

"NO, NO, PEGGY - IT'S

BOBOLINGS

NOT BOBOLINKS!"



This is probably BOBOLINGS 9, although it just might be #10. One day I'll sort through items on hand and find out if there really were two issues numbered 7, or maybe 8, but just now that's not the kind of live-work I want. Whatever the issue number, the newsstand date is November 1963. For FAPA, this emanates from 6001 43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland, 20781, under the guiding hand of Bob Pavlat.

ON A REASON FOR BEING This has turned into an annual fanzine. It wasn't planned that way, but it's an occupational characteristic which seems to strike many FAPAns from time to time. If the waiting list were shorter possibly I'd drop out for a sabbatical of a few years, but so long as the WL threatens to equal the membership list in length, and so long as I feel faint glimmerings of a possibility of return to activity, I'll try to maintain my membership. By annual publication, if I must, or more frequent publication if I can.

There is a great deal of time available to me that I could spend on fandom. Forty hours a week, as a conservative estimate. It's barely possible that I spend as much as two hours a week fanning--writing letters, reading letters and fanzines and books and prozines, attending conventions and meetings, and talking or thinking sf. Maybe I'm cheating a trifle on the time estimate--last year some little time was spent helping prepare for the Discon (not much, but some); the club meetings I count more as social than as sf, and driving to and from cons is travel time rather than sf. I don't spend time on fandom/sf simply because the subject isn't that important to me.

Science fiction is fairly stale. A few interesting novels are published yearly; I usually catch them in paperback. The shorter works, with few exceptions, are by the very fact that they are short limited to treatment of a single idea, and this limitation makes them uninteresting to me. DRAGON MASTERS was good. TRIGGERMAN was good. LADY WHO SAILED THE SOUL was superb. I no longer take the time to hunt for these exceptions to the generality that short sf is uninteresting.

SF fandom is another thing entirely. Most fans are far more interesting as persons than I feel that I am. They're also mostly nice guys. A few things that won't be quickly forgotten were the willingness of Ed Wood and Steve Tolliver to handle the Discon auction; the way Steve Russell and Larry Breed handled some last minute details on engraving and plate mounting; the help rendered by Peggy Rae and Jan McKnight on the registration desk and the help offered by many others; the ready and gracious acceptance by Forry Ackerman of a change in time for presentation of the Big Heart Award; gallons of orange juice presented to the registration desk by Jim Warren. A few aren't such nice guys, but you've got to figure on that. One fan at the con thought I was picking on him as an individual when I told him to pipe down, the room was too noisy. I wasn't

singling him out more than any of the other noisy ones, but I can see where he got the idea that I was, so despite harsh words and possible ill feelings on his part, I have none.

What occurred to me recently, however, was that there are a surprising number of silly people in fandom. Not stupid, not vicious, not even necessarily unlikable. Just silly. People whose approach to a problem solution is "do it my way or...." I'll have to learn to accept this as a trait of the person rather than let it lead me to generalizations that fandom is silly. And yet, this general irritation at a few does lessen the enjoyment of fandom as a whole. A year or so ago I mentioned how the continual Eney/White feud in fanzines caused this same type of irritation. Eney missed the point in his reply, when he said something to the effect that nobody forced me to read it. I read Eney's fanzines because I enjoy them, and it's a blow to have that enjoyment wrecked by a comment on the feud which I didn't even know was going to be there. Let me clarify that Eney is not, in my books, one of the silly ones, feud to the contrary notwithstanding.

During some 14 years of membership, FAPA has filled a number of needs for me. An outlet for some things I wanted to say, a source of reading material for things in which I was interested, and a way to meet and remain friends with a number of interesting people. FAPA has not been essential to the satisfaction of the first two of these needs of late. But FAPA still has a place, and the possibility that I'll need it much more next month, or next year. So I'm hanging on for another year, and that's the reason for Boboling's being.

HONORARY BOY HERO Not too long ago, as my FAPA appearances go,
RACE DRIVER I summarized the automobiles in my life. A new one has been added to the list. This one sets a precedent in many ways--it was purchased in August (all previous ones having been purchased in May), it makes me a two-car owner, and it's the first one that hasn't been a step up the ladder in power and cushioned comfort. It's also more fun to drive. The car is grey, has a red interior, and goes under the impressive name of Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider, which simply means that it's made by Alfa Romeo, has a 1300 cubic centimeter motor, and is a roadster.

My brother has been a bug on foreign cars for some time, and has owned a few. The Citroen 2CV and a couple of Fiat 600's, but none of these really inspired me. Then he had to go buy a Fiat Abarth Allemano, which compares with an ordinary Fiat about the way that a motorcycle compares with a motor scooter. I decided that I liked sports cars. I got tired of waiting for the Lotus Elan to come to the US (it was supposed to be released yesterday, 12 October), and so I bought the Alfa.

As a second-hand car, it has its shortcomings. The seat-back on the passenger side has weak side members and doesn't provide

a comfortable seating angle, the top leaks, some of the metric size fittings have been worked on with American tools and are thus pretty well messed up. But, wotthehell, it's fun. And with 25-30 miles per gallon, I can afford a few repairs.

I'm gradually getting used to the car. For turnpike driving, or for a trip in excess of 300 miles (which almost automatically means turnpike driving) I still prefer the Buick--though I now recognize a number of things that could be done to improve the Buick tremendously. Around town, I usually take the Alfa, despite the additional work of shifting and some necessity to crane my neck to see an overhead stoplight. On a back country road, there's no possible question. There is an intense pleasure in taking a tight corner at a speed which is perfectly safe, and yet which would be unsafe if not impossible in the Buick; in being able to break the back wheels loose to take a corner as you want and yet retain full control over the car (an idiocy in the Buick); even a pleasure in learning how to go into second without grinding gears. Driving the Alfa is sheer fun--it's one of the reasons I'm away from home more on weekends than I used to be.

Bill Evans recently took an extended trip in the Alfa with me, and went so far as to say that he'd be willing to be navigator in a rally. A friend at the office has invited me to assist in his timekeeping chores at Marlboro race track, where there's also a driver's school and a communication and signalling school that I want to attend next spring. Sylvia Dees, Ron Bennett, Ted White--that title you bestowed on me five years ago may yet come to pass.

HONORARY BOY COWARD Skiing is the other competitor for my time
HILL SITZMARKER, that has clashed with fandom in the past couple of years. Actually, there's no competition. Give me a choice, and I go skiing. The winter is a great time for fandom. There are a number of holidays in the winter, you get sick with colds, and once in a while the weather is just too bad to travel the ten miles to work. The winter is also a great time for skiing. Until the southern hemisphere was invented, it was almost the only time. So now if the weather is too bad to go to work I call Skyline, or maybe Shawneeland, or Braddock Heights, and if the snow is pretty bad there too I take off on a 60 mile drive for a pleasant day of skiing.

The "coward" part of the title of this section comes from my habit of arriving at the top of a slope, looking down, and deciding that the only sensible way down is to get back on the chairlift. So far I've always managed to beat down my better judgment, but one of these days the hill is going to look too much steeper and higher from the top than it does from the bottom. I'm curious to see how I react my first time on Skyline this year. The winter of 1961-62 was my first on skis, and I was out for only about 6 days. In 1962-63 I felt fairly confident the first time out, went to the top of the 200 foot slope at Skyline, and

on looking down decided someone had added about 500 feet to the hill since the previous March. I've skied that hill many times since, and the 500 footer, and the milder trails at Stowe (though still 1700 feet vertical). I still have a hunch that 200 feet is going to be more than sufficiently high that first time out.

I have decided not to devote a section of this report-on-activities-which-recently-occupy-more-of-my-time-than-fandom to bachelorhood. All males in the audience once were; some still are. It has crossed my mind, however, that both activities mentioned contain as elements of interest girls in clothes that fit. One picture in a sports car book particularly comes to mind--a rear view of a girl leaning on a guard rail watching a race. Costume: stretch levis. Caption: they also serve who only decorate.

TIGHT REPORT ON A SHORT SUBJECT The following report is extracted from ROAD AND TRACK. "Short skirts have the official approval--the enthusiastic approval--of the AAA. According to the association, most accidents involving pedestrians occur at night and 70% of the victims are men. According to the AAA, "The headlights of modern cars aim downward and readily pick up the stockings or bare legs of women in the beam. Naturally, the more stocking or leg exposed, the easier it is for motorists to spot and thus prevent an accident." Yea, verily." End of quote. In casual reflection, I can't think of seeing many reports of pedestrians in bathing suits being struck down. It's just as well; such pedestrians might be more troublesome than most to identify.

WSFA AND THE POPULATION EXPLOSION What has happened to the noble tradition that fan clubs are supposed to go either out of business or at least into a complete slump following a convention? Detroit appears to have been the last city to honor this custom, and even there I believe the disolution had been under way for some time previous to the Detention. Neither Pittsburgh nor Seattle were affected much by their cons; Chicago seems much the same; but I must admit that there are some repercussions in Washington. Two weeks ago six of our real club regulars were out of town for one reason and another. I had more or less assumed the club would just fail to function that night--no president, no vice president, no quorum. At this most recent meeting of the club, I found that we'd hardly been missed. There was a quorum. We picked up some six or so new members through the Discon, and recent meetings have found over twenty people present. About the only difference that the absence of six people makes is that there are enough comfortable chairs to go around.

ED COX The format in which the previous pages were presented I PRESUME was developed by Ed Cox some years back. I borrowed the format since it was so well suited to what I wanted to say. My apologies and appreciation to Ed, and regrets to anyone who started reading the above thinking it was Ed talking.

CASUAL REFLECTIONS ON CON COMMITTEES Some unlucky night in the future someone in the audience may catch me commenting on how easy it is to put on a convention. Ignore me. I don't know what I'm talking about. I don't to this day know what goes into putting on a convention. For me, it required less work than, say, an issue of FANZINE INDEX. I think EES (Eney, Evans, and Scithers) correctly gauged the amount of work they thought they might be able to get out of me, and gave me that much and no more. It wasn't work.

I've heard Scithers, Evans, and Eney say they didn't work either. I don't believe them. I know that Evans received and processed a tremendous amount of mail, requiring almost daily posting of books, replies to inquiries, mailout of material, and the like. Eney received Art Show materials, mocked up and set up progress books and the program book and did a lot of the printing. Scithers oversaw everything, set up the program items, made all masquerade ball arrangements including the band and special effects, corresponded with everyone under the sun, took care of Hugo bases and plates, did the printing with Eney's assistance, and too much else to remember. From my lofty diplomatic post I called the hotel and convention bureau a few times, wrote a couple of dozen letters, rendered a little assistance in folding programs and progress reports and stuffing envelopes, but certainly none of it was any strain.

I can't directly comment on the success of the Discon. I saw about 15 minutes of the auction, heard Evans' introduction of Seabury Quinn, and was present during the banquet and the business session. The rest of the time I was at the registration desk, or catching up on eating, or chasing down some member of the hotel staff (not that there was trouble, but there are always minor items like how about some more chairs, where the heck is the registration desk's telephone, and we've sold 300 banquet tickets, can we keep on or do you want to establish a cut-off time), or moving stuff to or from the room to the convention area. There is a lot to be done during the convention proper. Most of it seemed to me to go smoothly. We committed a few minor goofs by failing to anticipate certain things, but I think most of them went unnoticed. From these indications, from a few personal comments, and from a few notes in the fan press, the Discon was apparently at the least a good convention.

There were three things the con committee wanted to do, which we talked over and agreed upon before the Chicago bid. First priority was to run on a budget, and not spend money until we could pinpoint exactly where the money would come from. This was never a problem--we were in the black before we returned to DC from Chicago, and remained in the black throughout. The second was to run a fairly relaxed convention. This was achieved reasonably well, although despite George's attempts to keep the program relaxed there were still items vying for time. The third thing was a hope that we could prove that running a convention was not a man-killing job. We knew that some had claimed that it was such a job, we knew

fans previously involved with committees who wanted no further part of any future ones, and we knew of shattered friendships.

You seldom find work-horses like EES; that's possibly part of the reason nobody felt himself to be under any great con strain. We had almost no disagreement on the committee, and this of course helped. Our internal capability to print the booklets possibly helped some, as did the foresight of getting the Hugo awards well in advance of the con (these were picked up at the 1962 Midwestcon). There was no financial strain, the hotel was beautifully cooperative, and there were many members of the club, and outside the area, who were willing to lend a hand.

The heavy work occurred in the last couple of weeks before the con, and resulted primarily from the printing of the Program Book. This is a sizeable operation. It's as big a job as it is primarily because of the number of ads carried. I'm not sure if the ads are worth the effort. They probably are, if the money is needed. Scithers showed some signs of strain here (he was the man doing the work) but prior to the con this was the only sign of overwork on any one of the committee. The first day and a half of the con were hectic--would the hotel come through, has so-and-so arrived yet, we need more nickles for change and all the banks are closed, this is the last box of card-holders. Finally, though, it's banquet time, you can forget about the registration desk from here on out, no more banquet sales to fret about, the food is reasonably good, for a banquet, and the master of ceremonies takes over.

I've seen a lot of advise given on how to run a convention. The advise that I was given most frequently was "don't get involved." I helped some, and it was fun. From the Discon, I'm convinced that there are some things that are needed to put on a convention. You need a head man with good common sense and a sense of showmanship. You need a couple of reliable workers, as treasurer and editor. And you need from three to ten people, quite possibly teen-agers, who can handle a job without too much supervision. One more qualification for the head man--he must know how to delegate, and have the knowledge of people required to delegate to the right man. Your three primary people must in general be able to get along together. If any group can meet these qualifications, then there's no good reason that they should be hesitant about putting on a convention. One thing the Washington committee did lack was the feminine point of view. There were no women on the committee, and all four of us are bachelors. Peggy Rae McKnight helped lend the feminine touch in the last moments of preparation and during the con; advice like hers adds a little here and there.

A couple of people, former con committee members, have said it would be perfectly feasible and possible to put on a con in Las Vegas even if they lived in, let's say, Atlanta. I think they're right. There is a minimum essential amount of work. It only becomes a backbreaker if you want to do more than enough.

SELECTING PEOPLE I've forgotten now where this old note comes
FOR JOBS from, but I rather believe the origin was a
French Army officer, possibly Napoleon. He
divided people into each of two categories. The individual
was either stupid or clever, and either lazy or industrious.
The notes which I took down read: "Clever & Industrious--
suited for high staff assignments. Use can be made of the
stupid and lazy. Clever & Lazy--fitted for the high t
command. He has the temperament & requisite nerve to deal
with all situations. Stupid and Industrious: A danger and must
be removed immediately.

ON STAYING Frequently I've listened with awe to people telling
ALIVE of this or that experience, sometimes about the war,
and sometimes about more mundane times, and wondered
why I never escaped from death by the stroke of fate, as so many
others have. A couple of nights ago I was re-reading some of
my old FAPA publications and found that I had told of the
miraculous rescue in the grain elevator. Well that, at least,
was one occasion.

Yesterday I was roving the shelves of the Army Library looking
for a couple of references (all unclassified material is on the
open shelves) and found myself in the military history section.
I glanced at a couple of titles but mainly kept my eyes on the
library code, when suddenly the title "The Story of the Century"
caught my eye. I was in the 100th, or "Century" Division.

We had sailed from New York on the S.S. McAndrews I found--
a name that had long been lost to my memory. And finally I found
in the book things I'd never been sure of, and one that I'd never
known at all. I'd known that the storm on the way over had been
a dilly. How accurate the book was, I don't know, but it calls
it the worst in 17 years. I'd never known that the McAndrews
had come within 5 degrees of capsizing. And the report that
we'd almost run into one of our sister ships in the convoy had
been only a disbelieved rumor until confirmed by the book.

For some reason both this book and "Celer," which is a much
shorter story of my own outfit, the 100th Recon Company, miss
one incident. Maybe there are only three of us that know it,
aside from the ship crew.

We were approaching Marseilles harbor, and three of us were
sitting on the forward deck casually watching the sights. Where
everyone else was, I don't know, but some were probably below
getting their gear ready, and others were doubtless on the other
side of the ship. One of the men I was with (I was probably
with Soey and Chuck, though who knows at this late date?) pointed
ahead and slightly to port. "What's that?" he asked. I shielded
my eyes and looked far out to the horizon. "No, down in the water."
It took me a moment to find it. It was nondescript in color,
and round, and had bumps on it--"My-God-it's-a-mine," said Soey
or Chuck.

The ship's crew wasn't completely asleep; there was a
hasty stirring overhead, running feet, and suddenly one of the

ship's 20mm guns was uncovered and into action. And a voice cut through the air, "STOP, YOU IDIOTS!" The firing stopped. We watched the mine slowly slip by, too close to the ship, and noted that after we'd passed one of the destroyer escorts swung out of line to dispose of the stray.

The miraculous rescue part of the story? The fact that the mine was too close to the ship to be hit by the 20mm gun, for the Exec, who'd stopped the firing, assured us that the gun crew and we three GI's, along with rest of the forward port side of the ship would have been gone for good if the gun crew had managed to explode the mine.

AND ON As usual, the material in this issue went directly
HAVING BEEN from my soul onto stencil without passing first
 through my brain, much less any preliminary drafts.
I wonder if it will show more than mailing comments how much of
a save my membership effort this is. The writing and the doing
isn't hard; deciding what I want to talk about sometimes is.
Cars and winters and girls, mostly. But I don't know enough
about the first two to talk for long, and I'm still bashful
about girls. Why, shucks, it was only yesterday morning that
I learned that the way you tell the difference between girl
pancakes and girl pancakes is by the way they're stacked.

I guess there is one thing I've learned about sports cars
and girls which the various sports car fans have never been
thoughtful enough to pass on. Or maybe they wanted to keep
deluding the general public. Or maybe just FAPA, for who knows
what secrets such as Boyd Raeburn is keeping from FAPA that he
is spreading far and wide to the world? A sports car will catch
the eye of some girls. But it will never replace the American
sedan in lovers lane.

Some further checking reveals that this is at least issue
number 10 of Bobolings. Maybe by next issue I'll know whether
it's number 11 or not.