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Today is July 28th. It is Buz' and my eleventy-first mensiversary. Feel free to wish us many happy returns of the month. It's also significant in that it's the day before my Fapazine is to be run off. It will be interesting to see how many stencils I can cut, on such a nice sunny day, and with nothing in particular to talk about since I have decided not to do mailing comments this time.

### *The Bay Area*

We were there quite recently, you know, to the Westercon. I love the Bay Area, and so does practically everybody from Seattle. I wouldn't care to live there, but it's perhaps my favorite place to visit. Similarly, almost everyone from the Bay Area regards Seattle fondly. Of course they wouldn't care to live here, but they regard Seattle as an essentially right-minded town.

Seattle and San Francisco are similar in that both are hilly, both are built on a bay, each is the nucleus of a group of towns, each has a Chinatown with its shops and restaurants and festivities, each has many citizens who are Culturally Aware, and most important of all, I think, each city looks outward. San Francisco looks to Hawaii and the Orient; Seattle looks to Alaska and the Orient.

Not all towns look outward--very few do. It isn't entirely that Seattle and San Francisco are ports--not even all ports look outward. Los Angeles and New York are both ports, and neither, so far as I know, looks outward in the way that Seattle and San Francisco do. New York and Los Angeles are leading the rest of the planet, and to me seem self-absorbed and not too much interested in what goes on elsewhere. Of course this is pretty much subjective. To leave port towns out of it, I'm sure all will agree that Seattle and San Francisco are more outward-looking than, say, Des Moines, Iowa, or St. Joe, Mo., or any other inland city.

There are lots of dissimilarities between Seattle and San Francisco. San Francisco is much the older and more picturesque. Its houses are built close together--many touching. Its women are more elegant, more apt to wear hats on downtown shopping trips. Seattle is younger, smaller; its houses have more room around them. It's a more casual town, an easier town.

An important difference between the Seattle area and the Bay area is the difference in the physical environment. The hills around Seattle are absolutely covered with trees. From a little distance the hills look soft and fuzzy; all one sees of the hills are the rounded tops of closely set green trees. The hills in the Bay area are firm and bony, ranging in color from champagne through amber, and graced with irregularly shaped dark olive green trees. I have to admit that I think Bay area hills are more picturesque and romantic looking than Seattle's; and another thing that I particularly like about the Bay area (and for all I know to the contrary, Northern California in general) is this: the air has a spicy smell. Not all the time, of course, or one wouldn't notice it. But now and then, even when driving on a freeway full of carbon monoxide and diesel fumes, one will get a whiff of clean and delightful fragrance. I asked Karen Anderson about it, and she said eucalyptus. But I don't know whether the smell is always eucalyptus, or whether Northern California has a variety of aromatic trees and shrubs.

Since writing the above I have had one martini, one ground beef patty with cheese on top, approximately three cups of coffee, and have read several chapters in a novel by Georgette Heyer and turned the heel of a sock (beige with red and green flecks--a Christmas present for Buz, probably). I have also put the potroast on to cook. We generally have a potroast on Sunday night, so that we will have it for lunches during the week. Buz takes sliced meat and cheese for lunch every day. It's more expensive than sandwiches, and requires more planning. But he likes it better, it's nutritionally

preferable, and it takes less time to prepare in the morning. So what has this to do with the Bay Area? Nothing. However I'd actually finished that topic anyhow.

### *The Benford twins*

This topic is obviously related to the first, since it was in the Bay Area that we met Greg and Jim Benford.

I would like to describe to you in detail precisely how these two people differ from each other, however unfortunately it was not until quite late in the convention that I was able to tell them apart. During the time when I distinguished them chiefly by a glance at the name tag, although I might know at any time whether I was speaking with Greg or Jim, later I would remember simply a conversation with a Benford. However, on the first day of the convention a cursory analysis of their handwritings (and if I was cursing, it was because I'd left my book on handwriting analysis in Seattle) convinced me that Greg was the more Friendly and Amiable of the two. But Jim certainly seems friendly and amiable. So far as I could tell, the chief differences were that Greg is the more introspective of the two and Jim the more physically restless. Jim never seemed to stay at any room party for more than half an hour or so, and I think it's typical that he was born first.

In person the Benfords are tall, but not unreasonably so, sturdy and active looking, with very short dark blond hair, glasses, snub noses, freckles, and wide-lipped mouths slanting downwards at the corners giving them a faintly grim look. This is amusing now; twenty years from now they could quite easily look distinctly formidable.

Their style of speech is brusque, offhand, and humorous; it's very like Ron Ellik's except that the Benfords have a slight Oklahoma drawl, very pleasant, in contrast to Ron Ellik's standard West Coast speech. The Benfords reminded me so much of Ron Ellik that I told Ron he was a superannuated Benford twin, which was a horribly rude thing for me to say to Ron Ellik--a friend of mine since 1958, especially valued since the Westercons of '59 and '60. But I do occasionally say the first thing that comes into my mind, regardless of whether it is polite or not.

I thought the Benford twins made a considerable impact on the fannish side of the convention. First, together they had a double whammy. Second, apart, rapport built up with one twin seemed to carry over partially when one was next in company with the other twin. Third, one does tend to be interested in and curious about identical twins. There is something about physical resemblances that is stimulating to the imagination--one always wonders to what extent physical resemblances reflect similarities of temperament and personality.

### *The wine bit--*

I know you're longing to hear all about my winemaking ventures. Well, I'll tell you-- I didn't make the cherry wine (deciding not to rob the poor robins) and I'm not going to make the Oregon grape wine, either. We had our Oregon grapes severely pruned last year, and this year the crop is simply contemptible. Perhaps I'll see what, if anything, can be done with Oregon grapes next year.

At present I have perking, made since Westercon, honey potato wine, rose petal wine, and apricot wine. I had a recipe for rose petal wine, and sort of a recipe for apricot wine (it didn't say anything about apricots), but the honey potato wine is an idea of my own. Well, it's interesting.

I have two books about winemaking. The one put out by the Grey Owl people says that wine should always be fermented at the lowest possible temperature it will ferment at, as otherwise it will develop a brandy-like flavor. The other book, written by a man pleasingly named H. E. Bravery, advocates fermenting wine at the highest possible temperature. He says that wines made by certain recipes will develop in time a flavor not unlike expensive whiskies. I feel that these two authors have got the same data but a different attitude thereto. Do I like wine with a brandylike flavor, which in time will taste like expensive whiskey? I don't know whether I do or not. I guess I shall have to try it both ways and see. Another thing: one mustn't let air get into one's wine, or it will taste like sherry. But I like the taste of sherry! --It's a great hobby, gang.