

About ten Friday evening, when I was on my way out to the lobby to wait for Pat's arrival, Patty asked if she could use the john in our room. So there I was, very innocently, with a drink in one hand, the key in the door to the room, with an attractive young woman beside me ... when I was literally attacked from behind without warning!

When Pat Mueller sees what I'm going to do to her at Autoclave... (Of course, she'll probably have scouts out as far as the Michigan-Ohio border, but never fear, I shall find a way to circumvent them!)

I spent most of Saturday faithfully at my huckster table; but I'd like to thank Al Curry, and Pat, for giving me couple of breaks to wander around.

I spent most of Friday and Saturday being nervous about doing that speech again.

Saturday evening, Fred Haskell, Kathi Schaffer, Patty, Pat and I went out to get supplies for Patty's Quakecon party. (yet another story) and to our own mini-banquet at ye olde Western Sizzlin' Steak House.

When we got back, and I established when the speech was to be, I changed into the discreetly-see-thru caftan Pat made for me -- and lost my nerve.

"But you picked out the material," she said.

"But you said the other material would be too heavy," said I.

So Pat wore the caftan, and I delivered the speech in jeans and my shirt of many colors.

But come Iguanacon...

The microphone kept slipping, so Bob Tucker held it for me. Having Tucker as a straight man is neat, and something I think I'll ask for at Phoenix.

The rest of the convention is mostly a pleasant blur, even tho I was sick Sunday.

There is one thing I forgot to mention about Friday nite (the Perils of First Draft Stencilling): Pat, Patty and I were walking somewhere, when Patty heard Diane Drutowski's voice, and disappeared around a corner.

"My God," Pat said, "they squeaked at each other!"

So I listen, and had to agree: Patty and Diane don't talk to each other--the literally "squeak" at each other. Weird.

I was going to leave soon after Pat did Sunday evening, but...I guess I am somewhat predictable: after the poolside/patio party broke up, and after watching Flash's slides of last year's Midwestcon (preceeded by a commercial, of all things), I ended up having a long and serious, but pleasant, conversation with Terry, Mary and Mike, before leaving about 2am Monday morning, in the middle of a crashing thunderstorm.

I've always enjoyed Midwestcon's, but this one was really nice. The fact that I selfishly appropriated most of Pat's time had a lot to do with it, but the chance to spend time with Patty, Terry and Stephanie (none of whom I'd seen since last summer) and Eric (who I hadn't seen in a year and a half) made it all that much more a treat.

Pat was down for four days over the Fourth, and the following weekend I went up to see my parents on Friday night, before coming back down to Columbus Saturday eve for Sarah Prince's combo birthday party/COSFS meeting. Strangely enough, Pat also showed up.

Last weekend was the first weekend since the one before Memorial Day that I didn't get to see Pat. I survived, with the aid of that venerable establishment, Hap's Irish Pub, and friends: Tanya, Al, and Denise.

And Pat and I made the Bell establishment considerably wealthier.

Since I've been told that I'm somewhat responsible, I suppose I should mention that Denise has put out Her Very Own Fanzine: *Graymalkin*, from Denise Parsley Leigh, at 121 Nansen St., Cincinnati, OH 45216 [50¢ or the usual]. It's not bad, Denise. Really. Of course, the second issue will be considerably better, now that you have a Big Name to carry you! Maybe you can even tell What Really Happened Friday nite in Mike's room. [All I did, you see, was tell Denise that all of my friends were creative...but in her case I'd make an exception...] Euf...it's 11:30pm on the day of my birth. Bill

XENOLITH 6

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...first, I was going to publish an issue for Autoclave, and run "Bill Bowers' Third Practice Iguanacon Speech". Then I decided not to publish an issue for Autoclave... everyone would be expecting me to do one. So I bribed Denise into taking the speech for her second issue (she does need the help, after all)... But then I decided the idea of going to a convention "orientated toward fanzine fans" without something seems rather ridiculous. So, this.

Besides...I have to have something to give to Brian Earl Brown this weekend, or he'll think that I don't like him anymore!

No, I didn't make it to the Thursday-night pre-Midwestcon party, but by arranging to work an extra hour the first four days of the week, I arrived at the (new) hotel a little after one, Friday afternoon. And proceeded to stand in the registration line for a ridiculous amount of time. What were all of these people doing here this early?

I suppose taking a room at a convention less than ten miles from where I live-- particularly since it looks like I'll end up staying at Sid's for Autoclave, and crashing at Rivercon--is the height of fiscal irresponsibility. But I'd promised, in more affluent days, Denise that I'd split a room with her and Steve. I must admit that it was nice not to have to drive home at some wee hour, and since I made out well in the huckster's room (thank you, Robert E. Howard), well... I would, however, like to personally thank whoever it was on the committee who arranged for us to have the room next to the con-suite.

After unloading things into the room and, with Art's help, unloading the rest of the stuff into the huckster's room, I spent most of the afternoon setting up my table, and talking to people as they wandered by. Eventually I escaped out to the hallway, saw Tim Kyger -- and said, "Where's Patty?"

I'm really glad Patty Peters made it back for Midwestcon; I hadn't seen her since she and Bill stopped in Cinti on their Amtrack-way-west last fall. And while I got to spend a fair amount of time with her, it seemed like she, Tim, and Phil Paine were leaving before they got there...

It was somewhere in mid-afternoon Friday that someone said something about having read my speech. It took a moment to sink in...and to realize that no, Madman Riley hadn't been at Marcon and heard it, so... When Mike agreed to print the damn thing, I asked one favor of him: that he not distribute copies at Midwestcon until after I'd repeated the speech Saturday evening there. So not to have to worry about it, Mike mailed out copies of the relevant *Xenium* the Tuesday before Midwestcon. Apparently, in one of the greatest flukes of the century, the Canadian and U.S. postal systems combined to not only get copies to Chicago and Minneapolis, but as far as California within two days. *sigh*

It certainly wasn't Mike's fault; not even science fiction could have predicted such a thing! But I was a bit upset, and must confess to a certain small degree of harrassing Mike about it. I wonder if all of this had anything to do with what happened later.

In the early evening, Denise and I went with Mike to his room to get my copy of *Xenium*. I mean, since apparently everybody else at Midwestcon had seen it in print, why shouldn't I?

The next afternoon Mike happened to mention in my presence that he wondered who'd been in his room the previous night who smoked. Cigarettes. Apparently he honestly doesn't remember anything of the time Denise and I spent in his room, or of the strange and wonderful things we did together.

Denise and I are currently trying to decide whether it is to our advantage to Tell All. Or simply to continue blackmailing Mike...

Which way do you vote?