

Portrait of the Artist

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I am, as most of you realize, one of the world's worst letter-writers. Once every couple of months I may send a brief note winging to Florida, but that is about the extent of my accomplishments in the field. So when it comes time to send Christmas cards -- the only contact I maintain with relatives and far-flung friends I don't see at the science fiction conventions -- I feel somewhat stupid just scrawling my name on a card, and I haven't the faintest idea of what to put in any brief note. So I usually do the former and go ahead and feel stupid. But this year I'm going to try what a number of my friends who also publish amateur magazines do: put the mimeograph to work and include this one-sheet review of the year.

1972 was mostly just a continuation of things begun previously. There were no spectacular advances, no sweeping changes. But then, there were no noticeable retreats or retrenchments, either. I am still working as the Acquisitions Librarian at the UCLA Engineering Library, and I served as President of the UCLA Librarians Association during 1972. (There are such Associations on all nine campuses of the University of California, operating individually on local matters and together on statewide library matters.)

I was Co-Chairman of the 30th World Science Fiction Convention, put on over the Labor Day weekend here in L.A., and that took up quite a bit of spare time, both before and after the convention itself. There were 2007 registered attendees, the convention lasted from Thursday night until Tuesday morning, and the committee won't be finished with the mopping-up of details for a couple years, when the convention proceedings are finally published. Though it was a lot of work, both for me and for the majority of the committee of a dozen or so, it was generally a very successful convention, and we're planning to bid for another, to be put on in 1975.

For the fourth consecutive year, I was Treasurer of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, the oldest science fiction club in the world (1934), and the only one with a \$23,000 Building Fund. The Fund has been building since the end of 1963, but \$18,000 has been added during the last four years. With luck, we'll be able to get our permanent meeting place this next year, assuming we can continue to add to the Fund at the same rate. I just got re-elected for a fifth year, so I'll still be riding herd on the building of the Building Fund.

Duplicate bridge continued in second place on my list of hobbies. Since I began playing duplicate around August of 1971, I've played an average of twice a week, usually one week night and once on the weekend. (Weeks where I don't play on a week night are made up for by the occasional tournament on a weekend, when we play several times.) My partner, Drew Sanders, and I have managed to pick up several small trophies during the past year from tournament and bridge club series. (Though we haven't done any trophy-winning since we became ineligible for the novice and junior games. It will take a while for us to be able to do that well against the really experienced players.) I shall steadfastly resist the urge to diagram a particularly delightful hand we ran into last week... .

In September I started a class in Russian, for various reasons -- it will help me in my work; I may get to go to Leningrad in a few years when I go back to Europe (I want to see the museum called the Heritage -- have wanted to do so since Life ran the photo series on the place back in around 1965 or so); and my girl friend was also taking the class at that time. The probability is that I'll drop after this semester -- it takes up two nights from 6-10, in effect, and I'm too short on time. Elayne will probably continue, since she wants to be a language major.

I didn't get to do much travelling this year, since my vacation time went to putting on the convention. There were a couple trips on Library business to the San Francisco area this fall, a couple to San Diego -- one on business and one for a bridge tournament -- and various short half-day trips around the Southern California area. One of the latter was a trip to the wine country around Cucamonga with five friends. The various wineries have tasting rooms, and you can sample whatever wines they have. The Cucamonga area is the second most important wine area in California, the other being the Napa Valley in Northern California. (I managed to hit a few of the wineries in that area too, coming back from the business trips.) I'm considering becoming a Wine Snob of the type that knows all the good wines of the small out-of-the-way wineries that no one else has ever heard of. (I can't afford to be the kind that only orders, or stocks, The Best Of Everything.) Ever heard of a wine called Lambrusco? Well, there's this little importing winery called Opici...

There were a couple minor difficulties this past summer. I had an accident on the freeway when the brakes on my Econoline van grabbed and pulled me into the divider at about 70 MPH, spun the car around, and left it turned 180 degrees in the second lane. Neither of us in the car were hurt, no other car hit us (nor we them), and after an Auto Club truck pulled the fender out from scraping into the wheel, we were able to finish our trip. The accident took out the two headlights and the left turn signal, and that's about all. Insurance covered all but \$100, but I had to forego the use of the thing for a little over a week.

Then I had a minor burglary during the convention. Someone got in through the kitchen window, unplugged the stereo speakers, and made off with them. He may also have taken a small jewelry box with absolutely nothing of value in it (or I may have misplaced it). With money the convention owed me, I went out and bought new speakers -- KIH 24's, at \$100 each. And I'm much more careful about the windows these days.

At present my two-bedroom apartment houses, in addition to myself and an incredible amount of books, magazines, and miscellaneous junk, my bridge partner Drew, and a Burmese cat named Diophantine (usually called just Dio). Dio has been here for about a year and three quarters, having been acquired from some friends in New York in the spring of 1971. (They had to get rid of either Dio, a neutered female almost six years old, or the six-months old kitten they were planning to raise and breed -- Dio had a habit of picking on the kitten rather thoroughly. So, since my reaction on meeting Dio the previous year had been a threat to steal her when I left New York, they called and asked if I still wanted her. I did, and Dio arrived via TWA the next night.) She is very useful as a secondary alarm clock, utilizing her very insistent voice in my ear and her rather sharpclaw in my chest to remind me that she has to be fed before I go to work, and the alarm went off some time ago. (She tried the same routine on a Saturday morning only once; after picking herself up off the floor several feet away, she got the idea that the weekend was somewhat different.) Drew, who stayed here during the summer and moved out to sublet a shared apartment from a mutual friend who was going to a University in Mexico for a quarter, has just moved back again.

Plans for next year include a trip to Toronto for the convention over Labor Day weekend, driving there and back if time and driving arrangements will allow. I'd like to be able to take enough time to go through various small towns and shop through their junk stores looking for books and various oddments. It will require at least three weeks, and maybe four, so I may not be able to do it this year. The long-range plans are to be able to go to Australia in 1975 and northern Europe in 1976. I like to travel with a couple friends and see various places, and I hope to be able to do more of it in the next few years.

The title of this is a reference to a poem by Dorothy Parker, not a book by Joyce. Have a nice year!
-- -- Bruce (IncNeb Pub 941)