



IN
THE
CHAIR
/

"BY WAY OF BRIGHTON PIER"

It had been two years since I'd been back to Florida to see my parents, since I had been short of both money and time during the Christmas holidays of 1961. This year I was still short of money, but had lots of time, so I decided to endure the Greyhound bus trip there and back.

UCLA doesn't pay its beginning librarians particularly well, but it does give them 2 days vacation per month of employment, which adds up to about 5 weeks a year vacation. In addition, the clerk in the Physics Library had made a mistake in reporting the number of days vacation I had taken in September for the convention, so I was easily able to take three weeks off in December -- and still have time coming to me.

Money was a bit tight, but then so am I at times, and a couple weeks of pinching pennies allowed me to head Eastward with about \$30 above the round-trip ticket. This ticket was one of Greyhound's widely advertised "\$99-for-99-days" things, and was far cheaper than a straight round-trip to Tampa would have been. Also, it enabled me to plan about five stop-overs en route to visit people. I planned to take about a week to get to Tampa, about a week at home, and a quick trip back for the New Year's party.

Right after my Library Science class at USC on the night of the 11th, Dian Girard picked me up and provided taxi service to the bus station. I had spent the afternoon running around trying to gather up last-minute items, including a fifth of Jameson's Irish whiskey, to take with me. My large suitcase had been shipped Monday night, and I would be carrying a small overnight case, a slide projector, and my briefcase -- a predecessor to which was justifiably dubbed "The Albatross" by Bill Ellern, since I seemed doomed to carry it wherever I went. Albatross III (alias The Fake Albatross, since it is constructed mostly of cardboard instead of leather) is smaller than II or I, but still useful, so it went along.

Flopping down in one of the double seats of a Superscenicruiser I put the overnight case and the Albatross on the overhead rack, and the projector under the seat (it wouldn't fit overhead -- the Supers don't have much in the way of luggage space inside). The bus took off at 10:32 PST, chugging out the freeway like a somewhat constipated hippopotamus. I sprawled across both seats and went to sleep.

After breakfasting in Phoenix (and picking up several comics elsewhere in the town than at the Post House (where they charge 15¢ each), we headed for Tempe, Arizona, a short distance to the east of Phoenix. On the way I made a note that the "Legend City" amusement park, which would have its 87 acres open by the time summer rolled around, would be worth visiting on a trip to or from the Discon.

Of the five or six planned stops of my trip, only two had been arranged even vaguely with the victims; otherwise it was catch as catch can. The Tempe visit to John Myers Myers had been one of the two, but it was very vague indeed. John Trimble, on one of his business trips to Arizona, had got an OK on the visit from JMM, but there was nothing said about a particular date. So when I finished walking the two miles or so from the bus station to the address John had given me, there was no one home. Worse yet, the name on the mailbox wasn't Myers. But snooping through the window I spotted a whole shelf of JMM works and decided I had the right place, at least, even if I might have the wrong time. I sat down on the pavement and waited, reading JMM's latest book, The Deaths of the Bravos, which I'd brought along for an autograph.

After about two hours or so, during which time I had been visited by a slightly spooky Siamese cat and an overly-friendly dog, a car pulled in and disgorged several Myerses: JMM, his wife, and one of his daughters. When I had

carted my junk inside, I rooted through the overnight case and got out the Irish to present to JMM (as a bribe for letting me reprint the Silverlock song words in FILKSONG MANUAL).

We spent the afternoon talking of books, fantasy and otherwise. I discovered an excellent fringe benefit which accrues to authors published by Little, Brown: for Xmas they get a leather-bound copy of their book, compliments of the publisher. JMM had several of these, including the recently-arrived Bravos. I looked through several of his books, including a beautifully illustrated edition of Faerie Queene, and eventually we walked across town to the Arizona State University campus ("Everything in Tempe is in walking distance..." John Trimble), where we invaded the library stacks. JMM pointed out a copy of Gondal's Queen, by Bronte, and a number of other books of interest to anyone who wants to write of medieval-type civilizations. I found that ASU had their copy of Tros of Samothrace filed in the 937's -- Roman History, on the grounds that it was fiction involving Julius Caesar. I think that's ridiculous from a librarianship standpoint.

On the way back we stopped at the Desert Book Co, where JMM autographed a carton of copies of Bravos for the manager, while I took available-light photos of him (they came out, too, even with using Kodachrome II film.)

In the evening JMM's brother (an English prof at ASU) and his wife came over, and the talk became academic for a while -- at least to me. Later, I set up the projector and showed the five boxes of fan slides I'd brought with me -- most of which were probably quite incomprehensible to the Myerses, but they said they enjoyed them, anyway.

Mrs. Myers works at the Registrar's office of ASU, and we got to talking about IBM punch-card operations. The primary trouble seems to be with the operators; the machines work fine. (UCLA has trouble with both machines and the operators fouling up.) I tried to show Mrs. Myers how to work her 35-mm camera, but my own knowledge is rather scanty and I'm afraid I wasn't much help.

JMM is rather intrigued with fandom, finding somewhat remarkable the idea that such a frenzy of activity should be engendered by literary forces. He advanced the idea that a book on the history of fandom should be made available for the general public. (I told him about The Immortal Storm, which doesn't exactly fit the requirements. Harry -- how about your 1940-1960 history? Will it be slanted for the general public?)

Eventually, after 11 PM, I cadged my autographs (one for myself in Bravos and one for my brother -- a Western addict of sorts -- in a copy of Doc Holliday) and the Myerses drove me to the bus station at 11:30. The station had been closed since 6, but I only had to wait about 20 minutes for the express to El Paso. When it showed up I grabbed another double seat, looked out the window at the fading lights of Tempe -- a small city with a university and a delightful author -- and went to sleep again.

We got into El Paso around 9 AM (MST) Thursday, and as I had already sent a postcard to Tampa advising of my progress (there was plenty of time at the Lordsburg N.M. breakfast stop at 5:15 that morning), the first thing I did was phone the Rapps. Nancy answered, and said Art was home sick, but I should come on out. It was about a 45-minute wait for a local bus, but when I did get the right one it dumped me only about two blocks from the Rapps' place, and I trundled in around 10:45 to find everything either packed or ready to be packed in preparation for moving two days later.

As we were talking the mailman arrived, bringing a large envelope from Canada which spewed forth all sorts of carbon letters. "The latest Art Hayes mailing has arrived," commented Art, then President of the NFFF. They read thru the couple dozen pages of Neffsquabble, and we got back to talking for the rest of the afternoon. I set up the Travelling Slide Show again, took some pix of the Rapps, and around seven PM they drove me back to the station. Art drove along the scenic ridge route, and we stopped so I could get some photos of the

El Paso lights strung out below us. (The shots came out beautiful; thanks, Rapps.) And around 7:40 the bus lumbered off.

The driver turned on the intercom system and warned us that drinking and use of profanity were forbidden on this bus; I psneered, muttered a few words in Swahili and German, and tried to get some sleep -- though this time the bus was too crowded for me to be able to hog two seats.

The next stopping point was to be Rochester, Texas, where Marion Bradley lived, but the fact that it was Friday posed a problem: would she be in school or at home? While at the Rapps', we had dug through a couple FAPA mailings to re-determine that Marion was attending Hardin-Simmons University, which we suspected was in Abilene but couldn't prove offhand. The bus pulled into Abilene at 6:35 AM, and a quick check of the phone book confirmed the location of the University, but there wasn't time to wait until it opened and check the roster for Marion's class schedule: the only bus for Rochester was leaving at 7:15. So I took a chance that the Bradleys wouldn't be too annoyed at a phone call that early in the morning, and was rewarded with the information that Marion would be at home instead of school, and I should come on out.

At the end of a short two-hour trip -- I slept through most of it -- the bus pulled into Rochester, where Marion met me and we drove to her home. On the way I mentioned how much the LAreans in general and myself in particular had enjoyed Sword of Aldones. "Ted White doesn't seem to agree with you," she laughed, quoting part of TEW's YANDRO review: "'I don't know what a matrix is, and I don't think Marion does, either!'" "Well," I said, "as far as I'm concerned you should have just called it magic and let it go at that." "Maybe next time I will," said Marion, as we pulled into the driveway.

And with that I was off to the most enjoyable day of my vacation. It has been a long time since I've had a chance to spend hours talking to someone who is much more knowledgeable than I in my own fields of interest, but who isn't pushy about the fact. (The only exception I can think of is RonEl on the subject of fanhistory.) Marion and I talked fandom, APAs, Tolkien, imaginary worlds, and even opera -- though the latter is an interest in which my lack of knowledge is almost gross. I met Marion's husband Brad, and re-met David when he came home from school. The Bradleys were in the midst of moving from Rochester to Abilene, and Brad was in and out many times, but Marion still found a good deal of time for conversation -- a moving conversation, in many ways, since it was held while we walked around the house, Marion doing the household chores and me trying to keep in the vicinity but out of her way. We talked of unpublished manuscripts -- the Rivendell Suite, the Darkover/Al-Merdin mythi (which I have not yet got straight, though I'm willing to keep trying), and even juveniles.

That evening we switched to folkmusic, and Marion played a tape from the Coulsons, some of which was enjoyable and some pure caterwauling. Having got completely hung up on the Kingston Trio's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" a week or so previously, I sang it for Marion, and thus passed on this bottle imp that had been running through my glass head since I first heard it. This was sort of a dirty trick, as Marion was under orders not to sing until her throat got better -- orders she was constantly forgetting so that David had to keep reminding her -- and "Flowers" is a very catchy song; the rate of reminding increased. Again I dragged out the slide show, and following that, as I had been invited to stay over and offered a ride back to Abilene Saturday morning, everyone sacked out.

We got up fairly early, loaded the car with things to be taken to the Abilene house, and drove into Rochester to the hardware store to pick up some linoleum. (We had visited the store Friday, and while Marion and Brad were selecting the linoleum I wandered around the store looking at weapons. I found they do make a double-bladed axe in the halbred-shape that can be swung with one hand. If I'd been on the way back to L.A., I'd probably have bought it for my collection -- the one I have now is a two-hand, and isn't even halbred-shape.)

The linoleum secured to the side of the car, we headed for Abilene. Marion requested one more run-through of "Flowers," and I followed it up with "Tedron's Song," omitting any introduction. Marion's reaction was very favorable, and she asked where it came from. I told her who had written it, and added, "It's the only song to come out of Coventry so far." "If nothing else ever comes out of Coventry," replied Marion, "Coventry will have been worth the trouble." I passed the remark on to Ted when I got back, and he almost glowed. The good opinion of one person whose judgement one values is more than equal to offsetting the bad opinion of a dozen others. We will rest our case.

After a brief introduction to the new house, just a couple blocks from Hardin-Simmons, and lunch at a drive-in restaurant with better food than most of them, Marion and David drove me to the Abilene bus station, where I caught the 12:15 for Memphis. I hope that re-invitation was meant, as I have seldom enjoyed myself more on a visit.

I rode a second section bus, with no more than 6 or 7 people aboard, to Dallas, where there was an hour layover during which I walked downtown. I was looking for old magazine stores, but found only the local Doubleday outlet -- which was having a sale. Shortness of time as well as money limited my selections to two; there were many other bargains I regretfully left behind. (One of the two was Ogden Nash's The Christmas That Almost Wasn't -- has anyone else read this delightful verse fantasy?)

The next stopover was Memphis, which we hit at 6AM Sunday morning -- 3 hours and 45 minutes in Blue-law Tennessee on a Sunday morning. There was nothing open at all, so I sat in the station and read my books. Around 10:00 the Trailways bus to which I had transferred left for Huntsville, arriving at 3:10.

A phone call to the Hulans brought Dave out to get me -- easier to get by the Redstone Arsenal gates that way. While waiting for Dave, I called Es Adams's home, with a view toward vulturizing his collection if he's completely gafia, but no one was home, and a few minutes later a little Nazi car drove up and a slightly older version of Joe Sanders pushed open the door for me. I climbed in, exchanged greetings, and we headed for the Arsenal.

At Hulanhaus I was introduced to Dave's wife Katya, their month-old son Roy, and the two cats -- Inky (very friendly) and Kittipu (not). The talk was mostly of fandom; Dave figures he has finally arrived as a fan -- his correspondence is now piling up unanswered because of publishing deadlines. It had been suggested while I was at the Rapps', talking about APAs, that a merger between N'APA and SFPA might serve to get new life into both of them, but Dave assured me that the seven SFPA members are just as happy off by themselves, and have no interest in a merger whatsoever. (Of the seven, four are monAPans, Hulan and Armistead are triAPans with N'APA and SAPS, and Labowitz is a biAPAN with N'APA, so it wouldn't make much difference if the two did merge, I guess.) I bought a copy of the 6th SFPA mailing, and reserved the 7th, and picked up Dave's SAPS-zine NIFLHEIM to take back with me. After supper I did my Slide Show Trick once more. We talked about Southern Fandom and the members of it that Dave had met; I grotched that the Hulans were another example of the fact that almost all the attractive femmes in fandom were married; Dave smiled happily. He mentioned that Bill Plott had offered to trade a set of UNKNOWNs for Katya -- but Dave already had a set of UNKNOWNs. I offered a set of bound SAPS mailings, but that didn't work, either. I took a couple photos, and we sacked out reasonably early; Inky, at the foot of the couch, kept me company for the night.

We got up a little before six, and there was frost all over the place. Dave scraped the windshield of the car, and drove me to the bus station before he went to work. I hope the Hulans get to a con one of these years -- they're nice people to meet. (Bring the cat, too, Dave.)

I got into Atlanta around 1:40 PM EST, and inquired for the next bus to Panama City, where I hoped to visit the Vicks and see about retrieving the material for Metcalf's NEW FRONTIERS. The next bus, said the clerk, leaves at 2AM.

To hell with that noise, I said, and decided to go straight to Gainesville, Florida, on the 6:15 bus. This left me around four hours to kill, so I wandered around Atlanta, picking up some comics, a couple of the new ACE Burroughs books, and a couple jiffy bags -- the junk I had accumulated was getting way out of hand, and it would be better to ship a lot of it back via Library Materials rate from Gainesville than carry it to Tampa and back. The street-wandering took only a couple hours, so I went back to the station and started in on The Chessmen of Mars.

The bus pulled into Gainesville at 4AM, and I saw immediately that a few things had changed in the two years since I'd been there. Mainly, the damn bus station was no longer open for 24 hours a day -- Trailways and Greyhound now had separate stations, and neither one could afford to stay open 24 hours. So I stood around and froze for two and a half hours until the thing opened, stashed the projector and overnight case in a locker, and headed for the University of Florida campus. It was cold enough to numb the hands and feet during those 2½ hours -- I wonder what would have happened if I'd hit Gainesville about three days earlier, when the real freeze hit Florida?

I checked the student roster at the Administration Building, and could find only two names that I remembered from the Florida Speleological Society who were still on campus. A trip to the campus post office to leave a note in Bob Smith's mailbox (Robert Alan Smith, to distinguish him from the Aussie fan) was successful -- it still opens to a practiced hand. They ought to get better locks on those boxes or change the combination once in four years. I wandered around campus all morning, visiting people at the library, mailing off the junk and NIFLHEIM to myself at the UCLA Physics Library, and reading some more of the Chessmen of Mars. Eventually I met the FSS crew, and the afternoon and evening were spent catching up on what (and whom) the club had been doing for the past couple years. I'm afraid it has become a lot more serious than it used to be -- various serious Projects (some of them Daugherty Projects, others will get done) being set up and very few nutty activities. Pity. The only n.a. of recent date involved a couple cans of paint, a stencil, and the Interstate Highway under construction near Gainesville that needed its number changed. And at that they forgot to take a camera and record the event. In yakking about the n.a. of a few years ago, though we did manage to set off one of the newcomers on a repeat of one such n.a. -- collecting buildings -- though I don't know whether or not he ever got around to actually doing anything with the idea.

Eventually,, having collected the addresses of several FSSers who had moved to California, and getting a list of names for homebrew that various members had dreamed up for their own stuff, I caught a bus for Tampa.

Tampa, too, had changed for the inconvenient, as I found when I tried to take a Greyhound on a local ticket to Leona Street where my parents live. Instead of going over the Old Gandy Bridge to St. Petersburg, which route takes the bus right past Leona Street, half the buses now go over a new bridge, built since 1960, which route goes nowhere near the place, and of course I caught the wrong one at 3 AM. Luckily, the driver was overly cooperative, and it was his last trip. He went completely out of his way, dropped me at Leona, and then went back to the new bridge. I walked the 2½ blocks home, let myself in, and collapsed into bed.

The following week was spent meeting people -- including my brother's new daughter -- and going shopping, rooting junk out of the garage loft to send to L.A., and sorting the slides. In addition to the five boxes in the Albatross, I had shipped seven more in the suitcase, and before they could be shown to the relatives assembled for Xmas, I had to censor the wilder party shots. Didn't do much good, though -- my great-aunt still grotched about improprieties I hadn't even suspected. Resolve: do not show slides to said great-aunt next year.

On 27 December I caught an early-morning bus, ditched the idea of stopping in Panama City at all, and arrived in L.A. around midnight the 29th, giving me a day to catch up on things before we headed north to the BArea Party for New Years Eve. -- And THAT is another story entirely. - - - - - BEP

FAFHRD AND ME BY FRITZ LEIBER

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser were born of the Bankrupt Thirties, and like true depression children they didn't earn a cent for years and years -- five, to be exact.

It was 1934. Five years earlier the market had crashed; the Wall Street chaps had jumped from their windows or lived for months and years in terror of red revolt by the apple-sellers and the bread-line men; one of them had gone haring off to lay the foundations for Alcoholics Anonymous.

And in 1934 prosperity still seemed a-crumble to those of us who were around, despite the small beginnings of social security; in the next year Congress would vote the President four billion dollars for plain unemployment relief -- the WPA, FWA and such: a desperate bribe to desperate men. Midwestern bank robbers were folk heroes.

Jobs seemed impossible to come by, and were often rather odd: during the past two years I had been hiring out as an Episcopalian minister; my friend Harry Fischer had been putting on puppet shows featuring the chuckling murderer Punch and the grisly hangman Jack Ketch.

Twenty-five dollars a 48-hour week was a princely wage for college graduates. The Blue Eagle of the NRA was affrighting business men while giving them unconfessed hope. Fascism was gathering its final horrendous strength in Europe. Most extroverted brave young radicals were Marxists of some stripe; the introverted ones patched their lives together week by week, hunted work, jeered at the world, played chess or the newly-invented contract bridge, read voraciously, and dreamed.

Despite need for escape, the pulp magazines were fading -- the weekly pulps of the twenties were gone. The lavish movie houses from the same decade -- Balaban and Katz baroque -- seemed haunted places. TV, using whirling metal Nipkov disks as scanners, was an experiment inside GE labs. Pee-wee golf had replaced the luxurious links with their marble-lined locker rooms. H. G. Wells was predicting in The Shape of Things to Come an America with the clockwork all run down, and in very truth fear and lethargy still gripped our land.

The two creators of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser shared this uneasy lethargy. In the summer of 1934 my friend Harry Fischer had written to me from Louisville, Kentucky: "I am static for fear that my motion would be fatal. The gods have laid my soul aside to moulder for a time," and I had written to him from Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: "We still have those great foreknowledges of ourselves that you call adolescent fancies. But they will become mouldy and rotten and the trolls will creep into them greedily if we do not act soon. Our dreams will become the nests of the little gray ones, unless..."

"But there is much of strong hope," I went on to say, and indeed this

was true, for that September I received from Harry a long letter in which was embedded this seminal fragment, which I quoted in full in the foreword to my Arkham House book Night's Black Agents:

"For all do fear the one known as the Gray Mouser. He walks with swagger 'mongst the bravos, though he's but the stature of a child. His costume is all of gray, from gauntlets to boots and spurs of steel."

Of Fafhrd he wrote that he laughed merrily and was "full seven feet in height. His eyes, wide-set, were proud and of fearless mein. His wrist between gauntlet and mail was white as milk and thick as a hero's ankle."

They met "in the walled city of the Tuatha De Danann called Lankhmar, built on the edge of the Great Salt Marsh, and so the saga of the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd was begun."

In a letter postmarked September 24, 1934, I replied:

"Last night I walked down by the devious paths to the sea. And there I sat beside a congeries of silver gas tanks in the light of a veiled moon. I crouched upon a bulkhead and the sea lapped subtly at the rocks about my feet.

"And it came to pass then that a low black craft slid into my range of vision. In the back rose the ominous frame of Fafhrd, clad all in black. Ever and anon he would change their course when a whisper floated back from the bow, where the grays of the Mouser's garments hung over the sea like a ghost's. Through a strange scopic instrument he was peering into the sea -- only I noted that the instrument made no ripples where it entered the deeps: it was not into our local waters that the instrument peered.

"There came a swirl of waters on that calm night as if a whirlpool that lay at right angles to the boat had seized it. I caught a glimpse of the Mouser fighting an indistinct creature that held eight swords in as many writhing arms. Immediately afterwards the dark sea was empty."

Of these two fragments, Harry's has style and polish, a remarkable example of hitting the right tone on the first attempt. Mine is a reverie projected on the real world: I actually did go down by those oil tanks at night and sit by New York Bay and imagine things.

It is clear that Harry had been reading Irish myth and legend, for the Tuatha De Danann were the pagan gods of Ireland, children of Danu, the great goddess of fertility and death. They were later identified with the Aes Sidhe, or Little People.

This link with the world of Irish myth was soon dropped, however, and was not as great to start with as might appear. Lankhmar and the Great Salt Marsh are not to be found there, and while Fafhrd as first described is a rather typical Celtic hero, the Mouser certainly is not -- he already sounds medieval, perhaps Mediterranean, a being of dark alleyways and docks rather than green forests and meads, a small handsome gray gargoyle come to life.

Incidentally, my vision of the Mouser and Fafhrd peering down into dark waters for hints of alien life -- while I peer at them through the dark -- is a very apt picture of the writer at his creative work. He peers into the black pool of his unconscious mind, glimpses a flash of green, notes down the exact shade of color and rhythm of disappearance -- and then as much as a year later, in the course of actually writing a story, hooks and pulls out of that pool a seventy-tentacled green monster tall as a skyscraper.

Now let us take a closer look at the two young men who penned and typed the fragments I've just quoted. Although sharing the general mood of the mid-thirties, they were anything but typical depression children.

I was born December 24, 1910, son of the Shakespearean actor and producer of the same name. I was deeply familiar from early childhood with the more commonly presented plays of Shakespeare. I went to the University of Chicago, where my interests, aside from writing, shifted from chemistry to physics to math to psychology to philosophy to theology — a quaintly precise trending from the material to the insubstantial. After a rather brief acting career with my father's last touring company and an even briefer try at the movies, I became an encyclopedia writer, a magazine editor, and finally a freelance writer.

Harry Otto Fischer was born July 9, 1910, the same year but all the way across the zodiac from me — Cancer to my Capricorn. He early became a wide-ranging reader, soaking up everything from Weird Tales and Astounding and Edgar Rice Burroughs to Wassermann and Joyce and Proust, by way of Eric Linklater, Richard Aldington, and James Branch Cabell. In 1935 he married the artist Martha McElroy, who created the earliest pictorial representations of Fafhrd and the Mouser and drew the first full maps of Lankhmar and the world of Nehwon. Despite his early-maturing literary ability, Harry went into the box business, where he is a designer and engineer specializing in corrugated packaging. The Scalpel scores pasteboard, Cat's Claw staples it. I have never heard of any of his cartons turning out to contain poisonous eels of Lankhmar's salt marsh, or giant spiders of Klesh, but I have my hopes.

Harry and I met about 1930. We had much in common: a great interest in fantasy and romantic literature such as H. Rider Haggard's and Talbot Mundy's; a liking for sardonic German wit; both fencers, chess and bridge enthusiasts too; there were strong dramatic streaks: my own Shakespeare and Ibsen, his puppet shows (which he and his wife created and produced jointly) and later his semi-professional ballet dancing (his wife designed sets).

Corresponding with Harry, my typical letters rather quickly jumped from ten lines to ten pages. Soon we were exchanging missives in which news, commentary, and talk about books were regularly spaced out with extemporized fragments of fantasy and poetry. We would often take up each other's conceits and, tossing the literary ball (or literary bull) back and forth, produce series of loosely related fragments. We explored several other imaginary worlds before that of Lankhmar came dimly into view.

First there was the universe of the Elder Gods, shading into the realm of Loki and the trolls, which grew equally from the Elder Edda and Peer Gynt.

Next there was the philosophy of chaoticism: "The only God is Chaos, and Chaos is his prophet."

Then there were the Wischmeiers, a prolific Central-European family of rogue geniuses — perhaps a little predictive of the brilliant Hungarians who have played so prominent a part in American scientific and intellectual life the last thirty years: Gamov, Wiener, Teller, Franz Alexander, Szilard, von Neumann, and their compatriots.

The first Wischmeiers were invented on the spur of the moment to confound a Louisville friend who by some almost unimaginable sleight had managed to read Spengler's Decline of the West before Harry or I did. It seems that Adolf and Herman Wischmeier had written a five-volume commentary on that work, disproving the German cyclic historian's theses at almost every point. They were students of Freud, a psycho-mythologist and mytho-psychologist respectively, and were currently engaged in psychoanalyzing the Norse gods, much as Freud had taken to pieces Hamlet, Oedipus, Moses, and Leonardo da Vinci.

A flesh-and-blood professor of psychology belittled their work to Harry, but never questioned their existence — minor students of Freud, he would say.

And then there was a Wischmeier who circumnavigated the cosmos in a fiery chariot (establishing incidentally that it was not saddle-shaped) — Elijah Wischmeier, I believe.

A Chicago friend of ours, Georg Mann, joined the game — I believe by inventing Ottocar Wischmeier, who falsified the entire history of the Middle Ages. Georg became more deeply interested than Harry or I in those rapscaillon masterminds, those modern Cagliostros, those scarecrow profundities. Georg was another wide-ranging reader with a rat-trap memory — no, a memory that struck down and embalmed thousands of facts at once, like DDT. He was the first student to start from scratch and win a degree at the University of Chicago under Hutchin's new plan for accelerated learning. He eventually published in New Directions annuals several long satiric and polemic biographical essays about members of the Wischmeier tribe. "Anselm Wischmeier takes apart the neo-Thomists. "Azeff Wischmeier, the Bolshevik Beauocrat" anticipated all of Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm — but, unfortunately for Georg, at the peak of our wartime friendship with Russia.

He has recently returned to satiric writing with two contemporary-scene novels published by Macmillan: The Dollar Diploma, which tells all about the fund-raising drives of big private universities, and The Blind Ballots, which takes a bitterly humorous look at suburban school boards and politicking.

I have digressed here because the Wischmeiers are a good example of how contagious the game of imaginary worlds can be, and of how a little heavy humor may lead someone to years of work behind the typewriter. Writers, be warned!

Now what does this background material tell us about the origins of the Mouser and Fafhrd?

For one thing, that those origins were most diverse. Remember chaoticism!

For another, that we were using all our characters, including Fafhrd and the Mouser, to comment on life and the affairs of the world.

Fafhrd began as a somewhat regulation hero, though he has grown much less so. As for the Gray Mouser, one can point out faint similarities to Loki, Peer Gynt, Francois Villon, Etzel Andergast in Wassermann's Kerkhoven trilogy, Spendius in Flaubert's Salammbô, Jurgen himself and Horvendile in The Cream of the Jest, even the Pied Piper of Hamelin and Punch as a young man, but they are greatly outweighed by the differences — quite unconvincing. The Mouser stubbornly remains the Mouser alone.

Authors, of course, inevitably put much of themselves into their characters. So in a sense Harry Fischer is the Gray Mouser, and I am Fafhrd.

Being Fafhrd to some degree has been, over the years, an interesting responsibility, which I have fulfilled more in imagination than reality.

I do fence with the three weapons and I have owned workaday sabers, both the fairly comfortable weapon of the Civil War and the ponderous straight blade issued to the U.S. Cavalry just before World War I, which I can liken only to a skewer suitable for broiling roast-size shishkebab. I have occasionally toyed with one of the latter weapons in the manner of Fafhrd, handling it as a foil rather than a broadsword, and I find it really is better for thrusting; if you swing it in a great swashing stroke, you're apt to fall down.

And occasionally I look down at my unexercised frame and I think of Fafhrd and I go out and climb a fifty-foot mountain or scale a ten-foot rock wall. Or drive a mountain road just fast enough to make the tires start to squeak. Or sail a sailboat in a lagoon. Or plunge into a medium-sized Pacific roller, but not one of the really big ones that come crashing in for three days every three years, all the way from Japan.

For a while I was handier at living up to Fafhrd's reputation for wine-bibbing, but I discovered that this was incompatible with being the skald and scribe of the expedition. As the poet Peter Viereck puts it, "Art, like the bartender, is never drunk" — though he rightly stays in the midst of every wild party.

To find out more about the origins of Fafhrd and the Mouser than I've already told, you will have to consult Ningauble of the Seven Eyes.

Sheelba of the Eyeless Face, the balancing mystic-counselor figure to Ningauble in the stories, is perhaps the last clear trace of Irish-sounding invention in them.

Although 1934 ended with Fafhrd and the Mouser sharply crystalized, their background world or worlds was indeterminate.

In the autumn of 1935 I began a novella of the Twain, set in the misty period and empire of the Seleucids, and finished it early in 1936. This tale was rejected by several book publishers and by Farnsworth Wright of Weird Tales as being too full of stylistic novelties. It went through three or four recastings and rewritings, and was finally published in 1947 as "Adept's Gambit" in my Arkham House collection Night's Black Agents.

At this point I want to state categorically that the cavern of Ningauble has obscure space-time linkages — perhaps some sort of seven-fold warps — which permit Fafhrd and the Mouser to adventure occasionally in other worlds than that of Nehwon.

In January 1936 I married Jonquil Stephens, one more superswift reader with interests ranging from the earliest British poets to the latest murder writers, from medieval manuscripts to the modern Russian novel. In the late summer of that year she put me (and a little later, Harry) in touch with H. P. Lovecraft, who criticized and circulated "Adept's Gambit" — and incidentally engendered in me a larger respect for careful literary polishing and historical researching.

At about the same time I was working up a many-chaptered novel of the Mouser and Fafhrd which had as a working title "The Tale of the Grain Ships." In the written chapters of this novel, Lankhmar became more real — a sort of dark counter-Rome, eventually "The City of the Black Toga" — but, perhaps more important, another country emerges into view. In a letter to Harry Fischer postmarked December 9, 1936, and sent from Los Angeles to Louisville, I say that I am planning a new story, "...set in a country that has just been sent by kind dreams: a land a little like Norway in its houses, but more like Thrace because of its city-states and empire."

On the back of the envelope I have written in ink (along with a picture of trolls oozing from the windows of squat stone towers in a rocky landscape):

"And the king of the new country to be described in this letter was called: Movarl, Overlord of the Eight Cities and of the Northward Limit of Illik-Ving."

Later in the body of the same letter I drew a rather blocky yet moderately detailed map of my new country, this Land of the Eight Cities. Borders were left open, names incompletely listed. And while I seemed to want the world of Nehwon definitely linked to the real world of today, I didn't want to specify exactly where it lies and whether in the past or the future.

In the following years the World of Nehwon, mapped in greater detail and artistry by Martha Fischer, became more definite and self-consistent, but its linkage with our reality has never been precisely determined. It seems to lie in an alternate universe.

Meanwhile Harry Fischer was working up Mouser material in Louisville, for in the same letter I write: "That tale of Fafhrd and the Mouser and the king with two sons will be a grand one. I delight in magicians and a story that would use several score of them, all arranged in different guilds and fraternities."

Harry eventually elaborated this briefly-noted imagining into the half-written beginnings of an adventure set in the subterranean city-kingdom of Quar Mall, south of Lankhmar.

I wrote about 150 pages of "The Tale of the Grain Ships," discovered one morning that I still had not introduced many of the main characters or really launched into the plot, and I gave up working on it -- the problem of earning a day-to-day living had become too pressing.

It was not until January 1961 that, encouraged by Cele Goldsmith's purchase of two new tales, I was able to sift seriously through the material again and write the finished tale of the rats and the grain ships, published in Fantastic as "Scylla's Daughter."

But I do not want to leave that golden period of 1936, that period of first massive imaginings, without one last quote from that serviceable Los Angeles letter of December 9, 1936 -- a quote which possibly tells more about the real origins of the intrigue-ridden, pleasure-sated, sorcery-working, thief-ruled city of Lankhmar, its fat merchants and cut-throat rogues, its gilded courtesans and shrewd mountebanks, and its linkages to a certain city in our own world, than perhaps even Sheelba knows:

"Last night we were at a cocktail party given by John Barrymore and the wife of his lately much publicized romance Elaine Barry. It was at a huge place -- at least it had one two-storey room in which I could stretch without limit. There we did meet the following: Frederick March, James Cagney, Edward Arnold, Pat O'Brien, Johnny Weismueller, Frank Shields, Alan Mowbray, Luella Parsons (Hearst's Hungarian witch and all-powerful columnist), several directors, producers, and lesser fry.

"It amazed me greatly for a while, to see so many of America's symbols all at once. However, then I got wedged between Mr. Barrymore and Mr. March and discovered, much to my surprise, that they have bottoms that wedge in much the same fashion as any other person's.

"However, most of them seemed very good-natured, unassuming and pleasant -- who isn't who's making a lot of money? Mr. Barrymore is charmingly foul-mouthed, making up in roaring and gusto what he lacks in subtlety and studiousness. He was explaining (and impersonating) a certain gargoyle on Notre Dame at one time -- how it sat and looked down at the city and said nothing but, 'Excrement! Excrement!' All Excrement!' As I pointed out to him, it was likely for fear of what gargoyles themselves might do in that line that their makers often ended them off at the waist. And then he would roar and get maudlin and say, 'When you get up tonight, take a good long sweet urination and think of me, will you?'

"This would be a fine place for you, Gray Mouser. Everyone and everything is so confused; in fact, there is so much of chaos out here, chaos built on fear, suspicion, too much and too little beurocracy, that a person with a knowledge of the whims and pettishnesses of the blind god Azathoth would have the upper hand."

I'll say no more about this quote than that it illustrates a creative point I firmly hold: Fantasy must be fertilized -- yes, watered and manured -- from the real world.

After this Los Angeles period, Fafhrd and the Mouser languished unpublished and largely unworked-on for two years. Then in 1939 the magazine Unknown appeared -- a black bombshell in the fantasy world. I took the silver bit in my teeth, devised a somewhat choppy, more action-packed style of narrative than Harry and I had used in our letters, set up for myself the rule that my heroes should not be Conans or Troses but earthy characters with earthy weaknesses, winning in the end mostly by luck from villains and supernatural forces more powerful than themselves, and turned out the novelet "Two Sought Adventure," which appeared in the August issue of Unknown -- a bit of fantasy guerilla warfare before the real kind set in next month along the Vistula River.

When I used the same title for my Gnome Press collection of 1957, this novelet became "The Jewels in the Forest."

Another year of languishing and I gave a touch of plot to a short mood-piece and made my second Fafhrd-Mouser sale to Unknown: "The Bleak Shore."

There followed "The Howling Tower," "The Sunken Land," and "Thieves' House."

Oddly, no Fafhrd-Mouser story was ever published in Weird Tales, though more than one was submitted there, all but "Adept's Gambit" in the period after Farnsworth Wright. My "oddly" was confirmed by John W. Campbell, Jr., who more than once remarked in accepting a story, "This is more of a Weird Tales piece than Unknown usually prints. However --"

After Unknown, become Unknown Worlds, folded in 1943 the appearances of Fafhrd and the Mouser became infrequent. In 1951 Suspense took "Dark Vengeance," which became "Claws from the Night" in the collection.

In 1953 Bea Mahaffey encouraged me to do for Other Worlds "The Seven Black Priests," based on an off-trail chapter from the long story of the grain ships.

Then in 1959 I did "Lean Times in Lankhmar," purely from nostalgia, writing with freedom and not avoiding grotesqueries and humor -- the title, by the way, was suggested by George Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London, another indication of the close back-door linkage between fantasy and realism. I was greatly enheartened when it was accepted for Fantastic by Cele Goldsmith, who subsequently bought "When the Sea King's Away," "Scylla's Daughter," and "The Unholy Grail."

Over the years, through good times and bad, the Mouser and Fafhrd have become such good familiar friends to me, teasing or bullying me out of my discouraged moods when no one else could, that I have no doubt I will continue to solicit adventures from them.

- - - Fritz Leiber

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"Fafhrd and Me," a speech given by Fritz Leiber at the 20th World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago, on September 2, 1962, is reprinted with permission of the author.

The DisJAWF Side

by MADELEINE WILLIS

I started my trip as I was to continue - a lush. The plane passengers were offered soft drinks free, and, as we were determined not to miss anything, we took the first chance that came and ordered orange squash. The hostess came swaying back along the passageway with a tray of drinks and handed us orange-coloured ones in stemmed glasses. (Did nobody else think it funny when this type of glass was specified in the protocol for the water-drinking ceremony in FANAC 85? Maybe I have an odd sense of humor.) I lifted mine to my lips and drank thirstily. "That drink has a kick in it," I whispered to Walter. He sniffed at my glass. "Yes, it's a screwdriver." He beckoned to the hostess; she came back, looked confused, took away Walter's untouched drink and brought back his orange squash in a paper cup. I pretended to notice nothing; I looked out of the window and sipped my drink; it helped to disperse the slight nervousness I was feeling, I was so conscious of my position as part of the clouds of glory surrounding the BNF. No one would ever have raised a fund to bring me to America. At the same time, I had a feeling of exhilaration: I was visiting America, I had no responsibilities whatever for the next five weeks, and I was going to meet the fabulous people I had been reading about for years. This excited feeling mounted as we came nearer to the American coast.

Our first sight of land was over Cape Cod. This is America, I thought, I am now seeing the land which brought hope to the hungry and dispossessed. I thought especially of those from my own country who fled here during the famine years; America was still the generous host to the Europeans.

When we made our second landing, at Idlewild, and the air-conditioning was switched off and the doors opened, I got my first taste of the American climate. It was hot. For months Walter had been telling me that it would be hot in America, and I thought I believed him. I had pictured it as being perhaps a little warmer than it had been at the height of our summer, perhaps even 75 degrees -- after all, it was nearly the end of August. When I stepped out of the plane I wondered wildly for a moment whether someone had made a mistake and set us down in Miami -- the temperature must have been about 90 degrees.

Outside the arrival lounge I saw Dick Eney. I greeted him first, and as he was relieving Walter of one of our cases, I recognised and greeted Ted White and Terry Carr. This surprised them. "How did you know who we were, Madeleine?" was the way Terry put it. The simple explanation was that I had seen their photos in the fan press; maybe they thought I didn't read fanzines.

The fact that I read fanzines also surprised Bjo. When I mentioned that I read all the fanzines that came to the house, including borrowed SAPS, FAPA, and OMPA mailings, she exclaimed, "Then you must know a lot more about us than we know about you!" I must have been about the most knowledgeable inactive fan; the half dozen or so articles I wrote about 1954-55 would hardly count. I also read all the outgoing and incoming letters.

Now things are a little different. Bruce asked me to write this trip report for him, and me with nary a note taken. Ian moved to Dublin and I cut ten stencils for HYPHEN. Walter started to write a book, and I wrote the letters. Where is it all going to end?

There was a tense moment when Ted took my case. Dick Eney said he was taking us to the Wollheims for dinner and we should go with him -- he had been nominated Deputy Host by Larry Shaw, with whom we were to stay. Ted put in his claim as Chairman of the Willis Fund. To avoid argument, I said I would drive

with Ted and Walter could go with Dick. We were really in New York, not Miami. I had a sense of deja vu -- purely second-hand, of course. Looking back on it now, I wonder where Ted had intended to take us. Elsie Wollheim rose to the occasion nobly, and the only indication I had that maybe there were more guests for dinner than expected was the fact that she grilled some hamburger steaks in addition to the roast beef.

The Wollheims arrived as we were still milling around at the airport. The name of Donald Wollheim had a familiar ring to it, but I was ashamed that I couldn't place it immediately. I asked Don what fanzines he wrote for. (Well, if I was going to his place for dinner I didn't want to put my foot in it by referring to the wrong fanzines.)

As we were leaving for Staten Island later that evening, Elsie said something about expecting us for dinner again tomorrow, together with Ethel and the Lupoffs. We had already been asked out to dinner by Ted and we had said that we would have to see what arrangements the Shaws had made. We felt very awkward about the whole thing, and promised to ring Elsie and Ted the next morning and let them know what we had decided.

Dick drove us to the South Gate Ferry Terminal and onto the ferry, and I was soon out at the bows enjoying the breeze off the water. This ferry-boat trip became the favourite part of our journeyings around New York, and we didn't feel a bit worried about the distance the Shaws' house was from the centre of New York. I looked back at the fabulous skyline of Manhattan amid the myriad lights; it was nearly too much to take in all at once. I was amazed, though, to see spelled out in neon lights "79 degrees." I couldn't get over the fact that it could still be so hot, even after midnight.

At the Shaws' we were warmly greeted by Noreen and Larry. Noreen is vivacious and a ball of energy; she looked after a semi-invalid father and two small children, and yet still found time to cut the stencils for AXE. As something had to go, the living-room table was covered with two years' issues of such magazines as the Ladies' Home Journal and Good Housekeeping.

Later, when we settled down for a chat, Larry told us that the New York group had agreed not to invite us to any private parties so that there would be no jealousy. Because of Noreen's onerous domestic responsibilities and small kitchen, the Shaws couldn't do any entertaining, so they had nominated the Wollheims to look after us in the evenings. I was disappointed that we wouldn't have much opportunity to get to know the Shaws better. I felt that they were principally responsible for the success of the fund, and I would have liked to do some sightseeing during the day and talk to the Shaws in the evening. However, this was not suggested to us. So, on the basis of having already visited the Wollheims, not knowing them as we did Ted by correspondence, and having an appointment to lunch with the Lupoffs on Wednesday before the party at their apartment, we decided to accept Ted's invitation.

We couldn't understand the bitterness of the Shaws' opposition to our going with Ted. Larry, on hearing of the proposed invitation, had actually gone to the trouble and expense of sending us a warning cable. (We had never received it, because Larry had sent it to the Dublin Airport, and we had left from Shannon.) We went to bed feeling a bit bewildered and worried. It was this kind of thing that the New Yorkers had tried to prevent, only now matters were much worse. We hated to go against the wishes of the Shaws, but we felt that we were doing the right thing.

Dick had already left for Washington, and Larry for the office, when we got up the next day, so we had a leisurely breakfast with Noreen. I liked the American idea of sweet rolls for breakfast, but tea is almost indispensable for me first thing in the morning. Walter conservatively preferred plain toast,

but he enjoyed coffee at any time. Afterwards Noreen showed us where the station was, and left us to do her shopping. We were alone with the American transport systems for the first time.

We got on the train for the ferry, and I looked around with interest at the other passengers. These were Americans at home, going about their usual lives. I gazed out of the window feeling a sense of awe at actually being here. I had thought of Staten Island as being a sort of semi-rural retreat for New Yorkers, but everywhere I looked I could see houses being built and others being torn down to make room for bigger ones.

The ferry journey was as enjoyable as ever, and I could now see the Manhattan skyline more clearly. I drank it all in, trying to store up my impressions for when this wonderful trip would be just a memory.

The next stage of our journey was by subway, and I knew immediately that I was going to avoid it as much as possible. It was hot, noisy, dirty, confusing, and crowded. I became thirsty, and decided to try my first ice cream from a slot machine. It was so hot that the chocolate covering slid down onto my skirt before I had eaten a quarter of it. And we got lost.

This was a blessing in disguise. Walter likes subways; he enjoyed the Underground in London when I didn't; following maps and directional diagrams are a challenge to him. But the New York subway system and its charts are so confusing that he had to give up. Before we came up into the air again, I drew Walter's attention to a notice headed "To Visitors to New York." It started out mildly enough, merely welcoming strangers to the city, then it got down to brass tacks: Do not spit in the subway. Do not throw litter about. Try and be courteous and good-mannered. We fled.

We decided to take a cab the rest of the way to the Greyhound terminal where we had arranged to meet Ted White. I liked the New York cabs. The drivers didn't give me the inferiority complex the ones in London did; here, taking a cab seemed the most natural thing in the world. The fares were very reasonable in comparison with the prices of other things.

We arrived twenty minutes late, and after quite a lot of red tape we were issued with our 99-days-for-99-dollars tickets. Then Ted took us to Macy's where I was to get my first taste of shopping in America.

Ella Parker had told me, when I wrote to ask her advice as to what to bring in the way of clothing, that nylon things are dirt cheap in New York. Fortunately, I only half believed her. I thought the nylon clothing was as dear, if not dearer, than at home. Walter gave me ten dollars and let me loose. I astounded the men by coming back with five dollars intact. It was here that I bought one of the items which I bitterly regret having lost in my luggage -- a beautiful pair of white and gold sandals. I bought them at one of the bargain counters in the basement, for all of one dollar.

We went from Macy's to Terry Carr's place. I at last realized what was meant by a one and a half room apartment. There was one touch of luxury, bought with the proceeds from Terry's first sale to F&SF -- an air-conditioning unit. I think if I were living in New York, this would be my first priority. Our second honeymoon was a frost...well, perhaps that isn't quite the right description...until we reached the West Coast.

Carol came in from work when it was almost time to leave for Esther Davis's. She is an attractively exotic looking girl with long black hair, which she is in the habit of tossing back from her face. The Egyptian jewelry mentioned by Terry in CRY suited her admirably.

On our way to Esther's I stopped at a confectioner's window. "What's

that cake called?" I asked. It was cheesecake. At long last I realised why pin-ups are sometimes known as cheesecake -- they look good enough to eat. This is a misnomer in the British Isles; what is known as cheesecake here in the shops is a small cake consisting of a thin shell of poor pastry containing a cake mixture of indefinite flavour and dry texture. It exemplifies all that is worst in the bastardization of a great Swiss recipe. This American confection looked light as a meringue, yet rich and creamy, and it came in different flavours and in combination with such things as strawberries. Carol slipped into the shop and bought me one; I felt that I had made a major discovery.

On the way to Esther's place, Ted explained that she was the common-law wife of Walter Dupree, and they had been together for about twenty years. Since Ted's move from Greenwich Village, their little group had taken to meeting at Esther's; Esther was a new fringe-fan.

When we arrived we found that Andy Reiss and Leslie Gerber were there before us. Les was shouting for staples, and I murmured something about how he could barley be heard. Les looked pleased. "Oh, do you do it too?" he said. We said hello to Esther and Walter and I handed her the bottle of California wine I had brought. She looked at the label. "1957, that was a good year," she said.

Very shortly we were ushered to our places at the table. There were two very large red leather chairs at the head of the table, and I thought these were for our host and hostess. I sat down on the nearest chair. "No, no," Esther said, "You and Mr. Willis must sit at the head of the table." The dinner was brought in, and we were served before anyone else. Then Esther poured out some wine; when all the glasses were filled she held up her hand. "We must drink a toast," she said, "to our Irish guests, Mr. and Mrs. Willis." I looked down at my plate. This was a bit overwhelming -- fans don't usually do this sort of thing.

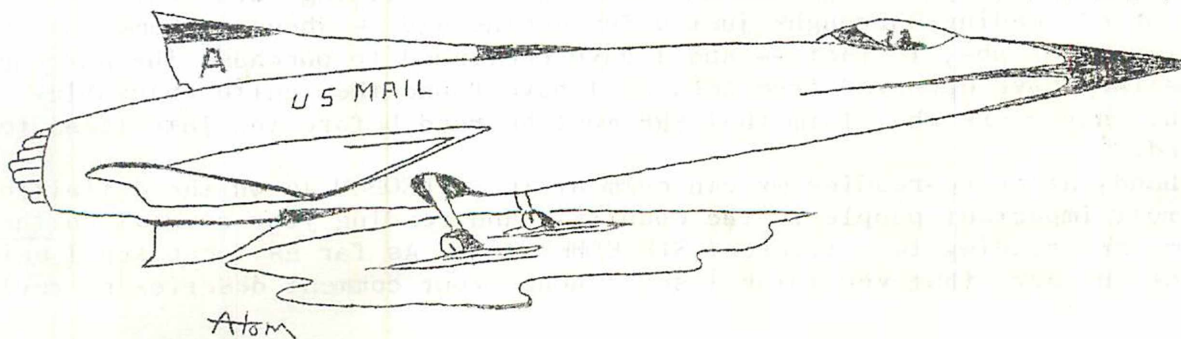
After a wonderful dinner, cooked by Walter Dupree, Esther took hold of my hand. "Would you mind if I tried to read your hand?" she asked. She told me that I should have had three children, I was yet to meet the great love of my life, and that I had an artistic nature. I'll settle for the last one.

-- to be continued

+++++ This first installment of "The Distawf Side" is being included in SPELEOBEM 18, and sent through the January 1963 mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society -- as an experiment. Following installments will be sent through SAPS only if the response justifies it; if you want to see more, say so. Fifty extra copies of this issue are available to non-SAPS distribution, and the same injunction applies: the appreciative comment gets the following installments, whether they go through SAPS, FAPA, or OMPA.

Thanks, Madeleine -- and I'll be waiting for the next installment.

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THE CABAL LADDER

9 January 1963

OUTSIDERS49 I had better start by apologizing to Wally for not counting the two pages he had in OUTSIDERS (and the one on STUMPING), as page credit this time. Of course, he would still have needed three more pages, but...

Just out of curiosity; how did you find out that Elinor had dropped SAPS? I never heard word one about it, but when Buz listed the Busbixii APA memberships in his September N'APAZine, and listed only himself for SAPS, I figured it wasn't much use keeping Elinor on the roster and waiting for her to start contributing again. Did I miss a notice to the effect that she was quitting, somewhere in either RETRO or FENDENIZEN?

Even if Johnstone does go horseback riding and get a "pained voice," he still isn't a "backwards lad" -- in fact, several people have been heard to consider him quite forward. The "pained voice," by the way, is from his practice as a cantor. (Edward is his middle name... .)

GENESIS BY WEBER If Harness doesn't get the next chapter written for this mailing, I'll do one for the next. Anything but leave the story with this as a last chapter! Next time I'll listen to you, Dick, when you say you can't write pun-serials. ...But in spite of all, there are some good lines and gags in this, Main problem is continuity-lag through the chapter, I think. Maybe, if this thing ever ends, and we do the whole thing up together, we can revamp a few things. Thanks, anyway.

PLEASURE UNITS 2 I tend to agree with you that SAPS has regretfully lost its ability toward, and its taste for, the Whacky. Anyone who tries to put in some nutty humor is greeted with, at best, indifference. Pity. Oh, well, there's always the WIMP.

"People like Willis, Boggs, Tucker, and Rapp, who publish great stuff year in and year out..." (p.13). Would you care to substantiate that statement for the last three fans named? Great stuff? Are you sure you're not letting past laurels fill present vacuums? (Or vacuua?) It's this tendency that gets fans and fanzines popularity votes in contests where they should not even be eligible -- APA egoboo polls, for instance. "Naming names" isn't all there is to it -- you should also be able to "cite instances."

So you object to fantasy worlds when they are "used as a crutch for a bunch of grownups refusing to accept the fact that childhood is long over...." The first question that comes to mind is: "What makes you so sure that childhood must be over for a grownup?" And the second is "What makes you think that fantasy worlds are only legitimately part of childhood?" In connection with the second question, you might look up Emily Bronte's book of verse called Gondal's Queen; John Myers Myers introduced me to this book, which is about a fantasy world shared by all the brontes. Why should an adult fantasy world be a Bad Thing, as long as the time its participating inventors spent in it does not make them a community burden?

Heinlein's fallout shelter was built by professionals -- just in case you weren't kidding in suggesting his fun work might be building shelters.

I started reading Burroughs just a few months ago -- when Ace came out with the first pair of pbs, in fact -- and I have continued to purchase the Burroughs novels as they have appeared from Ace, as I have found them quite enjoyable. A pox on the characters who claim that ERB must be read before the late teens to be enjoyed.

Offhand, after re-reading my own comment in SPELEOBEM 16 on the definition of "the most important people in the country," and reading your comment on that, I think we are reading two different SPELEOBEM 16's. As far as I can see I said nothing of the sort that you think I said; hence your comment deserves no reply.

13 January 1963

DINKY BIRD 4 In regard to music, words, and meaning: In general I agree with you that the "meaning" is primarily in the words and music, tho there are times when moods are evoked by music to such clarity that they may be said to have "meaning." I often wind up humming or whistling some sort of music as a background to whatever I may be doing (or even whatever I may be thinking), and although this music is usually a type that has connected words -- G&S, folk, etc. -- on occasion it is a bit from a symphony or other piece of orchestral music that seems to fit in.

"Cleah uvani" = "Clear skies/heavens." Obtained by degradation of sounds.

"The Case of the Coffee-House" is SAPS-fiction as she should be did! Most delightful, and I hope you and eaa get around to doing some more of it. Neat touch having the Interplanetary-induced gafiante be Earl, a recent ex-SAPSite.

ATTENTION FRED GALVIN: I would like an autographed copy of "Distributive Sublattices of a Free Lattice," also. I have a small collection of non-fannish writings by fans, including Sid Coleman's "Classical Electron Theory From a Modern Standpoint," which I got from the Rand Corp.

SPECIAL CONVENTION AND LEGALENGTH ZINE As a further proof that the OE is evial, I chopped the legs off this zine before putting it into the mailing, since there was nothing printed on it below the usual letter-size length. Of course, Schultz sort of got even for you, Ruth -- and he's got another Legalelength printed-all-the-way-down zine in this mailing, too. Maybe he'll run out of that paper, though.

"The Sorcerer's Nephew" is probably the best of the Level Four Coventry stories attempted. My own is rather vague in places, and the other two are worthless on the grounds that they are too extreme in their caricatures. Yours is quite enjoyable; thanks.

SON OF SING ALONG WITH BULLWINKLE I think I'd consider re-instating Henstell immediately if he could get copies of the original "Sing Along With Bullwinkle" to send through some mailing. As far as I know, these things aren't easily available to the general public, and I think the parodies are delightful.

There was a character down in San Diego's coffee house ("Circe's Cup") who wrote all sorts of songs for his own act, including several "Monster" songs, one about fallout shelters, and a bunch of college-centered ones ("Don't cry, Cop-per," etc.) Ted Johnstone and I got the words to a few of them, but since the music is original, too, there're problems about reprinting (also, I'm not sure if he copyrighted the things, though I doubt it). They ought to be published, though, so maybe if we can ever locate him again (he's quite at the coffee house now) we'll see about getting reprint rights -- and a copy of the music.

THE WILD COLONIAL BOY It should be pointed out that the three Aussie SAPSazines were postmailed on instructions from the editors, and not on whim of the OE. The OE, boob that he is, offered to do the work if the editors wanted the zines sent out as postmailings instead of having them held for the 62nd mailing. Motive for so doing: possible garnering of mailing comments in said 62nd mailing, and better continuity. I hope it worked.

As for comment on the Sicilian proverb you append ("To command is better than to f..."), I would say that it depended entirely on the direct object of the verbs -- command whom? It calls for individual decision. And of course, if one can command entirely, the second choice would follow in addition.

In PEON 33, November 1954, was the "Book Corner" column wherein Mason mentioned The Journal of Albion Moonlight, and in the next issue (Feb. 1955) Bloch answered him with an article called "Pruriency, Anyone?" Bloch's comment was that, in general, such stuff just doesn't sell, and for this reason SF writers didn't write it. A few pertinent quotes from the article:

"That many writers (science fictional and/or otherwise) are capable

of such an output, I have not the faintest doubt. But they must be either crazy and/or subsidized in order to produce it.

"For if there is a moral problem facing mankind, as Mason believes, then perhaps it can be summarized thusly: the moral problem facing mankind is that mankind refuses to face a moral problem."

He goes on to comment on how this problem applies to the SF field. Maybe someone ought to write Bloch and Riddle, and see about reprinting -- or updating perhaps -- the article.

I've read just enough of Pere Ubu to know that I don't like it in the least, and to recognize references when there thrown into a story like your "The Name Is Phord." Mebbe you ought to talk to Harness -- he liked the book. And if anyone has been able to make any sense out of your story, I wish they'd let me know.

COCONINO 1 Owen, I presume you took your title from the Krazy Kat strip or from wherever they took Kokonino Kounty. If I recall my Disneyland trips through the Great Painted Desert, coconino is a type of bug you make dye out of.

I knew why you'd reprinted the SaMosk blast at Beck, but I guess I didn't mention the fact. I approve of the idea of pointing out that an "injured party" has been guilty of the same thing he's yelling about, but generally I don't think it's worth the effort. Reasons: Chris, not SaM, was doing most of the yelling, and (2) As SaM pointed out, you could quite easily be hit from Beck's side, too. Safer -- and less work, said he lazily -- to just cite the instance completely, and give a small run-down on what was said.

And while I'm here, I'd like to express appreciation for the Lanctot cover and interillos. Mebbe I'll send him a couple stencils and request some illos.

COLLECTOR Howard, WARHOON isn't the first SAPSzine to get a Hugu -- Kemp got one for SAFARI ANNUAL #1 (alias WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION?) last year.

Yes, SAPS had a table at Chi -- sort of a SAPS/CULT table, actually, as all those there are both SAPS members and CULTists of some rank or other (we had to re-instate Ruth Berman temporarily on the CULT WL to get away with this.) And there will be a SAPS Table in DC, too -- in fact, I suspect I ought to get to work on it now. Anyone interested? Eney, what will arrangements be for reserved tables?

Has anything been heard of the Chicon Proceedings?

SPACEWARP 75. Art, if you want to put down the words to all those army songs you mention, I'll guarantee SAPS credit for them. Even the ones I've heard -- many years ago -- I'd like to see the words published and available for reference.

RETRO 26 I like Artless Artwork -- and as far as I know, you're the only one who does the stuff. Woddidyado, put a patent on it or something?

Somehow I'm amused that you think Ted Johnstone is the one of the 4+-apans who is most successful at participating. It's possible that a viewpoint some 3+ months after you wrote that comment makes the difference, but the fact that he's had to go minac in all APAs because of schoolwork, winding up with fines in N'APA, etc., does tend to make your comment look strange.

Perhaps the death of IPSO and MAPA will make things easier, though I think we could still do with two or three less APAs. Right now I'm in five of the 7 existing, but I manage to hit all SAPS and N'APA mailings with at least 6 pages (SAPS has got at least 18 pages in every SPELECBEM since number one). OMPA gets minac, I admit, because of the problem of sending the zines to England. FAPA has been getting reasonably-large zines since I joined, except for Mlg. 101. The CULT is a different problem, as is your own APA-X. They call for a fair amount of correspondence, but I don't have to cut stencils for each quarter --

just once every 39 weeks, approximately. So, all in all, I've considered that I do a reasonable job of participation in all APAs I belong to, with only OMPA having any cause to complain.

Johnstone not having read the last couple of SAPS mailings, he'll not be answering your question about the Sandy State student who hanged himself. The press was shut up about it, but it was an accident. Put briefly, the kid was a masochistic autoerotic...and slipped. There was (and is) no reason for the details to be noised around in the papers or news broadcasts.

"Ring of Ditur" in "Fellowship of Nothing" = "Detour," hence it louses up the terrain.

I am inclined to agree with you in regard to that Sacramento character with the "Pippin" nametag — a real creep that I would prefer not to have around at a party. And regretfully, I had a letter from Henry Stine a month or so that said that he, Hedberg, and Pippin were considering moving to L.A. some time this year.....oi veh. Boggs, Calkins, Hannifen, Stine&Co.... .

MEST 11 Nice to hear that the college is going to give you the B.S. in June; then you can give it to the rest of us for another year or so, hi.

POT POURRI 24 So SPELEOBEM 16 was "terribly provocative"? Doesn't seem to have provoked anyone into doing anything — or even into saying very much. Parts of it were intended to be provoking, of course, and that includes the comments to you on the matter of TAFF. They were intended to provoke you to vote one of these campaigns or other.

STUPEFYING STORIES Eney, thanks for publishing this. I am particularly delighted with the military-style map of Akrea, and the last section on How To Get Here From There. The name-borrowing problem of Coventry still exists in Akrea to some extent, but it's a decided improvement. I'd like very much to see some stories of Akrea — were any ever published? If not, why not do so?

THRU' THE PORTHOLE 5 A beautiful cover, Bob — get Chris Bennie to do more of these, if you can.

Mike Simms, who takes things apart with a screwdriver, was extremely useful when the Trimbles, Jack Harness, and Ernie Wheatley moved out of Mathom House last year. They just pointed Mike at a couple of things that had to be dismantled (like the bookcases, the huge post-office sorters we use for collators, and such), and told him to go to it. But I think we'll search him before we let him into another Westercon party.

ARKHAM SAMPLER Ed, you have the rotation plan for conventions confused if you think Blanchard couldn't get the con in 1966. The West Coast gets the con in 1964, London (assumedly) in 1965. Then the rotation goes back to the middle of the country for 1966, and North Dakota certainly falls in that category.

What's the difference between a dirigible and a blimp, assuming both to be lighter-than-air craft (this will get rid of the pests who would give me the difference between a dirigible and Col. Blimp.)

Harry Warner: Quotations are interesting to me — I use them all the time, in story titles and even in general conversation every day. For the most part, I use one because it recalls a situation which is applicable in comment on the present — or it brings to the mind of whomever I am addressing a longer description (either a fuller quotation or the situation in which the quotation appeared) which would apply to the present. Hence, "A rose-red city half as old as time" brings up a Middle-East picture of antiquity, "The rest is silence" writes a finis of deadly quiet to something, etc. On the other hand, "Nothing but gingerbread left" means nothing whatever to me. How and why do you use quotes? I ad-

mire your theory that all these famous quotations are from one huge literary classic which has been lost in antiquity. But in what language was that classic written? There are so many famous quotations in all languages...

I wish to remind you that you promised a print-out of TAPE TALK.

WARHOON 17 The Willis "Open window ashtray" story has been widely circulated by word of mouth, rather than in print. Garrett mentioned it during his 1959 Detention tirade on fans (I forget the connotation, or the context of his retelling), and I've told it several times in the face of BNF-worshipping. It is a delightful story, say I.

I would creeb slightly at your comment, Walter, that #71 on the Personality Test seemed to be aimed at the Coventrianians. With a choice between wanting to write a great novel or play and wanting to attack points of view contrary to one's own, I should think there would be lots of people to choose the first. I'll trade scores on that test with you (if I can find my copy of the results.)

Uh-uh, I didn't get the Pinot Grand Fenwick -- though I may have helped bid it up. I'm a Wibberley fan, but not so much as to buy bad booze for ridiculously high prices.

Brundage didn't show up to help judge the ball -- Leigh Brackett was put in as a substitute. Why was Fritz's costume -- or the spiders on it -- inappropriate? My own costume was that of Dr. Fate, not Spectre. The other Flash was Fred Norwood, not Charles Wells. Ibis's girlfriend is Princess Taia.

The third photo was of Cinderella's Castle (Disneyland); my 2nd entry, and one I will probably re-enter next year since there were no prizes this year.

"High Crusade" was by Metzger, not Bjo. I am extremely glad that Don Simpson was appreciated for his artwork -- especially the glasswork. I hand-carried those two goblets to Chicago and back in my briefcase, wrapped up like the Crown Jewels or something. Right now they are in one of my cabinets -- still wrapped up -- as Don gave them to me. Perhaps some day I'll have a place to display them properly, where there is little danger of their being broken, but until the time I move out of this cramped apartment they (and any other such delicate work) will have to stay hidden, and only writing be used to indicate how much they are appreciated and valued -- by me, as well as the judges at the art show.

Anent the Hefner party for the pros -- someone ought to get Bloch to write up his reactions to it. He said, among other things when he reported to a LASFS meeting, that the Playgirls never showed up. He was disappointed.

44 pages. I tell you frankly that I hesitate to read a 44-page report by anyone, let alone someone as notoriously long-winded as you, Walter. But having done so, I congratulate you for the report's completeness and for the attempt, largely successful, to get across your own enjoyment of the convention. I'll read the next long conrep you write, too. And while I'm at it, thanks to Rich Bergeron for publishing the report, as well as for postmailing this 90-page monster to SAPS.

Re: Bergeron to Ballard on changes in SAPS: You are both referred to WRHN 15 page 67, whereon RB cites my own comment (SPELEOBEM 14) that WARHOON was probably the drawing card of SAPS these past few mailings. I feel it unfair to have my comment on the attraction of WARHOON as a whole used to prove the service or disservice of the editorial in a particular issue, and I can see where Wrai might consider your remarks on p.67 to be citing the success of WRHN as indicative of SAPS's reception to your proposal of sweeping changes. As for SAPS being pleased with the status quo and disliking change, I've always considered that the s.q. had a built-in rate of change -- yes? So perhaps SAPS only dislikes violent change in its workings.

Most delightful comments to Fitch's anonymous reviewer.

And I finish up with the usual statistics of SAPSites I have met: 28 of the 33 members (all but L.Anderson, Bergeron, Deindorfer, Kaye, Smith) for 84.5%; 1 of the 3 Invitees (Hulan) for 33.3%; 9 of the 13 WLers, for 69.2%. Total: 77.6%.

DO YOU KNOW: That this greater liberty *now* granted to the fallen angels could easily account for their greater boldness and startling manifestations on a larger scale, such as the reported balls of fire, green monsters, "flying saucers," *etc.*, recently seen worldwide in the heavens and on earth?

☞ That *God's people* should not *fear* (Isa. 41: 10, 13; Psa. 27: 1; 46; 118: 8; 125: 1), nor *be amazed* at "wonders in the heavens above and signs in the earth beneath" (Joel 2: 30; Acts 2: 19), but should *look up*, and *lift up their heads with rejoicing, knowing that their deliverance draweth nigh* and that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand (Luke 21: 28, 31), for which we still pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth [universally] as it is in heaven"?

☞ That for only 12c we will mail to you postpaid a 67-page booklet, "Spiritism—Ancient and Modern," that gives a Biblical, factual, reasonable explanation of spirit phenomena and other modern-day mysteries?

☞ That for only \$1.00 (your money back if you are not entirely satisfied) we will mail to you postpaid the famous Bible key, "The Divine Plan of the Ages" (over 10 million copies have been sold), which points out many Scriptures that explain what present-day world conditions are leading up to in God's great plan?

☞ That many Christian people voluntarily support the work of the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement, an unsectarian movement seeking to further Bible study among all Christian people, so that for the asking you may have free literature on any subject mentioned in this tract—plus many others—also some of these little "FLYING SAUCER" leaflets for distribution, free of charge? *Please state how many you can carefully use.* Just write to:

LAYMEN'S HOME MISSIONARY MOVEMENT
2101-13 South 11th Street
Philadelphia 48, Pa., U.S.A.

"FLYING SAUCERS"

DO YOU KNOW: That since so many sightings of so-called "flying saucers" have been reported from the U.S.A., Canada, S. America, Europe, Africa, Australia, the Far East, *etc.*, many of them having been witnessed by a number of persons, the public is becoming more and more convinced of their existence?

☞ That these objects have been reported as of various sizes and shapes, mostly disc-shaped, but also tube-, funnel-, oval-, and ring-shaped, also as strings of lights, spheres, green fireballs, colored lights, *etc.*?

☞ That after investigation by the U.S. Government, many scientists and others, some of these reports have been explained as due to meteors, weather balloons, birds, aircraft, atmospheric reflections, hoaxes, *etc.*, but that others, from known reliable sources, cannot be thus explained, hence the mystery remains unsolved?

☞ That the general conclusion in these unexplained cases is that they are either (1) *some sort of secret weapon* of some nation on earth, or (2) *"space ships" from another planet*, or (3) *supernatural*?

☞ That it is very unlikely that any nation would expose such a weapon to possible enemy capture and examination in so many countries until ready to use it in actual combat; that while the "flying saucers" often seem to indicate intelligent control, yet they are reported to make such sharp turns at such high speeds that no human being could withstand the centrifugal force, nor could any material substance travel so rapidly without becoming white-hot, due to friction; and that therefore the thought (1) *of their being secret weapons* has largely been abandoned?

☞ That astronomers report that there is no life on the other planets of our solar system, except very low forms of vegetation, such as mosses, which have been detected on Mars; that life such as we know it could not exist on them; and that our nearest star is so far away that we cannot see any planets that might be revolving about it, hence the idea (2) *of their being "space ships" from another planet* is untenable?

DO YOU KNOW? That this leaves for our consideration only the third (3) explanation — *that the so-called "flying saucers" are supernatural?*

☞ That those who look to God for the pure wisdom (James 1:5; 3:17) will not be left in darkness at this time (Dan. 12:9, 10; 1 Thes. 5:1-6), though the wisdom of the wise men perish (Isa. 29:14) and is proven foolish (1 Cor. 1:19, 20; 3:19, 20)?

☞ That in Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 24; Luke 21:25, 26, we are told that at the end of the Gospel Age there would be a great Time of Trouble such as never was before, *accompanied by great signs and wonders*: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity [over the squandering of national assets, inflation, high taxes, bankruptcy of nations, corruption in high government circles, inability peacefully to solve world problems, Communism, etc.]; the sea and the waves [restless and lawless elements] roaring [against the bulwarks of the present social system]; men's hearts failing them for fear [e.g., of atomic warfare], and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken"?

☞ That these things were to attend Jesus' Second Advent, and that, according to Luke 21:27, "then shall they see [with the eyes of their understanding, for *the world will never again see Jesus in the flesh* (John 14:19), since He is now a *spirit being* (2 Cor. 3:17; 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 3:2; Heb. 1:3), *invisible to the human eye* (Col. 1:15; Ex. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16)] the Son of man coming in a cloud [of trouble, in this great Time of Trouble (Matt. 24:30; Psalms 18:7-13; Dan. 12:1; 7:13, 14; Joel 2:1-3; Zeph. 1:14-18; 3:8, 9)] with power and great glory"?

☞ That among Adam's race there were no *sons of God after Adam lost sonship* for himself and the human family (Luke 3:38; Rom. 5:12, 15-19) until "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14; Heb. 2:9, 14, 16) and then gave to those who received Him the *power to become the sons of God* (John 1:11, 12; Gal. 4:5-7); and that therefore the "sons of God" referred to in Gen. 6:2 *could not have been human sons of God, but were angelic sons* (Job 2:1; 38:7)?

DO YOU KNOW? That these "angels which kept not their first [original] estate, but left their own habitation" (in the spirit realm, by living on earth as men), dematerialized at the time of Noah's Flood; that they were placed under chains (restraints) of darkness "unto the judgment of the great day" (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6); and that this is why *until recently* they have operated only at night (as "spooks," "ghosts," etc.), or in darkened rooms with lights dimmed, in "spirit seances" (the "secret chambers," Matt. 24:26), or through apparitions, visions, etc., though now, *in the judgment of the great day*, the "time of trouble," they manifest themselves more openly, *often in daylight?*

☞ That "signs and lying [deceiving] wonders" were to come in the *Harvest* — the end of the Gospel Age (Matt. 13:30, 38-40; Rev. 14:15-20; 2 Thes. 2:8-12)?

☞ That these lying, seducing spirits (1 Tim. 4:1), these wicked spirits in high (heavenly) places (Eph. 6:12, margin), under "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), have played many tricks on mankind, such as palming themselves off as dead humans still alive, in support of Satan's original lie, *vis.*, that the *dead* are not *really dead* and unconscious (Gen. 3:3, 4; John 8:44; Eccl. 9:5, 10; Psalms 6:5; 115:17; Isa. 38:18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:16, 18); that thus they appear in seances (1 Sam. 28:13, 14; Isa. 8:19); that they obsess and possess humans, driving many insane (Mark 5:1-17); that they operate through spirit mediums (Acts 16:16-18); that they give visions, work miracles, haunt houses, slam doors, etc.?

☞ That, in view of all the above and many other evidences, we should not be astonished nor perplexed if these evil spirit beings are given greater liberty in many ways in this their judgment day, here in the end of the Gospel Age, when the Lord appears in the clouds (of trouble in this Time of Trouble), in flaming fire taking vengeance (2 Thes. 1:7, 8; Zeph. 3:8, 9) during the time of His Epiphany or "appearing" (2 Tim. 4:1), when He judges the "quick" (the new creatures and fallen angels, who are not of the "dead" — under a death sentence, as is the world; for no death sentence was pronounced upon the fallen angels, as it was upon Adam and his race, who as the "dead" will be judged during the coming "kingdom")?