

self-
preservation
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for:
fapa mailing 110
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small talk dept.

I guess I am a dilettante. I go pitter-pattering from interest to interest the same way I flit from subject to subject within these pages, touching on this, that and the other and never really getting to know much about anything in particular. This is compounded by an atrocious memory--especially for names and dates. For all of my reading and re-reading and re-re-reading, I can't discuss even my favorite subjects coherently, because I keep coming up with statements like, "Sometime back around the second millenium B.C., there was this god-hero whose name I forget, in some one of the cities of Anatolia, I forget just where, and he..." It is embarrassing, distressing and irksome..

That's not all I forget. For instance, I can be sitting in the kitchen, indulging in my second cup of coffee in the morning, and thinking all sorts of bright ideas that I want to talk about in FAPA, but by the time I have washed the dishes and made the bed and am settled in at the typer, I have forgotten just what it was I wanted to say. Or else decided that it really wasn't all that worthwhile.

That's the other problem. I am continually deciding that something really isn't worthwhile. Ghu knows how many stencils I've cut and never run off because I decided between the cutting and the mimeoing that it wasn't worth bothering with. Well, I know that's hardly a consideration. If I waited for something worthwhile to say before I published I'd be long gone from the FAPA roster. If they waited, so would a lot of other people...

I've found that the best way for me to get material into the mailings is to keep the typer set up and stencils handy. Then as soon as the humor is on me, sit and type (like now). Then, as quickly as I can, run it off. It is emotionally more difficult to chuck a mess of mimeoed pages than a cut stencil.

All of which isn't leading up to anything in particular, but it does fill pages, doesn't it?

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Since lastish I have gleaned some information on carousels, namely I found and bought A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF CAROUSELS (A book I knew must exist). It says nothing about the terms carousel and merry-go-round applying to directionally different machines, but rather uses the terms interchangeably. Also, as best I can make out, stylistically, the carousel at the Worlds Fair is not over a hundred years old, or anything like that, but most likely about 80 years, or younger. Once the typical design had been achieved around 1880 or so, it was followed for decades. A student of the subject could undoubtedly distinguish various machines--by carving

techniques, jump mechanisms, etc.: But I am far, far from an expert. And while Fried's Pictorial History...is better'n nothing and has some data and nice pictures, it is very far from adequate.

But at least it has given me some ideas to go carousel-observing with, come summer.

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Ted White and Andy Main dropped in the other day. We sat around for a while discussing the geneologies of our furniture, public transit systems and various odds and ends. And I took the opportunity of showing off my dragons. So far, every time I've shown off my dragons, the people to whom I'm showing them seem surprised to discover that there is stone available which is easier to carve than wood.

Well, I was surprised when I discovered it myself. But so frequently when I make a wonderful new discovery, I shortly learn that almost everyone else already knew about it. Maybe you already know all about talc. But just in case you don't, I'm going to carry on about it for a few paragraphs.

I used to find small scraps of soapstone when I was a kid and I prized them highly, but it never occurred to me to try whittling them. Then not long ago I bought some chunks in a local art-supply house. They sell it under the trade-name "Sculptstone". I got chunks in translucent white which is practically grainless, pale green which has a very slightly fibrous grain, and almost-black (this is the steatite---right now Eskimo sculpture in steatite is Big around NYC and, I suppose, elsewhere). And also some pink which is coarser and which I suspect might be an alabaster. I haven't given it any minerological tests as yet.

Along with its lovely colors and slighthness of grain, talc has the charming hardness of 1 on the Mohs scale. You can scratch it with your fingernail; you can cut it with a knife. I did most of my carving with a razor blade and a sailmaker's needle (a handy tool to keep around the house). I sawed slabs to size with a hacksaw. And I did the finishing where desired with sandpaper. A simple set of tools, wot?

Back in olden times (B.C.) in some places the translucent stuff was used for light-admitting window panes. The Babylonians dug talc for cylinder seals. The greenish stuff was frequently used before plastic, as imitation jade--a few drops of oil bring up the color nicely.

It is much fun to mess around with. If you have inclinations in that direction and haven't tried it, you should.

Some of the sources of soapstone are lab table tops, sinks, and old fireplaces. In fact, I have reason to believe that under the Contact and many layers of enamel, my fireplace is soapstone. Jeez, if only I had the ambition...

If you have access to the great out-of-doors you might even dig it up in the natural state. It's found in quite a few places. A lot of minerals metamorphize into talc, or serpentine, a close relation which is harder (2 to 5 on the Mohs), comes in loads of colors, and has also been quite popular for carving and making imitation jadework.

I have one item carved from raw rock.

A while back when the gang was involved in some superficial rock-hunting, a friend of mine went scrounging in some mounds of earth heaped in the park along the East River. He came up with, among other things, a greenish rock, which he split and shared with me. It was a light, powdery green on the weathered surface, and a bit darker inside. It was a little harder than my store-bought carving stone, and opaque, with a few flaws and a bit more grain. It begged to be hacked, so I roughed out a sort of primitive elephant, of which I am inordinately proud.

We went back to the same rubble heaps several times, but didn't find any more of this nice carving stone.

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So here I sat, with page 130 of the draft of my Western in the typewriter and my mind entirely in the late 19th century. Through intense concentration, I have captured the mood and am completely engrossed in the problem confronting the protagonist. And then--suddenly--there is this horrible noise.

The telephone is ringing.

I pick it up and mumble "Hello".

A muzzy sort of voice says back, "This is Terry. Can you draw a Hupmobile?"

Jolted severely through subjective time and space, I find myself a couple of hours later, surrounded by what is left of my collection of auto mags (sometimes I'm as bad about giving things away as I am about keeping them), sundry books of the motorcar, a vast collection of 8x10 photographs and other automotive miscellany.

"What's good for General Motors is good for God." Arnie Katz

By this time I have determined that I can lay hands on pictures which will provide me with authentic detail of all sorts of cars: Durants, Harmons, Star Cars, Fiats, Locomobiles, Bugattis, Whites, Phelps, Minervas and Isotta Fanchinis. But no Hupmobiles.

But finally, after much brain-racking, I come up with a source from which I can plagerize a Hupmobile. Greatly relieved, I lean back to relax, and then something else occurs to me.

The fact is, I get a large charge out of doing these drawings for Terry, but the side-effects are rather time-consuming. Like, last week, Terry sent over some stencils, which I finished up in no time at all. But there was a note with them asking if I had any spare copies of FanHistory. I decided to look-see. The ensuing and fruitless search consumed most of the day and involved a rather thorough sorting of the junk in the closet bookshelves.

That was last week. Today, when I had finished the hunt for the Hupmobile, I recalled that during last week's search I'd noticed a bottle of carbon tet in the closet. That reminded me that I had some electrical contacts in need of cleaning, so I went back into the closet today, to look for the c.t. I didn't find it, but then I didn't find my swamp water either.

You see, while searching, I remembered that there should be a bottle of Okefenokee swamp water tucked away in the closet, but I hadn't seen it lately. I got to wondering whether it had finally eaten through the glass and escaped.

Fortunately, I found it, safe and sound, in the kitchen, with the instant coffee.

Then I dug up the typewriter cleaner somebody gave me a few years ago and cleaned my contacts. After that, I settled at the typewriter and stared at page 130. After a few moments of staring, I glanced up at the clock. With a weary sigh, I switched off the typewriter. To hell with it.

It is time for the Chuck McCann show.

The Eye has been showing me "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea". This is a curious program which calls for an uncommon ability at the willing suspension of disbelief. It's obviously a show for the young'ns that are allowed to stay up past 8:00, and is full of all sorts of gimmicks. This one in particular had a Lost World plot complete with battling dinosaurs, Amerinds who had somehow become displaced in the Antarctic tropics, and

a giant spider that I remember distinctly from a Johnny Weismuller Tarzan of some years back.

By me, it is pure pulp and has a kind of naive charm. At least it's better written and better made than that spate of overgrown insect movies we had from Hollywood a few years back. But then, what isn't?

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The Curse of Time Dept.: I have before me a recent picture of Doc Savage and it is, indeed, a sorrowful thing to behold. Far sadder than the sight of a white-haired Richard Arlen tending bar in an old Western set. This is because it shows distinct signs of deterioration of Doc's once mighty intellect. Oh, woe!

Apparently for the past three decades he has kept up his rigid discipline of exercise. He is still well-muscled, perhaps even a mite muscle-bound from the look of him. But his face shows the ravages of time--a general coarsening of features and puffiness of flesh. And evidently he is now bald, because he has affected a Clairol-yellow wig styled after (if memory serves) the hair-do of the mask that Tony Trent used to wear in his WWII role of The Face. (It was Tony, wasn't it? Used to buzz around in a monstrous Deltawing, baring his fangs at the Nips--lost the mask overboard one day and not long after that got married--gala wedding attended by all the characters in the line.)

And the way he frowns and squints, one must assume that the years have dimmed the sensitivity of those gold-flecked eyes.

The picture I'm talking about is, of course, the one on the new Bantam issues of Doc's adventures. Fortunately, the stories under the covers are reprints of his adventures of three decades ago, and not some modern writer's telling of the recent episodes of his life. I'm afraid even James Bond would look good next to this pathetic hulk of a once-great man.

DO-IT-YOURSELF ANTIQUITIES:

Last night I got to thinking that I really should have a Babylonian-type cylinder seal, so this morning I made me one. I've already told you about my soapstone carving--and, of course, I made my seal out of soapstone. This is legitimate, since the ancients made them out of all sorts of things, soapstone included.

Professional lapidaries used to make them out of fine and semi-precious stone for them as could afford it. They usually worked by grinding, using fine quartz sand as an abrasive. They had some pretty efficient foot-powered (and/or slave-powered) tools, such as lathes, and their craftsmanship was frequently

quite impressive. Mine is not so good.

For one thing, I lack the patience of my predecessors. For another I lack the tools. My society has a highly-developed technology and right now there are tools available to the lapidary which can speed and simplify his work. But I don't have them. I am not nearly so well-equipped for seal-carving as the professional of three or four thousand years ago.

But seal-carving, even then, was not limited to professionals. A lot of the cylinder seals the archeologists find are made of such soft stone as steatite and talc and show the work of craftsmen as unskilled as I.

Of the four types of softstone I have on hand, the steatite, being most compact and firm of grain, would be the least easily damaged and the best for a cylinder seal. I chose the apple-green Himalya (a trade-name) because it is the softest. That is, while being the most easily damaged, it is most easily carved. I sawed out my blank with a hacksaw, trimmed it roughly to size with a razor blade, sanded it more-or-less cylindrical, and gouged out the figures with a sailmaker's needle, using a wire-loop stylus for some of the area shaping. I looked at reproductions of Babylonian seals for ideas and then did my own, using one of my typical Leech dragons and some Babylonianesque figures as rendered by an unskilled member of a different culture.

Being too lazy to go out and buy or otherwise obtain equipment for the job, I dug out my silly-putty to take test impressions as I worked. I made several pronounced goofs, but in general was surprised and delighted with the results. It is easier to get something acceptable (if your standards are low enuf) than I had expected.

Finally I drilled the hole in it. Since I didn't have a long enough drill bit, I had to do the last few millimeters with the sailmaker's needle. (These are damn handy tools.) Of course, the hole is somewhat off center.

But anyway I now have my own cylinder seal, in case I ever have to sign any documents in wet clay. And it was fun to make it.

It is another day. In fact it is several days later. I woke up this morning with that ache-all-over feeling, particularly around the shoulders, with sore muscles in one leg and both arms, and a very tender tip of the middle finger on the right hand. I attribute all this to having spent the best part of the past two days contorted over a piece of steatite prodding at it with a sailmaker's needle.

It may be that I am compulsive or something, but before I had finished my second cup of coffee, I discovered that I was back at the steatite. I sensed that if I didn't do something about this I would succeed in destroying myself completely, so I determined to get Out Of The House.

I packed off to the Metropolitan Museum for a quick spin through the Egyptian and Near Eastern rooms.

Now I have returned home, overwhelmed with a stark awareness of a frightening futility to it all. When I look at work that was being done four to five thousand years ago I am cowed. Admittedly those beautiful pieces may be the cream of a large crop, but still they stone me.

And I can hardly excuse the quality of my craftsmanship by citing the limited array of tools I am using. Melville just reminded me that most of the whalemens skrimshander was crafted with jack knives...

Do you ever get the feeling that you are completely superfluous?

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I stopped off yesterday and bought some more stencils, so this madness may go on indefinitely. The trouble with the present set-up (i.e., stencils at hand and the typer set out where it is accessible) is that this tends to turn into a verbose journal full of anything and almost everything that occurs to me. Like, here I am not yet in receipt of the November mailing and already on the 7th page of something for the February mailing. Ghod...

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A MOTHER'S LOVIN' HEART KNOWS HER OWN CHILE...

The other day I heard an ABC-TV executive on radio discussing the net's big rating hits this season. The interviewer asked him how the idea for "Bewitched" came about, and he answered that "it all started with a movie starring Veronica Lake, titled BEWITCHED"

But then maybe, being an executive, he lives in some different time-stream than I do.

HEY, LUPOFFS: Today I turned on Chuck McCann's Sunday morning show and what should I see in betwixt Krazy Kat and the Dragon Lady but Chapter Two of THE PHANTOM EMPIRE starring Frankie Darro and Gene Autry & His Radio Ranch. Swinging.

9 December 64 - IT'S RAINING IN MY KITCHEN

Do you ever have one of those years when everything seems to go wrong? I wouldn't want to try to list all the strange and disturbing things that have happened to me this year, like having two (count'em--2) jobs go sour on me, being hurricaned on while waiting for a train (which turned out to be leaky), like using up the last of my lifetime supply of mimeo paper, like cutting the kidneys out of a dead pig with a dull knife, like becoming a hyper-active fan, etc., so I'll just relate a few of the things that have happened in the past days.

Starting with Friday: I got home from work and found an incision in my living room linoleum with a long copper catheter running out of it. It led under the living room door, down the hall and back into the deep, dark recesses of the basement.

I don't know whether I mentioned it before or not, but the trap door in my living room floor (which the linoleum had covered rather nicely) is the only access hatch to the oil tank for this building. Seems the fuel lines had gone bad and the only way they could be bypassed was through my floor. So now this catheter is supplying the furnace with fuel while they install an entire new tank and line system which, this time, will be put in the back of the building where they will be easily accessible.

Actually all this isn't so bad--aside from the linoleum being shredded and the probability that I will trip over the line and snap a few bones...

But then there were the little things: the electric sheet started malfunctioning; the bedside lamp began to flicker, and the sound-switch on the TV went intermittant. I managed to fix the sound switch temporarily with a toothpick, rewired the lamp, and joggled the innards of the control box on the sheet until it got to working again. And since I had the tools spread out, I fixed the outlet this typer plugs into (which had been acting up for weeks) and did some more electrical maintenance. The clock stopped a couple of times, but hitting it started it again, and it seems to be okay now. The cat got sick on the floor but he only does it to annoy because he knows it teases, so I guess that doesn't count. And other normal things went wrong.

Then, today I came home from work and walked into the kitchen. It looked like someone had killed a frog on St. Swithin's Day in there. The multitude of tiny tips of peeling paint on the ceiling all seemed to be dripping little rusty-brown globules of water. At least I hoped it was water.

Unfortunately, just the Saturday before, I had plastered up all the mouse-holes for the winter. Knowing this, I thought for a moment of calling Don & Jo to find out how many cubits of gopher wood they might have in their lumberyard. But then I remembered that, as I slipped in through the front door, I'd glimpsed the super-lady back around the furnace room. I stuck my head out the kitchen door to see if I could spot her and wave her over to take a look at the downpour and the vast puddle that was forming on my new wall-to-wall floor.

Just at that moment my next-door neighbor, George, looked out his kitchen door and asked "What's new?"

I told him.

The super-lady peered out of the furnace room to see what the commotion was. George called her over and she looked at the ceiling. Since I know even fewer words in Polish than she does in English, George explained the situation to her. (She knows at least half-a-dozen English words, while I know but two in Polish and one of those is only fit for unmixed company and fanzine titles).

Seeing as how I didn't own enough pots and pans to put under all the drip points, I dug around in the closet, came up with an old plastic tablecloth and used it to erect a sort of lean-to to keep out the damp.

So now I am sitting here, listening to the patter of rain on the roof.

10 December 64 - "...Be fair, Sam. Who wants a leaky piano?"

The monsoon season began on Monday, and Tuesday it was still raining in the kitchen. Wednesday morning before leaving for work, I dumped out the accumulation in the rain barrel and re-set it. When I got home Wednesday night, the downpour had stopped. Now, it is Thursday night. The catheter is gone from in the living room, and I've taken down the tent in the kitchen. The apartment seems to be settling back to normal.

The workmen who took out the catheter nailed down the linoleum, replaced the old newspaper I'd left over the oil-smears they'd made to keep the cat from tracking in them and--one of them evidently made a phone call. I noticed the two nickles lying on the end table before I realized the phone had been disturbed. It pleasantly surprised me. Not the acquisition of 10¢ so much as the fact that whoever had used the phone had been so thoughtful as to leave payment for the call. This is the kind of thoughtfulness I have long since ceased to expect, require or ask of my fellow human beings. I am surprised to encounter it. It warms my flinty little heart.

Problems I had with this issue dept. (A regular fanzine feature)

First, I didn't have any paper, but Ted White came through with time and transportation which is why this is on typical Qwertyuiopress white instead of my usual varicoloured stock. But not having run this type stock before I didn't run it right. As a result I have gotten a worse case of offset than I've had in years. I didn't realize this until I started backing up and then it was too late to help one set of pages. Whether the situation will be better on the backup I can't be sure. I've tried to help the situation, but I have neither the time nor patience to attempt a complete cure. My apologies.

Secondly, this is the first time in years I've run during the winter and I had forgotten what a marvelous static generator the mimeo is in this climate. Of course the static problem also contributes to the offset.

I made a sort of stab at dispersing the static. I tied a leaf of aluminum foil to the end of a piece of twin lead that was close at hand. Then I tipped the other end of the twin lead to a convenient set of metal bookshelves. This helped, but as I was running I noticed a strange noise. I looked up. The end of the lead from the aluminum foil wasn't quite in contact with the earthing shelves and every time I turned the drum a sheet of paper would shoot out, tap the aluminum foil and fall into the tray. As it tapped the foil a small blue spark with leap from the lead to the shelf with a snap. It is quite colorful.

If I remember, next summer when and if the bone room window is open I will drive an earthing rod into the ground outside and run a permanent lead into the room to tie to the mimeo. Maybe this'll help. (No, the cold water pipe is too bloody far away.)

If you get the impression that this ends abruptly, you are right. I got chopped off in mid mailing comments by various things like a new job, an over-abundance of handy home handicraft projects, a serious reading schedule, and assorted other time-killers. In fact it is taking a serious exertation of willpower to get this mimeoed and I only hope I succeed.

Really, I am quite disgusted with both the lousy repro--the offset---and the static situation which has made running a real bitch. I have completely lost heart and would chuck the whole mess except that it would be wasteful. Fortunately, I don't need the credit, so if you are upset by the repro you need not read it. I sure don't intend to.

LeeH
27 January 65

COMMENTS

Thanksgiving a.m. 1964

Day before yesterday the mailing arrived and after perusing it and reading several of the most promising items I decided, as I frequently decide, that instead of slopping around in the stick, I would draft mailing comments and then polish them and try to put out something with a little more class than is my usual wont. So this morning, after having sat up rather late last night reading FAPazines, I settled at the typewriter with a wad of white paper to draft. After three or four words I decided to hell with it.

Thus once again I bring you my usual sloppy rough-draft-in-the-stick-type observations. I do admire and envy the classy, high-toned, well-polished wordage some of you turn out, but I guess it isn't in my nature to try to emulate it. So...

ENTROPY: Every once in a while my high-level enthusiasm for ATom is reinforced. I will be going my merry way holding the thought in a corner of my mind that ATom is great, and then I will see something that takes me aback and makes me think I didn't realize how true this is. His work is so damned "right".

TC, yr editorial is itself a welcome contribution to the documentation of fanhistory. But you know what a buff I am of things past (preferably obsolete and in ruins). Just for general entertainment purposes, it is good to have a fanzine around which digs into bygone writings is re-presents the best of them. I like to feel that when we are aware of that which has gone before we can make better use of the present. But I don't want to get all involved in that or this whole issue will go to hell in a bucket. And what I really want to do is get on to the next zine in this stack:

LIGHTHOUSE: The cover is, indeed, but especially the instrument at stage left.

The Philip K. Dick item is fascinating and I've got to think about it a while. But it seems to me he shut down rather suddenly, before he got where he was going. Though perhaps if I Believed, I would find his final comments more climactic.

WAW speaks of fandom as if it were the nicotine habit, a narcotic or something on that order. But then perhaps...

I am tempted to get involved in this political discussion, but am going to restrain myself because I know damned well that whatever I might say, I will phrase it in some obscure way that fails to make my point clear. Mayhap suffice to say that it is not possible to "keep things the way they are" because everything is built on what has gone before and as we move through time what has gone before is always something different (more) than it was. But then, can one say with accuracy that the Conservatives "want to keep things the way they are"? I think not. Nor do I agree that they want to go back to some point in the past. I think they just want to stop the motion in one direction and redirect it elsewhere. Or should I say I think that's all they would be capable of doing? No matter how much one might like today, he can't keep it as it is. I have no simple solution to the problem...

Carol, I think, is trying to depress me. But the filler from Richard Condon cheered me again.

As to "1926 And All That", muy platypoid. Funny like things back in the early '50's.

Metzger, as usual, enjoyable reading. Though sometimes I fet the feeling that maybe he is a character living in a book instead of a real-type person somewhere in a real-type world.

RE CO³, let us talk a bit about restaurants. I don't eat out much and when I do it is usually with the gang and usually we end up in a particular Chinese restaurant, Wo-Kee's (not to be confused with Wa-Kee's on the other side of the street). The big deal is the wonton soup. When I indulged in Mexican restaurants, my choice was The Alamo on 47th Street (just west of 6th Ave, I think), where one could get a lovely platter of enchiladas. For 10¢ extra one could get the same dish without the beans (I prefer it that way). We used to wonder if the extra charge was for the services of a peon in the kitchen on removed each bean by hand. Maybe eventually this will be automated too.

But now I am madly in love with an Armenian restaurant the name of which I can't remember now. The food is good, the service is excellent and the prices--well--the four of us go together, have dinner with wine, enjoy the feel of truly gracious living, and end up with a bill of about \$10.00 (for all 4 people). I dig.

There is a rather nice Pakistani restaurant around the corner and down a couple of blocks from here, but it is not so cheap.

Speaking of Kools, when I was a sprat in a non-smoking family, all I knew about cigarets was what I encountered in their advertising, I was under the impression that Kools were for smoking when (and only

when) one had a cold--excepting penguins, of course, but maybe they always have colds. I reckon I would if I frequently slid down ice-glides on my bare rump.

I have heard very little of Joan Baez, and what I have heard was generally so stylistically derivative that I wasn't very objective about it. I've heard even less of Bob Dylan and have not encountered him trying to be anything except Woody Guthrie. I do not doubt that you know the song title you mention was in circulation long before anyone ever heard of Bob Dylan, and possibly before there was a Bob Dylan.

Speaking of Egyptian art, I have just recently "discovered" it and gone mad for it. All these years I've known it was there, of course, but as I may have mentioned I'd been muchly involved with the barbarians to the east and haven't gotten into Egypt much since I left Chicago around 1938 or so. Recently, I got to the point where the barbarians were too much involved with Egypt for me to continue to ignore it, so I started doing a little study around the Nile. At the same time I was messing around with the soapstone whittling I mention elsewhere, and so was looking a little more closely at sculpture for its own sake as well as its anthropological implications. And suddenly a mess of the Egyptian stuff sort of hit me in the face. It swings.

Back when I put you on the mailing list for that first issue of Quandry, I was somewhat conscious of the ambiguity of some first names, like Terry, and was wondering whether the Terry Carr I was sending my fanzine to was male or female.

Take Five: When I get trading stamps at the grocery (the rare times I go to the A&P, that is) I just toss them in the bag with the goodies I've bought. Then when I get home I can peel them off the cold damp package of lambribs to which they'd adhered.

Full agreement with your comments on the Ryder HAMLET. I wonder how some joker can read Hamlet's speak to the players and then indulge himself in all the shortcomings he advises them against?

How do you feel about Olivier's fillum of HENRY V? It is one of my all-time favorites. I may be a real slob about Art, but when it comes to adventure fillums I am in my element, and Hal 5 is a swinger.

Carr orts enjoyed.

It is Lewis J. Grant's letter which tempts me most to get into a discussion of politics, cultures, etc. I agree heartily with the bits he recites about culture evolving and get off the train at the same station he does. I hope whoever writes Omega Point does a decent job of it. It sounds like a potentially good book.

Screens on the windows?

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC: rich, it is a short editorial but a cheering one.

Steve: You're a nut.

As to my inability to suspend my sense of disbelief in re James Bond, I think it is because the stuff I've encountered so far just doesn't inspire me to it. After much consideration of the discussion of JB in FAPA and after having watched with negative reaction one episode of the fan-touted MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. on the machine, I've decided that maybe there is something to all this jazz that I just don't dig. So one of these days maybe I'll try looking into the subject again.

Has anybody done a study of present day New York Fandom to see what percentage of it is made up of dps who were fanactive elsewhere before they came to the evil environment of the Big City?

JESUS BUG: Foosh, do you ever present your arguments in a quiet, intelligent, logical manner. But, Andy, cute slogans, mud-slinging, etc., are the basic elements of any campaign these days. Witness the recent cries of "carpetbagger" etc., on the national scene. Logic will get you nowhere nowadays. It is the Mad Ave approach that sells.

Idealism, they say, is the embryonic stage of the cynic.

I enjoy your chronicles muchly but find few hooks in them. As to your details of the Donaho-party business, see my above paragraph beginning "Foosh..."

I note you are only one of several people this mailing who have some wrinkling/fold-over in their stencils. Is this the new "in" thing?

I got this new job and the other people in the office are two Shapiros, a Bernstein and a Zuckerman. My third day there one (the older) Shapiro asked the Zuckerman "Is this girl Jewish?" to which the Zuckerman replied, "Yes." and after a pause, "I think so." Unfortunately, the Shapiro later asked me directly. In fact, what he asked me was, "Are you Jewish or Italian?" Being some kind of sucker for the truth or something, I replied neither.

I suppose the solution would be to learn Yiddish, and then when I am asked outright I can snap back some popular cliché in Yiddish that won't be an actual answer, but just an implication.

Trick-or-treat is a strange business. When I was a sprat I'd never heard of it. It first came to my consciousness when I was in my late teens or early 20's and taking some of the smaller neighborhood kids around on Halloween. The adults weren't familiar with it either. It seems to be an intentionally introduced custom designed to de-emphasize the old Halloween customs, such as breaking windows and overturning and to make it commercially profitable through the sale of special Treat candies, etc. For a while there it smacked of teaching the youngsters the fine art of blackmail, but lately the "trick" aspect seems to be disappearing completely. If all goes as planned, I suppose, in a few years Halloween will be simply the night that the kiddies put on their fancy store-bought costumes and go begging. Which may be better than having your outhouse overturned.

By the way, if I make any nasty cracks about California, please keep in mind that this is a local fad and diversion and doesn't necessarily imply anything.

NULL-F 36 & 37: It is strange, isn't it, how every once in a while one gets involved in explaining why he would sooner work at something he likes doing for a small amount of money than beat his bones to a pulp at a job he doesn't enjoy just because it pays more? Like how Rich And Famous isn't necessarily the same thing as Happy, and Happy is usually more fun...

In #37 you wax bitter. We all wax bitter at times (well, most of us). Don't do it for long, though. Is more better you should ignore the jibes and go your own merry way.

SYNAPSE: Well, if wrinkled stencils are the "in" thing, you are the most.

You have a knack for writing with nice little tidbits here and there, like the line "The number 1791 appears on the drum, but i don't think...etc"

I have been pondering over your nitpicking and have come to the conclusion that I definitely approve. I am not going to set down and study over my stencils, cleaning up the typos, or improve my lackadaisical manner of self-expression, or the like, just because of it. But at least you are prodding me into thinking about it.

I hold with the theories that usage makes the grammar, language has to be flexible, it continually evolves, and all that. But I also hold with the necessity of systemization if we want to communicate, and of keeping a check-rein on the evolution. I bear with all sorts

of colloquialisms and so forth. I speak atrociously--my grammar is much worse than it was some fifteen or so years ago. But I get bugged as hell when the mass media flood me with stupid grammatical mistakes. I seem to recall that, back in the Golden Days of Radio, that medium took pride in its craftsmanship. Goofs in production, dead air, and obvious grammatical mistakes were sins. TV, on the other hand, doesn't seem to give a damn. It's "between you and I" so often I'm beginning to wonder if maybe they're right and I'm wrong. "Unique" has obviously changed its meaning in the past few years, because nowadays things can be "more unique" any old time. Etc., etc. "Enthused", to which you object, also seems to have become an accepted word. My 1944 dictionary lists "enthuse" as a "v & vt. colloq."

"Could 'scene' be translated 'milieu' is most of your uses of it?" Care to clarify this sentence, Mr. Speer?

As to my mandolin cases, I'm glad you asked. These are shipping cases that mandolins (and occasionally other musical instruments) come in. They are made out of 3/8" plywood with 1 x 2 battens, and the musical instrument dealer on the corner near Meisner's dumps them out. When Don sees one in good shape, he takes it home, knocks it down and adds the wood to his lumberyard. He used the 3/8 ply as an underlay for tiles in his kitchen and it worked very well. It is handy stuff, and free.

"dirt-farm": I understand there are lots of other kinds of farms--hydroponics, for instance, or horse farms (Eastern style). But in my particular use, I intended the colloquialism (or maybe it is a slang term) whereby one implies the small, low-profit operation. A dirt-farmer generally grubs at the ground himself instead of handling the paper work while hired hands, or sharecroppers till the soil.

I've never heard the term "table model" in reference to a model airplane before. 50¢ seems like a fairly high price for a kit in the '30's. My brother used to get 50¢ kits, and sometimes even more expensive ones, but he was a buff. The ones I was familiar with usually ran 10¢ or 25¢. The nickle one was a cheapie. (By the way, there's another nit. Nickle. I frequently see the metal referred to as "nickle", and also see the coin called a "nickel".)

DIFFERENT: Curiosa indeed. Muchly enjoyed.

ASP: I am sort of awed and aghast at your tale of your times with the cats. It is entertaining reading, but I had no idea life with cats could be so complicated.

On work, as I mentioned earlier, I am in favor of enjoying

life. I have found a Way of Life and a Standard of Living that I find quite suitable. It doesn't include trips to the fascinating out-of-the-way places around the world that I think I might enjoy, or a lot of other luxuries which sound like fun but which I don't feel are necessary. I have established a break-even point for salary--the amount of income I have to have to maintain this way of life. More money is nice and I would like very much to have it, but beyond the break-even point, I feel that Other Things are more important than more cash. Eike, I should enjoy my job. No matter what else money might buy, it won't buy me happiness during those hours I spend on the job working for it.

Re conventions, I think you are right that there is too much carrying on. I've never been involved with the production of a convention so I can't talk from experience. But I am in favor of simplification as a matter of general principle.

I am not violently opposed to Hugos, but I tend to feel that awards in recognition of achievement are sort of silly. For one thing it is so over-done in this world today where magazines present awards to the various media in exchange for the publicity involved, etc. Egoboo is Important. Generally people need some acknowledgment of achievement to satisfy their souls and some reaction from others to measure their work with. And it is undoubtedly soul-warming to have a Hugo to set on the mantelpiece. But it seems to me that the Hugo is sort of a hollow laurel. If I had one I'd certainly show it off, but I'd feel a little guilty while doing so--I'd feel like I was putting on my friends--if I didn't explain a bit about the balloting.

As to naming children, I am in favor of the two given name set-up. For a girl one should be reasonably feminine and the other something convertible into a casual nickname. For a boy, one common and casual, one with a little flash and class. Then the kid has some range to choose from as to what he wants to be called when he gets old enough to think about it. He prolly wouldn't be happy about it. Damned few people seem to like their own names. This is a curious sort of thing that someone ought to speculate into some time. A large percentage of the people I know socially are operating under given names which weren't given to them by their parents (me included). Taken anmes, I guess you could call them.

Cigaretts & their packaging: Did anyone else in fandom play "Hits & Cracks" as a kid? I encountered it in Savannah and haven't heard of it elsewhere--in fact I'd forgotten it until now. When in company, you looked for discarded wrappers, I think Luckies was the brand, and when you found one, one of you took Hits and the other Cracks. Then you opened the wrapper and found somewhere on it a code H or C. The winner got to whomp the loser. There was some difference in delivering a Hit or a Crack, but I forget what.

ALLERLEI: The new house sounds swinging. Of late I have had several occasions to be in houses--for instance, some friends of mine have just acquired one in Glen Rock, N.J., a pre-WWII model with upstairs, basement, garage, gazebo, grounds and all like that--and they fill me with envy. But for people like me houses just aren't practical.

Re cops, you put up a good argument against them, like Danner put up a good argument for being prejudiced against Catholics a few years back. Admittedly, if one must be prejudiced, it is much more logical to pre-judge members of a group in which membership is voluntary and there are definite intellectual standards or principles or ideals or whathaveyou which would seem to shed light on the kind of mentality which would want to belong. But I'd still rather judge the membership of any group--police, Catholics, fans, politicians, etc., individually, when the occasion arises. All of my encounters with fuzz have been quite satisfactory--but then I'm white, female, and was not involved in lawbreaking at any of these times, so admittedly the fuzz may have been prejudiced about me.

I think you've made a valid point in how being a cop can corrupt an otherwise good individual. I know that if I were subject to the kind of prejudice and hatred the NY police are, I would rapidly develop a deep protective shell of evil.

I agree: isn't the act of showing favoritism to a Negro, even insofar as setting up a quota system, an act of prejudice? Like, pre-judgement can be for as well as against. In either case it is discrimination and prejudice. A man who sincerely wants his rights as a human being certainly would not want to deprive another man of similar rights--regardless of how one's ancestors had treated the other's ancestors. All of which brings to mind the recent "Not Guilty" verdict against today's Jews. Ghod, I hadn't realized until the subject came up in the newscasts that this attitude was officially held by the Church...

In fact, if you don't mind my wandering, I thought that getting crucified was Christ's own idea--he died to save us goyem or some such, and if he hadn't been crucified, we'd all still be condemned to an eternity in limbo or worse. How can some poor mortal be held responsible for an act that was so definitely The Will of God, especially is he wasn't around at the time? Oh, well, I guess I just don't understand Christian theology.

According to the puff, the Amerinds who perform a dare-devil act derived from a religious rite at the Mexican pavillion of the Unofficial NY World's Fair committed the appropriate sacrifices at the erection of their equipment. From what I see of the acts of our intellectually enlightened American-Christians no performance of a religious rite of any kind would come as much of a surprise to me, including the traditional child-sacrifices and ritual cannibalism.

No, I take that back. I am continually being surprised by things that, in all my years of cynicism, I should have come to expect. But that is my fault.

People who go around making statements like about the "natural female urge toward the Little League and the PTA" are prejudice. They are attributing what is evidently the result of cultural conditioning to a "natural urge". Admittedly a lot of women give good cause for the prejudgements made against their sex, like a lot of members of minority groups have given equally good cause for the prejudices against their groups. While there has been legislation to give women equal rights, the majority of them have got to overcome their cultural conditioning and demonstrate that they do not deserve prejudgements against them before they will succeed in attitudes toward them changed. I had a lot of fun at Arrow Press convincing one of the anti-feminists there that a female could be a reliable, responsible, intelligent worker. In the end, though, he was convinced only that I was an exception to a rule. This was in great part due to the fact that I had little cooperation from the other females in the office in my demonstration.

WARHOON: Is GMC trying to say that there was an international conspiracy against her?

The info on the auction room is appreciated. But if I had bought chairs, regardless of the price, would I have gotten the color upholstery I wanted, the ropy-ropy knit-backed heavy-duty plastic upholstery material I have, the kind of padding I have, and the entertainment/fun of having done the reupholstery job myself? Could I have looked at the low-priced good condition chairs with a mother's loving pride? People who have the true scrounger's and jerrybuilder's instincts will understand, but I suppose there are a lot of people who don't suffer from these instincts. Like, there are people who, on finding holes in the floor, would simply complain to the landlord. That's okay with me.

"...repeal the blackball...dangerous individuals can be taken care of by special rule..." I concur.

ERRATTA: On page 16 I referred to the mandolin cases as 3/8" plywood. That's a typo. They're 3/16" ply.

