

PHLOTSAM

the large Economou-size

FAPAzine

Issue Number 0

Mailing Number 68

Summer, 1954

P. H. Economou

"I Dreamed I Went To The MidWesCon....."



Bergeron
64

Getsam Number 0

The Case of the Unwitting Publisheress

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Some people can enter FAPA and pass up mailing after mailing without a contribution and suffer never a pang as a result; throwing together a bare minimum at the 11th (or the 13th) hour to fill their yearly activity requirements. Not so, Phyllis Economou. I know from the letters she's written how badly she wanted to put an issue into Mailing #67 and I heard how she was planning a bang-up issue of PHlotsam for #68. She even, somehow, badgered me into doing a few pages of column for it (to have been called "Jet-sam")...and that's a tough job these days.

But, alas, Fate flung a monkeywrench into her plans as it sometimes does to the best of people. Her husband, Arthur, took sick and had to return to Maine to convalesce. At the moment, Phil is publishing up a fair fog—but none of it is related to FAPA or science fiction. In fact it isn't even Amateur Journalism in the true, original sense of the word. It is very much filthypro-type publishing and Mundane at that ...almost Tuesdane, if I may borrow a term from Bob Bloch.

Phyllis, with the help of one printer and her younger sister, is continuing to publish their magazine, FLORIDA OPPORTUNITIES JOURNAL, and that's very much a full-time job when you consider that it formerly took the efforts of both herself and Arthur. So PHlotsam #1 lies somewhere in Miami, half-completed, with a cloud of those mean, twin-engined Floridian mosquitoes doubtless buzzing over it.

The situation troubles my conscience passing sore. I can't help feeling that, if Phil hadn't been such a fanatical perfectionist over the con report you're about to read--writing it and re-writing it Foo knows how many times--she might well have finished PHlotsam #1 (a chemist might well say it was basically pH-1) in time for the mailing. Then she could have settled back with the blessed, peaceful feeling that one doesn't have to ante up a mailing for another year.

As I see it, the only honorable course open to me in this case is to play the part of Indian Recipient and give it back as far as FAPA is concerned. So I've re-allocated certain of the pages originally destined for the Summer issue of Grue and I've worked up a cover of sorts. Rich Bergeron, with a prescience I find totally uncanny, sent along the perfect illo for it--a caricature of Marilyn Monroe--that arrived, so help me, the same day that word of Phil's plight reached me. The pic fitted in so perfectly with Phil's first working title ("I dreamed I went to the MidWesCon in my Maidenform..." ...something-or-other...helicopter beanie maybe?) that the whole cover just sort of fell into place.

One thing I regret though--had I known that this wasn't going to appear in Grue I certainly wouldn't have taken the liberties of inserting comments into the text. For this (and the confusing page-numbering) I apologize to Phyllis and to FAPA at large. For the sake of coherence, I've included a page of comments I did for Grue as the final page here. This means that Bloch's department is included too since there was no way of separating it from the back of the page. However Bloch, on being asked about this, said he'd much rather be stapled to Phyllis than to Grennell. He's an odd one, that Bloch. Or, come to think of it, is he?

About the time that you are reading this for the first time (assuming you're in the continental US), Phil will be discovering that she has got a PHlotsam in the 68th Mailing after all. I've numbered it "0" so that she won't have to re-do what she's finished on #1. She has paid me more than enough in issues of the FOJ to cover the cost of publication and it is most assuredly "substantially the work of the member", so it's all very open and aboveboard. Hope you like it, Phil!

---dag

BELLEFONTAINE BUFFET

7

a delectable saga of fans, pros and a con
as reported by

Your hostess—Phyllis H. Economou

This will not be the noble Sunday roast sort of convention report, served brown and beautiful, parsley decked, on a platter with the mashed potatoes and string beans on the side where they belong. Such an event as this convention, being absorbed for the first time by the untidy sort of mind I possess, is bound to emerge a Smorgasbord, tasty I hope, but sadly disorganized. The first course will be clear, sharp consommé, but from there I will inevitably go flying off in all directions. However, if you all like cheese and herring, don your bibs and let's dig in—

Consommé:

At 6:30 PM on Thursday, May 20th, I checked into Bellefontaine's Hotel Ingalls, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, hoping I hadn't missed much of the excitement. There I learned that, in typical eager-beaver fashion, I had managed to be the first to register. How that empty hotel did echo!

After a solitary dinner at the Logan hotel, up the street, I returned to my drab little room feeling woefully lost and lonely. I napped until 10 PM, then donned my face, arranged a bright smile on my ruby lips and tripped down to the lobby, which I was confident would now be resounding with peals of gay, fannish laughter.

Approaching the lobby entrance, I realized my error. Such silence could only mean that serious, constructive conversations were taking place instead of the frivolity I had expected. I paused momentarily outside the lobby door, rearranging my expression to one of grave intelligence, then made an Entrance which I still consider somewhat of a masterpiece. (The only Entrance, incidentally, that I accomplished during my entire stay. The rest of the time I just shoved like everyone else.)

Unfortunately, its majesty was lost on the sole occupant of the lobby, a fan-type individual with a tuckerish crew-cut, who was afloat on a distant sea of reverie. Being inclined at that point to take any gift-horse by the horns, I plunked down, mumbled an introduction and went off on a nervously aimless monologue re fans, fanzines and The Demolished Man. At length, I found his gape of morbid fascination so disconcerting that I halted and ran down right in the middle of The Second Foundation. Everything that later befell him, he brought upon himself. Drug salesmen have no business going about with fannish crew-cuts.

Having nothing better to do, I explained my presence in Bellefontaine to the mesmerized drug salesman at quite some length. As we chatted, I do believe I observed a spark of science-fictional interest kindling in his eyes. I felt quite a glow of accomplishment at the thought of acquiring a convert to Our Way of Life.

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An hour or so later, about 11 PM, I was gathered to the kindly bosoms (that term may be inappropriate, but the meaning is clear, I'm sure) of wonderful Doc Barrett, Robert Q. Bloch, and several of the Canadian delegation for a wee-hours bull session. Here I experienced my first heady taste of unadulterated fan-talk. I took the drug salesman along, hoping to complete his conversion by thoroughly saturating him with science-fiction. Some unhappy emergency must have called him away from our convention. He checked out very early the next morning though I had understood he was scheduled to stay at the hotel for several days.

In the early hours of Friday morning, en route to my downy couch ("downy", I hastily add, is purest literary license and not to be taken as descriptive of my benighted bed which, I'm sure, George Washington must have been bruised on)...where was I now?—oh yes—en route to my downy, I met Andrew Harris, the Ingalls' #2 check-in. Mr. Harris and I, after introductions by the night desk-clerk, held a fairly lengthy conversation which must have been interesting though its gist escapes me now, overlaid as it was with so very much more of a muchness.

However, Andy Harris will ever linger in my memory as a true Man of Action—a Galahad fast with a Band-Aid, bless him!

Pass your plates, please:

Let me warn you that, henceforth, I shall not drop names with such savoir faire. Many incidents occurred when I was still not quite able to attach all the names to their appropriate faces—especially where group activity was involved. Thus, to avoid mentioning E. Everett Ellison when I mean Lyle Tucker, I'm apt to utilize such vaguenesses as "a few characters", "a gang", etc., except in those instances where a personality nips my memory like...

A crisp, red radish:

A beautiful friendship almost came to an abrupt end on Saturday morning. (So I've skipped Friday—I warned you!) At 10 AM I was routed from slumber by the phone announcing that Earl Kemp wanted to see me in the lobby. I relayed the message that I'd be down as soon as I could make myself presentable. Some time later, Earl knocked on the door and told me he would be in room #something-or-other. Even later, fearful that he'd think I had returned to Miami in a snit, (the custom-made, fur-lined, 16-cylinder Snit I keep for returning from conventions in) I called his room to beg him not to go away. At length I stumbled sleepily over to meet Earl and his lovely wife, Nan and their two adorable tots. Oh yes—our nearly-shattered friendship. Earl had arrived at 7AM and he said he'd been strongly tempted to call me then! But he's such an especially nice sort of guy, I might have forgiven him even that.

Champagne cocktail:

Thursday night's talk-fest had a "preliminary" sort of atmosphere about it. Everyone was relaxed, un-excited, though thoroughly enjoying themselves. It was more like a pleasant home gathering of congenial friends than the hectic fun implied by the word "convention".

The convention proper, in all its fever, began for me at noon on Friday when a phone call summoned me to lunch at the Logan where I was introduced, en masse, to a confusing number of people whose so-familiar names I tried desperately to attach to the faces. It was, I think, the most exciting moment of the entire three days. Nothing is quite comparable to meeting, face to face, personalities you have read and heard so much about, with the pleasure of coming to know them as people just ahead. As lunch progressed, I found myself gradually sorting them out and the fun was on.

Creamy Camembert—smooth and mellow:

Saturday afternoon I went for a ride out to Beatley's at Indian Lake to see what all the old convention hands were sobbing in their Coca-Cola about. Now I'm sobbing with the rest of them. The afternoon was magnificent; sun, breeze, birds all doing their utmost to demonstrate what a day on the lake could be like when they put their minds to it. The lake was dotted with boats trailing fishpoles; sun-soakers lounged in drowsy content on the island or stared at glinting water from the bridge. After a half-hour of bridge-basking, it was a wrench to return to Bellefontaine which seemed so dreary in comparison. /it would have been easier last year, Phil—it rained the whole weekend --dag/

That evening I enjoyed dinner with Dave Kyle, the Tuckers, the Boltions from Michigan and the McKeowns, John Millard and Bill Grant from Canada. Fern Tucker, non-fannish, is a delightful girl with the most infectious smile, soon to produce the Sixteenth-FandoMite to whom pappy Bob will wearily pass his sputtering torch—Vivé LeZombie! (Willis reports that LeZ is to be revived—as a heritage, no doubt. Beautiful thought.)

That was the most frustrating dinner of my life. Dave and John engaged in endless dinner table conversation, seemingly senseless, that had the rest of us gaping like goldfish. To bewildered questions, they would only comment slyly that they were "Queer—but not Peculiar". I found the whole affair decidedly "peculiar" but later gleefully joined the ranks of the "Queer", having discovered that I hate Randy but adore Garrett. (Back to your stamp collection, Laney—this concerns you not at all!)

stop dunking your bagel in my borscht

Ham and corn canapés—the fanzine department:

Lyle Kessler passed me the good word that his outstanding magazine, FAN WARP, which saw one beautiful issue, is not defunct. After numerous difficulties, #2 is now in preparation and at the moment (June) appears to be a 40-plus pager. /this I gotta see! /

Larry Touzinsky loped up and presented me with not one, but all four issues of FAN TO SEE, which is defunct. I'd waited some time to see a copy of Larry's zine, and after reading them regret FAN TO SEE's passing*, and that I missed them when they were current. That's the trouble with being a fairly inactive, out-of-the-way fan—the better new fanzines never catch up with me until they reach #8 and/or expire. /*I mourn FTS's passing too—it was the first and last fanzine I ever sent a dollar to for a sub! /

Above all, don't miss DESTINY #10, now in preparation by Malcom Willits and Earl Kemp. This issue promises to be a super-special job which has cost Earl and Malcom buckets of the proverbial b., s., & t. Off the presses (offset) soon, it will feature a staggering list of "names", pro and fan, and run to umpty-ump pages. I honestly believe DESTINY #10 will be something to treasure.

How many of you have been as negligent as I in missing up on CAN-ADIAN FANDOM for lol these twenty-one issues? Gerald A. Steward gave me my first copy at the convention and it's a fanzine that can rank with the finest in material, outlook, humor and maturity. Not to mention the reproduction, which is superb. */don't feel too bad—it was dormant a long time there and Gerry revived it a few months ago/

Entrée—bits and dabs of this and that:

Congratulations to Harlan Ellison for winning the Grande Prix at the Sunday Banquet...as the Fan Who Did the Most TO Science Fiction. The nature of the award baffled me till I noticed that Harlan wore a decidedly SHEEPISH expression as he trotted out of the banquet hall clutching his 15 pounds of Sheep Dip.

A surprise treat was hearing Isaac Asimov sing. The song was a lilting thing which may or may not have been "Venezuela". The voice was cultivated—although not professionally trained, I'm told—mellow, resonant and altogether delightful!

No missed vocation here, though, I was assured. The Asimov singing is a habitual, pleasant pastime (and, I might add, a joy to anyone within hearing) but writing is the greater love—and money too.

Saturday night was movie night, when across the screen walked the Ghost of Conventions Past. Fans and pros gathered in the hotel's inoperative dining room and bestrewed themselves in, on top of, and—I suspect—underneath tables, chairs, and nooks. Masterminded by Tucker, who tore himself away from the poker to give the proceedings that professional touch, previous conventioners cavorted, grinned and waved to delighted squeals of recognition from the audience. (Funny how people always seem so happily astonished to recognize their friends "in the movies"—even though they may have taken said movies themselves.) It was all very nostalgically old home week for the previous con attendees and the rest of us wished enviously that we'd been there—Chicago, Philly, Indian Lake—too.

From somewhere, Bob Tucker also unearthed a good many slides which were thrown on the screen. These advertising and movie preview stills, vintage circa 1917 and even earlier, were sheer hilarity.

Tartare sauce:

It is my considered opinion that, at any well-run convention, sleeping accommodations for the attendees should be divided according to nocturnal habits. Thus those who bed down at cock-crow would enjoy heavenly quiet until the first bleary eye winces at the noonday sun.

The chipper souls who greet the Angelus with blissful bleats could go about their business of hurling pianos downstairs at 7AM without risking fanticide.

I am speculating about the pianos. My door was at the head of the stairs. I was half asleep/awake behind the door ~~odd place~~ and noises are magnified so in that twilight state. They may simply have been hurling each other downstairs in their innocent exuberance.

A little more cole slaw, anyone?:

To the extent of its limited capacity, Room 37 was the 770 of Bellefontaine. In Room 37 Randy Garrett regaled us with his terrific "Slan" in verse. In Room 37 Isaac Asimov entertained. In Room 37 also, I learned one more invaluable lesson in the fine points of convention etiquette. I had noticed Evelyn Gold remove her shoes on entering the room, but considered the practice purely whimsical. I chose formality and kept mine on. The room was crowded and I had no choice but to rug-sit with my feet tucked girlishly under me. When I got up—somewhat stiffly, not being quite all that girlish—rrip-p-p went my heel through my pleated nylon skirt. Thenceforth, like an old convention hand, I kicked off the blamed shoes as nonchalantly as the best of them. Ah, sophistication!

You're never far from home. Lou Tabakow, from Cincinnati, one of the pleasantest persons I met, informed me that he had been a long-time subscriber to the small Florida magazine published by the Economous.* As our circulation is very small (16,000), by standards of mass-appeal national magazines, the odds against my meeting a subscriber at such an affair must have been astronomical. *it's quite all right, Phil—FLORIDA OPPORTUNITY JOURNAL at 35¢ the copy from the editor...leave us don't be bashful!

Black-and-white sundae:

Sunday night, Ken Hall of Canada involved me in a lengthy discussion about the South's reaction to the recent Supreme Court segregation decision. As Ken was but one of several who expressed an interest in the subject, I'll mention now that the opinions I have heard range from the extremely violent to cautious disapproval. I sense an atmosphere of trouble if the issue is pushed too rapidly.

A specialty of the house:

Friday evening I was allowed a glimpse at the wondrous workings of a sci-fictional mind when Randall Garrett explained to me the inspiration and development of his fascinating story, THE HUNTING LODGE (lead novelette in ASF for July 54). As one of the questions most frequently asked writers is, "Where do you get your plots?", this tidbit of insight may provide a partial answer.

A while back, Randy chanced upon the Moore-Kuttner story, HOME IS THE HUNTER in GALAXY. Instead of accepting the familiar title in its mundane sense, Randy jumped to the off-beat conclusion that here was a story about a house that hunted. He started reading the story with great anticipation, wondering how such an unusual theme had been developed. However, the story followed a more literal tack, about a culture,

sans war and violence, where the bloodthirsty instincts of the more aggressive humans were allowed outlet through an accepted social class of Hunters who hunted each other.

The seed had been planted, however, and Randy was unable to get his original impression of a "hunter-house" out of mind. After mulling over the possible angles of such a theme, a story shaped up. Thus the conception and birth of THE HUNTING LODGE, which I read with extraordinary interest, partly because it's a most gripping tale, but also because considerable sparkle is added by knowing "the story behind a story".

Demi-tasse—the chronicle of the Coffee Crusade:

Can anyone tell me why a cup of coffee, which at any other time of day serves mainly as a satisfactory excuse for a work-break, will, at 4 AM, assume the aspect of a Holy Grail? For some strange reason, a good party can be made or ruined by the presence or lack of the bitter brew as a top-off. One of these Dedicated Crusades took place Saturday night—or Sunday morning, rather—just as people were thinking about bedding down for an hour or three before the Banquet. Some tradition-ridden soul said "coffee" right out loud and at once a small army—me among them—rallied 'round the dark brown banner. Alas, there was no coffee to be had. Bellefontaine had long since shuttered its doors, heedless of any responsibility to conventioning cafffiends. Was this to be the dreary end of what had been a most enjoyable party? Coffeeless to bed? Unthinkable!! The entire con would be a dead bust.

Then a rumor sprang full blown (untraceable as rumors always are) that coffee was to be had a couple of miles from town in one direction or another. Some minutes later I found myself with eight other dauntless Crusaders packed in what I still swear was somebody's MG convertible. Tucker later examined the MG and insists that nine people couldn't possibly---. He may be right, /and he could be wrong for once—I have distinct memories of once being one of fourteen men riding in the vicinity of one jeep --dag/ but Tucker wasn't the one on the bottom who got a cramp in his leg and nobody could move even an inch to provide relief. At any rate, it felt MG size and at the time I was too imbued with coffee-ferver* to notice details. /*fervor and fever blessed/

As we vainly traversed the outskirts of Bellefontaine, North, West and ESE, our small band gradually turned a vivid, Stefal shade of blue due to extreme cold and disconnected circulatory systems /monoxide does that too/. At the moment, our situation was reminiscent of a Hatlo's Inferno cartoon. We were all in imminent danger of death by deep-freeze, yet under our feet was a wooly blanket which we were too immovably wedged to pull up. After extensive maneuverings, we succeeded in getting one small corner up where we could touch it and suffer.

It would take more than Hatlo to deter coffee-sleuths, however, so on we rushed through the tearing night-winds, up highways and down byways, ever alert. We made one right-angle turn onto a promising broad concrete roadway with the feeling "this is it!". Shortly thereafter, red lanterns dead ahead flagged us to a stop. At the same time, we noticed that our broad highway had narrowed to pavement width. Three startled trackmen informed us that we were careening down a railroad

track, and they doubted Gabriel would be serving coffee at that hour.

So, to the accompaniment of approaching train whistles, and escorted by lanterns waving and standard-bearers, our chariot gingerly backtracked the quarter mile to the highway. Broken, bewildered and defeated, we tooled back to the Hotel Ingalls, where the night-clerk pointed out an all-night coffeepot down the block.

With the rising sun mystically haloing their radiant faces, the valiant Knights and Ladies of the Coffee-Bean hied them thither, excepting only the Young Man With A Cramp, who retired to nurse his incipient gangrene, and I, Traitor, who by then preferred sleeping to slurping.

Of Forks and Fallacies:

Now I come to a matter of extreme delicacy which I have avoided as long as possible. Fully a dozen times I've been on the verge of broaching it, but have veered skittishly off, as it involves the necessity of contradicting one of the veritable giants of science-fiction—Isaac Asimov. Aghast as I am at my temerity, I see no other way of salvaging the shreds of my reputation. As those who were present will realize, I refer to Dr. Asimov's speech during the Sunday banquet, wherein he publicly accused me of the unfriendly practice of fork-stabbing.

His error, I've tried to think, was quite natural. Dr. Asimov is a busy man with much of moment on his mind—I, an obscure femme fan he had but recently met. Also he was quite upset on account of all the peas. Doubtless he confused me with some other fanne—one with appallingly bad manners. And I feel that I must, with all due respect, correct this unfortunate impression.

In my New England home, where I was brought up as a gentlewoman, my earliest training emphasized that forks are for genteel and inconspicuous conveying of food to mouth, via the shortest possible route, and under no circumstances to be utilized for gesticulating, pointing, drumming on the china---or stabbing!!

Therefore, I always carry a ladylike hatpin for the purpose.

Bicarbonate of soda—bubbles overheard in an undertone:

15-Year-Old Fan: "There I was with these TWO wild women!"

Fan Wandering Halls at 4 AM: "I'm just looking for a keyhole to listen at"

There was this Martian, see---"

"Will you autograph my book, Mr. Asimov?"

"Now last year at Beatley's---"

"You mean you came clear from Miami just for this?"

"Make sure the ten of clubs is there---"

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"But the nasty thing is half vermouth!"

"Who's Jean Harlow?"

"If the halls are empty, knock twice."

"He's the White Hope of Eighth Fandom."

"Will you autograph my book, Doctor Smith?"

"Can anybody round up more glasses?"

"I've read The Lovers six times. I go for those mature stories."

Salt and Pepper:

In an anecdotal account of this sort, I'm handicapped by a lack of opportunity to mention a great many people whose pleasant friendliness happened not to fall in the "anecdote" category. ~~in~~ Brooklyn, Phil, they say there is an anecdote for every poisson. However, as meeting these others added flavor to the whole, not to mention the fact that many readers want to know "Who was there", let me scatter a few names for zest.

This will be far from complete—many personalities I had no opportunity to meet; frequently in group introductions, names did not quite register, though a face and personality may be vivid. And I'm certain to momentarily overlook delightful acquaintances whom I'll remember as soon as this is mailed.

Of those who come to mind right now, I believe numbers 1, 2 and 3 on my personal Hit Parade are Doctor and Mrs. E. E. Smith, and E. Everett Evans. I give this special mention because of the very special affection I have for them.

Strangely (and happily), I met no one at all whom I could truly dislike.

Now, sincere thanks for adding the perfect seasoning to my convention adventure to: N. L. Johnston (a handsome and highly intelligent "spectator-fan" from Akron, dipping his first cautious toe into the turbulent fannish sea); Joe Gibson; Mrs. Doctor Barrett; Marty Greenberg and his Prime Press associate, Dave Rosenthal; Rita Krohne; Ed Counts; Earl Perry; John Magnus; Howard DeVore; Don Ford; Hal Shapiro; Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett; Paul Mittelbuscher; Lloyd Eshbach; Phil and Betty Farmer; Charles and Mrs. DeVet; Lynn Hickman; Norm Wagner; Ted and Judy Dikty; Jean Carroll; Norman G. Browne; Bob Madle; Martin Alger and many others.

Mint Candy: No doubt there will be critical reports of the con—for some strange reason there always seem to be—but I am 100 per cent starry-eyed about it all. The only fault I can find is that, in those three short days, I was unable to spend nearly enough time with nearly enough people—there were so many far-too-brief encounters—so I'll just have to go again next year to get to know those grand people very much better.

¡HASTA LA VISTA!

-XXX-

--PHE

First of all, I want to thank Phyllis for her highly enjoyable narration of such events as she narrated. I suspect that there are whole volumes between the lines but no matter. There's a gnawing curiosity in my mind as to what Emily Post's views are on eating peas with a hatpin but I feel a fanne should not be begrudged her little eccentricities. Since you mention planning to attend next year, I'd very much like to make a reservation for an encore. Let's make an institution of this, hmm?

Speaking of reservations, Evelyn Gold says that she would have borne you a big, fat grudge if you weren't such a thoroughly engaging type, Phil. It seems that that "drab little room" with its "Benighted bed" and its proximity to the annual weight-throwing contest...was the room that Evelyn had picked out and reserved months in advance and the clerk was so stupified at your early arrival (or something) that he gave it to you by mistake and Evelyn had to be content with a less sybaritic cubicle. C'est la furshlugginer vie, non?

Mrs. Beatley, whom you mention fleetingly, is a lady ultimately disenchanted with science fiction and its fandom. It should be noted that the feeling is predominantly mutual too. According to one of my trusted Gestapo agents (Herr Oberst Wilson von Tucker) she had the interests of her fellow inn-keepers so firmly in heart (or bore such bitter animus toward Them Fans—it isn't quite clear) that some little while before the affair this year she made the rounds of the hotels and motels in Bellefontaine and gave them a highly-colored, pessimistic warning of the travails in store for them. The only ones who took her gloomy foreboding at face value were the elderly couple who act as caretakers and general factotums at the Bell Fountain Motel. Tucker, who spent considerable time visiting the McKeowns and their friends who had the misfortune to quarter there, recounts harrowing tales of almost incredible inhospitality as well as some of the most outright boorish behavior I've recently heard of. I mention this, not for spite or petty malice, but so that readers will take care to avoid the place next year. Tuck says that the rest of the hostelryes took the old rain-crow's croaking at their true worth and treated the delegates in the most exemplary of fashions.

I'm glad that you had the chance to meet John Lawrence "Maggy" Magnus, Jr. There may be nicer people than Maggy in our li'l ole microcosm but I hardly see how it's possible. Hearing that I wasn't going to be able to make it this year, he went and made up a large sign—printed it on a proof press—which bore the legend, "THE WE MISS DEAN GREENNELL CLUB". This he affixed to the ill-fated door of Room 27 at the Ingalls and a goodly slew of people in turn affixed their signatures thereto. Evelyn Gold even affixed a somewhat more personal trademark to it in a very eye-catching fashion. I have it here beside the typer now and I'll try to enumerate the fine, fannish names:

Jack Agnew; Phyllis Economou; Isaac Asimov; Edward E. Smith, PhD; Harlan Ellison; (also Max Runnerbean); Lyle Kessler; Joe Gibson; Sally Dunn; Richard Shaver (YEAH?); Bill Dignin; Norman G. Browne; Tod Cavanaugh; Edmond Hamilton; Leigh Brackett; Albert Lastovica (Derelicts); Doc Barrett; Don Ford; Roy Lavender (spelling?); Hal Shapiro; John Magnus (pres.); L. J. Touzinsky; Paul Mittelbuscher, Earl Kemp; TW:eel (Ted K. Wagner, if you didn't know); Dave Kyle; Howard Lyons; Gerald A. Steward; Sheldon King II; Robert Bloch; Philip José Farmer; Bette V. Farmer (for shame, Phil—you spelled it with a "y"!); Jim Harmon; Robert A. Madle; J. Q. Dero (do tell); Boyd Raeburn; T. E. & J. M. Dikty and one name that defies deciphering by even my well-trained eye. Doubtless a Venusian fan sponsored by 4e Ackerman? To all youse wonderful peoples, my humblest and gratefullest thank yous! Especially you, Magnus.

Funny thing, y'know...I remember scribbling my signature on a jumbo postcard that two young ladies brought into the coffeeshop at Beatley's last year. They were sending it to Doc Smith who was kept home by an untimely illness. If anyone had told me then that next year that fine-type guy would be returning the favor, I would have hooted in stark disbelief. It is indeed a tiny planet we inhabit, n'est-ce pas?

—dag

ONCE AROUND THE BLOCH

"the feature from the bloch lagoon"

Boggs #362,
Weyauwega, Wisconsin,
5 July 1954

Dear Dean:

After reading the latest FAPA mailing, I am still trying to assemble my wits (with the aid of a Little Jim Dandy Home Wit-Assembler, Engram-Remover and Pre-Frontal Lobotomy Attachment for the Kiddies).

It isn't easy (the lobotomy is, but this I need like a hole in the head) because the general effect of a FAPA mailing is similar to that of entering a large room filled to capacity with people who are all trying to talk at once. Like a meeting of Congress, only more intelligent.

Come to think of it...if we revised the Constitution a bit (eliminating all that oldfashioned nonsense about freedom of speech, etc., which is rapidly being outlawed anyway) we could conceivably have a situation where each state in the union would be represented by a FAPA member. Then the FAPA mailing itself could constitute the whole Congressional Record. I admit freely, of course, that the present Congressional Record is probably much funnier--wait till the MAD readers discover this!--but a FAPA Congress would perhaps be more truly representative.

Of what, I wouldn't care to say.

But can't you just imagine the Congresswoman from Georgia rising to move that the automobile be outlawed from our street and replaced by the horse? A movement such as this might easily sweep the country. After that, of course, it would be necessary to sweep the streets.

I can imagine a long debate led by Lee Jacobs as to the science-fictional validity of FRANKIE AND JOHNNY; a motion to put the Patent Office under the auspices of Bill Danner; the continued in absentia vote of Harry Warner; the report of the Carr Committee On UnFAPA Activities...but perhaps such an Utopia is impractical at this time.

Certainly I would prefer to extend this FAPAian Congress to international scope so as to include Les Croutch and more Willis. /amen/

Perhaps it would be easier if we retained our present House of Representatives and gave the Senate over to FAPA. Certainly Redd Boggs is more intelligent than a certain Minnesota Senator who shall remain nameless (Sen. Nameless, R., Minn., if you insist on his identity) and you are easily the equal of the Junior Senator from Wisconsin--particularly when you have a gun in your hand. /that figures...we're both ex-tailgunners/ At least you're superior to him in caliber, although I admit he's a bigger bore.

If not, it might be necessary to create a third body (Ted Sturgeon please note) as an auxillary--a sort of Outhouse of Representatives, as it were. And I hope it weren't.

At any rate, a reading of the current mailing has convinced me that there is infinitely more of interest in the opinions of FAPA membership than in the blitherings of our duly elected misrepresentatives today. As a purely disinterested spectator, I suggest that you launch a one-man crusade to put this matter before the organization and start taking over the country, lock stock and barrel. Don't forget the barrel--that's all we have to cover the national debt. Revoltingly yours, Bob Bloch