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For the first time in more years than most residents care to remember, New Jersey has a Republican governor, William T. Cahill. His opponent was past governor Robert Meyner, whom the New York Times referred to as an uninspiring retread. Cahill and Meyner were incapable of waging fiery debates, both had practically the same views on the important issues. Cahill could hardly cite his past record as a Senator; no one had ever heard of him before and there was frequent speculation that his nomination was due to excessive dislike for his most formidable opponent. A case of cutting off your nose to...well you know the rest.

Vice-President Agnew generously offered to personally campaign for Mr. Cahill, but strategically withdrew his support when he learned his presence was requested at the same time that statewide Vietnam protests would be observed. "They'll never get me." Spiro was heard to chuckle ruthlessly, and that was the last the Garden State saw of our distinguished Vice-President.

Instead, the Doublement Twins, David and Julie Eisenhower were impressed into service. Standing together on stage, before a crowd of eager supporters, they clearly glow, whether or not any lights are turned on them. Julie is beautiful, David is beautiful, it's impossible to say which one is the prettiest.

"Hello", says adorable Julie, "my father is Richard Nixon. He is President of the United States. I tell him how young people are thinking today. He learns a lot from me. I am a virgin. I am proud to be a virgin."

"Yes," chimes in charming David, "my name is David Eisenhower. My grandfather was Dwight D. Eisenhower. He died for your sins."

GOODBYE GALAXY and IF, HELLO AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

Since their recent sale to Universal Publishing and Distributing Corporation, GALAXY and IF have been steadily dropping in appearance, quality and control. Subscribers are the ones who are most aware of the problems. Do you subscribe? What did you think of the shredded issue of GALAXY sent to you without any wrapper whatsoever, but instead bearing an address label impudently welded to the cover? Are you an IF subscriber? How did you like receiving the October 1969 IF in the mails, thence followed by the December 1969 IF. What do you think of the cheap paper, the sloppy layouts, the crude artwork? Never mind the fact that editor Jakobsson has tried to redeem himself by offering the proper response to one of John W. Campbell's typically tasteless racial editorials. It's too late, Jake, the boat has sunk. Better start paddling yourself, if you don't want to go down with it.

AMAZING and FANTASTIC, despite Sol Cohen, are prospering precisely because Ted White is slowly turning them into readable, attractive, highly desirable publications that may achieve their highest level in their uneven history. Ted communicates with the readership, no other editor does. The editorials and features often ask, and answer personal questions. The musty reprints have all but vanished, the magazines are fresh, alive and concerned. They deserve your attention.

Unfortunately, AMAZING and FANTASTIC are not entirely free from fault. Like all the other sf magazines they suffer from poor subscription delivery. I subscribe to them all, and not once during 1969 did I receive any magazine as part of my subscription before I first saw it on the newsstand. A delay of three or four days I can understand, but these days the length of time from when the magazine first appears at the local stand, until the time I receive it can be anywhere from two weeks to a month. I can remember when promotional material for magazine subscriptions promised you would receive the publication "at least two weeks before it goes on sale at your newsstand." Well not any more brother, not any more. I haven't even mentioned the jokers over at IF who like skipping an issue to see if the readers are on their toes.

Knowing very little about the production end of a periodical, it would be hard for me to single out one party as the one responsible. An errant printer can slow delivery, the Post Office, which has never quite suffered a reputation for promptness can cause slow receipt. I suppose there must be a dozen other factors that would apply here. But I'd like to see something done about it, if at all possible. So would thousands of other subscribers.

About a year ago, pocketbook publishers began using three unit codes on the spines of their books. The first unit consisted of three digits and represented the code number of the publishing house, the second unit of five digits was a numerical list, and the final three digit unit denoted the price of the publication. My practice is to place all newly purchased pocketbooks in their order of publication, the latest arrival being put on the top of the stack and working from their. The usage of this new code posed a temporary puzzle, but once I cracked it there was no difficulty in continuing my arrangements. Every single publisher uses the middle, five-digit code to represent the chronological placement of the book. With one exception. Ace.

I asked Don Wollheim about it at the Philcon, and he explained that on Ace books, unlike the other publishers, the middle code is based on the book's title for computer usage. This explains why Andre Norton's THE ZERO STONE rests on the very top of my Ace collection while items of far more recent vintage are strewn back among the beginning of the Ace titles. And thus it becomes impossible to arrange Ace books in an exact publication order.

But then, you and I know what sort of people hungrily buy up each sf pocketbook and meticulously stow them away.

The HEICON committee reports that nominations for the "best novel" Hugos will be accepted shortly. They request that each voting member make an earnest effort to nominate no more than eight "Perry Rhodan" novels. There is also a rumor that foreign visitors to the HEICON will be given small copper spaceship charms which they are to carry with them, in full sight, at all times. These are to be worn on the shoulder or lapel and any attempts at concealment will be severely dealt with. Originally large yellow stars were considered but it was decided that the spaceships carried a more futuristic look to them.

While the haphazard numbering Ace uses, described above is a minor irritation, it has more than exonerated itself with the consistently high quality specials that appear monthly. The best bet for 1969 was Ursula K. LeGuin's THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS. She has written a stunning and dazzling novel that offers a sober examination of a single sex society, backed by a penetrating portrait of human and alien relationships. The editor of Walker Press considers her to be the most significant writer of the 1960's and he may not be far from wrong. THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS is a distinguished entry in a very notable series. It also carries the best Dillon cover I've seen, and makes them, as well as Ursula K. LeGuin, a clear contender for the Hugo.

The ST. LOUISCON proved to be an enjoyable and frequently relaxing convention, despite the numerous obstacles flung helter-skelter in our path. A week before arriving for the convention I had developed some difficulty with my asthmatic condition, which I was in the process of recuperating from as we landed at St. Louis Airport. It felt good to get off the stuffy, crowded plane and my elation lasted until I read a local newspaper and learned that the city was having a serious pollution crisis. If I had come from anywhere else I might have experienced reluctance to enter this lethal no-man's-land, but constant exposure to the elements compounded in the cauldron of New York had given my lungs a metallic consistency that screened out the puny pollution a sprawling mid-U.S. city could fling at me.

During some major program item a few people began discussing the numerous problems caused by the hotel. This came as a surprise, since we were relatively well treated, given a nice sized room with prompt maid service and had little encounters with the fumbling hotel staff. We were on the third floor and thus were rarely obliged to use the elevators, so the frustrations surrounding these devices were not experienced. We ate in the hotel as infrequently as possible and I spent half our first day locating convenient eating places within walking distance.

My impression of St. Louis itself is not the sort of opinion that will cheer the Chamber of Commerce. It's a large town, with a small respectable section and a much larger ghetto area that can easily stand beside the most hideous slums that Newark or New York can come up with. The new area by the river is attractive, the Arch is picturesque and must sell plenty of post cards, but seems terribly out of place and functionless. The shopping district had some inviting shops, the public transportation system is efficiently managed, the people are friendly but not overly gracious and can at times become quite hostile when confronted with someone not wearing the traditional garb of middle-class America. It's not a hick town but it's the nearest thing to that. The heat and humidity was oppressive (although I must admit that the hotel and buses had excellent air-conditioning facilities, far better than I had ever expected to find) lending an additional degree of lethargy to the normally slow activities of the natives. People took their time, were rarely aroused to any emotion. The cars all had a similar weather-beaten look to them, most had American flags and "Support your Local Police" stickers. None of the natives really seemed too aware of what was going on elsewhere. 'So there's a war being fought two thousand miles away; it's our war and a good one and we're bound to win', that was the unspoken prevailing attitude. Blacks were recognized but ruefully looked upon as one of the curses of big city living. I'm sure that given half the chance, most of the city dwellers would have been overjoyed to move to a big farm somewhere, where they could manage the land themselves and not have to worry about folk stepping out of their place. When some of the more shaggy looking con attendees strolled around you could see the distrustful, venomous stares they attracted. Everyone was suspicious of them, although nobody could really say why. They just looked different. It was reason enough.

I could never adjust to a town like this. This feeling of inactivity extends into every location. Eating places were dry, dreary and lifeless, the few tourist attractions were conducted by monotoned, scarcely human-looking robots who dutifully shuffled the gawking tourist through his paces. There was some night-life I had been told, although I couldn't find out what it was. A checkers-match, bingo, amateur night? Take your pick. The most erotic movie in town was "I A Woman, Part 2". The local Burlesque House was closed for the summer (during the winter and fall the girls did snaky dances in cumbersome Mother Hubbards and closed the evening of titillation by a hasty glimpse of their bare knees). PLAYBOY was sold under the counter by a few daring newsdealers risking the possibility of a full scale bust and twenty years at hard labor shucking corn. Everywhere you looked, the place was crawling with The Silent Majority.

Amen, to St. Louis. I've been there once, I saw what it was like and I can't think of anything short of another worldcon that could drag me back there.

Another sure cause of increased frustration among sf collectors is the way pocket-books prices are drastically jockeying higher and higher each month. The average pocket-book now costs .75 and it's likely that this will go up to \$1.00 in a few years to come. If you look hard you may find some books selling for .60, but this require a diligent and patient search. Reprints of best-sellers now cost about \$1.50 in an inexpensive paper edition. These are no different from the .50 reprints or ten years ago, in either size or quality; the covers still fall off if you accidentally spread the book open too wide. The only detectable change is that now the original four letter words are being used, instead of transparent substitutes.

All this makes me feel terribly old, since I can remember spending .35 for Ace Doubles and .25 for companion singles. I can recall my annoyance with Ballantine when they began issuing their novels for .50 instead of .35. I don't buy hardcovers and have had little contact with them, but an average purchase price of \$4.95 to \$5.95 for a single, undistinguished novel, with splotchy cover and imperfect binding also appears to be in the realm of the exorbitant. What the solution is can be anyone's guess. If and when inflation is conquered I expect the prices will level off but I'm sure there's no chance of a decrease. We may yet reach the stage when pocketbook buying is limited to the very rich, and hardcovers are unobtainable by any but the upper 1% of society.

A few astute fanzine readers may have noticed my name appearing just a little more frequently than it has in past years. I've always felt impelled to respond in some way to a fanzine editor who was good enough to send me a copy of his zine, no matter what the condition of the publication. To reply with money each time could severely cripple my finances and a good deal of the time it isn't even appreciated. Fan-editors want active response, not the cold acknowledgement of a quarter or two. Well fine, I would try to write letters in reply, but back about 1962 I suddenly discovered I was having trouble expressing myself in those letters, and the following year began to develop a phobia towards writing anything. I could not bring myself to type out anything longer than a paragraph or two of a LoC, before whatever forces controlling the body chemistry forced me to rip the sheet out of the typewriter carriage and discard it. I soon found myself unable to sit comfortably in the same room with my typewriter. I'd stare at it for a moment, begin to fidget, mentally picture an army of nimble fingers clacking away at the keys, and hastily bolt from the room. Occasionally I could scrawl a few lines of thanks but that's as far as I got before the withdrawal syndrome took over.

As a result, fewer and fewer people sent me fanzines. I enjoyed receiving and reading them but my failure to respond was interpreted as a haughty dismissal. I did receive enough of the key publications to keep in contact with what was transpiring in fandom, but I did nothing to contribute to it. A few people wondered what had become of me, and I really couldn't tell them. I was still there, interested as ever, but unable to respond.

At conventions I would watch in awe as a new era of fans entered. SHAGGY was revived by a group of LASFans who produced an attractive and pungent fanzine, but it was nothing like the old SHAGGY of the late 50's and early 60's. It made me feel even more isolated. At one convention the N3F took a matronly attitude and invited me to join and learn all about fandom. I thanked them and told them I wasn't quite ready for it yet. They grudgingly accepted this, but for a month afterwards I kept a watchful vigil about my mail-box.

Then, about a year and a half ago I decided to cold turkey it. I sat myself down at the typewriter, attached the clamps and leg shackles so I could not seek refuge elsewhere. And I forced myself to write a letter of comment to a fanzine. I sweated a page an half and when I was through I read it through and felt like burning it, but mailed it off anyway. Little by little more fanzines arrived. I tried to respond to each one and I found that after a while it wasn't quite as difficult as it had always been. And that's where I stand now. Occasionally fanzines arrive and when they do I try to respond. I have no illusions about the crudity of my missives, nor do I have any desire to shake loose Harry Warner's title of Most Prolific Letter-hack. I'm merely trying to thank some generous people.

MAILING COMMENTS

A PROPOS DE RIEN #129

In the middle of page 3, you refer rather generally to "atrocities". You possess a keen prophetic mind. As I write this a domestic and an international atrocity are creating headlines. The domestic incident is the notorious Hollywood killings, which have just been solved with the arrest of a number of members of a nomadic, amoral "hippie" group lead by a Svengali-like leader. At least the newspapers persist in referring to them as "hippies" taking a very obvious delight in maligning the true hippies who have as much hatred for these sadistic killers as the more vocal squares do. The explanation of these crimes is as unexpected as any detective story could be. When they first occurred the police investigated every sort of connection the victims could have with their murderers, coming up with some flatly bizarre situation, but hardly anyone proposed the theory that the parties might have been strangers, and no one suggested that the murders could have been committed because of hatred for the house.

Internationally, the Song My slaughter has provoked several investigations, including L. Mendel Rivers' comic expostulation that nothing would be covered up in this matter, and then solemnly announcing after a week of investigations that he didn't believe any such massacre had ever taken place. Almost as amusing was the reaction of a local Southern Cracker Senator, representing the home state of the young man charged with directing the killing. The Senator felt the poor boy shouldn't be prosecuted for making a little mistake.

The "little mistake" referred to followed on the heels of the Green Beret scandal, when the public was shocked to learn that these John Wayne heroes were doing double time as a branch of Murder, Inc. for the C.I.A. I guess it proves you can't trust anyone these days.

Andy Main was at the BAYCON and indicated to me that he expected to do a little traveling cross-country but was uncertain as to any definite destination. I got the impression that he had left Canada and resumed living in the States. I didn't see him at the St. Louiscon. I agree, he'll be missed.

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS #2

Odd that you condemn "The Group" but admit to liking "Valley of the Dolls". I've read neither (nor seen the quick buck flicks based on them) but had assumed that "The Group" was written with some attempt at sensitivity and quality, while "Valley of the Dolls" was an ineptly written sensational novel. Authoress Sussann (not the correct spelling, but close) has been maintaining a running feud with Truman Capote that has resulted in some delightful spiteful exchanges. Capote maintains that she is a "literary virgin" and looks like "a truck driver in drag". In reply to Johnny Carson's question about how she liked Truman, she replied that she thought he was a fine president. If the novel "Where Eagles Dare" was anything like the film, it must have been a roaringly funny comedy.

FUTURIAN COMMENTATOR

The Roscoe Karns series was telecast Sunday nights at 9:00, he played detective Rocky King and consumed a great deal of time arguing over the phone with his unseen wife Mabel. Would you have any idea how long ago this was? It was all done live, so it must have been a loo--ong time ago. Remember "Man Against Crime" with Ralph Bellamy as Mike Barnett stalking through immense doors that looked like packs of Camels? Remember Ripley's "Believe it or Not" with the Ballantine jingle about the 3 ring sign? Remember "Lights Out" and whats-his-name's reflecting bald pate? Remember "Star Trek"?

I've always enjoyed the Carr-Wollheim "Year's Best" collections, one reason being that they select more stories that are at least sf in the sense that we know it, never mind trying to concoct some definition for it, as opposed to Judith Merrill's broad acceptance of sf as "Speculative Fiction", which has resulted in some highly questionable choices. Since there is little readable science fiction published outside the United States, the emphasis on stateside stories should be understandable.

#### KIM CHI #15

Speaking of "I am Curious (Yellow)", you may be interested in learning that a New Jersey judge has publicly declared that he thought the film was tasteless and boring, but refused to issue an injunction banning showing of the film, which was sought by the usual meddling guardians of public morals. Critic Judith Crist said that if the initial reaction had been avoided the picture might have lasted a short time at a few out of the way art houses before disappearing. But now that it has become a handy forum for public discussion people everywhere are rushing to see it.

Your basic dish "gunk" may not be limited to your own table. I know at least 3 other families who have created some marvelous "gunk" dishes in their time. It gives one the opportunity to express any creative talents he may have, and it's kind of fun to stare at the results, after the ingredients have been properly combined, and wonder who's going to have the never to take the first bite.

#### POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK

rich ol' man, you take Sappy Spiro too seriously. Give him the benefit of the doubt, don't forthrightly assume that he has any idea what he's talking about. Let your sense of humor guide your thoughts. Recognize that he is subordinate to a president who ran on a platform of unification, doing his damndest to split the country apart, with the under-30 liberals on one side, the hardline, old-fashioned "Silent Majority" on the other. I sometimes wonder if he even believes most of the things he says, if Spiro doesn't walk around muttering "Christ, what an imagination I've got".

The pot/cigarette argument might be nutshellled to read: Legalized pot would sharply cut into the sales of cigarettes, tobacco is a southern product, our President has his heart in the ol' Southland. Example, look at the favor granted sugar growers, also Southern situated, by yanking cyclamates off the market. The sugar industry had been hurt by the increase in diet beverages. "Yuh gotta save us, son," beleaguered Southern colonels cried, as they sipped their mint juleps, whipped their slaves, and inspected their white sheets with an eye toward the eradication of any stains that prevented said sheets from being intensely lily-white. "Yes Massah", Dicky responded. Thus the cancer scare was born, although a human being could not conceivably devour enough cyclamates to develop the cancer the rats were getting. Thus the sugar industry was saved, the hero of the Old South once again had answered the call of the land, and peace and tranquility reigned as farm subsidies grew, slave whupping became an art, and the hasty ol' cancer-producing cyclamates were banned. Why, you may inquire, is not cancer-producing tobacco also given the same treatment? Answer, as I said above, tobacco is a Southern product.

As I remarked elsewhere, I'd rather be looked in a room with a person on LSD than a drunk. But I think it's a good thing the way drugs, alcohol, etc.etc. have dominated much fanzine discussion lately. I'm very dubious about some figures cited recently stating that a large majority of fandom has been on acid. It's too much like a lead-in line to an article on the subject, and seems the result of a few isolated experiences at a con or a drug inclined fan group. Other than this, it's surprising about the amount of responsible discussion about the subject, frequently based on personal experience.

THE VINEGAR WORM Vol. 2 No. #12

You would be surprised at the number of decent, respectable, fully responsible individuals whose only vice in life is a fondness for "rattle and rock" music. Most of them blend in perfectly with normal citizenry, and were it not for a guilty admission you would never know of their sins. I think, however, you fail to differentiate between the bubblegum music directed specifically towards the teen and sub-teen set, with its jarring emphasis on beat, noise, and teen-oriented lyrics, and definitive hard rock, which is regularly reviewed in such square periodicals as LIFE, NEWSWEEK and TIME.

Insurance companies can be bitches, but not all of them are this way. A friend of mine, an sf collector (and IF contributor) used to store a sizeable collection in the basement of his home. This proved to be an adequate and practical storage area, until one evening the hot water cooler developed a leak and sprayed the basement floor with several inches of water. Nearly half of his collection was totally ruined, soaked and water logged, and at least a third more was so soggy that he eventually had to discard that too. His parents had Homeowners Insurance, and immediately summoned the adjustor. The man arrived the next day, was shown the ruined magazines (he knew nothing about sf) asked what the value was, Bob named a figure of several hundred dollars, and then and there proceeded to write out a check for the precise amount cited.

I've worked in the insurance business for nine years, and you'd be surprised at the number of unpleasant, cantankerous agents there are, and these are persons who make their living dealing with other people, usually strangers to whom a first impression is vital. Many of them make fortunes in commissions annually, and I've often wondered how when they are basically unequipped to deal with others.

"Colorless" is a good way of describing Hubin. His reviews would seem mediocre even if you did not have Boucher's past columns to use as comparisons. I don't know why The Time staff selected him when it seems likely there were worthier choices available. The last time The Time grudgingly consented to acknowledge the existence of sf was when they reviewed Brunner's "Stand on Zanzibar". They didn't like it. Closer to home, the local Newark paper recently ran a review of a new Bob Silverberg novel in its Sunday section. The reviewer liked the novel but it was not the sort of review that's especially helpful to the field. He began one paragraph by stating "Unlike most science fiction, this book is well written..." which means he's never read anything by Roger Zelazny, Samuel R. Delany, Isaac Asimov, Bob Silverberg, Ursula Le Guin, Jack Vance, Henry Kuttner, or you name him. It's regrettable that an uninformed reviewer like this should have such influential power over the book-buying public.

The Post Office is getting progressively worse in its attention towards such insignificant details as mail delivery within a reasonable time. Have you tried prayer.

HORIZONS Vol. 31 No. 1

I would not call the new sex newspapers as being products of the underground press. The underground press prints material for those circulating within the underground, not for the more "enlightened" people on the surface. THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER and the L.A. FREE PRESS are properly underground items, since their appeal is with the hippy/bohemian/beat class, as well as a few outsiders who drool over the dirty pitchers. But the sex papers have caught the eye of everyone from the white collar office worker to the unionized construction man. It would be hard to consider these folk to be members of the underground, and yet they continue to buy SCREW, PLEASURE, etc.etc., in such numbers and with such enthusiasm that most have raised their prices, and a new one appears almost on a weekly basis. They've been busted several times, and this has only served to get them into the newspaper stories, thereby informing more potential readers of their presence and pushing circulation up another few thousand customers.

Kim Darby has another picture out titled GENERATION which you might care to look into. I don't think she appears quite as boyish as she was in TRUE GRIT.

The letters were all of interest, please continue this practice. Publication of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS may be the only way to attract long gaffiated former fans.

I'm afraid I can't follow your enthusiasm for Kim Darby, but I'll keep trying.

#### SERCON'S BANE 42

Perhaps the constant growth of Worldcons will require hotel dorm type arrangements at some future point, when the available hotels are exhausted, and there is no desire to use some mammoth hotel with mammoth prices.

Have you ever noticed that whether or not you are guilty of a punishable act, if you act guilty the police are likely to infer that this is an admission of guilt and attempt to apprehend you with the same care given to fleeing murderers? If you look nervous, flustered and suddenly make a bolt for freedom the consequences were largely caused by your own behaviour. If, however you keep your cool and restrain any thoughts of flight until the ideal moment presents itself, you are more likely to safely elude your pursuers. So no more excuses now.

I would be curious as to why someone would want to sell me car after 2 or 3 years, and be more than a little reluctant to invest in one. After 2 or 3 years you generally finish paying it off and this is the time to experience the delirium of knowing that it's truly yours. Most of the time it's worth it. I would hate to trade it in after this time, knowing all the trouble I went through to keep the payments current. It's like selling a house the day you satisfy the mortgage.

I think most people are pretty tired of the Ed Martin affair. It's been nearly ten years since this caper occurred, by now I wouldn't be surprised if Martin himself had forgotten the particulars, and just chose to regard FAPA with a general mood of gloom and rejection, without really being sure why. One of these days Harry will have to run an article for the newer members explaining it.

Milt Rothman was present at the Philcon, this past November 1969, and I understand he frequently attends, although he has otherwise no contact with fandom. Peter Vorzimer was also reported on hand very briefly, and one person who did circulate most of the time anonymously was Leslie F. Stone, who used to write for the Gernsback magazines in her teens. Today she's a stately but lively woman in her late fifties. It would be interesting if someone could uncover the whereabouts of a lot of these old, vanished names, both fan and pro. We nearly had the original publisher of WEIRD TALES down at an ESFA meeting once, but the threat of an imminent snowstorm which failed to materialize forced him to cancel his trip.

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Other FAPazines were read and enjoyed but provoke no particular comment at this time. I can't close, however, without citing both of William Rotsler's fanzines which I enjoyed immensely. That's one of the joys of belonging to a group like FAPA; every once in awhile such gems will appear. Until the day that Rotsler-films start appearing on television....