

From Sunday to Saturday ---

For Apa L (after a rather long lapse) and various other people, from Don Fitch, 3908 Frijo, Covina. HFP #NS 25  
Wednesday, 19 Jan. 1966: Gerber's Law puts it plainly enough: "The only way to Catch Up with mailing comments is to begin with the most recent material and work backwards as far as time & space permit -- if you start where you left off, you're Lost." This being so obviously an accurate observation, comments on Apa L #65 follow here -- after a paragraph of personal-type chitter-chatter.

With a promotional exam for Nurseryman coming up soon, I've been devoting several evenings per week to professional-type reading. (I don't expect to do more than just barely pass, nor to accept the position -- elsewhere than the Arboretum -- if it's offered to me, but the practice is useful, the topic interesting, and a good showing might be profitable in impressing the Front Office). And I've gotten off on a Chaucer kick, which generally has taken up the evening usually given over to writing for Apa L -- Distribution comments for the past month simply haven't managed to get beyond the rough note stage. There's world enough, but not time.

Jim Schumacher

Jim Keith : You might not realize this for a while, since you're both named Jim, but people in the LASFS are going to confuse you with each other, much as they did Fred Patten and Ed Baker for months after they joined (at about the same time). We don't seem to be equipped to cope with two new active fans at once.

It's always interesting, when new fans come on the scene, to try to predict how they'll turn out. I wouldn't try this with either of you yet, since you've given only a vague hint of your interests, personality, and potential talents. So far, however, it is possible to say that neither of you has given any striking contra-indication; it's still possible to hope that one or both of the Jims will develop into a Great (or Valuable, or Something) Fan Writer. It's also (\*Sigh\*) possible to expect that you'll go through some annoying and almost-unbearable phases in the next few years, but with luck and a little patience we'll all survive.

(Schumacher): The image "An ebony bird streaked / With innumerable hues" is jarring at first, until one thinks of the phenomenon of iridescence -- but even then it still jars just a little, because ebony does not have that quality. The rest of the poem (except for "Its 182 thousand and 500th day") is competent, but seems more like verse than poetry because (to me, that is) it does not go beyond the surface meaning. Are you sure you couldn't have done it as well in prose?

"Fandom...another of those facets of the Real World" : Bravo! There are, of course, people who sink into their job, their family, or some hobby (even unto fandom) as an escape, maybe ... not so much from Reality, because each of these things is Real, but rather, perhaps, as a means of avoiding facing the vast and awesome breadth of Reality; it's so much easier to take one little segment of it and build a protective wall around ten miles of fertile ground. Unfortunately, such walls have two sides; they keep things in, as well as out. But that's beside the point. People to whom Fandom is All are a perennially interesting psychological study, and serve to allow many of us to feel comfortably Superior, but I suspect that they are less common than one might think; for the most part we know other fans only in the context of this microcosm -- through club meetings, fanzines, conventions, &cet -- and this gives us a biased picture. Of course, many of us spend more time on fandom than we ought -- or more than we think we ought -- but as you say, it is enjoyable.

That neither you nor Len can "find a meaning for life other than life itself" does not seem to me to prove either that there isn't any, or that your minds are too small to grasp it. It may prove that one of the two is the case, but not which one.

Dave Van Arnham: After three readings, I still fail to get more than a few images from your poem --not enough for it to communicate enough to me to make it a really poem. Maybe it's too full of literary or some other references with which I'm not familiar, or maybe it's just Too Personal. This latter seems the most likely; it's one of the Great Traps for poets, and might be the reason for your indecision regarding its completeness. Come to think on't, this may be the reason behind the supposed inability of writers to criticise their own work; it must be extremely difficult to remove the filters of one's own; utterly personal, vision, and look upon it as an outsider would.

Tom Dupree: It could be "pretty silly to comment on a distribution which is 3 or 4 weeks old", but it's certainly not silly to comment on an idea that's 3 or 4 weeks (or centuries) old. If some topic you find to be of much interest crops up, it might be worth chancing the risk of duplicating someone else's comment, or coming out with an idea someone has already pretty well blasted.

Fred Patten: It doesn't seem that Jim Wright is Putting People On, exactly, but neither does it appear that he's really a malicious troublemaker -- more like a Misguided Idealist. He seems to think that our socio-economic system is extremely faulty, and that socialism/communism would be a Great Improvement (or The Answer). Further, he seems to have the Strange Idea that is is -- or that it ought to be -- perfectly all right for a person to say/write things like that in this country today. I kinda hope he's right on that last point.

Ruth Berman: I read and enjoyed lots of Dickens while in High School, though I'd not say that this was Representative of high-school reader's tastes. He usually told a rousing-good story -- though at a leisurely pace -- and painted with large strokes in bright colors, as it were. His Characters were particularly fascinating and are probably what made him so easy to read -- aside from being easily-recognized near-cartoons, they were clearly intended to be outré and hence were not so strange and incomprehensible to a 20th-Century child as were the "realistic" characters of other Victorian novelists.

For the most part (aside from Pickwick) I've not re-read Dickens work for many years, which is Bad because by now there's probably a great deal more there to be discovered and savoured.

By the way, Ruth, what is International House like? I couldn't afford to stay there (on the G.I. Bill) and somehow never even visited the place, probably because the two people I know who were staying there were ...um...Pretentious types.

Mike Klassen: "AHA!," I thought, "Mike Klassen is writing on Japanese mythology-- a subject I know something about -- I shall be able to criticize his paper into little tiny shreds." Unfortunately, I can detect no gross errors, and must descend to remarking that it sounds rather pedantic -- as is only proper in a paper written, presumably, for an Anthro. class. It might be noted, however, that the early dominance of the Yamato race (linguistic and physical differences are great enough to make it something more than a "clan") did not entirely wipe out other mythologies (also mostly theogonic) which survived in part, and are only now being discovered; unfortunately most of the researches are not translated & I have only the vaguest idea of their nature.

A two-page limit? Yes, despite more pages of notes. Apa L's interesting again.