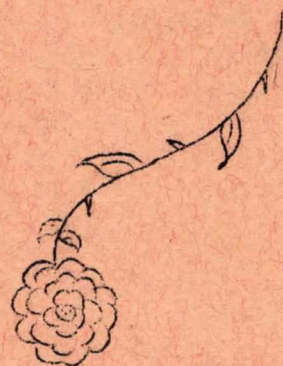
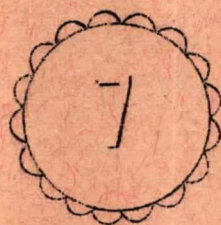


P H I L O T S A M

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PARTURIUNT MONTES -- and once again NASCETUR RIDICULOUS MUS  
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This is yet another issue of PHlotsam, the moist fapazine, coming to you lucky people from (fap!) 436 West 20th St., in New York City. Occasion being the 79th mailing of the FAPA, in May of '57. Hold Phyllis H. Economou responsible.

S P I N D R I F T ~ ~ ~

AND ONCE AGAIN I wind up the long three-month period between mailings typing frantically at all the most inconvenient times in an all-out, last-ditch effort to get PHlotz into the mailing. This time I not only had the usual good intentions -- I did something about them. I started writing mailing comments back in February. I had such a long time to work up this issue that I rambled along in my comments as if there were just ten fapazines to cover instead of another record mailing, and people were standing on corners giving away paper to boot. All this premature activity put me in such a flow of righteousness that I slid clear through March and April on my half-baked laurels. La. Deadline is now one week away, and had I not discovered that, with stimulus of a 20¢ special delivery stamp, the post office is capable of delivering a bundle to Virginia in one day flat, I'd retire to nursing my aching conscience. I've still got a fighting chance tho, IF I can muster up all that much fight. Why bother? Because Bill Morse, blessisart, has gifted me with copy, and like I said last issue when EdCo did likewise, I just can't bear to see other people's brainchildren laying around all neglected, however scruffily I might treat my own.

Just don't expect memorabilia...

SO SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED since I announced my imminent departure from West 20th Street and New York City. From present indications it appears that I'm apt to fall into the old theatrical tradition of innumerable swan-songs, indefinitely prolonged. Not that anything's changed--that's just the trouble. We're still out on that creaky limb and seem to be getting daily more enmeshed in that sticky, webby stuff that caterpillars or moths or butterflies or whatever messily enmesh tree limbs in. (My bi-( ), etym-( ), zoo-( ) /choose one/ ology is as shaky as my grammar.) I think I know the answer, tho. Altogether too many of you are convinced that Arthur and I really intend to move, and either will or already have. And therein lies our trouble. It took us two years to leave for Florida after making our definite departure plans, and five years to get back, despite our intention to stay for just two years. As long as anyone believes in our moving plans, we seem to be completely stymied -- but when the day comes that they all start to laugh when we sit down to babble about what we're going to do, jeering "Ah -- you will be here the rest of your life" -- then we finally up and move. Apparently that crucial point hasn't been reached yet, so c'mon you stinkers who mark "Please Forward" on my letters, who phone and say "I thought you'd gone," and otherwise jinx us -- Pulleeze...STOP believing!

BRAINTEASER: Why, I wonder, do I have among my Fapa notes here, a reminder that "Evoo!" is a Bacchanalian cry...

IN MY MAILING COMMENTS on SUNDANCE somewhere in this issue, appears as wild an esotericism as any emitted by Harness, to wit: "the young man who said he'd rather have a sub to ASTOUNDING than a college education, but if he's daid 'a sub to SUNDANCE' now ..." Perhaps I should just leave you all to puzzle out the profound meaning behind this morbidity, but I'm afraid you wouldn't bother. In case you're as annoyed by the obscure as I am, it was purely typo, translated "he'd said."

PEANUTS has come of age. Not only does the strip have its own raft of 61 books, but a group from the New York publishing and advertising fraternity have recently formed a PEANUTS CLUB. Purpose, as far as I've been able to ascertain, is to have lunches whereat each member bears the name of one of the strip's characters. Schroeder is present at the piano, Charlie Brown speechifies, Lucy fusses noisily, while Snoopy, Linus, Violet and the rest carry on appropriately. At this writing, however, the club is short one member -- nobody wants to be Pigpen.

WHY PEOPLE look askance at science-fiction fans -- Ad in the paper depicting a monstrous black obscenity clutching a curvaceous, half-draped, writhing girl in its talons. The copy? "Raw -- Violent -- Uncensored! SEE: The strangest of all rites ... an ORGY of Love!" The title? "FIRE MAIDENS OF OUTER SPACE." Although I haven't seen the epic, the NEWS reviewer (1½ \* which is about as low as he gets) filled an unnecessary amount of space detailing the story. From his account, the morons who run slaving to the Rialto after reading this ad, primed for an orgy, will be badly let down by this Maypole type blither about a bunch of girls (refugees from Atlantis, or maybe their decedents) ensconsed on the 13th moon of Jupiter just waiting for the Princeton football team -- pardon me, the Earth rocket crew to land and fall in love with them. Now that's all very pretty and exciting too in a boarding school sort of way, but the advertisers have no right to promise the public orgies unless they give them orgies. Not that I'm particularly in favor of orgies, but I'm more agin' misrepresentation. Especially when it reflects on my known hobby. My friends, who stay away from such movies in droves, and are utterly convinced they are typical of all science-fiction, mutter behind their hands: "She reads that stuff!"

Unfortunately, all too many, if not most, of the quickie science-fiction movies have just enough suggestion of obscene sex to inspire the ad writers to all-out salaciousness. There is the inevitable "critter," the REM -- a 10-foot beetle, as in "This Island Earth," or some such unlikely horror, which inevitably seizes and makes off with the disheveled heroine -- never the hero -- and the entire audience can be trusted to draw the same nonsensical conclusion about the monster's motives. What psychiatrist can explain why a movie audience should be convinced that any self-respecting 10-foot beetle, or crustacean, or octopus would find a pink-and-white human female of greater consuming interest (unless it were hungry) than its own particular variety of she-horror?

I wonder if, way out on one of the planets of Fomalhaut or Rigel, the alien whatsits have movies where blood-chilling he-humans steal whatsisters for nefarious purposes.

INSCRIPTION ON A TOMBSTONE: "Here lies an atheist, all dressed up and no place to go."

IN MY COMMENTS ON LARK I mention a letter which I did not have room to quote there. This was an actual letter received by the NEWS TV reviewer in response to his campaigning against "hard sell." If authentic, and it probably is, it indicates that at least some of the people are tired of being screamed at, but I find the writer's entire attitude, especially his conditioned reflex at the Piel's counter, and the very fact that he is able to write such a letter without becoming disturbingly aware of the extent of his conditioning, makes me queasy. This TV-brainwashing is so reminiscent of 1984. Mr. Weber, the writer, says: "I'm just an ordinary guy with a family that goes to the markets twice a week and purchases the many popular brands of products. At the liquor and beer counters ... as we pick up a dozen or so bottles of Piel's, my wife and I will remark to each other, 'I'm Bert and this is my brother Harry' and until we make the next counter we muse over the wonderful chants of these two wonderful characters. Our next stop is the cheese and dairy counter. Our product here is Kraft. Why? Pictured in our minds are the quiet smooth commercials, not only explaining the goodness of the product but demonstrating the delightful recipes." But Weber says that his family passes up the toothpaste which has someone screaming at the top of his lungs, "Cleans, cleans, cleans, while it Guards, Guards, Guards your teeth!" Why? Just for one reason -- his family is annoyed and irritated by the shouting. On the other hand, they buy Ipana persuaded by "the little girl with the fascinating voice telling of her daddy's doings." He says they think "this is a delightful and entertaining commercial, so the product must be just as refreshing." When it comes to cigarettes, Weber comments: "We keep in mind Garry Moore and buy Winstons. There is a boy for commercials! His smoothness and delivery and sincerity could sell the Brooklyn Bridge to Mayor Wagner and the Mayor would be happy in being 'took'."

The letter goes on at some length in the same vein. I think it's an appalling letter. The implication that the public can be mass-hypnotized into buying a product, not for quality, not because they like it or it agrees with them individually, but solely because the commercial is soft-spoken, catchy or amusing in an infantile way, horrifies me. A grown man's mind which, confronted with laden supermarket shelves, should be so triggered by the brand names displayed, as to empty itself of all but positive or negative commercial spiels, to the point where he and his wife reflexively exchange the ritual jargon, "I'm Bert and this is my brother Harry" each time they pass the ceremonial counter, is unadulterated Orwell. Advertisers are clever, and if the public indicates the greatest response to the "soft sell," it will only be a matter of time when the only battle will be which commercial can offer the most effective father image to be loved and obeyed, such as Garry Moore, or the most compulsive ritual to be carried out with words and gestures on application of the proper stimulus. The entire matter of consumer demand is resolving itself away from the traditional factors of competitive quality and price, into a question of whether people love the commercial or not.

This psychological approach has been long used by the police. When a suspect has been questioned at exhausting -- and sometimes brutal -- length by the toughest members of the squad, and morale is at the breaking point, a father image enters the picture. This gentle man's kindness and consideration, his offer of cigarettes and water, his radiating sympathy, is cleverly designed to inspire such an overwhelming surge of love that the culprit

breaks down and confesses all -- if he is indeed the culprit, and sometimes if he isn't. We all love and obey Papa.

We still do not have TV in our home, and I confess I'm more terrified of it every day. The thoughts in my mind may not be of any great moment, but they're personally mine and I treasure them. However strong willed I may consider myself to be, have I any assurance that I would indefinitely be able to resist the insidious psychological infiltration of Bert and Harry -- possibly to the point they would ultimately crowd out FAPA? Heaven forbid!

AND SO DOWN OFF MY SOAPBOX. Have a clipping here from Steve Metchette about the fantype training of our wild blue yonder boys at Carswell Air Force Base in Ft. Worth. Repercussions were heard when Brig. Gen. Nils O. Ohman forced an airman 3rd class to wear a sign reading "I failed to salute a general," for either seven 8-hour days, or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 hours (depending on who was telling the story). "The airman looked straight at me and failed to salute," Gen. Ohman said petulantly. "It was degrading to the airman," complaints insisted. Personally, I think we should all write our Congressman.

Secondary, or maybe primary, point of the item was that the airman so humiliated came from Meddybemps, Oregon. Now this I find extremely interesting. I'm still quite disappointed that Meddybemps turned out to represent something so prosaic as a cattle-crossing in Maine -- it was such a pregnant word -- but I could accept it as logical knowing the intense peculiarity of Maine-iacs who are quite capable of naming their localities almost anything. Witness Saco, Squapan, Mattawamkeag, Passadumkeag. (Pretty, though, aren't they, the last two?) But now that I discover Oregon also has a Meddybemps, I have something new to speculate about. It is unlikely that such a name could have evolved from thin air in two such widely spaced places, thus my "Meddybemps" must have had a tangible origin somewhere else, it seems. Unless, of course, in the distant past, Meddybemps, Maine had 11 inhabitants, one of whom went West to settle Oregon. Has anyone an inkling from whence came Meddybemps?

FOR THE MOST PART I thoroughly enjoy being female, but at times I must admit femininity has unsuspected disadvantages. Few males, I dare say, spending a pleasant evening at home, would find it necessary to intersperse sips of Southern Comfort And with sips of broth from a stewing chicken to assure a pot-pie with properly seasoned character. Quelle combinatione!

A NATURAL BORN FAPAN is Sam Kramer, who makes and sells jewelry in his studio in the Village. Following are excerpts from one of his circulars: "FANTASTIC JEWELRY -- For People Who Are Slightly Mad ... Tortured and Massive ... Some of the things have a morbid feeling: tortured and massive, they almost cry out with hysteria. Some are mild or wicked satires; many are tantalizing abstractions ... People who come to the studio of Sam Kramer are never pressed into buying. In some cases buying is actually discouraged ... How Do You Take Your Blasphemies? If you're a cynic with an appetite for subtle blasphemies ... or if you're a woman in a black gown with a sense of what is stark and dramatic ... or a man with a ring-finger going to waste for want of something heavy or amazing ... etc. and etc."

THEN THERE WAS the airline hostess who loved her job. Perhaps, she admitted, she could meet as many men doing something else -- but not strapped down...

# BACK WHERE I STARTED FROM

(more or less)

by BILL MORSE

Long years ago, when I was still of an age and innocence to believe what advertisers told me, I fell heavily for the old one about joining the Army and Seeing the World. I would, I vowed, be a soldier when I grew up -- or maybe an engine driver, or a circus ringmaster, or a keeper in the zoo. Even -- the low point in my life -- an M. P.

It all faded, of course, and I became one of the world's more-or-less-white collar workers until the mess called World War II boiled over, giving me no option but to test the validity of that claim of socialised travel. What a disappointed man I was. I travelled, all right, on my two size-11F feet, in a pair of heavily studded boots, both before and after Dunkirk. From May 1940 to June 1942, I estimate that those poor tired dogs covered ten thousand miles of England's green and pleasant land. No more illusions about seeing the world, nor of the beauties of the English countryside. When opportunity presented itself, I mustered across to a mob who travelled mostly on tracked vehicles, and with them I developed a liking for going places and seeing things which became a positive zest after V.E. Day. I had the bug, and when one day the RAF offered me a visit to Canada on loan to the Ministry of Supply's Experimental staff, I jumped at the chance.

Not, mind you, that I had much choice. A great big, rough, nasty, Flight Sergeant pointed his finger at me, and I went.

It started well. B.O.A.C.'s from London to New York, and by rail from there. Happily clutching my Air Force valise, I trotted up and into a Constellation and settled back in luxury in my rather battered A.C.'s uniform to be greeted by the Captain. He wore a D.S.O. and bar, a D.F.C. and bar (both officer's ribbons) and the oak leaf cluster of a Mention in Despatches. He must have left the R.A.F with a fearfully high rank. He said: --

"Good evening, Sir. Welcome to our ship."

For once, I was at a loss for words. I giggled a little and murmured softly but it was too much.

Seated beside me was a G.I. Bride with a load of sterling to get rid of before reaching the U.S. Her hospitality was embarrassing and her capacity astounding. Beer, wine and spirits were available throughout the journey and she kept them flowing. Several times, from sheer desperation, I tried to feign sleep, but she had a very bony elbow which dug deep into my ribs as she offered me yet another Scotch with a beer chaser. Fortunately, we stopped at Prestwick, Keflairk (storm over the usual Atlantic route) and Gander

to eat. Not that she ate anything, being scared of airsickness, so I had her helpings too, which was useful for absorption. She drank to keep her courage up and, by God, she was determined to keep my upper lip stiff too. I'd often wondered about my ultimate capacity -- here was the chance to find out. I feel it is to my lasting credit that I walked off at each stop, unaided and unconcerned. What is more, when we left finally at LaGuardia, the male steward shook my hand. Whether this was his tribute to a demonstration of British phlegm, or a silent acknowledgement of his own excess profits for the trip, is a moot point.

I took a taxi to Grand Central Station in absolute silence. It was wonderful. With eight hours to waste, I went out and goggled at the Empire State Building, didn't believe it, and went off to Radio City, where I felt the same way about the Rockettes. Are there really that many, or did I have double vision? From N.Y.C. to Montreal I slept. From Montreal to Ottawa I swilled my mouth with grapefruit juice and thence to Edmonton I was a model of English rectitude.

At Edmonton, a phone call to the Air Base brought instructions. "You take a Blue and White streetcar to 11th and 19th, and get a transfer to the Kingsway bus." So off I went down to the street and watched the traffic. So far as I could see, all the streetcars were a dirty reddish-brown, with off-grey tops. I must have stood there an hour and a half before I noticed on the offside rear of each one, a small coloured rectangle, divided into two colours -- Red/Green, Red/White -- behold! -- Blue/White. My travels were at an end, for a while.

In July of that year, two of my billet neighbours decided to spend a holiday hitch-hiking in the States. Both in the six-foot class, neither below 200 lbs., as tough a pair to see as any I ever met. Off they went promising cards from Mexico, their final destination. Three weeks later, they were back having taken two weeks to reach San Francisco and quit in disgust. "And if we couldn't do it, you sure as hell never would," they said.

That settled it. I left on my attempt at the end of August.

The average Canadian, though sturdily independent, is not usually quite the character that his American brother seems to be, and my first day's travel took me quietly down to Lethbridge.

Next day, I was picked up by a travelling stonemason and his mate in a Model A. Quite regardless of Canada's weird liquor laws, they had a bottle of Scotch, another of Rye, and a case and a half of beer. With this load, we gently meandered down and down via Milk River to Coutts, the Canadian border town. Fortunately, the highway was all but deserted or we'd have been in trouble. Even the stonemason himself was feeling a bit under the weather by Coutts. He suggested we call at a cafe and gulp some strong black coffee, so we filed solemnly in, reminding each other to go carefully and not let anyone see how we were.

One sip of the coffee made the other two splutter. There was a muttered "Pass those goddam cups across here," and they returned well spiked with Rye. Oh well. Off we went, across the border.

The American Immigration officer was a gentleman. He'd passed the other two across with a wave of the hand, and they vanished from sight. He came back and stood beside the Customs officer, who was about to go through my bag.

"Did you come down with them?"

"Yes."

"Hmm -- got any liquor on you?"

"No," said I, and breathed on them gently.

Neither moved a face muscle, but a reminiscent gleam appeared in their eyes.

"O.K.," said the first. "I'm off duty in a quarter hour. Wait for me over the top of the hill." And they walked off.

Sure enough, I got a lift to Shelby and another to Great Falls before dark.

From Great Falls to Butte, next day, by Sick's beer truck ("I got thirteen tons of beer in the back. Sealed, goddamit"). We went via Helena ("There's millions in gold right under this main street"). He had a couple of dozen bottles in the cab -- "rejects" he called them. They looked and tasted pretty good to me.

From Butte to Idaho Falls, same day, by Buick and GMC truck. No bother at all and I slept like a log.

Next morning, I decided to test once more my pet theory on hitch-hiking. I left the town limits, selected a comfortable looking spot by the road, and sat down with my back to the traffic I hoped to interest, resting my back against my bag. Out came a pack of Chesterfields and I lit one, gazing nonchalantly in the direction I meant to travel.

Seventeen minutes by the clock and a Chev. pulled up. The driver leaned across and hollered out the window: "Hey -- I'm going to Salt Lake -- wanna ride?" I was inside, with the door shut, before the sound of his voice had faded.

Salt Lake City was interesting enough for me to decide to stop off and check in yet another small hotel. At that time (oh blasphemy!) I'd no idea of the existence of Gregg Calkins, or I might have warned the City Fathers.

It's an absorbing place. I tagged on to a party going round the grounds of the Mormon Temple on a guided tour, taking note of the professional tones of the guide, his pauses for laughs, and the fluency of his explanations of everything. It all came trippingly on the tongue. He seemed a little puzzled by my uniform, and was finally curious enough to ask where I came from, so I told him. Then (as usual) he asked how I had liked what I had seen of the U.S. (with especial reference to Utah, of course). I told him I liked it fine.

"Ahah!" said he. "A-l -- jolly good -- topping, hey?" I allowed as how that might be one way of putting it, and we concluded the tour.

It still amuses me a little that Americans should look at me with suspicion because I speak neither Oxford, Cockney, nor Yorkshire. And I doubt if there are as many of us to say "Topping" as there are cowhands who say "Shucks, Ma'am," but these legends persist. When I tried to explain this to the guide, he blinked a little, then said, "Well -- God bless you, brother" and vanished, which made things difficult because he had been overheard by a group of young people who promptly approached me to enquire whether I had, indeed, really Found The Lord. (I think they were non-Mormon).

As a matter of fact, I haven't. It may well be that I shall, on the last day, but to date, so far as I know, only some Jews, a few Roman soldiers, and a Roman governor have actually met Him. All the same, not wishing to endure any proselytising lectures, I admitted that maybe I had, being a Catholic by official registration. It seemed to satisfy them.

Next morning, Sunday morning, I awoke to the sound of running water down the hill from somewhere above the Deseret Hotel. It seems an admirable way of cleaning the place, provided one can build always around a hill. Glancing out the window at the early morning churchgoers, I noted that Dior's New Look had not yet arrived here (this was 1948, remember). Delightful, on this sunny morning.

This was a day to remember. Continuing to test my theory, I was picked up by two youths in a '48 Chrysler Windsor who offered to drop me at Las Vegas (my projected target for the day). They were in a hurry, partly to get across the hot desert quickly and partly because the driver had heard his steady girl friend was two-timing him. Somewhere along the way, I let slip the fact that my ultimate destination was Los Angeles, to find that they were going right there. I settled back and let a glow of satisfaction and joy fill me to the full.

We stopped in Las Vegas for a breather, a ham sandwich, and a coke. See how sober I was getting? But I developed another vice -- the One-Armed Bandit. They brought out the worst in me, and at the end of an hour I had lost 60 cents, our driver had won about four bits, and we were all ready to move on. No kidding -- they were in a hurry. We had left Salt Lake at 10:30, and at half past midnight we were in Los Angeles and I was thanking them most sincerely for the ride. They thanked me in return for the half-tank of gas I'd provided and we parted. I booked in a large but unpretentious hotel on Figueroa and sank blissfully into bed. I'd made it.

I sent those two types in Edmonton a low postcard to prove it.

If you like meeting odd people, L.A. is a great place to visit. There was the one who offered me his card. (I still have it.) "I am Inventor" he said, with a gilt-edged smile. The card gave his name, address, phone number, the fact that he was 24 years resident of Brawley, Calif., and that he was the "Discoverer and Inventor of R.A.D.A.R." His current invention was even now being considered at Washington. "A device whereby the terrible crime of cutting down our glorious flag may be for ever prevented." You had a hollow metal flagpole, ran one rope up from the bottom and out through a pulley at the top. At the lower edge of the flag you had a sandbag.

There was a cop directing traffic somewhere about 8th and Hill Street. Sunglasses, cigar, and a pb stuck in the hip pocket of his pants. I saw him again in Pacific Seas Cafeteria and we got talking. I told him where I was staying and he grinned.

"Brother, you sure picked a good one." It sounded sarcastic, and I said so. "Didn't you know?" he said. "You should be there about two or three in the a.m., and you'll see all the girls going back to rest. They don't act up in the hotel, but there's a level thirty of them live there. It's a working man's hotel -- hah!"

About 10 that night, I went out for a beer. Strolled quietly along Figueroa for a few blocks till I saw a TV Tavern and called in. The juke box was a bit odd. You put in your nickel and spoke your request -- there was a gal downstairs with about five hundred discs who said "No" till you hit one she had. No Bach. No Chopin. Plenty of Satch. Good for me.

I got talking to the bartender, who suggested a Moscow Mule as a nice cool drink, so I had one. Vodka, lime, ice, served in copper mugs. It was clear and smooth and cool, so I had another, then a Budweiser, then another Mule, and so on, while I watched an endless series of wrestling bouts. It kept me going till sometime after 1:30 when I decided to go and check up on the cop's story. Out I walked, turning right, to walk back to the hotel.

Next thing I knew, it was past three in the morning and I was somewhere on Olive Street and way off in the opposite direction from the place I wanted. I've no idea how, but consideration of the total of drinks lends a small clue. Taking no further chances, I took a taxi back and carefully felt my way in and to the elevator. There was company; he said he was a German seal trainer, and was trying for the fifth time to get to the third floor. I could have sworn he punched button No. 5, but I didn't say so. I let him swear his way away and then tried for No. 4 and made it first time. For all I know, the other guy might have kept going all night -- my room was some way from the elevator so I wouldn't know. But I certainly slept well that night, giving me the rest I needed to get moving next day on my way back to Canada -- dollar shortage was hitting me, as it hit all my fellow countrymen.

\* \* \*

If you and our Editress can stand it, I'll tell you next issue how two Chicago characters tried to pull the con trick on me in 1951, and pass a few comments on some aged playboys I met in Northern California. That's why this particular piece ends in a different place from that suggested by its title.  
... Bill Morse

\* \* \* \* \*

Phyllis here: Rrrrrripping, old chep! More of the same will guarantee another PHlotz which has such a time generating its own steam these days. Just to clarify a point for your audience: When nostalgizing about your childhood ambitions does "M.P." mean "Member of Parliament" which, I think, is the British translation, or "Military Police" the American interpretation?

-oOo-

# EGOBOO & EGOBOO-BOO:

This will be more boo-boo than egoboo this time, and the boo-boo is my own. Not only am I going to be unable to comment on more than a fraction of the mailing at this late date (May 5th), especially after rambling witlessly over almost two pages on a LARK comment during my luxurious leisure, but many of those I have no time for are those I had the most to say about. As is my bad habit, I set aside those fapazines with the most check marks on the margins, those which interested me most, to do last. Don't ask me why. Perhaps my inherent laziness has something to do with it. At any rate, I love all of you -- well, most anyway -- and next time I'll do better, I promise (crossing my fingers).

TARGET:FAPA/Eney: I saw an ad somewhere -- sorry I didn't pay more attention -- that another magazine was finishing the Luke Short serial that was running in Collier's when it folded. I think it was SEP. Folding in mid-serial was not the worst thing pulled by Crowell-Collier. In the next-to-last issue of The American -- probably in Collier's and Companion too -- they were soliciting subs. # I've always understood that we were not permitted to send money to England -- or they were not permitted to receive it -- yet the London Mystery Magazine solicits American subscriptions with no mention of an American agent. \$1.75 USA and Canada, which, incidentally, is ~~44¢~~ per issue instead of the 35¢ newsstand price.

DIRECTORY OF 1956 FANDOM/Bennett: A most welcome debut in Fapa, Ron -- both your Directory and YOU, of course. Fun to see how your classifications agree -- or disagree -- with mine. Makes me real proud (and sort of humble, too) to be listed as a "BNF and/or Backbone of S.F. Fandom." Gee. # Wisconsin is apparently well on its way to that Fapan majority with the aquisition of Jack Speer. And once I get there too we'll have it made. (However, Ron, I've a hunch Speer's North Bend is still in Washington where it was last time I looked.) Delightful ATOM cover.

GEMZINE/Carr: Your argument that Marilyn Monroe is a dumb blond because of her marital history is invalid. Beauty, brains and emotions have nothing to do with each other. Unfortunately, both beauty and brains are apt to have a detrimental effect on a woman's chances for serene married life, and the combination, with fame thrown in, is almost fatal. A beautiful woman in the public eye is constantly surrounded with such a confusion of adulation, emotional influences, far too many men, and career demands, that the odds are heavily against her remaining clear-headed enough to select a man, attracted by more than her beauty and fame, who will make her a good husband -- if, indeed, such a man exists in her circle. An intelligent woman today is far too knowledgeable to be satisfied with a mediocre relationship and, if unable to reasonably fulfill her standards in one marriage is apt to try again. It's the little dumb-cluck, or the painfully plain woman who is able to marry the first man who asks her and settle down unquestioningly for the rest of her days -- considering herself lucky. From your reasoning, the average IQ of Hollywood stars, based on their sad marital records, would be extraordinarily low, and that I don't believe. They just haven't a chance.

PHANTASY PRESS/McPhail: I've been reading about Operation MOON-WATCH and the solicitations for Moonwatchers, wondering how it could be accomplished here in New York. The segment of New York sky visible from my back porch is so minute that it would need about 3 Watchers per city block. No small recruiting job. Central Park is off limits at night. There's always the Empire State roof, but would the \$1.75 commutation fare be chargeable to headquarters? Could join up and find out, I suppose. # You mad at me or somepin, Dan? No PHlotz review this time and I looked and looked. Better luck with your reproduction next time. Your cover was lovely though.

EXILE/Coslet: Darned if I can think of anything to say, Coswal. Impressive surely. Hope Fapa contains lots of unsuspected Biblephiles to properly appreciate it.

HASTY STOPGAP/Ashworth: Mal, would you please explain that puzzling address of yours? How can you live on two streets? Is it a corner? Do you have a front and rear (or side) entrance on two different streets? Is it all a Chinese puzzle -- "Makin" and "Tong" sound like Oriental intrigue. Please ... # I'd also like to know what is a "flatbed." Honest. # Your suggestion for Fapish "Chicken" would be one way of solving the waiting-list problem. # You don't mention the Royal portable. That's about the -- if not THE -- biggest seller here, and I would think must have distribution abroad. With the exception of the Remington and Underwood, the other makes you name are less familiar here and might be difficult to find parts for unless you settle in a good-size city. # A delightful ad caption appeared recently in a Sports-type magazine -- delightful anyway to me who considers hunting for savages -- "This Hunting Knife Will Find A Warm Spot In The Heart Of Every Sportsman."

WRAITH/Ballard: Who tells fires not to start during firemen's conventions, I wonder. A few months ago there was a convention of Long Island and New Jersey fire companies here in New York -- dozens of shiny red trucks and hundreds of polished-up firemen lining 34th street near the New Yorker -- and I wondered just how they all KNEW no fire would break out back home that day. # Advertisers are sheep -- they trample each other to be in the same magazine or newspaper everyone else is in until certain magazines become nothing but ad rags and everyone gets lost in the shuffle. The worst of them become so heavy and unwieldy that I stopped reading them because of the physical effort of holding them up. Yet other magazines, like REDBOOK for instance, despite good circulation, have never clicked with the advertisers and can't seem to attract many for all their campaigns. Tough for the magazine but a break for readers. # Caps and Gowns are standard even for grade-school graduations back in my home town now. They seem silly on kids but I think they are a good idea except in communities where good taste is the rule rather than the exception. When I graduated from grammar-school, the little girls all wore evening gowns -- and this in an era when the style was slinky silk form-fitting atrocities instead of today's frothy teen-ager fashions. Picture if you can the absurdity of all those formless little girls stumbling across the auditorium stage in their first rickety high heels trying to slink glamorously in Monroe-type sausage-casings without the stuffing! Including me... Much better the dignity of a cap and gown. # Our friend, Bill Danner, considers bulls "semi-domesticated." Let's you and him fight, eh?

FAFHRD/Ellik: Fans must indubitabobbly be slans if they can follow  
"Interplanetary." What, I fret, am I doing in such  
company? Of course, if I'd been able to read my copy it might have  
been more comprehensible -- but I could read the diagram and could-  
n't even find Earth, nevermind getting to Pluto and back again. Oy!  
# Apparently I'm just not coordinating mental-wise tonight because  
here I start DAG's col-YUM and get a nasty sort of shock. "Prior  
to the fall of 1941..." he starts. Well, somehow I associated this  
in my malfunctioning mind with the Decline and Fall of the Roman  
Empire, and spent several long moments trying to recollect the cat-  
aclysmic Fall of 1941. To make the whole affair more portentous, in the  
same sentence Dean continues, "I fell under the tutelage of George Kroening  
..." GOLLY, I gollyed, being a tender-hearted sort of soul and passing fond  
of DAG, I hope it didn't hurt awfully! Eventually came the dawn, but not  
before I was thoroughly shaken. Of course the DAG is rather addicted to  
falling -- falling drawers -- falling piles (pilINGS; falling ON, to be more  
explicit as I should), etc. # If Juille, in Judgement Night, was sexless,  
how come all those love affairs with Egide? Egad, didn't he guess?

NULL-F/White: Hey, I didn't receive STELLAR #10, and I took a sub at the  
convention, remember? Give, please Ted. # Golly, all these  
FAPACONS I'm missing -- and I was looking forward to them so much too!  
Seems every mailing date something comes up, and sure enough, I'll be in  
Maine again this FAPACON III week-end. Woe. # I have a bigger grotch than  
yours over "Ass'n." Our business name is "Arthur N. Economou Associates,"  
and it's astonishing how many apparently substantial business people address  
letters or make out checks without so much as an "oc." or "ts" on their  
abbreviation. As I consider myself the "Associates," (like a good wife --  
always bringing up the rear) it's disconcerting -- to be mild about it.

THE RAMBLING FAP #8/Calkins: So you hate to move -- and do -- and here I  
sit, faunching to move, surrounded by trunks,  
half-packed crates, cartons and whatsits so long dismantled I can't for life  
remember what they're supposed to mantle up into again, and moving day re-  
ceding increasingly remoter every day. As I refuse absolutely to unpack, I  
shall likely grow old and bitter surrounded by dust-laden cartons whose  
long-forgotten contents I shall duplicate again and again through the years  
as I did my present collection of hammers, staplers and ironing boards, so  
that when I am laid to my final rest (just away) people will shake their  
heads and say, "Now WHAT did that funny old lady want with 8 rolling pins,  
14 back brushes, 9 coffee pots, 5 wire clippers, 4 bedpans, 10 whisk brooms  
and 24 egg-beaters (3 left-handed)?" Aweel. # The New York post-office has  
had a beaut of a new problem these past months. New around here, anyway.  
After each snowstorm this winter, ALL THE LIT-TUL KID-DIES GRAB ALL THEIR  
PUR-TY RED SHUV-VULS AND DASH GLEE-FUL-LY OUT TO SHUV-VUL ALL THE NICE WHITE  
SNOW IN-TO ALL THE PURTY MAIL-BOX-ES. SUCH A MER-RY TIME! SEE HOW THE  
POST-MAN LAUGHS WHEN HE O-PUNS THE MAIL-BOX AND ALL THE GLOO-PY SLUSH GLOPS  
OUT. # Sissy! Where I come from, belly-whopping is the only acceptable way  
of sledding. Sitting is for toddlers. Of course we grewed up tough. We  
preferred taking my toboggan over the ski jump to sledding on any little old  
hill. I never did equal my girl friend's feat though, of going over the  
professional Winter Carnival ski jump at Rumford, Maine in a tin washtub.  
She earned 60 years of glory for a mere 6 months in the hospital. # I sent  
back your poll -- how about the rest of you? # JoAnn, when can we look  
forward to hearing from -- or even more about -- you, now?

LARK/Danner: Can't understand why you keep the typographical department on the 2nd floor, Bill. Surely space could somehow be arranged -- or rearranged -- for it in the basement with the press. Or do you just like to keep in condition going up and down all those stairs? # Our supermarket has soft Muzak -- sans commercials -- which is quite pleasant in the background, but in Jax, Florida, bus passengers were truly a captive audience, with pop-and-hillbilly-cum-commercials blared through every bus all day long. The Jax busses were the ones with the big "We Ain't Mad At Nobody" signs across the sides. In the interest of sweet public relations you could ride the busses free on Sundays simply by saying "I'm going to church." Just think of all the money you could save if you lived down there, Bill! # I think I -- or maybe someone else -- mentioned this before, but a few years ago Dr. Crane, who writes that nationally syndicated "psychology" column, devoted his column to life on other worlds. He anticipates the Earthman's Burden. Undoubtedly we will find some intelligent life here and there, he averred, but it's a foregone conclusion, beyond all dispute, that no life anywhere can possibly have reached our own stratospheric level of civilization and culture. It will be our bounten duty to educate, civilize and bring religion into the lives of all these poor backward heathen scattered throughout the universe just awaitin' for the Coming. Made me so mad I was tempted to sit down and write a very strong letter. But I can't even manage to keep reasonably current in my letters to such nicelings as Danner and people -- I should waste time on Dr. Crane? # Your pet author, T. H. White's name is cropping up everywhere these days. The Times mentioned last week that Putnam will publish a new White novel this month (March) called "The Master," exposing a demonic plot to conquer the world, all about this demon who (or which) dwells on a lonely island known to geographers as Rockall. Rockall is an actual rock poking 70 feet out of the Atlantic some 290 miles west of Scotland and inhabited only by sea birds -- until Mr. White found his demon there. Having always considered Atlantis more or less mythical, or at least unproved, I was surprised at the Times unqualified statement that Rockall is "a forlorn manifestation of the once magnificent Atlantis." Also, in a Marboro catalog received today, offer is made of "The Book of Beasts" translated and annotated by T. H. White. "Where do griffins stalk their prey and why are vultures lessons to heretics, etc." Numerous illustrations from old manuscripts. Sounds interesting ... # I've been receiving the Libertarian League propaganda -- and making all sorts of disclaimers to my postman who finds my mail of great fascination -- especially the inventive envelopes emanating out of a certain Wisconsin hamlet. They prolly took your name outen the phone book, he reassures me. # Tewler doesn't always just automatically rush right out to buy whatever the man on TV tells him to rush right out and buy. Some are becoming more discriminating and insist on being told to rush right etc. politely or they won't play. This is encouraging -- if this buyer's rebellion becomes widespread, advertisers might, in time, stop yelling so loud. Here's a letter received by the News' TV column which has been campaigning against the "hard sell" illustrating the point. No -- this is going to go on much too long, judging from check marks still on the margins. Besides, it's sort of priceless and should be featured somewhere more prominently instead of being buried in the mailing comments here. So look for it elsewhere. # I blushingly admit you had me pegged just right, Bill, in my dissertation on bull last issue. Sheer bull. What it amounts to was that I was taking my own advice in the gaseous water bit. I've often felt that Phlotsam was an awfully bland, non-controversial affair and have wished that

I could strike a few sparks here and there. But the usual Fapa controversies fail to tempt me, and I go blandly on. So this time I decided to jump headlong into a controversy and what happened? Nothing at all -- except a charge of GAS from Danner. So henceforth I shall twitter along about innocuous subjects and let the sparks fly about GMC. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not taking back a word I said about bullfights. If I had a conviction about bullfights that would probably express it. But if I was unconvincing in my arguments as you say, it's quite likely because I have no convictions about bullfights at all -- I don't give a purple hoot about bulls or bullfighters. Most every word I said was superficially absorbed from the picture "Bullfight" -- which I refused to see, but heard much about -- and Hemingway's "Death In The Afternoon" which I had just read. "That's right," I said to myself when I finished the book, agreeing completely that the bullfight was a beautiful, symbolic ritual, tradition-laden and profoundly meaningful, as I went out to peel the tradition-laden potatoes and check if the leftover roast would stretch for the ritual hash. So now Wrai and Dutch can shoot the bull about bulls and I'll sit back and listen. # Do you ever go anywhere, Bill? I sort of hope you say no, because I've built up such a detailed mental picture of you that it would be a disillusionment to have you say, "Oh shore -- I shoot down to Florida every winter, and to Kentucky for the Derby and into Pittsburgh for the sales on Dollar Day and etc. So far you've talked at length about where you don't go, and how long it's been since you've ridden a bus or train. I visualize you, Bill, as the Rock of Rockwood Ave., immovably ensconced in that great mansion, settled deep in a leather armchair puffing on a double-header pipe (the only picture I've seen of you), listening to hi-fi, with railroads to right of you, mailings to left of you, whilst presses beneath you volley and thunder. Visitors are graciously welcomed, but -- like President Eisenhower or Queen Elizabeth -- visiting traffic is all one way. I know you have a Car, but in my Danner Portrait the Nash purrs forever in front of the 720 door where it regularly receives polishing, painting, petting, dismantling and mantling, and is actually driven only on those rare occasions when a visiting fan is awarded an around-the-block demonstration. You have become an impressive legend to me, Bill -- sort of like the Pope.

THE LAREAN/Ellick: Gee this makes me sorta sad -- we'll miss you, Ron.

REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT/Alger: Gee that cover's pretty! # Envy your Packard experience. Our Nash Rambler went through three water pumps in 9 months. I never dared take off without an emergency bucket of water along. And it was a Coddled Car! # Despite all the publicity about astronomical salaries for entertainers, most of them have that glamorous gauntness through sheer starvation. The average annual earnings among Actor's Equity members here in New York is about \$750 -- which includes all those high-priced stars. This they piece out by working part-time here and there, but never any (well-paying) job that would interfere with their freedom to make the daily rounds and answer any try-out, or even look-over calls. And all these people must present an expensive, prosperous-looking "front" at all times. Circus people are notoriously low paid. Even Emmett Kelly, the world-famous clown, was earning a shockingly low amount with Ringling -- I forget the exact figure but \$90 or \$100 a week or thereabouts. Then off-season he could pick up \$2500 for a single TV appearance. Carnies are the hardest-working and lowest-paid of all, but the "front" is neither required nor expected of them.

SAMBO/Martinez: Delightful issue, Sam. And funny for bonus. #

Ron Parker seems like a nice, gold-hearted, earnest sort of feller, if a bit of a dipsomaniac. I'm sure that I'd have no such innocent faith that an evening spent with decendents born thousands of years hence would necessarily be "pleasant." In fact, I'm sure I'd hate the stuck-up, superior critters with all their airs, everlastinly shovin their pore old ancestor out of sight when the neighbors come to call. I'wouldn't do 'em a bit of harm to introduce me to their high-flown friends even if I am just a savage still thinks teeth are for chewin'. Maybe I can't telepath but it's easy to see what's in their minds at that -- they're just downright ashamed of me, and it makes me sad but a whole lot madder. These decendents of mine may be long on new-fangled gadgets like anti-grav interplan-scooters and automatic baby-changers (with optional breast-type feeder and burper attachment) but manners, breeding and decent respect for forebears died out when the Democrats got into the White House and the country went all to rack-and-ruin way back in 1932 I always say.

FANALYSIS/Schaffer: The U.S. Health Service is now displaying a poster in the Post Office, warning the public against the Hoxey cure. # We all know the frustrating pokiness of the U.S. Mail most of the time -- thus my astonishment at their unbelievable speed in getting my Feb. mailing here. As I was leaving for a trip the Sunday following mailing day, I asked Eney to send the mailing Special Delivery, hoping it would reach me by the end of the week so I could take it along. The package was postmarked Tuesday, Feb. 12th and -- I still can't believe it! -- the postman woke me to deliver it at 8 AM, Wednesday, February 13th!!! The second package arrived about 3 hours later. Pin a posy on the PO! # Not too much here I find commentable Ray, but it was the most entertaining and interesting Schafferzine I've seen yet. Enjoyed.

BANDWAGON/Ryan: Hope you have better luck with your Sears dufer than I've had, Dick. Mine is their "best," and fairly new too, but I've had trouble from the beginning. For business use it's OK because the letterhead is over the bad spot, but for PHlotsam, as you must know by now, it won't print on the top right side. They sent me a new drum, which bettered the situation slightly as the old drum refused to print at the top on both sides. Also, the uneven inking at the top causes a lot of offset due to running the paper through as slowly as necessary for those corners. Anyway -- good luck with yours. # Can't agree with your idea of a paper bargain. Mine is 20 lb. Topsham, and compares well with yours, I think. I get it at a local store that has always seemed quite expensive to me, but pay only \$1.35 per ream in 10-ream lots -- about \$1.60 or so per single ream. \$2.10 seems exhorbitant. # Enjoyed your account of the retail merchants' preparations for the Holy Christmas Season. As an insider you can warn us -- have any merchants yet proposed setting up Yuletide windows and dragging Santy into town immediately after Labor Day? It used to be post-Thanksgiving, now it's post-Halloween which infuriates me as Christmas decorations, carols, and all that seem so incongruous without snow and/or chill Arctic winds. This New Englander's attitude made Christmas seem a let's-pretend thing for me during the Miami years -- to drop into the dime-store for a coke on the way back from the beach, dressed in bathing suit and beach coat, and hear carols blasting out and see tinsel bedecking the papaya juice signs. Santa arrives on a float in full scarlet-and-white-whiskered regalia, surrounded by bathing beauties, and the poor guy always looks so hot!

SUDDENLY IT'S 2,000,000 BC/Rike: LeeSH beat you to this by a year  
or more, Dave -- when 2etc. BC  
was just an approachment instead of horrible actuality crushing  
us with flying butts and banged noggins from belly-crawling in.  
However, the crime's great enough for another screaming protest.  
It was an authentic, workmanlike job, except that you omitted the  
word "sassy" from your copy. That's standard this year -- every  
1957 car is supposed to be "sassy" someplace. So apropos when ap-  
plied to that hindward swoop, especially -- sort of like calling  
Madame VanAsterbuilt's girdled buttresses "sassy."

BONE MEAL/Youngs: This is delicious -- delectable even! Anyway it was the  
first time I read it. Now tell me how do I get it outen  
my head whither it gyrates? Hens-wrens-down-the-hatch-so-sad-TOOBAD!

!EHEU!/Youngs: !Migawd!

SUNDANCE/Youngs: Your account of a night-walk brought on an acute nostalgia.  
Some years ago I too used to love to walk the night, wan-  
dering down Third Avenue for a 3 AM coffee, or hopping a subway after mid-  
night over to the big Times Square newsstand (now defunct since the city's  
readers have deserted in such numbers to TV or suburbia) on an impulsive  
quest for all-night reading matter. Now the city is such a mugger's jungle  
that I'm nervous about walking to the corner for a paper after 10 PM, and  
with cause. # Your article "Nature Lore" was fascinating -- and SO instruc-  
tive. GMCarr may have been justified in her horrified rearing up at the  
young man who said he'd rather have a sub to ASTOUNDING than a college edu-  
cation, but if he's daid a "sub to SUNDANCE" now ... # If thoughts of balmy  
Cararillo, Calif., or "other such fortunate spots" makes you feel worse on  
those chill Boston days, possibly a visit there on a cold winter day ("Ab-  
normal, of course! -- CCofC") would make you feel grateful for your own small  
favours. I lived in one such "fortunate spot" -- Jacksonville, Florida --  
and just about froze to death. It's a matter of native psychology, you see.  
In winter, especially in the mornings, the temperature in Jax often hovers  
around 30 or 35, but the natives there are so proud of their "semi-tropical"  
location that they absolutely refuse to admit the existance of cold weather  
-- even to themselves. As a result, practically none of the houses have any  
sort of heating facilities whatever except for small kerosene stoves. Every  
corner grocery sells kerosene and on cold mornings you see all the bundled-  
up housewives trotting out with their gallon jugs to fetch the day's fuel  
supply. A couple in our house kept a 5-gallon container in their bathroom,  
indicating a pessimistic belief that it might be cold again tomorrow -- but  
they were considered eccentric, somewhat traitorous, and besides they came  
from Georgia so what could you expect? At least on cold days in Cambridge  
you can stay cozily in your warm house. Of course Camarillo, being farther  
North, may not have such stiff-necked civic pride -- and "stiff-necked" is  
no mere figure of speech applied to Jax. # My dad was a dentist and used to  
buy Mercury in small bottles. Who says it's sold ONLY in 76-pound flasks? #  
Lucky you and Andy are both night-people. Your marriage wouldn't last a  
week if one of you happened to be the dull day-type. But Susan asleep at  
2:30 AM? Aren't you afraid she'll become all maladjusted? # I always asso-  
ciate songs with times, places and people too. Isn't it disgusting though  
when a beautiful memory becomes inextricably associated with some nauseating  
pop-tune like, for instance, "Come On-A My House"? It seems such a waste,  
tangling up your mood so. # Delightful issue, Jean -- and where's Andy?

GASP/Steward: It would be just great if you could contribute \$10.00 to TAFF and plump 120 points worth for Boyd. I'd do it myself if only (a) I could, (b) I had \$10.00, or (c) I had been unable to inveigle myself onto the list of candidates. In the latter event I'd be busy like a pack-rat requisitioning and acquisitioning box from friends, relatives, piggy-bank and the reckless hocking of worldly goods from typewriter up to and including treasured old FAPA mailings. Y'see, \$100 or \$150, discreetly apportioned among friends and supporters (if any limit on contributions made it necessary) would assure me 1200-1800 votes which would pretty much guarantee my snatching the London trip -- a very interesting return on investment. And quite probably it wouldn't require anywhere near that number to swing the vote. It would be a walkaway for any well-organized clique with a little money and some tattered fringe-fan candidate masterminding. # I find you touchingly idealistic about young girls and their super-charged adolescent emotional reactions, Ger. I agree with you in doubting that Elvis Pelvis has inspired all of those salacious well-publicized reactions, but not because the sweet young things are not sexually affected by his gyrations. That they definitely are! In fact, you could say that all of the hysterical demonstrations touched off in female adolescents by romantic male entertainers, including Frankie in the '40s and Rudy in the '20s -- and not omitting whatever whatever brawny high school, college or pro-football heros young girls all over the country are palpitating, sighing, moaning and mooning over -- are sexually based. You'll notice that no female entertainer, however popular, ever inspires quite the same sort of hysterical demonstration. (HYSTERIA -- from Gr. hysteria: the womb.) However, I doubt the more sensational stories of the Presley effects not because I imagine that the girls idolize him purely as a musician -- although they do that too, as part of the whole emotional involvement -- but simply because adolescent girls, most of them anyway, unlike boys, just don't think -- or feel -- in such forthright terms. A young girl's very powerful sexual drives are all bedraped, cloaked, bedizened, and quite effectively disguised from herself, if no one else, by frothy daydreams, all soft, pink and pretty and -- mostly -- untinged with the crude, frightening scarlet of passion. Bessie's dream of Elvis is one of the smouldering glow in his great brown eyes as they meet hers across the milling stage-door throng, in that electric "moment of realization." Of her triumph in face of the burning envy of all her school chums as He makes his way to her side, takes her masterfully by the hand, and leads her off to glory in a pink Cadillac. She gets goose-bumps on her goose-bumps at thought of his lips on hers under the Miami moon as he Loves Her Tender -- oh, but tender -- whispering all the beautiful, poetic things that men seldom say, but adolescent females keep dreaming one will say to them until they grow up enough to discover the type of male who says such corny things. And the thought of little Elvises running about her ginghamed-by-Dior knees is positively annihilating! So she dreams, and she tingles deliciously (and mysteriously) and rushes in sloppy sox to the theater where Elvis is making a personal appearance, (or day-dreams about how she someday will if she lives in the sticks) and she prays with all the irrepressible, impossible hopes of youth that Elvis will Discover her. And it's all decidedly sexual. It's also clean and normal and natural and inevitable and I wish people would stop getting in such an uproar about it. # You're missing the opportunity of a lifetime. Don't you realize you could make a fortune during the Lawrence Welk shows charging admission -- JUST one dime -- the TENTH of a dollar, ladeez and geminun -- to the spectacle of Boyd Raeburn slouched in an easy chair licking his feet in the air!

One page left to hit a few high spots of the remaining slew of zines. Trouble is that, although check marks abound, nothing I had in mind really seems worth saying with space and time at such a premium. Which seems to refute my favorite old saying: "I'm writing this long letter because I haven't time to write a note."

GROTESQUE/Martin: VA hospitals would appreciate your old magazines.

THE RAMBLING FAP #7/Calkins: Miami PD has a sort of comic opera jailhouse.

Prisoners are everlastingly escaping, climbing through the windows, or, as one did, during a march through the corridor, simply joining a group of people waiting for the elevator and riding down and out. # Why the confusion about the deadline date? Always the 2nd Saturday.

LE MOINDRE/Raeburn: So you're talking about amorous beasties too. But disregarding the moral aspects of it, WHY should a gorilla find any girl seductive considering the standards he would naturally have of female attractiveness? # Maybe some teenagers drink because they like the effect too. # I don't believe Mary can be pronounced with a long "e."

BIRDSMITH/McCain: This is one of those with the most multitudinous check marks -- very interesting issue, Vernon. Thought you hadn't commented on PHlotz until I realized that the almost full-page headed PAMPHREY could only have been comment on Ed Cox's article. Would you like my recipe for meat loaf? # I think Monroe is one of the sharpest.

FAPESMO/Harness: If Myers can use his newspaper for activity credit, why can't I include 65 of our Egg Letters some mailing? I proof-read, stencil and run them off, and they'd be so handy in a pinch.

SHAWZINES: How much munny, hunny, for EXCELSIOR? # I'll bet that black-out in FREDDIE the FIREMAN was just a curiosity arouser. # By golly I was able to read every word of that opus by Budrys. The trick is to sneak oblique peeks at it, never a direct look. # Is Ted White beardless now??? # Here's an answer for Larry and Algis's problem of how robot bartenders could be used. Just eliminate the problem for the robot. Equip everybody with a soldered-on ID bracelet, of one metal for adults and another for non-adults. Entrances to bars, adult entertainment, etc. could be keyed to sound an alarm at passage of the illegal metal. The same system could be used to keep unauthorized adults out of schools, playgrounds and other children's territory.

STEFANTASY/Danner: The Skeptic Tank this time was Archer at his most hilarious. # Wim Struyck's letter inspired me to commit an unnameable horror which, mercifully, there is no space for here. However, I can't guarantee not to perpetrate it on Fapa next issue. Be warned!

THE FANTASY AMATEUR: What egoboo! Thank y'all. # Did anyone else notice that Bill Danner was miscounted by 100 votes. Makes him an easy third.

QABAL/Fapa's Finest: Oh to be in Fond du Lac now that spring is here...

GAVAGE/Janke: Lamb, we don't "review" fapazines in the usual sense of the word -- mailing comments are mostly just plain conversation. # Hey, you misread me. I did not puff That Book as Literature. I simply said it was hilarious in spots, which t'was. Next issue, if I can remember, I'll quote a bit -- I've got to refute this libel. # "ineluctable fragrance of virtue" -- hmmm. Shucks, man, me who's always dreamed of being a Dangerous Woman? # Welcome to the fold.

End of the line, omitting all sorts lovely stuff. Tip of the topper to HORIZONS (about which I could have written pages), CENTURY NOTE, BURBLINGS, REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST & FANTASIA. Appreciation to all the others, with a special booby prize for Wansborough -- surely, Norm, you can do better.

## AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN ...

With all the emphasis on and chatter about automation these days, I've been surprised and quite appalled at the demonstration of coolie labor I've had in my back yard the past few weeks. The spectacle of a crew of men demolishing three six-storey apartment buildings with little more than bare fingernails seems as incongruous as would a modern pants factory with workmen sitting cross-legged on the floor, nimble fingers plying thread-tailed needles and biting the ends off with their teeth.

These coolies are no downtrodden minority. A couple are colored or Puerto Rican but the rest are Anglo-Saxon -- including their language. It is not that better methods haven't been invented because I've seen the giant ball swung on a crane that can knock down a great building in hours -- and a lot more safely. Probably the entire primitive system was dreamed up by some union -- or retained by same -- to employ 20 men for weeks at hard labor on a job that should be completed in days. This is the sort of thing that makes me grouch at many union tactics -- such make-work antics are unnecessary, as our economy today can surely absorb the labors of these men more productively.

The crew seems to be divided into two groups -- one in charge of interior demolition and woodwork, and the others knocking down the brick exterior walls and open beams. Both groups present a masterly study in inefficiency.

The interior workers are armed with oversize crowbars -- and nothing else. After smashing the windows, they set to and pry away with infinite patience at walls, floors, window frames and all other wooden surfaces, gouging and straining to release the boards, intact or in pieces. In back of each building is a solid windowless structure rising to the second story -- we'll call them warehouses 'cause that's what they look like. Well, all these bits and pieces of boards are tossed out the windows to pile up on the roofs of the warehouses, then they are picked up piece by piece and thrown to the ground -- from where they are again picked up piece by piece to be loaded on trucks and carted off -- from where I presume they are again picked etc. etc. etc...

Not that the wood is being salvaged for any profitable purpose. It is all too smashed up and, living in much the same sort of ancient structure, I know the timber therein can be splintered with a table fork.

Now that all that rotten wood has been disposed of so laboriously, there remains the brick shells of the buildings. These consist of a single row of bricks forming walls roughly 5 inches wide, 6 storeys high. Then comes the part of the operation that freezes me every time I glance out the window. It is the most stupid and dangerous procedure I've ever witnessed.

Those huskys entrusted with the brickwork now climb dizzily up to the top of the narrow wall -- none too solid by now, I'd venture -- and with their little sledge-hammers peck the wall from under them brick by brick, or piece-of-brick by piece-of-brick. Many of the bricks shatter instead of tumbling down into the building intact, releasing a cloud of brick dust into the faces of the men with every blow. The trick, apparently, is to hammer just hard enough to break off a brick or portion thereof, but not to smash hard enough to cause the section you're on to tumble down also. As the part you're hammering is

just a foot or so from where you're clinging, it's an operation that obviously requires a high order of skill.

While this crew are working their way down by knocking the props out from under themselves, the others are on the roof below, now just a platform of sorts made of narrow, rotten beams, set double and about 14 inches apart. The brick-smashers are supposed to knock their bricks down into the apartment section of the building but every so often the bricks fly the wrong way and land among the men working on the beams below. Whenever that happens, the guy 'way up there peers down worriedly to see if any heads were crushed, and the fellows on the beams look up worriedly too. Then they all fatalistically go back to their banging and gouging.

The gang on the beams have to step pretty carefully because it's a longish way down if they should happen to stumble and slip through the beams. They are working with that marvel of technology mentioned previously -- the crowbar. With it, they teeter on one beam and, with considerable force, hack, gouge and pry away at the beam next to them until it breaks off and falls by portions to the ground below. If it just breaks in the middle, they stand on the few inches of brick wall of the next door warehouse -- now beam-less -- and gouge at the beams where they begin, on the wall they're balancing on! When most of the beams are gone, and the remaining ones are about 4-feet apart, it becomes necessary to both stand on, and demolish, a beam at the same time. I said the beams are double. So they somehow cling to one edge of it and pry away at the other near their toes until they separate the thing and half of it goes crashing below. Finally, standing again on the brick wall, they sledge-hammer the remaining half-beams down.

Now only the windowless brick walls are standing -- 2-storys high. Two men perch on each corner of the walls and start chipping their way down through the corner -- literally chipping away the bricks beneath them. Each man chips a section about two feet wide, straight down, knocking out a portion, stepping into it, and knocking out his previous foothold, 'til they reach the ground. When this operation is completed, all that remains is the four towering walls, unsupported, with no corners to hold them together. Then comes the most stirring sight of all -- you might even say Heinleinesque ...

All the men grab long heavy poles, and, using them as battering rams, charge en masse at the brick walls, striking half-way up their height, until suddenly the wall collapses in one piece into the interior. The firmament quakes, and for hours afterward the air and houses around, including mine, are filled with brick dust, seeping through window cracks and settling redly on every surface. I shudder at thought of the lungs of the workmen. I shudder for another reason too. When a brick wall is rammed amidships with such force, is there any law of physics that says the wall will fall intact in the direction of the ramming? It seems to me that the wall might well break at the point of thrust, sending the lower half forward, while the upper half topples backward onto the men. It probably never does, though, or I guess the men would be spending six months more chipping away each individual brick in the walls.

As a good SF fan, it's occurred to me that maybe all this nonsense isn't happening at all -- that maybe my window is impinging on a time-warp and I'm really gawping through a peephole into the past. I'll let you all know if they start constructing a new building out there with wooden pegs.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Does anyone  
pitch horseshoes anymore --  
and where do you get 'em?