Retirement somehow seems closer when I contemplate the fact that I'll need to publish only fifteen more issues of Horizons after this one as a slave to wages, assuming that death, incapacity, firing, layoff, or sudden fit of disgust fail to strike off my shackles earlier. So this is volume 40, number 2, FAPA number 151, whole number 156, aka the February, 1979, edition. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., still cuts the stencils for the Coulsons to run off.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: It was like the good old days when the November mailing arrived before Thanksgiving instead of shortly before Christmas. Even the postal people seemed to cooperate, delivering it from across the continent just a week after the date imprinted on the postmark. '' The official editor's message should increase the accuracy of some future index to FAPA mailings, by its reference to the use of offset in the official organ this time. It's very difficult to determine the difference between first-rate stencil duplicating and offset nowadays, and sometimes Xeroxing can be confused with either, to the future discomfiture of those who want to list the reproduction method in indexes. Fantasy Commentator: Here is additional and welcome confirmation of the theory that all the good old fanzines of the past are destined to return to existence, sooner or later. The only thing I find lacking in this issue is a letter section, which would have been sort of fannish with its comments on the last previous issue more than a quarter-century ago. '' It's been a long time since I read anything by Olaf Stapledon. I plowed through his most famous books with considerable difficulty because I didn't understand a great deal of their contents. Maybe I would react differently today. But those first readings gave me the impression that Stapledon was the ultimate development of the sort of writer who is normally ridiculed today for the habits he adopted in the early prozines: interminable lectures to the readers, no genuine characters but rather types to carry on whatever action occurred, civilizations wiped out efficiently and tidily in a few pages, and so on. I didn't consider that sort of story-telling as terrible as most modern critics do. But it's strange that Stapledon isn't condemned today for this kind of writing by the same modern critics. '' All this analysis of the legal standing of Lovecraft's literary estate fails to mention what may have been the most important influence on how things happened. Who could have imagined in the middle 1930's after HPL's death that his writings would ever have any financial or prestige value? Reprinting from pulp magazines was virtually non-existent, first rights to the fiction had sold for the most part to the lowest-paying newsstand markets, and the best that anyone could logically have hoped for was labor-of-love publication like the first Arkham House volume. In that atmosphere, why should attorneys and agents have made any real effort to settle legal rights once and for all, renew copyrights, and so on? '' I haven't seen the Knight book. I borrowed Pohl's similar volume from the public library and returned it after looking over only a few pages. I couldn't get myself interested in the politics and politicking of the Futurians in 1978, any more than I could when they filled their fanzines with such matters four decades earlier. It seems a shame that two books like these should be

published for a general audience about the same fan group, and none about other fan groups. Los Angeles fandom was certainly more colorful and exciting, and British fandom had a more potent and lasting effect on the professional science fiction field. Horizons: Newspaper training showed up again when I vainly hoped that I'd gotten correct the name of Martha Davis. '' And since cutting the stencils for the November Horizons, I've looked more closely at the Cavalleria libretto. I'd dropped the snide remark about the early corn crop from a glance at the English translation. The Italian original seems to be a bit ambiguous, but I think it has reference to wheat, which would certainly be more likely to be clearly visible in Sicily around Easter time. Fandom needs to be taken over by the Mafia, so problems like this can be settled authoritatively. Mumble Gutter: I can appreciate Tim's concern the day the policemen paid their visit to his school. I felt much the same way the time I had a near-complete file of Psychotic spread out across the long record cabinet and a man from the FBI dropped by. All he wanted was my opinion on the character of a former neighbor whose new job required security clearance, but I wondered for quite a while if that was the real reason for the visit. I've also had experience with nerves-created illness. I woke on the day I was to deliver my Noreascon fa guest of honor speech with a very real heavy cold: running nose, phlegm in the throat, a 25 decibel or so reduction in vocal output, and so on. An hour after I'd survived delivering the talk, the cold was completely gone. (To this day, I've never listened to that part of the Noreason highlights lp set, fearing that to hear it might reinfect me.) '' If marijuana is entirely harmless, that is the best reason for keeping it illegal. A lot of users, probably the majority of them, smoke the stuff because they want to break the law as a symbol of revolt, just as their parents carried hip flasks during the Prohibition era, unless it was their grandparents who did so. If marijuana should be legalized most of those users-to-defy would turn to something that remained illegal, and they would suffer greater harm, in all probability, from whatever other drug came into sudden popularity. Flossy: How long has it been since fans used women's given names or nicknames as nicknames for fanzines? I wouldn't revive the old custom if I were younger and stronger and felt able to stencil Mike's title. '' I doubt very much if Mike is second to me in loc output in recent years. Some awful machination of destiny causes more and more references to me as the most prolific lochack to appear as I produce fewer and fewer locs. However, I do suspect that I've spent as much time on fan history research and writing over the years as Mike has devoted to going to cons, so we might be approximately even in the amount of competition our loc habits have from other sorts of fanac. '' Mike is doing the same thing so many fan writers are doing nowadays when he writes about cons. More and more frequently, conreports are sprinkled with references to individuals who are mentioned only by first name, at the very time that fandom is growing ever larger and the number of fans possessing each of those given names is inflating. So it gets harder and harder for the person who wasn't there to be certain about which individuals are meant. Whodunit?: I've finally acquired a complete set of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Maybe I'll have read most or all of them by the next mailing and will be in a position to appreciate more fully all the Doyle-Holmes material that keeps bobbing up in FAPA. For that matter, I've been showing an ominous increase in interest in the

whole mystery-detective-suspense fiction field. I happened across a half-ton of Detective Book Club three-packs from the 1940's and 1950's dirt cheap and I don't want to read anything nowadays but those books. It makes me wonder if I wouldn't be happier to shift for a while, at least, to mystery fandom where I could recapture the excitements of being a neofan, where I wouldn't have the sensation that I've experienced everything fandom has to offer, where I would get to know lots of fans who seem very nice from the slight knowledge I have of them. '' It's surprising to see the date of 1927 on that film interview with Sir Arthur. Sound was just beginning to mate with moving pictures in that year. It must have been one of the earliest short subjects with a soundtrack, if the date is right. The Speed of Dark: My dislike for the whole concept of the computer is too great to permit me ever to play games with the help of one of that breed. Nevertheless, I find myself astonished at Mike Glyer's fully detailed account of his experience. Can the entire game-playing procedure be played back so it can serve as a memory guide for a fan who wants to write a long article about it, or did Mike hook an electric typewriter with a stencil into it into the computer so it would write the article for him, or does he have total recall? '' But the Constitution has been amended from time totime to adjust to changing times and attitudes. My belief is that it shouldn't be reinterpreted by the whim of a few attorneys every few years without the formality of amendment. I'm particularly worried about the way the Constitution has been interpreted in recent years as a tool for preventing law enforcement. Obviously, cruel and unusual punishment meant something to the founding fathers which has no connection with the conclusions that are drawn today by the Supreme Court. '' I've stopped filling out forms about favorites on an all-time basis. If someone asks me what books I've enjoyed the most in the past three months, I can give a sensible answer. But I can't remember how much I enjoyed books I read ten or forty years ago, so how can I compare those reactions to the way I feel about a book I've just enjoyed immensely? If I'm asked to vote on the best science fiction of the past year, the situation is even more impossible. How many people who nominate for Hugo awards actually read most of the new science fiction published in the year? It's becoming like the football and basketball polls, in which sports writers who see perhaps one per cent of the major college squads in a season decide which teams and players are the best in the land. (Comparative scores, won-lost records, and performance statistics can be used as guides, but a computer would be more efficient than a sports writer in this kind of judgment. A dozen years ago, Southern California finished higher than Notre Dame in the AP poll to determine the top ten teams in the nation at the end of the football season. Neither of those teams played in a bowl game. The AP took another poll after the bowl games and this time Notre Dame finished ahead of Southern California. So much for the reasoned decisions of sports writers.) The NASAchist: Maybe I'm the only fan who got angry with the Iguanacon committee without belonging to the con or even contemplating attending it. They asked me to write a series of articles on fan history for the progress reports. I did, once or twice after learning a deadline was much earlier than expected. Once I supplied another copy of an article after they lost the original. After all that work, I had a terrible time getting the one copy of each PR containing my material, all I asked as recompense. '' Now that we seem to have disposed of the belief that

no prozine story predicted people on Earth watching the first Moon landing on television, it might be time to contemplate something else. Was there ever a science fiction story in which mankind's first exploration of the outer areas of the Solar System was almost ignored by the newspapers and broadcasters? I learn more from one of these JPL publications than I do from scanning newspapers for a couple of months in search of the occasional two-paragraph dispatch about recent progress of a space probe. The media seem interested in space exploration only when something seems to have gone wrong, not when everything is going so right that unprecedented things are being accomplished. The most charming thing about the material in this issue is the fact that sounds of the probe in the general vicinity of Jupiter have been transmitted by one experiment. So much for those who complain about low-budget films whose soundtracks include noises made by various things in airless space. Damballa: Full agreement with Chuck's griping about bad words in fanzines. I find them annoying for much the same reason that I dislike overuse of exclamation points after most sentences, or the habit of capitalizing words the writer thinks need emphasis. The shock value is lost and it's hard to find something that will serve when a shock is really in order. '' Did Chuck ever give the answer to his last photo quiz? I don't remember reading if I was right in suspecting Superfan as the mystery person. '' For about four months, I've struggled with my economy efforts. The cause is a Sony TC-353D in the window of a store in Chambersburg, Pa., the old home town. My old Wollensak is wearing out, I want a reel-to-reel replacement, I'm afraid if I wait much longer to buy there might not be anything available except the semi-pro stuff whose extra performance qualities I don't really need, but I've been hoping that the store will cut the price after Christmas . The Sony has the 1 7/8 ips speed which I want for the Sunday evening golden age radio programming offered by one Washington FM station, and for taping baseball games when I must be away from the house three or four hours. '' Maybe there is theological significance in the short reigns of liberal Popes. God might be demonstrating that Catholic dogma shouldn't be watered down for the sake of better audience ratings. '' I can think of another old song whose author seems to betray lack of familiarity with the subject matter. "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" might have had a mapleor one of several other two-syllable tree names in its first line and title, if the poet had realized the quite modest amount of shade that apple trees normally create. '' I wonder if any other FAPA oldtimers were reminded somehow of En Garde by the cover on this issue? The artistic style isn't too similar, the ink is black instead of the colors that Al Ashley's fanzine used, but somehow the general impression is similar. The Great Australian Novel: I don't know how serious John Bartley McPharlin may be and how much he's simply trying to analyze the components of these long multi-generation novels. But I don't see why his general plot and characters couldn't be transformed into a big-selling novel, provided that the fad for such books hasn't vanished by the time he has the manuscript complete. Of course, there's also the danger that an entirely different set of sensational forms of behavior will be popular then instead of such things as drugs, neonazis and inhumane prison conditions. Quantum Sufficit: I recently bought a small stack of early Avon paperbacks in the magazine-size format John Foyster mentions. These were collections of short stories by big name mundane authors. But I seem to remember that the

same format was used rather extensively by Avon and possibly other lines for a few years for detective novels. I've been doing some other buying of early paperbacks at second-hand sources for a totally irrational reason. I'm acquiring all the earliest Pocket Book releases I can find in their original covers, prices and numbers (I don't mind if it's a comparatively late printing, as long as the general appearance is unchanged). I own some of these books in other editions, I'm not interested in the contents of some of them, but I'm buying them simply because I wanted them so badly when they were first released and money was too scarce for me to buy more than a selected few of those 25¢ paperbacks. One curious thing is the fact that these early releases are often in excellent condition when they emerge in a Goodwill Industries shop or a yard sale. Apparently the custom of treating cheap books roughly hadn't evolved when they were new and they were treated with the same care as an expensive hardbound volume. One problem is the fact that the cellophane-like substance that was affixed to the covers of those first releases is almost always missing by now. It must have lost its adhesive capacity as the years passed. Shelf Life: There's occasional confusion in Hagerstown ever box numbers on local mail, because the newspapers here maintain "boxes" as addresses for people who don't want to publish a street address or telephone number in classified ads. This also seems to be a service offered in a few big cities by enterprising individuals. I seem to remember that someone in Seattle operated a box service which was patronized by several fans in the 1960's. Mutterings from the Teapot: Fandom is a rebel-type culture. So if 75 per cent of Australians live in cities, fans might be more interested in stuff about rural areas, simply because it's off the beaten paths. Australian fanzines have given me an impression that rural areas on that continent are marvelously like the United States countryside a half-century ago when I was just becoming aware of the fact that there was something beyond the city limits of Hagerstown where I'd spent almost all my days in our autoless family. The Tiger Is Loose: A specialist in prehistoric Indians has been working in this county. His talks seem to indicate that human habitation in this area can be traced back 12,000 years. What puzzles me is not the origin of North American Indians, but why they seem to have begun emerging from cave man-style life into something approaching civilization at much the same time that civilizations began to appear in Europe and Asia after so many millenia of almost unchanged human behavior. Synapse: Maybe water is cheaper near deserts. I pay $6.90 for it every three months, whether I use a thousand or five thousand gallons.'' If Speer's nitpicking is meant for the future, when will it start to take effect? He's been doing it in FAPA for some forty years. I'm sure my own typography is worse now than it was when I put out my first FAPAzines. Grennell and Burbee come to mind as other long-term members who seem more careless in their typing than they used to be. I think the typical Zpeerzine nowadays devotes more space to nitpicking than early issues of Sustaining Program did, so the number of things he objects to in modern FAPA mailings must be greater than formerly. I can't be sure if I'm growing less patient with old age or if the nitpicking has become too dull to endure, but again I was unable to finish reading an issue of Synapse. This time I bogged down in the comments on Tim Marion's invention of the adverb. I wonder if Juffus has the guts to nitpick an equal amount with the way his neighbors and fellow attorneys express themselves in conversation?

Hagerstown Journal (Slightly Shopworn)

I'km holding to my determination not to write for Horizons any more of the stuff I used to publishm under that title. But it occurred to me that I might please the two or three FAPA members who lamented its absence by swiping some of the stuff I write for the local newspapers. Most of it has already been published in an edition of more than 40,000 copies so a few more readers won't hurt. I've tried to choose columns that aren't too dependent on local residency for comprehension. I won't rewrite anything in them to suit better the fannish audience, although I'm correcting a few typographical errors while undoubtedly inventing some new ones in the stenciling. I'll also make an effort to maintain the ratio which I'm supposed to hold in my journalism: about sixty per cent about the present, the rest about the past.

Fanzines have been publishing a lot of material about old movies, but I doubt if any of these nostalgia pieces has emphasized the particular film I wrote about in mid-1977:

Fifty years ago, the Colonial Theater had sensational attendance for three consecutive days. Crowds flocked to see a Hollywood feature about the Civil War which had Washington County as its setting and included some footage actually shot in this area.

"The Heart of Maryland" is virtually forgotten today, both as a stage play and in its movie incarnations. But it caused Boonsboro to be the setting for both the sensational hit on Broadway in the Gay Nineties, thenfor at least three film versions during the silent era of the movies.

It was the last of the movies based on the David Belasco play that was shown at the Colonial from Thursday, Sept. 1, through Saturday, Sept. 3, 1927. There's conflicting evidence over exactly how much of the film was done on location and how much in Hollywood's back lots.

A newspaper item published in 1927 put some of the filming at "Weldon", a structure on Boonsboro's St. Paul Street which is one of the oldest mansion house-type buildings surviving in the county. A few years later, the Federal Writers Project's guidebook to Maryland gave credit to "Rose Hill", the big nursing home structure, as the site of location shooting. This structure has also been known as "The Lilacs", the name Belasco used for the mansion which serves as the setting of much of his play.

But apparently the playwright didn't imagine one Boonsboro house as his setting. "There may have been a colonial mansion in Boonsboro which was like the one in which the heroine, Maryland Calvert, lived, but certainly it has not survived the ravages of time," a local journalist decided after viewing the 1927 film. That opinion seems backed up by a letter which Belasco had written in 1925 to Mrs. William Henneberger of Boonsboro. "The garden I used was a combination of your old Weldon and some spots from one or two others."

Then there was the question of the bell. In the play, the third act reached a sensational climax when Mrs. Leslie Carter, who created the role of the heroine, climbed to the belfry over a church, grabbed the tongue of its giant bell, and swayed to and fro above the playgoers, preventing the bell from signaling the escape of her lover as the curtain fell. The movie in 1927 was advertised with a

sketch of its female lead, Dolores Costello, holding on for dear life to the clapper of a tremendous bell. Local persons thought Belasco might have drawn inspiration for this episode from the old bell in Boonsboro's Reformed Church tower.

Hollywood crews also did location shooting at Antietam and other points in Washington County. Local audiences were so happy with the publicity provided to this county that they didn't seem to mind the fact that the program given to filmgoers spelled the town "Boonesboro".

The male lead was played by Jason Robards, not the actor who is still making movies but his father. The only other familiar name in the cast is that of Myrna Loy, who wasn't famous yet but had a minor role.

Unfortunately, this film isn't among the handful of silent movies that sometimes are shown on television stations visible in this county. Available reference works don't give any reason to be sure it even exists today. Hollywood made little effort to preserve old films, before the television era, except for a few major successes, and many features were destroyed or allowed to deteriorate beyond salvage.

Previously, Mrs. Carter had starred in a 1915 movie version. It may have been less than feature length, since few productions ran to more than a couple of reels that long ago. There seems to have been a Vitagraph production in 1920 which is even more obscure.

Belasco's play was the hit of the 1895-96 Broadway season, running 240 performances in the old Herald Square Theater. The production also went over big in London.

His play is an entirely fictional drama about a battle at Boonsboro during the Confederates' second invasion of Maryland. The heroine and her lover are chronically in hot water through four acts over spying charges.

Unfortunately, theatrical tastes have changed in the past eight decades, and it's doubtful if a modern audience would take seriously the melodramatic events and the dialog which were so successful when new. For instance, when the villain is about to work his will with the heroine, he is given this line: "My dear Miss Calvert, I hold you in my arms! Ha! Ha!" A general sums up the military situation in these remarkable words to another general: "We must hold Boonsboro now, or go to Heaven." When the hero and heroine finally embraced at the final curtain, the orchestra in the pit played softly "Maryland, My Maryland," not the most romantic melody imaginable.

It's impossible to be sure how closely the 1927 movie adhered to the original play, but it brought into view a number of characters whom Belasco didn't use, like Grant, Lee, Lincoln, and Jeff Davis. Moreover, it served as one of the first big successes for Miss Costello, who was just rising to fame at the time.

If a print still exists somewhere, it would be ideal as a special attraction for a historical festivity around here some day.

Boonsboro is a small town about ten miles southeast of Hagerstown and perhaps eight miles from the Antietam Battlefield. Incidentally, the problems of small town journalism are illustrated quite well by this particular column. I couldn't find in Hagerstown any complete text of the play, just extracts in an anthology, there was no way to determine what trade pap-

ers said of the movie when originally released, if a copy exists in any of the big collections of old films, and many other matters which would have been available in a big city. I had to rely on memories of a few oldtimers and a tedious hunt through out-of-focus microfilms of local newspapers for references to filming here and the first local showing, in addition to a few mentions in local history works. So it's a relief when inspiration provides me with the idea for a column which can be written rapidly out of my own knowledge, like this one:

The acquaintance stops you on the street and asks you why you don't write a column about how Hagerstown people so often go in the wrong doors. You'd noticed this phenomenon yourself, so now you investigate it and find it's even worse than you'd imagined.

A famous movie about problems in the New York City school system was called "Up the Down Staircase". In Hagerstown, it's the problem that arises before people even get to inside stairs. So many of them insist on going into large buildings through the door marked OUT and emerging through the door which contains the lettering IN while others are trying to use the same doors in the orthodox manner.

If you stand near the main doors of almost any large store or public building in Hagerstown and its suburbs, you can see this mysterious behavior in action. Nobody has ever taken an official survey of the situation, or if such a survey has been made the person responsible didn't publicize it because he thought the findings wouldn't be believed.

But it doesn't take much observing to discover that perhaps half of all the people going through those doors use the wrong doors on a bad day. Even when people are on their best behavior, the wrong way syndrome at swinging doors is apt to involve about one-third of all people who go in and out.

Sometimes, people will go to great lengths to make their entrances and exits the wrong way. It's easy enough to use the wrong door when the situation is simply a pair of swinging doors which open from a common center in the same doorframe. The real test for wrong wayism comes when an establishment's entrance door is separated by many feet from its exit door.

But many people manage to do things wrong in those circumstances, too, sometimes to the chagrin of management which has arranged the in and out doors for better control of shoplifting.

Maybe it's a game with some people. If you visit one local store, there's not only a separate in door but also a turnstile inside that door which operates by an electric eye automatically in only one direction, and is too high to be easily stepped over. If you stand just inside that door on a busy day, you'll see an occasional person inside the store stand near that turnstile, wait for someone to come through it, and scoot out like lightning through the turnstile before it has closed, all for the sake of being able to leave the store by the wrong door.

Why do local people do it?

The acquaintance had no ideas on that topic. But it's easy enough to do some guessing, until such time as someone devotes a doctorate thesis to this particular aberration in local behavior.

Some habituees of this practice might contend that it's a free country and if they feel like going out the in door, they'll do it. The obvious objection to this philosophy involves the rapid erosion

of really important freedoms in American life and the wastefulness of spending time on exercising the right to use the wrong door when more significant rights are being lost. Besides, none of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous Four Freedoms mentioned swinging doors.

In some cases, it seems that people use the wrong door in order to save two or three steps. But if you'll watch closely, you'll see that approximately the same number of persons who come out the in door make an immediate right turn, once they're outside, as those who are headed for a destination to their left.

A pessimist might link the habit to the way so many local drivers don't use turn signals and to the number of wrong number calls every telephone subscriber receives. This pessimist would explain all these matters by the same assumption: that people are growing stupider all the time and no longer can comprehend readily when they try to read such hard words as IN and OUT.

Whatever the real reason behind the wrong door syndrome, it is one of those small matters that can be annoying out of all proportion to its place in the scheme of things. At a time when there are more people running around than ever before and life is more complicated than it ever was, replete with a record quantity of every sort of delays, it would seem logical for everyone to obey authority where doors are concerned and thus avert the slowdowns, jostling and impasses that keep turning up whenever the same door gets used simultaneously by people doing it right and those doing it wrong.

It isn't often that anything about a dictatorship's rigid control over every aspect of daily life seems justified. But you can't help thinking wistfully on that topic when you try to leave a store through the OUT door while you're topheavy with purchases and a woman who outweighs you by a hundred pounds decides simultaneously to enter rapidly through that same door. Your imagination immediately begins to picture her obeying carefully the UP and DOWN shafts of Siberian salt mines.

There is an enormous turnover of employes on the news staffs of the two Hagerstown newspapers nowadays. One inevitable result is failure of some newly deceased persons to get the obituaries they deserve. There's a chance that nobody who sees an obituary as the funeral home supplies it will recognize its subject as a person who was so well known that more detail is advisable. Sometimes I try to make up for this sort of skimpy obituary by writing a column about the individual a week or so later. I'm not comfortable in mind when I do this for a couple of reasons. The column's appearance can reopen grief wounds for the immediate family just when they've begun to heal, and I can do this only for persons I've known well, thus failing to give equal space to many other newly dead persons who also deserved more space. But at least a few persons will live in microfilms more fully in the distant future when everyone who knew them is dead through this sort of column:

When E. Kenneth Ramsburg died recently, Washington Countians in general lost one of their best fellow citizens and certain countians lost a man who had helped to shape their characters and lives.

He wasn't colorful in the flamboyant sense and he wasn't overwhelming in physical characteristics. But he got things done. Among the many things he accomplished in his long life was the demonstration that a fellow can make something of himself by sheer determ-

ination and hard work, two elements that seem to be forgotten in all the federal projects which try unsuccessfully to improve the lot of people.

For one thing, Kenneth Ramsburg's own life could serve as an example to hundreds of youths he taught during almost a half-century as a teacher of agriculture in Maryland high schools. He never hid the fact that he wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He fought to get himself a good education, then devoted most of his life to educating youngsters, many of them members of families in as modest circumstances as his own folks had been.

Typical of his efforts during his long tenure as a member of the Boonsboro High School faculty was his work with Ohio Improved Chester swine. He used to describe them as "poor men's pigs". This wasn't a disparagement of the character of physique of this breed of swine, but rather a description of the fact that the OIC breed didn't command the high prices for good stock that certain more celebrated breeds do.

He encouraged members of his vocational agriculture classes, few of whom came from wealthy homes, and anyone else who was interested to raise OIC swine, enter them in fairs and livestock shows, and realize a profit while learning about proper swine management. In Washington County, his efforts in this direction were little known outside farming and school circles. But he was nationally famous for these accomplishments, receiving high honors from the National OIC Swine Breeders Association and serving several years as its president.

Even if his students failed to continue raising this type of pig after they left school, the lesson must have struck home: it's possible to achieve if you go about it the right way. There's no telling how many of his former students hav since accomplished things they might not have coped with, if they hadn't had his guidance.

Then there were the turkeys. About a decade ago, the instructor arranged to get newly born turkey poults successfully launched through the first few weeks of life at the school farm. Then some of his students took the tiny birds to their own farms, raised them until Thanksgiving neared, and then returned them to the school.

There they were converted into merchandise for the holiday dinner table and sold directly to consumers at a profit ranging between $2 and $4 per bird for each youth. The idea and the way it was carried through won for Mr. Ramsburg the Tilghman trophy awarded by the Maryland Turkey Producers Association.

Born in the Frederick County village of Utica Mills, he had graduated from Frederick High School and the University of Maryland before launching his career as teacher in the Lisbon and West Friendship High Schools in 1929. He came to Boonsboro High in 1943 and taught vocational agriculture there until he retired 30 years later. The school had an actual farm for its students to use but nobody could ever quite decide whether the most diligent students or their instructor did the most hard work on it.

Late in life, Kenneth Ramsburg found time for more non-agricultural services. He served a couple of terms as Boonsboro's mayor. Some of his time in office was turbulent but in general, he succeeded in coping with the sort of give-and-take transactions that a politician must accomplish, so different from the autocracy that a vocational agriculture instructor must establish to avoid total chaos.

He also tried, along with various other leaders in the southern part of the county, to do something about the flood threat that con-

stantly hangs over the area of the foot of South Mountain. He was secretary to the Little Antietam Watershed Association, organized to strive for dams which could cope with the potential destruction. But in this effort he achieved no success, because the project bogged down in the maze of federal bureaucracy and Uncle Sam's insistence that it should be turned into something much wider in scope and more expensive than originally intended.

Even after his retirement as an educator, he didn't lose interest in agriculture. Last August found him visiting the swine department at the Hagerstown Fair, lamenting the decline in the quantity of exhibitors there but showing as keen an interest in everyone and everything as a fellow of 21 when he was 71. He was just as precise in speech, direct in gaze and forthright in opinions as he'd ever been.

High schools needn't produce as many agriculture students today as when he began his teaching career, because there are fewer, bigger, more mechanized farms which require less manpower. But it's conceivable that the change in the way food is produced more efficiently couldn't have been achieved if it hadn't been for instructors like E. Kenneth Ramsburg who were softspoken most of the time, yelled when necessary, and somehow converted the least promising sophomores into seniors with graduating marks.

I was afraid I might have wasted much time and effort, gathering material for the next column. But the advertising department didn't even cast a dirty look in my direction after it appeared and apparently the editorial department had no fear that it might reflect on the standards of the ad writers:

Attending public sales is entertaining, sometimes expensive, and above all time-consuming. It's easy to squander three or four hours for the sake of bidding on one small item that caught your fancy.

However, it takes very little time, costs nothing, and is amusing if you do nothing but sit mmm at home and read the lists of articles which are advertised for disposal at public auctions conducted in this area. Sometimes there is also intellectual stimulation, as you try to figure out what in the world an item can be.

Culled from this season's crop of notices for auctions in Washington County and immediately surrounding area, here is a sampling of the treasures that were found at sales without stirring from an armchair:

Some offerings may be familiar to persons with a good knowledge of antiques or experience in certain lines of business. To the average layman, however, these items sound strange indeed. For instance, recent auctions around here offered to the highest bidder such unexpected things as a witch's kettle, a fainting lounge, a Scotman flaker, a golf ball picker, a one horse lay off plow, a wooden pippin rod, a set of steer horns, and a large mahogany hunt board.

Then there are the objects which bob up at auctions when you would think them more suitable for use as propers in the Late Show movie on Friday night. In this category, someone or other bought at various auctions around here this year:

An early wooden coffin, a flesh fork, a stomper, a fifth wheel casket wagon, and an occasional armed wooden rocker. The latter must have been one of those pieces of furniture which Fu Manchu used to destroy treacherously an enemy who never guessed the existence of concealed poisoned darts in a hollowed-out area.

Some sale offerings are just plain mysterious, in the way they're described. "Peacock at the fountain signed N," for instance. Were the "two mule ear chains" one object serving two animals, or two objects for one mule? How about the "commercial size brass steam whistle?" Offhand, it's hard to think of any market for steam whistles not large enough to have commercial applications.

Then there was the rural bath tub, which conjured up visions of an era when people who didn't live in the city bathed in tubs different in size or shape from those in use in the city, for some reason. The three beaded swirl wines item has a ring of genuine poetry to it, even if not many people have any idea what they could have been.

Others in this category might be the early roller scooter, perhaps a de luxe 19th century model of a skateboard, the comic print scenes, and their second cousins, the Indian wall scenes.

You might also wonder about the "old quilts never used in new condition," which sounds a trifle contradictory. Then there was the enigmatic statement in one auction notice following certain offerings. It stated that "These items are back in 1800." Was it a warning to potential purchasers that they would need a time machine to retrieve their purchases?

Occasionally, there's a more specific definition of what is offered. Various auctions this season have advertised "a rare old sausage stuffer that was found on the Antietam Battlefield" where you'd hardly expect anyone to lose a sausage stuffer, "soldier-bitten biscuits from the field hospital at the Antietam Battlefield," "old side saddle that was in the Custer family," "foot bell from Buena Vista horse car," and the very thing to give the person who has everything, books about "Akron and Summit County, Ohio."

A few esoteric offerings seem to be the result of defeat in struggles with grammar or spelling. "Old hued rafters" may have been handhewn timbers rather than rafters painted in various colors. Calm deliberation will enable most persons to guess the identity of what was described as a "sterling silver candle brabrum." The "ice thongs" could conceivably have been meant for manacling the abominable snowman, but more probably were tongs which carried ice to non-mechanical refrigerators in the old days.

"Salt cells" could be another mistake, unless someone had dismantled the detention portion of a salt mine. "Hog scrappers" might be animals which serve to provide gambling entertainment now that cockfights are illegal, but the term looks suspiciously like a device used at butcherings.

When all else fails to provide an idea for subject matter, you can always fall back on the old gimmick of old parallels to today's concerns. One day in 1977 I emitted this column while inspiration was in short supply:

The local man was deeply concerned about the class of '77 and about younger students, too. So he sat down and wrote a letter to the editor, expressing his worries and fears about both the Washington County public school system and the young generation.

But you didn't read the letter he wrote to the local newspaper about inability of graduates to pass simple tests in basic subjects, the overloading of the curriculum with too many courses, the disappearance from classrooms of religion, and the refusal of many young people to become steady employes. Your failure to see all this results from the fact that the letter was written and published a cen-

tury ago. The things the letter-writer penned about the class of 1877 and the local school system are startlingly similar to letters to the editor that are published on education from time to time in 1977.

The parallel even extends to the fact that the letter-writer in 1877 didn't have the courage to allow the newspaper to publish the remarks under his own name, remaining as anonymous in print as most people who have been complaining about today's schools.

Except for the more formal writing style that was customary a century ago, you wouldn't be surprised to find in today's letter sections comments like these which appeared in the Herald and Torch Light in 1877:

"The curriculum of our public schools is too extensive and somewhat overburdened, leaving little room for the practical every day moral part of education. It is said by a certain writer that 'our public schools accomplish little because they attempt too much and because what they do attempt is not what a broad common sense would suggest. We are all so wise nowadays or so bent upon becoming wise that we have no time to be honest or useful.'"

The same quotation continued:

"Our children....must have their poor little brains crammed full of all kinds of impossible knowledge, of names and dates and numbers and unintelligible rules, till there is absolutely no room left to hold any of the simple truths of honor and duty and morality which former generations deemed more important than all the learning of the books....

"They leave school utterly ignorant of all that is most essential for them to know and with just sufficient smattering of so-called knowledge to destroy forever their usefulness in the state of life to which they had been called."

One thing that upset the letter-writer in 1877 particularly was evidence that schools were no longer educating boys and girls in the three R's and other basic subjects. He cited the outcome of recent examinations for candidates at the military and naval acadmies.

At West Point, half of those applying for admission had flunked the examination. Even worse, 58 per cent of the applicants to Annapolis had failed to pass examinations. Subjects included basic grammar, geography, reading, writing, and mathematics.

"What use of philosophy, rhetoric, physiology, etc., in our public schools (very useful in their place) as long as the elements are not mastered and a West Point or Naval Academy examination cannot be successfully passed," the writer asked, so upset that he forgot to end his sentence with a question mark. "Our plea is for rigid thoroughness in the elements and only then take up other branches, then they can be pursued with profit."

In the past few years, many individuals who have acquired two or three college degrees have found themselves jobless because the skilled fields for which they trained were swamped by too many qualified persons. But much the same situation existed a century ago, according to the letter-writer.

"Nearly all the professions are overstocked, and because of improper preparation the standard in the professions has been lowered, and the professions are, to some extent, shorn of their dignity. It cannot be denied, that that is the tendency of the free school system to a great extent all over the country. The idea seems to lay hold on the mind and that all that is needed is to obtain all you can in the way of education in the school, and then some way will open by

which a living may be made without this disgusting and dishonorable thing of work."

As a result, he thought, many young persons after leaving school did nothing but sneer at work, wear cheap jewelry, smoke, and "sneer at honest labor and look with contempt on the honorable and industrious laborer or mechanic."

The best moral to draw from all this might be the one found in the Bible, to the effect that there's nothing new under the sun.

But if you insist on thinking further about the matter, you're probably going to end up convinced of one of three deductions:

Some persons expect too much of the schools and release their disappointment through letters to the editor when the schools fail to match their ideals. Or the schools were doing a bad job in 1877 and they're still doing a bad job in 1977. Or a substantial proportion of all students are either too stupid or too shiftless to learn much in school because of human nature, a situation which remains as true in 1877 as in 1977.

In any event, the anonymous letter-writer in 1877 signed himself "A Friend of Education". It's frightening to think about the things that might have been written to the editor by an enemy of education.

The next column caused at least one person to suffer indigestion, me. Part of my supportive data got cut before publication and I can't remember eighteen months later enough about them to make up the deficiency here. Worse, someone wrote an insert which was both irrelevant and incorrect in its definition of a blue moon and included it under my byline. I'll cut the forged portion and hope the censored part wasn't too vital to my point:

The full moon curse seems to be striking again in Washington County.

An unofficial tabulation of violent deaths during 1977's first 22 weeks shows that 15 persons died here as a result of motor vehicle accidents, aircraft crashes, shootings, drowning, and fires. Almost two-thirds of them occurred on dates which were within four days of a full moon, a part of the calendar representing less than one-third of the days from Jan. 1 through June 3.

Moreover, the two most serious non-fatal fires during the same period in Washington County occurred within two days of a full moon.

The strange apparent connection between full moons and loss of life or property becomes even more remarkable if the tabulation is confined to just a couple of days before or after a full moon, amounting to only one-sixth of all the days in each month. Six of the fatalities and both of the non-fatal major fires came within this narrower span.

The matter first came to attention a couple of years ago when downtown Hagerstown and some outlying areas were being plagued with a series of major fires, most of which were attributed to arson. Fire after fire broke out around the time of the full moon.

There's an old belief that the full moon has an effect on the behavior of some persons. But some of the fatalities which have occurred this year were the apparent result of circumstances over which humans had no direct control, like an outbreak of fire from natural causes or the mechanical failure of a vehicle.

There doesn't seem to be any really scientific study in existence which proves or disproves the old belief that full moons and

major trouble are linked here. But there are some policemen, ambulance drivers, and other emergency personnel who resign themselves to more work than usual during the days when the moon is nearest its full phase.

Here are examples of the way things have gone in Washington County this year, disregarding fatalities which Washington County residents have suffered outside the limits of the county:

January's full moon came on the fifth day of the month. On Jan. 7, a man died in a fire in suburban Hagerstown.

In February, the full moon arrived on the third day of the month. The biggest fire in Hagerstown so far this year occurred on Feb. 1 at the Glick Shoe Store building in the downtown shopping area. On Feb. 4, a man and a woman died in a fire at a residence in the southern part of Hagerstown. However, there were three other violent deaths in February which occurred far from the full of the moon. There was a highway fatality on Feb. 11, followed by a fatal shooting on Feb. 21 and another death in a motor vehicle crash on Feb. 26.

March is the only month without a violent death in Washington County within four days of a full moon. A fatal automobile crash occurred on March 11, six days after the moon was full. The following day, a burglary suspect was fatally shot by a policeman.

In April, the moon was full on the third day of the month and there were no violent fatalities or major fires within the span of four days before or four days after the occasion. But on April 29, a man was fatally injured in a motor vehicle collision, four days before the moon was full again on May 3. Four days after May's full moon, an area resident drowned in the Potomac River.

Another highway fatality on May 17 came far from the time of the full moon. But four days before the next full moon, which occurred on June 1, there was a fatal shooting in Hagerstown on May 28. One day before that most recent full moon, a man died when his airplane crashed near Pondsville. The day after the moon was full, there was a fatal accident involving a hang glider at High Rock.

May also brought a big fire in the Huyetts area which followed an explosion, producing no fatalities but probably the most serious blaze in financial loss since the Glick fire in Washington County. That occurred on the first day of the month, two days before the full moon.

It might also be instructive to draw up lists of nonfatal commotions which have been occurring around here when the moon was full. Within a day or two of the June 1 full moon, for instance, there were a serious stabbing incident, a multiple tire-slashing, and two complaints of assault in or near taverns.

Before you ask why I didn't do the obvious thing, and attempt to limit my statistics to accidents where human behavior instead of non-human causes seemed at work, remember both my inability to spend too much time on any one column which inhibited me from a thorough investigation of each case, and my liability to find myself in legal difficulties, if I blamed in print a person for something which the courts later decided had not been his fault. It's easier to write something like the next column. I cheated a little, because I'm supposed to write about local matters and most of the events described on the next page could have occurred in any city, not just in Hagerstown:

In one of the unpublicized events of the bicentennial year, a Hagerstown man actually invented the better mousetrap, according to a current rumor. Equally unheralded is the way the world beat a path to his door.

Last year's discovery was the culmination of many months of tinkering with tools and gadgets. The inventor was so proud of the greater efficiency and lower cost of his new mousetrap that he showed it to his friends. He was about to give two friends samples for their own homes, then decided that this act might somehow harm his patent rights, so he charged the friends a token dollar for the marvelous mousetraps.

It wasn't long until word began to get around Hagerstown. Within a few days, the inventor had several callers.

One visitor was inquiring about the fact that the man had invented the better mousetrap in his home and made the prototypes there. This was in violation of any number of clauses in zoning regulations. But the visitor promised a court case to determine whether a better mousetrap's creation justified charging him with creating a heavy industrial or merely a light industrial usage in a neighborhood zoned residential.

Three elderly ladies from the neighborhood also came calling. They had heard about the better mousetraps. They were angry with the inventor because their pet cats got all their exercise from chasing mice. The few sample mousetraps that he had manufactured were doing such a phenomenal job that their pets were deprived unfairly of this innocent merriment. The ladies demanded a halt to such proceedings.

They had hardly gone when an entire delegation arrived. They were members of a child protective organization. They were friendly but firm. Even though the inventor explained that his new mousetrap was absolutely safe to humans, as part of its improved nature, the delegation warned him that some child might someday take one apart and modify it in such a way that it could present a potential for bruising the fingertip of some youngster.

The inventor began wishing that he'd turned his brainchild over to a corporation somewhere in Australia for development, when the mailman brought a special delivery letter from the Internal Revenue Service. It informed him that he had not yet filed an amended declaration of estimated taxable revenue to cover the prospective proceeds from his mousetrap sales.

The inventor fired back a letter describing all the weary months of research which he'd spent in recent years to create the object which had brought him just $2 in revenue. This letter resulted in a personal visit by three agents of the federal tax office, who helped him to file amended tax returns covering the past three years, splitting the money over the 36-month period in order to utilize the tax law provisions for a long-term project.

At this point, the inventor decided to forestall another complication. He sent ten cents to the Maryland sales tax authorities, to make up for the pennies he hadn't collected when he sold the two mousetraps. Unfortunately, he was naive enough to explain in a letter what he had done. A constable brought a summons a few days later. It was illegal for the seller to dig into his own pockets for sales tax without collecting from the purchaser.

A Washington television station rolled its mobile unit up to his door to tape a news feature about the new mousetrap. When the feature was shown, the inventor was alarmed to see that the station's

special effects department had added dazzling rays of light and deafening zapping sounds to his silent, modest little gadget.

The next day an elderly man who saw the telecast stomped up to the house, furiously announcing a three million dollar damage suit for infraction of rights. The old man claimed to have told a friend while in high school that he intended to build a better mousetrap some day. This friend was willing to testify about this fact.

The telecast also brought the wrath of the environmentalists down on the inventor. They picketed his home for one entire weekend, after failing to convince him that the 27 verified kills which his mousetraps had achieved so far would most probably touch off a new ice age and destroy the Heaviside layer, through his tampering with nature's balance of power.

In disgust, the inventor got together the patent documents and his schematics for the better mousetrap, touched a match to them, and watched his effort to improve the lot of humanity going up in smoke. Fire and air quality officials promptly pounded on his door and advised him he had violated unnecessary burning and air quality regulations.

The inventor looked at the brown streak across his lawn where all these visitors' feet had killed the grass, and realized that the world really had beaten a path to his door. In fact, the residents of his block held a mass meeting about this situation and passed a formal resolution condemning him for spoiling the beauty of the neighborhood with this disfigurement of the greenery.

The next column was written in the midst of negotiations to create an lp of Jessica Dragonette's air checks. I wrote the liner notes for it and the record got a good review in at least one of the big-circulation audio magazines. Unfortunately, one promotional gimmick fell through. For a while we had hopes that Garbo would break her public silence long enough to tape a few words about her friend's lp, for use on one of the network talk programs.

A recent note on the interest of area resi ents in golden age radio programs brought unexpected results. It's news about the fact that one of the most famous of the old radio stars is a friend of a Washington County man.

Garfield Swift, Highfield, met Jessica Dragonette when both were students of Estelle Liebling, perhaps the most famous of all 20th century vocal instructors in the United States. Miss Dragonette was enormously popular as a radio singer during the 1930's and early 1940's. She resides today in retirement in New York City.

Moreover, the Highfield resident reveals, there's an almost unique documentation available of her career. Her sister, Nadea Dragonette Loftus, has put enormous effort into preserving audible and written things associated with the soprano's career. Recordings of her broadcasts have been presented to the Library of Congress where they have been dubbed onto tape for the use of university libraries and the public.

This is in sharp contrast to the failure of most celebrities in the great years of network radio to preserve systematically their creativity.

Garfield Swift still keeps in touch with Jessica Dragonette and her sister, who live on New York's East 57th Street next door to another celebrity of yore, Greta Garbo.

Recalling their student days, he explains:

"Jessica had a very pure, very sweet voice. But it was not of operatic size."

Instead of working to enlarge the voice to operatic proportions, Estelle Liebling felt it ideal for studio broadcasts. Her judgment turned out to be exactly right. Miss Dragonette quickly became the period's most famous network female singer of light classical and classical music. She held the world's record for the longest span of singing on commercially sponsored network programs.

After retirement, Swift recalls, Miss Dragonette wrote several books and did some lecturing. But she differed from many other famous radio stars by financial foresight, having invested wisely to avoid the money problems that some celebrities have encountered in recent years.

Still, the Highfield resident would like to see her return more frequently to the public eye. "She has a fine manner of speaking," he says.

Not just the recordings are available to help future researchers trace the career of the singer. Mrs. Loftus has also preserved written materials relating to her sister's activities. Many of them have been placed for safekeeping in Butler Library of Columbia University in New York.

Not long ago, an official of the University of Wyoming library visited the sisters to inspect the archives still in their possession. He decided that nobody has the like. Included in these files are such rarities as orchestrations by Rosario Bourdon, the famous conductor in old radio days, believed to be the only surviving scores from his hand.

Mrs. Loftus is another who would like to see Jessica Dragonette return to a public career. She envisions a new radio program in which she would tell about the events in her career, interspersed with recordings of her performances from the past. As things now stand, the last time Miss Dragonette's voice was heard nationally was apparently six months ago, when one of her songs was included in a special program marking the 50th anniversary of her old network, NBC.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Loftus has been corresponding with Swift in an effort to collaborate with him on a book about Estelle Liebling. Garfield Swift has many memories of that teacher. One involves a red-headed girl who had just entered her teens and used to get impatient as the two of them awaited their turn for lessons in the Estelle Liebling studio. The child grew up to become another famous vocalist, Beverly Sills.

The Highfield man, incidentally, also has had a remarkable career as a singer, even though he never gained the radio renown of Jessica Dragonette. He sang featured roles on such network radio programs as the old NBC Sunday broadcasts directed by Erno Rapee of the Radio City Music Hall, appeared on Broadway, and sang on the prestigious Third Programme of the BBC in England.

"But I followed my own bent," he says of his career. He always wanted to be a recitalist, so he gave up more glamorous forms of singing for the concert platform.

He sang extensively throughout Europe, where he attracted much attention because he delved into ancient publications and old manuscripts to find music which had been rarely or never performed in modern times. By featuring many of his musical discoveries on his recitals, he became a forerunner of the major revival of interest in ancient music which has taken place in the past decade or two.

The Swift family moved to Highfield to escape the heat of Washington, D.C., where he had been living as a faculty member of several colleges. He has established a studio at his Highfield home, but explains that he accepts only promising pupils.

Swift has, incidentally, provided me with all sorts of fascinating anecdotes and insights about the big name people in music and show business. He got close enough to the top of his profession to become acquainted with practically everyone. In fact, he has been using some of his co tacts to play around with an apparently wild idea: to create a Salzburg-style summer music festival in the mountains around his home just east of Hagerstown. The scenery is there, it's easily reached from all the big East Coast cities, and if Aspen could do it, maybe Highfield could, too. And now for something entirely different, a column which deals with Hagerstown area circumstances but could probably be adapted to most other cities without changing its moral:

Efforts to enforce the 55 miles per hour speed limit on highways have received much publicity in the past few years. But little is heard about another form of speeding, the failure of many drivers to conform to the 25 and 30 mile limits in Hagerstown and immediate surrounding areas.

The interstate highway speeding increases the danger of accidents and worsens the severity of crashes which do occur, in addition to wasting gasoline. The best thing that can be said for it is that it saves time for drivers.

Speeding where the limit is 30 miles per hour or slower around Hagerstown does less in the way of fuel conservation. It's definitely dangerous, because those limits exist where there are many intersections and driveways, parked cars to obscure vision, and other problems which aren't severe on the open highway. But it's not even excusable on the basis of time-saving, because little or no time is saved by breaking the 25 and 30 mile speed limits around Hagerstown on most streets.

For instance, one of the areas where complaints have been most numerous over disregard for the speed limit is Halfway Boulevard west of Virginia Avenue. If you obey the posted limit of 30 miles per hour from the intersection to the Massey Boulevard intersection at the mall, you'll quickly find yourself leading a long procession of twitching drivers who are tailgating in a dangerous manner.

But how much time is saved by those who speed in this stretch of road? It's about three-fourths of a mile from Virginia Avenue to the mall. The vehicle that maintains a steady 30 miles per hour speed should make that trip in about 90 seconds. The driver who goes 10 miles per hour over the legal limit would save in theory 15 seconds. In practice, the saving would be less because there's almost always a need to slow down or stop at the intersections and it takes a few more seconds to accelerate and decelerate to the higher speed.

Those who like to ignore the speed limit can cite the bigger amounts of time saved by beating the change from green to red at traffic signals. But at intersections like those two, where the cycle of lights includes turning periods, oncoming traffic will encounter a red light three out of every four times and the 12 seconds or so that were saved by speeding will be wasted in a longer wait

for a green light.

There's a different sort of futility in speeding in some Hagerstown streets where many drivers never seem to learn the facts of life about stop and go signals. One example involves northbound traffic on Walnut Street. No matter how fast you try to drive, you can't get a green light at both the West Washington Street and West Franklin Street intersections, because of the way the light changes are cycled.

There's a similar irrationality involved for the drivers who arrive on Antietam Street at the Summit Avenue intersection and as soon as the light changes to green, make a screeching turn onto Summit Avenue to save time. It's useless. The light will be red at the intersection of Summit Avenue with West Washington Street, no matter how fast they get there, and yet some drivers keep trying.

When traffic isn't too heavy, you'll sometimes observe some vehicles far exceeding the 25 miles per hour limit on North Locust Street. It's useless because the lights on that street are cycled to permit traffic going at about 25 miles per hour to get a steady succession of greens. Any vehicle that goes much faster will eventually arrive at the light before it has changed from red to green.

Just at a guess, the most unanimity in breaking the speed limit law around Hagerstown can be found on East Washin ton Street where it is changing into Dual Highway. It's posted at 25 miles per hour to a point east of the Cleveland Avenue intersection, about three-fourths of a mile from Public Square. Unless traffic is exceptionally light, there's virtually no chance of driving that stretch without encoun ering at least one or two red lights and most or all of the time saved by the speeding is lost that way.

There's no way to drive even half the distance from one end of Hagerstown to another without encountering traffic control signals or boulevard stop signs. But even if by some unlikely miracle a vehicle going at the legal speed limits and another consistently going ten miles per hour faster than the limit should both encounterm nothing but green lights, how much time would the lawbreaker save?

Hagerstown is about four miles across on most major routes, calculatin thickly bui t-up areas rather than legal municipal boundaries. Part of the trip would be in 30 mile per hour blocks, part in 25 mile zones. Elapsed time at the legal limits with no halts or slowdowns would be around nine minutes.

The vehicle rolling ten miles per hour too fast the entire distance might save about three minutes, give or take a few seconds. Its drivers might find those three minutes quite expensive in terms of time spent in court or fine, if charged with speeding, or in a judgment in a damage suit if the speeding causes anm accident whose consequences go beyond the amount of liability insurance he carries.

Of course, if there were no speeding in Hagerstown, the city would lose one source of occasional amusement. There's nothing that cheers up a law-abiding driver as much as the effects on a speeder when he's unfamiliar with the city or absent-minded, and zooms at 40 miles per hour over the railroad tracks on North Mulberry Street or through the chasm in North Prospect Street at its West Franklin Street intersection.

The spots mentioned at the end are a grade crossing of awesome chassis-cracking capabilities and a dip in the street which somehow isn't visible to the eye but must be remembered like the Mississippi's danger spots in steamboat days. And here's

what happens when I must write a column while in a mood which runs strongly to griping, bitterness and mal de siecle:

There's an old saying that people are more contrary than anybody. There seems to be much evidence that this is so. For instance:

Why is it illegal for the average person to shot off fireworks on his own property on the Fourth of July, while it is perfectly legal for him to use public land to jump off a cliffside at High Rock or try to climb a cliffside at Harpers Ferry? If some laws are based on the assumption that people must be protected against their own dangerous propensities, as in the case of fireworks, you'd think the public would at least be required to take legal risks on non-public land, like the auto racers who operate at a commercial speedway.

Why is there no apparent shortage of coffee in local stores after all the fuss about the frosts and the great coffee famine which is supposed to have followed? National statistics show a slight decline in coffee consumption, but that appears to be the result of refusal to pay quadrupled prices rather than inability to find coffee for sale. It's reminiscent of the celebrated fuel oil scarcity several winters ago, which ended with amazing swiftness when price controls were relaxed and the price soared.

Why do people who wouldn't think of allowing a speck of dust to exist in their kitchen put their small children in shopping carts and wheel them over the large stores? Whether the kids are barefooted or wearing shoes, they must transfer an imposing quantity of germs and assorted dirt to those carts, where other people will be putting the things they want to purchase, some of them not sealed in wrappers as well as they might be.

Why does the telephone company put all business places on a so-much-per-call basis, after a handful of free monthly calls, and yet allow anyone who wishes to make unlimited calls from home telephones? The nuisance of advertising solicitation to home telephones hasn't ended here and it seems quite probable that most of the people hired to commit this form of nuisance are operating from their home telephones nowadays, to save their employers the rate per call.

Why does the city, at a time when it's harder and harder for police to cope with serious crime, continue to waste their time checking parking meters and red flags and writing tickets for violations? Meter maids, like those employed in many cities, would free many hours of police duty time weekly for more important work, would more than pay their salary in fine collections, might also break up some of the abuses of curbside parking downtown. Meter-feeding by persons working in offices and stores might be discouraged if meter maids with time to use chalk on tires wrote tickets for violations of the two-hour parking limit at many meters, opening more spaces for persons who come downtown to shop.

Why is it still possible to buy any amount of take-out food without paying sales tax in Maryland, at a time when it was deemed necessary to raise the sales tax on food eaten in restaurants to five per cent? Logically, it should be the other way around. Take-out purchases usually wind up costing the taxpayers money, in the form of time and labor required for workmen to pick up the litter that people toss out the car window after finishing the snack.

Why is it almost impossible to get permission to erect in Hagerstown a fence around a private home tall enough and sturdy enough

to provide privacy and real protection from marauding kids, destructive dogs, and other forms of wildlife, while authorities are able to build monumental fences around new tennis courts and at various other points?

Why doesn't the Maryland Legislature go into special session and do nothing but delegislate for a few weeks, in order to get rid of pages in the lawbooks like the one that almost prevented a circus from playing in Hagerstown on a Sunday? You'd think that recent relaxation in the blue laws which now permitlarge stores to stay open on Sundays, restaurants to serve alcoholic beverages on Sundays, and so on would have included the erasure of surviving clauses from the obsoleted stricter regulations on the topic.

Why do kids create a headache for drivers and a danger for pedestrians with their bike-riding at points in Hagerstown only a few feet from school playgrounds which aresafe for bicycling and go virtually unused for that purpose during most of the time in the summer?

Why do so many individuals who complained last winter that they just couldn't stand it if the thermostat was lower than 74 or thereabouts seem to enjoy nowadays the local buildings where air conditioning keeps the temperature down to 72 or even cooler? The reverse ought to be true, judging by the amount of clothing which many local women are wearing or not wearing this summer.

Why do some people who keep wishing the good old days were back, when there were personal-service groceries, meat markets and bake shops everywhere in Hagerstown, patronize self-service filling stations? If self-service gas wipes out the full service filling stations, the public will be complaining about the very same absence of the personal touch and all the little extras of gas pumps that they miss in supermarkets.

Not long after that column appeared, Maryland removed the sales tax exemption take-out food ordershad enjoyed. But I doubt if there was any cause-and-effect element at work. The situation had been causing gripes for quite a while, particularly from food establishments who didn't know what to do about the chiselers who ordered food to go and then stood or sat around inside, eating and drinking it. Here's something I turned out around the time when Gone With the Wind was making its first television appearance, after trying to discover if the fuss over that movie had come mostly in retrospect or from its actual impact:

Movies have been making a comeback in Hagerstown and vicinity. There are more theaters in operation around here than ever before, a few films are so popular that they're held over week after week, and the showing of a famous movie on television forms a topic of conversation for days.

But it's doubtful if any film in the last 37 years has made quite as big an impact on Hagerstown as Gone With the Wind achieved when it received its premiere here in the early days of 1940.

It didn't run as long as the most popular movies shown here in recent years, because Hollywood was producing so many new movies each week, and it didn't gross nearly as much in Hagerstown as today's hits because movie tickets cost so much more nowadays.

But this city, like most of the nation, went bananas over the heavily publicized film version of a novel everyone had been reading during the late 1930's. The movie has drawn pretty well on its re-

peated returns to local theaters, and it's hard to find any Hagerstonian who didn't watch at least part of it when it showed on television for the first time several months ago.

Margaret Mitchell's famous story in its screen adaptation even had a lasting effect on interior decorating in this area. If you read the fine print in those public sale notices on the classified advertising pages, you'll find time after time "Gone With the Wind lamp" included among the items offered, usually in the antique section even though such lamps almost always were manufactured as a result of the movie.

The Maryland Theater was the scene of the first showing of Gone With the Wind in Hagerstown. Its local premiere was distinctive because it was one of the advance-ticket-sale ventures which were a real novelty to moviegoers in 1940.

The three hour, 59 minute movie was screened there only twice daily, once in the afternoon and again at night. All seats were reserved, costing 75 cents for the afternoon performance and $1.10 for the night show, two and three times as much as normal admission fees for this area's theaters in 1940. Apparently there was no reduced price for children who attended.

The box office was open 13 hours daily to accept orders for several weeks before the February 12 local premiere. You could also order by mail.

There was a strenuous advance publicity campaign here, advising the public of such matters as the way it had taken a million man-hours to make the film. Local residents had been following for years the ballyhooed search for an actress to play the role of Scarlett O'Hara, then the difficulties involved in actual production of the movie.

Vivien Leigh, who won the female lead, wore in several scenes of the film a gown which was shipped to Hagerstown as a special promotional feature. Originally it was supposed to arrive here before the movie's local debut, but people in Richmond, Va., its previous stop, thronged to see it in such numbers that it didn't become available until February 15. It was displayed in the window of Leiter Brothers store, now Routzahn's, on West Washington Street, complete with stays and panwtelette. Other downtown stores trimmed windows with less authentic souvenirs of the film.

The Saturday matinee performance was sold out long before the week of February 12, but tickets for other showings seem to have remained available up to performance time. On the premiere day itself, about a thousand persons attended each screening, below capacity.

Both local dailies gave the movie the rare tribute of long reviews. The two reviewers differed on one matter. "The only criticism to be made was the speech wasn't truly the slurred southern accent," the Herald lamented. "The cultivated southern accent rang true," the Mail asserted.

As the week progressed, manager George Payette found his theater receiving numerous patrons from Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. Asked why they made a long trip to see a movie which was being shown in their own cities, they explained that there was no reserved seating there, so they'd bought tickets in Hagerstown.

During the run of Gone With the Wind, which was extended three days into the following week due to excellent ticket sales, Hagerstown found its normal 11 p.m. shutdown of downtown activities extended until midnight, because of the length of the movie. Taxi drivers enjoyed rush business around 12 and hungry patrons discovered a de-

cided shortage of places to eat when they emerged from the film.

One woman, the granddaughter of a Confederate soldier, confided that she almost walked out when the soundtrack started playing Marching Through Georgia. Her family always taught her that it was unladylike for any Southerner to listen to that tune.

Many business firms permitted employes to take an afternoon off to see the movie, apparently fearing the consequences of sleepy workers if they stayed up to go at night before a business day.

One journalist was impressed by the large number of men in the audiences and the rapt attention they paid to the screen. Local men had been poohpoohing the book and movie as something best suited for women, apparently.

Even the worst blizzard in eight years, which struck on the night of February 14, didn't ruin interest in the movie.

Finally all those reels of color film were shipped to the next stop and Little Old New York, starring Alice Faye and a very young Fred MacMurray, succeeded David Selznick's famous production on the Maryland's screen.

The most curious thing about the entire commotion was the fact that Gone With the Wind was advertised in the local papers very sparingly. Only the smallest advertisements were published, apparently in the belief that the high pressure publicity campaign was enough to bring in the customers.

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The Worst of Martin

A Girl of Pompeii

A public haunt they found herm in:
  She lay asleep, a lovely child;
  The only thing left undefiled
Where all things else bore taint of sin.

Her charming contours fixed in clay
  The universal law suspend,
  And turn Time's chariot back, and blend
A thousand years with yesterday.

A sinless touch, austere yet warm,
  Around her girlish figure pressed,
  Caught the sweet imprint of her breast,
And held her, surely clasped, from harm.

Truer than work of sculptor's art
  Comes this dear maid of long ago,
  Sheltered from woeful chance, to show
A spirit's lovely counterpart,

And bid mistrustful men be sure
  That form shall fate of flesh escape,
  And, quit of earth's corruptions, shape
Itself, imperishably pure.

The End
(from Home: Friendship, by Ed Martin)