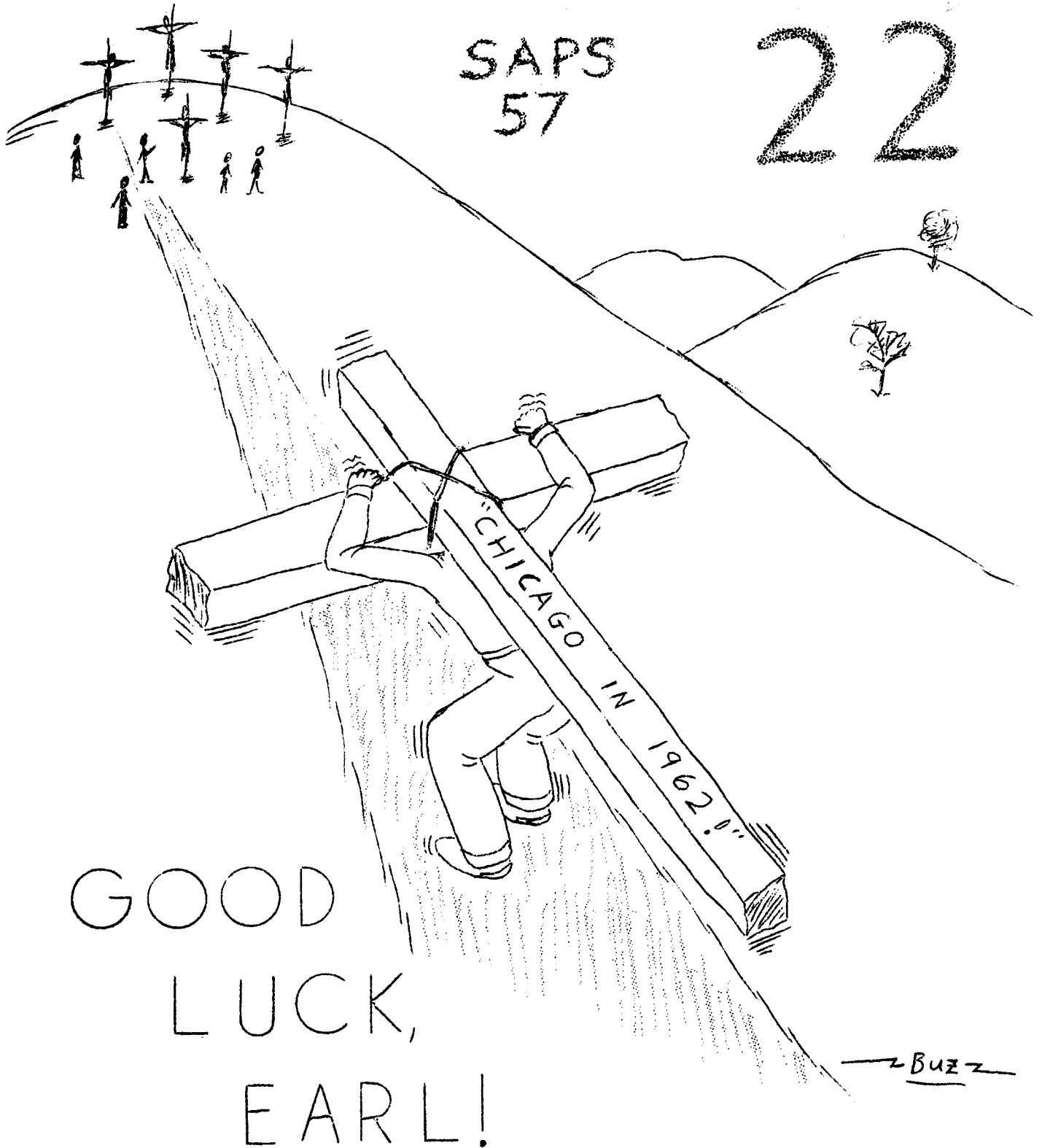


# RETRO

OCT  
'61

SAPS  
57

# 22



Retro 22, then is the effort of F M Busby, 2852 14th Ave W, Seattle 99, Wash. Said F M Busby wants to keep his record clear by getting said Retro 22 in to the Evil OgrE in time for the 57th, or Oct '61, mailing of S \* A \* P \* S ... Oh, I expect to hit the mailing, all right, but not much better than the 5-ring this time.

Eighteen SAPS-type people were at SeaCon (plus 6 from the WL), compared to 26 FAPA-type people, with an overlap of about ten or so. I've now met all members except Anderson (Larry), Bergeron, Durward, Lichtman, Ryan, and Smith who unfairly hangs out where it's safe. I've met 2 of the 4 invitees but only 8 of the 15 WL types. Westercon-'62 and ChiConIII should take care of a few of these gaps.

I read most of Mlg 56 a few days after it arrived, and the last six zines this very day (I haven't read the Aug FAPA or Sept N'APA mailings at all yet, except for a little spot-skimming; like later, people). A very uneven mailing (#56) as I recall-- some rare bursts of Great Stuff and also a certain number of nothing-type items. Or maybe it was just my hurried mood at the time. At any rate, regardless of whether (or how far) I get into MCs this time, I did read the mailing, entire. And enjoyed it, overall, too.

### A R e p o r t   o n   t h e   S e a C o n

is impossible for <sup>me</sup> to write, as such. Where to start, for one thing? The SeaCon may have begun for some with arrival at the hotel on Thursday or Friday or whenever; it may have started for Boyd Raeburn when he got into town on Saturday, August 26. Officially it may have come into being at the PittCon business meeting, or perhaps when Elinor received the official gavel from Dirce Archer on PittCon's Monday-pm. Unofficially it may have become an entity in its own right one summer afternoon in 1959, in our very own back yard, when Wally Weber and Jim Webbert and I (basking in the fallout from Gemzine) gave in to destiny and decided to go ahead and bid anyway. Or perhaps even in Feb or March '58 when the subject reared its ugly head seriously at a Nameless meeting. But personally I think the whole thing began at the Norwescon at Portland in 1950, when all we Seattle fringe-fans told ourselves that the Con was certainly a wonderful thing, but you'd have to have holes in your head to get sucked in on the production end of one-- meanwhile an evil little seed of purpose was insinuating its way into the deep subconscious areas of each fringe-fannish little mind among us. Yes, it started in Portland, in 1950. And surely I can't recapitulate 11 years of progress for you-- not and still make the mailing, I can't! So that is why I am not writing a SeaCon Report. Of course, this doesn't mean I won't be talking about the thing every second line or so throughout this zine...

There is certainly a lot of turnover in SAPS these days. Some go out and come in again, but I find only 6 names in SPEC 56 (besides our own, Elinor's and mine) that have graced the Roster uninterruptedly during our membership: Karen, Wrai, Coswal, Howard, Jack, and Art. It is perhaps notweowrthy (oh, let it stand; maybe it will make it into FanCy3 with any luck) that 4 of these 6 hold the 4 longest consecutive strings of hitting each and every mailing: Cos first, Art second, Wrai and Howard in a suspenseful tie for third. Elinor and I are tied for fifth; then comes Tosk-- hey, Bruce, you old Archivist you-- how does it go from then on? (I had all this figured out at one time, back around 1958 or '59, but quite a number of the current respectable strings hadn't even started then, so my listings are of limited utility as a reference work.)

Back to "turnover", though: going back only 9 mailings or a little over 2 years to SPEC#47, the last of our own regime as Two-Headed OgrE, we find only 16 names (including halves of dual-memberships) that appear in SPEC#56. So I suppose it is no wonder that the overall flavor of SAPS continually changes like unto a neofan's editorial policies, and that some of us who have become sot in our ways decry these changes and hark back to the Good Old Days, each of us most likely nominating a different era for the title. I suppose the really surprising thing is that there can be any continuity at all, with only custom to sustain it, and that officially in the whimsical hands of one omnipotent officer at any given time. Well, at least this year those omnipotent whimsical hands belong to my kind of kook...(end of notes).

The Year of the ~~of~~ Jackpot:

You know, it has been quite a year. Not just 1961, which is by no means done with at this writing, but rather a 13- or 14-month year that began at some vague pre-PittCon date and will perhaps end when we place the decimal point in the SeaCon Financial Report.

While the SeaCon is probably the most spectacular feature of this "year"<sup>of mine</sup> from many a viewpoint, the Con is by no means the item that had and will have the most effect on our present and future doings or enjoyment of same. (And so, you ask, what else is new?)

Well, there is the Tooth Bit. I was going to go into this in the July mailing but ran out of time. Since I am a lot shorter on time now than I was then, it is only the fannish thing to do, to discuss the Tooth Bit, herewith. Like mainly on May 19th of this year I obtained possession of a new set of fangs, the detachable variety, and thus (1) got back into the chicken-bone-gnawing league, and (2) discovered Tooth Fandom. Now I had been a dental coward (not for the FBI at all, but strictly in business for myself) for more years than you would like to hear about. But finally it came about that something had to be done whether I liked it or not. I'd had a few pulled now and then, one way and another. I had been quite self-conscious at Southgate-in-'58 because of a couple missing front lowers, and in fact this self-consciousness is possibly one factor (though probably a minor one) in our missing the Detention. However, shortly before PittCon I got my nerve up to go see about getting things fixed up once and for all. While this intention did not get carried out at that time, somehow the business of starting the action was enough to help out on the embarrassment pitch; I went to PittCon wearing about a dozen teeth, at least three of which were actually usable for chewing. Ate a couple of steaks on the trip, too. So after PittCon time went on and nothing much happened except that eating got to be more and more of a chore, until the BayCon loomed. It struck me that I had damn well better get on the stick. So I did, and it has paid off.

Why am I using up SAPSpages with this mundane tale? Because of Tooth Fandom, that's why. At PittCon I noticed that several other fans were in pretty poor shape on the dental side. After I'd been through the mill, it struck me that maybe some other people were doing my old trick of holding off because they were horrified, as I was, of the entire project. Letters mentioning this latest development of mine drew several types of response: everything from "I'm up against the same problem soon" to "I've had 'em for years; what took you so long?" Tooth Fandom, yes.

I'll say this; the changeover was about 20% as rough as I had expected. May 19 the guy did the final extractions in a very few minutes; an hour later he sent me home with a mouthful of new fangs. Also an icebag and a packet of "pain pills"; I'm no stoic but I did not need or use either of these aids, at all. Well, I came out lucky on at least one deal; I'd been told that a certain amount of painful swelling was probable within the first two or three days; it didn't happen.

Anyhow, all at once it seemed that I was hearing from half of fandom, the most unlikely/surprising people, who had preceded me in this move. And further, that a large number of other fans were in the same boat I had been in: in a bad way with the Naturals but very queasy about converting to the works of modern-day science.

But while the SeaCon has come and gone this year, my oldtime chronic nagging dental anxieties are now, newly and finally and for keeps, long gone.

((A point. On this deal, I got the Package: the extractions, the plates, the series of relinings for a year, and a new set of plates next year, all prepaid. I recommend this, because this way you go get the adjustments rather than putting up with discomfort; you're just getting your money's worth instead of paying extra.)

(Second point. For younger readers who are turned off by this entire bit, I have yet a worthwhile word: any time a dentist tells you to get rid of a wisdom tooth or some other "because it will push the others out of line", buddy you better believe it! The main thing that eventually made my own Naturals unworkable was that all my wisdom teeth came in sound and straight so that I wouldn't take anyone's word that I should part with 'em for reasons that seemed silly at the time. End of sermon.)

And then there has been (and still is) the New Bathroom. Several of you have been on these premises at one time and another-- you know that it is quite possible that this house of ours was designed and built by a deserter from Drake's "Golden Hind". What we did not tell you, however, is that he did not start from scratch. He built the thing around a bathroom that had been set up for an overnight camp of Aztecs on their way south from the Bering Straits crossing. Aztecs, unfortunately, are lousy plumbers; none of the oversize spaghetti under the house conformed to the Code, whether city or county or any of the eccentric interpretations vouchsafed to the householder by individual contractors or employees in the plumbing ~~factor~~ industry. And there was this minor worry about when the john was going to fall through the floor carrying some good fan and true into gafia of the very worst sort.

In fact, the only reason we have put up with this house at all the past few years is that we own the thing and don't have anyone to gripe to.

Elinor had been nagging me intermittently about the bathroom since shortly before the beginning of time. I had been stalling like mad for good and sufficient reasons; I'm not sure which scared me the most, the cost or the personal labor, but in either case I was right. Any other year it cost too much and mighod I couldn't possibly find the time to do all the necessary carpentry to tear out the whole damn bathroom (walls, floor, and all) and rebuild it in synchronism with the plumbing operations; this was totally impossible, I said, and truly I said it. So of course we did all this during the month of August 1961 with the Con breathing down our necks. So if I conk out prematurely at the age of 110, you'll know what did it.

I have got to admit that the results are pretty nice, even in the present unfinished state. The bathroom floor is all back in, and the pipes and drains, and nearly three walls are re-paneled. The new toilet and washbasin are truly little gems, and Elinor is momentarily lolling in a luxurious 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot tub such as is not to be found in the Sears-Roebuck catalog or on any contractor's standard list of fixtures; this tub went into the room with less than  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch clearance; like, we sweat that one.

Further benefits include John the 2nd, a miniature "trailer" toilet that started out in the laundry room but will soon be "off" the laundry room as soon as I get a door on the cubbyhole I've built around it. Also the old-bathroom's washbasin has been installed in the junkroom that will oneday be my Typing Sanctuary with any luck. And the hot water tank has been moved out of the kitchen to a more central point in the entire plumbing array, so that hot water is subject to much less delay lately.

Oh, it is all worth it, surely, but still I was justified in stalling as I did for so long, because truly this job hath been a bitch on wheels and no mistake.

Stalling? Well, when the floor alongside the old commode began to "give" too alarmingly under the emphatic footfall, I nailed a slab of hardboard over that spot. When the washbasin refused to drain at all, finally, I covered it with a cardboard "Out of Order" sign stating that hot water would be found (if at all) in the bathtub just behind the reader. I kept telling myself that rot though it might, the floor would never really cave in, passenger and all. Every time I sat down there I told myself this, though the story got less convincing all the time.

So finally I goofed up and ran entirely out of excuses at the worst possible moment-- the month just directly preceding the SeaCon. I have mercifully excised quite a bit of the month of August 1961 from my memory, but the anguished shrieks of "We are not going to MAKE it" that ring in my ears now and then, are mine.

We did, though; how about that? Well, we didn't really, in the fullest sense. The plumbers went out on strike after they installed the tub and toilets but before we had any washbasins at all. All sorts of fabulous fans (including houseguests Boyd Raeburn, Ella Parker, Wrai Ballard...) were reduced to washing their hands in (1)the bathtub, and (2)the kitchen sink. I hope they've recovered by now.

So, you see, it is possible to fill a year with turmoil such that the production of a WorldCon is just one of a number of things that are each All Too Much. I don't say it's easy to do this, but it is possible.

((Thought for today: Never put off until tomorrow what you can postpone indefinitely.))

How to Put ~~Off~~ On a World Science-Fiction Convention!

The safest and most efficient method is to support someone else's bid and then cheer him on like mad and perhaps even take out a support membership if you're flush. But assuming that we're being literal and CS as all-get-out here, there really are a few grim facts that should be kept in mind by anyone who is in the slightest danger of ever winding up on a WorldCon Committee.

I will not at this point recapitulate Howard's masterful text on this subject; it appeared in SAPS somewhere around Mlg 49 or 50 or so. If you have not seen this, petition one of our archivists for a reprint soon. It's definitive, and probably saved ~~but/ya~~ us several hundred dollars.

The first thing you need, assuming you get the WorldCon bid, is a hotel. You will learn to loathe the very word before you're done, but a hotel is the prime requisite for a Con, like it or not and who does. The hotel must have at least one major meeting-hall, a number of multipurpose siderooms, and considerable adaptability.

There must be a better way, but if you are green (like we were) you just walk into this hotel and ask to see the manager, who is out, so you get the chance to practice your pitch on several subordinates whom you'll never see again, ever.

It goes something like this, and Bob Newhart could likely do pretty well with it if the whole pitch were not so damned ingroupish: you say like hey we have this convention to put on next year over Labor Day weekend, and the man lights up as if you had put a nickel in. But slowly and gradually disillusion sets in; the manager is shocked to hear that you cannot give him exact attendance figures, that you are operating on a pittance instead of the \$25 membership fee that is usual for the sales conventions to which he is accustomed, that you will not be wanting the \$15 banquet, and that you do not intend to pay \$150 a day for the meeting-hall. At this point you do not rush the man; he might conk out on you and you'd have to do it all over again with his successor. So you take it easy for the time being.

Slowly and gently you tell him the facts of life about S F Cons. That you are not representing a Nationwide Organization with a fat treasury. That you can only estimate your membership to the nearest hundred (attendance, also). That your bite is \$2 per member, with another buck collectible from attendees (have the smelling-salts handy for this one). That you are only scheduling one organized banquet-type meal during the entire shindig. That you are not going to pay any \$150 per day for a hall if you have to hold the Con on a vacant lot with pup-tents. That you will not be able to give him any sort of banquet-sales guarantee except for a tickets-sold figure, and that our sort of idiots always make it tough on one and all by (a sizable proportion) inevitably wanting to buy banquet tickets at the last minute. And that of all things, we are NOT KIDDING about all this.

I understand that the hotels in some cities offer you all sort of free facilities without batting an eye. Others, however, tag the usual Con-facilities at about one G, to start with. But this is like buying appliances retail; it's for show-- three different hotels here in Seattle independently (in response to the Sad Look and the Sincere Story) lowered their initial prices so that The Facilities Package in each case was discounted to an identical figure something like \$450. Each hotel made the discount by a different process of calculation, which was good ad-libbing. But there it stuck, prior to PittCon and the awarding of the '61 Con to our sturdy li'l group of masochists... this was just the main hall and a couple siderooms, at that stage-- no HQ Suite, no N3F Welcome Room, no extras-- just the bare bones, \$450.

But we went ahead and bid anyhow, being incurable optimists at heart. Howard had said you shouldn't have to pay the hotel for any of that stuff, so we figured there had to be some slack in the arrangements, somewhere. There was, of course.

A really on-the-ball Committee would arrange for a main hall with separate space for the banquet and Costume Ball; locally, we had to combine all these into one room unless we wanted to cope with a real stuffed-shirt downtown establishment. There should be rooms for group-meetings, for slides&movies, for Artshow, for the huckster-displays, for the N3F Welcome Room. There should be an HQ Suite and the Guest of Honor's quarters. And ideally you should get it all for free. (Sigh!)

You should have the use of these facilities starting about Friday noon (except for the main hall; Saturday is plenty early to open things formally) and with the option to hold them over Monday night and not clear things out until Tuesday.

Our Package included one big hall, 2 main siderooms, an HQ suite, and the N3F room, with timing as above-mentioned. We couldn't get the Guest-of-Honor's digs in on the deal. But, holding Howard's ideal pitch ("don't give 'em a damn cent") high in the sun as a blazoned banner to follow-- well, we did the best we could in a chintzy area like this one is.

It is not only money that you have to worry about, with a hotel-- there are also Agreed Conditions. And there is this about agreements-- if they are not in writing over the signature of the manager, you have been wasting your breath, buddy. Here's what happens: so you fight it out on this line if it takes all summer and it probably does. So you have an understanding with the manager, period. So who drops in with a load of joy? The catering director, that's who. Or in our case, the catering directress, name of Little Doris the Hatchet Lady, so let us stick to the harsher gender for this functionary. The cateress holds her job by virtue of a sadist's disposition, an extremely selective memory, and an inability to find anything in the files that might make her out a liar. So you have settled all the questions at least two or three times in this creature's presence, but any time she catches you in the manager's absence she never heard of such a thing and it will cost you like mad, just as she had said all along. (Don't worry, folks; this is not Realistic Fiction; the Good Guys do win in the end. But isn't this a terrific bit of suspense, though?)

It is impossible, no matter how you work at it, to get everything down in print over the manager's signature-- but that's the ideal. They won't let you grapple the cateress and tattoo this stuff foursquare across her antrims. So you just have to do the best you can. And mainly, don't be afraid to turn purple and beat on the desk, when the snow is piling up too deeply from the direction of the hotel staff; it is sometimes necessary to intimate that you have bighod had about enough of this old crap and let's get our feet back on the ground. In which case, you go all out.

The Banquet is a Trap. The hotel will want you to give a guarantee; don't do any such a silly thing. Regardless of what the hotel says, you know that the crowd is unpredictable and that no Committee in history has been able to convince all you idiots to send the damn card in ahead of time! So you simply cannot permit the sales to be cut off before the Con as the hotel would like, and yet you are not going to be stupid enough to guarantee any definite number of tickets ahead of time, which you would have to pay for out of your own scratch. So, it's quite a scramble; you can and will always win it if you are stubborn enough, but there are no fixed rules; you will just have to play it by ear, as everyone else has done.

There is one Golden Rule to keep in mind. Any time the hotel throws you a Bomb at the last minute, to the effect that you have to foul up your arrangements badly or else the hotel will have to cancel something out on you completely, just stop dead & say nothing at all until you have figured how this affects the hotel financially. Most of the time they will be bluffing, threatening to cut their own throats in order to panic you into saving them a little inconvenience. So call the bluff; look grave and serious, but stand fast. Our hotel didn't want the bartenders to have to bother with checking for minors, so told us we had to exclude all minors from the Costume Ball or they would have to close the upstairs bar on us. I asked them what solution they had in mind, and Little Doris really glowed in throwing it right back at me. So I shut up for 15 seconds, looked serious as all hell, and said I was sorry if they had to close the bar but our first obligation was to our own membership-- all of it. It must have taken Doris all of one minute to figure out how to keep the bar open.

You must not think that hotels are evil-- it is just that we are the amateurs and they are the pros, and after all it is a Money Game and nothing else from their viewpoint; you can't expect them to have too much patience with our peculiar ways and foibles. Not at first, anyway-- it was nice to see the way the Hyatt House ass't-mgr began to glow late Saturday afternoon when he realized that the WorldCon was not going to tear up his nice new hotel, and that he was more or less coining money that weekend. But the thing is, they never believe ahead of time, not until they see it.

(it's really only a 7-page zine, Bruce, for the record)

I suppose I should apologize for failing to do something in the way of MCs on a good lilg such as #56. But I won't. Granted that much of that mailing demands comment, deserves it, and all. Granted that there is much good material in there. Granted that a couple guys stuck their necks out and earned a good blast (the clean kind; no fallout). Granted all that; this is still the last page of this zine.

I was going to knock off the political arguments anyway, Dick Bergeron. Politics has always been the paradox that irritates me to an unbelievable extent, considering how it bores me (paraphrased from Sturgeon's "Butyl and the Breather", by the way). And in this case I was only going to dig back and list the basic questions I had repeatedly asked to no avail, and stand on the line of "answer these first; maybe then we can talk further on the subject", hoping all the while that this'd end it. Because I really do not want to waste stencils & cranking & postage, on politics. There are many things (almost all of 'em, in fact) that I find more enjoyable.

Wrai Ballard, sir, I am heartily glad that you have finally shown your true colors as a Convention Fan. I will grant you that the finales can be the Best Part.

Les Gerber, I think you were very naive to expect any college to be less chicken than F&M (no relation) turned out to be. But you made a good try, there...

Lee Jacobs, the timing was such that I never did get a BayCon Report of any kind into this sterling apa. But I enjoyed yours, even though you drink, you know...

Obruce Epelz: I have not yet dug the true significance as to why you have 36 instead of 35 members as the limit, but it doesn't bother me much. I think you have started out with a good fierce approach and none of this coddling, and I congratulate you on your convincingly blackhearted persona. Also, you got the touch, like...

Jack Harness, you did a fine job on "Fellowship of O"; it got me, here.

Way way back last spring in maybe the April mailing I ran this blast on Creeping Serconism. I will now have to admit that it was a loaded presentation, set up so that only those who bit on it could be nailed by it. It was a dirty trick, but then when did I ever say I was neat? So nearly everyone either paid hardly any attention or else played it cagy. I think only about two members really picked up the lead cutlass and tried to cut me down with it. That's not too many, out of 32 or 35 or 36. Of course a few prime candidates dropped out, but what's wrong with that? All in all I think that page achieved its purposes, both corrective and definitive. About time.

It might not hurt to throw in a few comments on Heinlein's SeaCon-banquet talk. The man predicted that 1/3 of us would be dead in ten years or less, either by war or by the results of defeat-in-conquest, dead-dog style. He really rubbed this in, too; no alternatives were given much of a chance. This naturally rubbed me entirely the wrong way so I wondered howcome the drearies on a 100% basis. Why, I thought, did Heinlein completely ignore the possibility that we might stay tough enough to avoid takeover, and still avoid all-out nuclear war? I came up with the answer that he might have been out to evoke a specific reaction in his audience, so I checked this out in two ways. First I asked people if they noticed anything particularly about that speech, and what their reactions were. The responses indicated that the speech was correct on the surface, which will bug you, Art Rapp, as much as it bugs me. On the second prong of my checkout, it turned out that Heinlein did have a good strong purpose in slanting his talk the way he did. The only thing is, he seems to have overestimated his audience; the talk was not for sheep, but more for wolves, and it appears that our cultural institutions these days are geared to produce more sheep than anything else. Hell of it is, I never did care much for mutton...

This has been and still is a FenDen Publication produced out of sheer stubbornness and an instinctive tendency to always do the wrong thing. I believe this remark stands on its own merits. If not, let it fall; I don't need the pagecount anyway.

And on that cheering note, as the deadline sinks slowly into the west, we leave this happy island paradise to the gala huzzahs of the natives ("FUGGHEAD!") and the plaintive bleating of their domestic animals, pacifists all, and welcome to it.

"I may be in a slave labor camp now, but at least I dodged the draft!" ...cheers...