

LARK
VOL. X NO. Y
WHOLE NO. Z
76th FAPA MAILING, 1956



Except for a couple of not-too-satisfactory test-stencils this is the first one cut on my new Hermes 2000 typer. Some of you may be interested in the reasons for its purchase.

The Royal (which is older than I thought, having been made in 1940) was doing fine except for punching out o's and d's. I probably could have remedied this by putzing around, but the machine needed a new anvil and new rubber parts, so I called the shop from which I had bought it. The proprietor (a personal friend) gave me a price of \$47.85, which seemed pretty steep, but he assured me it would be just like new and do perfect stencil work. I let him take it; the job took two weeks instead of the promised one week. It cuts nice uniform stencils but the alignment, which was supposed to be improved, is worse than before and in regular ribbon work the i doesn't print at all and the o only half-prints unless they are hit very hard; the others print from very heavily to very lightly. I sent Mac a letter typed on it and he called me soon as he got it. I was pretty burned up, because the Royal used to be a pleasure to use and now is a miserable thing, and I had to pay plenty to have it made that way. He offered to allow me \$17 over the book value of the machine plus the entire repair bill on a new standard machine. But these cost 190 bucks, considerably more than I cared to pay, so he gave me the same allowance on this machine, which had been very slightly used on the counter. It does beautiful typing, but for stencil-cutting requires a heavier touch than I am accustomed to. Partly this is because the type is larger and partly because the shorter type-bars of a portable do not have so powerful a stroke. No doubt I shall become accustomed to it, and I like the larger type, which you may notice is larger than elite, but a trifle smaller than regular pica. On the other hand it has the half line-space feature found on most foreign machines and such useful characters as +, =, \$ and !. Too, it has practically all the features of the Royal for setting margins and tab, etc., things which used to be unheard of in a portable.

There is a lesson in all this which may be of use to some of you. If you have a typer that is doing reasonably good work, LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE! I've come to the conclusion that a major overhaul on a typewriter is a job for the factory. The Royal was a factory-rebuilt job when I originally purchased it, and did fine work for years... On to

BASANOIS / Where the hell do you dig up those names, Walt?... I dunno, Coslet / Walt, whether you should be glad I didn't review your Fapazine. Usually all that means is that it contained nothing that aroused me to comment... I was not in on the birthing of the VAPA, and I don't think Warner was either. I think Larry Shaw was, though, so perhaps some of these days he will give a history of the organization... Did you get paid for that ad on the back cover?

BIRDSMITH / No, Vernon--the line is "The quick, brown fox jumps over McCain / the lazy dog." Your version contains a couple of redundant letters and at least one redundant dog... I like your stand on "franked" material, especially as regards Morse' London Letters. For some strange reason I failed to read the last one but after reading this one with great enjoyment I'm going to dig it out. But I imagine Harry was thinking primarily of things like that illegible one

from Al Toth and the oil company comics. I'm sure he has no desire to stop really worthwhile contributions by non-members from appearing in members' publications... Probably you and Grennell are right about the grade-skipping business; I didn't do enough of it to judge. I skipped only a half-grade (2A, I think) and, since I started school later than the usual age this made no difference so far as classmates went. I think it highly unlikely that the classwork I missed had anything to do with my difficulties with math, mechanics and physics at Carnegie Tech... I can't help wondering why British tv sets need an additional antenna to get the commercial tv channel. Is the commercial tv on uhf or are all older sets equipped with sharply-tuned directional antennae?...

BOBOLINGS / I didn't sign the Perdue by-law and send it in. If 33 others do I will have no quarrel with the action taken. But on the other hand Elmer must have known some such step might be taken, as you say, and I'd sort of like to see if he begins to be a little more active in case the by-law fails. I suppose it's too much to hope for, but if he really does enjoy reading the mailings he might.

DY AUS / Isn't there anything you can do about the n on your typer, Speer / Jack? Sometimes it's high and sometimes it's low and it's always off its feet. Looks as though maybe the solder has broken and only friction holds the type to the type-bar... If this is an indication of what we may expect from you regularly you have certainly justified the action taken in preserving your membership. And I think you will find the comments on your Fapazines will cease to be disappointing now that you yourself are making such extended comments... Just hunted through the '41 Cameradio catalog because I thought it listed the Wincharger. It's not there, but I think it was made by Pioneer, not Zenith... Possibly atheists should not be tolerant of religionists' "believe or else" tactics, but most of them are. Tolerance is generally considered a virtue by Christians, possibly because they practice it so little... On the poor, butchered old Royal the pressure dial does work, though it didn't before the "overhauling". Now the machine gives very poor results on the heaviest setting and does not work at all on the lightest... The lower postage on "split" bundles is easily explained. I divided the whole bunch into separate packages each of which was within the 8-ounce limit for printed matter. This rate is considerably less than the parcel post rate, which is charged for anything over 8 ounces, and does not increase with distance. But a saddle-stitched booklet of 24 pages or more can go at the book rate, which is still lower. The last Stef I sent to Ellik took only about 34 cents, while the parcel post rate for the same package is about \$1.50... You may be right about fanzines being printed commercially when the publishers can afford it, but this does not hold true with those who use the printing press... I don't believe any relaxation of the law was necessary for publication of photographs of coins. A fairly old coin catalog contains photos of coins still in circulation when it was printed. It might conceivably be possible to pass a half-tone reproduction of a bank-note in a poor light, but this could hardly be true of pictures of coins. Why prohibit their publication?... But wells has lived in a city, not a small town. Even in the twenties wall-phones had practically disappeared from Pittsburgh, and the same is probably true of Savannah... I don't know what prompted that question about balloon-tired bicycles, but the answer is NO. The standard American bicycle, or boy-killer2, is too heavy; the addition of balloon tires increases rolling friction and makes it even harder to pedal... Okay, so Al's article is not an affidavit. So what? Maybe someday I'll reprint a real affidavit which I

published in an early Stef... Nope--I occupy the whole of 720 Rockwood and it isn't big enough.

ESDACIOS / My reaction to your statement that "...most of the FM stations, as anybody knows of course, feature mostly classical music" was a loud "HUH?" Even WDUQ of Duquesne University, our only non-commercial radio station, has only a couple hours of classical music daily. The rest is religious propaganda, baseball games, religious propaganda, football games, religious propaganda, basketball games and religious propaganda. WKJF, whose regular business is medium fidelity crap for captive audiences, has a three-hour program on Sunday nights. WWSW, which distinguishes itself with the wonderful tape re-broadcasts of the Pgh Symphony during the season, has the one-hour evening "golden Hour" when there is not some sporting event that can take its place. And that's it. The other two fm stations never have any classical music that even approached what can be called high-fidelity. These are WJAS, which carries nothing but captive-audience stuff, and KDKA, whose classical music is limited to the "Hi-Fi" concerts (Ha-Ha!) on Monitor. The fact that it calls a program carried over the radio network, which has a top limit of 5000 cycles, a "Hi-Fi" concert shows how much interest NBC has in high fidelity... Glad to know you enjoyed "Strange News From Heaven" as I did, Possibly you, too, will re-read it several times.

GINZA GAZETTE / Seems like a long time between Standpipes these days.
Wesson

GO D.C. / I think it's a good idea, natch. Count on my support.

GROTESQUE / Despite my wk dislike of po'try, I thought from the first
Martin / two or three that this might not be so bad. But the stuff on the following pages seemed to me to get steadily worse and I ended by just skimming through. Sorry, Ed.

HEATHEN / Well, you have a press and quite an assortment of large faces. If you have enough of some text face how about giving
Anderson / us a printed publication some of these days?... Nope--I have no facilities for making halftones of any kind, though I have experimented with the Flexirubber process. This will produce cuts of a rubber-like plastic from stereotype mats or from original drawings on similar mats (with a Benday background) and can also be used to make a logotype from a standing form, freeing the type for other use. This is the real meaning of the word "logotype" from which the "logo" of fans is derived. Use of "logo" to denote the name of a magazine in some sort of distinctive letters and produced by the stencil or the ditto process is incorrect usage, but what chance have I to stop it?... I can advise you about the "record-of-the-month" clubs. DON'T!...Why "analyzation" instead of "analysis", Larry?...

HORIZONS / At last! An illustrated Horizons!... I never read sports papers, but occasionally I am near a radio tuned to a baseball broadcast, and I notice that no such broadcaster ever refers to "first" and "second" halves of an inning; it's always "top" and "bottom". This peculiar terminology has spread to newscasters, too; many stations never present anything but "the top of the news" whatever that is... Hell, Harry, don't blame yourself for the lateness of the November Stef. It has only one cut; obviously I could have gotten the issue out without it if I'd been on the ball, which I wasn't. It was my own procrastination that made that issue late... A year or so ago the Sunday Press Roto section had an article about the man responsible for the "Jesus Saves" signs around here. Instead of stopping him from defacing property, the

police seem to encourage this sort of foolishness. So perhaps there is an individual in every locality that goes around painting such signs... No doubt some of the smaller sects do make stronger efforts to frighten their sheep, but how effective are those efforts? RC's are trained from birth to believe anything a priest tells them. See what Andy Young says in his postmailed Poo #5. I have already mentioned their apparent belief that confession wipes away their misdeeds so they can go out and start from scratch, as well as the priest who keeps a blonde in an apartment not far from here. Hypocrisy, thy initials are R. C... Finding trouble such as you mention in a tv set is not hard. Sounds like the sync discriminator tube was bad; all he had to do was locate it... I see that you like that phrase "almost indefinitely" too. Silly when you think of it, isn't it? But present-day cars, even when "handled properly and maintained skilfully" will not operate that long. Even if they hold out mechanically the bodies are so constructed, and of such lightweight metal, that they rust away in short order. Of course, if you're thinking of a Rolls or a Mercedes or some other such really fine car you are right... Signal strength suffers if you raise your television antenna too high? I doubt it. In general, the higher the antenna the better. However, such high frequencies are peculiar. There are always poor spots, possibly quite close to good spots. If an antenna could be raised without limit no doubt a point would be found where the signal was weak, but raising it further would probably make it stronger than ever. Before installing my antenna with a rotator on the chimney I got the best signal from Johnstown with the antenna on the front porch about four feet above the ground... I enjoyed "No Common Vineyard". An atheist friend once told me of a preacher friend of his who was both honest and intelligent. This, of course, made him a hypocrite, for he admitted (in private) that he believed none of the guff he dished out, but kept it up because it was an easy living. I wonder how many would say the same if they dared... There's nothing dull about "Dull, Small Towns I have known"... Hey--did you ever get the tape I sent you a couple of months ago?... Those who try your suggestion of photographing the planets of the nearer stars might do well to use #75 bulbs. These make so much light that they will reverse the negative when used at close range.

MASQUE / I wonder why Fapans are always using red ink on pink paper...
Rotsler / Damned if I can think of any other comment to make, though I enjoyed it all.

MOONCALF / More about dreams in color. Andy's remarks in Poo made me
Ellis recall that I too have had several dreams about owning a color tv set (or rather, a b&w set that suddenly began receiving color) and that for a while afterward I could even recall the subject matter of the vividly-colored pictures. This is peculiar because I haven't the slightest desire to have a color set, even if the price ever gets within reason. I have also experienced the brief images inside the eyelids or wherever, as well as "hearing" a word or two in a familiar voice when no one else was near. Possibly both the pictures and the sounds are the result of some sort of momentary short-circuit in the brain between the memory banks and the sensory nerves. Whatever it is may even explain the cases of religionists who hear wonderful revelations... Crazy, yes. I mean with regard to the constant climate you would like... Greatly enjoyed "A Pleasant Fiction" but it sure presents a different side of Estes Kefauver, doesn't it?... Rawhide sounds a little like Bob & Ray and also like Rege Cordic on WWSW. The latter once read a letter on his program in which I suggested the

return to cable-cars as a method of solving Pittsburgh's traffic and parking problem. But that was before Rege went over from WWSW to KDKA and (natch!) got mixed up with so many goddam commercials that I don't listen to him any more. The same, alas, is true of Bob & Ray. Since they acquired a regular sponsor June first their program has veraged about 50% commercials! I can't understand why anyone expects the long-suffering public to sit through that sort of thing, and wrote to the boys to tell them so. Won't do any good, of course... This is rapidly getting to be one of the best things in the mailings. Keep it up, Dutch.

NULL-P | Why did you have to shave the moustache (I usually spell it White that way too, though "mustache" has been the preferred spelling for many years.)? Is there a law against high-school students wearing them?... Your extremely individualistic spelling continues to amaze me: for example, "passified" on page 11. And this is "copied, or second draft stuff" too!... "Wop" has become merely a derogatory term, but I was once told that it originated with Italians themselves, derived from the initials of one of their black-hand-type organizations. Thus, while the term is an accurate one for certain gangsters it is, for that very reason, the more unfair to use it for all lower-class Italians. I don't think there is any similar justification for either "nigger" or "spick" or other such terms... On page 13 you have "differse" for "diverse". Do you pronounce it that way, Ted? Quick--how do you spell "blame"? On page 17 you spell it correctly and then on the next two lines have it "blaim". "Tremendious", "dispsied", "wreck" (for "wreak"), "rarety", "imbitters", "manditory", "vegitari-ans", "techniqually" (!), "intirely", "slandor" and "clogg" are other examples I noticed. The blue-ribbon winner, though, is your apology for using "dearth" (which is 100% correct) instead of "dirth" (which is a non-existent word.) I was going to suggest that you keep a dictionary handy when you write, but since you are so sure of words that you spell all wrong it probably would do no good. You should apologize not to us but to Stephen Vinson Stephens, Honor Student, for implying that his spelling is as bad as yours. I wouldn't bother mentioning all this except for the fact that what you have to say is generally worth reading and the spelling and grammar errors are very annoying... Of course the fact that I have no slightest desire to dig live jazz is another reason I stay away from "Monitor". NBC's attitude toward quality reproduction of music is perfectly exemplified by what it calls "Hi-Fi Concerts". These of necessity come over the network, whose frequency response has an upper limit of 5000 cycles, so that high-fidelity is impossible. "Hi-fi", however, has come to mean the sort of sound that comes from whatever equipment the advertiser is trying to sell, from a table-model ac-dc squawk-box on up; NBC applies it to lp records transcribed from 78 rpm discs made 20 years ago... Actually, the paper I am using now for Stef is the cheapest I've used for years. It is the same paper (Logan) as in previous issues, but is "English Finish Book" instead of "Eggshell Book". Furthermore it is of lighter weight than the eggshell (50 lb instead of 70) which makes it cost less per ream and is part of the remainder of a brand that the paper house no longer stocks so I got it for about half the regular price. Because it has less stiffness it is considerably harder to feed than the eggshell. I always slipsheet mimeo work for Stef anyway, but not for Lark... I believe correction fluid does use ether as a solvent. "Banana oil", however, is not a mysterious mixture with an "evaporating ingredient" but a highly volatile solvent in its own right. I don't recall its chemical name--perhaps some of you might... But Elmer's postmailing could take 12 days to get to you, or more. I once got a VAPA mailing that took almost a month to get here from New York... Handwriting is not illegal,

techniqually or otherwise, in 3d-class matter (or 4th-class which covers the mailings since they are over 8 ounces.) Minor corrections made by hand in printed or mimeographed matter will not subject it to first-class rates, so long as all copies are essentially the same. The determining factor is whether or not the handwriting conveys special information to one or more recipients.

PHANTASY PRESS | I am the last to blame those who have never seen a UFO
McPhail | for taking little stock in them, for I don't believe
| in taking things entirely on faith. But it seems that
all those who have seen them are impressed strongly with the unwordly character of the object. That was one of the things that struck me about the one I saw, a "saucer" type which emitted no flame or vapor trail. To paraphrase NLK it seemed to me that Earth's technology simply had not progressed to the point where it could make anything that could perform like that... Which is the crummy bit on page 18 of Stef 35?... What possible need is there for a bureau of critics? What could it do that the active members don't do better in mailing comments?... Yeah, I remeber the days of those prices. Around '41 I got an all-wool suit for \$12.50 on a sale at Sears'. Bestfitting and best-wearing suit I ever had, too. In those days a California job type case, brand new, was only \$1.55. Now it costs close to \$6.

QUABAL / I don't know whose law it is, but I like the one that goes:
E,J&B / "There's nothing wrong with the world, it's the people in it."

TYKE / Actually I don't give a damn whether there's a god or not,
Harness / but if you have proof one way or the other I can hardly wait
to see it... Concerning physical limitations on the breeding of dogs, there is not far from here a pup whose mother is a small Boston Bull Terrier and whose father is a good-sized Boxer... "Yaught", you say. Jeez kri, Ted's spelling is spreading!... Must everything go somewhere? Millions of people gather every day to see a bunch of highly-paid athletes whose principle ambition is to run like hell to get right back where they start from. "Eskimo" or "esquimau", Jack, but please, not "esquimoc".

ZIPs / Couldn't these have been combined with Mini into one publica-
White / tion?

Considering the mailing is quite a sizable one my comments have taken up remarkably little space, especially as there are fewer words per page than with the old Royal. There's nothing intentional about it and the only explanation I can think of is that there was less than usual which aroused me to comment. To fill this page I'll quote from a letter that came today (7-5-56) from H arness:

Maybe I shouldn't knock Xity so much; I've nothing against anyone being a Xian or non-Xian. And I've nothing against the ideas of respecting one another that were laid down originally. It's just that the Church isn't following them. Do you know that the Roman purges killed about 30 people in all? For all of Hollywood, that's all the casualties. For real blood, the cinema should turn to the city of Alexandria in the year 300 (give or take 75 years; I don't have the exact date) where 100,000 Xians killed each other. This was the great homoousian-homoiousian controversy--on whether Jesus was [of] the same or similar (respectively) nature as God. Here's the fatal iota of difference. Boom!

Well, that sounds like the sort of thing christians would fight about if they couldn't find any other excuse.

This is a test, just for the hell of it, with a backing sheet under the stencil and a sheet of ordinary black carbon paper face down on top of it. Who knows, it may work! The quick, brown fox jumps over

Those three lines look so good that I have put the stencil back with the same combination to finish this page. There is a decided disadvantage, of course, in the fact that what has been typed is almost invisible, but the same thing is true when I use a 1261 stencil without any carbon at all. It has the advantage, though, of keeping the type clean as does film.

If you want to see the condition of your type, by the way, type on paper this same way--through carbon paper, that is, without the ribbon, though of course the backing sheet isn't needed. The work is so much cleaner and neater (for all the world like perfect Gestetnerography) that I'm going to see if I can get a carbon-paper ribbon for this machine. As you no doubt know use of such a ribbon is one of the reasons for the superlative results of the IBM Electromatic.

Recently I found another rc church bulletin which was quite different from the others I've seen. It was four pages, printed, and the two inner pages consisted entirely of ads of the sort you see in a high school yearbook. Most of the first page was filled with a list of those who contributed over \$1.00 the previous Sunday, with the rest taken by notes about how much money was needed for the new school. On the last page was a list of those who had made payments on their pledges for the new school and the amounts paid by each. As I have mentioned before, the rc's are not alone in this money-madness, but of all "religions" they certainly have the best system of raking it in. There was no printer advertised in the center spread, so presumably the church had to pay for the printing job. An rc contractor once complained that when he does a job for his church he is expected to do it for nothing, though his material and labor costs are just the same as for any other similar job.

I seem to be a glutton for certain kinds of punishment. Despite all the trouble I had with the other one I am building another am-fm tuner, this one with entirely separate tuning units which plug into a chassis with a common power supply. The power supply and the am tuner work fine, but the fm tuner, as might be expected, is giving me all kinds of trouble. The first thing that happened was that one of the if transformers burned out--something I never even heard of before. As of today (7-15-56) it still isn't worth a damn, but I have hopes. I like to build the things--it's getting them to work right that nearly drives me nuts.

We've been having so much rain that I can't keep up with the ivy. It seems only a few weeks ago that I trimmed it around the windows and doors, and now they're almost covered again. Harry Warner will be pleased to note that this ivy-trimming job brings out one of the bad features about glass-block windows. The other windows can be trimmed easily from inside the house, but for the block windows I must borrow a neighbor's ladder. Because the ground slopes down steeply from front to back setting up a ladder is a tricky problem and climbing it somewhat hazardous. The result is that most of the time the block windows admit the sort of greenish light I mentioned once before.