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ace mystery SAPSZINE number 14 published by Edmund R Meskys (% Metcalf, Box 336, Berkeley Calif 94701, and begun as usual at the very last minute (at 7:30 PM, Sunday, 13 October this time, to be specific) for the 65th SAPS mailing.

Well, as you can see, I haven't moved after all. It's largely a matter of not coming up with a suitable job on the east coast. I've signed up to take some courses here this winter, and if things go well I now might end up staying several years until I get a degree. I'm mildly unhappy because it would be in "applied physics" instead of "physics" and therefore am not sure whether or not I will stay here even if I do do well. But anyhow, I now have no idea whatsoever about when I will be leaving California, other than that it will be after the Pacific.

The Discon was a weird convention for me. First of all, I traveled down to it with Matt Chlupsa, Carl Frederick & "the Greeb" in Matt's barely running '53 Merc hardtop. But not only were the 4 of us in this car, but Matt took along his motor-scooter! To make room for it the entire back seat had to come out, and the right edge of the front one disconnected from the floor and pushed up against the dashboard. Three of us sat in front, and one sat on the floor in back with the scooter.

Matt's idea was to leave the car at the edge of town after checking into the hotel and use the scooter for getting around. And Friday morning we did just that, touring DC on the thing. After a few minutes of nervousness I got confident enough to not have to hold on at all and so was able to manipulate the light meter & camera while Matt roared down the various streets. It was an awful lot of fun and had just about convinced me to get either a small motor-cycle like a "Honda" or "Yamaha" or a scooter once I pass my driving test. [Night before last I mentioned this to Metcalf & started to ask him about insurance on such beasts. He urged me most strongly to not get one, claiming that my obituary would appear in STARSPINKLE within one month if I did. He said this is largely because most car drivers ignore you, as if you weren't there, and you need perfect vision in all directions to be able to see everything coming at you. Also, a few people purposely try to run you down. He has succeeded in getting me somewhat worried about this, and I am now rather undecided about what to do. I do need some sort of mechanized transportation and I don't like cars.]

Carl Frederick had his bagpipes along and made a rather marked impression on a number of people at the con... especially Bruce Pelz. Thursday night we went out for a snack with Bruce, Dian & a few others. The "White Tower" had a large-diameter straw, so Carl immediately began to cut holes in his and make musical noises on it. He likes large-diameter straws for this, but these straws had too wide a diameter and he was having a lot of trouble. When he broke it in half to get two instruments & play in harmony with himself Bruce had enough, got up, and walked out.

Paul Zimmer kept wanting to hear Carl play the pipes, but never had the opportunity. Finally, by appointment we got together after Dinner in our room on Sunday night. Unfortunately by when we got all of the principles together it was about midnight and our party was broken up rather quickly by the house detective. (There were about 30 of us altogether in our room.) So we went out to DuPont Circle where Carl played them until we were chased away by a cop. We finally went to the foot of the Washington Monument where nobody bothered us. But we arrived about 2 AM and Carl was quite winded from all the walking and couldn't manace the thing for more than a minute or so at a time. So he disconnected the chanter and, sitting down on the bench next to us, By this time our group had diminished to less than a dozen, and Carl & I were sitting at opposite ends of the line of us on the long benches at the foot of the monument. John Mayhew, with his flute, was about half-way down the line and hence much closes. At one point

ace mystery Pg2] they played a few duets, and with the soft flute closer than the loud bagpipe chanter their volumes were just about equal and the combination sounded great! I remember one of the things they played was "Ride of the Valkyrie" ...I never heard it sound better.

Ups, Just got an offer of a ride back into town so I think I better go now. Hope I can at least finish this page during lunch hour.

Unfortunately the SAPS table turned out to be rather dull, this year...largely, I suspect, due to the presence of JWCampbell + satellites. The table had Ruth Berman, Wally Weber, Dian Girard, Bruce Pelz, "the Troll" (more on her in a minute), myself, Mrs Campbell, JWC, and two satellites. The three of them kept muttering to each other and I could occasionally catch the words "Dean Drive" so it looks like Campbell's still interested in that. With those three firmly established taking up a third of the table no one else seemed to have the nerve to speak up loudly and try to start a general conversation. Ruth talked with Wally, Dian with Bruce, and I ended up discussing her upcoming move to California with the Troll. Mrs. Campbell was rather left out of JWC's conversation and (I suppose) out of sheer desperation started one with the two of us. (I don't think Campbell came up for air once.) She was a very charming and interesting woman but seemed totally lost and out of place at the convention.

About the "Troll"...like "Lee Thorin" she has parent trouble and was at the convention under a completely phony name...and not very imaginative at that. ("Mary Devil") I first met her at a Philly Conference 3 years ago. The official con party was in a pair of connecting rooms and she had at one point set herself up in the doorway, saying it was a "Troll's bridge" and you couldn't pass without paying her. She refused to give her name at the time and simply identified herself as "A Troll", and I've thought of her as "The Troll" ever since. Whenever she came up in a conversation with Matt or Carl we always referred to her as "The Troll."

An odd thing about this con was the absence of large open parties before Sunday night. There were small closed ones the first three nights (ie, including Thursday), and I got an invite to one or more each night. But the ones I had heard about could have held at most a total of 75 people between them, and there must have been a number of others I hadn't heard about...especially since a number of quite prominent fans were not present at these. Sunday night was the combined West Coast victory party which I missed because of the antics with Carl and his bagpipes, and Monday night one developed in the con suite.

Damn that Bruce Pelz anyway! We were the only two left bidding on the Gestetner at the auction and I was just trying to decide what or how much more to bid when the auctioneer called it off as sold to Bruce. I was hesitating because I regarded Bruce as rather obstinate and figured he was liable to keep going indefinitely if he really wanted the machine. But I was completely shocked at the fast way the auctioneer cut the bidding off...with proper handling I am sure he could have gotten the bidding up at least another \$20. Perhaps he did this at the behest of his companion auctioneer, who was none other than Pelz?

Guess that's it for this quarter. I'm gonna have to return the typer to the secretary soon.

Ed Meskys

Oh - I might make the Philly conference this year. There is a 50% probability that I will be offered a trip East then, but right now I don't know whether I'll be able to accept it due to a shortage of free time.

Ed