

"I like catching, but they keep hitting me with elbows and knees and all like that...."

# CATCH TRAP

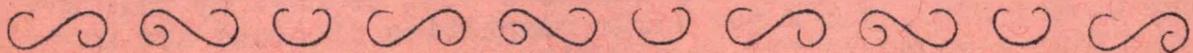
The not-so-very-daring Bem on the Flying Trapeze, yonder, should inform the Sacred Initiates, namely the 65 members of FAPA, give and/or take a chosen few close friends, that this is Catch Trap 92; and that this is Marion Zimmer Bradley, swinging around reflectively in Box 158, Rochester, Texas, for the major purpose of making mailing comments on the 92nd mauling (should be mailing, but let it go) of said FAPA. For the benefit or

otherwise of those newcomers who do not yet dig this Catch Trap jazz, the catch trap, in a flying trapeze act, is the catcher's trapeze; where he swings back and forth, ready to catch and throw back such leapers as dare the dangers of space and timing in their tricky passes. What with all the discussions flying around in FAPA, the analogy with the catcher in a flying act strikes me as an inescapably apt one for a writer of mailing comments. Be it further known that the terrified li'l catcher above, as well as all other Bems and monsters herein, are the work of Maggie Curtis. Also, that each and every opinion expressed herein, unless otherwise credited, is the (present) opinion of the editor and DOES reflect the Official Policy of this fanzine.

"You're ON, Marion...."

Fandom would totter, unless I began with HORIZONS

I think the escape clause in the Constitution for those who fail to meet renewal credits should be reserved for once-in-a-lifetime contingencies such as deaths in families, divorce, honeymoons or the loss of the use of one's limbs. But some way should be found to close it up as a loophole for people (yeah, yeah, persons) who would consistently use this clause to duck out of requirements. I'd suggest that the activity waived must be



A second page of CATCH TRAP 92, with Harry Warner warming up.....

made up within six months, and (c)--most important -- no single member could be benefited by such a waiver more than once in five years, except by majority vote of the entire FAPA membership. (If, for instance --and God forbid --someone like Lee Hoffman were to be lengthily hospitalized or some such, I doubt if anyone in FAPA would object to the red-tape of calling a special election; but it should be written into any such amendment that no person could circulate an activity waiver more than once in five years without showing good and just cause. ++ I don't think Wagner is out of style; I just think most opera houses can't afford to maintain the enormous rosters of first-rank vocalists needed for a large repertoire of Wagner operas. Most of these operas have huge casts, and they must also be protected by understudies, etc. \*++Modern novels benefit from cutting to standard length? I dunno; I find it hard to visualize THE CAINE MUTINY, for instance, cut down to 300 pages. On the other hand, LOLITA, which I esteem greatly, is very short -- and trying to analyze its peculiar flavor, I discover that it is because quite literally every word is placed to do the work of four; it is reminiscent of poetry in the way words are calculated to do not only prose work but to suggest and hold rhythm. ++ ++ We had a partial solar eclipse here today, but I didn't watch it. My eyes are far too glare-sensitive to stare at the sun even through smoked glass. ++ You can't summon up the nerve to buy cloth? My word! What would you do if your house needed curtains? For a while I sold ribbon --and had some male customers. Usually I assumed (1) that they were buying it for a wife or daughter, or (2) that they were making something which demanded it. Is that why people look askance at me in a hardware store, whence I sallied to buy a rubber hammer (for putting back hubcaps) a while ago? Wrong sex for such a purchase? Life would be kinda complicated if purchases have to be delimited by the nonexistent gender of inanimate objects, but in some futuristic science fiction, one could get into quite a discussion or a schism or even have a political revolution on the grounds of Who should buy What. (For instance, men might, in such a world, be allowed to buy beans and other cooked comestibles, but only women be permitted to buy flour or raisins; and men could shop for armchairs but not for kitchen appliances. Giggling girls whisper about that curly-headed boy in the next office who was actually seen purchasing an eggbeater, and mothers shake their head because their teen-age daughter purchased a flashlight.) ++ I think fandom as a whole could almost be defined by their habit of skimping on what the average consumer considers necessities, to purchase what the average consumer considers luxuries or nonsense. We do not have TV, I wear a winter coat which I bought 2nd hand eight years ago, I have yet to serve a meal on matching dishes, and our wall-to-wall linoleum has large scuff marks beginning to show through; but we have a tape recorder, four typewriters, a telescope, and if I have three dollars I will inevitably buy a quire of stencils instead of a new hat or a new handbag. We "can't afford" to buy a new car, and I can't afford to spend the dollar a week to have my hair set at the beauty shop, yet I buy large quantities of books and magazines. All the fans I know are the same, unless they have mundane wives.

A third page of CATCHETRAP 92, presenting the one, the only,

the stupendous Dick Eney, in

TARGET: FAPA ☆ ☆ ☆

What with all Jean Young went through enroute to the Convention in Detroit, it appears as a major miracle all over again that she was so poised, gracious and sweet. I thought at the time that she was a tremendous good sport about attending with an infant in arms, but wasn't aware that she had also been ill enroute. ++ Your description of Twenty Thousand Leagues over the Road reminds me, for some reason, of my disaster-laden trip with Kerry to Kansas City --though I didn't write so interestingly about it. Among other things, Finagle's Law was working to the extent that whenever we stopped for coffee or a cool drink to wet our dust-parched throats, at some ungodly hour when we weren't hungry, we got into the coolest, cleanest, most delightful restaurants, with whiffs of delicious comestibles and iced beverages and a restful atmosphere; whenever we were exhausted and hungry enough to drop, we could find only grease-joints with blaring jukeboxes, a prevalent perfume of shopworn lard, and a clientele who may have been the salt of the earth but who also smelled it. ++ Your struggles in convincing John Berry to discard a suit coat rather remind me of my troubles, too, in persuading Kerry that it really, honest-to-gosh, was all right to appear on the streets in Texas minus a hat and her very-proper-Bostonian white gloves. (I don't even own a hat or gloves.) ++ I like your haphazard mailing comments along toward the end; but I can guarantee that it is possible for tads to show up with crayon-smearred faces. Like, I know. It happens like this; said tad grasps crayons in his hot li'l fist, where they melt... a kiddy's set of crayons has little in common with the proper paper-shrouded, coolly used things of the more mature artist of ten or twelve. When said crayon has been thoroughly mauled in his hot sweaty damp little hands, he mops his equally hot, sweaty, damp li'l face with his grubby and multicolored li'l paws, and voila! (This, by the way, is why Binney and Smith "Crayolas" are the preferred school crayon; they are harder and don't melt quite so quickly in the perspiring palm of a child whose very toes curl with concentration as he carefully colors in the prescribed outlines to show Teacher that he can read the difference between "Color the rabbit blue" and "Color Dick's wagon red." (And, for free-style artists who sneer, I must put in the pedagogical truth --forgive me for stepping into your proper province, Juanita -- that the use of crayons for prescribed coloring, rather than free-style self-expression a la fingerpainting, trains the child in the fine motions of the hand, and thus contributes to future legibility of handwriting.) ++ Prob'ly everyone will pick you up on this, but the John Berry novel was called Krishna Fluting, not Dancing as you put it.

Down here is no place to start reviewing Bill Evans

CELEPHAIS ☆ ☆

but I can't simply leave the rest of the page blank, can I? ++ I see no special point in reducing the dues for overseas members, which may make me sound awfully

The fourth page of CATCH TRAP 92, Bill Evans hardly up the web yet

hard-hearted; but when I order books and magazines from England and the Continent, I don't see them reducing their prices to allow for the extra postage and insurance I have to pay. Overseas members cost the FAPA more than those on the North American continent, not less, and if anything I'd raise, not lower, their dues, to make up for the wear and tear on the membership. (And I suppose they, too, get tired of the attitude, which always seems arrogant to me, that Americans are all so rich they can afford to pay the tariffs for everybody else.) Now everybody jump on me at once -- maybe there is some very important point which I am overlooking. ++ At the school which my son attends, there are toilets in each room, running water, and a separate door to the outside (which, though very "modern" and all, means the kiddies have to put on their coats to go the cafeteria -- I mean TO the cafeteria.) The reason for this mad state of affairs is that school tax money locally is earmarked for school BUILDINGS only -- and can't be used to build up a good library, hire some betterpaid teachers, or anything like that. We live in a county which has oilfields -- and therefore the oilfield tax money is earmarked only for local use and only for building. So our school, twelve grades with less than two hundred scholars and a yearly graduating class of about fifteen, is virtually a palace; an auditorium which is fancier than any movie theatre, rooms with every modern convenience and so forth. Local people screamed loud and long when it was suggested that the high school, at least, should consolidate with Haskell, twenty miles away, so as to have a school with at least 200 high school students and allow them to offer a few more courses in math and languages; the kids, they said, simply HAD to go to school in their own community, and they dragged out all sorts of arguments why the kids would all have warped personalities and turn to juvenile delinquents if they were uprooted from their homes and more than a mile away from their mommies when they were in high school. So the subject was dropped. But the local negro children -- about twenty of them -- from first grade on up, are daily hauled off on a bus for a 24-mile ride to the nearest colored school, and nobody worries about the uprooting of their little personalities. Oh, I tell you, the Texas school system is a mess, and I'm sickened at Steve having to attend it. ++ That duet in NORMA -- the other one -- is "Sola, furtiva, all' tempio.." Translation; alone, in secret, from the Temple." And since I now have a tape recorder, could I persuade or wheedle you somehow to "take off" a couple of your unusual singers for me? My own collection is so small and so conventional that I doubt if I have anything you don't, but if gratitude will do it, you'll have it. ++ No, I don't have a recording of BORIS: can't afford a complete one, and wouldn't be satisfied with "scenes": I have yet to make up my mind whether I prefer the original-Moussoursky orchestration, now being heard at the Met, or whether I prefer the Rimsky-Korsakov revision. Probably the latter; I am no worshipper of "originals", and have a great admiration for Korsakov. ++ Speaking of originals, Bill, I wonder on which side of the FORZA DEL DESTINO controversy you'd wind up? I find myself loathing the way the Met has rearranged the scenes to eliminate the Inn near Hornachuelos and much of the army Camp scenes. This, of course, makes a more classic drama, thee

A fifth page of Catch Trap 92, and I'm about to blow the whistle on Bill Evans;

action mostly interior and personal to Carlo, Leonora and Alvaro; but for one who loves, as I do, the very sprawling and diffuse picture of life presented in the Rivas play, any attempt to simplify and "classicize" FORZA is mere butchery. ++No; I didn't read Traubel's METROPOLITAN OPERA MURDERS, but I did read a very fine novel, whose name I can't recall now, also a murder mystery, written by Queena Mario. Traubel should have plenty of background for a murder story; in her autobiography she tells of a time when some unknown person put ground glass slivers into her cold cream, and only a pure fluke of luck prevented her from disfigurement or the loss of her eyesight. It made my blood run cold. ++ Doesn't anyone but me like sweet things? Seems like everybody is always launching for dry Martinis, wanting soft drinks less sweet, and so forth. If I were a few pounds thinner I would be almost a candy fiend, and saying a thing is "dry" or "sour" is tantamount, to me, to saying it's distasteful; to me there is no such thing as anything being "good and sour"; the two are simply a contradiction in terms. I like salty things, and sweet ones, but sourness gives me horrible pains in the throat, and anything bitter is simply unpalatable-- which is why I almost never drink beer unless it's a very light variety.

Dave Rike and Bill Donaho, in

LIMBO ☆ ☆ ☆

But you are a heck of a person to talk, Dave, about including material by outsiders in FAPA: I mean, here you are turning your FAPazine right over to non-member Donaho. Not that I'm complaining, mind; Bill is far too good a member to wait until he wriggles his way up to the top of the list, and this way allows him to participate without the inescapable loss of some other FAPA member. Under something of the same notion, I have been presenting Kerry stuff and Maggie Curtis artwork in FAPA. But if it's okay for you to do it, one must allow the same privilege to Mrs. Carr and Cpl. Rapp. ++ Did you read "Cuba; A Dissenting Report" in the New Republic? The writer, whose name I forget, printed this frankly pro-Castro article, pointing out that prior to the Castro revolution, Cuba may have been FOR THE TOURISTS AND OUTSIDE CAPITAL, a sort of tropical paradise, but for the people who had to live and make a living there, it was pure hell, and we had been sitting there watching it without doing a damn thing, simply because we could make more money that way. I can't quote the entire article, but I couldn't have agreed more; and before we start slanging the Cubans for letting a pro-Communist agitator take over their country, we ought to stop and ask ourselves what Cuba gained from Capitalism? The freedom to starve? A fascist dictator? All of the profits of their natural resources going out of the country? We did nothing to improve the lot of the Cubans, and now we're bitching because they took matters into their own hands and improved them in their own way. So maybe it isn't our way ---nobody's making US live with Castro. I admit I wouldn't

care for the Castro regime for myself. But it's their country, and if they want him, they deserve him. Things could hardly be worse for the average Cuban than they were when we were standing by with our bland hands-off policy. ++ THE PUPPET MASTERS is the only Heinlein novel I ever unqualifiedly liked. DOUBLE STAR may have been a better book, and DOOR INTO SUMMER a more adult one, but I still liked PM best. LUMMOX, and HAVE SPACESUIT, WILL TRAVEL, were so sick-making that I haven't, even yet, finished STARSHIP SOLDIER.

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I didn't say there was anything wrong with limiting one's offspring for cosmetic reasons -- if a woman doesn't want kids she shouldn't be forced to have them, because she will take it out on the kids. It's sad, of course, when a woman loves children and her husband's desire for a big car, a footloose job, or a fancy-thin-fashionable wife means she must either give up her desire to have children, or lose her husband. All I said was that birth control as practiced in the USA is a side issue, having nothing to do with the very real and desperate need for some means of starvation-control and respect for human

life which is the real birth-control issue in India/China etc. ++ I cannot eat mustard on anything ... have never liked the taste of it but after an episode with cyanide poisoning, (I had absent-mindedly chewed on a bracelet which had been cleaned with cyanide-containing silver polish) when, as an emergency measure, I was force-fed with mustard to induce vomiting, even the smell of the stuff causes me damn near to go into convulsions. Which means if I get mustard on a hamburger I go hungry, period. I'm not especially fond of catsup -- prefer my meat to taste like meat rather than condiments --but I will eat it; ditto most relishes. But-- not -- mustard! ++Amen! The major function of fandom is that it provides an outlet for extroverts who aren't satisfied by bridge games, pink teas or church suppers! Elinor Busby and I were discussing this awhile back. My husband, though intelligent, is anti-social; he doesn't need friends and doesn't have them. He is croggled by the way in which, though admittedly starved for companionship, I will avoid people in Rochester. According to him, one either likes people or one doesn't; he doesn't, so he avoids them, but he thinks, if I'm lonely, I should assuage my thirst for people by going out and attending church, PTA meetings and the local ladies clubs. And he simply CANNOT understand how I can like SOME people and not like others, since I am not a snob in the sense that I like only "intellectuals." ++ Small town morals. I must be awfully unworldly, or something. The most shocking thing I ever heard of (in a small town --here in Rochester) was circulated surreptitiously, but it really happened and isn't just scandal. A local girl turned up pregnant and accused a local boy, whose parents put pressure on him to marry the girl. The boy went out and found five friends who claimed --truthfully or otherwise --that they, too, had had relations with the girl within the suspect period of time; then the six of them sat down and solemnly drew lots; the loser drove

A seventh page of CATCH TRAP, Donaho going into the net

over the state line with the girl, married her in Oklahoma, drove her home and left her on the parental doorstep --and has never seen her since. ++I have only once approved heartily of a capital punishment case; where an airman stationed in Wichita Falls stole ~~an~~ a little girl, three years old, from the back of her father's car where she was sleeping, raped and strangled the baby and left her in the city dump. He was pronounced sane (though of course he can't have been) and of course his Godfearing mother should probably have been the one removed from society before she foisted this neurosis on her son; but I don't see how a child-killer of that type could ever be reclaimable. I know, intellectually, that the man was more to be pitied than hated; and I tried a few times to pray for him, but I couldn't manage it. The rape of a child of nine or ten, outrageous as it seems, has some atavistic precedent, though a man who commits such a frightful crime demands thorough rehabilitation; and a man who rapes (or marries) a girl of twelve or thirteen is simply out of step with our particular society, and not with biological humanity. But for a molester of babies I see no possible future in society of any sort, and monstrous as it seems, I felt the world freer when he was safely dead...I am not sadistic enough to want him punished eternally by lifelong incarceration in the hellhole of a prison or mental hospital. Such a man, I feel, is better off dead and out of a world he can't live in.

KAnderson presenting a pale blue

*Alif* ☆ ☆

At this writing it occurs to me that by the time this mailing is circulated, we will know who the next president is. I keep praying that it will be Kennedy and that he will have damnsense enough to give Stevenson the post of Secretary of State. But I think Kennedy hurt his chances by appointing Lyndon Johnson, who is too conservative for the North, and yet the South won't accept him either -- to the Dixiecrats, he is so radical they damn near call him a Communist. All I can say is, if, after eight Eisenhower years, anyone still votes for Nixon --they DESERVE him. ++ Your tame fogs remind me that whenever I see a Greyhound bus going one way, I always see, within a mile, a Greyhound bus going the other way; in short, they always meet where I am, or nearly thereabouts. So that when I see the first Greyhound bus going North, or East, I start looking out for the other one going south, or west. And it never fails. ++ Your "Green-gold tights" -- you did have a pair of changeable ones; but they may have been silver-and-black or green-and-black. You were wearing them with an aqua-blue felt skirt which you also flung around as a cape, as I recall, and looked as if you were about to climb up a rope and begin spinning on it, or something like that. ++Yes, yes, I know all about the rib-cage development of opera singers, or did you think I was just chubby? ++ Hm...I'd never be able to get a weight-age guessing job at a carnival. Somehow I thought you were a bit older than I, not younger; but then, anyone who acts grownup I usually tag, mentally, as slightly older than I; and usually mean it as a compliment, too. (A thought for hassling around; how many people ever do feel "grown up"?)

On this, the eighth page of CATCH TRAP 92, I discover that in a full seven pages I have reviewed all of five FAPAazines, which means at that rate I could really make it a pretty lengthy zine. I'd better review a few of the fanzines which didn't inspire so much comment this time around....starting with

Ron Ellik, with a sadly slim ish of *The Bazaar* ☆

The Bjo cover reminds me of some chance remarks I once made anent "unmistakable styles" in one of the Ted Paulszines. The Bjo style relies on swirls and stars, and somehow the effect is to make a flat page (white paper at that) seem strangely to shimmer. I can't analyze it, but it's effective. ++ I understand that Elinor and Buz loathe weird plurals of their surname (and in case I forget it Down Lower, you two, I apologize for Busbybodies; I dinna know you were sensitive about puns on your name.) ++ About D H Lawrence and the girl who objected to her immortalization in the semi-autobiographical Sons and Lovers; every writer, on every level (even way down on the pulp level where I compete) has that to contend with. About the frankest of such writers (leaving out such folk as Henry Miller, who wrote once that he wanted to write "about himself"--evidently thinking this the only alternative to turning out best-seller trash) was the French writer Colette; her music-hall sketches, etc, are all very personal, she appears in them in first person, and her associates under the very thinnest film of pseudonym. For instance, in La Vagabonde, her manager/partner appears as "Brague"--and his real name was Georges Wague. So far no one seems to have objected too strenuously, tho' Colette was far from the ordinary ladylike female writer. DYDCOMFZ!

Dick Ryan (any relation to Vic?) on the *BAND WAGON* ☆



Quite right; birth control should not be rammed down the throats of anyone. But (despite some people's insistence that Indian women KNOW about birth control --having invented it -- and refuse to use it for religious reasons) I believe the FACTS should be widely disseminated. In the first place (Dick, this isn't all directed at you; part of it goes to Mrs. Carr, with whom I've been discussing the subject off'n'on); in the first place, the Indian culture and tradition may have been the first to invent contraceptives, but that doesn't mean the starving gutter woman knows how to use them, or is able to buy them. What I say here applies to EVERY culture in EVERY time; it should be made possible for the INDIVIDUAL -- not his government or his church, the INDIVIDUAL --- to know, in full possession of all the relevant facts, to make up his own mind whether or not he wishes to propagate his kind, or to do so in excess of population replacement. If this be propaganda, make the most of it....++ A car with bucket seats may be fine for racing, and very much "in", but I'm afraid for a 2,000 mile trip I'd find them awfully tiring. Even my heavy-riding, sofa-cushion Chrysler seems confining after 500 miles.

The ninth page of CATCH TRAP 92, with a fine double somersault

from Dan McPhail; both with the title of.....

PHANTASY PRESS ☆ ☆

I saw in Billboard that David Nelson is working as a flyer with a group that played the Minneapolis State Fair a few weeks ago; I tried to get Redd Boggs to cross the river and go see him, but he wouldn't. ++ I don't think I would care to challenge GMCarr in quantity for a year in FAPA: her ambition croggles me. I don't mind publishing a lot of small zines, but assembling the large ones is too much like WORK....my kitchen table will hold 10 pages without crowding, which is why 20 pages is a top limit for any FAPAZine I publish. It isn't the mimeographing or the editing of a big zine, it's the collating and stapling, which is why I don't consolidate. ++ The idea of an animal identity for every FAPAmember is a Good Thing. You remind me, Dan, rather of a good breed of dog; well-mannered, curious, friendly without being mischievous, highly domesticated and civilized, with the ability to keep your less sociable impulses neatly out of sight (which is why I stipulated a well-mannered, well-trained dog). If it must be a WILD animal, perhaps a beaver; industrious, hard-working and without vicious habits; not spectacular in any blazing way, but able to rack up monumental achievements in an out-of-the-way corner -- if anyone bothers to go and look at them. ++ Let's play around with this a little longer. ++ Yes, the tape you heard at my house was an operatic duet --Bei Mannern from THE MAGIC FLUTE --in which, by fiddling with microphone and three sets of volume controls, I had managed more or less to tune out Corry Bjister and sing the duet in question with the baritone. It's a shame this tape is mixed in with so much crud; I tried to re-tape it, and had very little luck. Evidently my "skill" with the volume controls, that day, was a sheer fluke. ++ Your re-issue of the covers of the first mailing was an interesting, but un-commentable item. ++ I still wish we could have gotten to the Pittcon, and I still hope you win the race for Veep, for purely selfish reasons --since I am committed, by my own Big Mouth, to put out the mailings (unless Harness' Gambit succeeds) without a word about the difficulty of so doing!

The Coulsons have a guest star in

VANDY ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

and first I want to talk to Tucker for a minute. Bob, something very much like the episode you mentioned --the nudist film -- happened in Abilene recently and the chap responsible, trying vainly to get permission to show this



this sunbathing film, flew into print via the newspapers, stating angrily that in his opinion, two current movies --PSYCHO and ELMER GANTRY --should be closed, rather than his nudist film. I'm not so sure I don't

A tenth page of CATCH TRAP 92, Bob Tucker holding center ring...

agree. I don't approve of censorship, though I think something should be available so adults can make up their mind if they want their kiddies to see a given picture. Steve saw several Vincent Price films without a hitch, then literally had hysterics in THE TINGLER: I discovered later that this one uses hypnotic techniques and Steve is an exceptionally suggestive hypnotic subject (had minor surgery, for instance, painlessly under very light hypnosis.) But I get a rather disgusted bang out of the way Abilene handles "Adults only" films. When they play the big downtown theatres, they make a huge THING out of "Adults only --no children, no half-price admissions" --- but when they come back to play the out-of-town drive-ins, just like always, "Adults 50¢ --CHILDREN FREE!" Gug. There may be some justification for not admitting kids to some movies UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR PARENTS -- I think a parent has the right, and responsibility, to decide what he wants his offspring, up to about age 10, to see on a screen. But it's all in the wrong direction. For instance, they put an ADULTS ONLY tag on a perfectly harmless Brigitte Bardot movie --"That Naughty Girl" --in which pretty Brigitte ran around in a few scenes looking, so my husband said, like somebody's kid sister caught in a shower, innocently pretty; I saw no harm in it, and presumably Steve didn't either, because all he seemed to recall about the picture was a funny sequence where Brigitte, as an undomesticated girl, burned a hole in the man's pants while trying to iron them. On the other hand, I took a carload of kiddies to see TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE, and found it double-billed with THE BEAT GENERATION, which may be okay for advanced teen-agers but certainly was no picture for the under-ten set, dealing as it did with a psychopathic rapist and glancing on abortion, homosexuality, etc. The kids -- the five in my car -- had various reactions; Steve, who knew the facts of life, was distressed and disgusted; a ten year old and an 11-year-old girl were sniggeringly curious and kept asking me embarrassing questions --embarrassing because I knew if I answered them truthfully I should be in serious trouble with two sets of parents; a six-year-old boy went, thank goodness, to sleep; and a twelve year old girl kept giggling nervously. Think of all the trouble that could have been saved by marking this one "Not for kiddies". Of course, that would interfere with parents who turn their kiddies loose on Saturday afternoon to pile into the nearest theatre so Mama won't have to look after them. \*++ Oh, gads, the author who wrote the lesbian novels was not KATE Wilhelm, but GALE Wilhelm. GALE Wilhelm wrote a novel good enough for the Modern Library -- WE TOO ARE DRIFTING -- and another one called TORCHLIGHT TO VALHALLA, both lesbian in emphasis; she also wrote some other very fine novels. One may like or dislike her work --- it's a bit too "arty" and avant-garde for me --but it is definitely on a level to be taken seriously. Kate Wilhelm writes nicely, but not in that class at all. ++ Juanita, MY kid simply loved WIND IN THE WILLOWS when I read it to him at the age of four. ++ Sewing is emotionally satisfying to me, though I would rather make costumes than clothes. ++ Maybe my love for tiny babies is very

Eleventh page of CATCH TRAP 92, Coulsons in a 3-man routine

selfish, not unselfish at all. I love newborn babies because of the purely physical pleasure I get from cuddling them, petting them, attending to their needs. The baby isn't selfish; it is simply surviving, and women have been so constituted --at least enough women for race survival -- to take enough pleasure in a child so that on a biological level it is more pleasurable to tend a baby than to abandon it in a tree fork somewhere. As cultures interfere with that biological instinct, the disapproval of society (i.e., it isn't NICE to abandon your babies on a hill somewhere, except in time of famine or something) is substituted for the lessening instinct. I am not very female in other ways, but I'm a mass of blind physical instinct in the presence of a very tiny child. I am, in the popular phrase, absolutely sloppy over babies. I coo. I babble. I gurgle and simply slop with emotion. "Intellectual" women are frequently disgusted with me, but I guess I was born that way, because one of my earliest and pleasantest memories is being entrusted (at about four) with the feeding of a neighbor's baby, and being shown how to feed her just a ti-ny bit on the spoon each bite, instead of stuffing it into her mouth. I was also the sort of brat who dragged around dolls and kittens and I slept with a teddy bear until I was seventeen. In fact, I keep on good terms with some rather silly local girls just to have a good excuse to be entrusted, at times, with their babies---simply because of the pleasure I take in them. ++And the babies certainly don't object; I have yet to see the infant who doesn't calm down when I take it; even refractory, tiresome, spoilt or colicky ones. ++ Er...hem. Next convention, you fan-type mothers, don't mob me all at ONCE. ++ Oh, I get mad and swat Steve good and hard when I think he deserves it. God forbid he should grow up thinking Mama is perfect -- I have seen THAT kind of boy, quite too often. There are plenty of times when we detest each other, and plenty of others when we simply put up with each other because, as I put it to him, three rugged individualists under one roof --well, something's gotta give, or we'd be murdering one another twice daily. Sometimes I can be sweet reason; other times, when Steve asks "Why" I tell him "Because I jolly well said so, Buster," and that is THAT --or else I go hunting up the yardstick. At the age of ten he is bigger than I am, so it's lucky he and I have fairly well agreed on rules of conduct--I'd have one fine time trying to spank him, at his size. ++ My reaction to "superbly muscled males in tights" is aesthetic too, for goodness sake --what else could it be? Oh---er --ug. Well, anyway, mine is aesthetic. Sorry you misunderstood...although I must admit that a film of Codona, who was quite a hunk of beautiful manhood, made my heart beat a bit faster than usual. ++ The October, 1960, issue of POPULAR MECHANICS contains a short-course in trampoline tumbling. Did you see it?

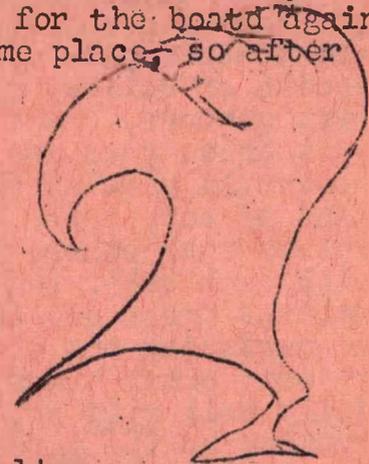
Phyl Economou's star turn, namely

Phlotsam ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

I must have a terrific amount of adrenalin on tap for emergencies, since in a crisis I am the calmest thing in Christendom, though I let down hard afterward. I had

Twelve pages of CATCH TRAP and I'm not half through the mailing! I surely don't Fly through the Mailing with the Greatest of Ease! Keep swinging, -Phyllis....

a terrific adrenalin jag, the other night. I hope to do an article on this for this mailing, but in the event I don't get the chance, during the appearance of the Bill Hames Carnival at the West Texas Fair, I worked, two nights, on the Midway's sideshow, on the "knife board" with knife-artist Dino Moreno....this meant I stood in profile in front of the board while Dino hurled knives around me, put out a lighted paper spill which I held in my teeth, and so forth. ++The crazy thing was, I have always regarded myself as timid, and I had never worked on a knife board before. But I had absolutely no fear, and, according to Dino, was a quite perfect subject; I didn't flinch or move even an eyelash, but stood with perfect steadiness. ++ The second night, an exploding flashbulb blinded Dino just as he released a knife, and the third of the blades (five in each set) threw crooked and sliced under my left breast. I was surprised myself at the steadiness with which I looked down, saw that I was bleeding only slightly, and said offhandedly "Finish your act, boy." He threw the other two knives, then, as I was splashed with blood all down the front, I went backstage and got off my blouse and bra. I had a nice deep cut through the left nipple (that's what I get for wearing a C-cup) and the first aid station insisted I go to the hospital; so to the hospital I went for a stitch and a tetanus shot, then back to the fairgrounds, where I borrowed a blouse from one of the other showgirls and was back on the board for the next show. I had some purely mental qualms when I started for the board again, but lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place, so after the first knife flashed past my face I felt perfectly fine again. All the rest of that evening, and all the next day, I was floating about six feet off the ground; I expect my system must have been soaked in adrenalin. I came down with a bump, Monday, (this had been Friday) into one of the worst depressions of my life: I imagine this is what the performers in "danger" acts learn to live with; they become adrenalin addicts and feel only half alive unless they are all hopped up for superhuman effort and danger. Rather a croggling thought -- that I have to take up standing around in front of a knife thrower, to feel really alive, as I did that night. Maybe I'll get up on that aerial trapeze yet! ++ NO, NO, NO, my husband was NOT in World War Two --he was in World War One -- 1917-1918. (I wasn't born then. I am thirty. Brad is almost 62. Comprenez?) +++ Okay, okay. Here I am sitting on the floor chattering, and all I can think of is Dino's bit of patter in one of his magic acts: He leans gently down from the platform and murmurs "Lady--" (to some helpless-looking gawker in the audience,) "Am I boring you? Well, I'm boring hell out of myself!" ++ Actually, though, I do get a kick out of this kind of off-the-cuff chatter. So okay; you've convinced me. ++ I could say more, but my gosh, I'm running out of STENCILS!



A thirteenth page of Catch Trap, and almost a month later than the twelfth; in the interval, two novelettes, three short confession stories and a lot of miscellaneous writing; Trying to recapture an original impulse with

SAM BO ☆ ☆

It would be a lot of fun to foregather the Texas-Oklahoma fan at Tulsa next summer, sure -- though from what one hears I have my doubts about it being exclusively a Sodacon! ++ I must have subconscious sadistic tendencies, for I enjoyed the long bit about Oscar, even while I feel an almost personal indignation (sympathy for underdogs?) at anyone who would string along a halfwit like that. ++ All science fiction movies aren't bad. A couple of months ago I suddenly found myself very proud of working, however modestly, in the science fiction field. That was the day I saw the film of THE TIME MACHINE. ++ Speaking of pride in the field reminds me that quite without any intention of namedropping, before I knew quite what a storm of record-breaking popularity the picture had stirred up, I found myself enveloped in some Reflected Glory; I happened to mention, seeing an advertisement for the movie, that I knew Bob Bloch, the author of PSYCHO, and had corresponded with him for years. It was briefly, I suppose, rather like confessing to having spent the night with Brigitte Bardot!

And in the Center Ring.....

OLÉ CHAVELA ☆ ☆ ☆

Random thought, apropos of nothing; if this is a tribute, could Madame Burbee be called a tributary? ++ It's about time somebody appreciated what the mundane wives of fans go through. (Or, for that matter, the mundane husbands of active fannes....my own Better Half never knows when he will come home to find stencils in his favorite armchair, fans parked at his typewriter, or, if I happen to be on the circus fan rather than the s-f fan kick, a tumbling mat in the middle of the parlour!) ++ Now of course, if one's spouse is him/herself a fan(ne), this sort of stuff is taken for granted. But I have long thought that the mundane wives of fans should receive, annually, some sort of Award for patience above and beyond the call of duty --we could, for instance, call it a Grizzy --short for Grizelda --to rival the Oscars, Emmys and Hugos. ++ Alice Martinez, for instance, who, after being Descended On by the travelcon to Detroit in large lumps, still had kindness and patience when I, in desperation, telephoned her from the Tulsa bus station while she was amidsthips of getting all the small fry off to school, asking her please to guarantee to the suspicious local people that I was a Solid Citizen for whom a check could be cashed. Or Pauline Mcphail, who gave black coffee, kind words and an oasis of rest to two drowned-rat fannes on an unholy trek, at the most unGodly hours of the night. ++ Having known these two, I can visualize why Isabel Burbee is so well-loved. It's about time mundane wives of fans got something besides the dishes to do afterward, while the femme fans are, by choice, off with the menfolks in the other room.

Fourteen pages deep in Catch Trap and time to speed up the show; here comes the parade of I-know-you're-there-but-I-don't-have-much-to-say-to-you-this-time zines;

Le Moindre: Hey, hey, look-- you say that "children must have less discriminating tastes than adults...how else do they relish cloying sweet concoctions with often obnoxious flavors, that adults can't stomach..." but what makes you think this is evidence of less discriminating tastes? Sure, many adults lose their taste for sweets, but that doesn't necessarily mean a taste for sweets is less discriminating; might simply mean that adults have actually lost something. As for "obnoxious flavors" --most children naturally dislike such nasty-tasting stuff as mustard, olives, pickles, vingar, most sharp spices, limburger cheese, etc -- their uncorrupted taste can still distinguish real flavor in bland things such as butterm and mashed potatoes and milk. As adults insult and destroy their taste buds with sharp flavors, they slowly acquire a need for higher and higher stimulation (hence "gourmet tastes" which are just plain nasty to the natural --i.e. uninsulted -- taste buds of a youngster.) I'd say, if anything, it was the adult tastes which were indiscriminating.... just as a near-deaf or t@ne-deaf person needs loud sounds while a good ear can distinguish even the faintest tonal shadings and modulations. ++ What fouls you up is this notion that simple tastes are associated with immaturity --that old jazz about "you gotta be a real Sophisticated Adult to appreciate this stuff." Hence the notion that a taste for beer is somehow more "adult" than a taste for cherry ice cream. (Seems like I said enough to you to have justified putting your name up! Sorry!)

Experiment MCMIX; out here, mimeo owners are usually church people too, and Master Products slants much of their promotional material at people who use their mimeos for church-bulletin work. ++ Speaking of flat mimeo work, when I was working at Montgomery Ward we addressed labels by typing the name and address in a piece of stencil inserted in the customer's file-card; then passing a rubber roller inaa handle (like a toiler-paper holder) first over a small inkpad, then over the stencil. I adapted this principle to print some tiny 2x3 cards, circus-poster style, for Stevie's miniature cage wagons, and if I can master the roller I'll turn out some color work on this impromised flatbed for FAPA later on.

Kerry Portfolio; I neglected to list the titles I gave these drawings; they are, in order, 1. Patterns in Silk (the cats); Nude antique; Carol in Crinoline; Bergey Girl 1960; Sunflowers; (the two bathing beauties); Gwynn and Marja; and, inside back cover, For Danaline.

Driftwood: I'm anti-hunting, and also anti-gun because down here in Texas just about every week some husband either shoots his estranged wife because she won't come back to him or "accidentally" shoots some innocent bystander on his farm. Like, if guns are around, people use them instead of calming down and going to law about it --which is why Texas has too many murders. I am unalterably opposed to hunting except for food (many's the rabbit I ate during Depression days) or to gun# for anything except National Defense.

Fifteenth page of Catch Trap, Sally Dunn gaily pirouetting;

If it's my porkchop recipe you want; have your butcher cut the porkchops nice and thick ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch); coat them with mustard thinly and brown them in a little hot fat. Lay out in a baking dish; mix together 4-6 slices of stale bread torn in bits, grated onion and a trace of green pepper, plenty of salt and pepper, and a can of cream-style corn, and put a generous spoonful of this gloppy mess on each chop; then pour 1 cup water into the frying pan in which you browned the chops, bring to a boil and pour around (not over) the chops in the baking dish. Cover and bake about an hour or until the chops are good and tender. Another nice way to do porkchops; brown them like this, then, in the same frying pan, lay a thick slice of onion on top of each chop and pour in, around them, either a cup of consomme, chicken broth ~~or~~ or, if you like it, canned "stewed tomatoes" --the kind that have green peppers added. Turn heat way down and cook slowly for about an hour. Scruptious, I mean scrumptious --my typewriter periodically starts sassing me back. ++ I know what you mean about people trying hard to prove they are not prejudiced. In college we had a very, very nice Negro GI running for student council President. Trouble is we also had a very, very nice young woman, active all four years in student affairs and a real dynamo. About a week before the election a tough rumor started running round college that nobody would vote for Phyllis B. unless they were prejudiced against Negroes. Ben, the colored boy, won at a walk and I kept having this feeling that an awful lot of the student body voted to show everybody how nice and free they were from prejudice. There was also a Jewish girl, a real nasty Bitch, who failed to get something she craved and went around talking it up all over school that it was because "they" --the college authorities -- wouldn't appoint anybody Jewish. Fortunately --we couldn't say anything-- a nice, forthright, outspoken girl from Hillel society spoke up and told her flatly "The reason you didn't get it isn't because of any prejudice against Jews -- just prejudice against bitches." I think we were all glad to see Yolanda get her comeuppance, because honestly, the way she went around was beginning to give some of us anti-Semitic notions! ++ Our house was not designed to be lived in at all --there is really no place to put furniture and not block windows, the doors swing back to use up all the available wall space and there are some doors which can't be opened unless others are closed, etc. Hellish. ++ If I decide to teach in Texas I think I will have to sign a statement saying I believe in God. I know that to get into two of the three Abilene colleges I would have to sign a statement saying that my "chief aim" in attending college is to "Lead a well-integrated Christian Life". Or some such thing. I will very willingly sign a statement saying I have no intention of overthrowing the government by force or violence, even though I disapprove in principle of such stateOments, because actually I have NO aim of doing any such thing; but for some reason I am bitterly opposed to signing a pledge not to smoke, drink or frequent "places of evil reputation, such as dance halls" --even though I don't smoke, dislike the taste of alcohol and can't dance a step and don't want to -- while students

Sixteenth page of Catch Trap, Sally Dunn about to drop to the net;

who wish to do all these things cheerfully sign the pledge and then simply take care not to get caught. For some reason this makes me mad as hell. Is our society sick, or am I?

And Coswal, in

*Some Finder (Eye-tracks)* ☆

I don't believe in pornography either, and I think, if children must be "protected" from sexy writings, it's up to the kid's parents to do it. Of course I have my own opinion of parents who censor a kid's reading, but I suppose each person should bring up his own kids. The person who wants the lewd magazines off the newsstands is saying, in so many words; "I am too damn lazy to look over what my kids read; I want to turn him loose with a quarter, and, without any attempt on my part to teach him the difference between good and bad books, sensible or non-sensible theories of life and love, assure myself that he won't get anything outside the house to shake my comfortable assumptions about what he knows or doesn't know. ++ I don't give Steve ten dollars and tell himself to buy a pair of shoes, and I won't until he can tell the difference between shoes that look good and shoes that wear well and fit well. Likewise, until he was eight or ten years old I didn't give him a quarter and tell him to buy himself a book, or magazine. I looked over most of what he read until he was about nine, to be sure (he was a tense kiddie) that he didn't get stuff that would give him nightmares or make him worry about such stuff as sadism. Children have enough to contend with. Now, with a couple of obvious exceptions (I discourage, gently and without being didactic about it, such magazines as CONFIDENTIAL or UNCENSORED TRUE CRIME), he has the freedom of our bookshelves and of the news-stands. I figure if he wants to read trash he will read it somewhere, and I'd much rather he would read it on the floor of my living room, where if he has any "embarrassing" questions I can either answer them myself or send him to the encyclopedia or one of our household reference books, rather than having him ask some misinformed schoolmate. In the last couple of months he has read THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING, all of the Sherlock Holmes books, two or three Raymond Cgandler mysteries, Talbot Mundy's JIMGRIM, Caryl Chessman's CELL 2455 DEATH ROW (I gasped but said nothing), RIO BRAVO, GIDEON OF SCOTLAND YARD, all issues of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, Ward Moore's TRANSIENT (God only knows what he made of it, but he re-read it twice and said he "loved" it), AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS, MODERN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, MEN, ROCKETS AND SPACE RATS, all my circus books, and dipped into heaven only knows how much else of my miscellanea. There is nothing to stop him from reading SEX IN HISTORY, THE HOMOSEXUAL IN AMERICA, THE HENRY MILLER READER, NAKED DESIRE (a paperback novel I notice lying around, not yet discarded), and he dipped into Huysman's LA-BAS, but evidently found it boring and put it aside before I could decide whether or not I wanted to exercise a veto. Conclusion; kids brought up without taboos have no morbid curiosity; obviously, if he ever develops real curiosity he will read till it's satisfied, then go back to his adventure stories, entertainment and nonfiction interests.

With an Eighteenth Page of Catch Trap, my typing fingers are beginning to get hoarse; Too much for

Georgina and Norm Clarke's

## DESCANT

The major reason why I think that those who intend to breed, or adopt children should be properly married is nothing to do with the stigma, or otherwise, of illegitimacy; simply that the marriage ceremony, so far, is the only way of establishing a legal guarantee which obligates said parents to support and maintain that child, and to provide it with a stable home (like, one with two parents and the same father-figure while he or she is growing up). In a world of perfectly adjusted men and women, maybe it wouldn't matter whether a man was legally tied to a woman or not, when she bore him an infant he would consider it a pleasure and privilege to aid in maintaining that future citizen; but as things stand now that "proper marriage" insures that if Our Hero (or Heroine, for that matter) suddenly wants to duck out on his or her responsibilities, there is either a young woman saddled with earning a living with preschool kiddies on her hands, or a man with a motherless kid lying around wet and squalling while Mama is On the Town. The laws of marriage give a legal handle for forcing these immature characters to face their obligations if they suddenly decide that Little Iodine is cramping their style. (They also eliminate the messy business of paternity suits. Sad as it is to see a man being victimized by a girl who has alleged untruthfully that Joe Doakes is the father of her unborn, it's equally sad, or maybe a little sadder, to see a girl, trusting and not too smart, with a baby she must either support unaided or put up for adoption because Big Daddy, even though he took the girl's virginity and kept her on a leash, stands there like an upright citizen and rebels against being forced to support a child who "might not" be his -- and gambles on a blood test which, though it doesn't eliminate him, fails to prove anything conclusively. Such sad cases would double and triple if it became *comme il faut* to have babies out of wedlock.) ++ Death penalty. I can see only one argument FOR it; if the perpetrator of a murder gets let off, someone who isn't too well balanced to start with, might possibly consider that he, too, can get away with it. This would be especially true of one type of juvenile, I think. ++ This is hell; I grouse because few people try to write anything other than slipshod comments, but when you do --as in the Gainsborough pieces, and "You're Terrific", I find nothing to say but "I liked it." Maybe the Egoboo poll will give me a chance?

Queen of the Air; Elinor Busby

*Salud*

I agree with you about abortions, all the way. If people don't want babies they shouldn't make them; once they've had their fun, they shouldn't deprive a perhaps useful future citizen of his right to life. There is, in this day and age, no conceivable (no pun intended) excuse for an illegitimate child, or an unwanted one; and frankly, I'd go along with permissive laws allowing a girl to be sterilized if she was too stupid or careless to avoid it, and had a second illegitimate child as a public charge --that of course would ~~wow~~

Eighteenth and LAST page of Catch Trap; I've had it for now

allow for the occasional freethinker who could manage her own life to suit herself without wedding bells. ++ I still can't see big weddings, though I suppose they're okay for people who like festivities; I don't, I dislike being center of anything unless I have something to contribute --I'm an exhibitionist and love being center stage when I'm doing something, but being main figure at a wedding would give me the fantods as much as being Chief Victim at a cannibal's banquet; I was married without fanfare in a clergyman's office and relatives, etc, were informed LATER--a fait accompli --and I have never regretted getting it all over without fuss. The only wedding I ever attended was my own; that is also the only funeral I shall ever attend. Social rituals of that kind make me physically ill.

JEAN LINARD: The connection between X-Tract and vanilla is simple; vanilla extract. Or don't you have that as a flavoring for puddings and the like in France? I owe you a long letter --please be patient. And granted, I should have caught on that Xtrap was "Extrapolation". ++ I am still squirming from the aptness of the parody Quotewort! Lovely! C'est magnifique!

BILL DANNER: Does anyone else ever buy magazines they're ashamed of? Looking for trapeze-flying pictures, I have recently bought movie magazines (for pictures of Burt Lancaster and David Nelson, both notable acrobats) and every time I do it, I squirm under the eyes of the mag seller, feeling like a sloppy stupid person --since no one else READS them!

GERTRUDE CARR: You asked once --here, or in N'apa, I forget -- why it should be so exceptional for ~~trapezists~~ trapezists to do things which "any monkey can do better". Well, Gem, one might as well ask why little girls should torture themselves to balance on their toes when any flock of cranes can create lovelier patterns of rhythm than a ballet; or why Heifetz and Maria Callas should spend years and years to master musical technique when God has endowed the race of birds with the art of creating music for the world. Flying -- and other difficult acrobatic feats -- is beautiful in itself; it displays the most beautiful pattern of a beautiful body; it demonstrates the outer limits of human achievement; and the aerialist, like the ballerina, creates, his own choreographer, something to say between himself and space, with only a fallible human body to say it with. So, to me, it is incomparably beautiful, thrilling and meaningful.

And I am sorry, Pete Graham, Ted White, F M Busby, Bjohn Trimble, and all the others I missed out, this time around. Thanks to everyone for electing me Official Editor, and especially to Rick Sneary for speaking up Amid the Opposition. (Rick, I used to play with guns too, and I'm afraid I'm going to have to stick another page on this Catch Trap just because I can't pass over MOONSHINE!)

On the 19th page of Catch Trap, I find I have something more to say to Gem Carr;

Of course I don't know yet whether my writings on circus-carnivals will be greeted with enthusiasm or disdain, Gem, but I do know why your article on a carnival roused some --not exasperation, not annoyance, but some sadness in me. Your whole attitude of what you called "frank appraisal of costumes, acts, etc" seemed to be critical -- sort of asking why in the dickens they didn't spruce up, criticizing them for not being tidier and more alert, etc. If you remember, when I referred to an act's costumes as "ragbag" I did so with a bit of curiosity as to whether the costumes had simply been assembled at the last minute, or if they had put away their better costumes for a day with less dust, and a less apathetic audience. And my appraisal of the slipshod family of riders was done, not by saying that their poor performance was insufferable, but by a quite sincere curiosity as to whether the star of the act was ill or in some way upset. ++ As I said to Phyllis above, I worked two nights in a carnival, a while ago. The first night, as it happens, I was given the "honored guest" treatment and they went out of their way to be nice; the second night, I was just one of the girls and got the picture from inside, and I liked it much better. I got no special consideration. I was working, not playing. ++ I went out with the other girls for the "Bally" --which meant that every time the talker outside reached a dead spot in his pitch, he yelled "Bally HO" and all the girls who weren't actually working at the moment grabbed their props and ran outside; in my case I snatched up the heavy iron knife blades and stood on the platform with them fanned out, deadpan, until they sent me in again. It's an alternation --like any performance --of frantic flurries of action, and long stretches of boredom, while you shift around out of the way of the ones who are performing, stand in a little group and pass around a cigarette for a puff or two apiece, or slip out behind the tent flap for a breath of un-dusty air until somebody grabs your elbow and says "You're ON!" and you walk out again, or scramble into your place. ++ And the ability to shift back and forth, I think, is what makes any performance endurable. ++The major difference then --to return --is that your frank appraisals of the show were critical and even somewhat superior; mine were loving and I suppose a trifle wistful. You seemed to be saying "I could never be like that"; I was trying to say, this is one of my beloved things, one of the homes of my heart, one of the places I feel happy, accepted, at ease.

As always, the Wild West Show is the accepted afterpiece, so we present the Fastest Gun in FAPA, Rick Sneary;

As I said on the other page, Rick, I used to play with toy guns too. One of my earliest memories -- by the time memories could be complete, coherent and verbalized -- for some reason ties in with the first circus I remember seeing. My father was, at that time, delivering the

Twentieth and absolutely farewell page of Catch Trap for 1960

mail to a number of small towns between Rensselaer and Hoosick Falls, N.Y. He had about a 4-hour layover between the trip up and the trip back, and sometimes on Saturday my brother and I would ride along. On one such occasion he took us to the Tom Mix circus during the layover. Before the show he took us both into a toy store, and my brother selected a beautiful set of leather holsters and two beautiful, pearl-handled cap pistols. Then it was my turn. I wanted the same thing. My mother tried to steer me into choosing a doll or set of dishes or some equally feminine choice, but I wanted the guns, and in an unusually indulgent mood my father said if I wanted the guns I should have the guns and nothing else whatever. (Oh yes, I loved dolls too, but this once for some reason I WANTED those guns!) ++ When Steve was first able to walk and talk I had some notion that he shouldn't play with guns. I resisted his pleas until he was about 3½, at which time, one day, at breakfast, he picked up a triangular piece of toast, pointed it at me and shouted "Bang, bang!" Whereupon I decided resistance was useless. Brad had an errand in Knox City that morning, and while he was shopping, I took Steve into a store and bought him a gun and holster set. When we returned to the car, Brad started, laughed, then handed Steve, solemnly, a flat package containing --you guessed it -- a second gun-and-holster set. From then until the middle of the third grade I doubt if I saw my son unarmed, except at school during lessons, or on the streets of town. ++ I think I approve of not making kiddy guns too realistic, though. Not only does it prevent their use in holdups, but it prevents any possibility of a kid getting to associate his toys with lethal weapons, or picking up a genuine gun thinking it's a toy, and purely in play menacing, and accidentally shooting someone (or himself) with it. ++ When I first wrote SEVEN FROM THE STARS I think among the incidents that got cut was one involving the Dvanethy shockers where a policeman mistook one for a child's toy zap-gun, refused to stop as ordered and got hurt with it. With all the beautiful kiddy-type rayguns on the markets now, an alien displaying a highly colored real zapgun might find himself being laughed at. ++ Speaking of which, did you ever see any of the instalments of the serial "The Mysterious Island" (Universal-International, Sam Katzman?) The aliens in that one, and in Captain Video in the movies, used some sort of sparkler-gun which produced a beautiful effect; does anyone know what they might have used in them? ++ I rarely played war games as a kid, and rarely played Cops and Robbers; country kids, I think, seldom do. Cowboys and Indians, of course, was a different story; Tom Mix and Tim McCoy; and so forth. ++ Steve has some guns that do shoot real bullets--soft bullet-shaped plastic pellets -- and he did have a gun that would shoot pins. I vetoed that for fear of blinding someone. ++And oh, yes; in small Texas towns the local marshal, constable or sheriff's deputy actually do wear a pistol and holster. By custom, tho, only these law enforcement officers wear guns in town, though all working cowboys carry a gun against rattlesnakes, varmints and the occasional cow with a broken leg. ++ ALL OUT AND OVER!