

FAPA 150

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# HOWDAH

With any luck, I'll actually get this in for the February mailing, and not owe pages when my deadline comes up in May. First time in ages. And another infrequent happening is the trip and con report in this issue. Haven't done a complete report since the mid-60's, I guess.

I think I'm shifting valence, or something. Elayne and I got married in July, and the house deal actually went through. So now I can settle down and become a married suburbanite, and take care of the house and grounds, and such in my spare time, right? Don't be ridiculous. Elayne takes care of the house -- she is much better at painting and such stuff than I am -- and we generally ignore the yard while it's winter. In the summer we may do a little work on it one night a week and a little more on a weekend morning. Right now all I do is fix the fence when the winds knock off some of the boards, and occasionally work on tearing out the shelving in the garage, so that eventually we can make a game room out of the place. What I'm mostly doing is working on fanzines -- both the collection and the revival of a genzine.

I have ditched some fannish obligations. The mortgage on the LASFS clubhouse got paid off last year, so when election time came around I declined to run again as treasurer -- a post I've held the past 12 terms (six years). I'm also ditching the post of Corporation Treasurer -- the guy in charge of fund-raising -- when the LASFS Board of Directors elects officers in early February. But to take up any possible additional spare time that might result, I'm back on two APA waiting lists...short waiting lists.

I'm still playing bridge at least one night a week. Passed the 50-registered-master-points boundary in October, at which time I could no longer play the limited games I had been playing, so I sent in the rest of the master points I'd been hoarding and went over the 100 mark, which makes me a Senior Master rank or some such thing. Hell of a long way to go before I can win anything much in open tournaments, still, but I'll probably keep trying.

GREGG CALKINS: Thanks for catching Evans's error and keeping me in.

BILL EVANS: I take exception to your statement in the FA that I never sent you my postmailing. If the P.O. loses your copy, that is not my problem but yours, and you can request replacement from the OE. If you meant the replacement copy which I said at Discon that I would send, it was sent, too, though it may not have arrived before you stencilled your FA Report. It took quite a while to find the few extras I had, since I moved between May and September. And if you did mean the replacement copy and not the original one, then your making the statement as a FAPA Officer is quite unwarranted, as the replacement was being sent only because I agreed to do so, not because you were entitled to one.

# A DisCon-tenuous Report

The Second Discon Expedition got under way at 10:00 p.m. Friday, 23 August 1974. Like the First Expedition, it included the Elephant, an attached female, and two extraneous males. But there the similarities end. In 1963, the Dammit (a Corvair station wagon) had taken the northern route (Utah, Minnesota, Ohio); this time the Red Ox (a Ford van) went the middle route (Arkansas, Virginia). In 1963 the personnel had been Dian Girard, Fred Patten, and Ted Johnstone; this time it was Elayne, Drew Sanders, and Glenn Mitchell. It is definitely an improvement to have  $3\frac{1}{2}$  drivers instead of  $2\frac{1}{2}+\frac{1}{4}$ , but I'm not sure whether having someone who automatically heads for the local Big Boy eatery, no matter what it's called, is better than having someone who argues with a clerk at a Dairy Queen snack shop about the exact number of ounces difference between the 15¢ and 20¢ drinks. Everyone to their own quirks, I suppose. It might have helped if we could have decided what kind of an animal Glenn was, since the rest of us have totems. He tends to remind me of a marmoset, but I haven't suggested it to him. (Drew is a Snake; he crawls under whatever cover is available and sleeps a lot. Elayne has been a Spryngbok for years, and I've been an Elephant for even more years.)

I took the first stint of driving, and we were halfway down the Golden State Freeway when a muttered "Oh, shit!" from Drew revealed the first forgotten items -- he'd left his sunglasses and driving gloves in his car, parked back at the Tower. We barrelled relentlessly onward.

Drew drove the graveyard shift, and, making horrible vampire-like noises when the sun came up directly in front of him, turned over to Glenn somewhere in Western Arizona, after which he proceeded to estivate. The rest of us elected to go see Meteor Crater -- something I'd wanted to do every time I drove past it on some cross-country trip or other, but never had the time or cooperative interest. Leaving the Snake to guard the Ox, we paid our \$1.50 and went to look at the Big-Hole-in-the-Ground. Glenn and I took some photos, we listened to the taped lecture on the theories and explorations in the crater, and Elayne rampaged around the pathways for a while. (One can climb to the bottom of the crater, but they don't recommend the practice, since it is 60 storeys deep, and quite difficult to climb in a few spots.) We then went through the museum and gift shop and hit the road again.

We made a brief stop at the Petrified Forest/Painted Desert information center, but the driving tour would have taken too long, so we didn't try it.

None of the coffee shops in the Denny's chain are particularly worthwhile, but the one in Tucumcari, NM, is especially unrecommended. It had almost no service, and incredibly bad food -- soupy tapioca pudding and desiccated cream pie, for instance. Even Ed Buchman, Mr. Putridity himself, would hate it.

It was raining Saturday night from eastern NM through the Texas panhandle and into Oklahoma. The absolutely flat plains we drove through gave the lightning a chance to create one of the most impressive shows I've seen in quite some time. 360° screens, lit up with cloud-to-earth bolts on every side. Really beautiful. (There was one objection to the show; it appears Spryngboks don't like lightning storms overly well.)

Gas prices started out atrociously high: 68.9 for regular in Ludlow, CA. But they then proceeded to get lower: 61.7 in Ashfork, AZ, 52.9 in Gallup, NM, and 48.9 in Edgewood, NM. After that they bounced around from 49.9 to 57.9 as we headed into Tennessee. (There was never a problem finding an open gas station.)

We got into Nashville Sunday evening, had dinner at Shoney's (the local Big Boy, of course), and headed for the Motel 6 -- the only one in Tennessee, according to the 1973 directory we had with us. Showers, beds, and air-conditioning are easily worth \$3.60 each after several days on the road.

The pool at the motel had been closed when we arrived, but I was determined to make use of it before we left, so while the others were attempting to figure out if

they were awake yet I splashed around a while. Apparently all the other motel guests left well before the noon checkout time, as the pool area was deserted and the parking lot almost empty. Probably a good thing, as far as the pool went -- more than three people in there and you wouldn't have room to swim. Eventually Elayne and Glenn got Drew up and me out of the pool, and we trundled off for some touring.

In looking over maps of the area, Elayne had spotted a Historical Site called the "Sam Davis Home," just south of Nashville. Though her first expressed comments indicated that she had Sam confused with Jeff, she persevered and eventually discovered that Sam was a kind of local hero, a Civil War equivalent of Nathan Hale. He had operated as a Scout in the Nashville-Chattanooga area, got caught with incriminating documents, and, at the age of 21, was hanged for refusing to divulge their source. So we went to the Sam Davis Home.

When we drove up on this Monday morning, there was only one car parked in the drive. Drew and Glenn weren't interested, so Elayne and I walked up the tree-lined approach to the front door and rang the bell. In a few minutes, a guy came around the corner of the house and headed for the other car, and a very nice L.O.L. (bridge term: Little Old Lady) opened the front door. For the \$1 admission each, we got to see a good example of an antebellum Southern home, with much of the furnishings original, and all authentic period. I sometimes get impressed by strange things: a patchwork quilt; trundle beds; and especially a bannister, handcarved from wild cherrywood and beautifully put together with pegs. The grounds include the house gardens, the cemetery (where Sam and various relatives are buried), the usual gift shop, and a museum. The latter has a tape-recorded story of Sam, and a large amount of Civil War artifacts -- guns and swords, uniforms, flags, newspapers, letters. The recording -- and Sam's story in general, for that matter -- tends to be somewhat tacky. But Patriotism is very much out of style these days, and Nathan Hale types are apt to be considered somewhat retarded. Nevertheless, what he did was important enough to be recognized by the State of Tennessee, in addition to the people in his own locale. A statue of Sam stands in the state capital. That should indicate the magnitude of what he did.

Our next step was at Fort Nashborough, in the middle of Nashville -- the original settlement area, according to the AAA guidebook. The stop, however, was brief -- the book didn't advise us that the place was closed on Mondays. So we followed the traffic -- and a particularly pungent truckload of hogs -- through the downtown area to The Parthenon. This is an exact copy of the original Greek Parthenon, down to the semi-complete statuary. It was built for a centennial celebration some years ago, in the middle of a very pleasant park (which also includes a small version of L.A.'s Travel Town: an airplane, a streetcar, and a train, for kids to play on.) The Parthenon also serves as a museum for a collection of American Indian artifacts (some local, some a donated collection of Mexican pieces), and an art gallery. We wandered around until they were ready to close, then set out eastward again. We would have liked to have seen The Hermitage, Jackson's home, but it closed too early, and would have taken several hours to do justice to it. Next time, maybe. We made various obscene gestures toward "Opryland" (a Dizzylandish place based on Nashville's country music fame, especially the Grand Ol' Opry) as we drove past the Interstate exit that led to it.

We turned off the Interstate a few miles short of Knoxville, and went north to Oak Ridge. We were just in time to get a midnight dinner, as the last few businesses started to pull in their sidewalks. Then we drove to the Atomic Energy Museum parking lot and attempted to get some sleep. But even with Glenn staying in the cab area of the Ox, which he thought would be more comfortable, the rest of us found the back of the van more than slightly uncomfortable, and by dawn we weren't the most rested group there could have been. Next time I drive cross-country, if I can't afford motels all the way I'll at least plan ahead enough to write for fan-space in the areas we plan to hit. Of course, if I could have even found Heiskell on the map... In the morning we found a tire had decided to go flat, so the Ox limped across the street to a service station. A nail was extracted and sealer put in, and the tire gave no further

trouble for the rest of the trip. (One day after we returned to Los Angeles, though, it blew out on the Santa Monica Freeway, catching me without my AAA membership card.)

When the museum opened, the three tourists went in, leaving the Snake in his usual state and location. We wandered around, pushed buttons on various exhibits that Did Things, followed a Programmed Learning course on government-and-energy, and joined an audience to watch a film on atomic energy for desalting sea water and furnishing electricity to coastal areas. After the film, one of the staff gave a talk which was followed by a Q&A period. He got zapped several times by very knowledgeable questions from the audience -- thermal pollution, security and safety at atomic plants, etc. Later on the tour, they demonstrated the use of waldoes, and I was tempted to ask the demonstrator if he knew where the things got their name, but I didn't. Instead I went in and talked business with one of the boss-types, to see if there was a way to get the UCLA Engineering Library put on the list of depositories for the technical reports the Oak Ridge National Laboratory turns out. No go; they've cancelled the Depository Library system, and you have to ask for the reports individually. Oh, well. At least I could check Tuesday off as Professional Activity if I wanted to, and not have to take it as Vacation time. (I didn't bother, once I got back, but I could have.)

From Oak Ridge we went south toward the Chattanooga area, to Ruckaleechee Caves. Once again the three tourists went touring. Glenn, a geology major, was interested in the caves from a professional viewpoint. I'm an old-time spelunker from back in my college years, and commercial caves are a bit tame, but I hadn't been caving in 15 years, so... Elayne had never been in a cave, but was interested in seeing some. (She's more of an agoraphobe than a claustrophobe.) Tuckaleechee is a fairly recent commercialization, and still somewhat primitive, which was fine with me. The guide took us a quarter-mile downstream in the cave, pointing out formations and other interesting items along the underground river, then we came back and he took us about the same distance upstream. It was a very attractive cave, and well worth the fee, but I had one complaint: the guide (and, I therefore assume, the management) cared nothing about the cave floor being littered with cigarette butts. The guide himself tossed away a still-lit butt into a small pool of water on the floor. I photographed it, and the shot came out quite clearly, so I may send a copy and note to the Assn. of Commercial Caves (or somesuch title). I'm not sure Tuckaleechee is a member, but the association does exist, and it should be made aware of some conservation needs.

From the Knoxville area we headed north toward Virginia, over a stretch of road where the Interstate isn't yet complete, and the semis thunder past you in their southbound lane as you try to find enough room to pass other semis in your northbound lane. It rained a bit, but nothing too fierce, and we eventually linked up with Interstate 81.

We had dinner in Wytheville, Virginia, a small town whose claim to fame was that Mrs. Woodrow Wilson had been born there. The food at Durham's Restaurant was quite edible, and the prices reasonable, so we would be quite willing to go there again. After dinner, with Drew at the wheel, we pushed north again, and pulled in, a little after midnight, at the Rockingham Motel in Harrisonburg, VA., just off I-81 before the turnoff to Luray and points east. There are no Motel 6's in the entire state of Virginia, but the Rockingham had a 1½-room arrangement for \$18 for the four of us, which was adequate. (Besides, their vending machines were less expensive.)

Wednesday morning, three of us got up and started repacking things in the Ox. Eventually, we even got the Snake up, though he was in a bad mood, possibly because we'd made him stop driving at midnight, after only four hours or so. He crashed in the Ox, and we headed for Luray and its caverns.

The Luray Caverns are very commercial, with a \$4 entrance fee, and a souvenir shop almost as big as the caverns themselves. (Plus a Historical Automobile Museum open only to those who buy a ticket to the caverns.) Even so, it's worth the \$4.00. Some of the rooms in the caverns are enormous, some of the formations quite beautiful, and the L.O.L. guide quite delightful. (She told parents point-blank to keep their kids with them, as she didn't want them wandering around up front with her.) One of

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the main features is the Stalacpipe Organ, with stalactites used for resonators of the notes, being hit by electrically-triggered hammers when their tones are needed. The organ can be played either from the keyboard, if there is an organist available, or from a sort of organ roll, like the old piano rolls. We got to hear it from the organ roll only. After the tour I blew in close to \$10. on souvenirs and junk for various people -- including a charm for Elayne's collection, a souvenir spoon for my daughter Cecy's collection, a set of playing cards for my collection, and a recording of the Stalacpipe Organ.

Odd notes: The Luray Caverns are in a mountain range called the Massanutten Mountains; they appear to live up to their name. The caverns include a wishing-well affair which is run for various charities. Every several years the cavern operators clear it out and give the money to some charity or other, such as the American Cancer Society. The last time it was cleared, after a 5-year period, it yielded over \$40,000.00. That's a lot of wishing...

We stopped at one of the roadside stands for some cider, leaving fairly quickly so as to not get ill at the 3-dimensional glow-in-the-dark religious pictures featured prominently among the tourist crud. Dinner was in Manassas, after an exploration of a reasonable-size shopping mall -- almost as good as one of the southern California ones! Then we set off to find a laundramat somewhere, since clean clothes were becoming a problem, and there would certainly be no time to do them after we hit Washington. We finally found one, just west of Falls Church, and just before we had to turn onto the Interstate that circles D.C. It had started to rain as we drove into the area, so we either sat in the laundramat and read, or stayed in the Ox to get some rest, instead of exploring the area while the machines whirled. At one point, while Drew and I were in the Ox, a lightning bolt was followed very closely by the crack of thunder, and we looked up the street to see sparks coming from a telephone pole's wires, about 100 feet away. It's just as well Elayne couldn't see it from the laundramat. When the laundry was finished, around 11:00, we found our way to the Interstate, and eventually to Connecticut Avenue and the Hotel Sheraton Park.

Our reservations were to begin Thursday, but we had no problem advancing them to Wednesday night, so the four of us crashed in our room amidst piles of luggage and miscellaneous junk. In the morning the other two moved to their own rooms.

Elayne wanted to see Washington Thursday before the con really got going, but, as I had warned her, once I hit the con hotel I didn't want to leave except for meals. So she went to see whom she could inveigle into going touristing with her. Alan Frisbie appeared interested, and they took off, while I lurked around the registration area talking to the various familiar types that wandered through. Neither the art show nor the huxters would be open to the public until Friday.

The registration lines were fairly long Thursday through Saturday, even with two lines for preregistered members, one for new members, and a separate one for banquet tickets. (Eventually, there was also one for voting memberships in the 1976 con.) At the banquet ticket station, I greeted the Discon Treasurer, Bill Evans, who immediately inquired, "Why did you drop FAPA?" I told him I hadn't dropped, and discovered he'd never received my postmailing back in May. And though he usually inquires of apparent dropouts as to whether they were actually dropping, he hadn't done so this time because of the press of Discon work. So I'd been dropped as of the August mailing, which hadn't yet appeared when we left Los Angeles (or when we got to D.C., for that matter.) However, Bill said, perhaps OE Gregg Calkins would catch the mistake and reinstate me. [He did, since his copy and the 3 extras for the OE arrived safely; thanks, Gregg!] I twitted Bill for taking on another con treasurer job after all the years of work as FAPA Sec-Treas and the stint at Discon I, and told him I'd send a replacement copy of my postmailing as soon as I could find it. [It took several months, but did get sent.]

In a spare moment, I tackled the hotel management about an unpaid bill for their ad in the LACon Program Book. I'd brought the original of the bill they'd been sent in August 1975, plus a copy of the PB, and, after consulting their files, they couldn't find any record of payment. They'd take care of it if I came back Friday. (When Friday came,

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I didn't have time to get to the offices before they closed, and they didn't open over the weekend, but on Tuesday they duly settled up.)

People met: Freff, bouncing gleefully about, having been accepted by the Ringling Clown College. Wendy Fletcher Pini, whose husband Richard has apparently got used to the fact that all sorts of people greet her with considerable affection. Jay Kay Klein, FGoH, taking stereo photos of everything, to bring out a stereo CONVENTION ANNUAL similar to those he issued on the early and mid-sixties cons. And, to quote Dorothy Parker, "after that I always get them all mixed up." The con became a kaleidoscope as far as whom I met when and what was said where and why. From here on we work by general subject and only occasionally timebind.

Eating places were fairly easy to find in the Connecticut Ave. area within a few blocks of the hotel. The small folder put out by the concon, listing such places, was very useful. The cheapest was the People's Drug Store lunch counter, but by Friday evening it was out of commission -- the clerks had all walked out. We considered the possibility that such fannish traits as low (or non-) tipping and general rudeness might be responsible, but nothing was definitely established. The delicatessen was also heavily patronized, and we went to the small Chinese restaurant several times. We also ate Indian and Italian once each, which is more than we ate in the hotel eating establishments. The latter were bad enough if you only considered price, but they also got a bad name early in the con, from extremely bad service.

The Ranquet, now in its third year, after being established in 1972 as a protest against high-priced Banquets at the Worldcons, was held at a MacDonald's about half a mile away. It attracted 30 idiots in addition to its organizer, Elliot Weinstein. The place didn't really know what hit them, and with luck, they'll never find out. I went as Ranquet FGoH and held a Money Gouge (auction; LASFS has called small auctions "Money Gouges" since I started doing them almost every week as The Committee to Gouge Money Out of the LASFS, since they could then be held under Committee Reports) as my part of the program. The Hogu Awards were almost as tedious as the Hugos this year, but the Male Chauvenist Pig Award, which went to John Norman for his Gor books, was delightfully presented (in absentia, of course), and should be continued, since there are certainly other worthy recipients.

We didn't go to the Banquet -- for the price of one ticket we could both eat at one of the better restaurants in the area. We weren't even planning to go hear the Hugo Awards, but everyone else had apparently decided to do so, and all other activity had come to a creeping halt. So we filtered into the back of the balcony to listen (it was too far to try to look also.) There were few surprises, and only one real grotch: the issuing of a Special Hugo. That Chesley Bonestell is quite deserving of a Special Award, there is no denying. But he should not have been given a Hugo by convention committee fiat. The rules under which the con was supposedly being held -- after all, they did publish them in both a Progress Report and in the Program Book -- include, under Section 2, dealing with the awarding of Hugos, 2.13: "The name and design shall not be extended to any other award whatsoever." Previous sections delineate the Hugo Awards, all of which are to be voted on by the convention members. If Discon wanted to give Bonestell a Hugo, they should have invented a category he'd be certain to win, and placed it on the ballot. (From the reported reaction of Bonestell to receiving a Hugo at all, Discon should have saved its energy and money.)

The business meeting was mostly concerned with the approval of a new set of rules, worked out by a committee chaired by George Scithers. These were first introduced at a preliminary business meeting Saturday morning. Scithers was the only member of his committee present to discuss the rules, which were fussed over, and a few amendments offered. The amendments, and the rules themselves, were sent to the main business meeting. (The Scithers Committee included Jack Chalker and Chuck Crayne, and maybe one or two others.) At the business meeting itself, the rules were hassled over in general and finally passed substantially as presented. I wasn't there. I am giving up caring very much what the business meeting does about the rules for the Worldcon, as it never seems to matter very

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much. The concons ignore any regulation they don't want to follow, and/or the next business meeting changes the rules again and obliterates the changes made the year (or two) before. And there is no way to enforce any of the rules; public opinion is so ephemeral as to be worthless as a means of doing so. The only thing a concon actually has to do is to hold the con. If they don't do that, the members could sue for refund of membership fees. Otherwise, said members are just there for the ride, no matter how noisy they may make it. (They may, of course, decline to ride in the same carriage next time... .)

Which brings up the site selection process. I went to Discon convinced from the hotel brochures that Kansas City had the best bid. I had nothing for or against any of the bidding committees as people, and I don't vote for a city as a city. (If I did, New Orleans would have won my vote point-blank.) I took the set of three hotel brochures with me and talked with various undecided voters to suggest they vote for KC. I went to the New Orleans bidding party, and listened to John Guidry talk of what he wanted to do for the con if N.O. won; it was the biggest bunch of High Hopes I've heard in ages, and though I'm sure John sincerely believes he could do it, I'd not bet a plugged Rasbucknik that 20 percent would come off. Then I went to the KC party, where their hotel had sent a representative to answer questions (and serve as bartender for the party). Ken Keller had already told me, confidentially, since I was already supporting KC, who the Guest of Honor and Fan Guest of Honor were. And some holes began to appear in the KC bid as far as I was concerned. The hotel couldn't guarantee the room rates until 1975. The hotel didn't have ice machines on the sleeping room floors for parties -- just one big one in the basement. (A minor point, admittedly.) The hotel did not have free parking. And by Saturday morning, all sorts of people had heard that Heinlein was to be KC's GoH; someone on the committee was leaking the information like a sieve. That deducted a point from KC for Ethics, to me. And it brought up another problem. I like Robert Heinlein very much, and I like his works very much. And the last time we spoke, he liked me. But he has been GoH at two worldcons already, and there are other pros who also deserve the honor who have not been GoH even once -- Williamson, Wollheim, Niven, Ellison, Bradbury, even! And there is only one worldcon per year. I simply cannot approve of a committee selecting a third-time GoH. So I dithered about voting for the '76 site. And I talked with other undecided types. And finally, Saturday night in the Orlando-in-'77 suite, we set up a comparison chart on the bids, getting Frierson of New Orleans, Hevelin of the KC committee, and a femme from the Columbus committee whose name I don't remember, to give us data we didn't have. The results looked like this:

	KANSAS CITY	NEW ORLEANS	COLUMBUS
HOTEL:			
Sleeping rooms	700 of 750	800 of 1,000	350 of 385 (/430)
Function rooms	ca. 44,000 ft. <sup>2</sup>	ca. 44,000 ft. <sup>2</sup>	needs 2 hotels
Parking	\$2.50/day	free	free
Age & structure	older	new (2 yr)	6 yr?
Ice machines	1: basement	each floor	each floor
rates	to be determnd 1975	\$26 max dbl; \$22 max sgl.	\$24 sgl Sheraton; \$19 sgl Twon Hse.
elevators	4; /5 serv, 1 frt.	6	6; /1 freight
COMMITTEE:	new; 3 regnl cons	scattered; 3 rgnl cons	established; 7 rgnl cons; 3 co-chmn
AREA EATERIES:	24-hr. across street	24-hr across st.	?
CITY:	tourism: neg. factor	tourism: pos, fctr	tourism: neg. fctr
LEGAL PROBLEMS?	Sun. liq. laws; sales tax 4%?; union:0	sales tx 4%; liq. at 18, 24hr 7day	sales tx 4%

Putting together the plusses and minuses for the bids (including the minus on KC for Ethics) was a bitch! By Sunday morning, when the site selection session was held, I'd finally made up my mind: I voted for New Orleans. It was a futile effort; KC had, in effect, won on the mail ballot. Only an overwhelming majority against them at the con itself could have beaten them. But maybe we have learned a thing or two this time: get all the facts of a bid before the mail ballot goes out, and publicize them. And per-



haps get some agreement among the bidders to have the results of the mail ballot made known to the bidders before the con at which the site will be chosen. If there is an overwhelming majority on the mail ballot, it will give the other committees a chance to cut their losses and save the money they would otherwise waste trying to garner votes at the con. (Both New Orleans and Columbus had been told, "unofficially" that the mail ballot voting was "close." It wasn't; it was a landslide for KC.)

Elayne and I had both brought costumes for the masquerade, though both were reruns. She brought her South Wind costume from Westercon 1973, and I brought the Barquentine rig from Westercon 1967: this time, I was going to do the thing right. The first time, it had a major error -- Barquentine (from Titus Groan) didn't have one good leg and a withered, nonfunctional one, he had only one leg, and it was withered, though still functional. I used the same ragged, shoddy tunic; ditched the wig and greyed up my hair as cruddy as possible; took the old crutch, wrapped it in strips of sheeting and crudded it up with dirt and brown paint; and tied up my right leg with a pair of belts. The left leg has a start on looking withered, as a result of an accident years ago, so I continued the process with some collodion and more brown paint. A different cruddy-looking book and some different chains for both book and waist, and the same schtick: Ted Johnstone's parody of "Camelot" (the title song) to "Gormenghast," and the Master of Ritual was ready to go on stage.

First, however, there were many other presentations -- including a 10-minute copying of the "Off To See the Wizard" routine from "The Wizard of Oz," which was quite unoriginal, and very boring. The stage for the masquerade had only one ramp, which they used for the exit, not the entrance. I think it would have been better the other way, because going up stairs is generally more difficult than going down them, when one has locomotion problems with a costume, because gravity aids the latter. But with the help of several steadying hands, Barquentine stumped on stage, clumping his crutch and snarling at anyone and everyone. He rasped out the parody, glared at the audience, and stumped off again, stopping for the four or five photo areas on the way back around through the corridor to the staging room.

There were a horrendous number of costumes, both with and without presentations. I sneaked back to our room to get my glasses so I could see some of them, and most were quite good. The judges finally went off for the preliminary deliberations, and the interim was filled by bagpipers and a guitar-playing nurse. (I understand Ted Johnstone was to have led some filksinging, but no one had remembered to get him a guitar.) I spent some time figuring out what I'd do if I got a second run-through, and managed to cook up another short parody that would fit in. Wasted effort: the second run-throughs were done without presentations. But I did get called. At the end of these, the judges again retired, and the guitar-playing nurse came back for a very long gig. (I regret being unable to remember her name, but much credit is due her for keeping the audience from getting restless as long as she did. Even with her best efforts, though, it took so long to judge that mass of costumes that the crowd was getting very itchy by the time the judges came back. Barquentine got Honorable Mention as Best Individual Presentation, and out of that many excellent costumes I am happy to have got that. Not satisfied, of course, but happy, anyway. (The judges gave one Award and one Honorable Mention in each of about eight categories.) I could quibble with some of the choices -- especially that ghodawful Ozdreck group -- but Judges are Judges, and this group had a hell of a hard job.

For a number of years, concons have been talking about regulating the masquerade more stringently, and I think it's time they really did so. KC would be well-advised to ask a committee to study the problem, including on it such people as Flieg Hollander and George Scithers, who have probably run more masquerades between them than any other pair of fans, plus someone to represent the costume makers and wearers (perhaps one of the Stopas -- I see Joni is in charge of the KC masquerade), someone to represent the photographers (Eney?) and someone from the KC concom who knows the hotel facilities thoroughly. I would make a few suggestions: Have presentations limited to 3 minutes maximum, and advertise the fact in advance. (At the 3-minute limit, a staff member chases

the offender offstage with a foolstick or the vaudeville hook.) Prejudging should actually eliminate the non-costumes from judging, saving them for a walk-across during the judges' deliberations and thus killing two birds with one stone.

Several good points of the Discon masquerade: they had a place for the costume entrants to sit and watch the other costumes; they had well-defined photoareas set up and divided by type of photography; most of the crew running the show knew what they were doing, even if the communication among them was occasionally lacking.

Art Show bidoffs are sometimes interesting as arenas for psychological study. In a way, they pit the artists' representatives ("Management," or "Show Directors" or whatever) against the buyers. The former are trying to get as much as possible for each piece of art; the latter are trying to get what they want as cheap as possible. The former are hampered by lack of time, since there are large numbers of pieces to be bid on during a relatively short span, and the latter are constrained both by lack of time -- there are lots of other things they want to do at the con, even on the last day or so -- and the competition from other bidders. Even the timing of the auction of certain pieces is a psychological guessing game. Do you, as Management, put up the most popular stuff early, while the Big Time Spenders have all their money, and hope to get reasonably good prices from the Little Timers for the almost-best, as Consolation Prizes when they get outbid on the Best? Or do you assume that the Best will always get Top Price, and auction the lesser stuff first to get the auction going? How many Big Timers will have to leave early, if the auction goes on too long? As a Buyer, do you wait for the One Big Item you want most of all or settle for several of the Almosts? Can you get it cheaper by bidding it up dollar by dollar, or by jumping to a reasonable limit early to freeze others out? Can you bid up the Moneybags type who appears to want your #1 Choice on several others so he may go broke before that one comes up?

The bidoff at Discon was split between Sunday and Monday mornings, and colored stickers had been placed on the bid sheets to indicate which art would go on which day. Of the Sunday material, I was interested in one or two of the Kirks, and somewhat interested in a Wendy Fletcher Pini, but I was quite sure all of them would go beyond my limits. I was quite correct. Elayne was interested in one of Fran Evans's rings, but even with her limit stretched beyond what she first planned, the bidding disappeared into the upper reaches, and she had to give up on it before it reached the voice bid. We wandered around the show Sunday morning early, looking at other possibilities, and discovered a batch of very good astronomical paintings by one William Dixon of Philadelphia. We'd never heard of him, and apparently no one else had, either, as there was little bidding on his works, which were quite good. One spaceship-and-stars painting, about 20"x24", had no bid at all, so, after checking to make sure Elayne also liked it, I waited until written bids were being closed off and wrote in the minimum bid. Bob Pavlat, director of the Discon Art Show, swooped past, he marked it sold, and I carted it off.

The Monday bidoff was another story. There was a Barr color prelim for The Hidden World that I especially wanted if I could get it for any reasonable price, so I waited through the first hour or so of the auction until it showed up. The written bid was only my minimum of \$35, over which someone immediately bid \$40. At that point I bid \$75 and everyone chickened out. Thank goodness. Any overcall would have taken it, as that was my limit. We happily trundled it off, along with a Healey nametag that Elayne bought for minimum. Some other time I'll find a Kirk entry that my taste and my pocketbook can agree on.

Somewhere along the line we wound up discussing the concept of different levels of convention-goers, from a financial viewpoint. Stage 1 would be the fan on a shoestring budget, sharing a room with as many people as possible to cut costs, eating at fast-food places if at all. Stage 2 would be the fan who shares a room with perhaps one other, can afford to eat in coffee shops and nearby reasonably-priced restaurants, and has some money for the huxter room, even if not a lot. Stage 3 can afford his own room, can eat in restaurants whenever he likes as long as the prices

aren't too ungodly, and can afford the banquet, some art at auction, and a fair amount of huxter material. Stage 4 is the first that can fly to the con without really thinking about the cost, can buy most everything he wants at a con and eat wherever he wishes to, and can throw a party if he feels like it. Stage 5 is Larry Niven. (We figure we're about Stage 3 at this point, with about a year or two to Stage 4. But we may have defined the stages inaccurately or be mistaken in our self-estimate, so... ). Transport to the con goes by the stages, too: Stage 1 hitches; 2 carpools; 3 drives, takes the bus, flies (at some financial pain); 4 flies or takes the train. ~~3 buys the airplane!~~

We went to several parties during the con, besides the aforementioned bidding parties. There were other bidding parties (Orlando in '77; New York in '77; Boston in '80). There was the ongoing Aussiecon party, to which we did not get, regretfully. (I was supposed to deliver a stack of the Moffatts' TAFF report to Peter Weston, and it was never mutually convenient until the last night of the con -- at which time I remembered I was also supposed to try huxtering a stack of the reports. I managed to sell off about 30 Monday night just in the lobby and at parties, and to lumber Richard Harter with the remainder to take to Boston and sell for TAFF.) Most of late Monday night, which started with an Eney party (it featured a good wine selection but an inadequate people selection, since I knew most of them too well already and preferred to spend time with people I didn't know that well...yet), was spent at a Fred Isaacs party, talking to Boston fans and D.C. fans (who fulfill the above requirement quite nicely). It/we didn't last long enough.

Neither did the con.

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Glenn Mitchell was flying back to L.A., so we were short one driver and a 4th cost-splitter for the return trip. After asking various others whether they were interested, we gave up and put a note on the already crowded bulletin board Monday evening. Tuesday morning the phone woke me up, and a prospective rider asked if he could go part way for part cost. Since he could drive, I told him we would prefer someone going all the way to L.A., but would call him back if no one else showed. Ten minutes later Don Keller of Baltimore knocked on the door, and we had our fourth.

We checked out of our room and Drew checked out of his, and the three of us set off for some touring of D.C. The damn one-way street system almost did us in, but eventually we got to the Washington Monument. We took the elevator to the top, since they no longer let anyone walk up the stairs, and I clicked off various photos in spite of the overcast day. Then Elayne and I walked down the stairs, reading all the plaques on the way. I have no idea why one is permitted to walk down but not up the stairs, unless they're worried about heart attacks only in the one direction. When Dian and I were there in 1963, we walked both ways in the thing. I suppose a determined collector of Things-I-Have-Climbed could take the elevator up, walk down, walk back up again without going into the front foyer, and take the elevator down.

The Lincoln Memorial came next, then the Jefferson Memorial. (Elayne had never been to D.C. before.) As we walked up the stairs of the Jefferson Memorial, we met Karel Thole walking down. He was having a great time, being a taxicab tourist and seeing all the tourist sights. We said we'd see him again in Melbourne, and went on.

We consulted a watch, the guidebook, and a map, and decided that we had just about enough time to get to one historic house before they started closing down the tourist part of Washington. We zoomed down Constitution Ave., stopped for only one red light -- at which time a cab pulled up on our left, and I looked down and said another "Hello, Goodbye!" to Karel -- and got to the Decatur House by quarter to four. One of the two L.O.L.s in residence took us on the tour, which both of us enjoyed. Quite a few of the furnishings are the originals, bought back or donated back after having been sold on the auction block after Decatur was killed. The rest are all authentic Period, of course. We were the last tour before closing. As we left, we thumbed our noses at the Garage across the Mall, then climbed back into the Ox and

scuttled back to the Sheraton to pick up Don Keller.

On the Sunday of the con, I had received a note from the hotel switchboard that a call had come in for me from my cousin Jane, and it gave a number to call back. I wondered briefly what she was doing in D.C., but since she and her husband live in Richmond, it wasn't too farfetched an idea that she'd be there and see the newspaper report on the con. I tried to return the call. I tried again in another hour or so. At last I had a brainstorm and put through a call to that number in Richmond. Voila! The Richmond Times-Dispatch had run a short article in their Sunday edition, which she had seen. It didn't give the hotel name, but she phoned around until she found the right one. The upshot was an invitation for the lot of us to stop by their home on the way back. I did some fast calculations and accepted. It would avoid another night at hotel rates, and the same average of driving speed we had done on the way to D.C. would then put us at the right place at the right time: about 9:00 a.m. in Altus, Arkansas. (Don't worry about it; wait a few paragraphs.) Besides, my great Aunt Violet, recently moved to Richmond from St. Petersburg and temporarily staying with her daughter (Jane), would never forgive me if I got that close without stopping.

When we got to Richmond it was raining, a steady soaking downpour I am no longer used to. (I grew up in New Jersey.) Jane brought out the station wagon to lead the Ox from the rendezvous to her home. After a mad dash from the Ox to the front porch, we went through the amenities, dried off a bit, and sat down to a very welcome dinner of fried chicken. Aunt Vi was on her relatively good behavior, with only a limited amount of fussing over or about Elayne, and only a few references to things I had done as a pre-teen. (Vi, Jane, and her husband Benny are the first of my relatives to meet Elayne, as my mother wasn't able to come out to the wedding. I'd love to see Vi's next letter to my mother.)

After dinner we sat and blathered a while, talking of relatives, dogs, cats, and even bridge -- at 82, Vi has taken up the game, albeit somewhat cautiously. Elayne brought out her needlework, and I hauled out the rug I've been working on since April. (I'd done next to nothing on it during the trip, as it turned out to be all but impossible to work on the thing while the Ox was moving, even when there was plenty of room.) Eventually the Crafts-and-Conversation Society ran down, and we crashed. (It should be noted that the talking was being done almost entirely by Vi and me. Elayne is always reticent around strangers; Don didn't know anybody, even us; and Drew, of course, had crashed almost immediately after dinner.)

Early Wednesday morning, we hit the road -- a toll road, the only one we encountered the entire trip. It cost us a staggering \$1.05 from Richmond to Petersburg where we turned off to head southwest into North Carolina. The roads were decent, the traffic light, and we made very good time -- a little too good, in fact. By 3:00 a.m. on Thursday we were in West Memphis, the easternmost point of Arkansas. We had to waste a couple hours in order to get to Altus at the right time: business hours at the wineries.

On the way to D.C. we had gone through Arkansas and noticed signs pointing off the Interstate: "Winery: 5 miles." Wineries in Arkansas? Arkansas? So we investigated. They were all closed. It was Sunday; of course they'd be closed. What did we think this was, California? We made a note of the location and got business hours so we could hit there on the way back. (And during the con we'd mentioned the bit to some wine-conscious types. The reaction was the same: "Arkansas?") We had to try this off-beat booze.

There are, as far as we could discover, four wineries in the Altus area. According to one of the proprietesses, another area, as large as the present area, had been planted in wine grapes by some Italian immigrants, but they had sold out to Welch's, leaving only the small acreage there is now. The four wineries range from Very Rustic to Very Touristy. The first we hit was the Mount Bethel Winery, which I would call Rustic. A dirt road led between the farmhouse and the barn, and the proprietess finally came out of the former and led us to the latter, where the winery

business was located. I tried their various wines, while Elayne, who was more interested in the cat and other livestock, tried one or two samples on recommendation. We wound up taking 3 bottles of their Niagara wine and 2 of their Delaware wine, as we'd promised various people to bring them back some Arkansas wine.

The Post Winery should be categorized as Commercial. They had a separate building just for wine business, including a separate tasting room, and various printed advertisements. I picked up a set of the postcards, and a recipe for a drink called a Razorback (Arkansas is very football conscious). After tasting about half of their 22 wines, I purchased one bottle each of the Cinthiana and the Muscadine. (The latter is also known as "Scuppernong.") As we pushed on to the next winery, Elayne started making noises about maybe she shouldn't let me drive... .

The Sax's Winery was Very Rustic. It operated out of the storage cellar of the farmhouse, and wine bottles shared the space with the home preserves and several household pets. I sampled the two wines they had -- out of the four kinds they usually carried -- and bought a bottle of Campbell's Early.

The last winery, Wiederkehr Wine Cellars, is in the Tourist class. They have tours of the winery, a gift shop, and a pseudo-Swiss Alps chalet to operate from. We tried a few of their wines and finally bought a bottle of Alpine Strawberry (an apple wine with strawberry flavoring). We ignored the tour, but did pick up a charm for Elayne's collection from the gift shop. And with that we departed the Strange Land of Arkansas Wines.

As we roared across Oklahoma, we were looking for a way to waste about four or five hours. Calculations indicated that unless we did so, we'd hit the Mojave Desert at the peak of its noontime heat -- something to be avoided if at all possible. The first reasonable time waster that came to mind -- my mind, that is -- was to stop somewhere and play bridge that evening. So while I drove, Drew looked through the directory of bridge clubs to see if there was one with a Thursday night game somewhere along our route. It appeared that Amarillo, several hundred miles ahead, was the only hope, so I kept the Ox at the illegal 70 mph in hopes of getting there on time, and in other hopes of avoiding the state fuzz while getting there. It would be nice to get back at the Amarillo club for the game we played there in '71, on the road to Noreascon, shortly after we began playing duplicate bridge. They had played a 10-table Howell Movement, and we had come in 20th. As we barreled along, Elayne, who wouldn't mind at all if bridge were suddenly uninvented, rechecked the directory and turned up the small town of Elk City, Oklahoma, which advertised a Thursday night game. An easily-accessible game was to be preferred to my trying to get to Amarillo at 70 mph, she said. Fine by us, and we stopped at Elk City.

After locating the game site -- the local Chamber of Commerce building -- we ate dinner and waited for the 7 p.m. game time. The director, who looked like he should be addressed as "Colonel," was quite pleased to have ausländer drop in on the game, and everyone we met was exceedingly friendly. (God help the furriner who drops in on some of the Los Angeles clubs without having a local contact there!) They had a 7-table Mitchell Movement, the card fees were 75¢ -- compared to the \$2 around here -- and we finished an ignominious 5th out of 7. But for the first time in I don't know how long, I actually enjoyed a game when I didn't win.

We drove through Texas, New Mexico, and most of Arizona without incident during the night, and stopped for breakfast Friday morning in Holbrook, Arizona. (Ah, there, Ron Bennett!) We ate at the Holbrook Truck Terminal, which was a double mistake. First, the food was somewhat expensive and barely edible. Second, when I tried turning the Ox around to get out to the highway heading in the right direction, I backed into one of their diesel fuel pumps and knocked the damn thing off its base. Diesel fuel spread out like a lake before they could find a cutoff valve and turn it. The pump had been exactly in the right-hand blind spot, and the vari-

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ous fuel islands were scattered over a rather wide area to accomodate the monster rigs that come through, so I hadn't expected to find one at that spot. Apparently accidents to the pumps are commonplace at the Terminal, as the manager said he'd had three such in the last couple months. As a result, he had an exact quote on the cost of the front panel of the pump, which was all that had been damaged. He then estimated the loss of fuel, and came up with a bill of \$43.96. There isn't a AAA insurance adjustment office in Holbrook, and I didn't have the cash, so, after some haggling, we put the bill on my Shell card (since the Terminal is a Shell station) and let it go at that. (Back in L.A., I took the bill to AAA, and they did indeed pay it, after about two hours waiting and filling out forms. They later sent me a complaining note about having had two accidents in two years. Since they're wrong -- mid-August 1972 to early September 1974 is more than two years -- I trashcanned the note and didn't reply.)

Our timing was, of course, off again. We hit the Mojave around 3:00 in the afternoon, cooled off the Ox and ourselves at Needles, just inside the California border, and plowed on. There were no further difficulties, and, after dropping Don off at Paula Marmor's apartment in Studio City, we pulled into the Tower driveway a little after 11:00. Stasia Spade, who had been house-sitting for us, gave us a status report. Everything was fine, and the cats (which we'd acquired a couple weeks before leaving, but hadn't got around to naming) were now named Flopsy and Mopsy. The latter had taken an apparently voluntary swim in the pool, and come out looking like a damp mop; the other appears to be boneless, like Frieda's cat Faron, but that is an afterthought since there would be no other name for the twin brother of a cat named Mopsy. We drove Stasia home with appropriate thanks for Tower-sitting the two weeks, and came back and collapsed. Final mileage: 6066.5.

That should hold us for another couple years!

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APPENDIX A: Ted Johnstone's parody (originally published in THE REST OF MEST, post-  
mailed to SAPS 59, April 1962)

It's true! It's true! The Earl has made it clear --  
The weather will be horrid all the year...

The laws were made a million years ago here,  
With rituals the same as ages past...  
And nothing ever changes, as you know, here/ In Gormenghast...

The status quo's defended to the limit,  
The liberals are utterly outclassed;  
And when a light of thought appears they dim it,/ In Gormenghast...

Gormenghast -- Gormenghast --  
I know it's dreadfully bizarre --  
But in Gormenghast -- Gormenghast --  
That's how conditions are...

A perfect closed ecology existing/ Without a change inside a thousand year...  
We know that it will last --/ Our future and our past  
Are bound together permanently here/ In Gormenghast.

APPENDIX B: New fragment of a parody (BEP, Aug. 1974):

You wonder what the Earl is doing tonight?  
He's up in the Tow'r of Flints, "Whoo-whoo!"ing tonight!  
And what does he do there, you ask, indiscreet?  
He's looking all around for mice he can eat!