new at all, and hardly the invention of Madison Avenue. '' Lots of persons with neither relative nor absolute pitch can sense even a slight deviation from the proper pitch for A. I discovered this one evening when I was asked to sound A to tune up the municipal band before I'd had time to warm up my reed. I imagine that skill in recognizing any pitch could be acquired by those for whom the skill isn't native, just as some persons can play almost anything by ear on the piano while others learn to do something similar by ear training on intervals and harmonies. '' I wouldn't think of trying to read an issue of Horizons published 20 years ago. A brief pause while I tremble violently at the wild idea. '' A girl who used to work at the



office taught me how to determine if a boaster had really had the experience with women that he claims. Just give him a sheaf of photographs of attractive women, some full-length and some head-and-shoulders, and watch to see which ones get his attention.

Celephais: Hagers town's downtown street lighting for the past 50 years was the outcome of someone's trip to Niagara Falls. Instead of staring at the water, he got all excited about the green poles with white frosted globes on top and talked so much about them on his return that the city installed them. Just in the past few years, gooseneck mercury vapor lights have been substituted, and a dreadful hysteria arose over them in some neighborhoods among people who thought the old ones were prettier. I wonder if many small towns do as Shippensburg, Pa., did for many years? For all I know, that town 33 miles north of here still saves money by turning off the streetlights while the moon is up during the week in which it's approaching and leaving full status. The Kambling Faps: No comments occur to me on the matter, but I think the manner is quite good; capitalizing names is a harmless and sure way of making a writing style distinctive. If this keeps up, I'll finally convince myself that Lee Jacobs and Ed Cox aren't the same person. Lighthouse: I'm touched by the suggestion that FAPA money might help to finance the fan history project. But it won't be necessary, now that Sam Moskowitz has told me about all the money that I'm going to make out of this document. Akkad: This is extremely good news. Ghostwriting and turning out junk under pennames sounds almost as dreary an occupation as my manner of writing for a living. And the books for juveniles should have a lot of fan readers, judging by the persistence with which Hugos go to literary works and television programs meant for youngsters. "I had an indirect contact with a lost city back in the winter, incidentally.

Among my fellow inmates at the rest home was an extraordinarily antiquated lady who had frequently had as a dinner guest the guy who dug up Troy, Schliemann. Sercon's Bane: One of the things that I have yet to accomplish in fandom is to acquire a nickname. I have none in mundane life, for that matter, although one lady across the street calls me Junior, something even my parents never dared to do, and a few other persons refer to me as Henry, apparently under the delusion that Henry derives from Harry. Salad: A fellow named Wagner wrote about "all these different races of beings, and each people has its own faults and merits" and so on, before Tolkien did. I grant that he didn't use as many words but he made up for that lack in other ways. Phantasy

Press: It was heartening to see Dan depart from his usual good humor and good spelling to prove that he can use invective if he really tries. I see no difference between Dan's borrowing of remarks from Readers Digest and some other fans' borrowing of remarks overheard at a convention for interlineations: the two sources produce statements of approximately equal brilliance and neither gives the compiler any credit for originality. Horizons I've finally found out what I busted last January. It was my right acetabulum. I doubt that I would have told anyone about the injury, had I known that it involved something with such an obscene-sounding name. "The cover on this issue pleased me greatly, but Jean Rose points out that it was pieced together from some unpolished verses and a sketch that was part of a letter. I had thought about missing an issue of Horizons deliberately, after completing 20 years of every-mailing appearances,



in order to end the suspense. But now there's wealth unprecedented in the form of a whole year's supply of fine covers by Jean, so I'll keep going if this battered frame collaborates. Poor Richard's Almanac: Schubert, when he heard about a budding new genius, used to ask the cruellest of all questions that can be asked about a promising young man: "Was kann er?" Rich has come the closest of anyone so far in explaining and describing the potentialities that Paul Stanbery is reputed to possess. Even if Stanbery didn't exist, this would be of considerable interest as a fine example of descriptive writing, in the sections dealing with Paul. But apparently it takes personal acquaintance to appreciate Paul fully. I don't find the fanzine quotations that Rich admires so much to possess any particular merit or distinctiveness and to most of us, Coventry is something that other people have written about with Stanbery as legendary figure as the spindizzy itself. Perversely, I couldn't help wishing that Rich had applied all this work to someone whose talents have been evidenced more fully in fanzines, much as Terry Carr did for one of the Bob Stewarts. The Last Night of Doubt is enormously better than the last full-scale play distributed in fannish circles, Dr. Plantagenet. But there is the fundamental question: why do beginning writers work in a form that needs actual performance for its full effect, a form that is only slightly less difficult to have actualized than an opera? I suspect that they do this at least partly because they know it will save them the work of writing anything except dialog and partly because people will not judge it too conclusively because they know it might play better than it reads. Stanbery does not make the mistake of attempting to put hopelessly non-dramatic material onto the stage, as some of the avant garde do. But I'm afraid that The Last Night of Doubt suffers severely from the fact that it contains a little of everything: Don Juan in Hell, Everyman, The Skin of Our Teeth, Pirandello, and the latest Hollywood movie. I don't expect anyone to write entirely original stuff, uninfluenced by what he has seen and heard in the medium he uses. But this work bears suspicious resemblances to the German-language Greek drama published for the Cult recently by Ed Meskys and written, I think, by John Boardman, who apparently had saved up his sense of humor all these years for this purpose. Wraith: Among my previously unsuspected virtues is one of willpower. I never would have guessed that I could resist the chance to buy a big batch of Argosys. I wouldn't have time to read them, I must own quite a few of those published during the 1930's, and yet the magic of the title and its associations are powerful. Something tells me that there will be an Argosy fandom as soon as the EC and Burroughs enthusiasms have subsided a trifle. Torrents: The movers in El Paso apparently have a number of television antenna repair companies in Hagerstown. It took one solid year of off-and-on efforts to talk a reputable local firm into replacing the busted leadin wire here. The other firms I called from time to time apparently ignored my warnings that nobody is home most of the time, dropped by without phoning first to make an estimate, and gave up when nobody answered the door on that first visit. Three years ago, when I decided to convert from coal to oil, two of the firms I contacted showed no interest whatsoever in coming to the house and quoting me a figure on an installation. My electric shaver stopped working one day; Montgomery Ward, where I bought it, told me their repair service was terrible and recommended my patronizing another local dealer, who undertook the repairs but ended up by giving me a new razor for the five dollar



maximum fee estimate. The moral must be that there are lots of folks who hate work as thoroughly as I do. '' More descriptive matter about this Italian sojourn is most desirable. Nancy and I used to compete closely for the title of the fan who does the least and goes the shortest distances in the great world. So maybe there's hope that I'll suddenly find myself going to the other extreme as completely as she has done. Cockatrice: There must be more comments on this mailing striving to force their way into existence. But so many publishers used darkish paper this time that my penciled notes are quite difficult to locate. There should be more comments on Boggs than I can decipher: That I liked Thunder on the Left very much when I read it many years ago on its incarnation as a pioneering paperback. And that the only girls' book that I can remember reading, aside from Louisa Mae Alcott's sagas, was a once celebrated novel entitled What Katy Did. This seemed to me like the most brilliant, worldly writing ever entrusted to the printing press. I remember particularly the uncontrollable orgies of laughter that overcame me, every time I thought of one passage in which Katy was in some kind of trouble, and when she turned pale or her hands trembled, one of the old ladies said: "Perhaps she's bilious." For a good 20 years, I've been trying to remember why this struck me as funny, and it has been a valuable reminder that Jack Benny may be the greatest humorist of all time despite my inability to enjoy him, if standards of humor vary so greatly that they even alter within the same person from childhood to adulthood. Let's Throw Redd Boggs in the Pool!: The temptation was terrific to adjust the grammar in the immediate neighborhood of the name of such a careful writer, but it was already too long a title, so I didn't do it. '' Bob Lichtman's idea about the waiting list is similar to one that I've advocated for years. But my preference would be a compromise between the present seniority system and the voting proposal: vote in a couple of waiting listers each year, let the others retain their present order. That way, everyone would become a member eventually; we'd never get a valuable unknown like Bill Danner under a vote-only system. '' This Ellick dream has a definite flavor of Revelations. I hope that the Italians turn it into a movie soon. '' I'm not interested in keeping folk music on television, but I have been writing occasionally to the FM stations that feature good music. It seems to be effective, if I may believe the detailed letters that come in reply. Mimeo: This is the only postmailing to show up despite prophecy and rumor telling of the imminence of others. I'd almost forgotten that Sylvia can write so well, after so long a spell of artwork. '' If the two oboes played notes with identical pitch, the vibrations wouldn't catch up with one another. I imagine the real explanation for lack of cancellation is that so much of the tone comes in the form of reverberation bounced from surrounding objects and the two instruments are at differing distances from these objects. '' But doesn't at least one of the gospels tell us that Joseph learned that Mary was with child before he knew her? This would eliminate the descent of Christ from David, although it wouldn't necessitate retention of virgin in place of young girl. '' You seem to be mixing up the soil bank with wheat allotments. But I'll let Wrai Ballard reply to this one, after remarking that the little farm sounds ideal for rice. '' Agreed that Burroughs must be read first when one is young. There are lots of authors who should be read first when one is getting old, too.



## Son of Science-Fiction Times

Review copies of paperbacks continue to arrive from several publishers, despite my failure to review most of them and my sad custom of forgetting to send a copy to the publisher when I do get a review into print. The most recent acquisitions for free are a pair of Crest tomes, one edited by and another written by oldtime fans of my venerable generation.

All the stories in Five Tales from Tomorrow were familiar to me, and I wasn't reading the prozines faithfully in the mid-50s when they were first published, so I must have come across them in previous anthologies. No matter, re-reading is frequently more pleasant than a new encounter. Four of the five stories stand up quite well under a renewal of acquaintance, and I wasn't disappointed in the fifth, because Everett B. Cole's Exile was dull at first and I expected no better.

I'm not sure about Ted Dikty's qualifications as an anthologist, but he did one wise thing when he put into this book Tom Godwin's The Cold Equations. If I'm not mistaken, this is an exceptional story, one that gets across an important point without stating or even hinting at its message. Unless I'm reading into it more than the writer intended, it's a mute and grim commentary on humanity's willingness to knuckle down to authority and to obey in general the rules at whatever excessive cost. This is one of the oldest science fiction situations, a stowaway on a spaceship. It could be charged with the transgression that is found in so many other prozine stories in a slightly different form, mechanical translation of mundane fiction's plotting and situations into science fiction. Usually, the writer gets blamed with borrowing his material from westerns, less frequently from spy stories or murder mysteries. In this case, it's a science fictional equivalent of the old sea story situation of a lifeboat without enough provisions to keep the occupants alive.

But I think that Godwin has made it a genuine science fiction story through his avoidance of the procedure that the sea stories normally involve. When people are adrift on the ocean, the struggle for survival may result in fights, murders, sacrifices of self, or employment of ingenuity to get out of the scrape. By using none of these possible procedures, Godwin comments bitterly on what the future may be like. The occupant of a one-man space craft, rushing medicine to a backwoods planet, discovers that he has a stowaway, a girl who sneaked aboard without realizing that the vehicle's fuel supply is just adequate for its weight with one person aboard. She gets quite emotional and in the end walks into the death of the airlock. This seems to me to be the author's way of telling us that we may come to a future in which regimentation will be so strong that such a girl will not even toy for a moment with the thought that the man may be willing to immolate himself to save her, makes no effort to trick him into taking her place in that airlock; and the man doesn't give a thought to this type of heroism, nor does he reason out the possibility of tossing enough of the furnishings of the vehicle outside to make up the change in weight. She did wrong in a temporary moment of rebellion and both accept her death as the only possible outcome. In such a future, it is possible to imagine that such small spaceships will not have an emergency surplus of fuel.

Simak's How-2 came at the right time for me: I was about to order an amplifier kit until I re-read this story. Even if I did



not receive by accident the latest thing in laser generators, I would undoubtedly spend two hours of work on the thing for every dollar I would save in the cost of purchasing a ready-built amplifier. Simak's style is very susceptible to parody, as Gary Deindorfer has proved, but his characters live and he demonstrates knowledge of the real world second only to that of Heinlein.

Robert Abemathy's Deep Space has now entered the purgatorial status of stories that were science fiction at one time, have been overtaken by the course of events, and have been proved to be based on a wrong assumption in this procedure. His hero as the first man in orbit discovers that this status does something convulsive to a normal human and immediately turns into something beyond normal humanity. It joins many another good story in which earth is contacted by bems before it gets men outside its atmosphere and those in which men find some unforeseen menace prevents them from surviving beyond the atmosphere. In fact, these unfortunate stories now meet quite closely the demands of the definition of weird fiction and pure fantasy fiction.

I don't care particularly for stories in which the humor depends on antics of machinery. Albert Compton Friborg has undoubtedly made many technicians merry with Push-Button Passion. But to me any kind of machine, even the most complicated, is something stupid and balky beyond all imagination and I can't identify with a giant brain that falls in love with another giant brain, any more than some African natives can realize that those arrangements of light and dark areas on paper are portraits of faces.

Through the kindness of Crest Books, the Fawcett World Library, and Barbara Hendra, I have also received The Long Winter, which C. S. Youd wrote under the penname of John Christopher. You can get some notion of my au faitness with current science fiction when I admit that this is the first Youd novel I have ever read from beginning to end. I gather that it's inferior to the ones that first made him sleek and prosperous.

The thing about this book that strikes me as oddest is the limitations which Youd seems to have imposed upon his literary self. It is extraordinary, how few the references he has included to events in the greater part of the world. Even if his emphasis on Britain and Africa is accepted as intentional concentration on the peoples and places he knows best, the very lack of hints on happenings in Asia and the Americas keep the reader's attention wandering. It is as if Churchill had tried to write his history without references to the Germans and the Russians.

I hope that the attitude that Youd displays toward the Negroes in his book is an opinion of the individual rather than a trait common to his nation. All through the book runs the unstated assumption that the black man will be incapable of meeting adequately the big crises, no matter how well he gets along in the small ones. The only Negro in the book who isn't evil in some respect is a slightly modernized reincarnation of the subservient old ducky who is so grateful for some scrap of kindness that old master bestowed upon him. Kipling's attitude toward backward peoples doesn't bother me so much, because the Asians he writes about were quite obviously inferior through lack of opportunity. Youd is describing a race of men who have remained morally and mentally inferior after they have received the chance to take advantage of civilization's opportunities. Abonitu's final words are absolutely dreadful, when he advises Andrew not to risk returning to Africa: "We are a civilized people. It may be better,



though, to wait for a time. And, after all, this is your home."

Outside of that, how did I like the story? Well, it's not as expert as I thought a person with Sam's early talents should be writing. He should have done at least a little homework on the solar situation that causes a new ice age to arrive. He asks the reader to accept on faith and some vague gobbledegook a change in the heat production of the sun. This isn't particularly convincing without backing by a description of how the sun has shown tendencies in this respect in recent centuries or observations on how easily specific conditions within the sun might bring about this sad event. The lack of firm distinction between the two women in the hero's life is disappointing. At first, Madeleine behaves quite differently from Carol, but after one-third of the way through the book, the two women act and talk so much alike that I gave up the struggle to remember which one had been unfaithful to Andrew. It didn't seem to matter.

And I wish that people who write novels would stop putting complete dependence on drinking as an activity for their characters on every conceivable occasion. It used to be bad enough in 19th century novels when the heroine fainted at every crisis and we get all upset when a play requires the cast members to light cigarettes with every tenth line of dialog. But it's even more annoying to find a novelist lacking in sufficient imagination to vary his bits of business. He gets his characters together for the purpose of enjoying a drink as frequently as a bad playwright gets an actor offstage by causing a doorbell to ring. A few such sip-by-sip accounts might have a meaning in the story, telling that these people are so much of their milieu that they cannot exchange a dozen words without moistening the membranes of their throats. But the demonstration shouldn't be repeated to the point of absurdity. Hemingway probably started this silly reliance on minute descriptions of the type of alcoholic beverages in use, the points in the conversation at which the speakers consumed several swallows of the stuff, what the waiter told about the liquor resources of the establishment, and any slight physiological effects that were produced on the imbibers. I hope that someone stops it.

Otherwise, the faults of the book are mainly negative. Youd seems to have troubled himself thinking out the consequences of this cold wave to only the smallest of extents. His reliance on hovercraft for transportation is something like the upswept hairdos that the girls suddenly began to wear in the Buck Rogers comic strip when such hair styles came into popularity in the late 1930's. You mustn't keep too much abreast of the present when writing of the future. I expected to find at least a few notes on ways in which men had attempted to meet the new conditions by technology. With so few evidences of attempts to battle the ice and snow, it's hard to take the substance any more seriously than I took the patches on which I had my falls.

I felt rather unhappy when Andrew and Madeleine found a way to move out of the slum shack where they stayed for a while after their original escape from the polar conditions. That's a good sample of the impression that the novel made on me. I couldn't sympathize or identify with anyone in it, couldn't get excited over the threats of either poverty or cold, and could find little inside the covers to bear out the contention of the blurb that it describes events "when civilization disappears into a voiceless polar night, when men and women turn into human wolf packs in their agonized struggle for survival."



## Joseph Fann and His Brothers

This is just one of the potential titles for the fan history. I am attempting to try some of them out for size and reaction. I didn't get a very enthusiastic acceptance of the title that I favored for a while, Outline of History. Another possible title is And Then There Were Fans, but I'd hate to think that anyone would believe that I was insinuating that fans are as much of a superior and different race as the one in the Eric Frank Russell story. I doubt that many persons would understand the allusion in the current test title. If there are any suggestions, you'd better make them instantly, because time is growing extremely short. I hope to have some tens of thousands of words completed and copyrighted in manuscript form by the time of the DisCon.

Horizons has provided several progress reports of varying natures during my preparation for the task of writing fan history. This should be the last of them, unless I change my mind about an assortment of things. As I've explained previously, the historian has a task in fandom with little resemblance to any other type of chronicling. There is nothing of any consequence to use for reference purposes from Pearl Harbor onward aside from several reference works that were encyclopediac in nature rather than historical. And fandom is so amorphous and hazy that there are no sure limits on where to stop in the areas or details of information. I have gone through all the fanzines in my collection, borrowed many others from trusting souls, ferreted additional information by means of letters, tapes, and conversations, and I think I can write a fairly good history by means of the notes already on hand and some additional facts that I can obtain as I go along. But I think of those sacks and boxes filled with my correspondence during a quarter century in fandom and doubts jostle me: shouldn't I wait another year before starting the writing, to permit me to go through all those letters and extract the information that must be in some of them? I haven't found opportunity to spend a couple of days at the Franklin Institute's ayjay library in Philadelphia, as my conscience orders. There's a list of perhaps two dozen addressees of people in foreign lands who might know vital information about fandom in non-English speaking nations. Shouldn't I unpack those cartons of prozines on the attic and go through the letter sections and prozine-sponsored club departments, for whatever nuggets of information they contain? There's not the slightest doubt that I could amplify mightily my notes, if I were to devote each long weekend to visiting a major city in the East and Midwest with tape recorder, where by previous arrangement the oldtime fans would gather around the microphone and ransack their memories. (I know from the evidence of one wonderful tape that some people will talk even if they haven't the energy to write a long letter on the same matters.)

There are other ways in which I could better prepare myself for writing this fannish history. But I've already begun the writing and I intend to proceed quite inexorably on the task from now on, squeezing in the fact-gaining procedures if convenient and keeping in mind the fact that an entire lifetime would not suffice to garner every last morsel of information about fandom's past. I have had a couple of close calls in the past three years, in the form of those falls. There may be a more serious accident or a big illness ahead a short time in my future. I'd hate to undergo such a trouble before I got the history written: this is not egotistical fancy that I'm the only person who could write the his-



tory but selfish desire to have something to show eventually for all the time that I've spent on the project up to now. Landing on my head in the fall last January knocked my memory function out of commission for a few days and I couldn't have written fan history if that brain damage had been permanent: my notes are fully understandable only to me in my present cerebral situation. Worse yet, every year that passes on preparation makes the history a longer and less manageable manuscript. Originally I intended to stop the history with the Detroit convention, but now I've determined to bring it up to whatever date may obtain when I get near the end of the final chapter. FAPA members will groan when they learn the reason for this change in plan. I determined to bring the history up to the future's present because that's the only way that I can include in it the way I feel about FAPA's treatment of Ed Martin. I want that episode to stand preserved in permanent form.

I hope to get quite a few chapters of the fan history completed by the end of hot weather, whereupon I shall dispatch them to Norm Metcalf and hope that all goes well with his publishing plans. Already on paper in first draft form are the segments of the history that deal with the first Chicon, the Denvention, and some related events. Re-reading these first pages of manuscript, I'm not too dissatisfied. The style is too stiff but I think I can knead it into more supple syntax when it gets the second drafting. It will be this second draft that goes to Metcalf. A third draft must await all the corrections, additions, and other changes that will be necessitated if the history eventually winds up in book form. From this distance, I can imagine the entire manuscript appearing in fanzine form but not as a book: it will be too long to reach this status without third drafting into more compact form. This is subject to changes in plans, naturally, if someone discovers an inexpensive way to publish books within the next couple of years or some libeled fan obtains an injunction that prevents me from any form of fanac other than NFFF membership.

Newcomers to FAPA and fans with short memories might like to know how I've been proceeding up to now. Both at home and at the office, I keep within easy reach a stack of source materials. In spare time, I go through these materials, sitting by a typewriter and tapping out notes and quotations whenever I encounter something that sounds useful to the fan historian. During the three years that I've been laboring in the fannish stables, I've probably given thirty to forty minutes daily to this work, on the average. After a month or so of this note-taking, I turn into a file clerk for a few hours. I clip apart all these little typewritten paragraphs, each of which has been tagged with an indexing word or two. This creates several hundred slips of paper, which I sort out alphabetically by indexing word. Then the gluepot and my collection of looseleaf notebooks come into use. There are eight of these notebooks now, each so filled with paper that it should be split into two less plump notebooks, but the clerk where I buy the things thinks I've acquired a Freudian passion for looseleaf notebooks and I hate to make myself conspicuous by more purchases for a while. I paste the slips onto ordinary notebook paper. (During the first weeks, I typed notes directly onto the filler paper, but this required too much hunting for the proper sheet quite soon.)

The only research work comparable to mine that I've ever found described is one that belongs to John Gunther. By coincidence,



undane friend gave me during my last hospitalization a little book by Gunther that tells how he wrote his Inside series. His problems and procedures are remarkably like mine. His source materials are easier to obtain and he needn't worry so much about the length of his manuscripts, of course. Our only basic difference is that Gunther puts his little slips of paper into large envelopes labeled with the subject matter instead of pasting them into looseleaf filler paper.

To give you some idea of how I've progressed in assembling facts, I have eight completely filled pages on the Pacificon, three and one-half on Ray Palmer, two-thirds of a page on Ella Parker, slightly more than a page of facts on pennames, and four pages on Philadelphia fandom (exclusive of stuff on Philcons and Phillycons). Each page contains perhaps 600 words, and most of these words are put together in a synopsisized manner to save space and typing time. If I were to use all my notes on a given topic, expanded and transmuted to a normal historical style, the wordage would probably double or even triple. Without taking the time to check for sure, I'd guess that the greatest numbers of notes are those on FAPA, New York fandom, Los Angeles fandom, World War Two and British fandom. This last subject is misleading when stated in such bald manner. It's a catchall for anything about fannish manifestations over there that didn't get indexed on a more specific topic. I think I got somewhat lazy in this respect and will pay up for the vice by wasting a lot of time ferreting out needed information from this section and I may end up by chopping up those pages and indexing them for greater convenience. Writing about the two conventions, I think that I used perhaps two-thirds of the information I'd gathered. This seems about right to me. I've had enough trouble with local journalists who gather just enough facts to make the news story long enough, rather than digging out more facts than space permits using, to provide an opportunity to utilize the best and ignore the insignificant.

Procedural problems are giving me considerable trouble. How much knowledge should I assume for the average reader of my history? Should I identify the occupation of the prozine editors who get mentioned in it? Should I include a description of how arjays function? Then there's the question about biography. I want to tell something of the personal life of the most important fans. But what of the others who make brief appearances in the history: should I diligently include for each a list of the cities where he lived as a fan, age, vocation, and dates of entering and leaving fandom? Should I make each chapter self-sufficient for the first serial publication, or will I be justified in referring to Ackerman and gafia in unexplained manner in this version, to save me some of the revising work for eventual book publication? I know that I'll be inconsistent for a while, at least, on the matter of cleaning up a topic completely where it makes its principal impact on fandom, or reserving the description of its earliest and last stages for the section of manuscript dealing with those time periods.

There is consolation in one respect. Whatever the deficiencies the history may have in these respects for a while, they will probably be overlooked in a general surge of disappointment and disillusionment throughout fandom with the way I'm writing the history. These three years of waiting have been unfortunate, because I'm quite sure that many fans assume that the longer they wait, the bigger will be their reward. Lots of fans will look for a general history of fandom that will be as detailed and com-



prehensive as various recent items of historical writing on minute segments of fandom's past. My history would be longer than Gibbon's if I were to treat every subject with the thoroughness that Redd Boggs accorded to Minnesota's early fandom. Even my All Our Yesterdays series has been able to devote much more space to a fan or a fanzine than an overall history will permit. It should also be obvious that I can't imitate Sam Moskowitz for fine detail. He wrote a long book, dealing with only ten years during which fandom was quite small. I'll have to cover all the things that happened before Sam's work begins, the two decades plus since its conclusion, and the various aspects of fandom of the 1930's that he failed to write about.

So you can't expect my history to include a mention of every general circulation fanzine that was ever distributed, the names of the officers in each year of existence for every municipal fan club, or quotations from the speeches of welcome by the chairman of each worldcon committee. I can promise that my manuscript will contain much more information about most fannish events and people than you can find in print anywhere else. I must warn that a persistent and determined fan will be able to dig out five times as many small details about a fannish matter than this history will provide. It's the nature of the beast.

A couple of fans have queried me about the provisions I intend to make for my more scholarly readers. I detest books with footnotes, whether published at the bottom of pages or in a group at its end. I have kept scrupulous notes on my sources of information for all the notes. It would be possible to cite the source in any of several ways in the history. But I don't think it would be of any particular use. This history will be different from a biography of Poe or a description of Renaissance music in Spain. Source materials for such volumes are in libraries, newspaper files, museums, and such places where they are theoretically at least accessible to those who want to pursue the points further. With fandom, it's different. My sources are fannish publications which are out of print and obtainable only if you know the right collectors or advertise extensively and spend much money; they are also letters which I will not permit most fans to paw over; they are general memories existing nowhere but in my brain and lost, unrecorded conversations. Naturally, I'll credit the point of origin of climactic quotations and unconfirmed theorems on disputed points. But for the most part, I think that it is more logical to keep the history as uncluttered as possible from dull recitations of sources. My notebooks will always be available, to enable me to answer questions about the sources from anyone who takes the trouble to write me about certain matters. If I have more ambition after completing the manuscript than now seems probable, I could annotate fully a carbon copy of the history or a copy of the book version and deposit it in the Library of Congress, a procedure that is frequently done. I'll make some kind of provision for preservation of the notebooks after I'm finished with them, so that the unused portions of the notes will be available to any fan who wants to do a better job than I did on a general history or to write in more detail on specific angles.

A couple of fans have incautiously praised my history before it was begun because of its impartiality. They may be disillusioned. I've lived peacefully in fandom, coexisting uneventfully with most of my peers and taking sides on few fusses pre-Martin.



But, despite telling evidence to the contrary, I'm human. All during these years, I've picked up prejudices, preferences, strong opinions on who was right and wrong, and my personal interpretation of disputed events. This fan history would be an abysmally hypocritical document if I prefaced it with the announcement that I had striven for complete impartiality. Instead, I intend to state bluntly that this is fan history as seen through the eyes of a fallible mortal who has attempted to give everyone a fair shake but has done some side-taking. It will be quite evident that I detested Cyril Kornbluth as a fan and as a professional writer and that I think that Walter J. Daugherty was one of the finest persons fandom has ever possessed, no matter how unpopular those opinions may be. It's obvious that I'm vulnerable to all sorts of criticism because my impressions of fandom have been obtained largely through the written, printed and taped word. My only defence will be to point out that this seclusion from the actual churning of the events as they happened on the spot may have preserved me from acquiring even more one-sided outlooks on the happenings. If the history turns out to be so distorted that it encourages an infuriated fan to sit down and write another history in retort, fandom will benefit immeasurably.

There is no point in hiding another weakness about the undertaking. It's likely to be less sound and thorough in the first half of the 1950's than elsewhere. Fans and their spoor from the period about ten years ago have vanished quite thoroughly and the help that has come from many fans has concerned mostly the extremely old or comparatively recent events. Thus, I have discovered the complete rundown on what Earl Singleton did after faking his suicide, up to his present way of life (as well as similar detail on Oliver King Smith, who got into fandom by writing the notes that contained the sad news), but the elusive E. K. Everett remains at liberty. Now that we've established the fact that he is loose somewhere on the continent, can someone provide me with the full name and address of the folks with whom he last stayed? I've just plain got to get those manuscripts that he holds from his own aborted fan history project.

Someone hinted at the possibility of financial grant for the project from a foundation, university, or other generous-thinking institution. I'd like to think that this could happen. But it isn't any use to make any real efforts. One difficulty would be my lack of education beyond high school: this would come close to destroying my eligibility from the outset. If a well-endowed body were found willing to overlook this little trouble, there would still be the nuisance of finding a sound reason for creating a fan history. I can imagine a research grant for a full-scale investigation into the amateur publishing tradition in general, or into the case histories of the famous people who dabbled in it when young. But I'm afraid that our fandom has not yet produced the geniuses or celebrities who would justify a foundation's interest in the topic. There would be the added embarrassment of figuring out a way for me to take advantage of this non-existent grant without losing my job in the process. I've missed 21 weeks' work in the past two and one-half years because of accidents and I dislike prolonged reflection on the reception that I would receive,



if I walked into the publisher's office and announced that I needed six months' leave of absence to write a book that might enjoy a sale of 350 copies. It is true that I have occasionally considered quitting this job and hunting another (in fact, this inspiration has seized me approximately four times weekly during recent months) but I doubt that I'd have enough peace of mind to write a book while hunting a new job. The only real solution to this difficulty, as far as I can determine, is the acquisition of some loathsome illness that keeps me clear in mind but rickety in body for a year and metamorphoses me into such a pitiable being that I get accepted back at work upon recovery. I have disability insurance that would keep me alive during such circumstances and a company insurance plan would help with the income and medical bills. Maybe Eney can think of something suitable, out of his great experience in hospitals. Any fans with an interest in family histories might work on a longer shot, research that would prove me the heir to some Warner fortune, preferably amassed by a bra factory or motion picture studio.

There is one additional matter connected with fan history writing that I hardly dare to think about now, lest it give me the wrong kind of ideas. What am I going to do with the spare time after I get this monkey off my back? I assume that the morning will come when I raise myself from my rumpled bed, wonder what forgotten dream of the night just past has caused me to feel a sudden renewal of youth and bliss, and then of a sudden comes realization that my delight is a real one because last night I finished the fan history. Right now, I feel as if I'd like to write an opera, a task for which I'm totally unfitted by training or talents. I keep thinking about the opera should be written about John Brown and the events in that little farmhouse 20 miles south of Hagerstown, the night before Brown's gang marched on Harpers Ferry. I'd also like to devote much more time to photography as a hobby, but that depends on whether I can climb out from under photography as part of my work. Taking a news photograph or two daily is such a grind that it leaves me with repressions against photography as a simple pleasure, the procedure that it should be. There is the added consideration that this fan history work has prevented me from routine maintenance on what should be daily activities. My collection of 78 rpm records has run uncontrollably wild for lack of time to index and sort acquisitions. I can't find single discs when I want them and even the sets are elusive, and I would love to get them all onto tape as insurance against breakage. The attic is an untracked wilderness because I find more time for fan history when I just toss anything I won't need for the next week atop one of the piles in the topmost part of the house. Three years ago, I had a paint shop laboriously mix to the right shade a can of paint to put on the kitchen wall where a smaller thermostat left a bare spot and an electrician installed a sheath for a wire to a new ceiling fixture. The paint job still hasn't been done.

A correspondent recently spotted a news story about a Hagerstown man who had murdered two people and killed himself. She said she was terrified for a moment at the headline, fearing I might have been doing the shooting. It would have been nice if she'd given me the benefit of the doubt and feared I might have been one of his victims, but the principle is still good. If you should hear of my sudden disruption, run, don't walk, to Hagerstown and rescue my notebooks. They're in the dining room.



## Hagerstown Journal

April 5—Ella Parker had been disturbed during her exploration of 423 Summit Avenue at the complaints that the electric refrigerator kept uttering. But I was used to them. I didn't even feel particular alarm last night when I returned home from work to find the refrigerator groaning at periodic intervals. Nevertheless, I investigated and decided that either it had finally learned how to defrost itself—it was old enough for such acquisition of knowledge—or was sick. It was cold and clammy to the touch, but the ice cream in the freezer compartment was melting. I called the Potomac Edison Company, which had sold it some 20 years ago, and asked if it might catch fire in the night. "Maybe not," the service department said. I turned it off and bloated badly from consumption of a half-full half-gallon carton of chocolate ice cream which would have melted by morning. The repairman came promptly in the morning and soothed my principal fear, that repair parts wouldn't be available for such an old model. He said they could be ordered without difficulty, and all that it needed were a new motor and compressor unit which wouldn't cost much more than a hundred dollars. I tried to forget the checks I had already written this spring for the stay at the convalescent home, the doctor, the optometrist, the internal revenue service, and various other creditors, and went immediately to see about the purchase of a new refrigerator. I know one of the Potomac Edison salesmen pretty well, explained to him that I saw no point in sinking a lot of money into a refrigerator that would contain little other than fruit juice, milk and ice cream, and he remembered just the thing for me. It was a 1962 model refrigerator that had somehow avoided sale before January 1 and had been hauled in disgrace to the basement, even though the 1963 model is almost indistinguishably different. I bought it as soon as I was assured that it does not defrost automatically. (Someone had told me that the automation in this respect adds a dollar to the monthly electricity bill. I'm sensitive to such matters just now.) Not foreseeing so prompt a decision, I hadn't brought along my checkbook and told the salesman that I'd stop in the next morning to settle for it. He said that that would be fine but I'd have to sign this contract. It was a frightening document devoted mostly to prophesying the terrors that would ensue if I failed to make the monthly payment on schedule. "But I'm going to pay cash," I said. "You don't have to deliver it until I bring you the check tomorrow." The salesman began to breathe shallowly and muttered something about uncertainty over the procedure when someone makes such an unprecedented overture as to pay cash for a major appliance. I finally was made to understand that I couldn't have that refrigerator at the reduced price or any other price if I didn't sign; I sensed that any other action on my part would require a rush order to a printer to supply a quantity of cash payment forms that might never be used again. I signed, after watching the salesman fill in all the blank spaces to prevent later insertion of carrying charges. The next morning I presented the firm's business office with a check for payment in full, got a receipt and various encouraging marks on my contract, and I had barely gotten home when the men came with the new refrigerator. It worked fine until the first time I defrosted it. Four inches of water covered the kitchen floor. Upon my complaint that the thing wasn't housebroken, a repairman disembowelled it, caused it to hiss prodigiously,



and that it had left the factory improperly adjusted, and added that the good thing about buying something on the instalment plan was that the company gives fast, sound service to protect its investment. I nodded weakly but didn't take him seriously until a week later when I received a letter from PE, containing a duplicate of the contract that I had signed and a reminder that all people who believe in this nation's status as the hope of the world make on time or even sooner the first payment. I walked down to the place where I'd bought it and demanded justice. The first girl I'd talked to couldn't understand my trouble on the grounds that I couldn't have completed payment on an appliance that I'd just bought. I shoved the signed receipt under the nose of a less attractive girl and she was impressed enough to telephone the bookkeeping department. A brief conversation reassured me. The accounting workers knew that I'd paid in full for the refrigerator but it was impossible to prevent them from sending out certain form letters. She put another "PAID" stamp on my receipted contract to assist me in sleeping. That was the end of it, except for a letter that I received from Potomac Edison the other day. It was a sincere little explanation of the function of the small white card enclosed. The card entitles me to preferred status as a customer as a result of the good credit rating I've established by making all my payments on time and in full. Today I received unsolicited a credit card entitling me to purchase gas at two service stations that have arranged to have the costs added to my fuel oil bill. I sense that these are the first faint stirrings of mighty, elemental forces that I have unwittingly unleashed, powers that will remain undescribed because Lovecraft is no longer with us and who else possesses adequate adjectives?

March 29--As a person grows older, deaths occur around him more frequently. The younger person knows fewer individuals and they are apt to be in a safer period of life. It was hard to believe that I would live through the winter, when almost every other day I got the special kind of jolt that comes from the sudden loss of a friend or acquaintance. And death disguised under many forms in this bitter cold winter. It must have appeared as a friend to Norman Kurzenknabe and he may not have cared whether it was only a disguise. Ever since November, this stooped little man in his late 80's had shoved against the rough wind down Potomac Street, one hand held tightly against his face to try to keep in a little of the warmth that his creaky heart couldn't easily replace. His life had intersected occasionally with me despite the age chasm. He'd almost talked me into joining him in the double bass section of the local symphony orchestra at one time, a project that was hastily abandoned when I demonstrated my inability to lift one of the things and my vulnerability to being crushed by it if I should allow it to slip and topple over on me. He'd listened to him play the piano at Hagerstown's Steinway dealer, watched him tune the piano for visiting virtuosos, and eaten beside him at a lunch counter where he frightened the waitresses dreadfully by his old world manner of ordering with as much finesse as if he were still patronizing Maxim's. Before I knew him, he'd issued phonograph records on pasteboard. His belongings were sold at public auction. I felt physically sick when I saw what had happened to his two bass fiddles and his cello and hastily abandoned my intention of bidding on a small souvenir of a kindly man who was more non-conformist than any young whippersnap of a fan known to me. Somewhat different was the death of a local in-



insurance man. He had a bad heart. His physician warned him and his wife that he must avoid certain types of exertion, including one in which the couple normally collaborated. The insurance man decided pretty soon that the doctor might be wrong and his wife refused to play this more interesting form of Russian roulette. On a snowy afternoon, the insurance man found a friend who was willing to do her part in determining the status of his heart. They drove in separate cars to a small town not far from Hagerstown. She drove back the same day and a relative picked up his car after the funeral. I don't know if the death certificate listed it as murder or suicide. We also lost a former mayor. I imagine that Hagerstown is the only community in the world where Sweeney is an aristocratic name. Richard was the special delight of a proud family whose members have never done anything in particular but have been very impressive in the process. He got elected to two terms. Everyone was furious at him near the end of his first term and he didn't stand a chance of re-election until my boss, then a reporter, wrote a sarcastic little item about mayors who spend their afternoons at race tracks rather than at the desk. This infuriated the people at a newspaper that would insinuate that there is anything more beneficial to mankind than going to the races and Sweeney was swept back into office. After he retired from politics, he spent his last years in a stock broker's office, running the small inheritance on which he'd been living into a \$600,000 fortune. He grew thinner and thinner as he aged, eventually approaching my proportions, and yet there was always something of the athlete about him, as he tottered down the sidewalk. He got revenge on the newspaper for that wisecrack about race tracks in the end, by reaching the point of death one night and hovering there for the following four months, driving journalists to distraction proving erroneous the daily rumors that this time he'd finally breathed his last. A hospital patient has little acquaintance with death, unless he gets personally involved, because of the efficient way in which the staff handle bloopers connected with their duties. But during my latest convalescence, I got to talking daily with another patient, a young man whose lung had collapsed and wouldn't stay inflated long enough for him to go home. He looked the picture of health and had the loudest conversational voice I've experienced. He'd long lived in Pittsburgh, had driven a taxi there, and regaled me with such experiences as calls to Throckmorton Street, a one-block thoroughfare approachable from only one direction and that direction almost vertical. Now he was working at the recently opened Mack Trucks factory in Hagerstown. From my room, I could hear him on the pay telephone, his first day in the hospital, trying to convince a fellow roomer that he really did have \$700 in the toe of a sock at his boarding house and he wanted that money brought to him. He liked to tell me about his father's eccentricities. One Saturday, he showed serious symptoms of alarm. "My father's coming to visit me," he told me. "I know he's going to do something nutty. He's crazy." He was called to the pay telephone frequently the following day, and finally told me the reason. His father had been bracing himself for visiting the hospital by drinking Seven-Ups. Room service had brought him 30 bottles so far and wanted to know if this could prove harmful. I was sitting in the wheelchair near the nurses' station, so I could stare at the one handsome nurse, when the father appeared, a stupendously large man, sideways and in



perpendicular. He inquired the way to the men's room before heading for his son's room. In fact, he made several other trips in the same direction before I returned to my own room. There was a subdued scurrying later that evening in the halls, then I went to sleep. A loud voice resounding through the floor woke me, despite the heroic efforts of my nightly sleeping pill. It was my young friend, again on the telephone to his fellow roomer, again attempting to persuade him that this wasn't a joke. "I told you he'd do something crazy," he said. "He just dropped dead beside my bed. No, I'm not kidding." The young man insisted on an autopsy. His lung held air the next day and I haven't seen him around town since then, so I imagine that he's taking advantage of this good weather to take passengers to Throckmorton Street. It was also hard to be sure if Clarence Mason's death was natural or accidental. They found him in the barn, with a wound on the head. He might have been seized and injured himself as he fell dying, or he might have stumbled and suffered an injury that brought on a more mortal physical disability. The family didn't want an investigation and Clarence had been prominent enough for the sheriff's office to keep hands off. He was the only likeable arch-conservative that I've ever known. He was an ardent racist, but fortunately his racism involved only one matter, the superiority of his Scot blood to that of all other peoples. He worked himself like a dog all his life on a farm west of Hagerstown. He never felt the same toward the farm after the interstate highway system was planned. Interstate 70 was to run right beside his property but Clarence would have to drive ten miles further west to get onto it in order to get across it or to come to Hagerstown. He sold the farm, remained on it for one last crop, and would have languished into death from homesickness if he'd lived long enough to leave the farm. Clarence hated modern education and this hate took an odd form. He raised 26 foster children, forcing each of them to complete high school. All turned out successfully in later life, allowing Clarence to brag that extremely rigorous training at home could conquer even the worst iniquities of consolidated schools and home room arrangements. He ran about eight times for the Maryland legislature, got elected twice, and did a remarkably good job in Annapolis. Clarence dressed, talked and walked like the traditional caricature of the hillbilly and I frequently suspected that he had a mental mask as the companion to this physical disguise; that his reactionary oratory was a coverup for the sound thinking that he evidenced when the chips were down in the legislature. Once every year, like clockwork, he asked the newspaper to do a feature story on a church that his ancestors had helped to organize. He was proud of it as an early experiment in interdenominational religion shortly after the American Revolution. His daughter had once been the county farm queen, one who produced a temporary journalistic sensation when she asked the press during a photographic session: "When do you want me to take off my clothes?" Hasty investigation showed that this was Masonic idiom for getting out of good dressed-up garments and into comfortable overalls for real work around the farm. I'm sure that Clarence never doubted for a moment that the moment of his death would provide him with a slightly different kind of opportunity to take off his clothes. None of us is outwardly the individual that he bears within. If there is a future to death, it would be nice to spend it in this manner, if the kernel within the husk was as sound for all as it must have been for Clarence.



## DisCon Report

This should qualify as the first con report on the Washington event. It also represents my first worldcon report. I thought it would be nice to write it early, then enjoy the DisCon in the knowledge that no reporting must follow it.

Of course, after some more time elapses, reflection should enable me to describe even more accurately my impressions of my first worldcon. But even at this early date, I think that I can describe some of the impressions. It will be interesting to compare later opinions with these tentative ones.

Although this is my first worldcon, I still can't believe that fandom is justified in staging one annual worldcon. Moreover, I believe that by now the worldcon is that only de jure while a de facto situation has developed approximating the conditions that I've advocated for a long while. An interesting experiment would consist of summarizing in the fewest possible words what the DisCon has programmed. This synopsis would include the fact that events cover three or four days, staged in a big city hotel, with a pro guest of honor, speeches, panels, a banquet, a masquerade, an opportunity to meet your favorite authors, and a swimming party...oops. Now you've guessed that I simply copied down the list of attractions published in the July issue of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction to publicize this year's Westercon. Although the Labor Day convention each year is called a worldcon, it's no different in any important way from the annual West Coast and British conventions. It operates on a bigger budget, it has a bigger attendance if staged in a large city, but the Hugo awards are the only thing the worldcon has that the other cons lack. I should think it much more logical to give up the pretense that a worldcon which has no important business aside from choice of the next site, that elects no officers except the people who will run the next con, is the equivalent of a world convention of Rotarians or oath-hall technicians. If we gave equal rights to three cons per year, a lot of kids would save themselves transcontinental trips to have the same experiences they could have experienced at a closer con, and the curse of bigness might be partially absolved from the con staged east of the Rockies: I sense today an unspoken effort to keep it on a larger financial level than the Westercon to keep up the pretense of first in fandom's affections. Nothing would prevent a California fan from attending a convention in the eastern part of the country. There would still be the Midwestcon and parties at Bill Donaho's house for those who prefer regional cons on a less formal scale than the big ones.

I doubt that I'll ever be fully reconciled to worldcons or any other type of formal-program fan gatherings, as the accidental result of my occupation. Any group that decides to stage a convention in Maryland and doesn't pick Baltimore as the location is quite likely to select Hagerstown, as the second largest city in a fairly central location. As a journalist, I've been forced to attend a discouraging proportion of all the conventions in Hagerstown. I haven't read any other reports on experiences at the DisCon, up to now, but I suspect that they will be similar in many ways to the reports that the state firemen's convention delegates or those who attended a state labor convention here might compose. The endless banquet, even if it's held early enough to qualify as a luncheon; the in-group jokes that elicit roars from



those in the know during introduction of speakers, the milling in the back of and just outside the main meeting room composed of those with neither the patience to listen to the program nor the nerve to leave it altogether; the attendees who get drunk early and embarrass everyone until drinking is general enough for them to grow obscure—those and a score of other things are common to fannish and mundane conventions. I've grown to detest most aspects of any convention, and I'm sure that the fact that I'm among acquaintances and not working for my living will never cause me to feel at a worldcon just as the average fan does.

I mentioned the Hugo awards on the previous page. I feel in the strongest possible way that the worldcon should give complete details on the voting totals for winners and losers. Until the results of some Hugo races are revealed, I'm going to continue to assume that there is one main reason for the secrecy: so few ballots that the prestige would be hurt by knowledge that the winners had received only a few dozen votes apiece. The explanation sometimes given, that the runners up are sometimes embarrassingly far behind the winners, assumes a thinness of skin among professionals that is a biological improbability, given the environment and conditions under which they gained their prodom. There are several objections to the analogy drawn sometimes with television awards, figures on which are also kept secret. The tv awards usually produce tremendous fusses and cries that we was robbed, and the television contests are partly invitational things limited to certain handpicked electors, partly mass-audience balloting in which any reader of TV Guide can take part. None of the tv awards is aimed at a group like active fandom with an interest that is intense but not involved in the outcome.

Fans seem to take in good spirits the tedium of waiting to register at the convention's start. Some convention fans with much experience in this aspect of the cons ought to be able to figure out ways to speed up things. One innovation might consist of requiring fans who join the worldcon in advance to pay the full sum at the time, then providing the packet of materials and badge to these individuals with no more delay than the time required to make a small mark on the con membership card, as a safeguard against doubling up of several fans on one card. If I understand the normal worldcon procedure correctly, some of the time goes to typing the insert for the badge. Surely this is a task that could be turned over to the member himself. For those who haven't joined in advance, the line might move faster if piles of forms were scattered around everywhere, on which the fan could record his name, address, and any other needed information while waiting. Those at the registration desk could pop the filled-out slip onto a spike without paper work, upon accepting the three bucks, and the list of attendees could be compiled at leisure much later on, from these slips. Expediencies of this type would reduce the accuracy with which the worldcon records would be kept and would increase the adoption of fake names on badges. But these things happen at the cons under present conditions and the change would be quantitative, not qualitative.

I feel quite certain that I would have attended worldcons before the DisCon if the programs were in the habit of including more topics of specific fan interest. The committees usually point out that the fans will amuse themselves regardless of the nature of the program, so the speeches and panels are devoted to matters of concern to the sercon types and the starry-eyed neo-



fans seeing their first live pros. This reasoning bounces right back onto itself. Those purist fans and youngsters would have a much better time if they could pursue their specific interests by conversation with the authorities, instead of sitting back in passive listening to the speeches by them. Worldcons have been compared with three-ring circuses. The comparison might be tested for validity some year by arranging a loosely timed fan program to accompany the normal sort of regular program in some smaller meeting room. This would give the fans a choice among three places to be: the pro-slanted meeting, the fan-slanted meeting, and the bar.

I can't help thinking that another year or two will see the end of the flash and flood nuisance from con-goers with cameras. Even color film is fast enough now to produce fine results under many indoor lighting conditions found at a con. By the time this FAPA mailing goes out, perhaps, it will be possible to order film with no particular speed at all. Coming onto the market is a black-and-white film with three layers of color emulsions, one extremely slow, one medium speed and the third very fast. You use the film in your camera with little or no concern about your lens aperture and shutter speed. Prints are made from the negative with the use of filters, to utilize the image from whichever emulsion was fitted for the exposure. Even without this super film, I would like to emphasize that there is little excuse for ruining the available light with flash and flood at cons. Using a camera with an f/2.8 lens and no film faster than Tri-X, I have used flash for newspaper photographs only twice in the past four months, and journalistic standards are more strict than those involved in taking entertaining snapshots as convention souvenirs.

I'd like to see worldcons get out of the heat of city streets into the country. The European fans do it this way and seem to have a wonderful time. The Seattle convention was apparently the nearest approach to a non-metropolitan convention facility, and a lot of attendees have called it the finest ever. I realize that vacation resorts are not likely to have enough space to handle attendance from a worldcon over Labor Day. This would provide an excellent excuse for getting away from two bad traditions, the holiday weekend timing of the worldcon and the striving for the largest possible attendance. Labor Day provides one day of freedom from work for most fans, at the penalty of crowded highways, school-opening conflicts, severe humidity and the highest prices of the year. My inclination would be to try a date in mid-May, except when the con was scheduled for such a northerly city that swimming would be stymied by the coolth. A convention in a location designed for leisurely vacationing might start in this country the tradition of gathering days before the con and lingering a week afterward, for those who really love to congregate with fans and can manage an extended vacation.

Labor Day is a pretty good time for me to attend a worldcon, however. I normally get Saturday and Sunday off and by subterfuge can usually claim Monday as a day belonging to my leisure, too, so I can attend eastern cons over that holiday without sacrificing a week of my vacation. I have been known to make errors in news reports about conventions held by mundane groups. So if Labor Day weekend of 1963 failed to conform to this good behavior or some other difficulty prevented me from attending the DisCon, the erroneous nature of my first worldcon report will have precedent.



## New Hope for Electric Chair Victims

One thing that discourages me from writing record reviews is the difficulty of finding a suitable title. To the best of my knowledge, this one has not been used before for this purpose. I don't intend to compete with the professional record review magazines, with their emphasis on reviews of the latest releases. Instead, I'll deal with some of the discs that have most recently found a home in my collection.

Columbia's "A Tribute to Lotte Lehmann", honoring her 75th birthday, fails to mention in the liner notes the unique nature of this occasion. Lehmann is the first female singer in history to reach a 75th birthday. The other great vocalists who spend fifty years on opera stages or concert platforms, retire, and eventually die of galloping senility are around 62 at the time of death. George Orwell must have acquired inspiration for his history-rewriting episodes in "1984" from the things that happen to biographical sketches in musical encyclopedias as the centuries pass and the singers age not.

But her willingness to submit to honest chronology is only one of the many remarkable things about Lehmann. This lp reminds us, just as if it were possible to forget, that she is perhaps the most satisfying female singer who has done a lot of recording. Elena Gerhardt, Elisabeth Schumann and Claudia Muzio left her far behind in many technical and some esthetic matters, but their art does not clutch your attention in an unbreakable grip in a wide variety of music. "More than Singing" was the title of one of Lehmann's books, and that title might define the thing that is special to her art: the intelligence, spirit, personality and humanity that never failed her.

I'm probably more fortunate than most listeners regarding Lehmann, for my sense of pitch is not acute and I do not object to the occasional transgressions in this respect. But lots of singers have impeccable pitch and few attain the ability to act with the voice that Lehmann offered. Acting with the voice is a carelessly used term these days. I've heard it applied to the temporary introduction of sprechstimme when the vocalist wanted to make a musical point, and even to the grunts and squeals with which some dreadful sopranos attempt to express happiness or terror. To discover what it really means, just listen to the incredible demonstration that Lehmann gives on the penultimate word of Beethoven's Der Kuss: each of the many repetitions of the word *lange* gets its own coloring and expression, with an effect on the ear equivalent to that which a fine actress would produce on the eye by her facial expressions or gestures as she performed some action on the stage.

It would be nice to know the reasons for Columbia's failure to release seven of the songs on this lp when they were recorded during World War Two. There is a thump at the end of Der Nussbaum that may have disqualified that recording at the time. In Questa Tomba Oscura has some sloppy pianism. Aufträge may have been ruined in the processing, a trouble that Columbia experienced frequently in war days, for it sounds muffled as if much filtering had been done. But it's hard to see any cause for withholding so long from the public the superb Schmerzen or Zur Ruh'. I know that there are various problems involved in correlating the music with the printed texts on many record releases, but Columbia had 21 years in which to work with these songs and



that should have been sufficient time to get accurately into print the German texts of the 15 little poems. They are riddled with more typographical errors than any fanzine I've seen in years. I am sure that a person with good knowledge of German could detect a myriad of mistakes, but I'd like to point out the ones that I've spotted: In *Aufträge*, the apostrophe is omitted from *hätt'* in the last line of the first stanza, two lines later *leichtbeschwingte* is misspelled, in the Mendelssohn song *trag' ich* is run together as one word, *Lune* is misspelled, in *Träume* *allvergessen* is misspelled, in *Ständchen* a simple little preposition, *an*, is spelled on, and in *Zueignung* the notes achieve the considerable feat of misspelling not only a German word but also its equivalent in the translation: *Becker* and *becker*, respectively, should be *Becher* and *beaker*. I own on 78 rpm discs all the previously released songs. The three Strauss items are infinitely better on this lp than on my old records, where surface noise is atrocious, but the two Brahms items sound much better in the album that originally contained them. The other re-releases sound about the same on 78 or lp.

Lehmann never hesitated to tackle songs that are normally a masculine prerogative. I prefer to hear her *Doppelgänger*, because this song terrifies me when a man does it. Schubert's music follows precisely the frightening import of the poem: that pain and anguish may somehow be eternal and unending. When a man sings of seeing his former self still in agony over an unhappy love affair I can believe that all the pain and unhappiness that have ever occurred may still be going on somewhere. When Lotte does it, I can realize that it's just a song because a woman is singing about a man's trouble. I think I prefer Ponselle's *In Questa Tomba Oscura* to Lehmann's, but it's good to have on this disc, as a sample of her use of Italian, a tongue in which she recorded very little.

Maybe this release and the Lehmann disc in Angel's re-release series are portents of more Lehmann to come. RCA Victor numbered its solitary Lehmann record in the Camden series as volume one, apparently intending to supplement it. We should have a chance to own on lp the scores of records that Lehmann made in Europe before she signed Victor and Columbia contracts. I know that the *Aufträge* from the early 1930's was better done than this one.

Less than 15 years ago, it seemed incredible that we should have the chance to own on lp the rarely performed operas of Rossini. It seems only slightly less remarkable now that we're getting second versions of some of them. I don't often buy a second version of an opera on records. But for Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* I've made an exception. The original Period recording is not blessed with as much music as the recent Mercury set, and the *Virtuosi di Roma* outplay the orchestra on the older disc. Most reviewers of the Mercury release also thought there was no comparison between the singers, but I'm not sure that the Period vocalists deserve such short shrift. Most of them are virtually unknown, except for this series of obscure Italian operas that Period issued in the early 1950's (three by Rossini, one by Donizetti, one by Pergolesi, each confined to a single disc; I own and love them all) but they sound much more interested in their jobs than some of the Mercury singers and they don't do anything particularly wrong vocally.

It's hard to believe that a better opera was ever written by an 18-year-old boy than this first one by Rossini. The duel duet has the kind of humor that you expect to find a wise old man com-



posing. The mature Rossini always got at least 64 bars' worth from a musical idea, but he lavishes excellent phrases prodigally in this opera: they are heard once, never to return, and some are dandies, like the one near the start of the love duet at Fanny's words, "Sarò qual più mi brami". He's helped by an excellent and unusual libretto. You'd hardly expect to find a baritone devoting most of an aria to trying to calculate the latitude and longitude of an oncoming guest with due allowance for the inclination of the pole and weakening magnetism of his compass's needle.

The new recording's four sides play about an hour and a half compared with not quite an hour's music on the two-sided old one. Much of the difference comes from inclusion of lots of music for two servants. They gain the stature of almost a Figaro and Susanna in their basic goodness and its contrast with the scheming rich folk. The Mercury album advertises itself as a complete recording. But the tenor has no aria, an unlikely situation for an Italian opera of this period. The old set also lacked a tenor aria. Lacking a score, I can't be sure, but I strongly suspect that there's supposed to be a song for the hero just before the first entrance of Slook, and moreover that it was sung when the recording was made and cut when the tapes were edited. There's a certain fat, languid and smirking intonation that creeps into a tenor's voice just before he's about to launch on a big aria, as unmistakable as the signs of pregnancy in a woman after eight months, and I hear this clue in the voice of Nicola Monti in the recitative just before Slook walks through the door. Aside from this possible cut, my only real dissatisfaction with the Mercury recording is the use of a harpsichord in the recitatives. It's an affectation, justified by neither esthetics nor history in this work. The Period disc's piano sounds much better.

I felt that my purchase of another version of Bach's St. Matthew Passion rated more as supplementation than as duplication. I owned previously a somewhat abridged performance in English on the extinct Bluebird label, serviceable but not wholly satisfactory. Besides, it was a gift, so the newly acquired set is the first time I've bought the work. I had been wavering between the Voxbox set, whose style and price suit me but also incomplete, and the recent Angel set, entirely too expensive and churchy in style. Then I spotted in a remainder house catalog a reissue of the first Vox version and ordered it immediately. I'm fully happy with it. It's about as complete as a St. Matthew Passion is likely to be. The late Fritz Lehmann is magnificent as conductor, making the listener forget some of the slight inadequacies of the sound and the soloists. The old ladies who complained at the work's first performance that it sounded too much like an opera must have heard a performance like this one. But I think that that is what Bach wanted. The slow arias in minor keys don't sound like neurotic whining under his baton as they do when the conductor is indulgent to his singers. The harpsichord is sufficiently far in the background to allow me to keep my temper. Even though the set sells for less than two bucks per record, the surfaces are quiet, there's an excellent reproduction of Van Eyck's Crucifixion on the cover, and you get an added souvenir: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in one of his first appearances on records. I don't know the full history of this performance; possibly Bill Evans can help out. It dates back to 1949 or earlier, reputedly was prepared for radio purposes in Germany, and appeared both on the Discophiles Francais and Vox



labels at the start of the lp era, then vanished until it reappeared on this "Pantheon Collectors' Series" label. It gives me hope that we'll see again the Richard Strauss compositions under the composer's baton that Vox once sold. It also leads me to believe that I'll stop my St. Matthew Passion quest, unless the strangest performance of all should become available on lp. That was the performance that cut everything with reference to the Jews. I should have thought that Nazi Germany wouldn't have cut references in this particular work, but with Erb as the narrator and Lemnitz and Hirsch among the soloists, it must have been a stupendous performance.

Bach comes to mind for a special reason in connection with Ives' Second Symphony. An American who listens to this work must get something resembling the sensation that a German received in Bach works when a familiar tune suddenly cuts through the music. Some of the chorale tunes that Bach used are included in hymnals of this country's churches. But they aren't part of the constant environment of today's Americans, as they were of Bach's Protestant contemporaries. My principal reaction to the first few hearings of the Ives work was that it's something like the first reading of a Shakespeare play. You're so struck by the sudden arrival of something familiar that you find it hard to keep the rest in focus.

But it would be hard for me to say anything critical of a composer who kept hanging beside the piano a sign that once pointed the way to the baseball park and saved the cap he wore as a pitcher for the Yale nine in 1898. I look at the baseball on my desk (it has been there ever since I pilfered it from the Hagerstown Owls, then in fifth place in the class B Inter-State League, in August, 1944) and feel that there may be potentialities of greatness in me, after all.

I would urge everyone to buy this Columbia recording and try to listen to it as something more than a game of identification of as many quotations as possible. After the first shock of hearing these native melodies has eased, you begin to realize that they fit beautifully into the music that Ives composed around them. In fact, it's not always easy to determine how much is familiar and how much is Ives, as in the case of the tune in the last movement that is and yet is not Old Black Joe. The set is further distinguished for first-rate accompanying materials. Historical and analytical information covers the entire back of the jacket in closely printed small type, inside are six pages of photographs and additional information, while the front cover contains a fine portrait of the composer wearing a felt hat that is every bit as battered and bruised as my favorite hat, the one I'm not allowed to wear while on the job. The only unfortunate thing about the release is the potshots that David Johnson takes at Horatio Parker in his annotations. It is a bad example of the tendency of some writers about music to attempt to further someone's cause by decimating his environment. Parker did write bad oratorios, as Johnson points out. But he also wrote one very good opera, Fairyland, and one very great opera, Mona, and Parker wrote dissonant music quite as acid as the final chord of the Ives symphony that impresses Johnson so much.

Bernstein's performance sounds excellent, although I've never heard the work under another conductor and I don't have access to a score. That final chord sounds a little tired, but maybe that's the way conductor and composer wanted it to sound.