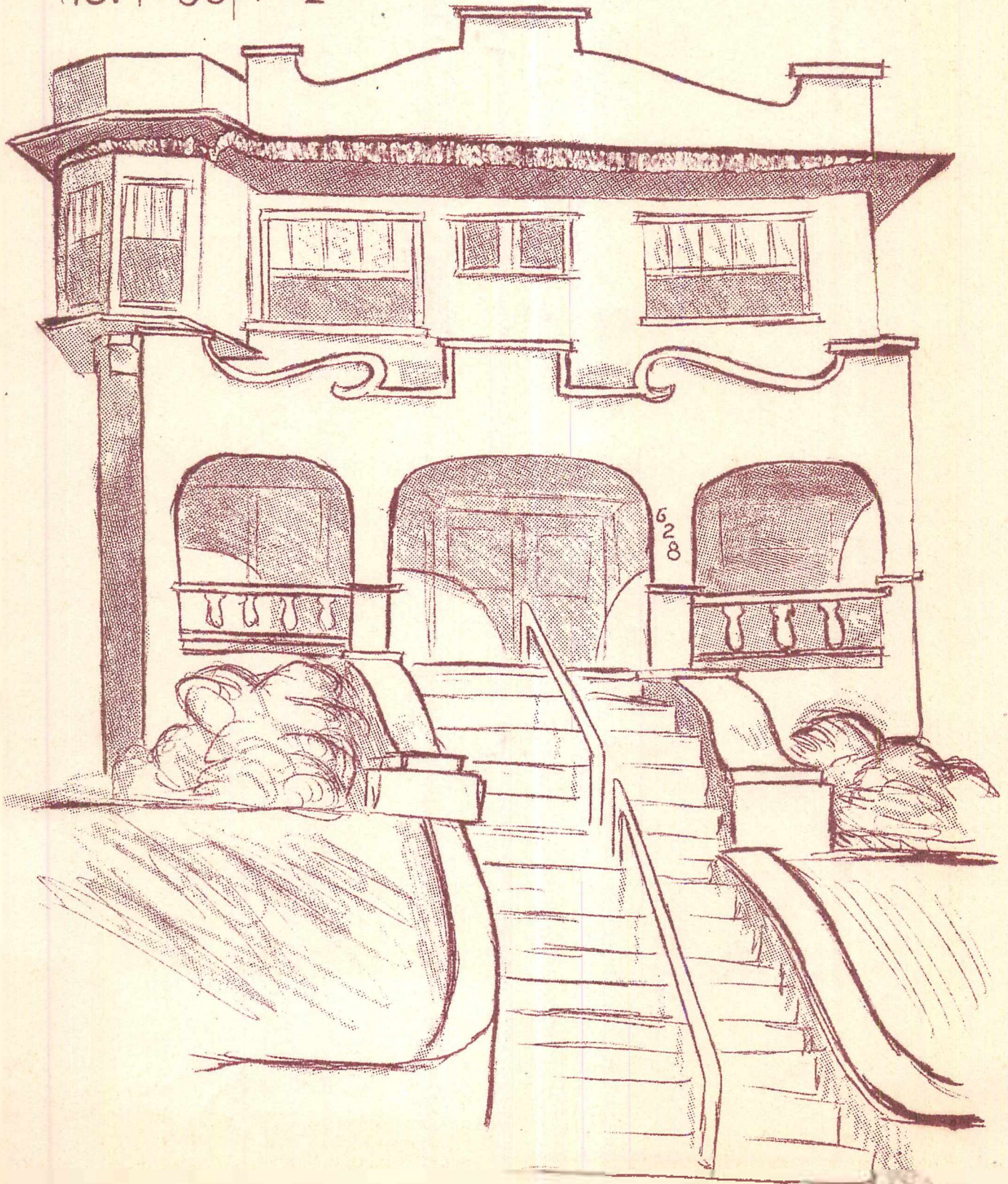
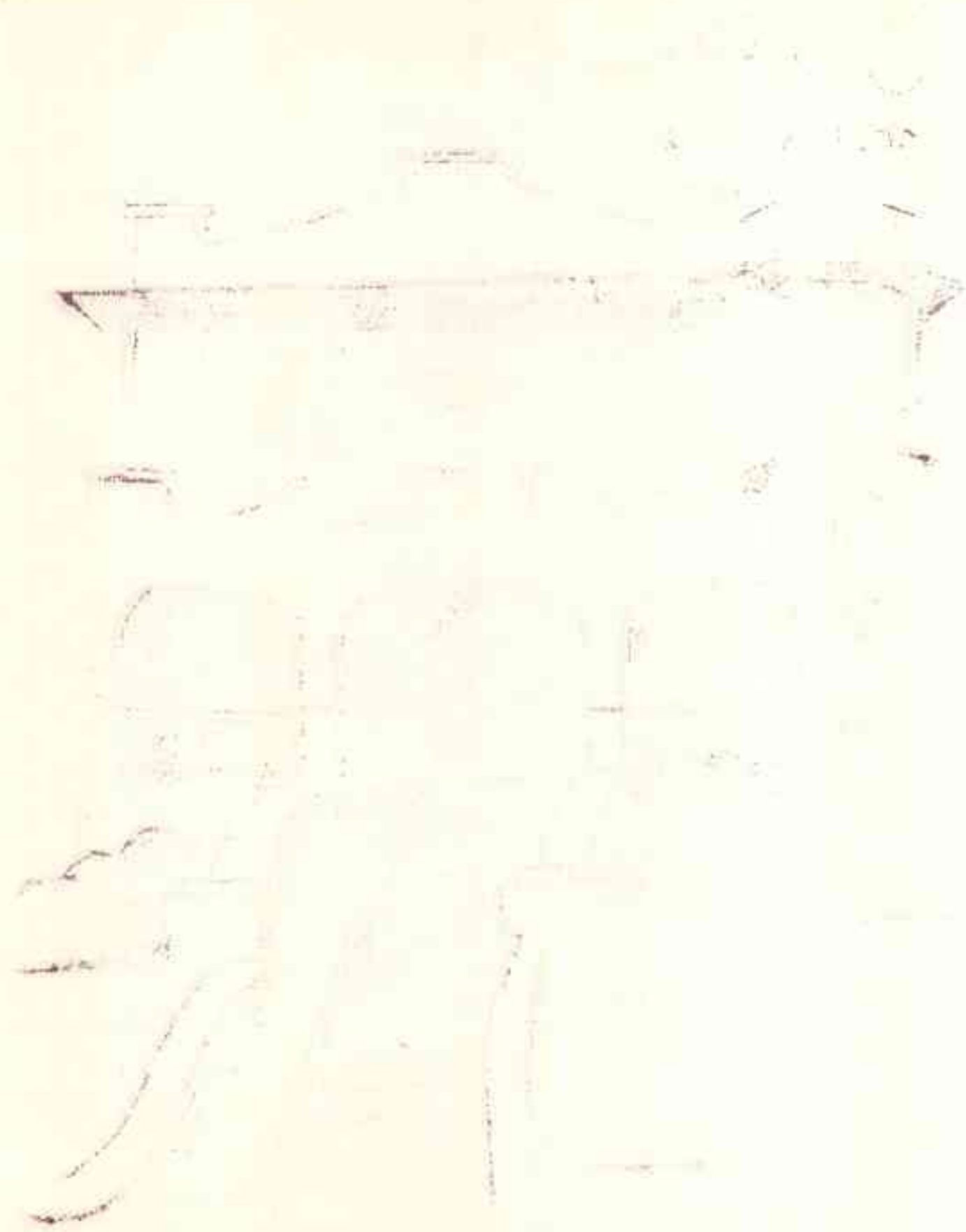


oixel

no. 1 - sept 62





BIXEL

NUMBER ONE SEPT 1962

contents

Cover: Tendril Towers - Alva Rogers

Bixelangsyne Editorial 2

Your Friendly BEM Dealer Article Cleve Cartmill 4

Emergency Flare Column Harry Warner, Jr. 6

A Little Novel Eugene Field 9

Journey to Shangri-LA Con Report Alva Rogers 10

A Palfy of the Yard William Salmon, Med. Profeff. 28

Cynthia Goldstone, pages 8, 14, 23

Terry Jeeves, pages 4, 20

Alva Rogers, pages 16, 20

Bixel #1 is published for the 33rd mailing of the OFF - TRAIL
MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION, September, 1962, by Alva
Rogers, 5243 Rahlves Drive, Castro Valley, California, U.S.A.
and is available to others for contributions, letters of com-
ment, or 25¢. Mimeo'd on the Rike Gestettner by The Hook and
Crook Press, Bill Donaho, prop. Copyright 1962 by Alva Rogers

BIXELANGZYNE *alva rogers*

This first issue of BIXEL marks my debut as a fanzine publisher. A year or so ago, during a party at Ray Nelson's, I was in the kitchen talking to Danny Curran and Poul Anderson, when Big Bill Donaho came in, laid his hand gently on my shoulder, and said, "Alva, why don't you try and get into OMPA?"

After I'd struggled up from the floor and rubbed my aching shoulder, I looked askance at this amiable giant and bleated, "Me? In an apa? Publish a fanzine? You're out of your ever lovin' mind. I've been a fan for twenty years and never published a fanzine...why start now? I'll write for VIPER, but publish my own zine? Hah!"

Hah! indeed. Liquor was my downfall; demon rum had so befogged my brain that I was unable to marshal any arguments coherent enough to counter Donaho's, and he was so friendly and persuasive...

His clincher was his offer to take care of all the publishing chores --all I would have to do would be to cut the stencils, he would do the rest. This struck me as such a selflessly generous inducement to me to strike for OMPA that I didn't have it in my heart to refuse him.

So, for what it's worth, my presence in OMPA is due largely to Bill Donaho. I'm looking forward to my participation in OMPA with a good deal of pleasure...I only hope Bill thinks it was worth all the trouble he took to get me in...

WHAT'S IN A NAME

About the name of this magazine. There was a time, twenty years ago, when the name Bixel rang gloriously throughout the length and breadth of fandom; when the short block of South Bixel between Wilshire Blvd. and Sixth Street was the most famous stretch of city pavement in fandom...for situated midway this block, on opposite sides of the street, were the LASFS clubroom at 637½ and Tendril Towers at 628. Now, this street is just another street. No longer does the gay carefree laughter of happy fans engaged in cooperative fanac come floating out onto the summer air from the open door of the clubroom; no longer are the sidewalks covered with the footprints of fans; no more is to be seen the heart-warming sight of Fran Laney and Porry Ackerman walking arm in arm up the street in jolly camaraderie; no more do the lights in the rooms of Tendril Towers shine down on the heads of slans...they now shine down on dull nonfannish pates; no more do the projects of Walt Daugherty excite paeons from an admiring fandom; no more do the Knaves and Outsiders engage in friendly rivalry with the LASFS...alas, all is gone--faded into history.

In spite of the many scurrilous things that have been said and written about this wonderful street and what it stood for, I know that in the hearts of a few doddering old Angelenos (and a few ancient fans from other parts of the country, also) a warm spark for what this street once

was in the middle ages of fandom still flickers.

Therefore, to insure that this most significantly historical fannish street not be forgotten in these latter days, I proudly name my fanzine after it; in addition to which, I give you on the cover a drawing of one of the most famous houses in the history of fandom--628 South Bixel, sometimes known as "Tendrill Towers," or...well, we'll let that one ride. This house has been immortalized in print by Francis T. Laney, Charles Burbee, and others--but to my knowledge this is the first time a good picture of it in all its magnificently beautiful ugliness has been presented to fandom. I consider this a very Worthwhile Thing.

CONTRIBUTORS...

I'm indebted to Cleve Cartmill, who is an old, old, friend, for his article. Cleve hasn't written anything in the science fiction/fantasy field for many, many, years--and the field is, I believe, the poorer for it. The adult, sophisticated stories that Cleve wrote for UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING twenty or so years ago enriched the genre immensely...a similar enrichment of the field today would not go unappreciated, I'm sure. Perhaps, as Cleve believes, we're about due for another breakthrough into something new and exciting like we had back in the early forties. I hope so.

Harry Warner, in his column (which I hope will not be a one shot resuscitation), mentions Ray Harryhausen and wonders if the special effects artist of the movies is the same Harryhausen who once belonged to the old LASFL and was interested in amateur movie making. It is. I knew Ray slightly in the early forties, and spent one fascinated evening in his home in company with Fran Laney and Forry Ackerman. The excuse for the visit was to pick up a life sized bust of Odd John that Ray had made as a mold for a rubber mask used by one of the LA fans at the Denvention in 1941. After molding the mask Ray had painted the bust a flesh tone, put in Odd John's facial features and covered the head with cotton. It was a perfect reproduction of Stapledon's character. We wanted it to grace the clubroom.

As near as I can remember, Ray had a studio set up in a barn-like building behind his house. In it he had set up an elaborate prehistoric scene in miniature, but extremely realistic, detail--ground, trees, bushes, and a menagerie of dinosaurs that was almost unbelievable. All beautifully detailed, fully articulated, and all manufactured by Ray. He shot part of a scene he was working on for us, demonstrating how carefully he had to account for every movement of rock, tree, and beast, for each frame of the scene of a death struggle between two dinosaurs. It was truly fascinating. From this hobby he gained the experience and skill to eventually become one of the finest special effects artists in Hollywood...and Ray is an artist, believe me.

ON CON REPORTS

When I first contemplated writing a con report I had in mind to simply write a more-or-less objective account of what transpired at the convention. But the more I thought about it in the days following, the more subjective my remembrances became. It seemed highly likely that

(continued on page 27)

YOUR FRIENDLY BEM DEALER by Cleve Cartmill



In a recent personal letter to the editor, I said that I thought current science fiction, on the whole, was inanimately introspective. In his reply to my letter, he asked me to expand this remark.

It's hard to do this and not sound snotty. If I had written any recent things, they would have been even more inanimately introspective than the average s-f yarn of the sixties. I sympathize with the problems of current s-f writers, and wish I could offer a solution.

If I could, I'd write it in dramatic form and sell it to one of the magazines.

The problem is this: What do we write about now?

The bomb over Hiroshima in 1945--about which I wrote rather badly at some length 17 months before it happened--as I say, the bomb over Hiroshima closed off the most diversified field to the s-f writer: nuclear power.

It did it in this way: the speculative adventures which we had been writing for years, based on nuclear power, suddenly became current possibilities if not realities. And since science fiction in the main deals with future possibilities, nuclear power and its applications in their theoretical immediacy cut off this field as a speculative source.

Science fiction foresaw the 100-megaton bomb and its implications (for example, Bob Heinlein's "Solution Unsatisfactory") long before it was a physical possibility. When it became a possibility in 1945, its social and diplomatic effects became an actual burden for living men and not an exercise for s-f writers.

Those effects are shaping world thought and action as I write this. A radioactive cloud of gasses and debris is circling the globe at this moment, expected to fall on civilization during the spring rains of 1962.

The upshot is too immediate for s-f writers, who deal mainly in problems of a future we may not ever see. We shied away, as of 1945, and still shy away from speculation.

Therefore, we have turned our thoughts inward. What is man, why is man, where is he going? That sort of thing.

This is all very fine, and has been the subject in one aspect or oth-

ers of some rewarding "mainstream" fiction. But when you try to fit it into the traditional format of science fiction it sometimes becomes dull reading, talky, pedestrian, probing without action.

The late Hank Kuttner once told me, "First you get your hero up a tree. Then you throw rocks at him." This was science fiction: action and reader identification. And if the story started to sag, you had somebody walk through a door (or a wall) with a blaster in his hand.

It wasn't sophisticated, maybe; it wasn't slick. But it was entertaining, and if the writer wove in a philosophical theme it seemed to have stature.

The primary purpose of fiction is to entertain. So says Somerset Maugham, who ought to know.

This is what science fiction seems to have stopped doing some time ago. The hero starts on a perfectly legitimate project of mayhem, arson, or world-saving, and he soon becomes heavy laden with problems of a social, religious, or sexual nature and all he does is talk about them.

When he gets up a tree, instead of dodging brickbats he dodges issues.

What we ought to do, probably, is bring back the BEM. The Bug-Eyed Monster was long and long the aegis of science fiction. It panted after bare-bosomed heroines, it dripped menace.

The biggest BEM today is Mr K's gas cloud, and what it implies. Should civilization build fall-out shelters or buy the new pills that protect from radiation?

If Joe Blow can't afford a shelter, and if his wife and mother-in-law are dead set against pill-taking, how will he protect his family?

Is a defensive move the smart thing, or should we take arms against our clouds of troubles and end them? If thereby we create greater clouds of trouble, what then?

It should be obvious that the BEM needs modern dress, and it can take many forms. The above suggestions cover only minutely one small aspect of the broad field of menace that exists today and which can be extrapolated ad infinitum.

Science fiction writers are feeling their way, probing for a breakthrough as significant as space-travel was to early science fiction.

They'll find it. Space travel, BEMs, and nuclear power were once the standbys. They need replacing. And one of these days, some writer --perhaps a beginner--will come up with a basic idea that can be exploited, explored and expanded so that s-f may become an exciting and respectable art form.

(continued on page 9)

EMERGENCY FLARE

by
Harry Warner, Jr.

This title as the name of a catch-all column has a distressingly long history. I'd like to hear from anyone who can remember the circumstances under which I first used it and the things it contained at that time. As soon as I determine who remembers, I'll try to think of a way to exterminate the possessors of such embarrassing recollections.

For this revival of a column, probably a oneshot resuscitation if I have anything to do with it, I would like to register first of all a jarring note of disagreement. It involves Terry Carr and the fact that he has suddenly started to sell one story after another to The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. From all over the fannish cosmos, I am now hearing such remarks as: "Gee whiz, here's another example of how a fan is developing into a writer good enough to sell to the professional markets!" And "I knew that all Terry needed to do was practice, and he'd make good."

I think that those people don't know what they're talking about. I don't think that Terry Carr has just developed the writing skill necessary to sell professionally, and I wasn't in the least surprised to learn about his successes. I think that Terry has possessed for at least the past three or four years the writing skills needed to make money from his typewriter. And I believe that the surprise and pride that are being evidenced that another fan has made good are an injustice to the fannish writings of Terry Carr and a perfect sample of the inferiority complex that fandom possesses about its members' writing abilities. Innuendo was a fanzine that better editing than about three-fourths of the publications that are sold on the newsstands today. Ninety percent of the newsstand publications do not regularly publish non-fiction prose of the quality that were found in the best of Innuendo's contents. Anyone who thinks that the hack who has learned the tricks of the trade necessary to sell to the confessions magazines or to market a typical paperback novel can write as well as Willis, Carr or Grennell is unable to tell good writing from mishmash. If there's a moral in the Terry Carr success story, it is this: that the best fan writers who do not sell professionally remain untainted by the scars of filthy prodom solely because they don't want to create prose of the type that will sell, or because they haven't taken the trouble to learn the markets or because they're too busy to try to market their stuff. We've had enough examples of fans who were only moderately good in the fanzines proceeding to support themselves by professional writing of journeyman quality. We've had a few examples of fans who were very good in the fanzines turning into major figures in the mundane literary world, like Sam Youd and Ray Bradbury. I'm sure that Terry Carr will fall into the latter category. But please, let's not display an inferiority complex about the literary quality of good fanzine writing.

Another matter that has bothered me lately is the lamentations that circle upwards to the gray, impersonal skies, over the terrible state of today's popular music. Several fanzines have become battlegrounds for action with live ammunition when some brave soul dared to

contend that there's at least a limited amount of rhythm or melody in rock and roll. One blast at the quality of the top forty tunes received the rare distinction of a reprint in another fanzine soon after it's original incarnation.

Now I have not been able to enjoy hit parade tunes and the kind of records that teen-agers go crazy over since I was about eleven years old. I seem to remember that in the same week, I became aware of the fact that Tin Pan Alley and the Saturday Evening Post had both suddenly become things to be left behind me. However, I don't think it's very wise to imagine that the current junk is worse than what was emerging from juke boxes twenty years ago or from Atwater-Kent radios in the 1920's or from pianolas soon after the turn of the century. The complaints about the disintegration that the top tunes will impose upon the constitution and the culture of the nation seem to be just about the same in general nature, no matter when you look at the situation.

I've just run across some criticism that might be apropos. This might have been written of "Hound Dog" with allowances for the changes that the years create in writing styles: "Pianos and guitars groan with it, night and day; sentimental young ladies sing it; sentimental young gentlemen warble it in midnight serenades; volataile young bucks hum it out in the midst of their business and pleasures; boatmen roar it out stentoriously at all times; all the bands play it; amateur flute blowers agonize over it at every spare moment; the street organs grind it out every hour; the singing stars carol it on the theatrical boards...the butcher's boy treats you to a strain or two of it as he hands in the steaks for dinner; the milkman mixes it up strangely with the harsh ding-dong accompaniment of his tireless bell; there is not a live darkey, young or old, but can whistle, sing, dance and play it..." Or from a more violent critic of the same tune: "We wish to say that such tunes, although whistled and sung by everybody, are erroneously supposed to have taken a deep hold of the popular mind; that the charm is only skin deep; that they are hummed and whistled without musical emotion, whistled for lack of thought; that they persecute and haunt the morbidly sensitive nerves of deeply musical persons, so that they too hum and whistle them involuntarily, hating them even while they hum them; that such melodies become catching, idle habits, and are not popular in the sense of musically inspiring, but that such and such melody breaks out every now and then, like a morbid irritation of the skin." Or this, written after someone had encouraged some children to sing the tune: "It is marvelous to me that so many good men will insist on perpetrating such mischief--just as if children could not discriminate; as if it would do no injury to vitiate their taste, or tamper with their susceptibilities...Their minds are filled with poisonous trash, to forget which in after life would be to them a blessing."

All this excitement was raised by a song that seems fairly harmless today but must have been the mid-19th century equivalent of the latest Elvis Presley record: "Old Folks at Home."

The house next to mine is cut up cruelly into apartments, and the landlord has apparently undertaken a new hobby: that of determining how many children can be stuffed into the medium-sized rooms in this

one building. I counted only seven small fry digging tunnels under my lawn, tearing shingles from my roof, and running an obstacle course over the automobile the other evening, but it sounded like a whole school system, and I fled in sheer despair to a retreat that I utilize only under such extreme provocation: a movie theater. Now I'm glad that I did. "The Mysterious Island" was the feature picture, and this movie, although it failed to contact my sense of wonder, did succeed in penetrating to the long unused sense of adventure. I might have been back in the armchair or porchswing on Bryan Place, reading those weekly Argosys. Instant nostalgia was the product for me of such matters as the cheerful way in which the movie moved from a Richmond prison camp to an unknown island to a biological experimenter. It must be the only movie in the past decade which has introduced women as a major factor without creating some rivalry for at least one of them among the menfolk. The giant fowl, the enormous bee, and the kingsize crab were so nicely balanced between the amusing and the frightening that my senses were confused by twin impulses to laugh and to pump adrenalin, so I didn't get critical about the rabbit-from-hat manner in which the rescues from these menaces occurred.



Moreover, there was one bit of sheer beauty in the film which I can't remember experiencing in quite such a form in any movie theater since I was a tiny tad. This was the setting in which the submarine was placed. It's a strange thing: long years ago my literary perceptions became sufficiently acute to prevent me from retaining my old fondness for the Merritt stories. But this particular bit of scene-setting came so close to my old mental images of the magic lands of Merritt, formed back in the days when I thought he was the greatest master of English, that I immediately equated it with the masterpieces that I once thought I was reading, not the skilled but shallow prose that I now know the Merritt stories to contain. I think that I could be repersuaded about the qualities of Merritt's genius, if some producer could put onto the screen "The Moon Pool" or "The Face in the Abyss" with the same quality of beauty and strangeness that this subterranean submarine dock possesses.

There was one unresolved puzzle in my mind at the end of "The Mysterious Island." Of course, I wasn't sure that Captain Nemo really died, and I was not altogether certain that the adventurers would get back to civilization without mishap, but an entirely irrelevant matter really claimed my attention. This British-made picture flashed its credits in almost illegible fashion, but I spotted the name of Ray Harryhausen as the man in charge of special photographic effects. Could this be the ancient Los Angeles fan who occasionally got mentioned in the old LAGFL Imagination! back around 1938? I recall nothing about him but the unusual name and the fact that he was interested in movies. My memory seems to say that his movie interest was that

of an amateur, that he attended club meetings regularly without writing or publishing fanzines, and that he vanished from even fringe fandom soon after the war began. Can this be another case of a fan who cashed in on his interest in fantasy?

Of course, if he's the Harryhausen of Los Angeles fandom, it's just as well that he didn't remain in touch with fanzines. He might have been discouraged by these articles telling how science has caught up with fiction and he might have thought Jules Verne's stories were obsolete, just because they're about submarines and luxury balloons.

--Harry Warner, Jr.

A Little Novel —

Once there was a Little Girl who Lived all By Herself on a Lone Island. She was Oftentimes very Lonesome and as she Grew up she Longed for a Sweet Heart, but as there was nobody Else on the Island, of Course she could not Have a Beau. She had Four little Girl Babies and Three little Boy babies and She Gave them all the Candy they wanted. One day as she was giving them Some Candy, a Brave Young Prince landed on the Island and Seeing Her fell in Love with Her. She had never seen a Man before and she did not Know what to say when he Asked her to Marry him. "What will Become of My little Daughter Bella!" she asked. "She can Marry my Father, the King," said the Prince. So they All went to Church and were Married and Lived on the Lone Island happily to the End of their Lives.

--Eugene Field
(from "The Tribune Primer," 1882)

CARTMILL (conclusion)

Certain experiments are encouraging. Rod Serling, Dick Matheson, and Charlie Beaumont are doing and have done some good, twisty things on TWILIGHT ZONE.

These men are established in the field, but the field is wide open to newcomers.

As a reader, I want menace--suspense. This means BEMs in one form or another. A galaxy can be a menace, a universe can be a menace. So can a neutron.

--Cleve Cartmill

JOURNEY TO SHANGRI-LA

ALVA ROGERS

Westercon XV has come and gone (sigh!). For me, this was indeed a memorable con...for a number of assorted reasons which will be disclosed in more-or-less chronological order.

Although the con was officially scheduled for June 30-July 1, in Los Angeles, it started for me in Castro Valley on the 10th of November, 1961 when I received a letter from John Trimble under the Westercon XV letterhead.

I arrived home from work about 4 pm, tired and drug out, completely unaware that within a few seconds I would have the greatest thrill of my fannish life.

"You've got a big surprise waiting for you," Sid said, handing me an envelope with the Westercon XV symbol on it. I extracted the letter from the envelope, saw that it was from John Trimble, and started to read:

Dear Alva:

Believe it or not, we are Getting Organized for this Westercon we're ~~stuck with~~ putting on next summer. One of the key decisions we've made is that of Who to Ask to be Fan Guest of Honor.

We would like you to fill that space for us, Alva, if you don't have any concrete objections. (Stage fright is not a concrete objection!)

No one, after working his ass off all day can be expected to have all his faculties with him, and I was no exception. At first the message contained in those paragraphs completely eluded me. My eyes must have left some pretty wierd tracks on that sheet of paper, because what I read was something to the effect that John was asking me to serve on some sort of committee to help select the FGoH. I was well into the next paragraph before it suddenly hit me, what John was really saying. My next recollection is of me sitting in my chair, with what was undoubtedly a silly fatuous grin on my face, and Sid thrusting a brimfull glass of a therapeutic amber liquid into my clammy and trembling hand.

After the Wonder of It All finally sank in, and I had hurriedly sent John my acceptance, I then began to worry about my banquet speech. What the hell does a Fan Guest of Honor talk about to his fannish peers? I guiltily ignored this problem for six long months until about two weeks before the con when I finally girded up my loins, sat down at the typer, and composed a speech which--for better or worse--some hundred or so fans would be paying four bucks apiece to listen to come June 30.

I had arranged with my boss to start my vacation on June 29 so that

Sid and I would be sure to get in at the beginning of things in LA. My original plan was to get on the road around 2 am Friday the 29th, arrive in Pasadena around 7 or 8 am, unload the kids on my obliging mother, grab three or four hours sleep, and get to the Alexandria, rested and refreshed, sometime in the middle of the afternoon. My sister, who had been visiting her college roommate in Marin county, was hitching a ride back to Pasadena with us which would make seven in the car: Sid and me; the children, David, Bill, and Adrienne; our kooky miniature silver poodle, Rogi Bear; and my sister, Bonnie.

I got the car loaded and everyone (except Sid and me) to bed by eight o'clock; but the kids were so excited about the trip and the impending visits with their grandparents that it seemed hours before they finally fell asleep. About this time Brian Donahue and a nonfan, but very close friend, Tom Whayne, dropped in and nothing would do but that we have a cup of cheer or two to speed us on our way.

We finally chased Brian and Tom out about ten and then Sid and I sacked out. But do you think I could go to sleep? Cheest! I lay there in a half stupor, imagining all sorts of horrible contre temps at the banquet...while Sid slept serenely on beside me.

At eleven o'clock I said to hell with it, kicked off the covers, kicked Sid in the rump, and said, "Get up. We're taking off right now." We got everyone up and dressed, stoked up with donuts, hot chocolate and coffee and into the car and out of the driveway exactly at midnight.

Castro Valley is situated on the continental side of San Francisco Bay, roughly fifteen miles south-east of Oakland on US Highway 50. About fifty miles due east Highway 50 runs into US Highway 99, the north-south arterial that runs the length of California, through its central valleys, over the Grapevine, and eventually ending at LA. The distance is--give or take a few--375 miles...I figured to make it in about seven hours.

For the first two or three hours everything went like clockwork. The kids were behaving themselves, my sister slept, and Rogi Bear (who had been dosed with Dramamine before we left) was quiet and unobtrusive. Traffic was light at that hour and we clipped off the miles at a fairly steady 70 to 80 miles an hour. Because of its size we were taking Sid's car, a 1957 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser convertible with a Lincoln engine. With power steering, power brakes, pushbutton transmission--the whole sheen of luxury accessories for which one pays half again as much as the basic price of the car (I didn't buy the goddamn thing, Sid's father gave it to her), this land yacht almost drove itself...which fact would soon lead to disaster.

By four o'clock I was having trouble keeping my eyes open. It had been twenty hours since I had last had any sleep and the gentle roar of the engine, the animal warmth generated by six people in the close quarters of the car, and the hypnotic effect of the red lights of the cars ahead, the yellow lights of approaching cars, and the strain of peering along the beams of my own lights, were all working against me.

About fifty miles north of Bakersfield I eased off of the highway onto the shoulder and got out of the car to stretch my legs, get

the cramps out of my back, and rest my eyes. The sky was pitch black, relieved only by a faint dusting of stars and a thin crescent moon a few degrees above the eastern horizon; the quiet--after the steady muted roar of the Merc's engine--was intense and was only magnified by the occasional rumble of passing trucks and the swoosh of speeding cars, the sound of an approaching train, and the mad chirping of crickets.

Feeling somewhat refreshed I got back in the car and started to pull back onto the highway. Fortunately there was no traffic at that particular instant, because just then all hell broke loose.

There are four buttons on a Mercury pushbutton transmission, arranged in a square on a lighted panel to the left of the steering wheel. At the lower left is a button with a double function--it is neutral when pushed in normally and the starter button when pushed in all the way; to the right of that is the drive button which is the one one ordinarily uses; directly above the drive button is low which is used but rarely, and to the left of that and above the neutral/start button is reverse. The cause of all the trouble was that the back light which illuminates the buttons was burned out and I had neglected to have it replaced...trusting, instead, on my unerring knowledge of the button's locations, and on my artistically sensitive fingers.

After I got the car on the highway I had the impression that it wasn't shifting into the drive speed--was, instead, staying in low. To my befuddled mind it was obvious that I had punched the low instead of the drive button, and so, with uncanny accuracy, I reached down and punched...the reverse button. This brought about some interesting responses from the automobile; there was an ungodly screeching noise from somewhere in front of me, and the car started to buck like an enraged outlaw horse that had just had Mexican spurs driven into its flanks for the first time. Thrown off balance by this totally unexpected behaviour, I made a lightning (but faulty) calculation in my superior fan-nish mind and stabbed for another button. This time it was much, oh, so much worse! The noise was one I hope never to hear again, smoke, in an alarming quantity, erupted from under the hood, and the engine was suddenly still and dead. I had hit...again, not the drive button, but...the goddamn starter button. I had just enough momentum to coast off the highway and back onto the shoulder--and there we sat in a moment of stunned silence.

"What happened, Daddy?"...one of the kids.

"Have you killed my car?" cried Sid, who had been jerked out of a fairly sound sleep by all these mad goings on.

"I don't know," I said, giving the starter button a hopeful push. Nothing, not a whisper.

"I guess so," I sighed, seeing all our carefully hoarded vacation money going into some garage's cash register.

"You bastard," Sid said. I might say here that Sid has a thing going with that car of hers which I sometimes think exceeds the more normal relationship between an owner and his car.

"I don't know, but I think I just tore hell out of the transmission," I told my disgusted family, after I had looked futilely under the hood, the body itself, and the rear end. I didn't know what I was looking for, but it seemed the thing to do.

I left the parking and tail lights on and the hood raised toward the sky, looking--in the blackness of the night--for all the world like a great bird that had fallen wounded to earth. I then took up position, flashlight in hand, at the side of the road hoping to flag down some Samaritan of the Highway.

It is very discouraging to be stranded on a great American highway in the dead of night with a car full of one's family and watch great trucks and sleek automobiles speeding unconcernedly by. To add insult to injury, as I would wave my flashlight beseechingly and then shine it hopefully on the upraised hood of my poor car, about half the oncoming trucks would flick their lights to high beam as they roared on by.

Finally a car stopped. It was all I could do to keep from embracing the driver as he got out of his car. But instead, I restrained myself and told him my tale of woe. Although he was travelling south with his wife and son to San Diego, he insisted that I get in his car and he would drive me back north to Tulare, the nearest fair sized town, to see if I could find a garage. Before leaving my family I gave Sid instructions to close the windows and lock the doors, and under no circumstances to open them to anyone except a Highway Patrolman. This, naturally, had a less than salubrious effect on her already frayed nerves.

We didn't reach Tulare but, instead, found a Shell station that was open and obtained from the attendant the phone number of a twenty-four hour garage not too far south of where the car had broken down, operated by a man who he said did good work without gouging the customer. I phoned this Noble Mechanic and arranged to meet him at the car, which, he assured me, he would have no difficulty finding. We returned to the car and--after refusing any money for all his troubles--my benefactor sped off into the night for San Diego.

It was six o'clock by the time Mr Hollis, the mechanic, finally pushed us into his depressingly ramshackle garage and we were finally able to fully assess the damage. I was immensely relieved to hear him declare that the damage was relatively minor and could be remedied by merely replacing the starter which would cost me altogether about forty dollars. In about an hours time the car was ready to roll and I toolled it back on the highway, hopelessly behind my schedule.

I gave up trying to keep my eyes open, so I turned the wheel over to my sister who had had the most sleep of the three adults. I dozed in the back seat until we were about half way up the Grapevine where I came to, glanced over Bonnie's shoulder at the gas guage and told her to pull in at the next Standard Oil station we came to. We stopped and, while the tank was being filled, everyone got out to stretch and refresh themselves. After this stop I took the wheel again and we continued without incident to Pasadena, pulling up in front of my parents' apartment around ten o'clock.

Because of the lack of bedroom facilities in my parent's apartment we had arranged for the children to stay in a nearby hotel under the supervision of Bonnie, and for Fogi Bear to be boarded out at a kennel called "Towne House for Dogs." Before checking the kids into their hotel we rested and visited with my mother for a half-hour or so, and then Bonnie, Sid, and the kids went downstairs to get in the car and drive to the hotel and kennel.

I was sitting in the living room more asleep than awake talking to my mother when Bonnie came back in.

"Alvey (my family call name used only by my parents, my brothers and sisters, and one Bob Buechley), it's done it again," she announced, looking as if she could cry. Oh, God!

I went to check, feeling masculinely confident that the two gals had just goofed in some way, because Mr Hollis back in Pixley had assured me that my troubles were over. Hah.

I pressed the starter button. Sure enough...it was deader'n hell. I sat there for a moment, swearing quietly and wishing that I had ol' Laney's mastery of profanity. My immediate reaction was that I had been royally screwed by that bastardly robber back the road a piece.

We eventually arranged with the Mercury agency to have the AAA tow the car to their garage and then they would call me back telling me what the trouble was and how much it would cost. In the meantime my father came home for lunch and Bonnie borrowed his VW and took the kids to their hotel to get them cleaned up and into some fresh clothes.



After an hour or so the Mercury outfit called and laid a bomb right up against my eardrum. Mr Hollis, it seems, had taken care of only half the damage. The starter had been shot, true enough, but a thinguma-bob on the Bendix of the starter had ripped the bejesus out of some doonicky called the converter, and it would cost me one-hundred-and-fifty dollars to have it fixed. Jesus H. Christ!

Well, to make a long story short, we finally--after much phoning between Pasadena and San Diego--got bailed out by Dr Rees, Sid's father, who arranged with the garage to have him billed for the work; and in addition, he sent us a lovely check by Western Union to restore our solvency. The garage informed me that the car wouldn't be ready until the next day (Saturday), but I couldn't care less...it was being fixed and I wasn't stuck with the bill.

I slept for two or three hours while Sid visited with my mother, and then my father came home from work and we piled into his VW with our luggage, and Sid and I were on the last leg, finally, of our trip to Los Angeles and to two days of glorious fanning!

When we got into LA I asked my father if he minded taking a little detour up South Bixel Street because I wanted to get some pictures of my old fannish domicile at 628 before it fell victim to the inexorable

advance of progress and was razed to make room for a redevelopment project, or something.

We turned off Wilshire Boulevard onto South Bixel and there it was, half way up the block--with the old LASFS clubroom at 637 $\frac{1}{2}$ directly across the street. Ah! The fannish memories this old street brought back. If I squinted my eyes just a little I could almost see Fran Laney hurrying up the street with his loose-jointed stride; and if I strained my ears just the least bit I was almost sure I could hear the noises of fannish activity coming out the open door of the clubroom... yes, I was sure of it...that staccato typing could only be Forry cutting a VQM stencil...and over there was Jimmy Kepner and Mel Brown coming down the steps from Tendril Towers, Jimmy lean and Byronic, Mel looking like a friendly brown bear, arguing with each other, oblivious to everything...and, by God! there was old Perdue with that everpresent smile on his face, and his face just the least bit flushed from his afternoon bottle of wine, weaving oh so slightly, going, I would wager, to the clubroom to putter around with his printing press. Everywhere I looked, up and down this short block, brought back memories of fan friends and events of a long gone twenty years ago. God! It was wonderful!

Dad pulled up to the curb and--still aglow with memories--I got out and went across the street to get a good shot at Tendril Towers, huddling in shabby dejection on its little plot of grass, overwhelmed by the apartment buildings on either side of it. I got two good shots of it from different angles with my borrowed Zeiz Ikon Contaflex, and then crossed back in order to get a couple of pictures of the building that used to house the clubroom. After discretely wiping a tear or two from the corner of my eye, I got back in the Volks and we headed back downtown for the Alexandria.

At last! After what seemed an eternity since we left Castro Valley for this west coast fannish lecca, we pulled up in front of the Alexandria. And who should greet us at the curb but Bruce Pelz, resplendent in a magnificent beard, who was immediately enfolded into Sid's arms as she shrieked, "Bruce," giving him a bear-hug and a resounding kiss.

While I registered and went up to room 1280 with the bellboy, Sid birddogged it for the bar to see what the action was. After getting squared away in the room I grabbed an elevator and went back to the lobby to find the bar and my wife. As I headed for the bar I passed by the coffee shop, and glancing in, saw Sid sitting at a table with someone who looked remarkably like an old and dear friend whom we hadn't seen since we moved from San Diego to the Bay Area--ten years ago. By God! It was! It was Stuart Palmer, the one and only, original, Stu Palmer who used to dandle our eleven year old son on his knee when Bill was just a baby.

After the heartfelt greetings were over we sat there and cut up old touches about the San Diego days with the three of us and Cleve Cartmil and Craig Rice and everyone else we could think about and getting our words all tangled up and interrupting each other and being incoherent because we had so much to talk about in such a relatively short time.

With such an auspicious beginning I knew this was indeed going to be a very fine con.

Soon other people wandered in...Len Loffatt, Rick Sneary, Al haLevy, God knows who else. Forry and Wendy came in together and Forry, smiling enigmatically, reached into a bundle of stuff he was carrying under his arm, and with an extravagant gesture withdrew a square of illustration board and handed it to me. Good grief! It was an uncompleted drawing of mine from about 1944 which had originally been intended as a dust jacket for a whodunit by August Derleth, until Derleth and I had a difference of opinion or something and severed our relations. I had completely forgotten about it until that very instant when the sight of the drawing brought it all back to me. That Ackerman is a most remarkable fellow.

Frankly, most of the rest of the evening is just a jumble of memories all mixed up in my mind...possibly because most of the evening was spent in the bar. Sometime in the early evening I remember going up to the California Room on the third floor which was the official convention room, to register and get my name badge. The first thing...er, person I saw was a goodlooking man talking to a youngster of about twelve or so. Even though his hair was much sparser than it was of yesteryear (and I hadn't seen him for almost fifteen years) I instantly recognized Walter J. Daugherty. How could I ever forget Daugherty. In the old days he'd shared his apartment with me when I was broke, and bought me the first set of oil paints I ever owned...and never asked a penny for any of it. Indeed, I do remember Daugherty. He spotted me, and finally shaking the little monster fan, came over and greeted me with all his old ebullience. We stood and reminisced for a while and then I started circulating around the room, talking for a while to Jean Cox and Bill Cox, and Dave Fox, and Bill Ellern, and John Trimble, and Lee Sapiro, and Bjo, and Morrie Dollens, and Ed Wyman, who informed me when asked that the Busby's wouldn't be in until Saturday...and a few minutes later I glanced toward the door and there was Elinor. Good old Ed Wyman.

I was talking to Jean Cox about Charles Schneeman, who I'm planning to do an article on for Rhomagnetic Digest Real Soon Now, when Sid swept in informing me she was hungry and how about taking her out and putting some food into her. I couldn't be bothered with anything so trivially mundane as food at the moment, so I waved impatiently to her and said something like in a minute or so. So she went off without me, squired by Bob Lichtman and Ron Ellick who, sneaky dogs that they are, feigning innocence, took her to a hamburger joint that was also a hangout for queers. It took Sid a while to realize the significance of the outrageous comments Bob and Ron kept tossing out; but it finally registered when a beautiful and unmistakeably queer fellow walked haughtily in and all the other boys in



the joint fluttered around him like moths around a flame.

Sometime during the evening, down in the bar, Sid managed to trade insults with Harlan Ellison. When he was introduced to her she looked up at him with an innocent expression on her face and said:

"Oh, Mr Ellison, ever since I read your book I've wanted to meet you."

"Really? What book was it?" Harlan said, beaming down at her, obviously faunching for a complement.

"Oh, I don't remember the title," Sid said airily, dismissing it as unimportant. "The reason I wanted to meet you was to tell you that you can't write for sour owlshit. You write like a very poor imitation of Nelson Algren." Sid is a harsh critic. She is an omniverous and discriminating reader of mainstream literature and outspokenly merciless in her criticism of anyone or anything she believes to be phony or pretentious in the world of letters. The book under discussion happened to be Gentleman Junky.

Harlan managed to hold the pose of the embattled artist under an unexpected flank attack from the Philistenes, but it was obvious that he was irritated and eager to shake himself loose from this amazonian Woollicott.

Sitting in that bar Friday night was like going back in time. During the course of the evening I saw and talked to old friends whom I hadn't seen in God alone knows how long. Hieson Himmel, Hearst reporter supreme, one of my oldest friends and Best Man at our wedding; Roy Squires, erstwhile editor and publisher of Fantasy Advertiser, looking like a grizzled Buzz Busby with his salt and pepper beard; Gus Wilmoth, founder of the above fanzine, looking not a day older than he did fifteen years ago; and his doll of a wife Genie, even prettier than she was sixteen years ago when I first met her at the Pacificon--some months before Gus met her and was fatally smitten; Jerry and Aline Thompson--I met Aline the same time I met Genie who's roommate she was. And Jerry reminded me that he had been a guest at my wedding. One of the most unexpectedly pleasant surprises was seeing the old Chanticleer himself, ol' Rosebud, Walt Liebscher. And I was really floored to find sitting next to him, Mari Beth Colvin--whom older fans will remember as Mari Beth Wheeler. The last time I'd seen Mari Beth was at the Pacificon which she had attended in company with Bob Tucker.

Man! This was almost too much!

I could go on like this forever, naming names like Dale Hart, for whom I'd done a couple of covers for his legendary poetryzine Ichor, back in the middle forties. It had been at least ten years since I last saw Dale...I believe it had been at my sister Marjorie's wedding to Mark Blanck, a former LASFSian, which had been a real swinging fan-nish affair. The Busby's sat at our table, and Donaho, and Jim Caughran, and Jerry and Miri Knight, and a lot of other people from the Bay Area. Miri presented Elmer Perdue with an incredibly garish purple tie with some sort of a beer advertisement or something on it, which Elmer immediately and proudly donned. Poul and Karen Anderson and Tony Boucher had found the bar sometime during the evening. About this time Ben

16

Stark came in to tell me the Vance's, Jack and his absolutely lovely and vivacious wife Norma, had arrived so I went out to greet the Guest of Honor and hold mutual lamentations with him over our coming ordeal. Jack was carrying a big sack of imported Skandinavian beer under his arm which he said he was bringing to Poul who has an affinity for such brew.

While I was in the lobby I saw a familiar figure and went over to verify my first impression. Sure enough, it was Kris Neville, a little heavier it seemed than when I last saw him, but still looking like a benign devil. Lil, his charming wife, was with him, but being in the ninth month of her pregnancy, she remained quietly seated on a couch and didn't enter into any of the mild revelry going on around her.

As the evening wore on several parties came into being in various rooms: Poul and Karen Anderson's, Avram Davidson's, Al haLevy's, and probably a half-dozen others I've forgotten about. However, I didn't feel much like partying that first evening--I preferred sitting quietly in the bar talking.

At eleven o'clock I went out for a late dinner with Walt Daugherty, Al haLevy, Ben Stark, Ed and Jessie Clinton, and Lee Jacobs. We went to a nearby Pig'n Whistle where we all settled for a breakfast, talking all the while about our chances of getting the bid for the '63 Western-con for Berkeley and The Little Men. We informed Walt that if we did get the bid we wanted him for our auctioneer, if he was willing, which he was. After an excellent meal we returned to the hotel.

Sometime after midnight I was beginning to feel pretty bushed and looked around for Sid to see if she wanted to break off and go to bed--after all, it had been a rather strenuous forty-two hours or so since either of us had more than a couple of hours sleep. Just then I was informed that I had a call on the bar phone, and taking it up heard Sid, who'd cut out unnoticed by me, on the other end suggesting that I get a couple of bottles of beer from the bar and come on up and call it a day. This seemed like a most sensible idea, so I went to the waitress's station at the bar and asked the bartender for a couple of capped Budweizens to take out. He said something about holding my horses, he was busy, so I stood there leaning lightly on the chromed rail that divided the station from the customer portion of the bar. Sitting on the stool immediately next to the rail was a slightly built Negro to whom I paid no particular attention.

As the waitress came to pick up an order I leaned towards the rail to get out of her way. Then as I eased back a bit from the bar I heard a voice say:

"Don't you do that again, man, hear?"

Puzzled, I looked down at the guy and said, "Sir?" Not very brilliant, I'll admit, but under the circumstances it was all I could think to say.

"Never you mind. Don't you do that again, see. I'll kill you. I've got my eye on you, man...you do that again, I'll kill you. I'm watching you, sec. I'll kill you." He kept swinging around on his bar stool, glaring at me and rattling on with his nightmarish monologue:

"I'm a World War Two veteran and been all 'round the world. I'm watch-you, man, I'll kill you. I'll kill you, hear? Just you never mind, I'll kill you. I'll kill you, man...don't think you can get away with anything, see...I'll kill you...I'm watching, man, I'll kill you...I'll kill you, see?"

I tell you...I was scared. I outweighed this fellow by ten or fifteen pounds and was probably a head or more taller, but I couldn't be sure that he meant to kill me with his hands--for all I knew he had a knife or gun, which would put me at a most unfair disadvantage. I tried to ignore him, hoping to keep from triggering any sudden violent action on his part.

He kept his litany of death up until the waitress came back and, hearing him, told him to shut up or she would throw him out. He glowered at me and muttered, "That's alright, man. You just mind what I say...I'll kill you." And with that final threat he turned back to the bar, the waitress got me my beer, I gave her a dollar tip for saving my life, and then got the hell out of there but quick before I became a posthumous Fan Guest of Honor.

When I finally got to the room and bolted the door and told Sid about it, she almost threw a fit.

I never did find out what I did that bugged the guy so.

The next morning, after futilely trying to get breakfast served to us in bed, we ate at the same Pig'n Whistle I'd eaten at the night before. We had a pleasant breakfast with Ben Stark and Lee Jacobs, and Lee offered to drive me to Pasadena that morning to pick up our car.

With this it suddenly dawned on me that it was Saturday and the garage would undoubtedly close at noon, and here it was pushing ten o'clock. I made for the phones and tried to look up the number of the Merc agency in Pasadena in the classified book. I found that LA is such a sprawling metropolis that each section of the city has its own separate classified book, and I couldn't for the life of me find one for the section embracing Pasadena..I finally called my mother and had her look up the number in her book, and on getting it called the garage.

I had to get there before noon and the car got locked in the garage, because I'd suddenly realized that my speech was locked in the trunk of the car and I hadn't memorized it--in fact, at this point I couldn't even remember what I'd written. In addition to this, the Invisible Little Man trophy which the Little Men were awarding that night to Hal Clement was also locked in the trunk. If I didn't get that out haLevy would have my head.

Well, anyway, I got the car out in time, thank's to Lee Jacobs' superb skill in piloting his Renault through the maze of LA's freeway system, and we got back to the hotel and drove into the garage just as Bill Collins and Dave Rike pulled in from San Francisco.

I went right upstairs to catch the opening ceremonies, arriving a few minutes late, and quietly took a seat to the rear. But Al Lewis, who was running the show, was right on top of things and called my name, forcing me to stand up and take a bow.



Promptly following the opening ceremonies Tony Boucher presented a talk on the past year (1961) in science fiction books. I sat there for five or ten minutes listening to Tony and wondering whether or not he would be offended if I got up and walked out, because I had already heard substantially the same speech from him at a Little Men's meeting and a boiled down version was in the new Rhodomagnetic Digest. I finally decided that Tony probably would not even notice me, and if he did wouldn't care, so I left quietly and headed for the bar.

The bar was jumping with all the swinging fans who weren't upstairs listening to Tony, and I sank happily into a deep comfortable chair and ordered a beer.

Shortly after 2 someone announced that Ed Clinton's panel, "What Science Fiction Market?" was in session, so out of a sense of loyalty to Ed I decided I ought to drop in on it and see how he was doing with his panel of talent, Poul Anderson, A. E. van Vogt, and Mark Clifton. The sound system was not working too well and the accoustics were rather poor, so I didn't stay long. Besides, I was kind of restless thinking about the speech I had to give in a few short hours, so I returned to the bar to seek the companionship of less serconnish and more convivial fans, and to imbibe some liquid courage, also.

For the next couple of hours I sat in the bar, trying to space my drinks, but still getting a mild buzz on. During that time I missed the "Author's Tea," a deal whereby you paid fifty cents for coffee and cake and got to meet and talk to various pros. It was quite successful, I understand, but as I told Poul, "I'm damned if I'll pay fifty cents to talk to you when I can talk to you anytime I want for free." Actually, it was a good idea, and it will probably be repeated in some form or another at Jestercon XVI next year in the Bay Area.



A little later Sid tried to drag me off to hear Ray Bradbury read a chapter from his new novel, but I was having too enjoyable a time in the bar surrounded by fans and talk to make the effort to go upstairs to hear a dirty ol' pro like Bradbury read his own stuff--and besides, I'd heard Bradbury read before and wasn't too much impressed.

I did manage to force myself away from the dark retreat of the bar for a few minutes to look in on the auction which was being conducted jointly by Walt Daugherty on pro material, and Bruce Pelz on the fannish items. But seeing nothing that particularly interested me, I soon left. The high point of the auction was the absolutely fantastic price paid by a young fan for a copy of John Myer Myer's Silverlock--\$30.00!

A glance at my watch sent me into a blind panic and I scurried back to the bar to recharge my rapidly waning confidence--it was almost six o'clock and the banquet was scheduled to get underway at seven-thirty. Sid was there, surrounded by Donaho, so I sat down by the Busby's and chatted for a while until I couldn't put it off any longer and left, with Sid, for our room to change for the banquet.

After shaving and showering I went to the closet to get my suit which I'd sent out to the valet service that morning for pressing, and hanging next to my suit I found a pair of trousers which I knew of a certainty were not mine. I started to make some suitably sophisticated crack at Sid when I noticed a valet service tag on the trousers stating that they belonged to one Eric Fennel on the eighth floor and that he had indicated that he wanted them today. We delayed our departure from our room long enough for me to call the bell captain and ask him to send someone for them so poor Eric, who'd come all the way from Hawaii, could attend the banquet.

We walked into the banquet room shortly before seven-thirty to find that the committee had arranged to have a private bar set up there for a social hour preceding the banquet. I made a bee-line for the bar and Tony Boucher grabbed me and bought a muchly appreciated drink for me, and introduced me to a grey haired gentleman he was talking to. It turned out to be Robert Arthur, the Argosy and science fiction writer of the thirties and forties. Sid, meanwhile, was in the clutches of Ed Rocker, a fan from around Sacramento way, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Avram Davidson, and who had been wearing Avram's name badge all day, buying drinks for Sid, and putting her on something awful.

Jack came in, looking a little wan (he'd said he would much prefer to dive into a five foot barrel of beer than give a speech), and he and Tony and I stood around trying to decide who would be first to climb up to the head table. Finally, after much frantic urging from Al Lewis and Ron Ellik, we ascended to the table and, after a little uncertainty as to just who would sit where, took our seats.

Jack and Norma sat to the right of the lectern, with Al Lewis, John and Bjo Trimble, and (I believe) Thelma Evens, beyond them. To the left of the lectern sat Tony, the MC, then me (in a pool of sweat), Bruce Henstell, Sid, Ellik, and then Harlan Ellison and his date.

While I was eating my old friend Walt Daugherty would dart periodically from his table, stand in front of me and say something like, "Remember, Alva, when you're standing up there and all those thousands of eyes are looking at you, they're just fans like you, so don't let it bother you," and other little goodies like that. I thought it was very funny, but if Sid could have reached Walt I think she would have killed him.

During the course of the meal we were treated to the "Solar Whirl," which was a fashion parade of futuristic costumes identified with the various planets of the solar system. It was announced by Thelma Evans, who did a fine job except for one slight slip of the tongue when she identified Adrienne Martine as "Miss Fallout," when it should have been "Miss Freefall." This fair croggled Bjo, who didn't know whether to be amused or dismayed. Jack Harness, disguised as a madly rushing, camera wielding tourist, provided a moment of unplanned slapstick when he tripped over the wire of a movie floodlight, bringing the light into contact with the floor with a shattering explosion. The costumes, designed and constructed by several members of the LASFS, were quite colorful and showed a good deal of creative imagination. Altogether, a fine show.

No sooner had I finished my desert than Tony stood up and I knew

I was soon to be under the gun. I expected Tony to spend several minutes on his delightful chatter which would give me a chance to collect my rapidly disintegrating nerves; but, like the crack of doom, I heard him say my name and knew I hadn't been reprieved. I remember John Berry's account in The Goon Goes West of how he felt just before he got up to speak at Detroit...and that's the way I felt.

I bravely approached the lectern, speech in hand, and looked out at a sea of faces...with thousands of eyes all staring at me. At previous cons I'd sat in the audience and envied Tony because he would inevitably send someone out to get him a drink, and I'd sit there, quietly expiring, as he sipped his long cool drink. And so, during my preliminary chatter, I looked out at the audience of friendly fannish faces and made mention of this fact, ending with an impassioned plea to some kind friend out there to please go get me a drink to sustain me during my speech. After all, if Tony could do it, why couldn't I? No sooner had I spoken than Tony leaped up, worked his way off the platform, and headed straight for the bar that was still set up at the side of the room. This was so unexpected that I could only stand there watching Tony. In a moment he returned to the platform and everyone started roaring--for in his hand was a very large bourbon and water which he handed to me with an elegant gesture. I was so overwhelmed and dumfounded that all I could think of to say was something like, "Thank you, Tony, you're a true gentleman."

I took a long grateful pull on my drink and then launched into my speech. I had decided ahead of time to read the damn thing, and to hell with it. Having very little occasion to write or give speeches, I had written my speech as if it were an article for a fanzine, and then read it as though I were reading it aloud to Sid after completing it. My subject was Fandom As A Way of Life? in which I examined my own participation in fandom over the past twenty years, with a good deal of reminiscing about the old days of fandom, my long held conviction that fandom was just a Goddamn Hobby, and my relatively recent conversion to the belief that it is really a Way of Life--but not in the sense that it is commonly understood. But mainly, what I was trying to do was combine nostalgia for the fannish past with an appreciation for the present which Redd Boggs has eulogised as the Greatest of All Fandoms. My ordeal was finished in about twenty minutes and I sat down, tremendously relieved.

Next on the program was the awarding of the Invisible Little Man trophy which The Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society was awarding this year to Hal Clement. Al Halevy came forward to make the presentation. Poul Anderson accepted the trophy for Clement with the announcement that he would present it personally to Clement at the Chicon during their award ceremonies.

Following this Harlan Ellison came on strong with some funny stories, and then Tony introduced the Guest of Honor, Jack Vance.

Jack is a wonderfully brilliant person with a fine wit and a melodiously liquid voice. Unfortunately, the PA system left a lot to be desired and a lot of Jack's speech was lost to most of the audience because of his soft delivery. The substance of his speech concerned the science fiction author's problems in creating alien environments for his stories. He pointed out that modern man lived in an environment that

was every bit as alien to his nature as any he was apt to find among the stars. Man just isn't designed, Jack said, to be truly comfortable in our highly technological, urban, civilization. Man is losing contact with the earth, is too much surrounded by the synthetic. A fine speech, worthy of the author of The Dying Earth, Big Planet, and The Dragon Masters.

Jack's speech concluded the program so I tottered off to the bar for a couple of quick ones and to pick up any egoboo I might find. The first people I ran into were Walt Liebscher and Mari Beth who congratulated me enthusiastically--Mari Beth saying she was almost in tears from the nostalgia my speech stirred in her ample bosom. Walt Daugherty came rushing into the bar shouting, "I am not forgotten! I am remembered to fandom!"--I had mentioned Walt in my speech.

Earlier in the day, at Donaho's request, I had agreed to make our room available for a party after the banquet, but the concon threw open their suite, so the party was moved down the hall. After a couple of drinks in the bar I got Sid and we moved upstairs to the party. Len Hoffatt met me at the door, congratulated me on the speech, and insisted that I have a drink of sour mash from his bottle. The two rooms of the suite were packed with fans and the party was roaring into high gear. I spotted Stu Palmer in the middle of the room and elbowed my way through the press of fannish flesh to talk to him. He'd just returned from Hollywood where he had been conducting some evening seminars for his students. Stu is head of the Palmer Institute of Authorship--Stu is not the founder (or related to him) the similarity of names is just one of those crazy coincidences. As I stood there talking to him John Trimble came up and suggested I get out of my suit and into something more comfortable. I said I was a little uncomfortable with a coat and tie on, and Stu said it was a pretty tie, so I whipped it off and gave it to him.

Sometime later--after I had changed clothes--Jack Vance came up to me and invited me down to his room for beer and some quiet talk; so, while he went out to get a supply of beer, I gathered up Norma and Sid and we went down to the Vance's room. We settled down for some nice quiet relaxed beer drinking and gabbing, and were soon joined by Al Hal Levy who was pretty gassed and was all steamed up about the '63 Westcon which we, The Little Men, were going to bid for the next day. Norma and Sid apparently thought we were old fuddy-duddies and kept faunching to go back upstairs to the party, so we told them to go on and have fun.

I stayed in Vance's room until around four or so and then went upstairs to hunt up Sid and try and talk her into making the bedroom scene with me. We eventually staggered the three doors down the hall to our room and fell into bed. I was almost asleep when I heard Sid moving around the room and looked up to see her getting dressed. A mite croggled at the sight, I asked her what the hell she thought she was doing.

"I'm going back to the party."



"Good God! What for?"

"To get a glass."

I was confused. Then she explained to me that when it was first planned to have the party in our room John Trimble had come in and moved the TV out of the room and into the hall (I looked over at the wall and noticed for the first time that the TV was indeed gone), and to reward him she had poured him a drink into one of our glasses, and not wanting to see him drink alone, had poured herself one in the other, and then the two of them had gone merrily on to the Trimble's room carrying the glasses. And Sid just can't go to bed without a glass of water on the table beside her, so naturally, she had to go back and get the glasses.

I told her I thought it was all kind of ridiculous, but if she had to, well...don't stay too long, and immediately went to sleep.

I awoke at seven to be greeted by the sight of Sid just getting undressed. I asked her what on God's green earth she'd been doing all this time.

"Sitting on the fire escape with Karen Anderson watching the sun come up," she chirped happily.

"Sitting on the fire escape with Karen Anderson watching the sun come up. Since four o'clock?"

"Well, not all that time," she answered without elaboration. "I was sitting alone on the fire escape, just feeling good and not particularly wanting to go to bed, when Karen came reeling regally down the hall with a pearl in the center of her forehead and every hair in place and looking real sharp, and she said she wished she had a drink. I told her if she tippy-toe'd quietly into 1280 without waking old dad, there was a bottle of a poor man's Jack Daniel's on the dressing table. So she went in and brought it out and we sat on the fire escape drink-in out of the bottle and watching the sun come up."

"A pearl in the center of her forehead," I muttered, trying to visualize Karen with a pearl in the center of her forehead. Then: "You sent Karen into the room? Good grief, woman! I'm sleeping raw." Sid just shrugged and said that Karen didn't say anything when she came out, so she assumed I was covered at the time. Somewhat reassured, I inquired about the pearl in the center of the forehead and learned that Karen had returned from a party at Ellison's and was still wearing her party clothes which included a hair goodgie with a pearl that hung down on her forehead.

Sid foregot to bring back the glasses.

We got up at a much later and more civilized hour and wended our way blearily down to the coffee shop for breakfast. I stopped for a minute to talk to Burbee and Wally Webber who were sitting outside the coffee shop, and then went in to get some badly needed food. We sat down with Poul and Karen and Himmel and gave the waitress our orders. Sid spurned the tomatoe juice and ordered beer with her breakfast, which made me turn a little green. She finished her breakfast and left

while I stayed to talk to the Anderson's and Himmel. A few minutes later she returned saying she had just run into haLevy in the lobby, "Looking like Christ after the crucifixion," and wondering if he was in any shape to deliver his talk at twelve-thirty, which was just thirty minutes away. When we saw Al we had our doubts.

About this time I heard that Jimmy Kepner was in the hotel so Himmel and I went out looking for him, and ran into him just outside the door to the coffee shop. We stood there for what seemed an hour bringing each other up to date on ourselves, and then Jimmy had to leave for work.

Meanwhile, in the bar, Sid, Miriam Knight, and Poul Anderson were perpetrating a dastardly plot to besmirch the reputation of Dr Al haLevy.

"Let's start a rumor about haLevy," said Miriam.

"Oh, goody!" said everyone. "What will it be?"

So they all thought of all the nasty rumors they could start about haLevy--and then Poul looked up with the light of inspiration shining from his eyes:

"Let's say that when Al got up to deliver his speech he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, aaghh!, thank you," heaved up all over the floor and sat down to a standing ovation.

They were convulsed over this and immediately went around planting it where it would be most fruitful. Their labors were rewarded when a short while later Dale Hart came up to Sid in the bar, where she was sitting talking to Burbee and Perdue, and asked if she had heard of the awful thing that had happened to haLevy when he started to give his speech. Sid went tearing down the bar to where Poul and Miri were sitting, screeching, "It worked! It worked!" And they all had a drink and congratulated themselves on a job well done.

I should say in all fairness to Al that his speech, "The Mythological and Romantic Elements of Modern Fantasy," was--in spite of a god-awful hangover--scholarly and well presented and one of the highlights of the convention.

Unfortunately I missed Al's speech, but I did catch part of the panel on science fiction and horror movies with Bob Bloch, Forry, and Bert Gordon, which was moderated by Walter W. Lee, Jr., and for the most part fairly interesting.

After a refueling stop at the bar I managed to accompany Donaho to the Sunday auction and caught the tag-end of it. I didn't buy anything of importance; but Bill Ellern surprised me by giving me five dollars for one of my paintings he'd bought a little earlier.

Following the auction Ronel got up and gave a witty account of his recent TAFF trip to England and Ireland. I left before he was through in order to check strategy with haLevy before the business meeting which followed Ron .

I was supposed to make the bid for the '63 Westercon on behalf of The Little Men, and we had arranged with Buzz Busby to second me. I checked things with Al and then--thinking there would be a recess following Ron's talk--popped down to the bar for a quick drink. I was sitting there quite happily when someone (I forget who) from Berkeley came in and said, "We got it."

It seems that no sooner had Ron finished than the business meeting was thrown open. When it came time for the bidding and I didn't get up for the Bay Area, they called haLevy, and when he didn't answer, Ben Stark rose to the emergency and made the bid for us with Buzz seconding him. We nosed out San Diego and Los Angeles for it, so now we have it...and so much for strategy and hallway caucuses.

Again, Sid went out to dinner without me. I finally went out to eat with Himmel, Gus Wilmoth, Ed Meskys, and Ed Baker. Himmel, who knows LA just about as well as anyone in that town, took us into the heart of skid row to a hole in the wall that turned out to be a Greek restaurant with the most delicious food you could imagine.

That evening another party was thrown in the convention suite as a capper to the festivities. The most notable thing about it was the marathon discussion carried on by Busby and Al Lewis over the recent disagreement between the Busby's on one side and the Trimble's and Lewis on the other, about the costume ball at the Seacon, which Donaho said lasted for seven hours before an understanding was reached.

Sid and I were pretty tuckered out by this time, so we cut out around one or two o'clock and went to bed. But it was a real nice party, I hear.

Monday morning we got up about nine, a little sad that it was almost over, and went down to breakfast. Len Hoffatt was there, and Buzz and Elinor, and Wally Webber, and Al Lewis, and John Champion. John was red-eyed and haggard. He said he'd spent the night--or rather, the early morning hours--in Donaho's room and was unable to get any sleep because of the noise Big Bill made...what kind of noise, he didn't say.

Karen came bouncing in, all bright eyed and bushy tailed, and for a gal who hadn't been to bed since the morning before, looking fantastically good. She said Poul was asleep and she couldn't wake him up to start getting packed. They had to catch the limousine in one-half hour in order to be sure to make their flight at the airport. Champion then offered to drive them to the airport which was on his way home, so Karen decided to let Poul sleep a little longer.

We tried to stimulate a little action by announcing that there was to be a party in haLevy's room, but the only ones who showed up were Sid, Jessie Clinton, and me.

Not being able to put it off any longer, Sid and I went to our room, packed, and checked out at twelve-thirty.

I had promised my mother that I would visit my brother who was in the veteran's hospital for a check-up, so that was to be the first order of business after leaving the hotel. We pulled out of the garage

and turned right on Spring Street; and as we were momentarily halted by traffic, Sid leaned out the window and yelled, "Elmer! Elmer!"

Perdue, who was walking happily down the sidewalk toward the hotel, turned, and spotting us, said: "Hello, Sid. Where are you going?"

"To the hospital!" Sid shouted back. At this Elmer looked alarmed, and hastening to calm him, she explained, "To visit Alva's brother."

Elmer relaxed and smiled. Sid waved as we started off, and the last memory we have of the convention is of Perdue, that wonderful, lovable man, standing on the sidewalk, oblivious to the people milling around him, his coat thrown open and his sequined tie glittering proudly in the sunlight, beaming at us and waving bye-bye like a small child.

--Alva Rogers

EDITORIAL - conclusion

several good accounts would be rendered to fandom by those who were sober enough to remember anything. Bill Donaho, for instance, has an excellent con report in VIPER; the Busby's are planning to write one; and I'm sure Al Lewis or someone from LA will not let the opportunity go by for a post-mortem.

I decided, therefore, to write a flat-out subjective report. I had a reason to do so, I believed. I was Fan Guest of Honor of the convention and as such would naturally react to the entire proceedings in a somewhat different fashion than I would ordinarily. From the moment I received the letter informing me I was to be the PGoH my whole attitude toward the convention was altered. The higher significance of being a PGoH of a Westercon can be debated, it's true; but to the person so chosen a feeling compounded of exhilaration and dismay descends upon him (unless he is so goddamned blase or cynical that nothing affects him) and--at least in my case--stays right with him throughout the convention. So, inasmuch as I had decided to write subjectively about the con, it seemed appropriate to me to begin my tale from the moment I received that fateful letter from John Trimble and carry it straight through from there. It's undoubtedly overlong but, dammit! if I'd put everything in I remembered, it would have been twice as long as it is now. Anyway, the editor of this here fanzine is easy to please.

A sad post script to the Westercon was the announcement of the death of John Champion on July 13, in an auto accident. I met John for the first time at this con and liked him on sight. He was young, good looking, and intelligent in a quiet way. Sid and I came into contact with him frequently during the two-and-a-half days we were there, found his company pleasant, enjoyed talking to him, and looked forward to resuming the association next year at the Westercon in the Bay Area. We both felt a personal loss at news of the tragically untimely death of this boy who had so much of life ahead of him.

The following piece of medical advice is reprinted in full from...
 IATRICA: seu Praxis Medendi. The Practice of Curing: being a Medicinal
 HISTORY of many Famous Observations in the Cure of DISEASES, performed
 by the Author hereof. Whereunto is added By Way of SCHOLIA, a Complete
 THEORY, or Method of Precepts, wherein the Names, Definitions, Kinds,
 Signs, Causes, Prognosticks, and various Ways of CURE are methodically
 Instituted, Digested and Reduced to Vulgar Practice.

Performed by WILLIAM SALMON, Mcd. Profefs. living at the Blue Balcony
 by Fleet Ditch, nere Holborn-Bridg, London.

London, Printed for Th. Dawks, His Majesties British Printer: in Thames-
 Street: of whom the several Books of this Author are certainly to be
 had. 1684.

(page 618)

LXII. A Palfy of the Yard

1. In the resolution of the Yard, as Aetius in his Lib. Cap. 30.
 says, the excretion of Urine is not stopped, but the ejection of the
 seed: this Evil is most troublesome and inconvenient to such as are mar-
 ried.

2. We shall come to the Remedies, the jelly of a Bulls or Harts
 Pizel, and conserve of Satyrion, and a Confect of the same are good.

3. We advise that the Yard, Groin, and Thighs be anointed with the fol-
 lowing Ointment: Take the Fat of Foxes Stones, the juyce of Rocket, of
 each half an ounce: the Gall of a Bull, one ounce: boyl them to the
 consumption of the juyce, and when it begins to grow cold, put into it
 the following powder. Take Pyrethrum, one dram: Euphorbium, half a dram:
 the seed of Rocket, two scruples: make a powder: and with the Oyl of
 Nuts and Wax a sufficient quantity make an Ointment.

4. We have used to give to one more flegmatick, Conserve of Sarco-
 col and confected Ginger, Pyrethrum confected and Pimpernel, and of the
 Species of Saxifrage confected, and Conserve of the root of Cow-Par-
 sneps.

5. Much like to this was prescribed for an old Spaniard who would
 needs marry, for the erection of his Yard which was paralytick. Take
 Oriental Saffron, long Pepper, Cardamons, Pyrethrum, of each half a
 dram: the tayles of Skinks with their reins, two scruples: Galangal,
 four scruples: the seed of Rape, of Parsnip, of Rocket, of Nettles,
 Bird-tongue, of each one dram: Leeks, white Ginger, choice Cinnamon, of
 each two scruples: the Electuary of Diaphatyrion, four ounces: with the
 Syrup of confected Ginger make a Mixture, which keep in a glazed Vessel,
 let him take Morning and Evening the bigness of a Nut thereof, drinking
 an hour after a Cup of pleasant Wine.

6. And let this following Powder be taken before he go to bed: Take
 white Ginger, one dram: Galangal, two drams: Bulls-Pizel dried and pul-
 verized: make a Powder, and give one dram or more in Wine.

7. There was also a Powder made of Pyrethrum, three ounces: Euphor-
 bium, one ounce: which was kept in a Bag of red Leather, about three
 spoonfuls whereof were boyled in strong Wine, with which the Stones,
 Yard, Perineum and Thighs were washed Morning and Evening.

8. It was ordered for the person that he should eat Beans, Onions
 boyled, and roasted Parsnip, Rape, with the Broath of Flesh, made ready
 with Butter, Honey and a little Ginger: All which did very much good.
 Forcetus, Lib. 10. Cap. 83.



Alva Rogers
5243 Rahlves Dr.
Castro Valley, Calif.

Printed Matter

Return Requested

Ron Ellik

1825 Greenfield Ave
Los Angeles 25, Calif.

