

THE

AVENGER

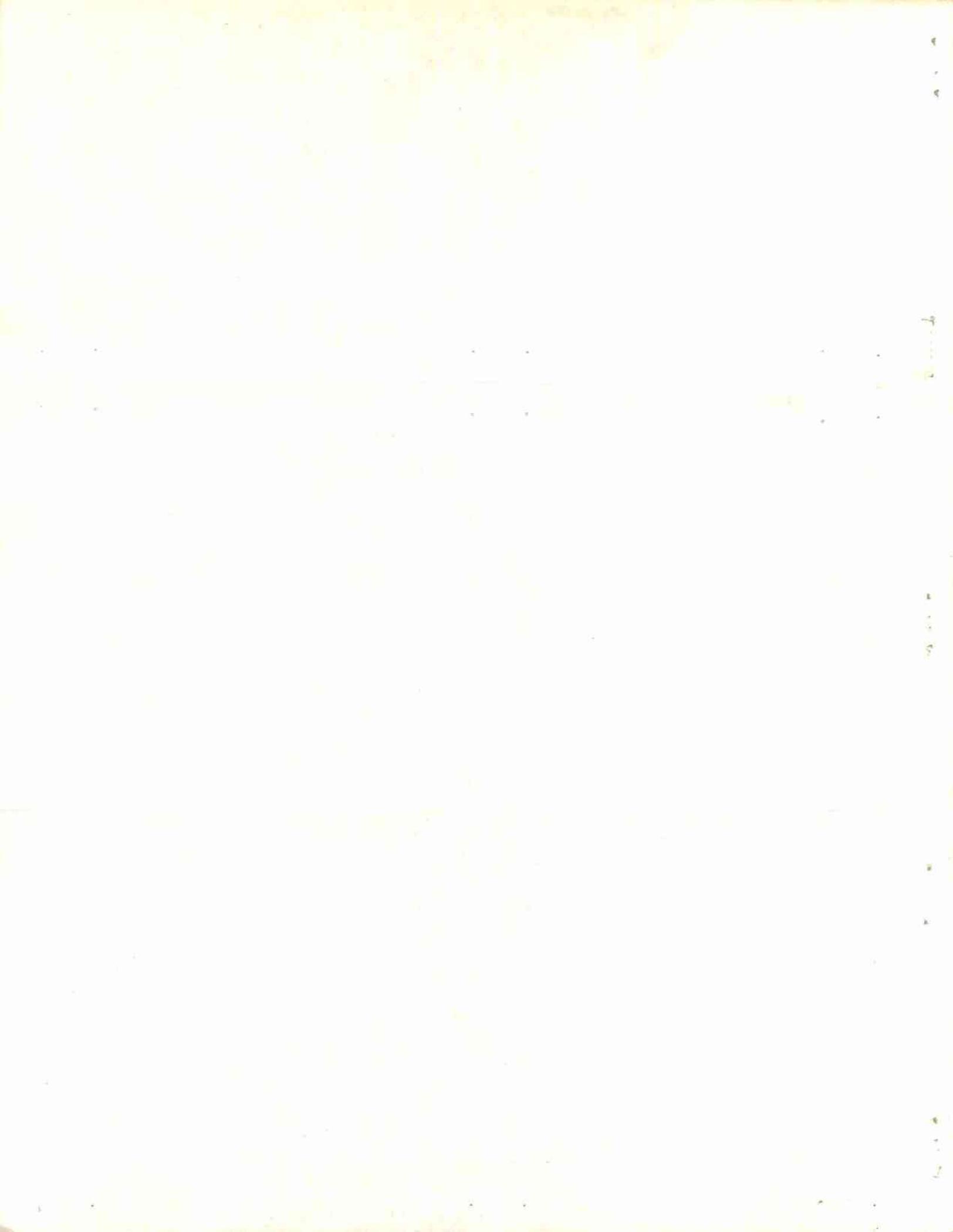


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# PILGRIMAGE to MECCA

Well, I've now spent five days on the West Coast, and it has been an extremely interesting and (for the most part) pleasant experience. (Of course, by when I master this, or even finish first drafting it, much more time will have passed. But this must have a finite length and this does seem to be an ideal point to cut it off. Selected further adventures of Ed Meskys, Boy Physicist, will appear in my N'APAZine.)

My plane left NY some 15 minutes past the scheduled departure time of noon on Thursday, June 14th. This was, for all practical purposes, my first air trip so despite the rather extensive cloud cover I didn't get too far into the copy of The Worm I'd brought along. Because of this cloud cover I could only see the ground from somewhere over Ohio to a little past Chicago and over the central portion of the Rockies. We were at 28,000 ft and for the most part the clouds were well below us, but we did occasionally fly thru some. I was really surprized to see "sunny California" covered by clouds.

My plane was scheduled to arrive at 2:40, after we took off the pilot announced that it would be at 2:55, and we stopped in front of the terminal at 2:30. However, by when I claimed my baggage it was 3. Right next to the baggage claim area was a counter at which one could presumably get reservations for any hotel in town. After waiting for 10 minutes while the character behind the counter fiddled with some papers, I gave up and went out the door next to me to the S.F. bus loading platform. Because of unfamiliarity with how things are run I missed the first one out and caught the next at 3:30.

Now I had dropped Norm Metcalf a postcard the previous day saying that I was coming out and would arrive about 3. I expected him to get it that evening, and just wanted him to stay where I could reach him then. However, I did take into account the possibility of his receiving it earlier and being there to meet me so I kept an eye out for him. Turned out he did and was (together with Bill Rickhardt who'd supplied the wheels) but we missed each other. He arrived about three and must have passed within a few feet as I was standing by the luggage area or at the hotel counter. And he says he had me paged too, but I suppose that that was after the bus had left for the speaker system did extend to the bus platform.

After I'd checked into my hotel I went out to eat and start trying to call the local fen. Again, after all this talk of Sunny California the cold really shocked me and I hastily ducked back for my suit jacket and raincoat--which I hadn't expected to use again until my trip home.

I had the most fantastic experiences with the phone that night. I first called Big Bill Donaho and learned of a party at the Andersons' but found him extremely uncommunicative and hard to talk with. Then I called Alva Rogers and got more info on

local doings, spoke with him about his articles in Viper, and got several phone numbers which weren't in Bennett's or Broyles' directories. He also mentioned that that was Bill's normal way of talking on the phone -- it was up to you to keep the "conversation" going and he'd do little more than answer direct questions. Since it cost 25¢ for the first 3 minutes and we spoke for 12 or 15 I expected I'd have to plunk almost another dollar into the slot. However, tho I waited for some 5 minutes the operator never did call back to say how much. Someone else wanted to use the phone so I left and walked down to the Greyhound Terminal to get a timetable out to Livermore. I resumed making my calls there but couldn't get any answer on what Alva had told me was Norm's number so I called back to make sure. This time I didn't go overtime and when I hung up I got my quarter back!

I then called and visited a fan who had moved from N.Y. to S.F. about two years ago, Kay Brickman. She said she'd contacted Ben Stark and 1 or 2 others when she and her sister had first arrived here but never joined any of the local groups because they all met in Berkeley or further, which was too far away for her to travel without a car. I brought her up to date on the doings of ESFA and the Lunarians and their members until her sister (who has little interest in fandom) got home about 10 or so and they had dinner. Some artist types from upstairs dropped in and I was getting tired (it was after 1 N.Y. time) so I left. Gads, but it was really cold now, and a fine misty rain was falling--something I was lead to expect didn't happen here this time of year. Presumable brainwashing by the local chamber of commerce.

When I got back to the hotel I discovered that Liz Lokke had called back (I'd called her before when she wasn't home) so I phoned her again. This time there was a 15¢ surcharge, and as I dropped the coins into the slot the dime came back to me! This was my last call for the day and the last bit of such luck during my stay (so far!)

The next two days I spent walking around the NE corner of S.F. and covered just about everything between Fisherman's Wharf, Civic Center and the Oakland Bay Bridge. About the only "place" that I wasn't to in that area was the "Top of the Mark", some two blocks from my hotel. I found everything very interesting and the hills were really fantastic (and tiring too!)

I was really flabbergasted the first time I came to a corner and stopped for an oncoming car to pass only to have it stop for me! In N.Y. this is absolutely unheard of -- often even when the pedestrian has the right of way (such as when a car is turning and the pedestrian is facing a lit "walk" sign) the cars barge right thru.

Some other things which struck me were the politeness and even friendliness of the bus drivers (also unusual was the woman bus driver I came across in Berkeley) and the well dressed panhandlers. While on Market Street (the main shopping district) three men in business suits and white shirts and ties accosted me. The only thing I can make of it is that there must be one hell of a "recession" locally, that "unemployment" ran out for these people, and for some reason they can't get help from the local charitable agencies. I mean, it can't be that the regular buses go around in the Madison Ave uniform, can it?

Too, the place seems to be completely over-run with liquor stores and bars which...er, aren't. There seem to be no "package stores" as such, but every grocery, delicatessen and drug store, and even some news-stands, sell booze. And in most cases the booze takes up a good portion of the display space to the extent that at first glance one often doesn't even see the "main line" of merchandise. And the bars.... Now I don't know whether it was just in that section of S.F. or what, but their number seemed not only infinite, but non-denumerably so. They weren't called "bars", but "clubs", and most had [or at least advertised--they looked so seedy that I wasn't in any] some sort of "entertainer" -- usually a pianist or organist.

Finally I saw the weirdist thing Saturday morning when I walked thru Chinatown to Telegraph Hill. Grant Street was closed to traffic for a two block stretch bet-

MEMORANDUM

when Vallejo and Union Streets, just past Chinatown and on the fringe of the South. Now I have seen a lot of exhibits of paintings before and I can't say I like to include sculpture, but here there were also some musicians who had set up small platforms upon which they performed while the hat was passed. Most of the artists tried to be noticed by wearing really distinctive costumes. One of the members wore a mid-19th century formal costume and had a top hat which must have been a foot and a half tall.

I finally contacted Norm Friday about 7 and he gave me directions on how to get out to his place. I had The Worm with me but again I got little reading done on the 1 hour trip because of the newness of everything.

When I first walked in he told me two very strange things in an odd cryptic manner and I just didn't know what to make of them. First he said something which I believe (but which I later learned was true and which is SMC for another matter) and then he asked me if I'd heard the SMC going around that I was a vampire. The only detail Norm would give is that I (or perhaps it was some other N.Y. fan) was supposed to have been investigated by the FBI (of all things!) on account of this several years ago.

The first thing was bad enough but the second one convinced me that Norm was joking. The real weird things were happening the next day that the first was true and a week later that there really was such a story. (Karen Anderson, Al halcyon & I were out sampling something called "Stein Beer" up in Sausalito (what a beautiful appropriate name for the town--but unfortunately it isn't pronounced that way) in MARIPASA County when I mentioned it, and Karen said it was true--such stories were going around. She said that there was a wildly and somewhat self-consistently constructed line of reasoning set up to prove this, but would go no further. And from the way Norm had told it I gather that the details are anything but complimentary. (I've found it's fascinating the sorts of things that can spring up concerning oneself without your ever having heard of it. I'm getting rather morbidly curious about what the details could be...)

The conversation returned to a safer level (now notice that I said safer, not sane) and he told about how every single copy of New Frontiers #4 + the mss for #5 were either in the hands of Shelby Vick or lost. (He'd entrusted them to Shelby to mail to Berkeley after he left Florida, but never has received them nor been able to get an answer from Shelby as to whether they were mailed.) He plans to hitchhike down to Florida sometime in the next month to find out and get things straightened out in general. Also, he said he's put a deposit down on a letterpress and intends to use that method of reproduction in the future in order to save money, and that he hasn't heard from Don Day directly in some two years he's gotten indirect word that most of the pages of the '62-'61 Index have been printed.

Before I took the bus back to S.F. we visited Ben Stark for a few hours. Ben has an impressive stock tho it isn't quite up to that of Brad Day in size. It is better organized and cleaner, however, and might be a bit more varied.

Next day I called Big Bill again to see about a ride out to the Guggus party and he told me to meet him by his house. While we were waiting for someone else who was supposed to ride out with us I had an opportunity to sample his famous home brew. Now I am not much of a connoisseur of beer and rarely drink it (I do try Lowenbrau or Charlie Brown's during and now order it regularly at the monthly WORLDWIDE meetings, but don't know what else but I really enjoyed his product. I got to try it again beer the other day and it wasn't good it left a burning aftertaste like the page one of WORLDWIDE ginger. Now I will have to try his alcohol, but I don't know what kind of alcohol it is and I certainly wouldn't object to further sampling of it.

#### PICTURE:4

The third person didn't show up so we finally went alone...and were among the first to arrive. Aside from the Andersons, Bill and myself, Mirriam Carr, Jim Caughran, Al Halevy, Jerry Knight, Norm Metcalf, Alva & Sid Ropers, Ben Stark and undoubtedly a few others eventually turned up.

At first I just met the people, listened in on some of the conversations, and snooped around the party-occupied part of the house (paying particular attention to the books and Karen's paintings) but after an hour or so I got into a rather lengthy discussion of fantasy with Poul. I had remarked [after discussing some other matters] that while I didn't care too much for the story itself [too much doom-mood] I greatly admired the rationalization of his The Broken Sword. Also, I remarked, there was no question of what had happened to the fairly creatures--they had simply wiped each other out in their wars. Why there was so much carnage that by the end of the book 90% of the fairy population must have been done in! [Come to think of it, with the rationalization used they could still be around and we simply don't see them.]

Anyhow, trust a physicist to come up with something like that--logical and original. The rationalization of his Three Hearts and Three Lions, on the other hand, was ok, but it was an old standard used countless times--especially by de Camp in Unknown. Stories like Lord of the Rings which are simply set in the distant past generally involve a great number of anachronisms. From The Hobbit and the talk therein of their still being occasionally seen in England I assume that "Middle Earth" is supposed to have been some sort of primeval predecessor of Europe. However, "taters" are referred to as a staple in their diet, and weren't potatoes brot from Latin America by the Spanish Conquistadoeres? Of course "pipe weed" gets around the difficulty of tobacco, but what about the whole concept of smoking? Didn't that come from the Indians? Or could it have originated in the Orient with its use of opium and other drugs? The whole culture and technology seems to be a fusing of various aspects of that of England from the from the 15th to 18th centuries [minus gunpowder].

Now since Tolkien is a philologist he must be quite familiar with our cultural history simply because his specialty is one aspect of it which reflects most of the others--languages. Since he was so careful to build up other aspects of the background of LOTR I don't see why he used an ordinary cultural background. I mean, he has the ability which most authors don't. Could it be that he tried but the non-familiar orientation somehow disturbed the mood and charm of the story--perhaps because the reader has come to expect such a background and it disturbs him to not find it? Or simply that he was limited by what he had already written in the Hobbit long before he planned out LOTR?

Poul maintained that despite the obvious shortcomings a recognizable culture was needed in order to not have to explain everything. Thus the use of "tinderboxes" and familiar foods which the reader recognizes. But, he thot, it might be a good idea to use a medieval Oriental culture for a change in stead of the familiar (and overly so) medieval European one in some future story.

Karen, who'd come up to us by then, commented that in stories like these you just had to ignore the given rationalization (the far past of which no records or only this record survived) and assume that it took place on another planet whereon human beings had also evolved [+ other sentient creatures] but which bore no geological or historical similarity to our planet. The same is true of Eddison's Worm with its ridiculous setting on Mercury. Ok, so maybe we could accept an atmosphere (underdone?) and human beings in the spirit of the game as we do with Burrough's Worm stories, but the year, length of day, climate, seasons, species of animals aside from men and even the moon are identical to that of Earth. Not only that, but the locally variable factors are identical to those familiar to the British culture. Again, it is best to imagine this as set on a completely different world going about near distant sun.

Speaking of The Worm Ouroboros, Karen remarked that one of her ambitions was to try to recreate one of the fabulous meals described therein, inventing recipes for

things which apparently didn't really exist. That's another thing about the book-- its rather weird language. But much of the charm of the book does come from the archaic forms which oh so often are perfectly appropriate to the context. I will have to re-read it someday with an unabridged dictionary at my side for many terms simply went over my head. Oh I gathered from context that the word referred to an animal or an emotion or food, but that told me nothing about the specific thing referred to. A real fault of the book is the existence of inconsistencies in the plot --an unforgivable sin in fantasy! We talked about several of these such as the magical appearance of a fully crewed boat to take Juss and Bluszco home after their release from Carc@. And Karen pointed out the magical appearance of food for their banquets when "on the road", but she said that you should simply ignore these things because these minor errors are immaterial to the story, and enjoy the story itself.

She also pointed out that there is a sort of bibliography giving the sources of all of the verse the characters spouted at each other and that apparently the characters know no English literature from after the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. But in the other three books, which are supposed to take place before this one, the characters quote from a more modern repertoire.

In all we spent quite a bit of time talking about fantasy and these aspects of it but then we somehow drifted over into languages. A little later I suggested that perhaps the presence of a dual person in the Lithuanian of a few centuries ago and in Homeric Greek were rudiments of the "One, Two, Many" stage of counting, but Poul said that that stage of counting had been surpassed so long ago that that couldn't possibly be so. Perhaps it wasn't so much a "dual" person initially as a "small group" as opposed to a "large group" person. Thus the pre-dual person would have been used in addressing or speaking to a small intimate group of 2-5 people while the plural person would have been used by a leader in addressing a mob. Unfortunately neither Karen nor I knew enough to be able to verify or reject Poul's speculations. My speaking knowledge of Lithuanian did not include any sort of dual person or method of use thereof the once when I had browsed thru a "Lithuanian Self Taught" book in a library I had noticed that altho it did list a dual person the conjugation was identical to one of the others. I forget which but I imagine it was plural for that does seem more logical. And the language must have lost distinctive use of this quite a while back because in it, like in most European languages, the 2nd person singular is used only in intimate conversation. [Come to think of it, the general tendency in the change of languages seems to be away from the specific and towards the more general so that a change from a "small plural" to a "dual" seems most unlikely. But then, we only knew that something called a dual person existed and nothing about the way in which it was used in practice.]

Karen knew classical Greek rather well but was only beginning to learn Homeric so she wasn't much help either. She did have an annotated edition of Homer in the original which she dug out but couldn't find anything useful in the notes.

This got us onto the topic of how languages seem to simplify with age and I expressed an old wild hypothesis of mine--that the original complex Indo-European language was that used by the human race when it first colonized the Earth and that it had been degenerating ever since. Poul, as usual, immediately came up with a better idea. Way back when, some 10,000 years ago, aliens landed among us and were frightened for Campbell's favorite reason. That is, they saw that we were developing at an absolutely fantastic pace and had already come up with agriculture after only umpteen thousand years of herding. Why at this rate we would be competing with them out there among the stars in a mere 20,000 years or so unless something drastic were done to stop us. So they set themselves up as gods, and having our trust [or fear] they taught us the "language of the gods--Indo-European--in order to confuse us and hold us up.... And we've been unlearning this ever since!

Oh, we talked of other aspects of these things, and of other things too, but as all conversations must this one eventually came to an end. [Incidentally, I cheated and added a number of afterthoughts in writing this up; also, I quite often

## PILGRIMAGE:6

just ran the essence of what was said into a single continuous unit without bothering to try to straighten out who had contributed which part of it. I drifted again and people started to leave the party when Karen suggested a game.

Games seem to be a big thing with Bay Area fandom. This, based on a knowledge of the characters of literature history & mythology, was one I had never heard of before. In either of two versions the person who is "it" picks a character (Karen, first up, chose one of John Carter's sons) and announces the first initial of his/her/its principle name. It is up to the others to guess who this is, and they start to try to think of people whose names begin with a "c". However, they don't ask outright "Are you Conan?" but something like "Did you spend the early part of your career as a pirate?" And "Were you killed in an accident while working as a scab?" instead of "Are you Casey Jones?" It is up to her to find someone, not necessarily the person/creature the questioner was thinking of, who fits the description and say "No, I am not Cxxxxxxx." If she can't, the questioner can then ask her a direct question such as "Are you human?", "Are you real?", "Are you male?", "Are you female?" [remember that it might be neither as in the case of a robot or perhaps an alien], etc. Now it most definitely is not expected that, when asking an indirect question, you guess who she is thinking of, and if you should ask, for instance, "Were you born on Mars?" If she can think of anyone else who was it is perfectly legal for her to say "No, I am not Captepx#0." In the tight version of the game once something is established by a direct question it limits the following indirect questions, while in the loose version it doesn't. Thus, if it were established that she isn't real the Casey Jones question would be illegal in one case and legal in the other. There are all sorts of other rules to prevent use of esoterisms and about what happens when the questioner makes a mistake, but there is no sense going into them here. In fact, for all I know this whole game might be familiar to most of you and you found the whole description a crashing bore.

Anyhow, we played the loose version, and the characters the participants came up with and the fact that the "it" person got almost all of them sort of flabbergasted me. Had I been "it" I don't think I would have caught half the references, but then most of them had played this game many many times and had plenty of practice. But as I said, their knowledge of literature, mythology, etc, was really overpowering.

By 3 AM only Karen, Bill Donaho, Norm Metcalf, Jim Caughran and I were still at it. Everyone else had either gone home or, in the case of Poul and Astrid and two who were staying over, retired. Karen had held out for quite a while as Carter's son, and then Bill had been it. It looked like things were about ready to break up and I had been wondering about getting back to my hotel in San Francisco. The last bus left Berkeley at 1:30, but before retiring Jerry Knight had assured me that buses ran from Oakland all night.

However Karen simply didn't want to quit and asked us if we'd stay longer if she gave us breakfast. She did manage to convince us so we cleaned all of the leftovers out of the refrigerator and went back to the game.

Now of course I was rather tired and at times just sat there with my eyes half closed and said nothing for a half hour or so, while at times I woke up and took an active part in the questioning. Also, most of them were drinking fantastic quantities of various forms of ethanol [by my standards, that is--I was to learn that this is SOP in Berkeley fandom] and yet they remained completely sober and their wits were very sharp right up to the last half hour or so of the game. It had been a "bring your own booze" affair and because I didn't have the time to dig anything up I abstained. But I was perfectly happy and didn't miss it. I'm sure that if I had had anything I would have been asleep on the floor--not from over-indulgence but because of the change in time zone and the fact that the stuff is a depressant. Norm however, who'd also abstained, stretched out on the floor and went to sleep about 4:30.

## PILGRIMAGE:7

We were all getting groggy about six and were making all kinds of mistakes so we quit and Karen made us some coffee. We got Norm up, drank the coffee, finished off the remaining food, and broke up.

It was now close to seven and I was wide awake again. Karen was still going strong too, and she asked me if I wanted a guided tour of San Francisco. I was game so she left a note for Poul and Astrid and we were off. I certainly must admire her powers of endurance. After that all night session she was still perfectly awake and had that car in perfect control.

As we neared the Golden Gate Park Karen asked me if I had any particular desire to see the zoo. Since I didn't the first place we decided to visit was the Japanese Tea Garden in the park, but we found that it wouldn't open for another 2 1/2 or so hours. Karen made some remarks about the "fugheaded fuzz" and easily slipped thru a space between the "cyclone" fence and the wooden gate. I tried to follow but, damnit, I was just a bit too fat. I got most of the way thru and if my back had been a little bit straighter I probably would have made it. We could find no wider spaces, the wooden part of the fence was too high, and the metal part had a barbed wire top.

We then stopped for a few minutes to see the "buffalo herd" further down the park (inherited by the city when a circus went broke a number of years back, and containing a half dozen or so animals) and went on to the "Ocean Beach" at the end of the park. As we walked on the sand Karen casually asked me if I could figure out why she never goes swimming there. I speculated about sharks [there had been an article in the NY papers several years ago about sharks attacking and killing a pair of UC students] and strong undertow. She said that while both were factors to be considered they were not the real reason. As a wave reached close to us she had me bend down and touch the water. The intense cold was what kept her away, she said, and it was due to the ocean currents which brot the water from Alaska. She muttered something about this being no real indication and had me follow her out as the water receded. I had no idea of what she had in mind and all of a sudden another wave came rushing in and swamped us up to our knees! I was utterly flabbergasted and for a moment just didn't know what to do or think, but then "votdihell, archie, votdihell!" I thot, grabbed ahold of the ends of my raincoat to save that from getting wet too, and relaxed to enjoy myself. (Anyhow, it was too late to run.) This, said Karen, was the only way to really appreciate the real cold feeling of the ocean.

This, I was beginning to see, was the sort of thing one can expect from Karen. I certainly must admire her carefree way of enjoying life and "the HELL with the consequences or what the squares think!" I'm sort of glad she pulled this little surprise on me for it really was the only way to "know" the Pacific, and if she had warned me about what she had in mind I'm sure I would have had all sorts of reservations about my clothes, etc, and would never have agreed to it. Come to think of it, she probably never ment it as a surprise and it never even entered her head that I might hesitate, but she just neglected to give full details.

Now that I've met her I know I'll appreciate her fanzines much MUCH more for I'll keep thinking as I read them, "yes, this is her alright." The little creatures she draws, the Doheug [what's the origin of that name, Karen?] now seem so appropriate too--they're hers.

Anyhow, we then crossed the street back into the park to where the sloop "Cjoa" was on exhibit. This little ship, and it was about the size of a contemporary lifeboat, had been the first and only one to successfully pass thru the Northwest Passage. The fact that this microscopic thing (so small that it had no cabin above deck) with a crew of only a half dozen or so had done it really aroused your sence of wonder and Karen made some comparisons of this with the contemporary astronauts. Here the crew had battled the elements for a year totally cut off from all other life...what were the astronaut's experiences compared with this?

We then drove a few blocks north past the Seal Rocks and Cliff House and on to

the art museum, "The California Palace of the Legion of Honor". Of course it was still closed but we spent some 15 minutes studying an original casting of Rodan's "The Thinker" they had in front of it and talking about Heinlein. I remarked that since this was one of the only 5 original castings made it was a shame to keep it out in the elements. Karen answered that a thin crust preserved it and it was much more fitting for it to be outdoors than within. Were it within it would have had to be kept polished which would have given it an entirely wrong and inappropriate texture. And it was "right" that "he" should be outdoors too! She also advised me to return to this spot at the top of the hill just in time for sunset for when atmospheric conditions were just right it seemed as if you were INSIDE the sunset. A most magnificent occurrence, she assured me.

We then drove thru the Presideo [army establishment] taking the leisurly Lincoln Boulevard instead of the usual Doyle Drive. This let us out onto Lombardo Street and we shortly reached the block of it billed as the "crookedest street in the world" where it snaked down a very steep hill. Sheesh! Going down that thing in a car was like going down a roller-coaster!

It was still far far from the 10 AM opening time of most things, I had to check out of my hotel by 11, and I was getting hungry. I decided to bring the last thing up first and asked Karen if she'd care to have breakfast now. [We were passing Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill and she remarked that not only did it look like a phallic symbol but its name sounded like the French word for coitus!] When I answered "Anything" to her query about what kind of food I was willing to take for breakfast she got a sudden gleam in her eyes as a thought struck her and she asked expectantly "Anything?" "Well, er, just about...I guess." "Well, I feel like having some Chinese food...you game?"

It sounded like a good idea so we were off looking for some restaurants she had in mind. They were all closed and we asked a policeman if he knew of one that would be open. We went into the place a-half block down Grant Street that he had pointed out to us but when we ordered egg-roll they said they didn't serve Chinese food 'till after 1. I had begun to faunch for egg roll myself so I bluntly asked the waitress if she knew of a place where we could get Chinese food at this time.

Well, luckily there was one right across the street and we went in. It was a very small place with only a counter and (I believe) no tables. Only one of the people there could speak English and it was obviously a place where the Chinese themselves went to eat and which normally didn't get any "tourists" as clients. I don't remember the place's name but I'm sure I could easily find it next time I'm there. The food was very good and the place is worth remembering. (It was on the West side of Grant Street near Clay.)

We were only 5 or so blocks from my hotel so I asked Karen if I could check out and dump my luggage in her trunk. She agreed so I ducked up, changed into dry clothes and checked out.

We next drove to Twin Peaks in the Southern end of the town but didn't see too much because of the haze. As we were nearing Golden Gate Park again Karen asked if I was sure I didn't want to see the zoo. Well, I had no objections and she did want to see the Koala Bear and...was it Snow Leopard? again so we went in. It was still only a quarter of ten but fortunately the gates were already open and we didn't have to wait. We spent an hour or so looking around and keeping up the constant line of chatter we had maintained ever since we left her home in Orinda, and we left the park heading for the Golden Gate Bridge. Dern it, we forgot all about the Tea Garden which was open by now.

We took the leisurly minor coastal roads thru the various towns in Marin County untill we reached the Richmond Bridge which we crossed. We were only a few miles from where Poul, Jack Vance and Frank Herbert were building a houseboat so we visited that and found them all there, plus Astrid. After a quick look-around she drove us down to the Greyhound terminal in Oakland and left me there at about 1 PM.

There was still the matter of Mass. I knew there was one at 6 in SF and could find none in Oakland so I checked my baggage and took the bus back to SF. I sat down in Union Square park to wait and tried to read further into the Worm but I was just too tired to be able to concentrate. Anyhow, I ate and killed the rest of the time 'till 6 sitting half asleep in the park.

I caught the 7:15 bus out to Livermore with some 10 minutes to spare, but when I got out there my luggage wasn't there! It had been sent out on an earlier bus and the station house had been closed, so it was taken on to the next town with an open station--Tracy some 30 miles away!

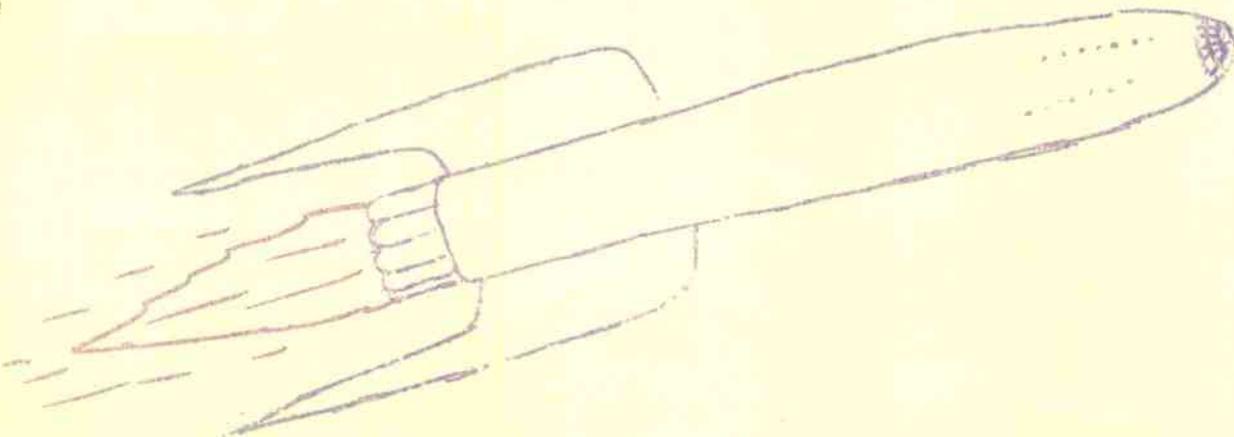
The lab had a housing office which was supposed to arrange for an apartment for me after I had sent in all of the necessary forms. They found a place and wrote me describing it and asking for a deposit if I want it, but the letter got lost in the mails. Since I never answered it they assumed I had made arrangements of my own, gave the apartment to someone else, and quit looking for one for me. Friday I phoned them from SF and asked what the hell had happened. After we figured out what happened they went to work looking for a place and phoned me back that evening saying that they made a reservation for me for Sunday night and should have a place by Monday. Thus, I headed out of town for the motel at which I was to stay that night.

Next morning I looked and felt like hell when Mrs. Huey, the housing officer, picked me up in front of the motel in order to drive me out to the labs. I had absolutely nothing except the clothes I'd worn the last day, and they were wrinkled like all heck. Also I hadn't shaved in two days because of the all night party and the missing luggage, so I was extremely glad to learn that my boss wasn't in that day. I spent the day listening to orientation lectures, getting my picture taken for the identification badge [Ghu, but I look like hell on that thing] and doing all sorts of other bureaucratic little things. I spoke to Mrs Huey about a place to stay but she still had nothing and I was to go back to the motel for this one more night. But she promised that she'd have something by the next day for sure.

So I got a ride back at the end of the day, picked up my luggage (which had been returned to the Livermore terminal that morning when it opened) and went to bed very early. Presumably the crisis was over. I had my luggage, I'd be meeting my boss the next day and starting work in earnest, and I'd be settled in my own apartment. Things were really looking up.

Edmund P Meskys

11 July, 1962.



A SORT OF POST-SCRIPT

1: Cover by Bjo, picked up at the Westcon Art Table. Reproduction by "Oscid" process. This is a real weird method of reproduction. First I had to make a transparency of the illo--this was done by Xeroxing it onto special "tracing paper" like stuff and it is here that all of the loss in quality originated. "Xerox" is a pretty crummy process for copying anything except typing. Then you grab yourself a stack of special yellow paper and feed it into the machine one at a time with the transparency on top of it. Where light gets thru the transparency ammonia can dissolve the dye--where it doesn't, it can't. If you have a good hand-drawn transparency it will do a really nice job....I think I'll have to re-use this piece of artwork some day when I can do a better job of reproducing it.

2: Typing (except for this page) by Selectric. Took me quite a while to get used to the beast and initially there were typos galore. Unfortunately they only have the typeface used + a "scientific" one consisting of most of the Greek alphabet and all sorts of symbols like integral signs, partial derivatives, ktp.

3: About the preceding 9 pages--the early part is probably the most re-written thing I've yet published but towards the end I was running out of time and the last page is even composed on master. If I decide to re-run this elsewhere I will probably revise the last few pages. And towards the end I went into a lot less detail than I intended to--again because of the time factor.

I did subsequently learn what happened to Karen after she left me. When she got home she had to clean up the mess from the party but fortunately Miri, who had stayed over, was still there and did most of the work under her direction. Then after dinner she played "Scrabble" with Miri and Jerry Knight and her score was higher than their combined scores! That woman is absolutely fantastic!

When I started to write this thing several weeks ago I really had a gosh-wow feeling about the party and next day and I could hardly wait to get up to that part of the report in order to try to re-capture it on paper. Looking over the completed masters I am afraid that I didn't succeed but it is hard to evaluate your own stuff. Especially so soon after it was finished.

4: I did write some MCs but started mastering the report first and that took much longer than I expected. I couldn't leave off in the middle of the narrative and now it's mighty close to the deadline. Since I owe pages I will cut things off with this page, give the mess to a secretary to run off on the electric Ditty, collate the mess and send it off to Bruziver special delivery. Like, I don't want to be OUT of SAPS.

I suppose Rich Bergeron is right about fanish priorities and I am much more of a club fan than a fanzine fan. Here I could have been creating a giant SAPSzine but I spent all weekend every weekend with fans. (By the way, the Westcon was a pure delight--one of the best cons I've been to!)

I really like things out here on the West Coast and am seriously thinking of trying to stretch what was to have been a summer job into a full one and staying another year or so. (However, because everything of mine is here I don't want to leave New York permanently.)

Well, be seeing most of you at the Chicon!

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