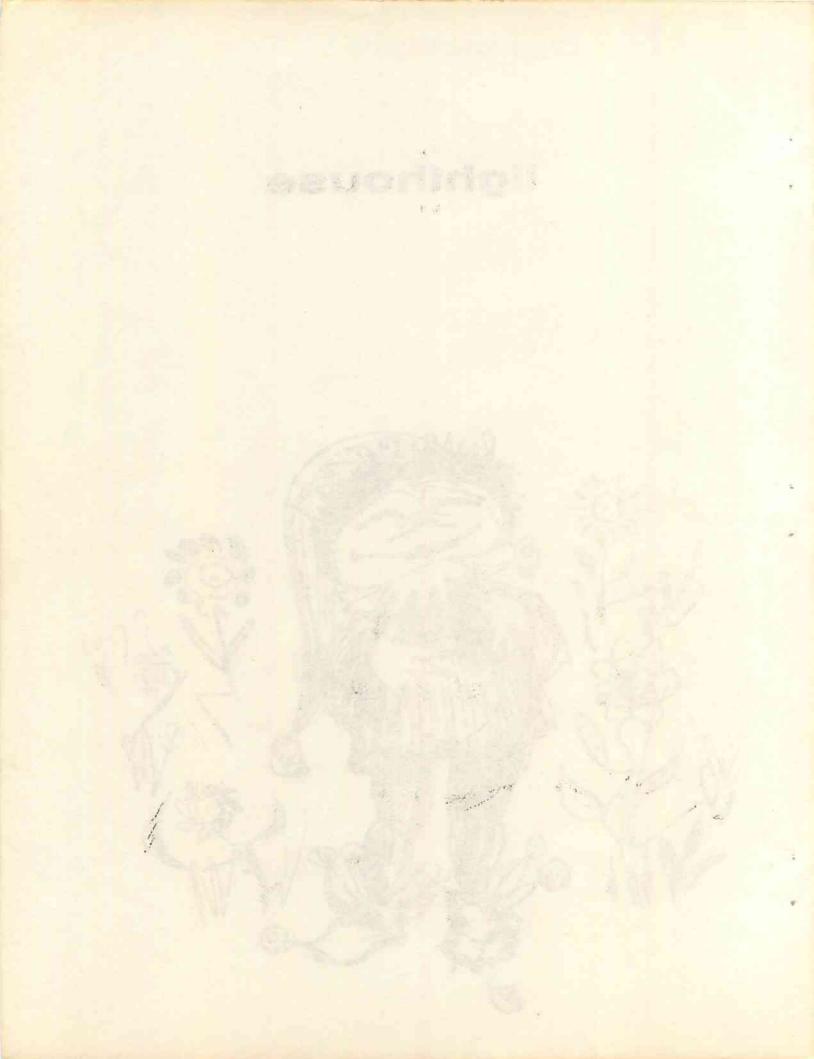
lighthouse





Our Man in George Hetzger...George Metzger
From a Celestrial Galaxity....Carol Carr
Minor Drag......Pete Graham
Looking Backward.....Pete Graham
Comments on Comments on....Terry Carr
Bach in High Fidelity....Walter Breen
Take Five......Carol Carr
Tailgate Ramble.....Terry Carr

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LIGHTHOUSE

Number Ten -- August 1964

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OUR MAN IN GEORGE METZGER

letters from george metzger

August 11, 1963:

I don't know if I wrote you while I was making the scene at the Zen Mine in Nevada -- it was the sort of exhibarating change that brings out a madness in one that finds him fanatically writing a million old friends, and when he has regained his composure he not only wonders to whom he wrote and what he wrote but was he really ever there?

In any event, I now find I have a problem: I don't know what New York state looks like. Now, one can watch tv and hear the harrowing tales of people who have escaped alive, tongues intact, from the city proper, but the rural areas, ah, that's another matter. I envision the whole eastern seaboard as utterly jampacked with toll freeways and cities crammed to overflowing with people. There are so many states in such a small area that I cannot see how one would have room to swing a dead cat, let alone a very alive one. Oh, people have assured me that yes, we have mountains and parks and trees just like everyone else, but I'm not convinced. I know there must be a flaw in my dream world, and that's one reason why I almost came to New York.

Yes, I really set out for there. Truly. I set out with \$5 and two very eager girls, hitch hiking. But we never made it. That is to say,

I am here in Santa Cruz, Calif. and at last word the chicks were stranded in Colorado, living with a Mescalero Apache friend of ours and ready to come home. They had your address and I'm sorry none of us have made it. We muchly desired to stomp up and down the city in long-legged strides, hands thrust through our belts, Indian beads and medicine bags jangling in the sunlight, and dig the Village and Harlem and the Bronx and say, "Maaan, lookit these crazy muthers, all cooped up in these dreary canyons..." We would look at the dirt on the walls of your skyscrapers and compare it with the dust and dirt out here and think our grime is healthy dirt.

And then we would hitch hike cut into the state parks and dig the scene there, but I don't think it would ever have been like the freedom we found there in the tall hills around Silver City, Nevada. There is a certain thrill of power about being able to drive an old Ford pickup truck or old Dodge panel job up some rutted back road and pull into a deserted mine and set up camp without a soul knowing or caring about your being there. You can select a rickety shack or pitch a leanto tent and build a fire for the women to cook the beef or venison over. And if you're bum-kicked and feeling like a Mean Muther you can take your lever-action Winchester with the feathers tied to its barrel out of the cab of the truck and walk to the edge of a bluff and squat there and watch the sagebrush. You squat or stand and you watch. The hills are filled with jackrabbits and a bullet from a good deer rifle will blow one in half. You leave them for the coyotes and go back to supper. And the city? If you walked into a bar with your guns and knives on and demanded a drink...well? They'd shit, that's what.

I don't know what I'm trying to say to you; perhaps it's that lately I've been very much on the road (northern California, Oregon and mostly Nevada) and I've been digging country and sights like never before and I've been hot to compare them with what I could see, feel and smell in the eastern mountains. But I never got there.

I could only read little bits. At the place I mentioned, the Zen Mine (a shack, an outhouse and three caves and lots of trucks), we would arise when the sun came up. The women would start the fire and put on a monstrous pot of coffee and after that they would feed the men, wash the dishes, feed themselves and wash up the dishes again. And soon the sun would be at its height and maybe the temperature up to 90 or 100 and we couldn't do much of anything but sit in the cool of the cave or in any shade and sleep or weave Injun things or read. Maybe I'd sit there with the dogs, Sabre and C.B. (for Child Bride), and read. Like maybe so and so in the city worrying about money and getting busted, etc. etc., and I couldn't even worry about them, they were so far distant. Or a letter from Sylvia saying I-am-living-aprimitive-existence-too-because-I-am-in-a-Girl-Scout-camp-at-Bear-Mountain-New-York-cooking-over-an-open-fire-and-am-getting-the-hellrained-on-and-catching-a-cold. At Pyramid Lake we had sand storms -tears up your eyes something terrible. Nost meat came from hunting: if you couldn't get a regular deer you got a barren doe. The ranchers called them cows, or something like that. A good beef steer can feed twenty people for two days.

The people were strange. Maybe they had once made the beat scene in San Francisco and Berkeley and Pt. Richmond or maybe they were up from Tucson and were brought up in the Indian way of life. Some of them were very much in the Indian way of life. Several families lived in teepees -- in fact, the only people in Nevada who do live in teepees

are white men. They live off the land. The Injuns live in settlements, go to Reno for kicks, and live off the Government.

I wanted to tell you about my term in the Maternity Ward, too. Yes, I got to play pappa-san. A girl friend managed to wait until I returned from Nevada to drop her kid. I am tired and hungry when I come in off the road and she goes into labor and I get to be the one to sit up with her. Labor is grim to observe. Mear enuff to make a man give up screwing. I phone her boy friend at 4:30 a.m. and try to get across to him the idea that it would be good for her morale if he would come over. He lets me know he thinks I am some sort of shit for putting him through such a thing. So 5:30 finds me in the waiting room of a local Catholic hospital...vaiting. All around me are real fathers doing real worrying and really pacing. I sit and weave godseyes, Indian things to ward off the evil eye. It's a grey morning and I can't even see the sun come up. I am there till she delivers at 1:30 p.m. She comes through the delivery in fifteen minutes under hypnosis, talking to the doctor about earthquakes.

And they shoot her full of demeral. She is very happy. She is very flat looking too. I hang up the godseyes and finally get thrown out when visiting hours are over. At evening visiting hours we smuggle friends in, and when caught try to pass them off as grandparents. Friday night we get on the phone to her and from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. serenade her, her roommate and a coupla nurses. (The Fort Mudge Ramblers have been reformed. The New, Improved, Polyunsaturated Fort Mudge Ramblers do country and old-timey stuff. Lars Bourne, who hates fandom, is the banjo player.)

Saturday morning I check the chick out of the hospital. I wear some beads and my medicine bag; the nurses are all properly croggled. She is happy to be home. Now that the coast is clear her boy friend comes over. He is happy too. He tries to screw her. He is not very bright, much less hip.

I am a wise ol' bastard. I get the hell out of there before I go crazy. Lars has to stay. Lars has changed over the years. He is a bit tamer now. Right now he is out of work. I gave him my last \$10 before returning to Santa Cruz. He has a wife, three cats and a car to support. I have nothing.

Perhaps that is my problem.

I am still on the road (long past my time?). To come back from Nevada and tell the city kids about the trip seems a groove. Maybe it sounds romantic to have to wash the mouse turds off the watermelon before you can eat it for breakfast, but...

November 24, 1963:

If I didn't write and tell you before or if you haven't heard, then via the return address on this letter you can gather that the Great White Father has taken me away to fight the white man's war. I'm not sure how to explain this, if indeed an explanation is needed. They drafted my lovin' little ass back in October and the basic is just about all over. Should I ever want to level criticism at it I now have firsthand insight. It's all a lot of bullcrap, but strangely enough it's almost fun. I have gained weight and an in better physical

condition than I've been in in a long time. It's just another scene, man.

Two hundred and fifty men out on a field practicing lunging with the bayonet, yelling, "KILL!" is supposed to be a very serious affair, but damn few people take it so. It's a big game. We're on the bayonet course and it's raining like hell and we play the game. They have targets of metal and tire rubber likened to the jousting targets ancient knights once practised upon and we yell and splash through the rich mud at them and stab, bash and slash the hell outta them. It keeps your mind off of the rain, the exercise keeps you warm, and you think it's fun.

There are tons of bullshit they hand you about the severity of this or that and maybe they frighten the kids just out of high school, but the rest sit and wait and try to be inconspicuous. And it works perhaps too well -- two weeks ago I was home on pass and no one recognized me. With glasses and no hair and a rigid back I am not noticed. I ran into one girl friend in a crowd and I stood next to her and she never even saw me. When I caught up to her again I talked to her

without her even considering that it might be me. I am a particle of the crowd now.

And this is a world seemingly as separated from and remote from the "real" world that I once roamed as any fantasy world written. The things I have done are very past and distant. The people I once roaded with: their problems are not mine anymore.

Two years into the abyss.

I can't say I hate
the Army -- there is a
lot of waste and bullshit but even so I intuitively understand what is
going on and why. Still, I am assailed by the fact that this is a gap
of two years in my life. My former scene just stopped dead like a
thrown switch. Whatever particular phase of development my art was in,
that stopped short too, and if I allow it that can cause me depression.
If this were a more relaxing, pensive scene I might be able to think
out all the ramifications of it all. However, I'm dispensing with all
that. If I were still a civilian I would just be wasting my time
some other way.

Boy, I wish I were wasting my time some other way.

I'm growing simpleminded here. It's easy -- lectures and explanations are very simplified (like some of our sergeants). Hell, I've even given up drinking. All the punk kids just outta high school do all the drinking in this platoon -- also all the barfing. Plenty young enlistees, want to be glamorous, so they go airborne. That's

where you jump outta planes while they're in flight. Much fun, except when they are reminded they could get sent to Vietnam to get shot. Not so much fun then. I meanwhile am getting sent to Oklahoma. That's Injun territory. Maybe something groovy'll happen there to write you about.

June 12, 1964:

The country here in Oklahoma is wide and flat. We went to the top of about the only mountain hereabouts and all over it was one big swath of flat dirt from your feet to the distant horizon, in all directions save the one broken by the pimpling mountain range. Down to Wichita Falls, across the dust bowl...I'm not used to so much wideness. I can't say I like it. The hiways roll up and down over hills and vanish into the horizon dead ahead of you. 1400 miles from home, and I can't grasp the significance of it all. The Army warps one's time sense. Though I've only been here six months it seems longer. Buch longer. Infinite. By sense of direction is messed up too: without the Pacific to act as a magnet I'm lost.



I have just been notified I've made PFC, which means I can now sew on my stripes. I'll have a little more prestige. Mainly I'll have a little more money. I will now be drawing (after deductions) around a whole 390 a month. That's really not too bad, considering there's nothing to spend it on here. Mages are hell here: waitresses get 50d an hour, and like But despite the best of efforts I go broke by the end of the month if I don't watch out. Mainly, other people borrow money from nice, merciful ol' Uncle George, the stupid sucker. I have concluded that I should put all my monies in something material which I will still have when I get out. Like my truck, which is used for storing things...like a friend's Porsche motor, a fish bucket, a patio couch, and some lumber. I decided to blow all my money at once after a coupla trips around the bars in the town here that lives off us young heros. I went with all my broke friends. I had money. Pretty soon I was broke, they were drunk, and I had seen all the ugly barmaids in town. Pretty depressing. So at the first of the month I walked into this store, threw down 380 and said, "Gimme that," and I walked out with a nice new Marlin 30-30 carbine.

When I stop and think about it I really don't know what I want a rifle for. I'll probably see one twice more as far as the Army's concerned -- I have a desk job. When I get back to California/Nevada and start making the Zen Rine scene, if it's still thriving, maybe I'll get in a chance to shoot a deer or two, or a cow. But not enough to make it worth putting out 380. It isn't very Zen-Miney, even. Up there everyone tends towards Minchesters. Maybe I prefer to have the only Marlin in the display when I run off the sheriff with the rest of the boys.

However, done is done. I can always sell it for about what I put into it. As rifles go it's a damn good gun. The action is a bit weird, but I like things that way. It's especially groovie to stare down the barrel at the rifling, the spires. Very esthetic.

Now that I have it I can sit around and figure what to get next. I have been thinking of getting a welding outfit. Hainly, I have no grill on the front of my truck. I thought it might be very groovie if I put one in...mine. Some sort of metal sculpture, with things within things, teeth, bulges. I can't recall the artist(s) but it's a kind enjoying a moderate vogue out there in the real world, or so I gather.

I've given passing thought to trying to get to New York sometime. I mean, hell, I'm halfway there now. It would have to be next year, like when I Get Out. Then it would depend on money, how much I have, how good a driver I am, and how the truck is (it needs work) and how quickly I want to get back to California. I'm going to get out early to return to college. I'm practically a gibbering moron now, and the sooner I'm out of here, the better. Applying for school gets me out quicker. It will be quite a hectic first semester, I suppose. I'll have next to no dinero and will be just-getting-by. Same old story. I expect I shall live in my truck. Haybe I'll buy a season ticket to park in the college's parkingbuilding. I would like drive up to around the third or fourth ramp where traffic isn't so heavy, back in next to the outer rail and Squat. Open the back doors, put out an awning and a chair and a potted cactus or two, and by gawd, I'm home. Good ol' California living.

Meanwhile I'm supposed to tell you all about fabulous Oklahoma. Oklahoma's booth at the World's Fair will tell you that this is a vacation wonderland. I will tell you that Oklahoma is flat dirt, all the way from Kansas to the Gulf of Nexico. Its cities are towns, and its towns...well. There is a great network of dirt roads between allwhere here. I have found one road that sorta dribbled off into nothing in the middle of a herd of complacent milk cows in a pasture. For awhile it was kind of pleasant, just rolling along back roads, no city rush, rickety country bars, old delapidated farm buildings to prowl around in. But only for awhile. Then it got to be a bit of a bug, because that's all there was.

And then there are the junk yards. SALVAGE, read all the faded signs up over the buildings. The yards of old, gutted cars are numerous and frequently large. I never noticed junk yards much in California, perhaps because no matter how big they were they never overshadowed much of anything. But here, they seem phenomenal. have big heavy fences and signs: KEEP OUT, BIG DOG! Haybe they are signs of wealth. The owners guard them fiercely. You go in to look and a man will trail along to see if you're interested in anything, and if you are he wants to make sure you buy it, not jerk it out and throw it over the fence to friends. A couple of us found an especially groovie one on a Sunday, out in the slums. No fence, and a number of old vintage Fords. Hostly we were interested in old truck bodies and went pawing around those, armed only with a screwdriver and a camera. The camera was visible. On the whole it proved to be a pretty shoddy collection. But on our way back to the truck this brand new Chevvy full of longhaired Okies, looking like out of date juvies, rushes up. "Uh, lookin' fer somethin'?" one asks. We suppose they are the owners or something, no doubt called by someone living nearby. So we don't

leave right away. We go poke around some more, pointing and snooping, all the while looking out of the corners of our eyes at the boys in the car. They don't get out but maneuver the car around so they can watch us. They look very concerned and worried. I guess they take their junk very much to heart. A way of life? Why not.

The largest yard we have seen has never been open. It is wide and long, all very neat, with the cars laid out side by side in rows, some neatly stacked upon top of one another. On a hill in the middle of it is a shack, surrounded by car parts. There is no sign of life. I've been here six months, and have not seen one change in that yard. Not so much as a tail light has moved. The fence is tall and at the top slanted in, barbed. You couldn't get out. It fascinates us.

What is he? A collector? A junkophile?

Couple of days ago I went to see a friend of mine. He is married and gets to live off post in an expensive apartment. We screw around and accomplish little...except for the armadillo. In the middle of the afternoon we are lying lifelessly around the floor, reading old newspapers or dozing, and Sandie, that's the old lady, decides to go shopping. Stu, her ol' man, is sound asleep on the floor, so it leaves two of us. So we go. Heading out one of the little narrow (but paved!) roads on the edge of town we come upon an armadillo, lying dead alongside the road. Sandie flips: "Mow, did you see that? It was an armadillo!" "Yeah...it...was...an...armadillo..." Mell, of course one doesn't see an armadillo selling pencils on every street corner or anything, but still ... "That's just what Stuart's always wanted!" I might add he has rather peculiar tastes at times. So we come back and she parks the car on the edge of the road and I walk over and look at him. A big fat dead armadillo. I look around. No traffic. I kick him to dislodge some of the ants, grab him by the tail and hoist him up. He is a bit flat in the rear, where he was struck. Also cracked. I turn around, and bhoy, here comes all the traffic. So I stand there patiently with my dead armadillo, waiting for the traffic to clear up. Nobody seems particularly upset by me or the dead armadillo. I guess they see them every day. Or maybe it's the California plates on the car. They have some peculiar notions about people from California out here. I get across and plop him on the floor and we go home. We wake up Stu. "We have a present for you, Stu." "What is it?" "It's a surprise, you'll like. It's just what you've always wanted." "You better like it," I add. "I don't stand on public hiways and make an ass outta myself for just anybody." So he goes and looks in the car. He throws open the door. "Now, it's a dead armadillo. Just what I wanted. Mhy, it's even better than the one my sister has!" Christ, I think, it runs in the family. He takes it out back among our cars and pokes it with a stick. "Now, I can't wait for the maggots to get it!" So he pushes the thing around till he has the skeleton in a pretty good position and leaves it in the weeds behind the garbage cans. Every so often during the weekend he would go out and look at it. Hot me, though. I guess armadillos aren't a big thing in my life. Another new horizon ignored. So much for education.

That is what cosmopolitan doings in "the third largest city in Oklahoma" are like. I shall have to use the word "cosmopolitan" on my friend from Queens, the one who phoned you when he was in New York recently. He goes to Real Live Plays all the time. He has a Thing about Paul Newman. He went to the World's Fair while he was in New

York, only he went alone 'cause no one wanted to be seen dead there. Everyone reads Art Buchwald and he said the Fair was like Disneyland and so no one will go. I imagine he hopes nobody saw him go. If Art Buchwald finds out he may have to stay in Oklahoma. They're probably just like that in cosmopolitan New York. I'll just bet.

But he brought me back souvenirs. In the Catskills he and some friends looted an old, decayed, crumbling barn and brought back some junk. I like junk. If it's groovie junk. He was supposed to get me a photograph, too. He was telling me about New York: "If you ever come to New York there's this girl you'll have to meet!" "Yeah?" "Yeah, her name's Maome Schwartz." "It would be." "She's a social worker in the Village..." "It figures. Look, tell ya what, see if you can get me a picture of her ass. Then I'll consider it." So he said yeah. So he asked her. So she said NO! And him a James Bond fan, too. Tsk.

Oh...by the by. In case I didn't tell you before, somebody took a shot at me and two other guys in a convertible Sunday night at around 2:00 a.m. We were passing a cemetery and approaching the gate when there was a shot from a shrubby area just past the cemetery. It was a .22 and it went over our heads, but it sure was weird. I guess some people just don't like the Army.

This's a crappy week. We get two hours of "training" every week. This means you get off from work to go watch two hours of some movies or some speaker who can't speak or a sergeant telling you dirty jokes while he's drunk. It's usually pretty neat 'cause it means two hours of sleep. Not this week. This week we get to go through the gas chamber. It won't amount to much, however. They'll give us a lot of crap and BS and then gas us. It is all oh so very goddamn important of course and wouldn't save your ass in a fart factory. So we sit around and see a ton of films most of the time. Some new, some old. One point I noticed: In the films from a few years ago they always talk about "The Enemy". But now they come right out and say, "This is a Russian soldier, he is the enemy, he is out to kill your ass dead!" Really. We had one film showing us how the Russian soldier is trained, and how he is baid (makes our 11d an hour seem like a fortune), and how he is treated by the military justice. I suppose we are to think we would be doing him a favor by shooting him. I dunno. I don't recall all of it so well. I slept through most of it. Vaguely I wondered what kinda films they show the Russian soldiers and do they sleep through theirs?

I got moved up on the KP list, and got it Friday instead of today. Fine with me: gives me all weekend to recuperate. KP is pretty grueling sometimes. They get me up at 2:30, telling me I'm late. I don't know what time it is but rush over. The cooks aren't even there yet. But four other KP's are. As they get in ahead of me most of the easier jobs are taken, so I end up washing trays, cups, etc. at the sink. Hiserable day. Very hot, sweat just runs off us, dribbles off the end of my nose, runs into the corners of my eyes, etc. We get no rest breaks. Some places they do, but here the cooks are chickenshit to do so. So if you get caught sitting down they raise hell. The only "rest" is sitting down to eat chow (and you better do that fast) and sitting down to peel potatoes. (250 pounds we peeled.) And you better not talk too much when you're peeling potatoes, either, 'cause we are all iggerunt sojurs and aren't supposed to do two things at once. Not that we give a big fat rat's ass.



We look for all kindsa ways to screw the cooks, etc. The time before when I was on with my friend who lives off base, we stole a whole sack of porkchops. I love porkchops. The first cook thinks the second cook stole 'em. Big argument. We snicker while we work. Late that evening we are at his place, pooped. We look at the porkchops. Looking at them reminds us of all the sweat and heat and grease and crap... We can't eat the porkchops. We throw them away.

It's always like that. Have very little appetite, seeing how food is prepared, having to prepare some of it ourselves. Very sorry day. Work till 7:30 at night without rest (except when you go to the latrine and sit down). Split. Exhausted. Sleep late Saturday morning. The temperature is 97 and the humidity something like 55 and no one is very happy. We go into town with a friend who is being sent to Germany the end of this week. He's from New Jersey and has never been much away from home till the Army sent him here. He is most apprehensive about it all. We keep trying to tell him that Germany at its worst will still be better than Ohlahoma at its best. He is not a believer. Not yet. He go to town to see a friend of this kid. Friend has had to marry a 25 year old barwhore who is seven months pregnant and fat and ugly and stupid. She was knocked up when he met her and she has two other kids drifting around somewhere. He was avoiding marriage with her though she was trying madly. Then he got involved with a forged check of a friend"'s and some lieutenant got after him. The "friend" went ANOL and left Stupid holding the bag. So fat&preg goes to the officer and says, why you can't throw him in jail, we're goin' ta be married: and so on. So the officer says, You WILL marry that woman. So he did. He is quite henpecked. He is 21 and ugly enough to curl worms. He had been the kid's roommate and had borrowed the kid's iron. "Where is my iron?" says the kid. StupidVorms says, "Well, I pawned it for 3." It was worth \$25. We conclude he's an asshole and deserves getting screwed by sorrywhore.

Me walk around town some. Me are trying to get rid of a third

party who is following us around. He rambles on with bad jokes, reads nudist magazines in diners while we eat, and tells us who all the different queers are around the base. We speculate on how he knows. He is just a nice trusting kid, he says. He is, too. We let him get on a bus first. He trusts us to follow. Har. Wave goodbye. We go to the remains of a drunken party. It's mostly full of people I don't like. TS. It's a sorry world, friends...

Meanwhile, what the hell do I write about? We had a tornado in Texas three months ago and a real live dust storm shortly after, and not much else. Real drag. If you drop dead all you get is \$300 spent on the funeral. Dreary place.

-- George Hetzger

Hello Lola, give me Doctor Jazz.

We picked up one excellent word -- a word worth traveling to New Orleans to get; a nice limber, expressive, handy word -- "Lagniappe." They pronounce it lanny-yap. It is Spanish -- so they said. We discovered it at the head of a column of odds and ends in the Picayune the first day; heard twenty people use it the second; inquired what it meant the third; adopted it and got facility in swinging it the fourth. It has a restricted meaning, but I think the people spread it out a little when they choose. It is the equivalent of the thirteenth roll in a "baker's dozen." It is something thrown in, gratis, for good measure. The custom originated in the Spanish quarter of the city. When a child or a servant buys something in a shop -- or even the mayor or the governor for aught I know -- he finishes the operation by saying:

"Give me something for lagniappe."

The shopman always responds; gives the child a bit of licorice-root, gives the servant a cheap cigar or a spool of thread, gives the governor -- I don't know what he gives the governor; support, likely.

When you are invited to drink -- and this does occur now and then in New Orleans -- and you say, "That, again? -- no, I've had enough," the other party says, "But just this one time more -- this is for lagniappe." When the beau perceives t that he is stacking his compliments a trifle too high, and sees by the young lady's countenance that the edifice would have been better with the top compliment left off, he puts his "I beg pardon, no harm intended," into the briefer form of "Oh, that's for lagniappe." If the waiter in the restaurant stumbles and spills a gill of coffee down the back of your neck, he says, "F'r lagniappe, sah," and gets you another cup without extra charge.

-- Mark Twain, in Life on the Mississippi

Ford was not long in invading Britain, where the motor car industry had got away to a slow start, thanks to a law which had required a "locomotive" on a highway to be preceded by a man with a red flag. In 1901 the Daimler Company had a modest output by Detroit standards, but it gave individual consideration to each customer:

"Kindly write to us, stating your requirements, and let us know:

1st. At what speed you wish to travel.

2nd. Number of persons to be carried.

3rd. Whether your district is flat or hilly."



In 1962 I worked for a man who advertised himself as a literary agent. Now, you probably have the impression that a literary agent is someone who tries to sell an author's manuscripts at the highest possible price, taking 10% of the proceeds for his trouble. That's certainly what a legitimate agent does, but not so my former employer, Literary Agent X. The following representative sample of his correspondence with clients will give you a better idea of his business:

Mrs. Bonnie Boodle Rural Route 1 Sulphur Gulch, Kentucky

My dear Mrs. Boodle:

I have just read your delightful, engrossing, superscintillating, potentially salable masterpiece, The Kunfeshuns of a Good Gurl in a Shak in the Bloo Hountains and I want to tell you, Mrs. B dear, that you're the most tremendous amateur yet I've ever seen all my life. There's just one thing, Mrs. B, and I almost wouldn't mention it except I want to see you become famous and Get Ahead in Top Markets and all that, but your wonderful brain-child could use a little fixing up -- just a little. Now, our professional staff here can do it for you professionally and also I will arrange to have my professional typist type it on her electric typewriter. Because, well, frankly, Mrs. B honey, a #3 potato bag wouldn't be a bad substitute for the nice 3 lb. paper we use, but we think you shouldn't have used charcoal because charcoal tends to smudge and editors are so fussy about their clothes, as we all know, those prissy little editors. Chuckle chuckle.

So, Mrs. B baby, for the rock-bottom nominal sum of

So, Mrs. B baby, for the rock-bottom nominal sum of only \$225 for your entire 8 pages of manuscript, that's what we'll do it for. Whaddaya say, honey?

Sincerely, Literary Agent K

Deer Litery Agend Eks:

I wood luv to reely but I caint becauz ferst my huzbind came down with flou and now my boy Lucifer and the stov hadda go last month to pay the welfare peepl for the hospitol for the soshel worker what my boy Juluis basht her hed in with a ax. So I caint. To bad. I no I got

Love,
Bonnie

My dear dear Bonnie,

I was touched to read of your plight and I vowed, as I wept, that I would not let mere money stand between your success. Just for you, my sweet Mrs. B, I will allow you to pay the fee in installments. Monthly.

Whaddaya say honey.

Endearingly, Literary Agent X

Deer Litery Agend Eks,

I wisht I coud but I caint because you see now with the stov gawn and my huzbind daid, I had a hard tim of it and had to tern to the streets and came down with the creeping intestinal ivy and caint work no more at my only cource of lifelyhod. The publik will never no my storey.

Love, Bonnie

My dear sweet poor little Bonnie,

How you must be suffering! For you and only you I will make this my last, final and decisive take it or leave it offer:

Half price -- \$112.50.

Beseachingly, Literary Agent K

Deer Litery Agend Eks, In monthly instaulmens?

Dear Mrs. B:
Yes, in monthly installments.

Deer Litery Agend Eks, I except.

WHEREUPON: Mobody touches the manuscript until she's all paid up. And three years later, with the last penny in the kitty, one of his "professional staff" gives it a semblance of plot, a scattering of characters, a hint of beginning and end. We can't do too much with it, you see, because Literary Agent X specifies the number of hours one can spend on so much wordage. The thing is typed on a manual typer and a carbon copy is sent to Mrs. D, who writes back weepily saying the guts were took out of it and it aint a troo storey no more. The original, of course, is put on a shelf to collect dust.

Needless to say, a person like Literary Agent X doesn't attract top authors. Bonnie Boodle was not an atypical client, and having to deal with the literary outpourings of these people day after day wasn't terribly stimulating. There were compensations, though, because some of them were inspired, if unconscious, humorists. I made a collection of excerpts from some of the most excruciating manuscripts that passed through, by, and under my desk, as follows.

In the first group, each quote is from a different manuscript:

We noticed that in all this time the sun had not moved at all it must somehow be stationary, oh well, we will worry about that later.

"Maybe the bartender has a dictionary," he said, half in jest and the other half more seriously.

Christianity first is feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and quench the thirsty.

Father would ponder and ponder, still hoping that young Dr. james would one day not look upon his patients as mere morsels.

Father sat in his favorite armchair with his ears standing up on end.

Gentlemen: I sincerely believe there is a strong demand in the New York area for the stuff I am putting out these days, and I am most fertile at this time.

Jim's quick eye detected that Kit was bleeding painfully at the mouth.

Both were fortunate in having almost photogenic memories.

From an "authority" on mental illness -- a serious, sober, straightforward article:

Hental patients are schizophrenic, maniac, and psychotic. First, let us take the schizophrenic. The classic example of schizophrenia is the Jeckyll and Hyde personality--sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm sad, sometimes I'm so damn mad. This type of patient fills most of our hospital beds.

The second is maniac. The maniac patient is not in

touch with reality and requires little sleep.

The third group are the psychotics. The legal name for this condition is insanity. They have really slipped their discs, lost some of their marbles.

There is another form of treatment called occupational therapy. It consists of doing something with the patient's hands.

From a novel:

The priest performed Extreme fuction over her body.

He bent over her heart and listened with a stetrascope,

Science fiction?:

...like a fragment from some celestrial galaxity.

A serious discussion in a short story:

"Mrs. Ryan, in my opinion, suffers from nymphomania and I advise she consult a gynicologist. This will cost plenty if she needs an operation."

Romance:

I grew warm in his arm. Thus we sit a short while. A cock crows. "Did you hear," he said, "a cock crew."

Emotion:

Regaining control of his reflexes, he buried his face in his hands and whispered, "Christ! Oh Christ!" Then as the seriousness of the situation hit him with full force he said, unconsciously quoting that old master Shakespeare, "Oh: Hell! What have we here?"

Folksy stuff:

Now my uncle Wily came rightly by his name because what the Webster book says that word means is what my uncle is loaded. That you may have a fuller realization of how his folks named this one Wily, I relate herewith a forinstance.

From a "Biblical" play:

"Rebelah, my beloveth, please don't cry ... "

From a serious book on natural history:

Some are born naturalists. Some achieve natural history, and the rest of the world has natural history thrust upon it.

The following are from a 400 page book. The author couldn't think of an ending, so sent it in unfinished. I killed off both main characters. He wrote us a letter, saying he loved it.

When Tavar came out on deck, he came out cussing. "Where in the hell am I?" he yelled. "Pray tell me, Skipper." When I told him what had happened, it seemed to take quite a load off his face.

After a moment or two his speech cleared up, although his face remained white and his neck veins strutted.

Lecia stood wax-like from fright, and Lizzy stood stonelike from fear.

He began to look fiercer. Sweat particles popped out over his forehead.

And, looking at her picture, he would repeat the vowels he had made on her death bed.

Julian remembered that morning so vividly, that he never forgot.

These are by a female author who called her book Sex From One to Thirty. Not years -- men.

He was full of vitality, and quick with words. I felt

rather quick with words myself that day and as we walked arm in arm to his beautiful new automobile with custom pipes and so forth, we exchanged witty bits of conversation and laughed wittingly at our own comic remarks, that flowed out of our mouths a mile aminute, seemingly.

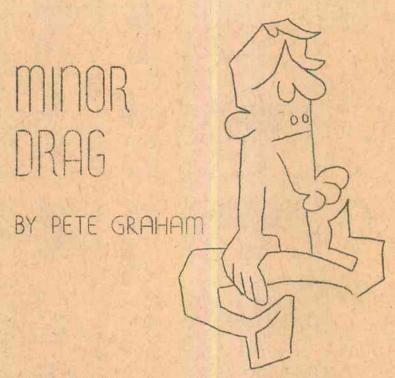
I was in his arms after but a blank moment, and he was kissing me passionately, when suddenly he lifted me up and carried me into the bedroom. I lay there on the blue sheets wondering about nothing.

The music started and we were dancing again and in no time he led me to the bedroom and seduced me no end.

Sometimes he'd come by in the wee hours of the morning. I seemed to have a soft spot in my heart for him, I'd let him in intending just to talk. Before you would know it we were eating each other, so to speak.

There's a humor piece on Theodore Dreiser which parodies his use of endless detail in his novels. This I think beats Dreiser -- it's beyond parody:

I've met some good cooks and have known some well known chefs in my time but, none that could begin too compare with Claire's mother except, Claire herself of whom also is an exceptionally good cook and, had followed right in her mother's footsteps. She too had learned too create her own recipes and menus. Everything about the dinner was outstandingly deliscious and her mother knew that I liked homemade apple pies and, she had baked two of them just for my benefit not too mention two big fat juicy homemade mince pies flavored with real rum and they too had been baked with a butter crust that was beyond description. Well, I had a little bit of everything on the table and, no words can express how much I enjoyed every last crumb. The turkey had been roasted to a deep golden brown from butter rubbed into its skin, stuffed with a filling that had been made with sausage, celery, onions, a pinch of garlic, thyme and, other seasonings. Altogether, it had weighed close too twenty pounds before stuffing and close too thirty two pounds after stuffing. Claire's mother wasn't at all scotch about the servings either. That dinner if seen by the President of the United States would have gone down in History as "The most fabulous and remarkable dinner of all time." Too make it more enjoyable, there were two candles too set off the beauty of the table along with the most beautiful hand crocheted banquet sized table cover I had ever seen and, I have been in some very beautiful homes that had very beautiful things but, none too compare with that table cover. This cover was exception because it had been made by Claire herself out of Clark's ONT number thirty thread.



LIGHTHOUSE Goes to a Wedding:

Those of you who keep track of such things will be interested to know that the Lady of the Cat People got married a few weeks ago. I am once again working at the Bureau of Applied Social Research, and am in a position to know this. I also became best man, a prideful position not without a dearth of responsibility, and participated in a lovely, romantic chapel wedding. My role was a pleasant one. The grain of truth to the myth that you have to prop up the bridegroom is in the five minutes immediately preceding the ceremony, when you too are wondering whatever the hell happened to the bride. All else is glory and tinsel: dinners given by glowing parents at which you are warmly appreciated; fetes and parties where you have a central role in participating (but not organizing); walking around at the reception in one of the two dinner jackets present, as I did, puffing on a cigar and being gracious as hell.

The whole business prompted in me the realization that I've been to very few weddings. As a matter of fact, the only weddings I've ever been to I've either been the best man or the son of the bride. Once I was best man to a friend of mine on the Daily Californian staff, since divorced, and at least twice, as I remember, I was present at the weddings of my mother, also since divorced. These small tidbits about my mother's life, by the way, are exceeded in interest only by the information about her present home in New Zealand and her relationship there with a juggler. But I digress.

I think I'm in favor of large marriages (in terms of the ceremony, I mean; I'm opposed to polygamy). There are few enough times in this world when you can force everyone to come to your party. I enjoy being a host, and having a mob of people coming around to get drunk with you at your convenience has always seemed to me to be one of life's greater pleasures. (This is especially true, by the way, since I took up the cigar a couple of months ago; expansive gestures,

apostrophic commentary and forceful expletives are far better punctuated with a dynamic wave of a cigar. Hind you've flicked the ashes before, though.)

But to have a large ceremony you really need family to make it complete. You can't be too social in the limited time afforded at a reception, so it is best to have quantities of distant relatives you can afford to ignore attend to make the crowd. Then you can spend your time with your cronies. This is assuming you've set everything up right beforehand and not let the goddam parents run things. This strategic concept must be handled with care as if at all possible it is they who will be paying for the whole bash anyhow.

Since I haven't got much family the odds are already turned in favor of my being married in a grimy quickie at City Hall. But I intend to marry rich in order to obviate that, and other, problems. Norm, will you play at my wedding?

What's the Word I Want?:

I received a John Birch Society leaflet on the street the other day -- "Support your local police" -- and noted that to inquire for more information from this organization opposed to the spread of Federal bureaucracy I had to use a Massachusetts Zip Code. The New York Telephone Company, on the other hand, proponents of digit-dialing and non-alphabetic phone numbers, still mail their bills without the Zip Code.

How Long, Oh Lord, How Long?:

In a couple of years I will have been a member of FAPA for over half its existence. More to the point, I think it is about this year that I'll have been a member of FAPA for over half my own existence. Having been born in 1939 and joined FAPA in 1952, I suppose I'm as eligible as anyone to ruminate on my past.

(The business is complicated by the change in my attitude toward age. For some time now I've scoffed at relatively young friends of mine -- usually women, under 30 -- who would piss and moan about their oncoming decrepitude. I still think it is absurd. However, sometime around my 25th birthday a few months ago I began developing a different attitude. A change of life, as it were. Now I am honestly pleased to consider myself a young man, hardly a teenager or a "youth," but at the same time I'm aware that I am not really young anymore. I have never been physically in good shape, though never in really bad shape, and I'm now quite conscious that I may never be in better condition than I am now. The flab tends to increase, not decrease; the occasions for exercise dwindle and the effect it has becomes more a holding action than a developing force. Too, I'm just at the age when men these days do their best work; it is common knowledge in the sciences, for example, that the best work of sharp young men is done before they are 30. Look at Gell-Hann, for instance. I've only just returned to school and a degree is years away, so that thought is a little disturbing. But I console myself with the thought of the late developers: Franck, Grandma Moses, Laney.)

When I first joined FAPA, giants walked the earth. This is because they had just left FAPA, and I was disappointed to find on joining that I had taken Ackerman's place and Laney had to all intents

quit a mailing or two before. Lee Hoffman's first SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY, which I'd missed by two mailings, had signalled a peak of her efforts. As a natter of fact, though I collected many past FAPA mailings, I never did get a complete set of that famous November 1951 mailing. There was a SPACEMARP in it too, I believe, and a WILD HAIR (the last?). I believe it was an anniversary mailing; the 15th, perhaps. It's old hat now to talk of the short waiting lists of the Old Days; and actually I did have to wait one mailing before I could join. I think I may have been as low as sixth on the list when I applied. Charles Lee Riddle responded to my application: I forget now whether or not the Willis death hoar had been pulled yet at that point.

Speaking of which -- the first I've done, now that I think of it, for about a decade -- that "hoax" is a little interesting to look back on. I don't recommend it as a course of action for enthusiastic young folk, but I must say on thinking about it that it did not redound wholly against my best interests. There was a certain stupid audacity about it, I think, a quality of its being an almost unbelievably idiotic thing to do, that caught in people's minds. I was not a nasty nor a wholly stupid kid at the time; I'm sure that showed, as did my very real repentance after the fact. I was quite appalled at what I'd done, and equally as flabbergasted by the reaction. I think I thought of Millis at the time as just another popular guy. A couple of moments ago, as I was thinking about it, I realized that the reaction really was phenomenal. The "message" I'd sent out was in the least likely or respectable form, and yet a number of people took it quite seriously. Lee Riddle phoned Lee Hoffman long-distance, and Vernon McCain published a diatribe I've still not recovered from. (I've always seen him as a sort of fannish Mencken, mercurial, quicktongued; at my mention of his name I picture him snarling over his shoulder at me in his grave.) The whole business left an unpleasant taste in people's mouths as far as I was concerned for some time yet it did leave a taste, and I think that if truth be told the fantasy of an attention-seeking adolescent came true to a surprising extent with the passage of time. My impression has been that people remembered both the incident and me, and as time passed and I changed the association between the two became less and less.

This may be true in a larger sense, too. Terry thinks, and it seems true, that the whole of Bay Area fannish youth was implicated in the affair. Terry was specifically accused by at least one person: and the subsequent "Terry Carr" hoax by Boob Stewart didn't help matters. Terry has told elsewhere of his surprise at reading in FANCYCLOPEDIA II the definition of the ACC, the "Adolescent California Crowd" which included the Bay Area youngfans. In general I think it was a term more applicable to the slightly later breed of Southern California fans around Pete Vorzimer, but this is splitting a pretty fine hair.

. Someday I'll have to write up properly the way I entered fandom. It involved my mother's interest in Dianetics, a portable typewriter and a great quantity of cat shit, none of which play a serious part in my life today. A couple of years later I met Terry, who introduced me to the FAPA concept, one with which he was not wholly familiar himself. He described to me with some agitation one afternoon that the eight pages a year had to be published within the organization, not just anywhere in fandom. He'd thought he had it made. To me this stands in history with LeeH's blissful ignorance of ink and my own misapprehension of the necessity of the inkpad.

Actually it's amazing to me the extent to which Terry and I have collaborated in FAPA. We put out a miserable postcard size mailing-comment zine in Ace double-novel format, which I'm sure today was just too much to ask of anyone. This collaboration went on for some time, even into letter-size, and culminated -- with considerable hiati -- in the LIGHTHOUSE of yesterday. (The LIGHTHOUSE of today does not exist. I do not say this simply for Walt Willis' benefit -- he likes to keep track of these things -- but if you will look at the colophon a change in editorial personnel will be evident.)

I stay in FAPA today mainly in order to keep in touch with a few people; not all of them are in FAPA. But they are in fandom (even the Fapans) and I would hate to lose contact with them entirely. It's not the most productive way to maintain a membership -- I don't often maintain my previous level of 125% pages a year -- but I choose to selfishly exercise my prerogative and maintain myself as a member as long as I maintain my friendship with a good half-dozen people in and around FAPA.

My Life and Hard Times:

That letter over there on the right may seem strange to you, but you have no idea how strange it appeared to me when I got it. The story behind it is Joe Pilati, who had been sending ENCLAVE to the Socialist Party National Secretary Betty Elkin in the course of his correspondence with her. I'd seen ENCLAVE on her desk a couple of times and studiedly ignored it; but while I was in Chicago earlier this year evidently he came to New York, discovered she knew me, and told her to write and ask me this question from the old VOID days. I haven't seen her since.

The story behind that, though, is as long as my connection with radical politics. Somehow fandom has dogged me throughout.

The first time the two areas overlapped I was in Chicago five years ago. The discussion bulletin of the YPSL (youth group of the Socialist Party) needed an editor -- that is, someone responsible for handling the regular publication of articles by YPSL members. Hormally the zine ran over 50 pages, about 800 copies. With my neophyte zeal I took over the job; I'd been a little disgusted with the pallid, badly-stencilled plain white magazines issued theretofore. I introduced colored paper, Gestafaxing, fancy lettering guides, end-of-article fillers, and interlineations. All except the latter have survived to this day though I held the post for only a year; the idea even spread to other organizations, and it was not uncommon for me to meet people I'd never heard of from strange Trotskyist sects who would say, "Oh yes, you're the guy who put out those great looking YPSL bulletins."

Coming across the unexpected in regard to fandom was depressingly common in the days when Ton Condit was more active both in fandom and politics than he is now. This again was several years ago; Tom for some reason took a malicious delight in telling people all about fandom, FAPA and my relationship to it. I found this a bit unfortunate. Fandom is just a goddam hobby, after all, and in many ways a rather bizarre one. If truth be told, I was embarassed. There are plenty of nuts in the radical movement, but I think the percentage is higher in fandom and the general personal level of the non-nuts is considerably higher in radical politics. Fortunately it never got around much -- nobody really gave a damn -- except for a couple of acquaintances who would bring it up at strange points. In 1959 or so just after I'd lost

socialist party/social democratic federation

1182 BROADWAY . NEW YORK 1, N. Y. . LEXINGTON 2-1452

February 27, 1964

Peter Graham c/o Debbie Meier 1343 E. 50 St. Chicago 15, Ill.

Dear Pete,

Would you mind explaining to me what the difference is between mimeo ink and horse manure?

You can do so when you return to New York. I have something to show you at that time, also.

Fraternally,

Betty/Elkin

National Secretary

be:ms





and regained my membership in FAPA I remember walking along a street in the Village and hearing Dave Van Ronk yell at me across Bleecker Street, "Hey Pete, you get back in FAPA yet? Ahahaha!"

Condit and I were on different sides of some political fences in the YPSL, and occasionally we got a little bitter toward each other. (I think today that Tom is an interesting fan, but has no place in a democratic socialist organization.) On one of the occasions when our differences were less than bitter but more than simply congenial, the question once came up of my being elected to some minor post in the New York organization. Tom opposed this on generally non-personal grounds — he wanted someone with a different point of view on some irrelevant question or other — but he didn't mind bringing up fandom. At a business meeting of some dozens of people he spoke on the issue, saying, "This is a responsible position; how the hell can we elect Pete to this when he can't even stay a member in FAPA?"

(Actually the net effect was nil. Everybody looked at each other and said, "Mhat's FAPA?" I was embarassed but Tom was stuck out on a limb with a private joke. I forget who got elected.)

Some of the things that happened weren't so spontaneous. Once Tom, I and another guy named Jack, a long-time friend of mine, were all serving together on a preconvention Constitution committee. YPSL constitution has been pretty stable, but Tom being a libertarian has always had some revisions to make (not all bad, by any means) and it's needed cleaning up. Jack and I, in general agreement on most items at issue, hadn't discussed things much. Before the convention, though, he and Tom got together and talked over several proposals to make to the convention delegates. Later they read them off to me. We discussed several and things got modified slightly. Then they read the last one: "YPSL members shall not also be members of any organizations whose membership is restricted on an arbitrary basis. " The wording was more subtle and somehow implied "discriminatory" restrictions. I was a little nonplussed and said it didn't sound necessary. They verbalized at great length and I was about to agree when Jack couldn't hold it in any longer and began to laugh. Tom had told him about fandom and my part in it, and the effect of the amendment would have been my having to resign from FAPA. It never got to the floor: I killed it in committee, and considered similar action against the committee.

Recently I haven't been very active politically; you might say I've gone gafp. But I intend to be active again soon. When I am I think I will take up publishing the discussion bulletin again. It'll really be well done this time, you see, now that I really have experience. I think it'll all be Gestafaxed or maybe even photo-offset, with articles by Martin Luther King, Willy Brandt, Harold Wilson, Norman Thomas, John Boardman, unpublished articles by Marx and Engels, and pictures of the last SP convention and the latest demonstrations. It should be over 100 pages and will probably appear monthly, maybe even more frequently. If you fans want it, you can send me a dollar now and I'll make sure you get a copy. It should be pretty good; Just about the perfect discussion bulletin.

The first issue will be out real soon now.

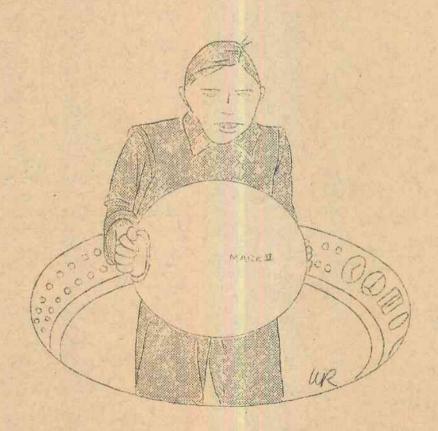
Breen in a Nutshell:

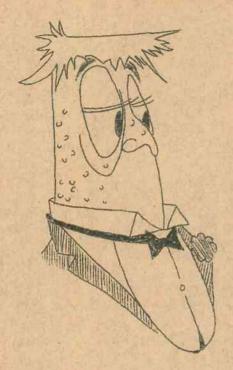
For the record: 1) I think Walter Breen is an obnoxious person.

2) It is wise for children not to become involved with Walter for, except for a natural revulsion they may feel, he can only have an unhealthy effect upon them. Much the same is true for adults. 3) Donaho's handling of the matter was wrong, inept, irrelevant, disturbing, dangerous and, it appears, dishonest. I want no part of it. 4) I would have signed the Breen petition for FAPA entry, but am glad he got the necessary signatures without mine. 5) The issue has brought out the worst in most of those who have commented on it. Self-right-eousness, aberration, projection, shrill hostility, self-conscious anti-social pride, and surreptitious defamation are not character building assets. 6) Willis' appeal for a "return to normalcy" in QUARK? should be followed. It is true that it will solve no issues, but none have been settled yet and none are going to be.

-- Pete Graham

I'm afraid of Uta Hagen.





LOOKING BACKWARD

MAILING COMMENTS BY PETE GRAHAM

QURP 3: Bennett

James Bond is a major new culture hero. I saw a discussion of him in a New Republic a few weeks back which really discussed him seriously in those terms, which I don't think is warranted, but there is something to it. His Latest book--"On er ajesty's Secret Service"-is sort of an anomaly, not like the others at all. The patent absurdity of the plot is not played up as much; what is more important here is the minute-to-minute action, which is plotted and paced better than in most of the other Bond books. Bond is really a little dense, you know. All of his major scrapes come about because he has screwed up. Someone I was talking to about this was trying to develop a major sexual theory about Fleming and Gond. I don't know about that he was implying that I was a maternal rather than paternal figure, i standing for mother and all; and the like. But there is something strange about Bond's involvement with criminals who want to mutilate his masculinity. In one book he gets his balls beaten with a carpet-beater and is threatened with imminent castration ("Say goodbye to it, James"). In another he is slid astraddle along a table toward a buzz-say. Of course his sex life is of prodigious proportions, as seems to be his ability. He's slept with everything female except Rosa Klebb, even conquering .- that symbol of final sexual mastery! -- the beautiful lesbian, Pussy Galore. In the latest book he steps more casually into bed with more women than ever before.

I like reading Bond stories. I think they're a lot of fun.

MELANGE 7: Trimbles

I don't like my name, and having you print the tattered meaning of "rock-like" for Peter in your name-table is no pleasure. It's better than what went on in high school, though; in adolescent talk of the time "peter" was a euphemism for "penis", see also "prick". (This was in the same period when "buns" was current in California--see Terry's comments. He forgot to mention in that connection the threatening sentence, "I'm gonna do in your buns. Toughly, stomp your ass.") I would rather be called Pete, but that doesn't look too good on formal papers. I could use my middle name and become Scott Graham, but that's got the wrong tone; or P. Scott Graham, which is a little much.

In your discussion of the police you mentioned the old English law that, in event of a public disturbance, the constable had to go to the locale and publicly read the entire Riot Act to the rioters before he could take action. During the recent Harlem riots a lawyer turned up a similar code in an old New York State Law the mayor of the city is required by law to visit the scene of the riot and personally apprehend or disband the rioters. Mobody takes it seriously (Mayor Magner knows better than to let his white ass get into Harlem).

THE LOVECRAFTSHAN: BOGGS

Penetrating. The trouble with the hypothesis is that I think there is really something to it. There really is a lot of emphasis in Lovecraft on smells, textures, "obscene" and disgusting materials. Anal, really quite anal, yass. Lovecraft was not a healthy man.

As I'm typing this Terry is yelling at me that I can't comment on this now, this is part of this mailing. Hie on foary tradition. These Queebcon one-shots are great. Perhaps it is because I am more interested in the people putting this one out, but I find this an example of the one-shot at its best; and the Lupoff-Brown-Stiles oneshot in this bundle a dreadful drag. The latter don't let any kind of personality shine through; but the Queebshots do. This is real. (This is raw. We must seize it.) Soon the Carrs and I are going to Canada to visit the Clarkes and go with him to Low Dives and listen to Glorious Cacophony. I hope when we do that Raeburn will also come and we can discuss how muzzy my thinking is. Now that we've invited ourselves up there, tell us, Horm, can we come? Do you have a place for us? Should we bring our own reeds?

CAC 4: Netcalf
It's funny how a justifiable letter in defense of onesself, as this is, can sound so bloody hostile and obnoxious that I almost find myself hoping that the blackball works on Tapscott.

SCATALOG 3: Wilson

The pomposity of that Red Chinese song about Hao is pronounced in a lot of Communist semi-literature. I've bought a couple of Chinese Communist pamphlets, one just for the title: THE WHOLE PARTY AND THE WHOLE PEOPLE GO IN FOR AGRICULTURE IN A BIG WAY.

And there was that marvelous song I learned six years ago from David Novogrodsky ("that's N-0, v-0, g-r-0, d-s, k-y") on the Nest Coast. The song, "Pick and Spade", is a real one; the last line is real too, but is tagged on from some other source.

"Pick and spade, pick and spade, Me are Tito's youth brigade; All speed the plan, Shame the idle man.

Belgrade's a fine town,
Home of our collective.
Onward to Brushko,
That's our next objective.
(Reprise: Bick and spade...)

Homeward victorious, Comrades courageous. Sons of the working class, Tito's shock brigaders. (Reprise: Pick and spade...)

(crescendo...)
Tito, Tito, Tito, little flower of the youth!"

BATHTUB GIN: Lupoff, Stiles, Brown
This is probably the worst one-shot I've seen in years. Stilted, forced, unpleasant. See my comments on the Queebshot above.

DEEP IN THE GLEN: Clarkes & Raeburn

Harvelous reference there to Raeburn "dreaming happily of the

Almost Perfect State." And I catch that reference to Bob Lichtmeyer
there you sneaks you. Boyd, will there be honking and skreeing in the
Almost Perfect State? (Almost Perfect Honking and Skreeing, I guess.)
I can see the state-commissioned symphony, "Ode to Glorious Cacophony",
now (or am I confusing this with Shostakovitch's last?).

POSTMORTEM: Choate out of Knight

My reaction on reading this was not at all sympathetic. I have a marginal note, "Tho is this prick?" But part of this hostile attitude, I confess, is created by the discovery of a man who diminishes his wife's name to "Gretch." That just doesn't sound like an affectionate term, it just doesn't. But mainly it's the righteousness.

HORIZOUS 98: Warner
I'm essentially a conservative guy. I wish Horizons were still appearing coverless on white paper.

I found the television presentations during the Kennedy assassination period to be well-done, largely in good taste, and fascinating. It's interesting to speculate on the role it played as a cathartic, come to think of it; after the funeral there was a great deal of mental hitching-up-ones-belt and back to the world going on. At any rate, that three-day period showed to me some of the potentialities of television as an artistic medium. The shots of Kennedy in life were mostly the first night and I didn't see much of that. But the live-action shots of the coffin being carried from one place to another, the visitors and the funeral I found effective and moving. Nost moving was the late-Sunday night showing of the thousands who visited the bier. Nothing was happening after midnight or so; the shooting of Oswald had just been replayed and covered for an hour or so. All the networks moved to Mashington and the Capitol dome: the silent people moving by the coffin, the rather tasteful commentary by the announcers and finally the Boston Symphony performance of a Beethoven symphony was one of the most moving hours I've ever spent. I was struck at that time by this lode that TV has not yet mined: the documentarymusical art form, where the screen deals photographically with a subject while good music is played for the sound. My primary conception involves classical music, but I think it could be extended to other musical subjects (jazz, for example). The movies, as a matter of fact, could do this sort of thing even better; with color carefully and sparingly used, musical-visual creations of striking beauty could be achieved.

Of course some of the TV coverage was striking in other ways. I didn't see the Oswald killing but that must have been impressive. A friend of mine sleepily turned on the bedside TV set Sunday morning, watched a moment as some man was shot, turned it off again and went back to sleep thinking in what bad taste it was to show commercial murder mysteries on the Sunday morning after the assassination.

"Merel n the" as a typo more typical of linotypes than typewriters is a nice note. I was trying to think of others, butETAO INNetaoincmfw none came to mind. One new type of linotype I'm finding in the New York Times: a line is wholly left-adjusted, no embedded spaces, and a third of the line or so at the right is all blank. I suspect this is a function of the new paper-tape computerized typesetting devices,

but I haven't found out yet what kind of bug would create such a thing.

For years as a youth I got the St. Joseph's calendars. At the
time they were touting the new orange-flavored aspirings for children.
I never had them but always sort of looked forward to getting some.
Skatekey, I guess.

I myself never found the "Tirst Family" record (Vaughn Header's imitation of Hennedy) in bad taste, and don't think it would be in bad taste to sell it or play it now. Any other attitude would be a little hypocritical, it seems to me. I will admit that putting it in a display window for the week after the assassination was a bit crude.

One could set quasi-quotes on a linotype. One would have to be an expert with a saw, that's all. I've seen stonemen turn commas into periods on 6-point foundry type. This involves holding the pice of type, about an inch long and as narrow as the thin edge of a match, up to the edge of a power-saw with one finger. The only mistake I ever made with the saw was to cut too large quantities of type-metal at once. Then some of the slugs I was pushing through reached the back of the saw, the upsweep of the rotary blade picked them up and threw them at me. That saw has always scared the hell out of me.

You mention Von several times in your music section; would you comment on their general quality relative to other manufacturers?

They have a lot of sets out, and I've hesitated. They've looked "
"cheap" somehow. I've had good luck with some of the other non-pres-

tige labels, though; Jounterpoint, for example.

Are you really bored by "most music before about 1700"? There is something fine about Gregorian chants (sparingly, of course), and their relaxed, even qualities. Des Tres is not dull. Have you heard the Play of Daniel (a New York Pro Musica rendering of a c. 1200 work? I'm sort of fascinated by the pre-baroque period; I recognize it has dulling qualities, but I find them more in sameness of key than lack

of complex handling of musical voices.

Two weeks ago I went to a couple of concerts at the new Philharmonic Hall; a summer series offered some excellent buys in tickets. For the first concert (Dach's Husical Offering and other pieces) I sat on the aisle, row II; excellent seats, but the best-known fault of the hall was evident. The highs were clear, but the lows were lost; not muddied, just lost. The harpsichord could barely be heard and sounded the same on every chord. A few nights later I sat in the highest tier. However, I had bought my seat early enough that I was placed well forward on the side, where the "rows" were only one or two seats wide. The low strings (for Haydn's Creation) rebounded off the opposite wall to me, the reeds and violins came straight up to me and the view of the orchestra was magnificent. The best seats in the Philharmonic are the cheapest, if you get them soon enough.

That you call schadenfreude sounds more like simple hostility. Or not so simple hostility, if you will. I noticed you didn't attribute any to yourself; can you? Actually, the word doesn't have a primary meaning in the active sense; it is most often used to indicate the pleasure a person gets from another's misfortune regardless when

ther the first person was responsible for it or not.

For some reason, I've gotten quite anti-litter in my old age, too. I carry paper for blocks to litter-baskets. At least New York has a lot of them. They're multi-purpose; they hold litter, garbage of local residents of the components of small winter fires for indigent tourists. A while ago in Drooklyn Heights the Carrs and I found one full of paper that had been hit by a car; the top was squeezed tight together like a can stepped on at one end, only even more irreparable. Little bits of paper, completely traped inside, stuck out all over. A few days later the paper and container were gone.

One reason you don't see the kinds of nasty acts you describe in fandom much is that what you are describing are impulsive acts. There is a lot of nastiness in fandom, but only on personal contact can ! little semi-conscious acts of hostility take place.

KARUWA 2: Ellerns
Dill, your little diatribe on Ted Mhite convinces me that you don't like him much. "Everything Ted touches turns to shit." That's a little extreme, really. You're presuming on his effectiveness. Re the Shadow: What's little and red and knows what evil lurks

in the hearts of men? Lamont Cranberry, of course.

The swordplay sounds fun--except your protective helmets don't sound very protective, and I don't care for the idea of carrying the game out to the first touche. I'd love to be a good fencer; and not an academic one, either, with the stilted stances. The Errol Flynn school has always appealed to me. Yass.

-- Pete Graham

There are no atheists in swivel chairs.



comments on comments on

mailing comments by terry carr

A PROPOS DE RIEN 12: Jim Caughran
That book K by Leslie Waller
sounds like just another thriller in
the tradition of I Killed Stalin by
Sterling Noel, and all sorts other
books about assassinations of enemy
dictators. There's one out about
Castro too, I think. They provide
pleasant (?) fantasies for the
kind of mentality that works on
the Personal Devil theory of history
and politics: gee, if only somebody'd knock off that s.o.b. then
everything'd be okay again. (Rather
curiously, I haven't seen much evidence

of real hatred of Mao Tse-tung in this sense. Apparently the Red Chinese regime is recognized as a movement, a government, which is

independent of its particular leader(s) at any given time.)

Reminds me of a manuscript I read by a client at Scott Heredith. The writer is a very good British suspense novelist, but he made a mistake when he decided to jump into the Fail Safe/Seven Days in Hay/etc. sweepstakes -- you know, the pseudo-sf popular novels which have dominated the best seller lists the past couple of years. This guy did one in which the climax involved an assassination attempt on the unnamed Soviet Premier. The Premier was giving a speech in Red Square, and there was this sniper on the roof of a nearby building. He drew a bead and fired, but one of a flock of white doves which had been fluttering about happened to fly in the way of the bullet, and the dove was killed instead. Everything worked out swell after that. God but it was symbolic as hell. (The story sold to some newspaper in England, I hear, but nobody over here wanted it.)

I like your proposal for moving the egoboo poll back to the Movember mailing. The reasons you give are good ones, and I'd add another: the miserable inaccuracy of Dan McPhail's statistics. I was appalled a few mailings ago to see Harry Warner saying that "future historians will bless HcPhail for his statistics" -- more likely they'll curse him, because they really are shot through with errors, and incorrect statistics are worse than none at all. I note, for instance, that in this mailing Dan's still claiming that Pete Graham published 125% pages in 1962 while I only published 8%, despite the fact that several people have pointed out his previous error on this to him, in print. I've also seen him publish contradictory statistics in the same report, as on a page-count for Marion Bradley I think last

year. And in any case, as you say, we should be voting for quality, not quantity.

SERENADE 4: Dick Bergeron

That line about FAPA being 'composed of illustrious has-beens sitting around waiting for each other to live up to their names" is a classic, though I'm not dead sure it's grammatical.

But wasn't it Sturgeon who wrote The Stars are the Styx? I know

it wasn't Philip Jose Farmer, as you have it here.

Your mention of Claire Deck touched a guilt-spot within me. Beck was on the INNUENDO mailing list, and apparently that of SF TIMES too, because when Sam Hoskowitz's All Our Yesterdays Have Light, Fool! (a rather intemperate reply to Harry Marner's article on The Immortal Storm in Inn) appeared in SFT, Beck sent me a rebuttal of it for Inn. That was shortly before I moved to New York, though, and the manuscript was among the stuff I left behind, so I've never published it. It was nothing terrific, but for fanhistory's sake it deserves print, so I must remember to hunt it up when I'm in California next month.

SCATALOG 3: Art Wilson

I enjoyed all of this, but I don't have any checkmarks. Actually, that square-root sign at the bottom of page 4 looks enough like a checkmark that I keep stopping there every time I page through the zine. That suggests a possible remedy for fans who feel they're not getting their fair share of mailing comments on their zines: write in your own check marks next to the paragraphs on which you particularly want comments. You might even go so far as to scrawl a few illegible notes in the margin, with key words like "fuggheads," "bleedinghearts," "engineers," etc. just barely readable.

TARGET: FAPA: Dick They
The public apology is quite pretty, sir, and is accepted in the spirit in which it was given. 'Saright.

THE TATTOOED DRAGON AND HIS ELECTRIC WHING-A-DING: Bill Rotsler This was a bit of a disappointment: you're beginning to repeat yourself, Bill. Virtually all the gags in the pictorial parts are from QUOTEBOOK. I sort of have the feeling that you're doing these TTD's these days primarily for showing to nonfans, in which case of course it wouldn't be particularly important that we fans have heard the gags before. Still, it's a pity as far as I'm concerned.

One thing I've been waiting for, by the way, is for you to print the Sam Hartian and Stuff comic strips that I saw several years ago. I gather they never clicked commercially, but dammit they were excellent and I'd like to see them in print. If you don't want to publish them yourself, how about sending them to me so I can put them in Lths?

Must confess I found The Strange Hind of William Rotsler a bit ho-hum, having seen lots of this stuff by you before. There are some nice images here, but not enough to justify the length to which you went. One line jumped out at me: "boxes of candy and butterflies." It took a double-take to realize that you didn't mean boxes of butterflies too. But that's such a swell concept. Haybe for Lisa's next birthday you could give her a box of butterflies, all gift-wrapped. It would be light, and she'd be dying to find out what was inside. Then when it was opened scores of butterflies would fly out and swoon around the room in a riot of color.

I guess that's an example of the strange mind of Terry Carr. I'm totally puzzled by The Tar. It's not badly written, but it's such an old and hackneyed idea -- why did you bother?

HORIZONS 98: Harry Marner

I haven't been making much noise lately about the Martin matter, even though I'm still irritated over it. My silence, though, has been because I've come to the conclusion that we should have promptly put forth a special rule for his readmission. I agree that Trimble should have overruled himself when he admitted his mistake, but I think we made a mistake in assuming he must do so. There's nothing in the constitution insisting upon this, and FAPA is after all a constitutional body. When you have a constitution as detailed as FAPA's, you have to follow the letter, and since the only remedy specifically provided in the Martin case was a special rule, that's the course we should have taken. (In an organization like SAPS, where tradition and reliability on the OE's common sense takes the place of a codified set of rules, I would expect the officer to take full responsibility, but in FAPA there's a fair amount of justification for passing the buck to strict constitutionality.)

I'm still irritated, in general, with Fapans for not voting through the special rule when it was finally presented; however, I'm aware that virtually everything was working against the rule by then. Martin, in the first place, had always been an unpopular member; there was strong feeling against deadwood in an organization with such a long waitinglist; most Fapans were thoroughly bored by the whole subject by the time of the voting; etc. The only thing arguing in favor of readmitting Martin was a sense of justice, which proved to be rather weak in FAPA. The speed with which Breen was admitted into the organization over the blackball suggests that the Martin hassle may have

reawakened a few consciences, though.

"I've come to expect everyone in California to have a special name for fanac." Or, as Burbee once put it, "Anybody who's in his right mind enters fandom under an assumed name."

DAY*STAR 22: Marion Bradley

The indifference mark, or so-what point, is a lovely concept, and I chuckled for five minutes over it. The mark itself, though, which seems to go ½, requires no less than six strokes, plus rolling the platen up half a line for that lowered hyphen. Seems like too much work to me. Why not just 7? That requires only three strokes, same as quasi-quote marks. (My count of strokes includes backspacing, of course.) I'm being so thoughtful about making this mark easy to use because if it ever catches on in fandom it seems to me about half the faneds publishing will be called upon to use it for most of their material. On the other hand, come to think of it, if the mark is a lot of work, then maybe those faneds would simply not publish the material requiring the indifference marks. Oh well,

Comments to Walter, now:

Why do you speak of Yma Sumac in the past tense? Has she died or something? Now that I think of it, she never made any more records after the two or three she made when she was first a sensation. Did she go back to Peru and settle down in some small village at the 15,000-foot height to call llamas or whatever authentic Inca princesses do with their voices?

I'm not much for firecrackers and such either, particularly since one July 4 when Boob Stewart and I were fooling around with them. We would stick a coupla firecrackers under an empty beercan, entwine the wicks and light them, then step back; when they went off the beercan would be shot several feet into the air. On one shot, I remember, we sent one can about fifteen feet up. (This was an early experiment in methods of sending new empties to the top of the Tower, but we never perfected it due to the vagaries of trajectories and winds in the

upper stratosphere.)

Anyway, we were carrying our firecrackers in our shirt pockets. and using the cigarettes we were smoking to light them when they were in place. One time I lit a firecracker, stood back and watched the can pop into the air, then started to take a drag on my cigarette. Suddenly I noticed that it wasn't a cigarette I had in my hand, but an unlit firecracker. Instantly, with an awful sinking feeling in the stomach, I knew what had happened: instead of putting an unused firecracker back in my shirt pocket, I had put the lit cigarette there. Even as this burst into my mind, I heard a fssst! from my pocket as one or several of the wicks of the firecrackers there caught. wasn't time to take off my shirt; all I could do was lean forward so the shirt would fall away from my body. Several firecrackers went off at once, but fortunately they were small ones; they tore a helluva hole in my shirt, but there were only a few powderburns on my chest. Later on I had a bruise there, and a certain innate nervousness when dealing with firecrackers since.

SERCON'S BANE 20: F. H. Busby
Your explanation of your attitude toward Walter is the first sensible thing I've heard from your side of the fence. I don't happen to agree with a lot of it, nor am I willing in something as important as this simply to take your word that you have evidence to back up your position (you're offering us interpretations, not facts per se, and I'd rather have the facts to interpret for myself), but all in all what you say here convinces me that you're acting in good faith, anyway.

"Mell, yup, no doubt I was a potential Henace in the Dad Old Days when I figured it was quite OK to drive so long as I could eventually get the key into the ignition. But the relatively small number of tangles (legal or otherwise) that I got into during 15 years under that silly way of thinking convinces ne, as I said last time, that the

Safety Council attitude (or criteria) are unrealistic." -- FIB, pg. 5
"You make one small but vital mistake re Martin: 'he had his renewal credentials', you say. Oh? According to whom? Working as a reporter, surely you know that no amount of unofficial dissent makes the slightest dent in the most casual decision of duly-constituted authority. And as I pointed out in the preceding mailing, S-T John Trimble's decision (right or wrong) still stands by default of competent challenge under the rules by which this organization is governed. Wishing won't make it so. Come on, now; you wouldn't try this approach on a traffic ticket, and you know it!" --FIB, pg. 4

Once more around the concept, slowly please.

A FANZINE FOR NOW! 4: Al Lewis

That proposed fanmag CONFUZINE, to be published jointly with the other Al Lewis, sounds like a latter-day version of the o-o of The Bob Stewarts of America. That was a club being talked about some ten years ago by the various fans of that name, of whom there were at least two authentic ones, one hoax, and several gag ones. The o-o, as I heard it, was to feature nothing but a mirror on the cover.

ANKUS.11: Druce Pelz VF3 may stand for Very Fine Business now that it's been bowdlerized, but originally it meant Very Pine Buns -- "buns" being slang for "ass" or "buttocks". Presumably it was originally a girl-watchers comment, then by extension a generally complimentary term on anything. (It was current about the same time when "sexy" was used indiscriminately to mean "good".)

GODOT 2: Hike Deckinger

I assume the title is meant to suggest that this is the fanzine

we've all been waiting for?

Prophylactic dispensers are apparently fairly widespread in the South: I remember Dave Rike telling me that he'd seen them throughout Texas, New Mexico, etc. Some of the brand names were amusing, but the only one I remember now is Big Chiefs. (Pete Graham suggests that an interesting sociological and psychological paper could be done on brand names of prophylactics. Tieing in the names of female contraceptives would be interesting, too: the men's products suggest virility and strength, but those for women are awfully circumspect. Can you imagine a woman going to a drug store to buy a tube of Cleopatra, or asking her gynocologist for a new DuBarry diaphragm? Ah, no. But names of perfumes sometimes get downright levd.)

The ubiquity of grits in the South reminds me of the same prevalence of pickles in the East. It was one of the first things I noticed when I moved to New York: wherever you go, no matter what you order, you also get a pickle. I remember writing a letter to some-body shortly after I got here. "You can't get a decent milkshake here,

and I'm up to my ass in pickles."

SYNAPSE: Jack Speer

You say, "It is understood that fandom's tolerance does not extend to expressions of inversion," but I don't believe that's at all true. The fannish sexual code, as far as such a thing exists, is generally quoted as accepting "any form of sexual expression between consenting adults. There have been, and are, exceptions to this (Laney, et al), but it strikes me as significant that you're the only fan I've seen use pejoratives like "queer" and "fruit" in print in recent years.

Webster's Collegiate lists "interlineation," but it means something which is written between lines of print, not of hyphens or

underscores.

MELANGE 7: John & Bjo Trimble

The listing of the meanings of Tapans' first names was interesting, but my name isn't Terence -- Terry is the full legal name. However, this is a nitpick: it does derive historically from Terence, so your listing's correct.

John's article is a diverting quick survey of its subject. I assume this is some sort of school paper? It's not the sort of thing

a person would be likely to write specifically for his fanzine.

KARUNA 2: Jane Ellern Lionel Davidson's The Rose of Tibet isn't as obscure, either fannishly or publically, as you seem to think. Lin Carter reviewed it (favorably) in SPECTRUII 1, and it's out in pb from Avon. Avon also brought out his first novel, <u>Might of Wenceslas</u>, a sort of international-spy-and-chase story a la Eric Ambler except that it starts out like one of those British comedies about the incompetent little man trying to deal with life, jobs and women. It's very good.

UNABASHED EGOBOO ******

The Sad Saga of Baby Glynnis by Grania Davidson in JESUS BUG 11. 2) All of PERHT HE VOYAGE by Redd Boggs.

3) Hoping You Are The Same by Harry Marner in HORIZONS 98. 4) Capital Punishment by Djinn Faine in KARUNA 2.

Lovecrap by Arthur Jean Cox in THE LOVECRAFTSHAN 3.

In a way, trying to explain fully a piece of music is like trying to communicate a girl's beauty completely in a few words...or, perhaps, like trying to say exactly in prose what a poem "means" in all its levels. A goal perfectly definable but beautifully and forever unattainable, its fun is in the relative success of human thrusts towards it.

And so we have generations of critics, reviewers, and writers of liner notes, some of them musicians themselves, hacking out their wretched attempts, while composers and their friends tangle themselves up in their own verbiage trying to communicate in words something that was created essentially without words and without need of words. Meanwhile Gustav Mahler, raising his beer stein on high, shouted, "Down with program notes!" And more recently Joe Pilati and Ted !Thite have given themselves and their readers resounding belly-laughs over the gaucheries of writers of program notes, liner notes, reviews, and the like, in classics and jazz. It would seem that musicians who write their own commentaries on music are rarely articulate, and when articulate their comments are seldom relevant or revealing; and when the commentaries are by nonmusicians, they are usually beside the point.

And so we have some of the studidest liner notes ever to be set in type adorning two of the most important discs to come to public attention in the last few years; discs important for reasons quite other than one would expect from the reviews. These discs are Bach's Greatest Hits and its sequel Swingle Singers Going Baroque.

Because of the stupidity of the liner notes, reviewers have been

BACH'S GREATEST HITS. Philips PHS 600-097 storoo. PHM 200-097 mono. SWINGLE SINGERS GOING BAROQUE. THS 600-126 stereo, PHM 200-126 mono. Porsonnel on both apparently same though unidentified on former:

Jeannette Beaucomort, Christiane Legrand (solo), sopranos Anno Germain, Claudine Meunior, contraltos Claudo Gormain, Ward Swingle (arr.), tenors Jean-Claudo Briodin, Jean Cussac, bass-baritones

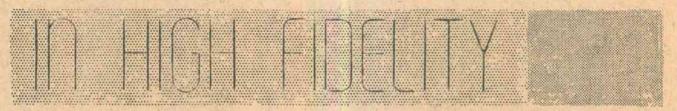
Guy Pederson, continuo (string bass)

Gus Wallez, drums

Legrand, Swingle, Claude Germain and Briodin were in the Double-Six group.

On BACH'S GREATEST HITS: (Asterisked numbers are the most successful.)

- *1. !Fuguo, D minor' i.e. Contrapunctus #9, Art of the Fugue
- *2. 'Prolude for Organ Choral #1,' i.e. Choral-Prelude WACHET AUF (Sleepers Wake)
 3. Aria ("Air on the G String"), from Suite for Orchestra, D major
- 4. Prolude in F minor (mislabeled "F major"), Well-Tempered Clavier, book I
- 5. Bourrec from 2nd English Suite
- 6. Fugue, C minor, Well-Tompored Clavior, book I
- 7. Fugue, D major, Well-Tempered Clavier, book I (omitted on some stores copies)
- *8. 'Prelude #9,' E major, Well-Tempered Clavier, book II (transposed to D-flat)
- *9. Sinfonia from 2nd Clavier Partita, C minor (transp. to G minor). Soloist: Chr. Legrand
- 10. Prelude, C major, Well-Tempered Clavier, book II
- 11. Canon for 4 voices, first recorded performance (wrongly called "unpublished" -- it's in BGA
- 12. Two-Part Invention #1, C major ed. of Bach's complete works). Given as
- 13. Fugue, D major, Well-Tempered Clavier, book II.puzzle--bass line quotes complete statement first, then Swingle's solution in full.



totally misled as to the significance of these two discs. Most have reviewed them as jazz, and not very good jazz at that. A few others have reviewed them as Bach and baroque music in general or as novelties. Since Dom Cerulli, the liner-note writer, emphasized mostly the different kinds of scat singing, some reviewers have chopped these recordings because either scatting Bach's instrumental lines is "blasphemy" or the syllables used have not been as widely varied as in the better jazz scatting. All these commentaries have missed the point. Heanwhile, back at the turntable, listeners have been digging these various Bach numbers as music, and some jazzmen have been saying, "I told you so! Bach swings!"

I first came across Bach's Greatest Hits in Berkeley, meeting a jazz drummer friend in a record store and hearing the disc put on as a demonstration. I knew nothing then of Ward Swingle or his career, but simply listened with open ears. Here were these eight gleeful vocalists doing Bach instrumental numbers, using scat syllables well adapted to the lines, proving that a lot of Bach's instrumental melodies and countermelodies either were or could have been vocally conceived, and using the nearest I have ever heard to a convincing reconstruction of the French rhythms actually in use in Bach's day. Furthermore, whoever Mard Swingle was, he obviously was a Bach scholar; voice-leading and part-writing were correct and there was no tampering with the texts. Jazz it wasn't; Bach it was, and furthermore good Bach at that. Several tracks involved rhythmic problems which have stumped most straight classical performers from Wanda Landowska on down -- the very loose, slow introductory section in the Sinfonia is a notorious instance -- and for once they sounded completely convincing. Distinctions between solo and choral or

On SWINGLE SINGERS GOING BAROQUE:

^{1.} Badineric, from Bach's Suite #2 (flute & strings), B minor (transp. to Em)

^{2.} Air, from Handol Clavier Suite #5 in E ("The Harmonious Blacksmith")

^{*3.} Gigue, from Bach's Suite for Unaccompanied Cello, in C. 4 male voices only

^{*4. &#}x27;Largo,' slow movement from Bach's F minor Clavier Concerto, orig. from a lost G minor concerto for oboe or oboe d'amore, and found also as the Arioso from Cantata #156.

Hero in D-flat. Soprano soloist, Christiane Legrand

^{5.} Prelude #19 from Well-Tompered Clavier, book I. A-flat (transp. to F)

^{*6.} Preambule, from Bach's Clavier Partita #5 in G

^{7.} Fuguo, from Vivaldi's Violin Concerto op. 3 #11 of the L'ESTRO ARMONICO set, as rearranged by Bach for claviers. B minor

^{*8.} Allegro, from Handel's Concerto Grosso op. 6 #4

^{9.} Preludo in E-flat, from Well-Tempored Clavier, book II

^{10. &}quot;Solfeggiotto," by Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach; orig. a scale-&-broken-chord five-finger exercise

^{11. &}quot;Der Frühling," by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, probably originally for clavior

^{12.} Prelude #24, B minor, from Well-Tempered Clavier, book II

If possible, dig the storee discs, as antiphonal bouncing back-and-forth among the various voices adds greatly to the experience.

contrapuntal sections were well preserved; dance movements such as the Bourree sounded danceable for once. There wasn't as much ornamentation as a claviarist or violinist would have put in, but it was keyed (as with common Baroque practice) to heartbeat and other body rhythms. Use of a string bass for continuo wasn't really outside the Bach tradition, either; continuo or "Generalbass" lines could be, and were, taken by clavier, viola da gamba, viola pomposa, bassoon, cello or string bass in Bach's day, according to the taste and resources of the instrumentalists at hand. Use of a drummer was also according to tradition, but this drummer — who occasionally sounded a little like Kenny Clarke — seemed a bit too obtrusive at times, the only real black mark against the recording. (In the second disc, he is much less obtrusive, and in many ways the performances are even better the only evidence of sequel trouble is in choice of selections.)

Use of a small and tightly knit group of performers, furthermore, was very much in the Bach tradition; most orchestras and choruses doing Bach have been far too large. The Brandenburg Concertos can and should be done by about nine or ten players instead of the full-sized symphony orchestras normally employed, for instance; Bach's secular music was mostly intended to be played in a salon or good-sized parlor rather than in a huge auditorium. Swingle either recognized this fact or understood intuitively how the music ought to be done, how it would sound most effective -- an intuition common in musicians of earlier generations, trained to feel into a given score rather than slavishly play it straight without asking what was intended. We may justly blame Berlioz and Wagner and their followers -- who made the gargantuan orchestra into the norm -- for the loss of this particular art; "assembly line music" is a term heard in many places. In a small combo, any given musician can hear how his own line relates to the whole, and adapt his own playing accordingly. In an orchestra of 112 or so players, a cellist will only be able to follow the conductor; his own line is likely to be drowned out by the trumpets and trombones on one side, and the massed violins on the other, and the "kitchen department" in the rear. And performances suffer because of it.

After I learned who Ward Swingle was, I was less surprised at his discs. He comes by his Bach scholarship honestly. Born in Alabama in 1927, he took his Haster of Husic degree at the Cincinnati Conservatory, then in 1951-53 became an exchange student in France at Walter Gieseking's master classes in piano. He later accompanied some ballet groups and Zizi Jeanmaire, and shortly after Mimi Perrin founded the Double Six group in Paris, he joined them as a tenor.

Whether or not the Swingle Singers began as an adaptation or splitting off from the Double Six, their Bach work is no mere novelty; the genuine scholarship found in those arrangements is sufficient proof. What is more, it has paid off, as the performances are unusually convincing, not as jazz, but as music, enough so that I would like to make these discs Must listening for every harpsichordist, pianist or organist planning to do any Bach, to give them some idea of tempi and of the sound of the French rhythms Bach meant to be used on his music, as well as of some of the sparkling effects less easily described in nontechnical terms.

Before the exactitudes of modern notation were developed, any composer necessarily created scores for musicians of his own day, on the assumption that these individuals would play in the manner and tradition familiar to them, on the instruments at hand. In Bach's day

this meant that instruments were divided into front or soloists, ripieno or fill-in and continuo or rhythm section, much as in modern jazz bands; it meant that there was a certain interchangeability among instruments in any given section; it meant that groups were small enough so that each musician had to adapt his own lines to the whole; it meant that bass lines -- vocal or instrumental -- were routinely strengthened by continuo instruments, which held the whole group together much as do rhythm-section players today. Tempi, normally keyed to body rhythms, were made a little faster or slower according to occasion, purpose, or performing instruments.

Far more important, there were several national styles of playing, and Bach wrote various numbers in each of these styles, the language of his titles being a clue to the style of performance intended (except that the "English" Suites, not so named by him, are in a more French style than even his French Suites). Details of the differences between Italian and German styles aren't relevant here (they can be found in Thurston Dart's paperback The Interpretation of Music, which is an extremely valuable sourcebook to anyone interested in performing music of Beethoven's day or before), but French style, in which much of Bach's secular music is written, is the nearest to the loose rubato rhythms of jazz. It is also the least familiar to the average classical musician or listener, unfortunately; and it cannot be written out exactly in the language available in Bach's day, any more than can the subtleties of some jazz solos in modern notation. One key to it is that so-called "agogic accents' were used throughout: pairs of eighth-notes were not played evenly but instead with rubato, the first of each pair being very slightly lengthened, and this longshort distinction was exaggerated still more in dotted-note figures. Triplets were also likely to be played unevenly. Demonstrated vocally by a conductor at the clavier during a rehearsal, a melody to be played in French style would have had to be scatted, not evenly as dadadadada, but as something not too far from the oobadoobadooba used by the Swingle group!

And so, whether or not this was their intention, the Swingle Singers have become responsible for an approach to Bach and to baroque music in general which will affect regular performances of it in years to come. I may stick my neck out and predict that a few years from now the ordinary listener, used to Bach-via-Stokowski, will see Bach works programmed and hardly believe his ears when he hears them played with these odd bouncy rhythms, the rhythms of the old French dances Bach was used to hearing. These are discs for the enlightenment of musicians and nonperforming listeners alike; for people who think Bach forbidding or dull, and for those who think his music primarily cerebral. They are also discs to show up the inadequacy of most reviewers.

Even if it is a futile game to attempt to communicate fully in words the meaning of a piece of music, it is still possible to say something meaningful about it (the composition, or the performance, or both), and in particular to make the hearer understand a little better -- perhaps -- why the thing is worth listening to, or why from them on the mainstream of music has been or will be or might be a little different, or even why some particular track has emotional power far beyond what one would expect from the simple means used. If a reviewer has any function at all, surely it is in that area, aside from the limited use of "I liked" and "I didn't like". That most reviewers missed the point of the Swingle Singers discs suggests

a re-examination of the whole practice of sending records out to them, and of the grounds on which they are chosen. Probably much of the trouble, once again, is that musicians are seldom journalists and vice versa. And perhaps a little more of the trouble lies in the difficulty that much of the power of a given musical performance can be suggested, aside from the performance itself, only between musicians and in their own technical language -- a language likely to be so much Assyrian to most listeners, a fact continuing to separate musicians, reviewers and the public.

-- Walter Breen

How I want a drink, alcoholic, of course, after the heavy chapters involving quantum mechanics. -- Sir James Jeans

The most valuable portion of Sir D'Arcy Power's essay on Pepys's general health, contributed to the Lancet in 1895, was that which offered a medical man's explanation for the abnormally strong sexual cravings of the diarist. Much of Pepys's celebrated incontinence, he suggested, was traceable to the equally celebrated operation which he underwent in his youth for the removal of a stone; the probability was that although the operation rendered temporary relief, it did some permanent injury to his genito-urinary system, which would account for both his incontinence and his childlessness. Translating the diarist's colloquial seventeenthcentury English into the crisp parlance of the modern physician, Sir D'Arcy went on to reconstruct, on the basis of Pepys's own records, an actual case history of his lifelong trouble with "the stone," for which the operation in his youth had been only a palliative. In passing, he recalled the fact that Pepys always treasured the stone removed from his bladder in the famous operation -- a stone which, according to his fellow diarist John Evelyn, was as large as a tennis ball. In 1664 Pepys recorded having spent twenty-four shillings for a suitable case in which to display it to his friends, sometimes in order to encourage them to undergo a similar operation. That stone, one of the most curious relics in English literary history, is now lost; apparently he failed to bequeath it, along with his manuscripts and his fine collection of rare books, to his old college at Cambridge. Perhaps, on the day when the long-lost play from which Hamlet was fashioned turns up, Pepys's admired bladder stone too will be found. Its discoverer will enjoy a unique reputation in the annals of literary scholarship.

-- Richard D. Altick, in The Scholar Adventurers

Toward the close of the World War, it became the turn of a young Chicago poet named Maxwell Bodenheim to make this trek (to Greenwich Village). With a rowdy contemporary named Ben Hecht, Bodenheim had contributed not only talent but most of the fun to be found in the Chicago literary scene. At one point they edited the bull-in-the-bookshop Chicago Literary Times, each issue of which appeared on paper of a different color. However, the most famous caper cut by the unholy pair came on an evening when a large crowd collected to hear them debate -- Resolved: That People Who Attend Literary Debates Are Imbeciles. Hecht strode center-stage to announce that he would take the affirmative. Then he stated, "The affirmative rests." Bodenheim shambled forward, scrutinized his confident opponent, and said, "You win."

-- Allen Churchill, in
The Improper Bohemians

mailing comments by carol carr





DAY*STAR 22: Marion Bradley

I'll never invite you here for vegetables. You may cook them for flavor -- we cook 'em for maximum crunch. Especially cauliflower. (Ever try raw cauliflower as a dipper for dips? I don't mean dunk the whole head in a dip bowl, but break off the individual clumps, with a little stalk left on, and then dip. Tastes like a piece of soft wood being eaten across the grain but is it ever crunchy.) Also broccoli, peas, string beans, corn -- everything but spaghetti. You can come over for spaghetti. By the way, I don't dig the crunch for health reasons; it's a personal perversion but one, fortunately, that Terry shares. On second thought, it doesn't matter whether he shares it or not -- he's an inveterate vegetable hater and will eat only peas and corn, maybe a radish on days of the full moon. How slow is slow-roasting?

I agree with you about sex criminals. Was it you who said there's very little to say to someone when you agree with him? I agree.

PERMIT ME VOYAGE: Redd Boggs

Very good, especially The Stronghold and Thought in Fall.

The Bonnie Brae letter is a gas. Also the Benchley quote -- I love Benchley.

JESUS BUG 11: Andy Main

On The Fugitive: I had a mad crush on David Janssen for awhile and consequently watched the show every week. That was in the days when Terry let me watch TV in the bedroom. Did any of you suspect that TCarr is a tyrant? You see, we have one of these teensy sets, larger than a Sony but smaller than a breadbox, and the most comfortable way to watch it is in bed, sort of a little to the side of you, about three inches away. But Terry too is a bed fiend. We are two of the most sedentary types in the world and like pillow pigeons fly to the bed at every possible opportunity. (No snide remarks -- we also eat cheese and crackers, play with the cat, read, talk, crochet, do crossword puzzles. The last two items belong to me.) At any rate, Terry claims that when I'm watching TV in bed he can't read. So we argue instead. For awhile I was winning and that's when I went through my Fugitive period, but now he's winning. I haven't watched

TV in two months, not even David Janssen.

But to get back to him, after awhile I started to find him sort of ridiculous. He has a beautiful face, I think. But it never changes except when he smiles, and then he has only one smile -- no, two. The expansive grin, which says "I'm just too lovable," and the sheepish grin. This is the one he uses when he's trying to ingratiate himself with the hoodlum, or the sheriff. The sheriff says something devilishly evil like "What's your name, stranger?" and Janssen looks at him very little-boyishly and you can see his face turning pink as one corner of his mouth turns up for his grin no. two. It's quick and embarrassed and has a little chuckle somewhere in the middle of it.

But I still think he's pretty.

B/2: Curtis Janke

On Bonanza: I saw their one-shot for civil rights too and thought your comments were all too valid, especially the description of the hero sounding like a mixture of Lauritz Melchior and Hilton J. Cross. I've seen this actor before, by the way, and he always does. What really killed me tho was the house the Negro family lived in. All starched white curtains and nice furniture — no rats or leaking faucets. They sho treated theah n----s good back in the Old West, and all on a post office sweeper's salary .too. Or maybe the daughter worked to help cut. Maybe she was a Greek scholar teaching at the nearby university. Shous like that make me sick. Goldwater makes me sick. Oatmeal and soft-boiled eggs make me side.

DAMBALLA 3: Chuck Hansen

You're pretty self-righteous about Dick Ellington's reaction to the Kennedy assassination. After the initial shock of Kennedy's death, people were either morbidly fascinated by the TV and press coverage (as I was) or went around saying they still couldn't believe it had

happened, or felt it was enough already.

I don't feel particularly proud of myself for being glued to the TV set for three days, and I certainly don't think Dick Ellington should be ashamed of the fact that he couldn't sustain his grief or shock or whatever you want to call it for that amount of time. Of course it was an appalling, senseless crime; no one argues with that, but everyone has his own mourning limit. Who are you to say how long and in what way?

Friends: people who borrow my books and set wet glasses on them.

If someone is Missing

To find a missing member of the family, begin at the bottom and work upward. If your first search is not successful, direct your attention to any sizable accumulations of piled-up rubble or debris which are the results of blast damage. Look for signs of a protruding limb and if nothing is visible, listen for vocal sounds or the noise of labored breathing.

-- from The Family Survival Handbook, Belmont pb, 1963



Confessions of a Literary Midwife:

Elsewhere in this issue Carol gives a bit of the lowdown on what it was like to be a minion of Literary Agent K. Host of you know that for about a year and a half I too was working for a literary agent, Scott Heredith, and it strikes me that I might take this occasion to tell you a bit about my experiences as a hotshot lit'ry agent.

Of course, the Heredith agency is by no means as, er, colorful as X's sucker outfit. There's a saying in the publishing business that any agent who advertises is a crook, but this isn't completely true. (I don't know exactly how that saying ever got started, come to think of it -- agents are not, after all, doctors, nor even psychiatrists, though at times I've thought that people who seek an agent should really be looking for one of the latter. But I digress.) Scott advertises regularly in both Writer's Digest and Author and Journalist, but his ads are true enough -- there's the usual inspirational salestalk about how many writers have found fame and riches through the agency, followed by a listing in some detail of services and terms, including specified commissions for working with bonafide pros and fees for reading and if necessary criticizing work by writers who haven't sold yet. The success stories are true -- Richard S. Prather submitted his first book to Scott with a reading fee, and Scott has since parlayed his Shell Scott novels into a (literally) million-dollar contract with Pocket Books; an unknown called Sal Lombino joined the agency back in the fifties, and as Evan Hunter he now makes hundreds of thousands per book; etc. The reading fees are higher than those charged by other agents, but the potential returns are a lot better too -- which is to say, if you've got a story or book which is good, Scott is in a position to get you a good sale on it. No other reading-fee agent I know of is worth a damn.

I landed a job with the Meredith agency back in 1962 by answering an employment agency ad for an editorial position. I had an interview with a woman at the employment agency who warned me the job was with "an agent who sells a lot of science fiction and junk like that." I told her mildly that I didn't mind, because I'd been writing and selling science fiction myself. I guess she decided we deserved each other, because she sent me up to see the Vice President at Scott Meredith.

as readers of BREVIZINE and prozine lettercols of the fifties knew him. He remembered me from fandom, and had seen my stuff in PASF and such, so we got along swingingly. (As a matter of fact, back in the mid-fifties Henry and I had collaborated on a story. He'd seen one of mine called Fantasy Story in an issue of PEON, had written to me for permission to rewrite it and try to sell it. I'd said sure, and a little later he sent me a carbon copy of his version, which was, as I recall, a lot better written than mine but still only hackwork. It never sold, and I guess both of us would just as soon for get it now, because neither Henry nor I mentioned the story during the interview — nor, come to think of it, during the year and a half we worked together.)

The job was what is called formally Associate Editor, but it's usually referred to at the agency as "running a pro desk". It can best be described as a sort of sub-agent position. The setup is that Scott himself handles the really big deals of the agency, or the touchy negotiations, etc., while Henry as V.P. troubleshoots on those Scott doesn't handle. The general run of agency business is handled by the men on the pro desks, of whom there are currently three. The agency's clientele -- somewhere over three hundred writers in virtually every field -- is divided among the pro desk men, each of whom is responsible for most of the correspondence, manuscript reading, submissions, negotiations and so on concerning his list of pros. Scott reads all incoming and outgoing mail in addition to that which he handles himself; he also sets policy and makes a lot of the touchy decisions that come up even on a 335 sale.

For example, we took on a writer who had been selling regularly to Amazing and Fantastic, at 2β and $1\frac{1}{3}\beta$ a word respectively. He was, like many writers, in need of quick cash, so when Fred Pohl, to whom we'd submitted one of his stories for Galaxy (rates 3β a word), said he could use it in If at 1β a word, we had a problem. Should we take the money now, or call back the story and try the 2β a word markets first? Scott said neither -- we'd shoot for a compromise with Fred, asking for $1\frac{1}{3}\beta$ a word, the author's base rate so far. After some negotiating, which Henry handled, we got the $1\frac{1}{3}\beta$, and everybody was happy.

The natter of when to ask for more money -- and how much more -- is a problem. Scott once told me the story of how he'd negotiated the movie sale of John Wyndham's Day of the Triffids, for instance. Wyndham was at the time a total unknown outside the s-f field, though this novel had just been sold to The Saturday Evening Post. Scott submitted a copy of the manuscript to a producer who'd said he was looking for something "different," and a little later a call came in from Hollywood. It was the producer: he was interested in the property, and offered \$25,000 for it. (Figures here are only approximate; I disremember the exact ones.)

"I could have just taken the 25,000 -- it would have been Myndham's largest sale by far. He would have been happy, I'd have been happy, and the producer would have been too. But there was something in his tone of voice, a trace of either nervousness or maybe just indigestion, that made me think he really wanted that story badly. So I told him I'd want 3100,000. He said absolutely no, then hemmed and haved and finally said he might be able to raise it a little. He said he'd call me back the next day.

The next day was a Saturday, and I'd given him my home number. I was running around making arrangements for a visit of some relatives, and keeping as near to the phone as I could. He called at 1:00 that afternoon and offered \$45,000, top offer. I told him I had houseguests coming in an hour and I didn't have time to play games; I said \$100,000 and hung up. Then I sat by the phone for an hour and sweated blood until he called back and we settled at \$75,000.

That was a swell success story, and I made appreciative noises about what smart agenting he'd done. Scott's enough of a public relations man to be unimpressed by compliments, though; he just grinned and shook his head. "Well, it worked out well. But if I'd been wrong about his tone of voice -- if it'd just been indigestion or a hangover -- I could have completely blown a \$25,000 deal."

Scott is an interesting, largely enignatic person. I've met people who dislike him intensely, and others who think he's the salt of the Earth. I never got to know him personally, but I did see a lot of Scott the businessman, which is probably his most important facet. In the office he's genial, casual, but always on his toes. He thinks quickly, and can be surprisingly effective in getting you not only to do things his way, but to agree with him about them. After awhile I got to know when I was being manipulated, and how, but I always had to admire his technique. I had a few arguments with him, most of which I lost, but win or lose I always learned a lot about dealing with people.

One of the times I won was when I wanted to submit a really oddball article to a magazine which seldom bought non-staff-written pieces anyway. Scott said it was a waste of time; I claimed it was a longshot but worth taking -- and anyway, where else could we send it? So the article went to that market, and a couple of days later Scott called me into his office. He had a letter in his hand.

"That would you say," he asked me, "if I told you we'd been offered \$150 for that crazy article? Think we ought to try for more money somewhere else?"

I said, "Hell no - nobody else would buy it. Let's take the 3150 and count our blessings."

He nodded. "That's what I'd say too. As it happens, though, they're not offering \$150 -- it says \$500 here in the letter."

Surprises like that were always pleasant -- moreso than you might think, considering that the manuscripts were not, after all, my own, nor was the money. But when you work with an author as his agent for awhile you get to identify with him. I even got rather fond of a couple of confessions writers, and God knows there's nothing I hate more than confessions stories.

One of the other nice surprises I got was also a bit disquieting. I was negotiating the sale of a hardcover book which nobody at the agency, ne included, had figured had much of a chance. A small publisher liked it, though, and asked me to call and discuss terms.

"That do you think we'll get for it?" I asked Henry.

He shrugged. They'll offer \$600. If you talk well, and the

stars are right, you'll get 3750, maybe 3800."

I decided to shoot not for the \$750, but for a thousand, so when I got on the phone with the editor I said, "Let's settle the matter of price first. How about \$1250?"

"Fine," he said.

I did a doubletake which I hope wasn't audible over the phone, then went ahead and concluded negotiations on royalty rates, subsidiary rights and such. When I reported the sale to Scott a little later, his eyebrows went up. Then I went back to my desk and brooded about how easily I'd gotten twice what we'd figured to get. If I'd asked for \$1500, or \$1750...?

Not all of the work I did at the agency was with the professionals, by the way. Whenever something would come in from a new writer which looked good, it would be given to one of the pro desk men for reading and marketing. I also handled some of the agency's correspondence with aspiring writers, as well as interviewing them when they came into the office. Some of those guys were real kooks. One Negro fellow came in to discuss his poetry book, and he insisted on reading several of his poems aloud to me -- with gestures. It was mostly love poetry, abominably bad, but he snuck in words like "breasts" and "thighs" here and there so he thought it was daring and commercial as hell. I tried to be polite.

A middle-aged woman came in one day with a book which was guaranteed to be a tremendous best-seller for any publisher bold enough to bring it out. It was a compilation of twenty years of her diaries, showing conclusively that she had been the victim of continual persecution by the international Jewish conspiracy. But the trouble was that the Jews controlled the magazines and book companies, so no one would buy it.

One guy who for a time was calling me long-distance every day from California kept telling me he was a personal friend of Irving Shulman. I kept telling him that was nice. By phone-friend was a beatnik type who blasted around the country on his motorcycle, occasionally laying up somewhere to write stories. He finally sent one in, and it turned out to be a clumsy but sickeningly sweet little tale about a truck named Hollie which went to the Hardi Gras and had a good time.

Another of my frequent correspondents was a guy in college who was writing a novel. In fact, he'd been working on that novel for four or five years, as letters in the back-correspondence files showed. Every week or two I'd get a letter or note from him, saying he was just about finished with chapter eight, or revising chapter six, or he had a great idea for the fight scene in chapter eleven. I'd write him back an encouraging note saying we were all looking forward to seeing it when it was done, and in a little while along would come another letter telling me how well the tenth chapter was shaping up. I had about come to the conclusion that he wasn't writing any book at all, that it was all a nonstrous put-on, when one day along came the manuscript. It wasn't bad, either, and as I recall we asked him to do some revisions and send it back. I imagine along about 1968 he'll have the revisions done.

Having seen a lot of work by aspiring writers while I was at the agency, I can tell you that most of them are either ludicrously bad writers, or just plain cranks. The classic example of the former, a story which is still talked about at the agency in amazed tones some seven years after it was submitted there; was a science fiction short about a guy who was in some terrible trouble, people were chasing him and trying to kill him, and this went on for 5,000 words until the climax. He was trapped, hanging by his fingers from a bridge hundreds of feet over a rocky gorge, and his pursuers were stamping on his fingers to make him fall. Then the author wrote, "Oh, I forgot to mention that he had wings. Spreading his wings wide, he flew away and..."

There probably isn't any classic example of a crank -- each is amazing and/or appalling in his own way -- but the one who stands out in my memory is the man who wrote in to say that he'd done an article telling what had happened when a Hegro family had bought a house in his neighborhood. He mentioned stone-throwing, burnt crosses, threatening letters, mobs beating up the Hegro children, and a few other things. "They finally had to move out," he wrote, "which proves how effective these methods are. I would like to see my article in print so that white Americans across the nation can be told how cooperation and neighborhood planning can protect our homes against BLACK encroachment."

Scott sent that letter out to me with a note which said (and this is a direct quote, because I remember it clearly), "Please tell this animal that we don't see a market for it."

Between the nuts and the incompetents there were a number of new writers who came up with good manuscripts, and it was always a pleasure to see them. I know that a lot of times I'd work particularly hard to sell a script by a beginner. I did sell a good number of them, too -- books to Hacmillan, Harper, Putnam and others, stories and articles to magazines in any number of fields.

To get back to nuts, though, one of the ones I had to deal with from time to time was one Pete Graham, who was wont to call me during office hours for various reasons. If it was a busy day and I didn't want it to be too obvious that I was just talking with a friend I'd intersperse our conversation with things like, "No, no, at least two hundred dollars!" or "Nell, I can't help it, he says you've got to cut thirty thousand words out of the middle of it."

One day right at closing time, when all the typewriters in the office had been shut off and people were standing around putting on coats and preparing to go home, the phone rang and the switchboard girl told me, "Ray Bradbury's on line O1, for you."

Heads suivelled around all over the office. I picked up my desk phone and said hello.

"Hello," said Dete. "I've written this seven hundred word novel, it's all about a little boy with a jack-o-lantern in Kansas, and I wonder if you'd --"

"You bloody idiot!" I yelled, and all around me jaws gaped open.

When I resigned from the agency this past March, it wasn't because I didn't like the job. The basic reason was quite simply that the field I'm most interested in is editing, not agenting, and Don Wollheim offered me an editorship at Ace Books. So that's where I'm working now, primarily on the science fiction books there. If you'll wait about a year or so, maybe I'll write an article all about what moneyhungry, argumentative, unreasonable s.o.b.'s agents are.

Especially Scott Heredith.

Postscript:

Aspiring writers aren't the only ones who write unwittingly funny things. While I was working for Scott, Carol sometimes used to read through clients' manuscripts that I'd bring home. One night she suddenly broke up laughing, and handed me a page containing a torrid sex scene. Halfway down the page I read:

"I got my lips on hers again, and showed her what I hoped was a neat trick in emasculation."

That was written by a man who had sold well over a dozen novels.

-- Terry Carr

Tay I be kicked to death by little red spiders!

After being in Moscow for only a few days, I was informed by Mikhail Apletin, the secretary of the foreign section of the Union of Soviet Writers, that I had a large ruble account as the result of accumulated royalties. It was the practice in the Soviet Union to publish books by foreign authors without the formality of negotiations or contracts, but royalty was strictly accounted for and deposited in the state bank to the authors' credit. In order to obtain this royalty, it was necessary to go to Russia and apply for it in person.

...what might have been, at other times and in other places, the simple procedure of drawing earned royalty in the offices of the publishing house developed into a lavish, Asiatic-flavored ceremony that began at one-thirty in the afternoon and ended six hours later.

Samples of various types of dry and sweet volka were served at the large conference table and, once that started, no one seemed eager to put an end to it. After nearly an hour of toasting Jack London, Shakespeare, Upton Sinclair, Mikhail Sholokhov, Confucius, and numerous others mutually acceptable as subjects for admiration, the type of volka most favored by the cozen editors, assistant editors, and interpreters present was concentrated on for another hour. By that time iced black caviar was being served in large crystal bowls; and soon waiters were bringing in pink and white champagne. As soon as one caviar bowl was partly empty, the waiters brought in another heaping one. The supply of iced champagne seemed likewise to be unlimited. Toward evening, chocolate candy and syrupy Georgien coffee were served.

Finally, in the early evening, a cashier and his assistant entered the conference room carrying bundled rubles... I was given a suitcase in which to carry the money home in a taxi and advised to keep it in the safe at the National Hotel since I would have a trying time as a foreigner if I attempted to deposit it in a bank. Once drawn, the money could not be returned to the state publishing house without much difficulty, and it could not be taken from the country...

-- Erskine Caldwell, in Call It Experience



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4