

# DESCANT

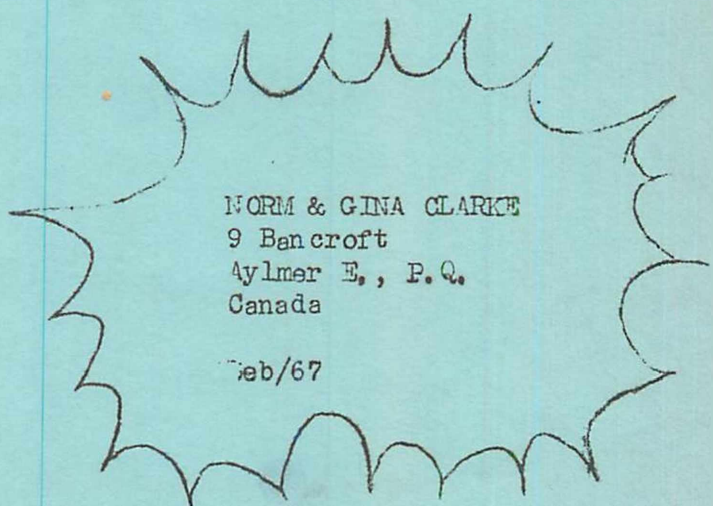
# 15

SPECIAL CONVENTION EDITION

DEDICATED TO

## BUCK COULSON

FAPA  
118



NORM & GINA CLARKE  
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Aylmer E., P.Q.  
Canada

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## Cleebcon Report

a cataract of lies, a tissue of untruth

We searched the faces in the Toronto bus station, desperately looking for Boyd. The faces were packed in nose to nose because there was a rail strike on. When Boyd did appear, his face was a new one - shorter than we remembered. Well, no one should go to a convention with a long face.

We got into Boyd's 1954 Caddy (with the raccoon tail on the ariel and the giant dice in the front window) and zoomed through steamy Toronto and down through the fruit belt of Ontario. No, I mean they grow grapes and stuff. We detoured by Niagara Falls. It was our anniversary, more or less. Boyd took a picture of us against a background of foaming detergent suds.

Then we went to a restaurant where Boyd demonstrated a few basics of restaurant lifemanship - using a cashier as his subject since there were no wine stewards. Norm had an iced tea, so he could be iced-tea-brothers with John Koning as well as beer-brothers with Lee Jacobs.

We were welcomed to the States by a cloudburst. Boyd pulled the car to the side of the road, claiming that the sky had darkened so much and the rain was so heavy that he could not longer drive. I thought that was kind of funny because everybody else was managing, including some fool in an open car. None of us, including Boyd, noticed until much later that the trouble was he was still wearing his sunglasses. (He wanted to be shades-brothers with Harlan Ellison.)

Hours later we stopped at a Howard Johnsons. Norm and I, quiet stay-at-homes that we are, had never seen a real genuine Howard Johnsons before. Boyd warned us that they bland everything up by some mysterious process. Perhaps they have a huge synthetic food machine in the kitchen - I picture something like a soft ice cream machine - and whenever the waitress says, "One french-fried shrimp, one scallops," the chef presses a button, and a dollop of guck comes out of the machine, and he presses the guck into shrimp and scallop molds, sprinkles it with cornmeal and gives it a quick dip in the hot fat. Good though.

Then there was our dramatic entry into Cleveland. Way on the outskirts of town Norm and I, acting as navigators, decided that Boyd should get onto this Euclid Avenue which went directly from the eastern edge of town to the doorstep of the convention hotel. However our map only showed Euclid Avenue as far as 21st Street or so. Where we turned onto the avenue, it was 196th Street. As we putted along from stoplight to stoplight for the next two hours, Boyd said frightfully rude things to us and tore at his already alarmingly shorn locks.

Now when we first talked about going to the con, Norm had said something about Negro riots. Sure, I said, in places like New York and Chicago and Omaha (Omaha?) and like that. But whoever heard of race riots in Cleveland? So the next day there it was all over the front page - race riots in Cleveland. All right, I told Norm, but even if there were riots, we'd be safe in the hotel. What does it matter? So we were only slightly worried to hear on the car radio about riots that very night in Dayton, not far away.

So there we were, inching along Euclid Avenue. An Avenue, which despite its name disproves one theorem of geometry - a straight line is not necessarily the shortest distance between two points. Right, Boyd? We should have taken the great polar route along the lake. Anyway, we were chugging along when Norm said, what was the name of that district in Cleveland where they had the riots? Hough, I said. All the Negroes are in a Hough...Get it?...Ahaha...Why? Because I just saw a store marked Hough Bakery. Oh.

Later we found a Hough Bakery right across the hotel and probably they're all over Cleveland. Nevertheless that one on Euclid alarmed us. Look for barbecue places, someone cried. There's one! someone else cried. And there were all these stores, padlocked for the night behind giant metal extendable gates. As if to protect them from rioting and looting and things like that. And unlike the Liberal Bleedinghearts Norm and I usually are (Boyd of course is a hard-hearted conservative and kept shouting Know Your Place out the window) we kept nudging each other and saying, Look, there's another three dozen of them.

It's all right, Norm, I said. You can always wave your sax at them and claim to be a soul brother. Egad no, he said, or something like that. They'd tear me apart for Stealing Their Music. White Power, yelled Boyd at a group of large scowly Negroes waiting for the light.

I suddenly realized the interior car light was on, left over from when we were studying the mpa, and it was reflecting brilliantly off our more-than-usually-white complexions. Turn it off, Boyd, I begged. Sure, he said, I'll turn them off...Two, Four, Six, Eight, he shouted, honking his horn at a carload of 300-lb. Negro stevedores ahead of us.

By way of anti-climax, we reached the convention. And in due course we made our way downstairs to The Bunch of Grapes, where we found a bunch of nuts...Sid and Alva Rogers, Carol and Terry Carr, Jim Caughren and Chuck Hansen. Shortly afterwards I stomped out in a huff, causing all sorts of mental notes to be mentally noted for con reports, but I returned shortly. I was discovering my touristy bit of carrying travellers cheques wasn't so handy.

Terry is very distinguished looking. He looks less like a fan than like a lordly editor with the power of rejection or acceptance. I think he should start calling himself Terrence Carr. Carol is as strikingly pretty as I had remembered, with the marvellous hair that drove LeeJ and Laurie mad at the Giant Quebeccon. Carol and Terry presented us with nametags for our kids, so we could tell them apart.

Sid Rogers is a magnificent hunk of woman, attired in outfits that only a MH of W could carry off. I was impressed. ### I have a silly idea I read in a recent Hansen fanzine that he'd reached the age of 50. If Chuck did say that, then he can't count. Maybe he's doing a weird variation of the Jack Benny bit - he stays 39 forever but counts his birthdays anyway.

Boyd got many encouraging compliments on his new hair style. Like, "Whatever happened to your forehead?" and "Don't tell me you go into the office of the CENSORED company like that?"

Then someone said there was a party upstairs. "Oh goody," we cried, imagining ourselves snug and smug in one of those exclusive room parties we'd heard about, hobnobbing with other ENFs, while Boyd guarded the door shouting "Go A-Way" to the undeserving who slavered in the hall. But the party turned out to be an

intimate gathering of 500 people, sponsored by the Syracuse-Boston axis, who were serving drinks like they hoped to keep everyone drunk until the voting on Monday.

We met the Lupoffs. Pat is petite and very pretty. Dick has a long face with sad brown eyes - a face that was meant to be mournful but which perversely looks cheerful. And we met Ed Maskys, Andy and Barbara Main, Alan Shaw and Arnie Katz.

Then Norm and Steve Stiles spotted each other. Norm immediately did about four shticks (as his people - musicians - call them) in order to impress Steve. Next day neither Steve nor Norm could recall their encounter very clearly and were wondering desperately what kind of impression they'd made on each other. But they got together and assured each other that they had been perfectly fine.

Next morning we had breakfast at the Minute Chef, where Boyd demonstrated some more restaurantmanship. "First," he said, "you ask in a quiet, pained way for a knife. Then with a frown you request a fork. Then you pound your fist and demand a serviette. Then you scream and clutch your stomach and threaten to die on the spot of starvation if you don't get your food. Then you grovel and whimper and beg until they serve you your drink."

The man beside me with the Frodo button turned out to be Banks Mebane. He told me the Minute Chef advertises "24-hour service" because you're supposed to place your order and then call back for it 24 hours later.

Here we met the Pavlats, all three of them, and Lynn Hickman.

Then Boyd did what any wise, experienced con-goer would do - he went shopping. Norm, eager to learn the con-fan ways, tagged along with him. I stayed to register and then, with some trepidation, put on my name-tag. I had thought of wearing my Elmira ("Meyer") Schultz nametag. Boyd was going to be Rock Raspberry. Norm was going to be Regie des Alcools. But we all chickened out. And furthermore I chickened out on wearing a big FRODO IS A FAG button. There were too many believers around.

Then I went to a panel on How Not To Write Science Fiction, though I wasn't really sure I needed such advice. I've got along nicely all these years not writing science fiction, and you know how it is with something you've picked up on your own and then you get some formal instruction in it from an expert and it ruins your technique... (Notice how I cleverly mangled my wording to make it read that the panel members were experts in not writing science fiction.)

The most interesting discussion was between Zelazny and Spinoff (or whatever). Zelazny said he pictured the action of his books as if they were movies or plays and then wrote down what he saw. Spinoff said he was interested in what the characters were thinking. I vote for the Spinoff position. I can see and listen to people any old day - it's what goes on inside their headbones that's mysterious. Besides which the voyeur technique can get to be an awful drag. Not long ago I read Back of Town by Maritta Wollff, which divulged not one teenyweeny thought of the characters...directly. It sounded something like this: "She sat, head in hand, as if in deep thought. Suddenly she got up as if she had come to some kind of decisions and stode purposely to the phone. There she hesitated, frowning, receiver in hand. Then, slowly, seemingly unwillingly, she slowly dialled..." It drove me batty. As Spinoff said, if you want to see a movie, go to a movie.

Anyway, who's Zelazny to defend the voyeur technique? The only book I've read by him was about the mit-doctor of the future and half the book takes place inside somebody's skull - so far inside that I didn't know what was happening.



But enough of that - the important thing is that while waiting for that panel I met Lee Hoffman, Ted White and Jack Caughn. Ted looks almost as dignified as Terry Carr. Must be something about being in the publishing end of things. Lee is a very warm, friendly, good-looking woman. It's hard to believe she was ever 16-year-old twin boys.

I went to the art show to enter stuff by my kids and the Morse kids. Bjo grumbled at me goodnaturedly for not having entered the pictures ahead of time. Bruce Pelz who was manning the desk looked right past my left ear and told Bjo he thought they should put a time-limit on entries next year and if somebody came and tried to enter a picture late they would be roped to the nearest pillar and turned over to the attentions of someone called, I believe, "Sadista". I slunk away to my room to make out the forms and get the pictures. When I crept back downstairs and peered around the corner, Bruce was gone and Ron Elik was in his place. He greeted me with a proper show of enthusiasm.

I taped up the kids' pictures and looked over the adult entries. I liked Bjo's orchid-nymphs and changelings and was fascinated by George Barr's ballpoint pen work. And I liked the Michelangelo-like Storm-God or whatever. I thought Shantorelle Peng's Time Capsule was clever.

While I was prowling around the art room I spotted a name-badge with "Ottawa" on it. I looked further up - it was not attached to my husband or to Paul Peng. Another Ottawa fan! At the same moment he spotted my badge and we galloped at each other, gurgling and shaking hands and saying goshwow. Then we exchanged credentials. "I'm a fan." "Oh. I'm a Burroughs Bibliophile." "Oh." We both back off a few paces, then suddenly turned tail and fled in opposite directions.

I ran into Les Nirenberg, a hard man to overlook. He was prowling the place looking for orgies to film. He didn't find any so he used up most of his film on that cute little android at the registration desk and the rest of it on the fashion show, or a couple of highlights thereof, namely Robin White. It was subsequently shown coast-to-coast on Canadian television and there were questions in Parliament the next day.

Anyway, I told Les I'd just ridden down in an elevator with Isaac Asimov, goshwow. Hmpfh, said Les. He'd asked Asimov to take part in a discussion before his camera and Asimov had said he'd have to ask his wife first.

We went to the costume ball. I was most impressed by St. George and the Dragon and Explosion in a Time Machine. Several people came up to us and congratulated us on our simple but effective costumes: Aliens walking the earth, achieved by wearing ordinary 20th century clothes but using makeup with a tinge of green in it. We were annoyed because we looked as we usually do. Yes, and the number of people asking me where my boots and whips were reached a crescendo. "See, see," said Norm. "I told you you were getting an awful reputation throughout fandom." "Hmmm," said Boyd. "Have you noticed that they all ask about your boots and whip but nobody has inquired about your rubber suit? I guess we know what fans are interested in." Well, as long as it's not guppies.

Then the band began to play strangely old-fashioned 1930s music for all the futuristic people. I think costume balls should have electronic music, full of bleeps and buzzes. Norm would have sat in except he didn't bring his accordion.

Here we met Juanita and Buck Coulson, Don and Maggie Thompson, Bunia and Paul Peng (I think we'd met somewhere before), and A Host Of Others.

At the costume ball I spotted Poul Anderson who was taking photographs. After some prodding by Norm, who had been reading an Anderson novel on the way to the con, I went over to Poul and said, "Hi - do you remember a certain drunken evening in Calgary ten years ago?"

Poul gave me a sort of sick smile and said, "As a matter of fact, I do," and retreated to his viewfinder.

"This here is my husband, Norm," I said. "He drinks too."

Poul mumbled something like, "I'm sure he does..." and, crouching, eye to viewfinder he pursued something at the far end of the hall.

"I think I still have the tape of Karen singing folksongs..." I cried after him but he vanished into the crowd.

Then we met Bob Beuchley. The Bob Beuchley.

"We're unregistered," we cried. "These are phony badges. What do you say?"

"Fine, fine," he beamed. "Nice to meet you."

"Aren't you going to jump on me and knock me to the floor or even TOUCH MY BREAST?" I cried.

"Oh I wouldn't think of it," he said, nervously eyeing Norm, who outweighed him by a good minus-150 pounds.

I was chagrined. Why we'd just the minute before run into Wally Weber and Norm had offered to let him fulfil his printed desire to paw me. Wally took one look at me and hastily declined. Or maybe it was because Norm outweighed him by a good minus-50 pounds. When we left him he was being pawed by Jean Bogart. Serves him right.

We left the costume ball and made our way to the night's exclusive closed-door party for only the inner circle of 800. (Bruce Palz gloated in a post-con publication that all the room parties went deep underground, thus implying that he got to go. I bet though that he spent the evenings in his room feverishly making notes for his chart.) En route we stumbled over a real, genuine, passed-out nec sprawled on a lobby floor, goshnow. His friends were pulling him over to the sidelines so he wouldn't be trampled by bagpipers. Here we met Ben Solon and Lon Atkins.

Next morning Koning, Ellik, Jacobs, Raeburn and us went looking for someplace to eat and, not finding one, we settled for a certain drugstore. I sat next to a shelf full of fascinating things, which I've forgotten now, except for the salt-peter right next to the alum. (Is corned-beef an anti-aphrodisiac?) Which reminds me, there was another drugstore right across from the hotel with a window display of supporters. As a sheltered Canadian, I haven't been so crogged since my first trip to the wicked U.S. and saw a drugstore-window full of whiskey-bottles.

Later that day we found ourselves in the NBF hospitality room, shoving down the free food and drinks and yacking with the Pengs, when who should come in but Carol and Terry Carr. We welcomed them to fandom.

Norm and I met Ted White in the art room that day. He gave us a rather far-fetched explanation of why he couldn't hire either the Fuggs or the Playdates for the costume ball if New York won their bid. Something about having to hire an 80-piece standby band.

We ate our supper that night and the night before in hotel dining-room. It was a bit fancy and expensive for Norm and I. He had a hamburger (\$1.60) and I had a corned beef sandwich (\$1.90), but they were amazingly substantial. Norm told me it was all my fault anyway if we had to pay so much for a meal - he'd wanted to go to the London pub across the street but the first time we went in we had to get to the dining-room via a bar full of hollow-cheeked, red-eyed, shaky-handed zombies. "Just old fans and tired," Norm told me but I didn't like the atmosphere. We found out later that it wasn't so bad once you made it to the dining-room and the prices were more reasonable.

Anyway, at the F and E hotel dining-room I gorged on all the garlic-bread, etc., trying to get my money's worth, and I guess I did because I gained back the 10 lbs I'd lost for the convention.

And I have to admit I sort of dug the luxury of having dozens of lackeys scurrying about waiting on us. Rather an ante-bellum air about the place - one Negro in a white coat to set tables, another to fill water-glasses, another to replenish the breadbasket whenever I cleared it out, another to hover over us to fill coffee-cups, and so on. My pleasure was somewhat tempered by the suspicion that they all lived in Haugh and probably out in the kitchen they spat in the water pitcher.

Mains joined us for supper the second night. They ate salad because they're vegetarians. Boyd remarked that the salad looked very good but he'd once succumbed to the temptation to order just such a giant salad and got a sore jaw chewing and chewing and chewing...only to find an hour later that he was hungry again. But too tired to eat any more. (And there's a non-sentence just to bug you, Boyd.)

Last night of the convention we actually attended a Closed Door Party. In our own room. In attendance were Katz, Alan Shaw, Koning, Raeburn. And later on we attended another closed-door party. In Ted White's room. Ted wasn't there. He was at a Closed Door Pro Party, the ultimate in exclusiveness. Boyd, who has been everywhere and knows everything, said he'd been at one once and it was very dull - just authors sitting around bitching about word-rates and sadistic editors who rip thousands of bleeding words from the very guts of novels. The party we were at was hosted by Andy and Barbara Main, who were unofficially sharing the White room. Here we met Rusty Havelin and said BOO to him - thus revealing that we read other people's fapazines with no more attention than they give to ours. Here we met Andy Porter.

Who else did we meet? Well, there was Bob Silverberg and Len Bailles and...and... Well, I've been poring over all the con-reports, and you didn't mention meeting me either. Besides it's February and I can't remember so good anymore.

There were a few things I didn't mention - like the Lilapa meeting Boyd and we held, but we couldn't find any lilapa members so we held it with Lee Jacobs and Jim Caughren instead. And we met Sid Rogers one day in the art room tending the Pelz baby. "I'm a natural-born mother!" she cried. "See, even little babies recognize me as a mother right away!" And I saw Bjo's kid, who is cute cute SUTE. And once I rushed up to L. Sprague de Camp and kicked him in the shins and said, "GREY wasp, not green!" He looked baffled. Hoping you are the same...



# AND THEN I MET . . .

THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WILL BE some mentioning of names going on here. This convention report (that's what I like to call it, even though I haven't written it yet) will be conducted in strict accordance with the LEE JACOBS Rules, except that I'm not going to type all the names in caps: just that of LEE JACOBS. So this report will be mostly the naming of names; what it will not be is an account of whatever went on at the Program. I didn't attend very much of the Program, for one thing; and for another, you doubtless already know who won the Hugos, who will be putting on next year's convention, and what Harlan Ellison said to Randy Garrett. All of those things have doubtless already been printed in twenty-three con reports (it is already Sept. 7 as I type), so I won't write about 'What Happened In The Gold Room. Instead, I'll write about 'What I Did At The Con.

What I did was: I met fans. Of course, I'd met fans before: the way it had worked was that I would sit here in Aylmer, with a large supply of beer handy, and every now and then fans would pound on the door. But this affair at Cleveland was something else. Mighod, I'd never imagined seeing so many ~~big~~ fans all at once. They swarmed, teemed, slithered and lurched all over the place. It was an awesome sight indeed, and one that I enjoyed.

## In The Beginning

I didn't get any sleep the night before starting the trip. That wasn't because I was filled with tension and excitement: no, it was for the simple reason that I cannot go to sleep before 4 a.m. (unless I've missed some hours of sleep the night before). So, since I had arranged for a cab to call for us at 6 a.m., I thought it would be damned silly to go to bed for an hour and a half, or less. At least, that's what I decided after making a determined try at falling unconscious around midnight: I'd swilled quite a lot of Martinis and beer between 8 p.m. and 12, hoping they would soothe me to sleep. So, promptly at midnight, I stumbled and burped my way up to the bedroom, undressed, and lay down. For an hour I stared, unblinking, into the darkness, and then realized it was no use. Back downstairs I came; and then I swilled quite a lot of coffee until 5:30, at which time I woke Gina and told her it was time to get going.

## Westward. Oog

"I'll get some sleep on the bus," I told Gina when she expressed horrorification, if not surprise, upon learning I had been up all night. Once aboard the Greyhound, I leaned back and closed my eyes. In thirty seconds I opened them again. I watched the passing scenery (downtown Ottawa) for a few minutes, then sighed convincingly, writhed into what seemed like a comfortable position, and once more lowered my lids. I nestled a bit against Gina's shoulder. My eyes popped open. This routine was repeated five or six times; so, as a last drastic measure, I started to read an Ace science fiction novel (written by a fan), and I still didn't fall asleep. When the bus pulled into the Toronto terminal, at noon, I was able to walk up to Boyd Reburn with firm step and clear, unblinking eyes, and greet him with my customary hearty, "Oog." Boyd was right in character, except for his new lowbrow haircut, and he instantly suggested going to a restaurant: he neglected specify F and E, so I pointed at a Japanese Greasy Chopstick across the street, and said that that place looked ideal to me. So for breakfast I had shrimp tempura, while Boyd and Gina nibbled at such exotic Oriental Delicacies as, respectively, grilled cheese sandwich and corned beef likewise. And that's 'What We Ate in Toronto!

### The Clarkes Stateside

Soon we arrived in the United States (of America). Actually, it wasn't very soon, for we had stopped to take a gawk at Niagara Falls, which I had never seen. Boyd had, of course (he's been everywhere, maybe even to Hong Kong), and so had Gina, on her mysterious trip east from Calgary in 1956 or so, when she passed through numerous fancentres (Canadian fandom was booming and whimpering in the mid-50s) and never contacted one goddam fan anywhere, including this here writer, who was pretty sore about that when he found out. Well, anyway: we looked at the Falls ("Yep, it sure does fall, all right," I noted), got lost for an hour or so while trying to find our way back to the highway, and eventually crossed the border into Buffalo, NY. As though this event were some sort of cosmic signal, a violent tropical storm immediately broke over us, as a consequence of which Boyd could not see where he was going, and got lost again for a while. We eventually found the Freeway ("quick, anybody got an American quarter?"), though, and were headed towards Cleveland. I could tell without a doubt that we were in the US of A, and kept pointing things out to Gina, who is not as seasoned a traveller as I: "See, we have just crossed the State Line into Pennsylvania. Notice how gray and drab and Appalachian everything has suddenly become? Oh, that's Pennsylvania, all right." Boyd, of course, just yawned and said that all countries look the same to him.

### I Was the Navigator of a Mercedes 220

As we drew nearer to Cleveland, Boyd asked me to get out a couple of maps and figure out just where we should turn off the highway to get into the city. "I can't see any correlation between the road map and the map printed in the con booklet," he complained, "Where, for example, is Eustis Street?" We were on the outskirts of the city as he said that, and I quickly scanned the two maps. "HEY!" I mentioned, "Turn left right now, QUICK! Here is Eustis Street, and we just follow it and it takes us directly to the front door of the hotel. No sweat: it goes right there in a straight line, so we won't have to go all around the perimeter of the town and then have to make confusing turns and such. This street will take us right to the hotel." By this time, Boyd had turned onto the street I'd indicated with my wavings and pointings and shrill screams. I settled back to watch for the hotel. "We're almost there," I said to Gina. We snailed along the narrow street for about twenty minutes. "Let me see that map," Gina said. "There," I pointed, "See, that's the street we're on now. You can see that it ends smack dab at the hotel." "This is a map of the centre of the city," Gina observed, "and this street we're on is crossed by 20th street right here at the edge of the map. What street are we just passing?" "One hundred and ninety eighth street," I read. In a few minutes I added, "Well, that was one hundred and ninety seventh street we just passed," and, a little while later, "Well, there goes one hundred and ninety sixth street, gang." Nobody seemed to be talking to me, so I just sat there and quietly counted the streets for another hour. Finally Boyd snarled, "I bet this goddam street goes right through Hough, where they have Race Riots and tip over cars full of white people." At that moment we passed a place whose sign read "Hough Barbecue and Soul Food." "Goddammit," Boyd said. Gangs of Negroes milled about (we Canadians aren't used to seeing gangs of Negroes; we aren't even used to gangs of French-Canadians yet). "Oh, for heaven's sakes," I said, "There's nothing to worry about. You forget that I am a Jazz Musician: should any of these people start to give us a hard time, I'll simply speak a few jazz words like 'oh vouty' and they'll know that I am a Soul Brother, and I'll explain that you two are Canadians who are free from racial prejudice and in fact have several best friends, and it'll be all right." Boyd just crouched low behind the wheel, and Gina hummed a few good old Spirituals, until eventually we were out of the Sinister Negro District, and even -- would you believe a mere three hours behind schedule? -- turning into the hotel parking lot.

## Down in the Bar

It was but the work of a moment to check in and be given a room different from the kind we'd reserved ("I'm sure you'll find the twin beds comfortable." "We wanted a double bed, though." "I'm sure you'll find that they are big twin beds,"). The room was 885, and Gina and I went in and bounced skeptically on the twin beds; but I, at least, didn't dare lie down on one of them, for I knew that, what with having gone without sleep for so many hours, I'd surely conk out right away. So, instead, I took a shower; naturally, the phone rang. It was Boyd, who reported, "The Ferrys haven't checked in yet, but the Carrs are here, Ted White is here, the Rogerses are here ..." "I'll meet you in the lobby in ten minutes," I told him, for by this time Gina was taking a shower. I called to her to hurry up, for we were to meet Boyd in ten minutes. In ten minutes Boyd called again: "Where are you? What's keeping you?" "Well, Gina's in the shower. Give us another ten minutes." Ten more minutes passed; the phone rang. "Well, Gina's fixing her hair, and her face, and her 'things.' We'll be down in a little while, I guess." Sid Rogers got on the line: "Now hear this," she said, "We're having a party. Get down here right away!.. Right NOW!" "Lor, Sid," I said, hanging up. And later, indeed, Gina and I finally got to the lobby, where the first people we met were Sid and Alva Rogers (we'd already met Boyd). We set out for a bar called "The Grapes of Wrath" or the "Sour Grapes" or something like that, and, "Oh, this is very fannish," I thought, "Now I am going to do a lot of ur'inking with fans." And sure enough, we did sit there for some time, boozing and chatting with the Rogerses, Terry and Carol Carr, Jim Gaughran, and, I think Chuck Hansen (I do know Chuck was one of the first people I met, but I can't remember whether it was in the bar). "Tell me all about yourself," said Sid Rogers. Well, I guess that's traditionally a good conversation opener, but it just stumps me. I thought it over, and then answered, "I drink." "Why?" asked Sid. Boy, that Sid Rogers asks the darnedest questions; it must be a result of her newspaper background. "Well, I can never think of anything better to do," I finally admitted, taking large gulps from my glass. I'd only had time for two or three beers, plus my very first taste of Jack Daniels, when someone suggested we go to the Beer Party. I was just beginning to feel comfortable in the nice quiet bar, but Gina reasoned with me: "You won't have to pay for drinks up there," she whispered, giving me a vicious kick. So off we all merrily went to that scene of roaring chaos, which was, I believe, Syracuse's fault, that night. I met a few more people at that party, though I can't remember most of them (I can't remember just where and when I met most people, I mean). Oh, one I remember: I was tottering from the Free Booze line, carrying as many glasses as I was able to, when I almost bumped into a blond fellow who was chitterchattering to a few girls. "Hello, Ron Ellik," I said. "I don't know you," he replied civilly (I wasn't wearing a name tag). "Norm Clarke," I whispered, fearful that hobs of my horrid admirers would overhear and leap on me and tear my clothes. "Go away," said Ron Ellik, "I'm only interested in meeting your wife." Well! I put all my glasses down on a table, and sat beside Carol Carr. "Psst," she said, "There's Steve Stiles over there." "Where, where?" I cried, for I had been looking forward to meeting that selfsame Stiles, so that I could kick his ass and tell him what a fool he is. "Over there," said Carol, "That fellow in the pink shirt who looks stoned out of his mind." I walked over and said, "Are you Steve Stiles?" He blinked at me and said, "I might be. And who ...?" "I'm going to kick your ass, Stiles," I said. "Hm, well ..." he said, glancing apprehensively at my massive frame. He certainly was relieved when I revealed my ~~secret~~ true identity. So Steve and I sat together and had a long and rewarding intellectual discussion, although, next day, neither of us could remember what it was about. At one point, someone -- Ed Maskys, I think -- came up to me and requested, "Say something in Canadian." "Fuck off," I replied obligingly. I think he took me seriously, for he gave me dirty looks everytime he passed me, the rest of the weekend. I imagine it was shortly after that that Gina or somebody carried me off to Room 885, and to bed, but I don't remember getting there.

### Fifth Fandom Is Not Dead

Early Saturday found Gina, Boyd and me sitting in the "Minute Chef," so named because it takes about half an hour to be served. We had just sat down when Boyd spotted Lynn Hickman, and took me over to meet him; Boyd knew I would enjoy the meeting, for Lynn had recently sent me a letter of comment, under the impression that I was Norman G. Browne ("I remember the good times we had at the Nolacon, Norm," he had enthused). Lynn and I certainly had a good hearty laugh ("Heh, heh") together when I pointed out his error to him, although I didn't think it very tactful of Lynn to say, "Well, if you're not Norman G. Browne, then who the hell are you?" Later, though, he gave me a copy of his fanzine, The Pulp Era, which appears to have something to do with science fiction. Boyd and I went back to resume our interminable wait for juice (orange juice, that is) and coffee and so forth, and Bob Pavlat sat down beside us. I assured Bob of Gina's and my vote for him as OE of FAPA, even though we hadn't mailed our ballot yet. "Bruce Pelz has batch of ballots with him," Bob said, "You can get one from him, if you want, and vote right here at the convention." "Hey, that's a great idea: it sure would be a Fun Thing to ask Bruce for a ballot, and then to write "BOB PAVLAT" on it with a flourish, right in his face, so to speak." (Unfortunately, however, I never got to do that: I did ask Bruce for a ballot, at one of the beer parties, but he said he didn't have any with him. Oh, I bet he did.) Another fellow sat down with us: his name-card told me that he was Banks Mobane, who had written, I remembered, a fine, nostalgic article about the old Planet lettercolumn, "The Vizigraph." I told him how much I had enjoyed that article, and asked whether he was going to write something similar about the lettercols in SS and TWS. "Well," he said, "It would be pretty much the same names, and the same thing, wouldn't it?" Maybe so; but I think I'd still like to read an article like that, especially if by Banks Mobane. After some conversation, with Bob and Banks, about, among other things, Health Warnings on American cigaret packs ("Why don't they put up signs saying 'New York City may be hazardous to your health?'" ), Boyd and I went outside and went sightseeing around fabulous Cleveland, Ohio. At least, we went sightseeing as far as a record shop (for Boyd) and a liquor store (for me). Boyd ran wild through the record shop, crying "Gee!" and "Vo-de-o-doh," along with other Mod expressions currently in vogue with people of his generation; he eventually bought about two dozen LPs by Groups I Never Heard Of ("The Beatles," "The Rolling Stones," "The Ink Spots"), while I, being a Fogey, bought an old Frank Sinatra LP that I'd thought was long out of print. I also bought (at a different store) a fifth of Jack Daniels Black Label and a pint (or maybe it was a "tenth") of Scotch. As we walked happily back to the hotel with our prizes, Boyd delivered a stirring lecture on the horridness of State Ownership, citing as an awful example the dingy, bureaucratic "State Store" where I had had to (gasp) Sign A Slip and Wait In Line in order to get my booze. "That's because it was not True Socialism," I explained, "but merely the shoddy approximation that one sometimes finds in a Capitalistic Society. Now, if the people, the workers, were running things -- such as the booze store -- things would be a lot different." "Bah," said Boyd. He has no real understanding of what a Workers' State is like, but he'll find out.

### Is Science Fiction In A Rut?

Gina and I went to register; and as we approached the desk, I casually took notice of a semi-naked lady who was pirouetting around and waving a Zap Gun while bright lights glared. "I guess Les Nirenberg is here," I guessed, "directing a Canadian Television Production." A voice behind me said, "Tell her to go 'zap, zap!'" I whirled around. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself Nirenberg," I remonstrated (for it was indeed that same ex-fan), "you ex-fan, you." Les immediately did three or four schticks (as his people call them) to get himself back into my good graces, threw an arm around my shoulders, and asked, "There are all the wild, closed-door, fan parties at, baby?" He wanted to bring his TV crew to a party like that (with equipment and all, I guess), so they could get a



look at, and maybe pictures of, what these here cosmic-minded fans are really like. "I'm a stranger here myself," I told Les, "I don't know of any such parties. Maybe you should ask Boyd." "Aw, Boyd is mad at me," Les confided, "for bringing this TV crew down here." (Later, when I told this news to Boyd, he sighed, "What a very Nirenbergish thing for him to imagine.") After promising Les that I'd keep an eye open for any wild fan parties, I wandered off in no particular direction, and suddenly spotted the very person I'd been hoping to see. "LEE baby!" I whooped. LEE JACOBS (DPOF) looked at me without recognition for a second, did a mild take, and then gave me the secret handshake of the beerbrother (it requires a shaky hand). "I didn't recognize you without your beard," he said. "I didn't want to be mistaken for Walter Green," I explained. "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go and get a beer. Hey Stiles," I called to Stiles, who had just ~~strolled~~ <sup>strolled</sup> into view, "come on and drink beer with me and LEE JACOBS." "Why not?" chorused several other people who were within earshot; so a gang of us went to a store called "The Transit Bar," which featured pictures of old trolley cars (as well as featuring beer and other such folderol). It was a typical American bar, I noticed: there was a baseball game on the color TV. I had found out, already, that there is always a baseball game on TV in the USA. I am convinced that it like the Continuous Shows in movie theatres: the same game is shown over and over. (That reminds me: a guy I know once walked into a party, looked around at the people who were drinking and conversing, and asked loudly, "Hey, haven't you got The Game on?" "What game?" cried everyone. "Aaggh, there's always some fuggin game on," he replied.) Well, naturally a couple of fine fannish hours were spent there at the bar, with good ol' Stiles on one side of me and good ol' LEE on the other. Steve got onto the subject of References to Dope in current popular music; so, thus given the cue, LEE and I (who go 'way back) immediately swung (that's a Jazz Term, Harry) into the chorus of "Who Put The Benzedrine In Mrs. Murphy's Ovaltine?" Ah, the old songs are the hippest. Meanwhile, other people were passing in and out of the barroom, among them the ubiquitous Sid Rogers (every time I went into a bar, or "saloon" as they are called by Working Lashes, why, sooner or later she'd turn up there; I'm beginning to suspect that she drinks). There was also the fairly ubiquitous Jim Caughren, and even Famous Fannish Pro Bob "Robert" Silverberg, who said to me, "Did you get my letter of comment on Honque?" "Yes," I said, "Boy, that was a pretty nasty letter." "The only kind worth writing," he hissed. "However, you're right," I admitted, which was gracious of me, I thought, "probably this Michael ... uh, Sasic is just a little kid, and I shouldn't have laughed in my mean way at his hilarious fanzine. That reminds me, though: you were asking what I was doing when I was 13 years old. Well, I wasn't messing with silly old fanzines. No, I was writing religious poetry." Silverberg looked properly impressed, made the Sign of the Cross, and disappeared in a puff of smoke. Then up came Boyd, closely followed by a youth who appeared to be hanging onto the Raeburn shirttails. "Norm," said Boyd, calling me by my first name, as I had told him he might, in public, "I want you to meet ... John Koning!" "Your notorious Fawning Acolyte, you mean? Ah there, youngster," I nodded to him. Actually, John didn't seem all that fawning at all: he looked like an immaculate, sophisticated, blasé, conservative young man: he looked like a young Boyd Raeburn, in fact (if anyone can imagine a young Boyd Raeburn). Eventually, and for no apparent reason, the Transit Bar decided to close; so Jim Caughren, LEE, and I went to have a couple more drinks in the Electric Grape (or whatever) bar. We asked the bartender what we could do about getting booze on Sunday. "You better buy it tonight," he told us, "because tomorrow there's nothing but 3.2 beer sold in this state. LEE and Jim and I fell to discussing this grave situation: "Well, maybe we should go out and pick up a few cases of beer, a couple jugs of bourbon, and some ...". A fellow a little way down the bar grinned at us and said, "Say, that sounds like a good party." We ignored him; for he obviously wasn't a fan; he was wearing a suit and a tie. However, he kept looking at us, and nodding and grinning, so I leaned over to LEE and whispered, "Is that fellow a fan?" "New," said LEE, after a quick glance, "he's wearing a suit and a tie." Jim Caughren overheard us. "Why, that's Bob Leman," he said, "Don't you know Bob Leman?"

"Oh, well ... Bob Leman, why didn't you say so in the first place? Hey, why don't you shove over and sit with us, Bob Leman, even if you don't look like a fan, or even like a Bob Leman, who, legend has it, is a big fat guy." Bob told us about his diet -- a painful thing to hear -- and about his laying off the Sauce. "Except for the odd vacation like this," he said, "when I have a few beers. No hard likker though," he sighed, "but I am going out to eat some Chinese food in a few minutes." His eyes shone with pure lust and anticipation, and he left shortly after for his date with Oriental Delicacies; and, as it seemed to be getting dark out, there in the bar, the rest of us finished our drinks and went our various ways. My various ways led me to my room, where I fell onto the bed with a splash.

### Alien Color, For A Time

However, I didn't sleep at all. Oh, I may have dozed for a few minutes; but then I began to roll around restlessly, and I decided it must be time to get up. After all, I might be missing something; maybe, for example, Elmer Perdue had arrived, having been flown to Cleveland in a Yellow Cab. Anything could happen at a Science Fiction Convention, I said to myself (and usually does, I added with a swift poke in my ribs). I realized I was punchy, so I took a shower and changed my clothes. While doing that, I switched on the radio: naturally, I turned to the local R&R station (for no-one listens to jazz in the daytime). However, what I heard, with half my attention, wasn't R&R ~~music~~ or any other kind of "music," but an announcer conducting some kind of contest called "Telephone Quiz" or something. He was saying, "Umpty years ago a man came to the USA, and went on to become a Famous Person. His initials are R.L. Now here are clues about him ..." He went on with some words and phrases such as "bicycle pump," "skatekey," and so forth, and then said, "So if any of you listeners out there in Radioland can figure out, from the clues, who 'R.L.' is, phone in right away and win a Big Prize! We're waiting for those phonecalls, folks!" I was absently trying to fit the clues together when the first call came in to the radio station. "(Beep) Is it Robert Lewis?" asked the Listener. "No," said the announcer, "and who is Robert Lewis, anyway? Is he someone well-known?" "Well, uh ... (beep) ... haha," said the telephone voice. The announcer hung up, and instantly the phone rang again. "Telephone Quiz," said the announcer. "Is it (beep) Richard Lupoff?" asked a voice. I broke up. "Well," said the announcer, disgustedly, "I see we've got the kooks with us." Hoo boy, he didn't know the half of it. There were a few more telephone rings, but apparently the announcer killed all further fannish guesses with his Delaying Device, because no more Kooky voices were heard; and finally the announcer gave up and cancelled the Telephone Quiz, and went back to playing Good Music.

### The Short Loud Noise

So back down to the Gold Room I went, to catch a bit of the Costume Ball. One of the first costumes I saw was that worn by LEE JACOBS: it was a suit and a tie. In fact, I believe it was a black suit, black shirt, and white tie. LEE JACOBS, mafioso. LEE looked me over. "I dig your costume, gate," he said. I was wearing a suit and a tie (in reality, it was my Glenlea Club band uniform, which I don't get much chance to wear any more since I no longer play in the Glenlea band). I didn't watch much of the costume stuff (except to wonder who was in drag), but just poked around, saying hello to fans (and even to pros: Gina introduced me to Poul Anderson, who had once got drunk with her in Calgary). I spoke to fans: "Hello, Buck Coulson," I said, for one, "I hope you remember that last night you promised to write a con report for me." He paled, and went away. Then I said hello to Juanita Coulson, and promptly mentioned the name "John Boardman" to her. "Or whatever he calls himself," she hissed. "Oh, you mean like 'Eric Blake'?" I guessed, recalling that there were schools of thought about that. "Hiss, hiss," Juanita growled, "You know, 'Blake' is supposed to be a Typical Conservative ..." "What? Blake a conservative?" I gasped, "Why, I always thought he was a racist." "All racists are conservatives, and vice versa, to Boardman,"

Juanita said. Somehow I got the impression that the subject of John Boardman is a touchy one, with Juanita Coulson. I milled around some more, and in a few minutes I met Ted White, who had managed to hide from me until then. "Well, you do exist," said Ted, "You aren't Les Nirenberg after all." What Ted White doesn't know is that I am really Norman G. Browne. While Ted was expressing his astonishment at my actual physical existence (pinching and poking me embarrassingly), an accordion band started to play. I don't mean an all-accordion band, but just that the band had an accordion in it. "Are you going to get your horn and sit in with the band and honk and skree?" asked Ted, and Terry Carr, who hangs around with Ted White a lot. "No," I replied, "I hate accordions." "Nothing for it, Ted," said Terry, "We'll have to get him drunk." (The funny thing is that I was afraid that might happen, and that I would sit in with that accordion band.) "Aw, go on: sit in, Norm," Terry badgered. "Come on, Terry," I countered, "why don't you edit something, right here, just for kicks." After Terry and Ted had gone away, I wandered out of the Gold Room, just in time (so I was told later) to avoid hearing the accordion band play "Night Train." I'd had about enough of the Mob Scene for a while, so I collected Gina and we went down the hall, away from the area that was overrun by fans.

### Microcosmic Circle

We gingerly skirted a clump of filkniks who were sitting on the floor and ululating, and came to an oasis where there were armchairs and sofas. John Koning and Boyd were sitting in a couple of those armchairs; and, as Gina and I approached them, they got up and moved away. "Hm, some secret Fawning Rite going on there, no doubt," I thought, as Gina and I went so sit down where the Master and his Disciple had just been sitting. "Hey," called Boyd and John, "Come over and sit here." They had merely moved to a long sofa to make room for us, it seemed. Shucks, no Strange Worshipping that I could watch from the corner of my eye. So there we sat, enjoying a respite from the hubbub of the Costume Ball, and listening to a good, swinging band that was playing for another convention. As we sat there and relaxed, we suddenly noticed that three fans were sitting at our feet (Boyd seemed to think this was only proper); they were Arnie Katz, Ben Solon and, I think, Lon Atkins (Alan Shaw may have been there, too). It must have been a moment of glory for John Koning, for there he sat, at the left hand of Reburn, while a younger generation of fawning faces gazed up at him with awe. "Ben Solon," I said, "that's a good fanzine you publish. In fact, it's so good that I'd thought you were a much older fan." "You're the second fan who's said that to today," he said, "I don't know why." (Modest Ben Solon, it's because you do not publish a juvenile fanzine.) Anyway, it was a pleasant, restful interlude, sitting there chatting with those fine young fellows who were so very unlike those obnoxious neos I'd always thought were the hazard to be avoided at conventions. Eventually, it was time to go to the New York party, and it was there that I met Lee Hoffman; and I must say that meeting her, and subsequently sitting around and talking to her in saloons and at parties, is foremost among those things that I remember most fondly about the convention. And somewhere along the line I met Andy Main, who is another Swell Person, and whom I also saw quite a bit of, throughout the rest of the con. Well, by now I was meeting so many fans that it's impossible to remember just when and where I met whom: I remember having some laughs with Dick Lupoff (and Pat, too), asking Mike McNerny not to review Honque in his Monster Magazine ... and, oh, asking Bruce Belz for a ballot (and not getting one), and meeting Len Bailes, and John and Bjo Trimble. Well, let's just say I met a lot of fans that Saturday night, though it seems I didn't get to say much more than hello to most of them: still, it was great just meeting them. I suppose some time I must get out the FA and play the game of How Many Fapans Have I Met? Well, because of booze and lack of sleep, once again I had to cop out before the party was over; special thanks to Gina Clarke, who helped me to find Room 885. That was you, Gina, wasn't it?

### Fancy Expensive Restaurant

I think that brings me up to Sunday (even though I've left out all kinds of memorable things that happened to, and around, me on Saturday; I have left them out because I forget them altogether). The first thing I remember about Sunday is that I regained consciousness as I was walking across the Public Square -- with Boyd, LEE JACOBS, Koning, and Ron Ellick -- in search of a restaurant, or, at least, someplace where we could have breakfast. Naturally, we let Boyd lead the way, and "Here is a place that looks promising," he said. It was a drugstore. Well, after all, this was Cleveland, Ohio, on a Sunday; and that isn't much different from Toronto, Ontario, on a Sunday. All the FERS were closed, it seemed; so we all trustingly followed Boyd into the drugstore. At least the place provided a Classic Raeburn Story, which follows immediately, so pay attention. "I want," said Boyd, after having scanned the menu with patrician disdain, "a bacon and egg sandwich." "It's too late for breakfast," yawned the waitress, "We ain't servin breakfast no more." "Well, I don't care whether you call it breakfast or lunch," said Boyd, "I just want a bacon and egg sandwich." "It ain't on the menu," the waitress droned. "Look," Boyd said winningly, "Do you have eggs? Do you have slices of bread? I will tell you how to make an egg sandwich. You break an egg, see, and ..." "We ain't cookin no eggs," the waitress recited. Boyd sat there, completely outpointed. Oh, he had lost that round. I think he settled for a hamburger, eventually. However, I didn't even get as far as he had: when the waitress finally got to me, I said, "I will have a bacon and ..." "We ain't cookin no eggs," she lipiped thinly, drumming her fingers on the counter and staring at the ceiling. "Who asked? Who asked?" I cried, embarrassed, "Could I maybe have a bacon and tomato sandwich?" "Well ... I guess so," she granted grudgingly, and schlumped away. Of course, all of us there at breakfast lavished praise and congratulations upon Boyd for having discovered this delightful little salle a manger. Ron Ellick was thrown into such a foul humor that he told a story (the one about the porpoise and the gull) whose punchline consisted of five puns in a horrendous row. After a moment of nasty silence, followed by Boyd's hysterical giggling, LEE JACOBS dropped about a dollar into the jukebox (playing "Flamingo" by the Marijuana Brass over and over) and we all crammed down the indigestibles that were served to us, in a spirit of bonhomie and joie-de-vivre (if those are the words I want).

### Bar Trek

There was a lilapa meeting scheduled for 3 p.m., but we were unable to get all the members together at the same time; so a few of us were shuffling about in the lobby, speculating about Habercrackers and wondering what to do, when Jim Caughran stepped in and took firm command of the situation. "Let us go across the street to the saloon," he said. The sheer reasonableness of the suggestion struck us all at once, and "Good thinking, Caughran!" we said as we rushed outside. On the way to the saloon, Lee Hoffman made some crack about "shade fandom," and implied that people who wear shades are Fawning Acolytes of Harlan Ellison's. I whipped off my shades and glared at her (but it was a pretty poor glare, blinking and eyewatering as I was in the overcast daylight). Oddly enough, though, what little I saw and heard of Harlan at the con, I liked (which is far more than I can say for anything of his I've ever read). In fact, in the saloon, it was pretty generally agreed that Harlan is an okay guy, and that, to a lot of fans, it is just an In Thing to put him down. There was much disapproval, for example, of the note that someone had sent up to the stage while Harlan was talking about his Experience with Sinatra: the note, as HE read it, said, "When you've finished sweeping up all those names you just dropped, give Asimov a chance to talk." We sat in the saloon for an hour or so, drinking "3.2" beer, and listening to LeeH talking about Western writers and books (and speculating about an Other Fandom), and to Boyd telling his Hoary Old Raeburn Stories, which are as traditional and as expected of him (especially the Harriet Kolchak one) as the Watermelon Story is of Burbee.



### Did You Say " " ?

As we were leaving the saloon, I noticed that Jim Caughran had stopped at the bar to purchase a six-pack of beer; I hadn't been aware that this could be done, legally, in Cleveland on a Sunday, but I was certainly pleased to see that it was so. I also bought a six-pack, went back to my room, opened a can of beer, and lay down. When I woke up, it was time to go to the important awarding of the Hugos; so I hurried down stairs and arrived at the outskirts of the Gold Room in time to hear the beginning of an oration by Sam Moskowitz. "Gosh-wow," I exclaimed to Steve Stiles, who had suddenly materialized beside me, "one of my greatest fannish dreams has come true: I have heard the angelic voice of Sam Moskowitz! Let's get the hell out of here, Steve. Let's go up to my room and have a beer." Stiles was mighty reluctant to leave at that particularly enthralling moment, but I finally persuaded him when I told him I'd let him look at my etchings. We went up to 885, had a beer, and discussed science fiction and its relationship to the covers on Honque magazine, and then we came back down to the Gold Room in time to catch the end of Sam's memorable speech. Then, with mounting excitement, we learned that somebody had won a Hugo for Best Novel! And somebody had won a Hugo for Best Fanzine! And somebody had won ...

### Songs Some Other Taught Me

Eventually, of course, I made my way to the Sunday night Beer Party (don't ask me who was putting that one on, so to speak). Luckily, however, before I had even got a glass half-filled with (3.2?) beer, somebody -- oh, it was probably Boyd -- grabbed me by the arm and said, "Wanna come to a party?" It turned out that the party was in Ted White's room, even though Ted himself wasn't there. (Why did Ted White avoid me, throughout the convention? Oh, I did bump into him a few times, but he never once brought up the subject of Jazz Criticism, or even The Beach Boys.) There was quite a crowd in that small room, though: Boyd, Koning, Leeh, Arnie Tate, Andy Porter, LEE JACOBS, Andy Main, Stiles, Alan Shaw, and .... "Hey, hey, here's Rusty Hevelin," whooped Boyd, to me, "Come and say 'boo' to him, Norm." I was puzzled (read: drunk) for a few seconds, but then my fine mind cleared. "Why, goddammit, Boyd," I muttered, "It isn't Rusty Hevelin that we say 'boo' to. That's Russ Chauvenet you're thinking of." (There has been a longstanding feud between Chauvenet and the Queebshotters: it is such a bitter feud that Russ never says anything about it, and Boyd forgets who it is we're feuding with.) Well, it was a pretty good party, in Ted's room. For one thing, instead of a filksing, the assembled mob was treated to an impromptu duet by LEE JACOBS and me: it was a famous old Jazz Classic called "Twisted" (originally a tenor sax solo by Wardell Gray, later sung, with words, by Annie Ross). LEE and I were in fine voice, and we swung up a storm, as several people left. A little later, after much urging, I explained the set-up of Lilapa. A few more people left. I was just starting to feel expensive (down, White!) and loquacious, and was about to get onto the subject of politics, when John Boardman entered the room. I left.

### Michelobism

At eleven a.m. Monday, the phone by my bed rang hideously. I wept "Hello?" into the mouthpiece, and a cheery voice said, "Mr. Clarke?" "I guess so," I whimpered. "This is Mr. JACOBS," chirped the jolly voice, "Do you remember you asked me to call you sharp at eleven, so that we could go and have a couple of draught beers for breakfast?" "Oh my, I was forgetting," I choked. "Solid, gate," LEE shouted, "I'll see you in the lobby." So, a little later, I was across the street in the saloon, at my last social gathering of the convention (with LEE, Boyd, Gina, and two or three others). LEE and I drank Michelob draughts, while the rest of those at the table had funny stuff such as orange juice and coffee. I was suddenly struck with sadness: it had been such a fine weekend, with such great



people, and now it was almost time to leave. A tear rolled into my Michelob, diluting it. "Well, LEE," I sniffled, "I hope we'll be seeing you in November, at the Quesbeccon." "Drink up, drink up," cried Boyd, "for we must be on our way to Willowdale, where you and Gina are going to Stay With Me As My Guests, so that I can serve Gina some escargots and parsnips." "Another couple of Michelobs," I called, but LEE demurred, saying, "I've had enough for now." "Then you must have some of mine, from mine own glass," I insisted. LEE did that, and then I clasped his hand shakily. "Beerbrother," I said emotionally. "Whaddya mean, 'beer' brother?" he snorted, "This isn't beer; this is Michelob." (It tasted like ordinary American horsepiss to me.) On this note of international understanding, we left the cozy saloon (which had come to be like home to me, as most saloons are) and went back to the hotel, where some of us were going to attend the Business Meeting and perhaps the FAPA Meeting, while others of us were just going to pack our bags, pay our bills, say some goodbyes, and leave.

### Getting Away From It All

Sigh. Gina and I checked out -- not, however, without a little excitement: the desk clerk attempted to charge us several dollars more than the price we'd agreed to when we'd made reservations. It took only about half an hour of being firm and insistent to get across the point that while perhaps the room we had been given was more lavish than the one we'd contracted to occupy, we had been assured, when we'd checked in, that there would be no difference in the rate. This crisis over with, Gina and I took a last look around the lobby, hoisted our gear, and prepared to leave. But, I suddenly remembered, we hadn't taken a single picture at that convention, even though we'd brought heaps of film. "Hey Stiles!" I called, spotting him, and others, "Ho, Koning! Over here, Katz!" Boyd took a picture of Gina and me with a few of the people we had spent such an enjoyable time with; I hope it turns out. Just after that snapshot was taken, along came Andy Main. Hell, we couldn't leave without a picture of Andy Main, so Gina took a picture of Andy and me, and Koning (who had, but a moment before, knelt and kissed my hand. "Hey, you've got the wrong guy," I said, "You mean him," pointing at Boyd. "It's just association," John said. That fellow plays his role to the hilt, let me tell you.) John and Andy snatched up our bags, and off we went to the parking lot, and to Boyd's sparkling new Mercedes, which he dusted off meticulously with a silk handkerchief while Gina, John, Andy and I waved many goodbye waves. And then Boyd leapt behind the wheel, gunned the motor, and away from Cleveland and a wonderful convention we went. Sigh.

### And Epilog

Boy, I've sure left out a lot of things that I suddenly remember. For instance, how could I forget my actually talking to Harlan Ellison? For one thing, we had kept bumping into each other, almost literally, all over the hotel, all weekend; and every time it happened, I'd look at Harlan, and he'd look at me as though to say, "Who the hell are you?" But here is How I Met Harlan Ellison: I was standing talking to Bob Silverberg (just look at the names I'm dropping), up dashed HE. I presume he wanted to talk to Agberg, rather than to me (I can be modest, on occasion). However, his first words were addressed to me. "And don't you fergit it," he said, in his best Show Biz, have-I-got-a-line-for-you manner. Then Ellison talked to Bob for about three seconds: "Are you coming upstairs for the TV bit with the Younger SF Writers?" he asked. "No," said Silverberg. "Well, ya wanna come up and watch?" "No," said Silverberg. "Well ... I gotta go," Harlan said. I intruded, before my opportunity was lost. "Hey," I said, "I just bought a Sinatra LP, and I'd like you to autograph it for me." So help me, Harlan's hand shot out; then he realized that I was putting him on. He actually waved his arms in momentary confusion, and then rushed to the elevator. Bob Silverberg explained why he wasn't going on the TV show. "They want me on TV, boy, they gonna pay me," he said, more or less, "Besides," he continued, "I'm not a Younger SF Writer."

"That's true: you are an old and forgotten SF writer," I sympathized. "It bugs me," Silverberg continued, "when people tell me they were reading my stories when they were in the third grade. What they don't know is that I was in the fourth grade at the time." I graciously refrained from making any joshing remarks about that line, which was just as well, for several people told me that one can Say Stuff to Ellison, but not to Bob Silverberg. One can't (so I understand) say things to Bob Silverberg such as, "you can't write for sour owl shit." And, anyway, I wouldn't want to say something like that to him, even if that were what I thought, which it isn't; for he seemed a pleasant guy who did some quietly funny bits. For example, we were standing surrounded by Nirenberg's equipment (well, I guess it was really the C&C's) and Bob made an elaborate business of inspecting it with great interest. "Hmmm," he said, stroking his beard and peering at some object, "I suppose that is a ... light." Then he gazed upon another device. "And that, I suppose, would be a ... camera." I would like to thank Bob Silverberg for setting up the line for me. "Where's the action?" I said.

Ah well, all that was a long time ago. It is now late January, and this last stencil must be finished and run off tonight. Well, it doesn't really have to be, unless we want to go through the tedious postmailing routine again. So here I have a stencil to fill up, and I can't think of anything more to say about the convention because (as Buz Busby said would probably happen) it is now just "a big muzzy Golden Glow" in my mind. I do have some regrets, mostly that certain people weren't there in Cleveland: I'd really been looking forward to meeting Harry Warner and Bob Tucker, for example. Well, maybe in New York. Ch yeah: Gina and I are planning to be at NYCon, all right. The TriCon was such a great and wonderful thing that we have almost decided to become convention fans and to start bidding for Aylmer as a con site. (Would you believe the Chamberland Hotel, Boyd, LeeH, LEE?)

-- Norm Clarke

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"See, Jenny, the other half of this fanzine is written by his father."

"Oh. No wonder it isn't very interesting."

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DESCANT, the Fapazine of pages and pages of solid blackconvention report, is composed and arranged by Norm and Gina Clarke, 9 Bancroft St., Aylmer E., PQ, and is intended for the February, 1967, mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and maybe even for the Shadow FAPA if we knew whatever happened to it. The above space may be used for putting down The Committee, maybe.

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