



# LEIGH EDMONDS' 1971

## PROLOGUE: 1969

Leigh Edmonds sits hunched over his collapsible table with the light shining from an altogether unfavourable position. This table is positioned in about the centre of the room, though it is close to the bed, for that is what Leigh is sitting on. The bed is covered by one of those blue bed covers with the frilly stuff in a wavy pattern on it.

To the left of Leigh (and he will see it if he looks up - ah yes, just as I remembered it) is the head of the bed, made as it is of light-grained, stained wood in such a manner that a person can stack books on it, which is what Leigh has done.

All the books are paperbacks, but there is no uniformity in their width or the colour of their spines. From left to right they are: RICHARD THE THIRD, THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH, RICHARD THE THIRD (again?), THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PEANUTS, A CONCISE HANDBOOK OF BETTER ENGLISH, BRIGHTER THAN A THOUSAND SUNS (which was a book that Leigh read when he was trying to do matric. at night

"I must really admit to you all that I have nothing to admit. This may be a pity to you, but I'm happy up here, where I wish you all were so that we could be here together."

- Leigh Edmonds

"This year I narrowly avoided the decision that mankind is basically good after all."

- Harry Warner Jr

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

- St Paul

LEIGH EDMONDS  
BILL WRIGHT  
HARRY WARNER JR  
BRUCE GILLESPIE  
in  
S F COMMENTARY 28

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DISCUSSED IN THIS ISSUE - S F COMMENTARY 28 CHECKLIST

Kobo Abe: INTER ICE AGE FOUR (41, 43) \* ANZAPA (10, 20) \* APA-45 (6-7) \* ASIO (18-19) \* AUSTRALIA IN 75 COMMITTEE (20) \* AUSTRALIAN S F ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 1972 (50) \* John Bangsund (6-7, 10, 13, 17) \* John Bangsund (ed.): AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY (18) \* John Bangsund (ed.): AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (17) \* Bernie Bernhouse (14) \* BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC 1971 (44) \* BEST FILMS 1971 (45-46, 49) \* BEST NOVELS 1971 (41-43, 48-49) \* BEST POP MUSIC 1971 (44) \* Ingmar Bergman (dir.): SHAME (45) \* Valma Brown (1, 13-16) \* Kevin Brownlow & Andrew Rollo (dirs.): IT HAPPENED HERE (45-46) \* CALL HER SAVAGE (24-25) \* Michael Cameron (14) \* Elias Canetti: AUTO DA FE (41-42) \* COMORG (17-18) \* Thomas Disch: BODIES (39-40) \* Leigh Edmonds (2, 5-16, 37) \* Leigh Edmonds (ed.): RATAPLAN (5) \* Leigh Edmonds (ed.): THRUSTING MEMBER (18-19) \* Leigh Edmonds & John Foyster (eds.): BOYS OWN FANZINE (10, 18) \* FAPA (6, 21) \* John Foyster (6, 10, 38) \* William Gaddis: THE RECOGNITIONS (41-42) \* Costa Gavras (dir.): THE CONFESSION (45-46) \* Costa Gavras (dir.): Z (45-46) \* Bruce Gillespie (37-50) \* Gounod: FAUST (12) \* Carey Handfield (33) \* Lee Harding (11, 15) \* Anthony Harvey (dir.): THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS (45-46) \* Dick Jenssen (18) \* Robin Johnson (10) \* JUST IMAGINE (25) \* Elia Kazan (dir.): THE ARRANGEMENT (45) \* Buster Keaton (dir.): THE GENERAL (25) \* Allan Jay Lerner: MY FAIR LADY (33) \* Ken Loach (dir.): KES (45-46) \* Lesleigh Luttrell (7, 10, 50) \* Thomas Mann: JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS (41, 43) \* MELBOURNE MUSIC CENTRE (10) \* MELBOURNE S F CLUB (17, 19) \* MELBOURNE S F CLUB ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 1969 (8) \* Michael Moorcock (ed.): NEW WORLDS (47) \* Mozart: COSI FAN TUTTE (12) \* MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY (31) \* Robert Musil: THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES (41-42) \* NEW YORK TIMES (24) \* NFFF (33) \* NOREASCON (21-22, 35) \* OKLAHOMA SHERIFF (25) \* Elio Petri (dir.): INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION (45) \* THE PRIVATE SEA LSD AND THE SEARCH FOR GOD (5) \* Marcel Proust: REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST (41-43) \* Puccini: LA BOHEME (11-12) \* ROSTRUM MOVEMENT (20, 36) \* Donna Runic (11-13) \* Joanna Russ: THE VIEW FROM THIS WINDOW (39-40) \* John Sandler (13) \* S F COMMENTARY AWARD (39-40, 47-48) \* THE SHADOW OF THE EAGLE (25) \* Bernard Shaw: PYGMALION (33) \* Donald Shebib (dir.): GOING DOWN THE ROAD (45-46) \* Paul Stevens (6) \* Preston Sturges (script): THE POWER AND THE GLORY (24) \* Professor Humphrey Tape (39, 46-47) \* TENTH AUSTRALIAN S F CONVENTION (11, 18) \* TRUE GRIT (26) \* Wilson Tucker: YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN (42-43) \* Luchino Visconti (dir.): DEATH IN VENICE (45) \* Harry Warner Jr (21-36) \* Harry Warner Jr: ALL OUR YESTERDAYS (21, 32) \* Harry Warner Jr (ed.): HORIZONS (21) \* Bill Wright (17-20, 36) \* WWVA (26) \*



school during the first year he lived in Melbourne, 1966. He lived at the YMCA., PARKINSON'S LAW, A DUSTBIN OF MILLIGAN, A BOOK OF BITS OR A BIT OF A BOOK, THE TWO CULTURES: A SECOND LOOK, "LOVE ME DO": THE BEATLES' PROGRESS (very well eyetracked this), VOSS, THE SCIENCE OF FLIGHT (on extended loan to me from Mike Rice - which will mean something to John Bangsund), THE ODYSSEY, COOPER'S CREEK, THE MAGUS, NOTHING LIKE THE SUN, ROGET'S THESAURUS, THE IMAGE OF NEWTON AND LOCKE IN THE AGE OF REASON, EUROPE OF THE ANCIEN REGIME, THE ARISTOS, THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION - HEAVEN AND HELL, ENGLAND IN TRANSITION, THE HISTORY OF MODERN FRANCE, ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, EROS DENIED, THE PRIVATE SEA LSD & THE SEARCH FOR GOD (out of which Leigh got his current beliefs in God. He was reading the passage which says, "But in pure immanence, or pantheism, God's nature and man's nature are identical. God is just another word for mankind as a whole, or the universe as a whole or reality as a whole, or the life-force as a whole. In pantheism it is neither insanity nor heresy to imagine you are God, because in fact you are God." As Leigh read this it was as if all the words "you" were written in capitals as "YOU", and in that second said, "Of course", and became a pantheist. There is no logic in it but there is no need for logic.), DRUGS, DYING, THE KORAN, and THE PERFUMED GARDEN.

There should be more books there, as there was once, but Leigh has arranged the two speakers of his record player at each end of the shelf so that when he lies with his head on the pillow he gets it full in both ears. Leigh enjoys this. The speakers are laid on their sides because if they stood right way up they would not fit into the shelves, as they are too high in height (or, if you want to look at it another way, the shelf being too short in lowness). Because the speakers are on their sides there is room on their sides (now their toes) for other books, but Leigh so placed only two books, MESSIAH, by Gore Vidal which is near the left speaker, and CATCH 22, by Joseph Heller (Leigh had to reach over and pick it up to check to see if he was right) which is on top of the right speaker.

Above the books and the speakers is a board which comprises the top of the bed-end. It is a bit dusty, for Leigh is not as clean and tidy as he wishes he were. At the left, pushed right up against the wall there is a pile of paper in American-quarto size. The lower part of it is white because they are copies of RATAPLAN 4 which have not been posted out yet. They are all bound for places other than inside Australia, as Leigh intends to post them out with RATAPLAN 5, which he should be working on instead of this.

(The light from the reading lamp is reflected in Leigh's eye from his pen as he writes (this is all being done longhand first), distracting him from his work. The pen is a "Shaeffers - Made in Australia", which is moulded in light grey plastic, all except the nib (which would be too difficult to describe at the moment) and a silver metal band about two inches above the nib. Leigh unscrews the pen at this point to put in the ink cartridges. The top of the pen is also made of a silver metal and it slides onto the pen, so as to protect the nib, up to this metal band where he unscrews it to put in the ink. It is the light reflected from this top which distracts Leigh and he wonders why he doesn't take it off. Logic, however, tells him that he puts the top on the pen on the opposite end of the pen from the nib so that he will know where to find it when he wishes to use it to protect the nib. Also he has learned from experience that placing the silver nib protector as he does, makes the pen feel longer and lets it balance better in his hand.

Leigh likes this pen because it is a fountain pen, but he does wish that the join between the nib and light-grey plastic case was inktight so that the ink

wouldn't come out and stain the first two fingers of his right hand as well as his thumb. At any rate, the packet which the ink cartridges come in (five to a packet) is labelled "washable" and through experience Leigh has found that this is so, even for the white handkerchief he once had to use to clean up some ink.)

On top of these are several hundred sheets of paper in various colours. These are copies of the eighteenth and nineteenth mailings of APA-45, the former of which is 462 pages long and the latter of which is 338 pages long. Leigh is glad to be a member of APA-45 because he is sure that it is perhaps the best apa in existence these days. John Foyster has told him of the sad shape of SAPS and Leigh can see for himself that FAPA isn't all that strong because the latest FANTASY AMATEUR, number 128, shows that there are only 240 pages in the current mailing, even with three times the members that there are in APA-45. Leigh is on the mailing list for FAPA, number 30 on the mailing list, and John Bangsund is in slot 26. John Foyster was once on the FAPA waiting list, but just of late he made it onto the membership roster, where he is number 26. This is John's first mailing and he has contributed seventeen pages to it. This copy of the FANTASY AMATEUR is lying on top of the APA-45 mailings and Leigh has already responded to it. He can't help but wonder if John Bangsund has.

On top of that is a five-cent stamp.

Over that there are two pieces of paper. The lower one is a note left by Paul Stevens and it reads:

Leigh

I'll very likely be in the club until late but otherwise I'll go down to St Kilda to see MADIGAN and THE SECRET WAR OF HARRY FRIGG. That's if there's nothing better on.

Don't worry about tea. (We need bread-not lettuce-bread.)

Yours fannishly  
Paul.

(Leigh pauses to wonder about the "bread-not lettuce-bread" and then when he finally gets it, he laughs. He cannot help thinking that if he'd written it he would have written "Bread-not lettuce not into temptation." Then he remembers that he is not Paul; good ol' Paul who is even now down at the Binns' home helping to bag dahlias.) Underneath is scrawled in black felt-point pen:

PS: As it is now 11.00 pm - Forget it! P.S.

Leigh remembers that the note must have been written on the weekend when John Bangsund rang him at work and asked him if he wanted to come up and play a couple of games of chess, so he left straight after work to go up without going home first. Leigh likes to do things on impulse. He likes to think that it's good for him. Those chess games weren't, though: he lost four games and won one.

Leigh remembers another note which Paul left him on a similar occasion. It said: "TWONK!"

The other piece of paper is folded up, but so that you can read what is written

\* (\*\*brg\*\* Both John and Leigh are now members of FAPA.\*\*)

on it from the outside. The writing is his own handwriting. There are two parts to it. The top one is:

I must really admit to you that I have nothing to admit. This may be a pity to you, but I'm happy up here where I wish you all were so that we could be here together.

Below this is a tear where it seems that Leigh wished to separate this note from the rest of the sheet. Below this he has written "Cruddy Paper" but this is crossed out with a single line and below that he has written "Crappy Paper-back Book".

Casting his mind back, Leigh recalls that this sheet of paper was written out at Bernie's six days ago and they tripped on acid. It was a beautiful, weird experience and that is all he can think of to sum it up. That makes him sad. There were a couple of other things of a non-personal and communicable nature which he brought back, one of which is a story which ends with the punchline, "They come and cover it with plastic, cut it up and sell it." Leigh can remember what the story is about but he can't remember how to write it properly.

The piece of paper goes back onto the file even though the contents have been put to the use for which they were intended. The paper is a memento. Leigh has only one memento of his first trip, a small piece of paper which he carries around in his wallet and which bears the word "YEAH" written in freaky printing. Leigh cherishes it as it were part of himself. I guess that maybe it is.

On top of all that nostalgia there is a copy of XLV 20, the OFFICIAL ORGAN for the 20th mailing of APA-45. Lesleigh Couch, who is the OE (though by now she will be married to one of the other members, Hank Luttrell, and thus, Lesleigh Luttrell) sent this to Leigh by airmail so that he would have an idea what has been going on while he is waiting for the actual mailing of 424 pages without postmailings to arrive. It is on top because he has just sent back to Lesleigh his voting for the EGOBOO POLL BALLOT and CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

At the very top of this stack is a paper-bound copy of the Advent book, THE PROCEEDINGS: DISCON, which Leigh bought from John Bangsund at Haliford House last weekend. He gets up from where he is writing and puts it with the books which he has lined up along the window sill, between THE PROCEEDINGS: CHICON III, and IN SEARCH OF WONDER, by Damon Knight.

There are fifty-two books lined up there, all but fourteen of them hard-covered. Resting on some of the books is a furry object with yellowish-coloured fur, two big fabric ears, button eyes, and a small golden ball for its nose. Its tail is a length of brownish fabric that is the same colour as the ears and sewn up so that it is sort of round. It looks something like a large rat but Leigh would rather refer to it as "fake puss", since the pet-hating owners of the flat won't let him have a real one.

Resting on the book furthest from the bed on which Leigh is sitting is a small trophy made out of two pieces of polished wood. The bottom piece is so shaped that four of its sides are rectangles with each of the four vertices being right angles. The two other faces are also rectangles, but they are so sloped that only two of the vertices are right angles and of the other two, the one which is closest to the base is an acute angle, and the one which is nearer to the top is obtuse (but their sum is still two right angles - intriguing, don't you agree?). Thus when this trophy is viewed from (what Leigh calls) the front, the forward face of this lower piece is sloped up and away. This

face bears a small plaque and an inscription, both of which will be returned to when the nature of the upper piece is made known.

The upper component of the trophy is thinner in its least thickness, maybe one third, of what the lower component is in its least thickness. Looking from the front, this component is pentagonal in shape. The uppermost two sides are of equal length and meet at a right angle. These two sides also meet two of the other sides so that the angle formed at their point of convergence is also a right angle. (Speaking off the cuff, it would seem likely that this upper wood component was in its original form a square, but part of it broke off. So much for idle speculation.) The lower three sides of the component appear to be of approximately equal lengths, though perhaps the lowermost one is slightly shorter. Certainly the two sides which are not the bottom are equal in length. The design is also such that the two lowermost sides that are not the bottom side, meet that side at equal angles (which cannot be measured with any great accuracy without the properly calibrated instrument). The lower side is bevelled so that it can be placed in the base component of the trophy at an angle which is equal to the angle at which the front face of the lower component slopes back. Despite this, however, the two components do not combine to form one surface. This is because the upper component is set in the middle of the upper surface of the lower component.

There is a plaque mounted on the front (that is, the surface which is more readily available to visual access because of the slope of the upper component because of the bevel mentioned earlier) of the upper wooden component of the trophy by a method which cannot be deduced visually. Further attention will be accorded to this plaque in a moment.

The upper component of the trophy is attached to the lower wooden component by a screw through the bottom of the base into the bevelled face of the upper component. So that the trophy will rest squarely on a flat surface, the hole for the screw (which is a flat-head) has been countersunk.

The inscription on the upper plaque reads:

MELBOURNE  
SCIENCE FICTION  
CLUB

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

and the lower plaque reads:

to  
LEIGH EDMONDS  
FAN ACHIEVEMENTS  
EASTER CONVENTION 1969

Leigh gets up and puts the trophy back where it was; another one of those nostalgia-laden things. He is very glad to have it, but even so it makes him sad to realise the Achievement Award is something that he will own until the day he dies, and already there is a little chip off the top.

The last book is THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY.

- Leigh Edmonds, THE MECHANISM 7, October 1969

# LEIGH EDMONDS: 1971

## A BALL-BEARING MEIN LEBEN

As I sit and write this, I puff away on a cigarette and have CSN&Y coming in through the record player. The cigarette tastes strange. Maybe it's getting late and I've smoked too many of the things today. Maybe it's because when trying to get myself to reconsider what I was doing at the beginning of 1971 my taste buds have decided to recapture that burning rubbish-heap fragrance that I knew so well back then. When I try to think myself into a mood in which I can write about myself a year and some months ago I disorientate me and lose me in a stream of thought that is so personal and non-verbal that it poses an impossible task.

I might be able to take the easy way out and just say that on this day I did this and on another day, that. But I don't feel inclined to bore you with a list of happenings without showing you the person who did these things and show you the reasons why such an unlikely person would do such things. Am I a special person who bears no relationship to ordinary people? No; whether I like it or not, I'm just like everybody else. But, although I don't actually remember it too well, I have been asked by the editor of this journal to recount one-twenty-third of the reason why I am today who I am. -- what it was like to be Leigh Edmonds in 1971.

Let's take up this story some time in the last months of 1970.

For a long time I had been interested in music, and interested in lots of other things. I had so many hobbies that I didn't have time to do them all properly, but I didn't have anything that was really important. This fact was giving me a lot of sleepless nights. I suppose that everybody goes through the phase when they must re-evaluate everything they do and are and I suppose that they have to do it many times. But this was my first time, and I didn't know what was going on. Despite a desperate searching, I was finding out nothing. I had several friends who had been here before; they were all trying to help me but the quest was mine and I had to find my own way out of the maze.

So I decided to take up music as a serious study, and not keep it as something that just poured into my ears. I attended a night class on music theory and told myself that I was going to learn to play the piano. Although I had de-



cided to buy a piano about three-quarters of the way through 1970 I didn't get around to it until some time in February. I was living in a little box flat with Paul Stevens and since the walls of the flat were very thin I didn't think that it would be at all fair to all the people around me if I practised and annoyed them. So I had to move.

Robin Johnson moved down from Sydney towards the end of the year. He was looking for a place to live so I suggested to him that we find a house. We spent a couple of Saturdays looking at places, and in the end we settled for a half-house in Moonee Ponds. It was a nice old-fashioned place with big rooms and high ceilings and an arch in the hall with a gargoyle that looked down on people as they came in the front door. We spent a couple of weeks settling in. Then I gathered up my courage in both hands and went out to try to find a decent piano and somebody to teach me to play it.

I finished up at a place called the Melbourne Music Centre where I was introduced to a man with a fantastic beard and a quiet voice. He listened as I explained what I wanted and why I wanted it. I told him that I was interested in the theory of music, and that I had decided that I needed to play an instrument so that I could understand it, and that a piano would be the best instrument to learn. He organised it so that I could get a piano, and he gave me a piano lesson. He told me how to hold my hands and where to put them and gave me a couple of finger exercises.

The next evening was very rushed. Firstly I met Donna outside Flinders Street station and chatted for a bit. I went and signed the pieces of paper for my piano and then went out to visit Carla Harding. I met John Bangsund at Harding's place and convinced him that he should drive me to the Masonic Centre; I had a ticket to a chamber music concert, an all-Bach program. Listening to Bach all night becomes a bit boring after a while and soon all the music seems the same and so I went to sleep.

The day after, my piano was delivered, and Robin, who was between jobs at that time, was instructed to ring me the moment it arrived. He did, and I could hardly contain myself until it was time to leave work, get home, and start the long and time-consuming business of learning to play it. I ran down to the station, ran home from the Moonee Ponds station, then burst into my room and it looked so beautiful and polished. I dragged up a chair to the piano and started - C.. D.. E.. D.. C.. E.. C.. - and I was in love with the thing.

For the first few months I would spend a couple of hours a night practising. There wasn't very much else that I felt interested in. Fanac fell to almost nil, and only Lesleigh's kindly bending of the rules kept me in APA-45. Finally I was thrown out of ANZAPA and I had not produced one genzine. I even resigned from the Australia In '75 Committee for awhile. I went back to night school and repeated the course on music theory that I had done the year before; not that it was much good because I had to try to figure out grade five theory on a piano when I had hardly a scrap of grade one piano. I used to write bits and pieces of tune with modulations thrown in, and then I wouldn't be able to play it to find out what it sounded like.

In January John Foyster and I produced the first issue of BOYS' OWN FANZINE and posted it out. We had very good intentions to make it a quarterly publication, but you know what happens to good intentions, and some of you will know what happened to BOYS' OWN FANZINE. But there was some work done on the second issue - I typed the editorials and letter column but somehow John never got around to typing up the rest of the issue. We decided that to save space we would use John Bangsund's IBM Selectric with the small type so that we

could get as much as possible into as small a number of pages as possible. This meant that I would have to spend a lot of time at Bangsund's, and as you can imagine I didn't at all mind spending lots of time in the same place as Valma, and as it turned out, she didn't mind too much, either...

Of course, Lee Harding deserves a lot of the blame for what I've done. He is one of those people who can express feelings in a way that people like myself cannot express them. Even before I took up music Lee helped me to clarify the situation and me, for myself. During most of 1970 and part of 1971 I used to visit Lee and Carla quite often at weekends. The Harding household is like a different world from everybody else's, and Lee helped me to think about things in a new way. I sorely needed something like that in the days just before the beginning of 1971, when I was looking for things I felt I needed. Lee became a mentor, but as 1971 progressed and I began to find my own feet, I ceased to lean upon Lee for, well, spiritual guidance. The relationship changed from one of dependence to one of friendship.

It was Lee who invited Donna and I to a party that the Hardings held after the New Year's Convention. I had just met Donna at the Convention; we sat together during the Film Festival, and got along well from then on. On the night of the party Donna and I went to Hardings' place in the hills. We sat together in a little room just off the lounge room and talked away to ourselves. At about 11pm, Donna's sister rang the house and said that Donna's mother was terribly worried about her, and could she please come home now? We called a taxi, and drove all the way from one side of Melbourne to the other (it cost me seven dollars, but got me a goodnight kiss). Since it was only early evening, and the taxi driver told me that it wouldn't cost me anything to go back to Hardings' (for some obscure Transport Regulation Board reason) I went back to the party. When I returned I caught up on a night's drinking (a successful effort), chatted to everyone else, and went to sleep on the lounge-room floor. Next thing I remember Lee woke me in the morning by rolling me over with his foot. The best thing about that night was that I now had enough confidence to ring up Donna again and ask her out.

I read in the newspaper that some operas were on, and I decided to go to see what they were really like. I was paid on a Thursday, so I went to the Princess and bought two tickets to see LA BOHEME and FAUST. I didn't particularly like Puccini, but one of the engineers at work had told me that it was one of the most beautiful operas, and in those days I was young and impressionable. I spent something like \$20 on four tickets. I wouldn't have minded going to see other operas, but I just didn't have any more spare money.

So one Monday night I met Donna after work; we went somewhere to eat and then off to the opera. Donna was about five feet six with lovely legs and nice big tits and beautiful wavy hair and nice round face and I really enjoyed being with her as she was my first real girlfriend and boy, was it ever big deal!

We saw LA BOHEME from the second back row of the stalls at the Princess Theatre. If any of you have ever sat right up the back in the Princess you'll know how bad it is. Still, it was the first opera that I'd ever seen, and for most of the first act I was in seventh heaven and then when they got around to that YOUR TINY HAND IS FROZEN aria I went into ecstasy, and could you honestly tell me that you wouldn't unless you are a real pleb?

But, ah, Puccini had the silliest plots for his operas, and I didn't know as

much about Italian opera as I do now, as my head was still filled up with Wagner. Donna said that she enjoyed it a lot. I didn't know whether she meant it or not, and I supposed that I had liked it and we went home in a taxi which cost me a pretty penny. We had a nice kiss and cuddle in the back seat and that was worth at least five Puccini operas (and I seem to remember that during that season the Australian Opera staged two, or was it three, Puccini operas).

We saw FAUST from the back row of the stalls. This is just a little bit worse than the second back row - but FAUST goes a little bit longer, which is real fun when you've never heard it before and have forgotten all the French you learned at school except for "je suis", which means that they are the only words you understand. Isn't it remarkable how many times characters tell you what or who they are? However, I do remember that Donald Shanks sang Mephistopheles, and he was really good.

Donna was Czech, but her father was Italian, so that she could understand what happened in the Puccini opera, but she was just as lost with French as I was. She went to sleep, which really made me feel good. But I was there to enjoy the opera, and by hell that was exactly what I was going to do. I was put out because Donna went to sleep, but I didn't know how to react because at this stage I didn't know what one did with a brand new girlfriend. Lee Harding had said that maybe opera wasn't what you took sixteen-year-old girls to, but then again I wasn't too sure where else I would take her.

One time she talked me into seeing COUNT YORGA. I found it rather ghastly as a film, and I almost died when a vampire popped around the corner at me. Then there was the time I took her to see the film WOODSTOCK. She didn't like it very much, and I should have known right there that our tastes weren't very similar. As I said, I wasn't very impressed with FAUST and I wasn't happy with Donna snoozing away in the seat next to me after I had gone to all that trouble and expense. Since the relationship was sort of tentative I told her that no. I didn't mind in the slightest, and I was so sweet and understanding (now if Valma did that to me there'd be hell to pay and I'd be utterly unbearable). But again we went home in a taxi and there was another kiss and cuddle which was... well, I was starting to get used to the idea.

The next opera I saw was a small-scale production of COSI FAN TUTTE. If I write here that this was the one that really sold me on opera, you can get some idea of how much I loved it, and how fondly I still remember it. Perhaps another reason why I enjoyed this one more, was because I went to it with a friend of Diane Bangsund's; she really did enjoy it, but that was the only time that I took her out because this was getting somewhere near the end of May, and after that I was too preoccupied.

The only other opera I managed to see was an amateur production of MARTHA. If you've never heard of it, neither had I, and though I sometimes mention it in conversation, I've yet to meet a person who knows anything about it. Actually it was quite lousy, and so was the production, but I enjoyed it immensely. I went by myself, and I can still sing the two main songs from it for you if you like, as they were so catchy.

But before I finish talking about opera, I may as well write here that Donna is a very nice girl, and though she will probably never get to read this I would like to publicly thank her for that wonderful quarter-hour we spent passin' on (as my sister would say) on the seat at the city square while the two guys on the next seat kept up a running commentary, and we also put in a

few words while we had a breath of air.

When I had bought a piano, and had decided to play, I figured out that I was going to straighten out everything. I would be able to make some sense of the rather pointless life that I'd been leading up until that time. Music would supply the intellectual need but I still had to experience the way of the flesh, even though I didn't get to do exactly that.

My birthday wasn't at all happy. Since I didn't tell anybody, nobody bothered to say "Happy birthday", which would have made me happy because I was particularly down that day. I went and spent a half-hour learning how to play the piano, and then I went home, practised, and felt neglected. Donna rang late in the evening to say "Happy birthday" and stuff like that. This perked me up a great deal, and that was that. The next day we met quickly after work and she gave me a cigarette lighter, which was not exactly what I would have liked, because I'd given up smoking two days before that. So I took up smoking again. A day or two later I was down visiting John Bangsund, and he gave me a book that he had come across in a shop - piano transcriptions of the first five Beethoven symphonies, for four hands unfortunately, but still very interesting reading. Valma gave me a card which said that she was sorry that she had missed this birthday and promised that the next one would be better (and was it ever, because she gave me THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA and THE FEMALE EUNUCH).

John Bangsund had a birthday sometime in March or April (I forget just when). Valma arranged a surprise birthday for him. She arranged for a couple of mutual friends to come around and take John out for dinner. While that was happening, all the guests would arrive and John would arrive home for a surprise party. I went down to John's place right after work to help Valma prepare the party, and to enjoy her company. We set up candles in bottles, etc, the guests started arriving, and soon they were all there. John was due any minute. He didn't arrive. We waited, and still he didn't come. Valma started to worry, and all we could do was to wait some more.

By ten o'clock we were all quite bored and just a bit angry at John and his two friends. John and Elizabeth Foyster gave up waiting and decided to go home. They offered Robin and I a lift to the station. We said goodnight to Valma and hoped that everything would be all right. I told her not to be upset, and we drove off leaving everyone else still sitting bored and waiting.

I never heard the full story of what happened to John Bangsund that night - but it was said that John Sandler (one of the conspiratorial friends) crushed his hand in the door of his car and John had to take him to a hospital to fix it.

Valma Brown had done some acting with the Repertory Theatre in Brisbane, and, having gone as far as possible in Brisbane, she came to Melbourne to seek her fame and fortune. About that time John Bangsund advertised for someone "nice but corrigible" to share his flat. Valma answered the ad, and she ended up sharing a flat with John Bangsund. This caused a great deal of (unfounded) idle speculation about them both. I met her for the first time on Good Friday morning when I went down to Bangsund's to do a couple of things for the Mini Melcon, which started that day. Valma was a pretty, thin girl with long, red hair and a very expressive face. I quite liked her. After that I seemed to spend more and more time down at John's place talking away to Valma, and after a month or two John used to bring us Milo in bed, and not too long after that we decided to move into a flat together.

Actually, the first time I went out with Valma was when she rang me up to say that she had a couple of free tickets to see a play at St Martins, and would I come along with her? So along I went. It was the first time that I had been to St Martins and a long time since I'd been to my last play. The play was a thing called THE HAPPY APPLE. It was quite fun but the last half of the third act let it down tremendously. On the way home (we went home to John's by tram, which was a great saving) we stopped off to look at the War Memorial and somewhere else Valma decided to remove some milk from a back door. We took that home and put it in the refrigerator for John to find. He did, and joke of jokes, it was bad.

Another time Valma and I and Michael Cameron and Liz somebody went along to the Victory Cinema. We saw some bloodthirsty film, and I carried Valma home on my back. When we got back to Bangsund's there he was sitting with George Turner and getting stinking drunk. We all joined in and Michael and I ended up in the lounge room at four in the morning - he was talking and I just wanted to get some sleep.

Michael had come to Melbourne from Brisbane with Neil Rahman for the New Years Convention. Neil had done all the talking, but Michael was the person whom I had enjoyed meeting. I just wished that he had been more given to opening his mouth. A couple of months later I received a letter from Michael saying that he was coming down to Melbourne to live. He asked if I could put him up for awhile. I asked Robin if it was okay, and so Michael came down and stayed in our front room. He wasn't supposed to stay for long, but he did, and we spent quite a few nights sitting at the kitchen table talking and playing monopoly, which I always won and attributed to his lack of "will to win".

Michael met Bernie and liked him, which didn't surprise me in the slightest, since even though they had different personalities they were both driven to do the same things and feel the same way. One day Bernie phoned me and said that he couldn't bear living at home any more, and could we put him up for a few days, and, well, I'm just too soft-hearted and our front room was occupied by Bernie and Michael. This didn't make Robin very happy, and the longer they stayed in the front room the less Robin liked it.

In retrospect, the six months I spent living with Robin in that half-house in Ardmillan Road seems like a golden age. In some ways it really was. I was rarely bored because if nothing was happening or about to happen I could always go and practise the piano. That's what took most of the time. I took out Donna, and then met Valma, and didn't care much what happened at home. Michael and Bernie set up camp in the front room. Robin lived in his room, and they didn't get on too well together. I don't think Robin was too happy with the situation: he didn't agree with the life-styles of the other two, and he really wasn't happy about the strange incense-like smells that came from the front room. But neither Robin nor I could ask them to leave, so the situation continued for awhile.

As I had so little experience with girls I had no idea how to approach them, and being the sort of person that I am, I wasn't too good at faking it. That had been my trouble with Donna and any other girls whom I had met. People had given me the impression when I was a kid that one did this and that to get girl friends, but I just wasn't too good at any of this or that. But Valma wasn't interested in the game-playing that went along with the ritual male-female inter-reactions. I found it so much easier, and she made me feel that it was I who was important, and not my ability to play a role. We got along very



well, and she finally seduced me in the nicest possible way, which made it so much easier for me, since all along I had been under the impression that I was the one who was going to have to do the seducing, and I didn't see how I could do it if I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing. I'd read THE PERFUMED GARDEN and a few porno books but there is a lot of difference between what you read and the practical aspect of the operation - well, to put it bluntly, I was scared shitless. And there I was at last, an unvirgin and proud of it.

I don't know what I would have done if it had turned out that Valma and I just didn't get along together, and hadn't both been interested in basically the same things. She was studying acting and I was studying music, and my interest in drama was perhaps just as intense as her interest in music. Perhaps in the end I would have given up the relationship despite everything. But Valma isn't stupid, and fortunately she hadn't been reading any romance novels, and she wasn't wrapped up in any romantic myth. We both knew that getting involved as we did is a serious venture - two individuals combining their assets for mutual fun and profit. Though I am tempted to use the word "love" I will not, because my experience with Valma defies description in terms of anything that I have come across in the media, and in previous experience apart from music. Lee Harding once gave me a copy of a book called THE ART OF LOVING, which is supposed to deal with the ideals of love as it functions properly, and what appears in that book is something like it really is, but it is only cold print. If I were to write here that I Love Valma Brown I would give you an impression that would not be true, because you do not know what I mean by love, and I cannot explain it.

In the end, everything at Ardmillan Road was resolved when I left the house to live with Valma. Robin also moved into a flat of his own, leaving Michael and Bernie without a place to stay. So Bernie went back home and Michael moved in with a flat of freaks.

Valma and I set up house in a flat not too far from where John Bangsund lived. The flat had been the habitat of a couple of friends of Valma's and they'd done a moonlight flit without telling the agent. We just took over the flat in their names, because in that way we would get it bond-free and at a nice low rental. Of course it was a sort of paranoid arrangement. We both felt illegal about what we were doing, and for the first couple of weeks we always felt apprehensive about answering the door. Things did not improve at all, when one night we came home to find a little note shoved under the door from the agent who asked us not to play the piano so late at night. One time we came home from shopping on a Saturday morning to find the agent waiting on our doorstep and we had to make up all kinds of elaborate excuses about how the previous tenants had gone to live in Adelaide for a few months, and we were just looking after their stuff for them.

We moved into the flat together on the Saturday before my sister's twenty-first birthday. The following Wednesday, my parents arrived in Melbourne from Dimboola to celebrate it. I rang them up, and after a while I had the nerve to tell them what I was doing, and though I had expected some sort of bad reaction, it was far worse than I had expected. My mother just let out an "oh", which was almost enough to break my heart. I am the result of what is called a "good Christian upbringing". My personal experience is that while this process is undoubtedly Christian, it isn't very good - it all depends on what you mean by "good". My parents brought me up to believe the same things that they believe, but now I just don't agree with them. In our household alcohol, gambling, and sex were taboo subjects. About the only thing my parents ever

said about sex was that having sex before you were married made you shoddy and not a fit wedding present for your future spouse - i.e. don't. (At the time I thought this was a pretty silly idea but I didn't contest the point.) I didn't want to upset my parents and tell them about Valma and me. But I had worked myself up to a whole speech about how I was sorry if it hurt them, but it was something that I had decided to do, and they would just have to learn to live with it if they could. The only part of the phone conversation that I remember plainly was my mother saying that she was disappointed in me, because she thought I had more principles than that. At the time I was so upset that I didn't know what to think, but looking back, I remember that my main reaction was a suppressed anger - they thought they had the right to tell me what was good for me and what was moral and what wasn't. I was also very sad that they couldn't understand what I was doing and why I was doing it. Of course I really shouldn't have expected them to understand what I was doing, because I really didn't have any idea myself. I only knew that I liked being in the same place as Valma, and that she mattered a great deal to me.

I told my sister about Valma and me. When I broached the subject very carefully, she said, "I wish it was me." I had thought she would react in the same way as my parents, so I sat there looking stunned. Beverly had always been closer to my parents than I was, but like me, she had been living in Melbourne for a few years. She must have become more liberal than I realised. She was engaged to be married in December, and probably she envied me for just going ahead, and not worrying too much about our parents.

My parents met Valma for the first time on the night of my sister's birthday when we all went out to have a meal together and saw LITTLE BIG MAN. She dressed up nicely and made as good an impression as she possibly could. She capped off the whole evening by giving my father a little kiss as we separated, something which really set him back and at the same time impressed him. But the fact that Valma and I were living together was quietly ignored, and there was a tenseness about the whole night.

After that, I could hardly bring myself to write to my parents. Except for one letter from them, which just said again that they didn't like what I was doing, I heard nothing from them. For several months, there was no contact between us. At last we decided that we would like to buy a car, as we wanted to go up to Brisbane for Christmas to visit Valma's mother, and we could use the car for lots of other purposes as well. I wrote a letter to my father saying that although I could understand that he did not like what I was doing, he could not change my mind, and that was that. I went on to say that we were thinking of buying a car and we had talked to a few people who had said that it was better to buy a second-hand car in a small country town where everybody knew how people looked after their cars. Within a few days my father phoned to say that he had seen a car that we might like. We talked about it a bit and we decided to go ahead and buy it, if he could talk down the owner a bit from the price he had given.

Finally we bought the car, and from then on we re-established contact with my parents. Because we now have the car we can visit them more often, and I have been getting on better with them than ever before. We never talk about Valma and I, but at least they have come to accept us. Of course, whenever we go up to visit them we get to sleep in separate beds, but I don't mind because, for one thing, it means that I get a better night's sleep, and it is not much to pay for being able to express my love for my parents.

- Leigh Edmonds 1972

Suburban Melbourne can be a ghastly experience for anyone, and those who have to live in it deserve all the sympathy they get from Another Place. However, during the years there has been one refuge from the cultural blight that infests our beer-and-morality-soaked city - the Melbourne Science Fiction Club.

I was not privileged to join the Club during its formative years, but I drifted into its activities in the early sixties when the hydraulic lift, the only means to enter the club rooms, was the fearful wonder and delight of all who travelled in it. All the big fan happenings of the decade left me uninvolved. The AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW gang came together, did their thing, and split up. I knew everything that was going on but still I was merely a spectator. Then what happened to change this state of affairs in the 1970s?

In a word, Johnbangsund.

After the demise of ASFR, Bruce Gillespie started to publish S F COMMENTARY, Leigh Edmonds began RATAPLAN, Lee Harding wrote for VISION OF TOMORROW, John Foyster espoused politics, and about the only institutions that kept this whole creative splurge in some sort of cohesive framework were the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, and the Australia and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association, founded by Leigh Edmonds. Then came David Grigg and FANARCHIST. I remained interested but uninvolved.

At about this point, I intercept a thought wave generated by numerous exasperated readers: "What's all this got to do with Bangsund?" What indeed!

For those of you who do not know him, John Bangsund is liberally endowed with a mysterious essence which, for want of a better word, I will call charisma. He is also a true humourist who lives very close to the depths of despair. The slan-shack atmosphere of the ASFR days must have been a traumatic experience for those exposed to the full force of the Bangsund personality... continuously. Even now, he (or she, for that matter) is lost who comes to the serious attention of John Bangsund - he knows that John is Something Going On which requires Something To Be Done, and she might as well resign herself to the inevitable.

During 1970, I came to the serious attention of John Bangsund, and my fannish soul was saved (or lost). Anyway, I was no longer uninvolved.

You see, John had this great vision of an umbrella organisation for Australian fans. It would act as a communications link between the diverse groups which are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth. "What a

good idea!" exclaimed Melbourne actifen at the time. Many a happy evening was enlivened by discussion on the subject. I began to be seduced by visions of the power and grandeur of secret mastery, and spent much time researching the legal basis of the constitution of this noble organisation. Late in 1970, a name for the organisation was chosen at a series of meetings attended by just about every Melbourne fan. It wasn't long before the Australian Science Fiction Communications Organisation (COMORG) announced its existence to an incredulous nation. It even had its very own publication, AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY. This is an historic document, folks, and those of you who have not got a copy should buy one quickly at the next convention auction (provided that anyone who has a copy is foolish enough to let it go.)

For volume 1, number 1, of ASFM contains the only printed record anywhere of the celebrated COMORG CONSTITUTION, which enshrines the noblest aspirations of fannish endeavours. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is left out of the COMORG CONSTITUTION. We even included a National Council of the Organisation, consisting of representatives of all the fandoms and responsible only to the Executive Committee of COMORG. It turned out that this was going a bit too far, because we had neglected the formality of telling them all about it beforehand. For reasons that will be obvious to the discerning reader of the above paragraphs, there are people around who, perversely, didn't want to be organised by John Bangsund. They were having Second Thoughts. Angered by the absence of a money-back guarantee in the COMORG CONSTITUTION, these disgruntled coves engaged in a calculated subversion of the 10th Australian Science Fiction Convention, held at Melbourne University during New Year 1971, where the Executive Committee of COMORG had hoped to insinuate the National Council into a late-night business session held at the same time as a showing of BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

The 10th Australian Science Fiction Convention (organised by John Foyster, Leigh Edmonds, and Lee Harding) was chiefly memorable for the absence of lavatories, but I can recall several other only-slightly-less-noteworthy aspects of this gathering. This was the convention that introduced multi-programming into Australian conventions. This was the convention at which Dick Jenssen (the Guest of Honour) petulantly withdrew his endorsement of active s f fandom because GILES GOAT BOY, by John Barth, was not nominated for a Ditmar Award.

And this was the convention where the massed fury of Australian fandom was unleashed against the Australian Science Fiction Communications Organisation. In vain did John Bangsund (disguised as Professor Humphrey Tape, Dean of the Faculty of Biblical Engineering at the University of Ard-Knox) try to distract the horde with his brilliant lecture on the subject of ektrachiasology (possibly one of the funniest speeches ever given outside an Oxford Union debate, and printed for posterity in volume 1, number 1, of BOYS' OWN FANZINE).

The fans were not put off. They gathered in little groups called queues, licked gelati, and plotted the overthrow of COMORG. The End came with dramatic suddenness. A Rival Organisation manifested itself in the second issue of its Official Organ, THRUSTING MEMBER, published by Leigh Edmonds. Founded on principles that are the very antithesis of the noble ideals of COMORG, the Australian Scientifiction Information Organisation (known as ASIO to its intimates) seduced unwary fan away from the path to righteousness and into the snares of unorganised activity. The destructive potential of this evil movement can be gauged from the following extracts from the ASIO CONSTITUTION, such as it is:

The AUST STF INFO ORG exists.

Membership of the ORG shall be a fee of \$1.00. 100% of this fee will be payable to... ((indecipherable, but one suspects the worst)) ...Payment of this membership fee entitles members to free copies of the official organ and any other items which the committee may deem desirable.

The ORG shall have no officers other than somebody designated to look after the money... ((what wickedness!)) ...This official shall also produce the official organ... ((disgusting)).

Members of the AUST STF INFO ORG are ordered to have a good time.

Could anything be more subversive?

By now you may have gained the impression that Bill Wright is merely a herald for the personality of John Bangsund, so let me reassure you that this is only partly true.

The real Bill Wright was born in Sydney in 1937, and my earliest memory is confessing sins against holy purity at the age of six. After that, I celebrated the end of World War II from my hospital bed (having received a fractured skull from a passing motor-cyclist after I had run onto the road in front of a trolley bus). I draw a welcome veil over the rest of my schooldays and the severe adjustments to adult life. Suffice to say that my basic essentials are food and shelter and warmth and a moderate occurrence of sexual congress, in that order. All the rest is but icing on the cake.

Shortly after leaving school, I began to bet on the horses. This activity seems like a reasonably adequate sex substitute. Although it can be demonstrated mathematically that the gambler must inevitably lose if he is opposed by a system with superior financial resources, I remain a mug punter because I enjoy it. Also the world of mug-punting is one into which I can escape every now and again when any of the other worlds threaten to overwhelm me.

During the early 1960s, I became involved with two organisations that still occupy large lumps of my time - the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, and the Rostrum movement. The MSFC has been held together for so long through the efforts of Mervyn Binns. In the dark days of the 1950s and early 60s, the Club was Somewhere To Go. From the early 1960s to the latter part of the 1970s it was still only on the fringes of my life. After I was touched by the magic of COMORG, I retired from the scene for three months and developed a propensity to imbibe vast quantities of the commonest alcoholic beverages. (Until about six years ago, I was as thin as a rake and practically teetotal, and had a rotten disposition. Since discovering alcohol, I have acquired layers of fat, and my friends tell me what a tremendous fellow I am.)

In March 1961, my employer held a training course for office supervisors throughout Australia. I had an opportunity to socialise with congenial people who lived on expense accounts in hotels, and one Friday night we began a pub crawl of the Melbourne scene. We had half a dozen ales at the London pub, a session of grilled steak and the House Red at the Eureka Stockade, went to the Hotel Australia for supper and more beer, rolled up to Flinders Street railway station, and I poured myself into a train, and went to sleep.



Wake up suddenly. Unfamiliar scenery. Get off train. Unfortunately train travelling at twenty miles per hour. Mercifully my carriage not yet left the station. Go to sleep for a long time. Wake up painfully. Become aware of murmuring voices. Blue uniformed arm puts some things back into my pocket. Open both eyes, lean over, very sick. Nobody takes any notice, being busy writing reports. Groan. Still no response. Stagger upright and discover broken arm. Wander over to the road. Hail a passing taxi and go home, leaving assorted railway officials and police still busy writing their reports.

The taxi fare came to more than \$5, so goodness knows where I was. Some weeks later I received a civil letter from the Railways Department intimating that I had caused considerable delay to the late train. The Commissioners had decided to take no action at this time, but a recurrence would result in a prosecution.

After the 1971 Eastercon, the moguls of Australia In 75 decided to enlist the aid of relatively inactive fans to do all the work, while they freed themselves for the really important task of canvassing personal support from their many overseas correspondents. Having been softened up by the COMORG episode, I fell easy prey to the Bangsund wiles. Before you could say "Three Thumping Thick Tigers Tickling Truth" I was there on the Australia In 75 Committee. My position was (and is) Secretary. The Committee wanted someone to take notes at Committee Meetings and attempt the formerly impossible task of preparing minutes of the proceedings. Although they did not know it, an agent of COMORG had now infiltrated the councils of power.

But such activity did not end there. I became furiously active in other fan-nish endeavours. I succumbed to the blandishments of Dennis Stocks, Bruce Gillespie, Robin Johnson, and (wouldn't you know it) John Bangsund, and joined ANZAPA in time to appear in the 19th mailing, October 1971. The glorious and legendary Advention took place at New Year; and 1971, with all its triumphs and miseries departed into the limbo of the past.

And, as I mentioned earlier, the Rostrum movement continued to have an important influence on my life. In 1964, I joined a Rostrum public-speaking group so that I would have some self-confidence when confronting people. It wasn't long before I realised that some of the most likable blokes I had ever met were absolutely dedicated to the teaching role of the movement (as distinct from its fellowship role). Eventually I became president of my group and moved on to become a Victorian councillor. During the 1971 Rostrum year, about fifteen members of my group ran a public-speaking competition in inner-suburban schools, with the co-operation of the area schools inspector, the headmasters, and the form teachers. The ages of the competitors ranged from ten to fourteen, and there were separate competitions for each grade. In all, about two-and-a-half thousand children took part in the competition, which concluded in July with a Grand Final evening at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. There was an audience of about six hundred Rostrum members, parents, children, and teachers. Prizes worth about \$100 were given out. The whole thing was so successful that we are repeating the experiment this year, and at the moment we are holding a series of semi-finals. We heard some gems of speeches, especially from the younger children who are less self-conscious than the others. This year a ten-year-old struggled halfway through his three-minute speech and then developed the jitters. He faltered, and stopped. He asked the chairman if he could start again. His subject was, "I want to be a doctor. He started again, and made an even worse hash of it. Finally, he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

# HARRY WARNER JR'S 1971

Harry Warner can justly be called the world's greatest living science fiction fan. Not that he reads more science fiction more often than anybody else. No, he gains this honour because of his thirty years of involvement with the people who read, talk about, or occasionally think about science fiction - that strange group of people called the "fans". Fans publish fanzines: every year for more than thirty years Harry has tried his best to send letters of comment to nearly all of the thousands of fanzines he receives. Apart from all that, he has published the fanzine HORIZONS continually since 1939. Most of its copies appear in the world's most prestigious amateur press association, FAPA. Harry has not missed a FAPA mailing since then. Fans conduct endless pieces of research about their field: Harry has published the history of fandom, ALL OUR YESTERDAYS: FANDOM IN THE FORTIES, which tells as much about modern fandom as it does about the 1940s. Fans' best friends are fans: without ever meeting him, I and hundreds of other fans would consider Harry one of our best friends.

Once every year, Harry Warner Jr publishes in HORIZONS the story of the previous year as he saw it. Reprinted from HORIZONS, No 129, pages 2582 to 2597, here Harry tells HOW I BECAME HALF AS OLD AS MY GRANDMOTHER.

In this annual lookback on the year I don't intend to ruin an achievement that has gone largely unrecognised until now. Not a soul has praised the self-restraint that saved the world from two afflictions: (a) I didn't write a long, bloody narration of my operation, and (b) posterity will have to deal with one fewer convention report as a result of similar muteness about my adventures at Noreascon.

But just as the victorious general behaves with perfect courtesy toward those he has defeated all through the day of triumph, then stays awake half the night gloating in the secrecy of his bedroom, maybe I can be pardoned for

starting this chronology with some minor self-indulgence. And I hope nobody notices the manner in which a dreadfully long conreport could be created if someone were nasty enough to piece together all the scattered fragments of Noreascon experiences that I've been divvying up among various fanzines.

Many people expressed surprise at my appearance at the worldcon, but what surprised me most was the manner of my coming and going. I had never had neuroses about flying, no airplane had ever done something to me in childhood, I had not sworn a mighty vow to anyone to travel on the solid earth, and I've never been discouraged from flying by news stories about crashed airplanes. The real reason why I had never flown before this summer was because I was scared to fly. But my old Olds would never consent to take me all the way to Boston, the last through train service in the Hagerstown area was discontinued when the nation's rail service was improved this year, and I not only dread an eleven-hour bus ride but I couldn't find a timetable. The local Greyhound terminal explained that they used to have such things but had given them all away.

So I flew. I don't want to disparage the air service between Hagerstown and Baltimore, but let's put it this way: if you like to sit next to a window when you fly, then the Hagerstown Commuter is the airline for you, because you are not only certain to get to sit beside the window but you are also virtually as close to the window on the other side. I had one of those I have been here before sensations as I boarded the plane in Hagerstown, then soon discouraged any mystical experience because I realised what was causing the *deja vu* feeling. This Hagerstown-Baltimore air service is uncannily like the Williamsport Trolley, which I had ridden so often until it was from the rails untimely plucked a while back. The two craft are just about the same size, create approximately the same amount of noise and vibration, the pilot and his assistant on the airplane wear uniforms resembling those of the conductor and motorman, and the crew also bore the same general attitude of expectancy, since nobody could ever be sure what might happen before reaching Williamsport. I thought I was quite calm on my first plane ride, I succeeded in keeping my lips firm and unmoving despite the wear and tear I was putting soundlessly on the 23rd Psalm, and I disgraced myself only upon arrival in Baltimore when I found myself unable to get the safety belt open. Incidentally, all the movies and television programs and written descriptions about flying had failed to prepare me for one dramatic aspect of air travel. Nothing surprised me except the string that they use to fasten the tag to your baggage. It looks so much like the old familiar corner-grocery-store string that I couldn't believe its elasticity. It's little things like this that make you realise how incomplete a record we're leaving of our civilisation, no matter how much film and ink we're devoting to it.

It's mid-December as I type, and I still haven't had the second operation that I was supposed to undergo soon after the Noreascon. It's my fault and I feel quite upset about the situation because I promised the surgeon to undergo it soon after Labor Day and I don't normally break a clearcut promise. But the promise was made back in April when I was still getting over the first operation and I didn't know then that I wouldn't snap completely back from the February hospitalisation. Ten months later, I still don't have the physical stamina that I had before the operation and I am still positive that there has been some permanent damage to my mental capabilities. So I've been putting off endlessly the phone call to the surgeon, partly in the hope that I'll feel normal again, partly in the conviction that another operation will really leave me messed up. The situation that requires surgery doesn't bother me particularly and isn't likely to grow much worse if neglected a while longer.

but it creates a constant slight danger of a sudden worsening that would require immediate surgery, so I can't risk getting more than a half-hour or so of medical attention. It can't be causing the unsatisfactory after-effects from the first operation, which include a tendency to tire out three times as fast as I once did and an exasperating come-and-go memory lapse over small matters. Maybe I went to work again sooner than was proper after the first operation, but by intent or accident, the disability benefits which were guaranteed to run for sixteen weeks were cut off suddenly at the office and I did not like to be non-working for physical reasons with nothing coming in. Maybe the anaesthetic slugged a few brain cells; I'd never had a general one before, only locals, and I must have gotten a good one, because I can't even remember undergoing it, just a blank from shortly after waking on the morning of the operation until I came back to consciousness wondering why I wasn't sick to the stomach. I don't know whether or when I'll get up the nerve to go to hospital again. There are ulcer symptoms and I keep telling myself that I might as well wait until they get bad enough to justify a hospital stay which will cover both the operation and thorough investigation into the ulcer problem.

As a whole, 1971 was a strange year, one in which almost nothing happened except those two big events. Aside from the trip to Boston, I didn't get further than twenty-five miles from Hagerstown all through the year. So both the convention and the operation have begun to take on mental images of unreality, like things experienced on trips to the movies rather than part of reality during the year. I really should try to do a few things that are neither so sensational nor so humdrum.

Of course, "happened" might qualify as a description of the change in the most impressive thing involved in my fan activity: the backlog. Just yesterday I rearranged all the stuff piled on my desk, spending half the evening on that task. Basically, there are two foot-high piles of fanzines, letters, and other stuff that should be answered. Between those two flanking horrors the desk contains a scattering of other obligations which can be handled, conceivably, before the statute of limitations expires. I'm eight or ten months late already with letters of comment on some fanzines, and some urgent letters that arrived last summer still haven't received replies. It's increasingly evident that I'll never attend to some of these duties as long as I work a full-time job and have other interests that compete with fandom for spare time. Occasionally I can reduce visibly the height of the piles by steady work for a couple of weeks, only to see the gain destroyed and a new half-inch of growth when I run into a week or ten days that aren't conducive to locs and related labours. Another month lost to an operation will create an impossible situation.

In these recent months when I haven't had the stamina to handle desk work as I used to, I've toyed with various ideas. Publish an occasional personalzine that I'd distribute in lieu of locs. Ask for a year's sabbatical from all other forms of fanac while I write another volume of fan history. Announce that from now on I can't loc fanzines except on an every-other-issue basis and will those who don't like this please take me off their mailing lists. Devote a month to writing a novel and if it sells, tell all fandom that I've become so greedy for money that I can no longer spend time on locs. But all those procedures would go against what I really want to do. I can't bring myself to any course of action other than to continue making some friends among those who get the letters of comment and some enemies among those whose fanzines I never get around to commenting on. Nobody will believe that I just grab fanzines at random when I have time to write locs, so I've resigned myself to

watching some fans think they get or don't get locs because of the quality of the fanzine or a conspiracy or just plain nastiness on my part.

One form of competition for fanac became less time-consuming in the course of this year, because of my general weakness since the operation. I get tired after only ten or fifteen minutes of piano-playing. Theoretically this creates a small amount of extra spare time. But the minutes and more besides have been gobbled up by this ever-increasing preoccupation with movies. I had faint hopes that it would go away after a couple of years but it's getting worse. Just during this most recent year, for instance, I've begun saving newspaper and magazine articles about movies which I imagine I'll want to have for reference purposes and I've been dipping into those immense published volumes of NEW YORK TIMES movie reviews to figure out just what were the first movies I can remember seeing. I've tracked down the early movie trip where the Vikings were the subject of the feature, and sure enough, it was a full-colour film, just as memory told me while reason argued that that was too soon full-length colour features. But THE TIMES never got around to reviewing most westerns so I can't confirm my impression that my first horse opera starred Ken Maynard and was called THE OKLAHOMA SHERIFF, and I'm baffled as ever to figure out the film's identity which gave me one of my earliest recollections of just a scene, an execution on a lonely battlement.

The nicest thing that has happened with respect to movies this year has been the benevolent and adventurous spirit which impelled a Washington television station to start a series of Saturday night showings of films of exceptional interest. Apparently a film buffs' semi-commercial operation involving live movies in a real theatre is tied in somehow with this Saturday night series, which is superior to most museum film series for consistently good choice of features. The station is even sending out program notes free to anyone who asks for them: quite lengthy dissertations on the background and historical importance of each feature, together with beautifully reproduced, slick-paper stills from some of the films. This CINEMA CLUB NINE, as it's officially named, doesn't always tell the truth when it claims that all its films are being shown for the first time on television, but those which have been available for tv in the past are almost never seen on the tube and there have been some real firsts not only for television but for any type of screening in this generation. For instance, THE POWER AND THE GLORY, which had been thought to exist only in a mutilated form, turned up on the series several weeks ago in the form of a near-perfect print that was just discovered in France. This is a triple-treat movie which I urge everyone to keep an eye open for: the first big role for Spencer Tracy, the last movie made by Colleen Moore, and the remarkable Preston Sturges script that foreshadows both CITIZEN KANE and some quite modern techniques. It didn't win much favour when it was new in the early 1930s, because audiences of that day weren't ready for such heresies as lip-synch when a narrator speaks the words of characters who are saying the same thing silently on screen, the depiction of a rich capitalist as an unscrupulous person who didn't work his way up from poverty by following the ten commandments, and story-telling almost entirely in the form of flashbacks which are altogether out of chronological sequence.

So I've been glorying in such experiences as seeing Clara Bow for the first time in a talkie. I'd seen a couple of her silent features, which didn't prepare me for the shock of that voice, which sounds uncannily like the voice of a girl who used to live in Hagerstown. The Bow film, CALL HER SAVAGE, makes you understand why that infamous code got adopted. It seems like quite strong stuff even today, for such things as the lust an old man displays for a small child, some whipping scenes, the basic miscegenation theme, and the sheer



animal-like sexuality that Clara exudes at her first entrance, galloping frantically as if part of the horse she is riding, emitting wild screams of pure vitality.

I'd seen THE GENERAL previously but never in the beautiful print that the television station used. It has the shadow detail and highlight gradations that almost always vanish during the endless generation series that make possible the survival of silent movies today; moreover, the stock is tinted just as most silent films were when they were new, and the soundtrack is superbly appropriate piano music, with no synthetic sound effects. Normally I can't bear to watch war films, but THE GENERAL somehow causes me to forget the terrible things on which it's based. Maybe Keaton is responsible for this: the comedian magically becomes the only entirely brave and human person as he wanders among the armies.

The biggest treat of all is yet to come. JUST IMAGINE, the pioneering film about the future, that was believed lost, is scheduled in a few weeks. This was shown in only a scattered big city or two since the discovery of a print, and it's undoubtedly to be the first time it's been on television. The first fanzines I ever received were still publishing stuff about it, years after its initial release, and I know one old-time fan who had apparently lost most of his interest in science fiction but became almost incoherent with excitement over the film's re-emergence, then took a week's vacation so he could go to New York to see one of its first modern showings.

But the most fascinating thing of all in this series, I suppose, has been SHADOW OF THE EAGLE. You won't find this title in the index to any history of the American movie but it's a wonderful example of the prehistoric art form of the cliffhanger serial. The FLASH GORDON series seem like de Mille productions beside this twelve-parter, which features an unbelievably young John Wayne. He was even worse as an actor when he made it, he was so thin and satin-skinned that it's hard to recognise him, but the voice hasn't changed between this serial and his most recent movies. He still has that same sing-song series of syllables emerging at precisely the same pace both then and now. The people who made the serial must have set a world's record for economies. They seem to have abstained from supplementary lighting for outdoor scenes, so everything shot in sunlight has the same charcoal shadows that you used to produce with your Brownie. Duke apparently taught all the other cast members everything they knew about acting. The whole cast displays the same odd habit of freezing as rigid as death when someone is speaking a line. I don't know whether they fear that movement would distract him, or are all petrified by inability to remember who has the next lines. Auto chases are conducted at speeds that never exceed fifteen miles per hour or thereabouts. The strangest peculiarity of all is the naive way in which the chapter-ending crisis is resolved at the start of the next chapter. When the hero and heroine accidentally drive their auto into a road construction area and dynamite is detonated beneath their wheels, we see when the smoke clears the vehicle proceeding normally on its way; if someone is thrown out of an upper-storey window, he is shown landing on his feet and walking away in the next episode. And I loved the whole dozen-episode serial, despite all this. There is a great deal of action around a carnival, whose tents and strong man and ventriloquist bring back pleasant memories. The heroine, Dorothy Gulliver, is so pretty in a healthy sort of way that you feel sympathetic and want to offer to send her to drama school.

Old John was also in one of the real live movies I saw this year. I knew two hours of sheer bliss unadulterated by aches, thinking, or the environment,

when TRUE GRIT came back to town. It pleased me even more than the first time, because I'd read the Portis novel since its original showing here. I can see now that Kim Darby's movements and expressions are the cinema equivalent of the book's viewpoint. The book is the narration of an old woman looking back on an adventure in her youth, and this dignity and sedateness which Kim maintains through all the hurlyburly is exactly how an old woman would imagine that her younger self behaved, the visual equivalent of that ceremonial style which is one of the most attractive things about the way the story is told in the novel. Also I noticed for the first time this year the extreme reliance that the director put on backlighting, all through the exterior scenes. This causes the colours to be muted and a brownish tinge to cover the landscape, exactly like old photographs that weren't fixed and washed to perfection fifty years ago. I certainly hope that Duke makes a lot more money somehow soon, so he'll drop the litigation that has held up television showings of the movie; the poor old fellow didn't think the price was right.

I hate to put into print another thing that has been happening to me this year, for fear of thus encouraging it to continue. I've been getting interested in country music. This is even more extraordinary than the obsession with the movies. It started around the year's beginning, when I got into the habit of listening to a Wheeling, West Virginia, radio station in early morning hours during nights when I was staying up late awaiting sleep. At that time, the all-night country music show was playing frequently a Lee Moore record, WORRIED MAN BLUES, and its dismal message meshed with a section of my psyche. I found myself staying awake even when I felt sleepy, waiting for the night's performance of that song. As a side benefit, I got acquainted with other things that were new to me, such as THANK GOD and GREYHOUND YOU'RE GONE. Ever since I've been listening more and more to country music over the radio, branching out to the all-night shows on WSM in Nashville, and WHO, Des Moines, when I feel in need of variety. But I prefer WWVA, because that station also provides my favourite disc cowboy, Gus Thomas. Moreover, the Wheeling station has a link with the golden age of radio. Not even the brfs in old radio fandom have been able to salvage many recordings of one characteristic of radio in the pre-television years: the non-network stars. For nearly a quarter of a century, every large station had its own talent, comedians and musicians who either weren't quite good enough for national exposure or were just starting their moves to stardom. WWVA is one of two radio stations in the nation today that still retain one phase of this golden age procedure. It has its own stable of country music people who spend all Saturday evening doing a live show from a theatre for an audience as well as for broadcast. Dozens, maybe hundreds of such arrangements used to be in effect all over the nation, counting dance bands and variety shows and so on, but the only country music versions that survive today are WWVA's JAMBOREE, and WSM's GRAND OLE OPRY. The Wheeling talent rarely appears on major recording labels, when they appear outside Wheeling it's usually in small and medium-size East Coast cities rather than at the big state fairs. and they freely admit when they chat with Gus that they don't make much money. But they sound more genuine than the nationally-known country music stars, and I imagine that I'm better off listening to them for the time being, until I'm ready for the totally uncommercial country music people. As the year ends, I'm fighting desperately to prevent myself from starting to buy country music records. My collection to date consists of Vernon Dalhart singing THE PRISONER'S SONG and I have a premonition that if I make even a small addition to that section of my record accumulation, I won't know how to stop.

Meanwhile, it has occurred to me that science fiction and country music have a lot in common over and above my interest in both. Country music, like science

fiction, is liked by a substantial minority of the population and is held in disdain by the establishment and the intelligentsia and the majority of the silent majority. Both forms of creativity are fighting endless battles against those who would transmute them into quite different things: country rock artists and Shaverites, for example. Something always goes wrong when either science fiction or country music becomes the basis for prime-time network television. Johnny Cash is forced to sing the things he does worst and waste time on the wrong guest stars, and science fiction turns into something like LAND OF THE GIANTS. There also seems to be a similar bond of fellowship among the professionals and fans in both fields. There are people in Hagerstown who look forward to a long weekend in Nashville every year as happily as fans anticipate their attendance at the worldcon. You could also draw parallels between the emergence of science fiction and country music in this nation: the prozines and the wide dissemination of hillbillies via radio and records began at just about the same time, while the big breakthroughs followed almost simultaneously when everyone started to buy country music on lps and science fiction in paperbacks. I don't think there's anything in country music quite like science fiction's active fandom, though. There are plenty of fan clubs in country music, but most of them seem to exist because members have a fondness for one particular performer.

Life around me in Hagerstown continued to run its degenerate course during the year. From local and national causes, we made the biggest strides yet toward 1984. When you add to national things like the wage and price freeze such local changes as the adoption of stricter subdivision regulations, a plan for the country, a building code, and the unveiling of zoning for later adoption, then top it off with state assumption of various things we used to control locally, like the lower courts and school construction, you feel sick. I can appreciate arguments why each of these changes individually was necessary and beneficial but I can't believe that the whole shebang considered as a whole is anything but a demonstration of how far a community can go toward total imposition of controls by government over everything in just one year. Some other people seemed to feel the same way. Some county officials were scared stiff by telephoned threats of violence against their persons and members of their families. Nobody was convicted but some evidence pointed toward the culprits being rather ordinary persons who were just driven to desperation by the sense of everything clamping down on themselves and their possessions.

I'm particularly disturbed about the coming of zoning on a country-wide basis. In theory, I think that some form of zoning might be advisable. But I disagree with both the form it normally takes and the invariable manner in which it is administered. Even if the officials in charge of zoning supervision are honest and conscientious, there is still every probability that the little guy and the big shot will be affected in entirely different ways by zoning, simply because the latter can afford to hire enough attorneys to argue the way clear to do whatever he pleases. I have sat through zoning hearings in which a one-man business failed miserably in the effort to get the right to continue to use the new sign that had been purchased for its place of operation, which was an inch or two larger than permitted in that zone, and meanwhile the biggest shopping centre in the western part of Maryland was allowed to be built in a first-rate residential area through rezoning and attorneys, and in nearby Frederick County an aluminium factory was permitted to start up in the middle of the finest agricultural area rather than in any of the areas zoned for industry.

But the biggest flaw with the normal sort of zoning strikes me as two-fold: I question whether residential and industrial and commercial enterprises should

be kept separate from one another, and if I'm wrong to question that, then I think it's wrong to impose restrictions on future construction without greater efforts to change what has already been done. I grew up in a world whose inhabitants wanted to live within a few minutes' walk of a grocery store and a drug store, and whose working men tried to rent houses that would be only a block or two from their jobs. Much of the nation's pollution and ecology problems derive directly from the total change from that philosophy into the zoning concept which forces the use of an automobile for almost every purpose other than trips to the bathroom. I could applaud zoning laws that required factories to be built only in areas where housing was nearby or there was vacant land available for subdivisions, and that permitted at least one grocery store, service station, or other small business in each residential block. If I'm an old fuddyduddy who just doesn't appreciate how nice it is to live three miles from the nearest cash register and timeclock, then everyone who lives in areas where there are exceptions from the zoning rules in the form of survivors of firms that were there before zoning was imposed deserves to have the same freedom from commercialism enjoyed by people who live in suburbs built since zoning became effective. It would be more logical to think about the huge bulk of the population affected by these pre-zoning intrusions than about the minority who move into new areas where homes are newly constructed after zoning.

Hagerstown is the only part of this county which has had zoning, and the effects of it have not been encouraging. Individual merchants have been building new stores in isolated spots just outside the city limits to get away from the zoning that makes it difficult for the modest-sized store to erect a modern building in the downtown area: all the available space down there is occupied by old buildings and surrounding the old buildings are the older residential structures in residential zones, and the lowest-income people gravitate toward the encircling residential belt because the structures are not only the oldest in town but also in the worst condition, and every kind of dubious and seedy character thereupon resides on the edge of the downtown business section and spends much time wandering around the shopping blocks and makes a lot of people reluctant to go downtown for shopping purposes. Without zoning, the downtown section would have continued to expand gradually as it had been doing previously, with new stores and office buildings taking the place of those roach-filled, weatherboard houses. If zoning comes, and is rigid, on a county-wide basis, the scattering of businesses will simply move a little further out, because Pennsylvania and West Virginia are only a half-dozen miles from the centre of Hagerstown, and almost anything goes in that border country.

But I just don't understand a lot of things about the way this area is going. For example, we're simultaneously in the midst of a fight to get Antietam Battlefield land protected by federal ownership from ruin at private hands, and a fight to keep C & O Canal land from ruin at federal hands. Historians want a couple of thousand acres in the battle area to be purchased by Uncle Sam, because commercial interests have been eyeing it for residential developments, and some of the same historians have litigation going in federal district court over the C & O Canal property, which the National Park Service has been messing up badly. I would think that the paving of the canal towpath on the canal property so jeeps can use it would cause some doubt whether the Antietam land would be better off under federal ownership.

Besides, I've grown increasingly disturbed about the whole concept of battlefields as national shrines. I know Antietam best. Almost all of the area where the fighting occurred is still farmland, and Antietam hasn't been

commercialised like Gettysburg: no amusement park, guides, commercial museums, or other distractions. But maybe that's part of what's wrong with Antietam. Tourists by the hundreds of thousands drive through those hills every summer, admire the green fields and old trees and read a few monument inscriptions, and go back home delighted to have history preserved like that before their eyes. And subconsciously, all these people must feel that war isn't so bad after all because Antietam Battlefield is so peaceful and lovely. If they want to preserve the battlefield, then I think it should be done realistically. All those green fields were torn up so badly by men and horses and artillery that some couldn't be farmed again for years. They were clogged up with bleeding men and screaming animals and all the litter of two half-trained armies. The air was polluted with mixed odours of gunpowder and excrement. Most of the soldiers were half-dressed in whatever garments they could find, rather than wearing those uniforms you see in paintings of Civil War action. All this could be reproduced easily enough with dyes and dummies and loud-speakers and fertiliser and stenchpots on Antietam Battlefield today. I think it would do tourists a lot of good to have their stomachs turned and their ears assaulted and their eyes offended by this kind of preservation of history. Of course, I've been nurturing an idea that seems even better to me in some ways. It would consist of sending some excavating equipment to Vietnam, and digging up the entire site of My Lai. It could be reconstructed on one corner of the Antietam site as a much more faithful example of the modern way in which the nation fights its wars. Even the graves would take up less space than those in a normal cemetery, because so many of them are small. The remainder of Antietam could be given back to the Indians, if they'll take it.

Then there's the power situation. For a while it was doubtful whether people could have Christmas decorations lit this year, because of a fuel shortage for the power companies, and the gas company has put a strict limit on the cubic footage which it will sell to any one customer in a single day, after having been forced to cut back on supplies to large consumers during cold spells for two straight winters. Yet both utility companies are advertising and sending out salesmen in efforts to sell more air conditioning and to heat more homes electrically and to get a gas hot water heater in every basement. There's hypocrisy there, somewhere.

Hagerstown continued to slip smoothly toward extinction during this year. It lost its Western Union office (although wires will be handled after a fashion in a secretarial service office), its draft office which was combined with one in another county so it's no use to send word to Canada that everyone can come back into this part of the United States, its farmer's market which may close down at the end of the year because of declining patronage, and its swimming pool which has been condemned. Not many cities suffer that particular fate, so maybe Hagerstown will be remembered when it's gone.

The city did acquire a couple of small new attractions. I was happy to find a new businessman showing imagination when he called his new store "Play It Again, Sam", hung out in front a sign stating "Since 1971", and advertised recycled clothing. The city also acquired its first pornographic store. The proprietor announced when he opened it up that there's something wrong with anyone who would patronise him, restricted entrance to those over twenty-one, painted two solid coats over the display windows so nobody could look inside, and seems to be doing pretty good business. A lot of people are indignant, since this firm is established in Public Square; the feeling seems to be that it wouldn't matter if it were back in an alley somewhere. The people who complain about it seem unconcerned over the contribution to broken homes and smashed autos that has been made over the years by a liquor store on the other

side of Public Square; or the harm to the bodies of users and sensibilities of non-users created by two firms fronting the square that sell cigarettes. Less happily, the Odd Ball Shop, main local source of second-hand books and records, broke all its previous records by failing to open for business even one day in 1971. It had been open for two weeks the previous year, and the year before that, you could get in almost any warm day (the furnace in the building it occupies hasn't worked for years).

I can't say that my house did much to raise the level of gracious living in Hagerstown, although its dilapidation didn't discourage an assessor from raising the assessment on it about twelve per cent. The assessment isn't supposed to be affected by repairs, as distinguished from improvements, but it's awfully suspicious that it was raised within two weeks after the men finished putting on the new roof and clothing the porch roof in a leakproof new coating of gunk and that the amount of the increase was quite close to the bill for the repairs. The house badly needs painting, but thank goodness the old paint has finally stopped flaking off for the simple reason that only an insignificant amount hasn't already done so. I don't think the need for paint has harmed anything except one board on the front porch which appears to be rotting out and I just couldn't face painters after all my other troubles this year. The attic seems to be watertight again, thanks be, and despite an occasional mysterious thump, I've found no reason to believe that squirrels have learned how to get in so far. As part of the roof-replacement job, I had the men install screening where pigeons roosted at night, and I should have known better. The men did a fine job, but when my back was turned, the pigeons must have brought some large ducks or swans from the adjoining park to help squash the screening inward until there is just enough room for the pigeons to cling in some discomfort. If we should be blessed with a real nor'easter, they might be blown away from this exposed pad but I'm sure they'll figure out a way to cope with even that problem.

Inside the living quarters, the situation is not much better. Now there are two ceiling lights in non-operating condition because one effect of the operation has been much less control over my balance than I used to have. I no longer dare risk to climb higher than the seat of a chair, and with domestic perversity, the two bulbs that burned out this year were in the two ceiling fixtures that must be approached by a ladder. My favourite chair is on its last legs, and there is another thing to worry about. The upholstery just below the cushion is protruding gradually and pretty soon I won't be able to keep my heels on the floor as I sit there; the excelsior that has been hidden around the springs is seeing the light of day again as the cloth covering yields to the infirmities of old age, a greyish dust from some unknown source gradually accumulates on the floor under the chair, and the arms wobble alarmingly if I put any lateral pressure on them. I don't mind buying and accustoming myself to a new chair and I haven't figured out what to do with this one, for which I feel as much affection as I would a pet dog for its faithful support and relaxation functions over the years. It's too heavy for me to get to the attic unaided so maybe I'll try to find next spring some painters who can also change light bulbs and lug overstuffed chairs up two flights of steep stairs. I don't even know if it's safe for me to keep the house accessible in the winter by shovelling snow. Several persons who have had physical problems similar to mine aren't allowed to shovel snow, and I can't call the doctor without getting into trouble about the next operation.

Yet another problem involves both the house and a hobby. I'll need more shelf space for records from now on. I don't dare lift anything as heavy as a set of steel shelves in their knocked-down condition. There's one set of steel

shelves already in the house which I haven't dared to use for records because there are no sway braces and it doesn't seem firm enough to risk invulnerable stuff, but maybe I can salvage it by changing slightly the positioning of the shelves and improvising some rigidity of wire or strong rope. I've been buying records at a less rapid pace than I used to, mostly because I'm still burning about the pogrom on mono records. And the future doesn't look favourable for lots of lp goodies. There's the trend to make and sell only the kinds of records that sell best immediately upon release, instead of depending on slow, steady sales for a couple of decades, so there goes a lot of the potential for serious music releases in the future. Then there's the dreadful push for four-channel recordings. I don't doubt that it'll be stereo's history all over again: years spent re-recording all the serious music that had previously been recorded, usually with the same artists, meanwhile ignoring all the treasures that have never yet been recorded. If it hadn't been for the coming of stereo, for instance, I'm sure that all the Verdi operas would have become available on domestic recordings by now. So I've waited all during the sixties for the dozen Verdi operas I don't yet own and if I must wait during the seventies I may not make it or I'll become deaf or around 1979 some marketing people will get together and decide that this four-channel gimmick is about worn out and we must interest the public in something else that will make obsolete all the existing recordings and sell lots of hardware.

The one nice thing about the miserable record situation for my kind of music is the existence of The Musical Heritage Society. Because it doesn't distribute its records to retail stores to any great extent, and doesn't have many big-name artists, this firm gets little publicity. But probably it has more different records in print just now than any of the big-name labels, it charges only half as much for records as most companies, and a large proportion of its offerings contains music that isn't currently available on any other label. The company seems to be dangerously overextended just now, and even sent out an appeal to all its mail-order customers to be sure to buy some records in one particular month so its finances could be bolstered. What else can you expect from a firm that releases two different complete recordings of THE WELL-TEMPERED KEYBOARD in the same month? So I advise anyone interested in serious music to get acquainted with this firm while there's still time. It emphasises pre-nineteenth-century music and more recent music of an offbeat nature, but dabbles in familiar and modern serious music, offers a couple of Offenbach operettas, and specialises in "complete" offerings like all the Haydn symphonies, Schumann piano music, and (still in progress) everything Bach sent down to posterity. Even the catalogue is something special. It's the only firm that issues a really good catalogue, the kind the RCA Victor and Columbia used to publish in the 78 rpm days. The latest edition runs to 162 pages with all sorts of cross-indexing and complete details on each item in collections and anthologies. Postage and handling fees are quite low, and there are frequent special offers that bring down prices still further. Most of the recordings themselves are taken from European releases frequently featuring artists who haven't happened to come to this country to become famous here. If you don't mind jackets that lack full-colour pictures and text leaflets which are primitive in appearance, you'll be happy with records from this firm, which lives at 1991 Broadway, New York, New York 10023.

There has been one other change in my record-buying habits. I am more consistently purchasing broken sets of 78 rpm records. It's partly done from the tardy realisation that if I pass up one incomplete set, I may have lost the chance to piece together a complete album from another incomplete set later. It's also partly out of sympathy for the old age of those records, which really shouldn't be subjected to the mauling they receive from kids in the



Goodwill Industries and Union Rescue Mission stores. Just this week, I invested in a cheap batch of discs from the Gigli TOSCA: it's not much more than half there, but at least this much won't be smashed up when parents take their kids along to those stores. Maybe I'll use some of these to fill out a set later in which just one or two records are missing, and if not, I might make some collector happy by providing a stray disc or two he needs. Of course the complete recording is available on Seraphim lps. But I remain unconvinced that lp reissues provide the forward sound and fullness of tone that come from badly-worn 78s.

As far as fanac is concerned: in 1971 I made a deliberate effort to cut down on the attention to the past that has been dominating what I write. I've attempted to limit stuff about the past to not more than one or two paragraphs in each letter of comment. Most of the non-loc stuff I've written for fanzines this year has dealt with the present or future, except for some items written to special order for editors, and, of course, the FOCAL POINT column. Not a lick of work has been done on the fan history. I talked to some Advent people in Boston and I didn't get the impression that they will want the manuscript soon, and certainly I don't want to suffer this time the lapse of years between the writing and publication that plagued the history of the 1940s. A few fans within reasonable driving distance of Hagerstown were kind enough to offer to ease my labours by spending several days getting my attic's fanzines into decent order, so I can find what I need for writing fan history. However, one of them dropped by and got a trifle discouraged when he made an inspection of the attic. There is also the apparently insoluble problem that fanzines are stuffed into boxes helter-skelter with only one distinction, a mark on the box if everything in it has been gone through for fan history note-taking. If all the boxes were emptied and their contents sorted out, it would require endless checking back and forth to determine if I had investigated all possible sources of information about this or that worldcon, or all the biographical details I could find about an obscure fan, for instance.

But there's no doubt about my continued emphasis on the past in fanac, and I've been trying to tell myself that it isn't really a disastrous form of behaviour. Continued activity down through the decades is the only real advantage I have over most fans. I can't write about all the happenings of the local fan club, I can't create prose on the level of a Willis or Hoffman, I don't have enough interest in the intricacies of professional science fiction to write much sercon stuff, and so I dip into recollections and past experiences somewhat more than is really good for me. If it's a fault, maybe it isn't as severe a fault as would be a preoccupation with the actual now moment, which I know much less about.

It has been another year in which I managed no major writing aimed at professional markets. Bodily woes are a legitimate excuse, though. I have plenty of things in mind. Three or four fantasy novels are neatly plotted in my mind, although one has just been forced to migrate from Mars to a Jovian moon because of those darned space problems. Also I have those crazy notions about non-fantasy writing projects. The big book about Meyerbeer, for instance; if I don't write it, someone else will, and someone else might make it less entertaining than I would, even though he might have access to European sources of information. And if I took the time and trouble, could I interest a publisher in an anthology idea which I haven't seen put into print yet? I think there would be a market for a big collection of stuff from all the great children's magazines of the past: ST NICHOLAS, THE AMERICAN BOY, YOUTH'S COMPANION, CHILD LIFE, and so on. Some old folks would buy such a book so they could read again what they had enjoyed when young, and maybe young

and maybe young persons would also purchase after browsing disclosed the startlingly high quality of many stories and poems and illustrations. There was a St Nicholas collection a few years ago, but I know of no anthology drawing from lots of childrens' magazines. I'd also like to try a mundane novel, a sort of reverse THE COLLECTOR in which the victim gradually takes control of the situation and decides to make lots of money out of her plight. And my admiration for Julie Andrews has given me this mad urge to write a book in which MY FAIR LADY would be a key to the world of the future: after a cataclysmic war, the only two surviving pieces of printed matter are a copy of PYGMALION in the United States and a text for MY FAIR LADY in England. Both serve the function of Bibles for the new woman-dominated rebuilding society, and thereupon scholars gradually discover the awful truth about the variations in the two scriptures which have been causing holy wars, including the dreadful realisation that each book was preserved in the author's wrong country...

If this year was memorable for anything in my fanac, aside from the worldcon, it was because my duties as teller in the NFFF election were easy and calm. Few SFC readers belong to the NFFF, so I should explain that first of all, there was only one election this December, considerably less than the usual number, nobody got left off the ballot, and only slight commotion resulted from a rumour that a constitutional amendment should have come up for vote. Nothing at all went wrong except that there was no deadline announced for voting, there was nothing on the ballot to show how many votes should be cast for director, there was room for only one write-in vote from the directorate instead of the usual five, and a self-mailing ballot form permitted members to mail their votes without envelopes and made it almost impossible for the teller to get the ballots open without destroying the X marks a millimetre or two from one of the folds. There's reason for encouragement if things go this smoothly in an NFFF election. But really, the organisation is much maligned because it's so easy to poke fun in this way. But vulnerability for some proceedings doesn't remove the fact that there are considerable advantages to membership, if a fan isn't trying to show off by making a career out of his refusal to join. The tape bureau is the only place in fandom where you can get copies of convention panels and speeches, sound tracks of science fiction movies, dubbings of big-name pros' appearances on network television, and the like, without endless correspondence and answers to questions about fandom. One of its publications is the only surviving example of the famous old fannish tradition of the all-letter fanzine. It's also the only place where the isolated and lonely fan can get such services as a lending library and participation in group correspondence. There are some first-rate people in the NFFF whom you can't get to know elsewhere in fandom. Of course the organisation could be more effective, if fans had different instincts, but in the world as it exists, it's probably the closest thing we'll ever have to a general national fan organisation. I feel certain that some of its most vigorous detractors don't know much about the object of their scorn. I wouldn't waste the hours it takes to open and tally and count up and double-check the votes every December, if I didn't feel obligated to make at least a token offering of labour to go along with my dues.

Or maybe I'm just incorrigibly naive about fanac, unable to get cynical in the way many other fans become after six months or so in the hobby. I still get scandalously excited about things I should take calmly after all these years. A letter from a celebrated pro writer whom I've never met contained some unjustifiably kind statements, and I felt half-intoxicated for the next three days after its unexpected arrival. Someone sent me one of those three-dimensional pictures of the first men on the moon, for no cause at all other than the excitement I've admitted to the space program, and I narrowly avoided the \*(Australian agent: Carey Handfield, 2 Banoon Road, South Eltham, Vic. 3095)

decision that mankind is basically good after all. Just this week I was one of three people selected to receive the only copies of a famous fanzine published on a special kind of paper, and I feel as awed as if Elizabeth I had willed me her collection of prompter books for all the Shakespeare plays. I even feel a perverse sort of satisfaction when I get asked to accomplish some improbable feat of research or information-seeking. One long-gatified fan would trust nobody else to search out the present-day address of Margaret Brundage, and I do believe I succeeded, although Mr Keene hasn't provided verification yet. I received the ultimate compliment of this sort when an unknown name to me wrote asking if I could help to expand his collection of Judy Garland artifacts. By a wild coincidence, I just possibly might manage it, because years ago I taped some broadcasts of historic radio occasions put together by a Washington station which was celebrating an anniversary, and one of them included what purported to be Judy's first radio appearance. Now all I've got to do is find that item among two tapes packed with that series of nostalgiana.

You will all be happy to know that there is no possibility that what follows can be repeated more than sixteen times in these year-ending summaries: I'm just about ready to quit the job but still hold it. Mandatory retirement age is sixteen years in the future so you won't have to put up with such a statement after 1987 or thereabouts. But I really do think that the great day is coming, after so many false sunrises. Working conditions are approaching impossibility. I have access to my desk only about six hours daily, much of the mail addressed to me at the office never reaches me (and unfortunately, men at the post office sometimes toss into the newspaper's box fannish stuff, particularly when the street number hasn't been written clearly), and almost everything I write is tampered with until the meaning is changed or cut where the deletions create a one-sided story, or kept out of print until it's ancient history. Some new provocations turned up during this year. The disability pay that is supposed to run for some sixteen weeks of a long-term illness was cut off for me just as my sixth week off was starting, and I could get no more satisfaction to my screams of anguish than assurance that somebody had made a mistake in the book-keeping department. My surgeon submitted a bill for \$125, which struck me as a first-rate bargain, since it covered preliminary examinations, the operation itself, daily visits during my ten days in the hospital, and seven post-operative treatments in his office; the company-sponsored insurance refused to pay him more than \$75, and the company didn't try to haggle over it with the insurance people. By now, of course, I have found a new reason for continuing to work a little longer: the need for this other operation, the desirability of having some outside income until I'm no longer getting bills involving it, and the chance that I wouldn't be able to subscribe to hospital and medical insurance for myself if I left the company group plan and applied for individual coverage while I knew that an operation is necessary. I'm just going through the motions at work, counting down the months that remain if the worst happens (192 of them, unless I chop off 36 by grovelling until I get retired at the age of 62), and knowing that every week I stay on the job reduces the length of the dangerous interval between quitting and the beginning of social security and tax advantages, when inflation or unforeseeable expenses could force dips into the principal in addition to consumption of interest. I won't be able to reduce my spending appreciably because it would be hard to drive it down below the present miserly level.

Of course, circumstances have allied with my native stinginess. I haven't dared risk the weight-lifting required to use the 8 mm projector and set up the screen, so I've been buying no more movies from Blackhawk Films, despite

all the buried treasures that this firm is bringing to light. A camera isn't too hard to manage, but I just haven't had the energy to do much photography, so there goes another reduction in outgo which would normally be dedicated to film and similar things. I haven't even finished the roll of colour film I started at Noreascon, although I did summon up enough ambition to develop the black and white pictures exposed there. I managed to determine that the Contax suffered no apparent damage from that fall when the neckstrap broke, except in the lens, but I haven't gotten around to buying a new 50 mm lens. That would be a more sensible procedure than getting this one repaired, for the cost might be about the same either way I went, and I can't conceive of anyone getting that banged-up flange back into such perfect roundness that filters and retainer rings and such will go on and off without blinding. And I miss the Contax because I remain an unreconstructed rangefinder adherent in the great photographic conflict against the single-lens-reflex party. I haven't even bought much printed music this year, and now it's probably too late. I don't have the courage to look at current prices which have been inflating in an incredible manner for several years. Now that the American dollar's value has dropped, nobody except public libraries is likely to be able to afford imported music.

By coincidence, Christmas is again this year proving to be one of the final events of the twelve months. It's acting like a mournful Christmas for me in some ways. Too many greeting cards have contained the kind of scribbled messages that make me unhappy. One old friend who has been playing physical brinkmanship for years with heart trouble now has the added affliction of failing vision. An aunt on the other side of the country had a stroke several months ago and writes more despondently every time I hear from her, about declining body and the danger of another stroke. A former big name in FAPA jotted some despairing lines on a Christmas card: he's unmarried, his only two immediate relatives have died, and advancing years are preventing him from doing the good job at the bowling that replaced fandom as his hobby. One of my favourite people in Hagerstown has had domestic problems that make me miserable, even though I'm not involved in them in the slightest. And Hagerstown is so poverty-stricken as a municipality that it didn't even do much decorating this yuletide. No decorations on power poles, no trees in the square, and the green stuff hiding wires which hold overhead decorations stops before it reaches its supports, leaving ugly bare wires sticking out of either end. This has never been much of a city, but it used to have the distinction of decorating the downtown section so elaborately that motorists couldn't figure out which lights belonged to the traffic signals at intersections. It's a good thing I made that decision far in advance not to watch any television showing of A CHRISTMAS CAROL this year. Seeing that poor old man getting rooked of his money through semantics and propaganda conniving would have completed the destruction of my holiday spirit.

What happens in the year to come? Even if I get completely healthy again, I don't plan to show up at the worldcon. The most brutal frankness possible compels me to admit that if I ever go to California, it will be to wallow in the remains of Hollywood rather than attend a convention. I'm pretty sure that the new year will contain some kind of change in my loc habits. The strain on time and ingenuity and my desk top is so great that I'll probably have to figure out some other procedure. Maybe I can see some real live fans at a regional con somewhere in 1972, and maybe more of them will drop by the house during the year than made the pilgrimage during 1971: unless I've forgotten someone, there was only one delegation from the Carolinas and then an evening with Ned Brooks and the Corricks in September.

Aside from these basics, I hate to try to make plans. Increasingly, I feel  
HARRY WARNER JR S F COMMENTARY XXVIII 35



# BRUCE GILLESPIE'S

# 1971

Hurry along there, please. You don't want to miss this expedition. A dollar a time, down the earhole, and into Bruce Gillespie's brain. Hurry, ladies and gentlemen.

Yes, Mrs Murgatroyd? Stop, everybody, for one moment, please. Mrs Murgatroyd has a question to ask before we put on our thought-protection suits and deep-brain diving helmets. Why should we bother to explore the head of this Gillespie creature?

I see you are in a most perceptive mood today, Mrs Murgatroyd. Fortunately, most of our tourists make quite sure they have chosen the right exhibition before they set out. But if you insist on asking honest questions, I will give you an honest, straight-from-the-shoulder answer.

Ma'am, ladies, gentlemen. I must confess that this is not one of our best exhibits. Human minds grow in many varieties and sizes, and for only five dollars you can descend into the depths of much more interesting minds, such as that of Leigh Edmonds. That trip is not recommended for maiden aunts, or even your wives, if you are careful. Again - and Honest Joe never side-steps a good honest question - I must confess that this particular journey is not recommended for anyone in particular. In our journey today, we must follow a strange and arduous route. Many rooms of this specimen's mind, and even whole galleries and terraces are so empty that nobody has wandered through them for years. Peeping toms gave up travelling this journey years ago: the section of the exhibit usually labelled "Sex" is curiously empty. Connoisseurs of the sounds of hollow ringing rooms are the only people who explore those sections.

Again, I must say that the rooms of this mind labelled "Adventure", "Travel", and especially "Sport", are nearly empty. Dusty holograms stand in drab corners of these rooms. You can look at them if you like, after we have finished the main part of our journey, but the images in those rooms have become flickery over the years. Some of you might even find that the whole network of terraces and galleries, called "People", which is usually filled with noisy and infinitely interesting exhibits in the minds of most specimens, contains some very strange pictures indeed. Even in the room where the specimen's friends and family stand, the images and objects sometimes crack, split, or crumble to dust before your eyes, only to jump together minutes later. You never feel that a picture is going to leap from the wall and grab you in its arms, as you feel so oppressively in the minds of many other human beings.

But, please don't go away, Mr Bruno and Miss Cataclysm. I've spent twenty-

five years explaining to stray tourists why they should inspect the mind of this strange creature, so I haven't given up yet. Stay with Honest Joe's tour.

The truth is - listen; you interrupted too soon, sir - that few sections of Gillespie's mind contain anything at all of interest, but the warm glow that can be seen under the doors of those rooms illuminates the whole of the rest of this creature's mind. Let us begin the journey, and you will see what I mean. Careful, Mrs Murgatroyd; careful there. Through the ear-hole, avoid the ear-drum in case it clobbers you, and we'll nick into a blood vessel here. I've long since drilled a passage through the bone. Mind your head, there Mrs Murgatroyd. We try to make these journeys as comfortable as possible, but the human body does its best to keep out tourists.

A beautiful sight, isn't it, Miss Coca-cola? It complements the beauty of the watcher, I'm sure. No matter what the human brain, even one as lowly as this, the sight of endlessly twisting paths, towering hills, and beautiful corridors can only arouse the greatest wonder from the most hardened heart. Indeed, these corridors, rooms, landings, and walls gain some beauty and poignancy because of their emptiness. If you remember that specimen we visited last week - Lee Harding was the name, I think - as I say, you may remember that every nook and cranny was so overcrowded that we could hardly move from one room to another, the noise was appalling, ranks of bustling jokes knocked us down at every intersection, and one particular section of that mind had almost taken over the entire brain. Definitely not a journey for maiden aunts. Oh, sorry, Miss Cataclysm - you're a maiden aunt.

You've noticed then, Mr Claphanger? Already that strange golden glow can be seen in these corridors, even though we are as yet many miles from our destination. Here, climb into my cerebrumobile, which I always keep stored in one of the dustiest, emptiest rooms...

...We're here, friends. It didn't take long, and you didn't miss much scenery. I should know. I conducted some research inside this specimen once, and could not even find enough juicy information for an MSc. I'll give you your dark glasses here. Mr Widdershins, I know you have strong eyes - well, you said so - but I assure you that the light is very bright in the next section. I see; you survived inside the mind of John Foyster. You have my respect, sir; I can't say that I've ever had the courage to lead an expedition into that one. Yes, you may leave off your dark glasses, Mr Widdershins, if you wish. And now, I'll open the door.....

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Sorry, sorry, sorry! I must apologise sincerely. I forgot to make sure you had your noise suppressors working as well. I hope nobody was blown away in the gale. Everybody's dark glasses working okay? Omigod, I'll lose my licence if I do that again. You should have believed your horoscope this morning, Mrs Murgatroyd. I never look at mine on days when I visit this specimen. Everything goes wrong anyway.

But we did get here, and I'm sure you'll find many interesting objects and impressions along this gallery. In fact, soon the objects in this gallery will spill out into every other section of this mind. When that happens, the specimen will die from brain fatigue, but it will be a spectacular conclusion to



brighten the days of many a future mind-archaeologist.

Yes, I know the light is so dazzling that it makes you squint. However, after you become accustomed to this area, you will find it as interesting, comfortable, and fuddy-duddy as any other library. The glow is emitted by the vast quantities of energy almost completely diverted from the other sections of this mind, which give light to this corridor. At times we think that the power cables will burn through because of overloading. But the specimen always goes to sleep, or takes a holiday, just in time to save the whole structure.

Now that everybody can see clearly, what are the two remarkable things you notice about this corridor? How right you are, Mr Claphanger. Nearly all the exhibits are books or holograms of scenes from books, arranged on library shelves. And all the exhibits are catalogued, ordered, thumbed through, and arranged in charts and sequences. However, this corridor never quite satisfies mathematicians who tour here: the reference numbers often change or become scrambled. Dust settles on some items, or blows around this corridor, and a rather nauseating taint hangs around some of the exhibits, as if they have begun to rot like old flowers, though the specimen has not yet swept them out.

Where are we? Sorry, Mrs Murgatroyd. This is really not my day today. We are in the section marked SCIENCE FICTION. See, there's a notice in this corner, labelled SCIENCE FICTION 1971. This "Top 20" list has only just gone up, and I must say that it looks a lot better than last year's Top 10. Indeed, after carefully analysing the relative luminosity of the lists for 1970 and 1971, Professor Humphrey Tape, our resident Gillespieologist, found that even Number 20 on the 1971 list glows more brightly in Gillespie's mind than Number 10 on the 1970 list. However, the Top 2 on 1971's list are not quite as bright as the Top 2 on the 1970 list. The Professor also reports that even Number 30 on the new list glows more brightly than most of the numbers on 1970's list. After we had carefully tapped the energy currents in Gillespie's mind, we found out that no other "science fiction fans" (a small and strange race of specimens, all with minds as peculiar as this one's) ever agreed with the list made by Gillespie; and that the specimen calls this list the

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S F COMMENTARY AWARD OCT 1970 - SEPT 1971

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Bruce Gillespie offers the prize of a meal on the house to the first-place winner of this list of the best new pieces of short fiction published between October 1970 and September 1971. (No one has yet taken him up on this prize.) Publications taken into consideration when judging this list, were ORBIT, QUARK/, THE SECOND BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN S F, NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY, UNIVERSE, CLARION, INFINITY, NEW WRITINGS, ANALOG, FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, GALAXY, IF, AMAZING, FANTASTIC, WORLDS OF TOMORROW, and WORLDS OF FANTASY.

- 1 THE VIEW FROM THIS WINDOW, by Joanna Russ (published in QUARK/ 1, November 1970).
- 2 BODIES - Thomas M Disch (QUARK/ 4, August 1971).
- 3 THE ENCOUNTER - Kate Wilhelm (ORBIT 8, March 1971).
- 4 THE GOD HOUSE - Kenneth Roberts (NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY 1, March 1971).
- 5 THE PRESSURE OF TIME - Thomas M Disch (ORBIT 7, October 1970).
- 6 LET US QUICKLY HASTEN TO THE GATE OF IVORY - Thomas M Disch (QUARK/ 1, November 1970).

- 7 CONTINUED ON NEXT ROCK - R A Lafferty (ORBIT 7, October 1970).
- 8 RAMONA, COME SOFTLY - Gordon Eklund (QUARK/ 1, November 1970).
- 9 THE LAST SUPPER - Robert Fitzgerald (QUARK/ 2, February 1971).
- 10 RINGING THE CHANGES - Robert Aickman (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, May 1971).
- 11 THE FOURTH PROFESSION - Larry Niven (QUARK/ 4, August 1971).
- 12 THE MISSING MAN - Katherine McLean (ANALOG, March 1971).
- 13 THE SCHOOL FRIEND - Robert Aickman (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, December 1970).
- 14 RESCUE SQUAD FOR AHMED - Katherine McLean (ANALOG, October 1970).
- 15 ALL PIECES OF A RIVER SHORE - R A Lafferty (ORBIT 8, March 1971).
- 16 TIME EXPOSURES - Wilson Tucker (UNIVERSE 1, July 1971).
- 17 A DIFFERENT DRUMMER - Raylyn Moore (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, February 1971).
- 18 ET IN ARCADIA EGO - Thomas M Disch (QUARK/ 2, February 1971).
- 19 HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN - Gordon Eklund (QUARK/ 3, May 1971).
- 20 A SEEKER FOR STILL LIFE - Gordon Eklund (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, January 1971).

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Don't stagger back too violently, please. Please keep your balance, despite the results you see before you on this chart. Several times, No. 1 has blurred or nearly blotted out. At one time, BODIES and THE VIEW FROM THIS WINDOW were given equal ratings. Another time, the latter story disappeared altogether, all the items moved up one place, and A COLLECTOR OF AMBROSES, by Arthur Jean Cox, moved into Position Number 20. A violent dissension nearly burst Gillespie's channels of decision, for one part of his mind said, "THE VIEW FROM THIS WINDOW is not science fiction or fantasy!", and the other part of this mind, "Yes, I agree, but it appeared in a collection of speculative fiction, and it is by far the best story to appear in such collections or magazines during the time period." Fortunately for Joanna Russ, the latter argument won, but Gillespie still fears that the readers of S F COMMENTARY will not agree with the winner.

Let us leave this corridor, and venture into one that is even stranger, if not so brightly lit. As we wander past the piles of science fiction, you will notice that many of the items are very shabby, fly-blown, or barely existing at all. Gillespie has this persistent habit, a habit that will eventually break down the structures of this mind altogether, of ingesting tankfuls of acid science fiction. A small part of it congeals into pleasant exhibits, such as those we have already looked at, but the greater part lurks on these shelves, never looked at again, but obscuring the incandescent radiance that might have so readily transformed the whole of this mind. However, Professor Humphrey Tape has discovered that the energy that lights this section of the mind also gives power to all other sections, as it surges through. If the "Science fiction" section slowed down, the whole grid would lose power so quickly that all the lights would fuse, the doors jam, and the other exhibits burn down to ashes of things past. A difficult problem that no mind engineer has ever solved, or ever wanted to. Occasionally, Professor Humphrey Tape sets up a laughter machine in these corridors - he thinks that brittle, bracing laughter will sweep aside all the corruption here. But the laughter machine always breaks down or goes into convulsions, or even worse, creates further items of humorous science fiction, which bend these shelves further under their weight.

The next corridor is labelled "BOOKS - GENERAL". Often this merges with the "Science Fiction" area, and sometimes this corridor zigzags so sharply that it winds to the opposite side of Gillespie's mind. Nearly every other corridor and path in this mind joins this one at some point or another, and most of the exhibits in the rest of this mind were originally manufactured here. Probably we can account for the lack of density in the rest of the brain if you note that there is little feedback to here, especially not from that area labelled "The Body". Professor Tape theorises that long ago a violent explosion shattered the interconnecting corridors, and now whole sections of this mind are inaccessible to the tourist, or the specimen himself. Perhaps the links never existed in the first place.

Let your eyes adjust again. In some sections of the "Books" corridor, the lights blaze so strongly that they outshine all the items in "Science Fiction". However, "Science Fiction" is lit fairly evenly, while there are black patches here, and some exhibits have been here so long that they have nearly faded from view. But look at 1971! The brightest year so far. You will notice that in 1971 Gillespie reopened a side-cloister that had long since been walled off: it's labelled "Non-fiction". But the glory of the main "Fiction" area! Gillespie's passion for lists and catalogues continues here: as in the "Science Fiction" area, everything is rated according to little stars, and he has a Top 10 list of the BEST NOVELS OF 1971. See the great books here; they loom so large and give out so much light that they can be seen from all parts of Gillespie's brain. They stand like shiring monuments:

1 THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES (DER MANN OHNE EIGENSCHAFTEN)

by Robert Musil; three volumes first published in 1930, 1933, and 1953 respectively; edition read: Panther books, Nos 24905, 24913, and 24621; total of 1266 pages.

2 THE RECOGNITIONS

William Gaddis; 1955; McGibbon and Kee; 956 pages.

3 AUTO-DA-FE (DIE BLENDUNG)

Elias Canetti; 1935; Penguin Modern Classics 2287; 522 pages.

4 TIME REGAINED (LE TEMPS RETROUVE)

Marcel Proust; 1927; Chatto and Windus CWP 40; 474 pages.

5 THE CAPTIVE (LA PRISONNIERE)

Marcel Proust; 1923; Chatto and Windus CWP 28-29; 561 pages.

6 CITIES OF THE PLAIN (SODOME ET GOMORRHE)

Marcel Proust; 1921-1922; Chatto and Windus CWP 21-22; 736 pages.

7 JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS (JOSEPH UND SEINE BRUDER)

Thomas Mann; 1948; Alfred Knopf; 1207 pages.

8 INTER ICE AGE FOUR (DAI YON KANYO-KI)

Kobo Abe; 1970; Alfred Knopf; 225 pages.

Wilson Tucker; 1970; Ace Special 94200; 252 pages.

## 10 THE SWEET CHEAT GONE (ALBERTINE DISPARUE)

Marcel Proust; 1925; Chatto and Windus CWP 25; 380 pages.

Hear the sound of tram wheels and shuffling people while you read the list? Most of them were read while Gillespie was travelling to work and back again. Once he went past his stop and was carried into the city before he looked up from reading THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES. If you contemplate that book for long enough, you forget all about your surroundings. You want the book to grow bigger and bigger, until it threatens to crowd out all the others. But next door to it is a book that is nearly as crucial a piece of Gillespie's mental architecture. Listen to this mind's thoughts rumbling and tumbling around the ten books:

"...MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES... one year in the life of Ulrich, the greatest figure in literature, and one of the most invisible... but the year 1913 never finishes because the book never finishes; Musil died on the day he wrote its last sentence... I hear music when I think of this book; the sound of a Beethoven quartet... Ulrich and Agathe play the main violins, and the deep, rich last volume becomes a duo of unprecedented complexity and beauty... This book connects with any and all my knowledge or feelings about philosophy; it's greater than any metaphysical poem, yet it opens more possibilities than anything in Shakespeare or science fiction... Must read it again, soon..."

"...But how do I say that MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES is better than THE RECOGNITIONS?; the question is ridiculous... I could hardly have read THE RECOGNITIONS more quickly... one of the most compulsively readable books ever... those silver sentences which burst forward like huge locomotives, but also subtle, clever, and funny... those monumental characters; that monumental shadowy character; that vague, yet intimate God that 'looks over his shoulder'... the obsessions, the fireworks... and I have James Blish to thank for telling me about it, although he was 12,000 miles away and hardly knew of my existence, while Gerald Murnane praised MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES, and he was sitting at the next desk... Every book is part of another person, and vice-versa... James Blish is right; how ridiculous to think that the Novel has died or that puny squibs of science fiction books could ever compare themselves with books like these..."

"...AUTO-DA-FE... Elias Canetti; his only novel... how to make yet more comparisons?... The Art of the Short Sentence... great, sharp images etched with the smallest number of the simplest words: 'A madman asked, 'Is there a God?', and wanted his address'... 'Fischerle had one form left; annoyed at the two spoiled ones he scratches, deep in thought, on the third: 'Am completely crackers.' If a person writes that of himself, you've got to believe him, because who'd write that of himself?... A book about madmen, who somehow turn out more alive and recognisable than all the mysterious, so-called sane people one meets... Funny, desperate, the smile on the skull... Pure fiction; no explanations needed; everything just is..."

Friends, now that we've heard those ramblings, try to step around to the next mountain of books. You'll find other peaks of this mountain in 1970 and 1969, for Gillespie has taken three years to finish REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST, but he read the first volume so long ago, that its image has faded a great deal. It's even difficult to see the shape of the whole book, as it is split into so

many books that its brightness dims beside that of Gillespie's favourite books: ALICE IN WONDERLAND, and THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS (the brightest of them all), MADAME BOVARY, MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES, and THE RECOGNITIONS. But look at what REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST has done! See those crannies in the walls, the windows and doors that break through into corridors and rooms that Gillespie did not even know about. The long, green rays of Proust's prose did not flare like the arc lamps of the prose of Gaddis and Canetti, but slowly burned through steel walls and unbreakable vaults, until complete areas of Gillespie's brain had to be re-mapped. But perhaps REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST did not change Gillespie, but only added markers to an ill-drawn map. The influence of the first three books is clear to a Gillespieologist like Professor Tape, but he and I cannot estimate the benefit, or damage, of the whole of Proust's book. We will wait to see what happens when Gillespie reads it again.

But I am wandering away from my purpose, friends. You are all starting to fidget. What's that, Mrs Murgatroyd? Yes, I warned you that Gillespie's classification systems are inconstant. REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST is split into its parts, but he has put together the four parts of JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS and listed it as one novel. Perhaps that is because it is difficult to tell apart the four sections, anyway. The one that shines most brightly is JOSEPH IN EGYPT, but apart from that, JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS shares one halo. Listen. Gillespie's mumbling again...

"...Those daunting thick, oak German sentences... that smarmy anti-hero called Joseph... the tragedienne, known vulgarly as Potiphar's wife... a great yarn that winds around like the coils of the Nile itself, sometimes losing itself in the sands of Mann's mind, and sometimes flowing along so inexorably that one can only swim with it... and always the knowledge that the river is as long as the length of human history, that it's about Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus, and the eternal ache of being strangers in other people's lands... but there's another depth too, the experience of being an Arab, and a German, a human being who seeks to live a peaceful life, while the insatiable torrent of human history flows by... Is Mann in the middle of the river, or watching at the bank?; the reader is always in the middle..."

Yes, Mr Widdershins, it was becoming a bit oppressive surrounded by books like skyscrapers, wasn't it? Here's something more our size; in fact, it has slipped by chute down from the "science fiction" corridor. Or maybe it went from here to there. It's INTER ICE AGE FOUR. We won't stay here for long, since Gillespie wrote about this book in VECTOR 60, published by Malcolm Edwards for the British Science Fiction Association. Allow me to sell you a copy of VECTOR from our tourists' kiosk: only \$5.50 for 10. And Gillespie wrote, at great and boring length, about YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN, in S F COMMENTARY 24. That exhibit has a special second halo, you'll notice. The author agreed with Gillespie, and so egotistical is this specimen that every so often he flips back through the pages of YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN, just to reassure himself that both he and Wilson Tucker were right. Don't look disgusted, Mr Florbryx; I warned you that there were unpleasant aspects of this journey.

And Gillespie just did not like SWEET CHEAT GONE as much as the other sections of REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST. To him, it seems like a connecting-link and not a well-structured novel in itself, like the other parts.

We have nearly reached the end of this section of the corridor, which, as I said, is by far the longest and richest in the mind of Gillespie. We do not have time to look at other years; a few of them are nearly as fascinating as 1971.

What's that, Mrs Murgatroyd? The "Non-fiction" section? Thanks for reminding me. You might see in the distance that most of the earlier, long-since-entombed exhibits were school and university textbooks, but Gillespie shut those away as soon as possible. However, not many exhibits here have the same four-star glow of some of the "Fiction" pieces that we just left behind - the only worthwhile "Non-fiction" exhibits for 1971 are DIAGNOSIS OF MAN, by Kenneth Walker (Pelican A552; 1942; 255 pages), ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, by Harry Warner Jr (Advent; 1969; 303 pages), which glows the brightest; MORE ISSUES AT HAND (William Atheling Jr; 1970; 146 pages), SELECTED LITERARY CRITICISM, by Henry James (Heinemann; 1963; 342 pages); RADICAL SCHOOL REFORM, edited by R and B Gross (Clarion 20915; 1969; 345 pages); and COMPULSORY MIS-EDUCATION and THE COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS, by Paul Goodman (Vintage V-325; 1962, 1964; 339 pages).

We can move quickly through the next few sections, as I am sure that you are all tired. Besides, for your dollar, you are allowed one more excursion for the day - something much more pleasant, which shouldn't be hard to find.

Put on your ear-muffs. I am just about to open the padded door of the "Gillespie Sound Cavern". Inexperienced tourists find the noise chaotic here. If you have been before you will notice that usually Gillespie is only playing one piece of music at a time in the "Sound Cavern", but often his active, frothing imagination superimposes on the real music a tune which sounds the way Gillespie thinks it should sound like. We are lucky today; Gillespie is replaying a few highlights from 1971, although he still insists on composing ridiculous lists, even about music. Help me here, Mr Widdershins; carefully unlock the door while I lean against it. It's open? I'll let go. Stand aside...

....There! Horrible din, isn't it? CAN'T YOU HEAR ME? I'M SHOUTING AT THE TOP OF MY VOICE! I MUST BE TALKING TO MYSELF. .... Whew! I managed to reach the sound regulator. Classical music fans will be disappointed in here. Gillespie plays "serious" or "classical" music much of the time (he never knows quite which term to use), but often he plays rock music and a classical piece alternately. Confusing, I agree. The best new music he heard during 1971 was Bruckner's SYMPHONY No 4 - and also (alphabetical order of composer) THREE VIOLIN CONCERTOS, by J S Bach, STRING QUARTETS, Nos 1 to 6, by Bartok, SPRING SYMPHONY, by Britten, SYMPHONIES Nos 82-87, by Haydn, CORONATION MASS, by Mozart, SYMPHONIES Nos 2 to 6, by Nielsen, QUARTET No 14 ("DEATH AND THE MAIDEN"), by Schubert, JOB, by Vaughan Williams, and THE FOUR SEASONS by Vivaldi.

The pop music replays are even harder to catch. Gillespie did not put STICKY FINGERS, by the Rolling Stones, on display, because it did not glow nearly as brightly as earlier Rolling Stones albums. (Gillespie has all of them.) The two most favoured records are DEJA VU and FOUR WAY STREET, by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Gillespie also acquired WHEELS OF FIRE - IN THE STUDIO, by the Cream, for the first time in 1971. And, although it nearly wrecks the loud speakers in the "Sound Cavern" Gillespie often plays GET YOUR YA YAS OUT, the record of the Stones' 1969 live appearances in USA.

From GET YOUR YA YAS OUT came LITTLE QUEENIE and LOVE IN VAIN, one of the very few single-play 45 records that Gillespie liked during 1971. Some of the others were I AM, I SAID, by Neil Diamond, the Australian version of JUMPIN' JACK FLASH, by Harvest, the Who's WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN; YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, by Lee Michaels, and A HARD RAIN'S GONNA FALL, by Leon Russell.

It's nearly the end of our journey, everybody. I don't even have any last-minute surprises for you, since I can't show you the "Film Room" unless some film is showing there. Gillespie nearly closed this cinema altogether while he was in Ararat; and he opened it rarely during 1971. However, a few choice items were shown, and the film that is Number 1 on this list (see; another list - there constructed on the door of the "Film Room") nearly persuaded Gillespie to throw open the room again and show films weekly or daily, as happened during 1965 and 1966. The interior of the "Film Room" has collected a lot of dust since then. But No 1 is glowing brightly! FILMS 1971:

1 THE ARRANGEMENT

directed by Elia Kazan

2 INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION

- Elio Petri

3 SHAME

- Ingmar Bergman

4 KES

- Ken Loach

5 DEATH IN VENICE

- Luchino Visconti

6 GOING DOWN THE ROAD

- Donald Shebib

7 Z

- Costa Gavras

8 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

- Anthony Harvey

9 IT HAPPENED HERE

- Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Rollo

10 THE CONFESSION

- Costa Gavras

Gillespie has only attached brief notes to this notice-board. Little idea is given of the reasons for choosing these films in this order. Only the first three glow very brightly; only they would have competed with the films seen a few years ago. What does this note say? THE ARRANGEMENT: "This is how films should be made: fast, furious, full of surprising and beautiful pictures; touching because somehow it includes everything, yet reaches high. The only film to keep me enthusiastic about Films, Capital F." INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION: "Taut, tight, and terrific, as they say in motor car advertisements. The music is arresting, the photography beautiful, yet analytical, and the leading actor is memorable, both a reality and a valid archetype. Kafkaesque, bitter script helped." SHAME: "Despair, despair, but rarely so cinematically precise and convincing. A war between two people seen



as part of, and even the cause of the moronic civil war (resembling a European Vietnam war) which finally drives the two into the ground and onto the tide. Almost the best Bergman film I've seen." KES: "Back to Ararat Technical School? No, it's a secondary modern school in the north of England, but it's no exaggeration of That Other Place. The boy actor - what was his name? - even fidgets the right way while sitting in the waiting room of the Employment Officer. Big brother, and principal, and conscientious teacher, and brutish teacher - they're all as thick as flies here. A regional film? Not likely!" DEATH IN VENICE: "Yet another Visconti 'adaptation' which has more meaning than the 'original' book... To make von Aschenbach a musician should have been ridiculous, but it was a stroke of genius by a genius... It becomes a great film when Visconti lets his camera follow the path of Aschenbach's sight as he looks slowly around the room, twice - nobody else takes that trouble... But sick Venice impresses more than the ailing dramatis personae." Z... "Flash, bang, wallop, and you always know who are the goodies and baddies... but the baddies are interesting as well, the whole Greek nation full of them.. A funny, uproarious film that makes you deeply angry." THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS: "'They don't make 'em like that anymore'... A forties film, or maybe an AVENGERS episode, with my favourite actor, George C Scott, and a sentimental, funny script that is sloppy the way I like 'em to be sloppy, and has beaut photography, and a great ending. Probably my favourite film on this list, although not the best." IT HAPPENED HERE: "On the list just to spite all the people who attended the Melbourne Fantasy Film Festival and complained about this film. So the Nazis won? So it's the forties? So a forties' film-maker records the whole event? So the colonised are real Englishmen, and not unbelievable figures from a John Christopher novel? So the film-makers make the film as if they are being shot at most of the time? I'm convinced. Perhaps s f fans wouldn't recognise real people if they saw them, or a powerful political statement if they heard one. Come back, Brownlow and Rollo, we need you, whoever you are." THE CONFESSION: "Shouldn't be here; it preaches; you know what's going to happen at the end; but it's still a great film. As in Z, people get imprisoned, accused, laughed at, bashed, humiliated, and tortured. Not machines, and not propagandists. Montand is too good for words - which is why Costa Gavras convinces us of his goodness with uncompromising pictures - and the other prisoners are even more memorable. And the film looks good; it's 'aesthetically pleasing', like the rest of the films on the list; you can't say the same about most recent films."

Do you think that the notes are too short, Mr Florbryx? I can't give you any more - it's hard to communicate with the Gillespie creature while you are inside his head. Perhaps sometime he will say more about them. In 1971 he saw a few other glowing films as well: THE FORBIN PROJECT (John Sargent), LITTLE MURDERS (Alan Arkin), THE ANDERSON TAPES (Sidney Lumet), THE BED SITTING ROOM (Richard Lester), THX 1138 (George Lucas), THE GO-BETWEEN (Joseph Losey), GIMME SHELTER (Maysle Brothers and Charlotte Zwerin), and LITTLE BIG MAN (Arthur Penn). Now we'll leave the "Film Room", although I have some regrets that we did not actually see any exhibits.

Everybody get into the cerebrumobile, and we'll slip out through the Teargland Express - much easier than going back through the earhole. I'm still waiting for Professor Humphrey Tape, however. He was going to meet us here. He sounded very excited. "I've found it!" he kept shouting over the phone, "I think I've finally solved the secret of the Gillespie!" But he wouldn't tell me his solution. Probably he wanted to test his theory before he announced his findings to the excited group of three scholars who have been trying to solve this mystery for years. What keeps this structure together? How can so many absurd contradictions and impossibilities be consistent with a mind that



NEW WORLDS). 1. THE HEAT DEATH OF THE UNIVERSE (P F Zoline) (well, it would have received the SFC Award if I'd been publishing SFC). 2. BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD (Ted Thomas). 3. THE BILLIARD BALL (Isaac Asimov). 4. GINNY WRAPPED IN THE SUN (R A Lafferty). 5. MARS PASTORALE (Peter Tate). 6. MULTIVALUE MOTORWAY (Brian Aldiss). 7. STRANGERS TO PARADISE (Christopher Anvil). 8. OUR MAN FROM PEKING (Hayden Howard). 9. THE MODERN PENITENTIARY (Hayden Howard). 10. THE SONS OF PROMETHEUS (Alexei Panshin).

Oct 1965-Sep 1966: 1. A LONG WAY TO EARTH (John Brunner). 2. THE THIRD GUEST (B Traven) (reprint, in FANTASTIC). 3. ON THE SAND PLANET (Cordwainer Smith). 4. THE ALCHEMIST (Charles Harness).

Oct 1964-Sep 1965: 1. THE STARSLOGGERS (Harry Harrison) (better-known in its later guise of BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO). 2. GUESTING TIME (R A Lafferty). 3. WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT TOWN? (R A Lafferty). 4. THE GREAT COSMIC DONUT OF LIFE (Ray Nelson). 5. ENIGMA FROM TANTALUS (John Brunner). 6. THE UNTELEPORTED MAN (Philip Dick). 7. SOLDIER ASK NOT (Gordon Dickson). 8. THE DEADEYE DICK SYNDROME (? Greene). 9. THE IMMORTAL (Gordon Dickson). 10. OUR MARTIAN NEIGHBOURS (Bruce McAllister).

Who needs Professor Humphrey Tape? If that doesn't provide a temporal map of my s f tastes, what does? The only selection that I regret including is THE BILLIARD BALL, by Isaac Asimov, which on re-reading is marginally interesting. If I re-read those four stories (the only good stories of that year) for Oct 1965-Sep 1966, I would probably place ON THE SAND PLANET No 1. Otherwise, I would continue to agree with these lists, at least back to 1964, which was a very good year, the best previous to the s f year that has just ended, when for the first time I had to enlarge the list to a Top 20.

#### FAVOURITE NOVELS

(Usually these are novels, although I've allowed in biographies and autobiographies sometimes; textbook non-fiction never; s f in direct competition with everything else; and no collections of short stories unless they show great unity. These are the novels that I enjoyed most in these years.)

1970: 1. MAGISTER LUDI (DAS GLASPERLENSPIEL), by Thomas Mann. 2. VOSS - Patrick White. 3. NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR - George Orwell. 4. THE GUERMANTE'S WAY (LE COTE DE GUERMANTES) - Marcel Proust. 5. WITHIN A BUDDING GROVE (A L'OMBRE DES JEUNES FILLES EN FLEURS) - Marcel Proust. 6. COSMICOMICS (LE COSMICOMICHE) - Italo Calvino. 7. SOLARIS - Stanislaw Lem. 8. SO - Adam Pilgrim (Owen Webster). 9. GREYBEARD - Brian Aldiss. 10. THE BLACK CORRIDOR - Michael Moorcock.

1969: 1. SWANN'S WAY (DU COTE DU SWANN) - Marcel Proust. 2. JEAN SANTEUIL - Marcel Proust. 3. TO THE FINLAND STATION - Edmund Wilson. 4. THE TURN OF THE SCREW - Henry James. 5. NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR - Philip Dick. 6. UBIK - Philip Dick. 7. THE MALE RESPONSE - Brian Aldiss. 8. THE WANDERER - Fritz Leiber. 9. BUG JACK BARRON - Norman Spinrad. 10. NON-STOP - Brian Aldiss.

1968: 1. HOTHOUSE - Brian Aldiss. 2. THE COMEDIANS - Graham Greene. 3. THE ZAPGUN - Philip Dick. 4. TIME OUT OF JOINT - Philip Dick. 5. BRAVE NEW WORLD - Aldous Huxley. 6. A DIFFICULT YOUNG MAN - Martin Boyd. 7. INSIDE OUTSIDE - Philip Jose Farmer. 8. THE CENTAUR - John Updike. 9. CAMP CONCENTRATION - Thomas Disch. 10. BABBIT - Sinclair Lewis.

1967: 1. CANDIDE - Voltaire. 2. GULLIVER'S TRAVELS - Jonathan Swift. 3. ANOTHER COUNTRY - James Baldwin. 4. THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN (DER ZAUBERBERG) - Thomas Mann. 5. THE SLEEPWALKERS - Arthur Koestler. 6. THE TREE OF MAN - Patrick White. 7. THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDITCH - Philip Dick. 8. VILE BODIES - Evelyn Waugh. 9. SCOOP - Evelyn Waugh. 10. THE WRONG BOX (Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne).

1966: 1. NOSTROMO - Joseph Conrad. 2. ALL THE KING'S MEN - Robert Penn Warren. 3. THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV - Fyodor Dostoyevsky. 4. PORTRAIT OF A LADY - Henry James. 5. LUCKY JIM - Kingsley Amis. 6. MIDDLEMARCH - George Eliot. 7. THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS - Robert Heinlein. 8. A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ - Walter Miller Jr. 9. THE TRIAL - Franz Kafka. 10. THE POWER AND THE GLORY - Graham Greene.

1965: 1. A PASSAGE TO INDIA - E M Forster. 2. ANNA KARENIN - Leo Tolstoy. 3. LAVENGRO - George Borrow. 4. L'ASSOMMOIR - Emile Zola. 5. NINETY THREE (QUATRE VINGT TREIZE) - Victor Hugo. 6. BOON ISLAND - Kenneth Roberts. 7. WE THE LIVING - Ayn Rand. 8. DO I WAKE OR DREAM? - Frank Herbert. 9. PERE GORIOT - Honore de Balzac. 10. THE PROPHET OF DUNE - Frank Herbert.

I won't write my lists for 1964 and 1963, when I was in 6th and 5th form respectively, and very, very young. From those years books which I would still endorse are EAST OF EDEN, by John Steinbeck, FURY, by Henry Kuttner, THE PASTURES OF HEAVEN, by John Steinbeck, MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA, by Agatha Christie, THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, SONS AND LOVERS, by D H Lawrence, DAVID COPPERFIELD, by Charles Dickens, CANNERY ROW, by John Steinbeck, MADAME BOVARY, by Gustave Flaubert (my favourite book now, but it scored only No 6 in 1964), ALL WE MARSMEN, by Philip Dick (MARTIAN TIME-SLIP, in book form), and FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE, by Marcus Clarke. In later lists, I doubt whether I would still include the Frank Herbert books, THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, or BUG JACK BARRON, and I cringe when I see how low I placed books like THE TRIAL and PALMER ELDRITCH.

#### FAVOURITE FILMS

(This list does not stretch back to 1965, when I saw more than seventy films, and nearly all the films that have remained my favourites ever since. I did not make a list that year because I couldn't pick out a Top 10).

1970: 1. ZABRISKIE POINT, directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. 2. THE SEVENTH SEAL - Ingmar Bergman. 3. FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH - Roy Ward Baker. 4. METROPOLIS - Fritz Lang. 5. ADELIN 31 - Bo Widerberg. 6. WOODSTOCK - Michael Wadleigh. 7. DANGER DIABOLIK - Maria Brava. 8. CATCH 22 - Mike Nicholls.

1969: 1. CLOSELY WATCHED TRAINS - Jiri Menzel. 2. BULLITT - Peter Yates. 3. THE BOSTON STRANGLER - Richard Fleischer. 4. CASTLE KEEP - Sidney Pollack. 5. ROMEO AND JULIET - Franco Zeffirelli. 6. MY DARLING CLEMENTINE - John Ford. 7. IF... - Lindsay Anderson. 8. THE PARTY - Blake Edwards.

1968: 1. 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY - Stanley Kubrick. 2. LES COUSINS - Claude Chabrol. 3. THE LOVE CAGE - Rene Clement. 4. BELLE DE JOUR - Luis Bunuel. 5. ACCIDENT - Joseph Losey. 6. IN COLD BLOOD - Richard Brooks. 7. THE DAMNED - Joseph Losey. 8. THE WAR GAME - Peter Watkins. 9. CAMELOT - Joshua Logan. 10. FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD - John Schlesinger.

1967: 1. COOL HAND LUKE - Stuart Rosenberg. 2. LA PEAU DOUCE - Francois Truffaut. 3. THE IDIOT (PART ONE) - Ivan Pyriev. 4. BILLY LIAR - John Schlesinger. 5. TOPKAPI - Jules Dassin. 6. A FINE MADNESS - Irving Kershner. 7. BANDE A PART - Jean-Luc Godard. 8. UN HOMME ET UNE FEMME - Claude Lelouch. 9. FAHRENHEIT 451 - Francois Truffaut. 10. LOVES OF A BLONDE - Milos Forman. 11. ANATOMY OF A MURDER - Otto Preminger. 12. ALPHAVILLE - Jean-Luc Godard.

1966: 1. THE BIRDS - Alfred Hitchcock. 2. WOMAN IN THE DUNES - Teshigahara. 3. THIS SPORTING LIFE - Lindsay Anderson. 4. THE KNACK - Richard Lester. 5. IL POSTO - Emmanuelle Olmi. 6. SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS - Elia Kazan. 7. THE SHOP ON MAIN STREET - Jan Kadar and Elman Klos. 8. KING RAT - Brian Forbes. 9. NORTH BY NORTHWEST - Alfred Hitchcock. 10. LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD - Alan Resnais. 11. THAT MAN FROM RIO - Philippe de Broca. 12. KNIFE IN THE WATER - Roman Polanski.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

Except for the back cover, all the rest of this issue was typed more than three weeks ago. Since then Syncon has happened. The convention was promptly adjourned to Melbourne, where it continued. The illustration on this page gives a fairly accurate picture of the current state of the editor - i.e. shattered.

One of the more pleasant features of Syncon was the award of the Australian Science Fiction Achievement Award (Ditmar) - Best Fanzine 1972, to S F COMMENTARY. At the time that the award was made, I meant to make a pleasant little speech of acceptance. Instead, I found that I could barely say a thing. I cannot remember the words that I said; I meant to say:

"At the beginning of this convention, our Guest of Honour, Lesleigh Luttrell, said that she actually enjoyed talking to me, and I've been in seventh heaven ever since. Now you, the fans of Australia, have shown that you enjoy talking to me as well. Thank you very much, but this award also goes to all those people who have supported SFC for the last three and a half years. Special thanks to John Foyster, who has also edited SFC during the past year. Now I know that I'm talking to my friends."

August 24 1972.