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UNABASHED PLUG

LepreCon 11 will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix April 5-7, 1985. Guests of Honor will be Lela Downing, G. Harry Stine/Lee Correy, and Roy Tackett.

Memberships
are \$14 until 1/14/85 and room rates are
\$47 for single/double. Don't hesitate. Con-
tact LepreCon 11

P.O. Box 16815

Phoenix, Arizona 85011

Yeah.

AND THEN THERE WAS BUBONICON 16. BUT THERE
ALMOST WASN'T.

More than 20 years ago the Mountain View Inn, then known as the Western Skies, was the poshest hotel/motel in Albuquerque. Unfortunately it fell victim to a common business practice: every dollar that came in went into the owner's pockets and nothing went back into the business. Bubonicon 15 was held there in 1983 (because it was cheap) and the Bubonicon 16 committee contracted with the Mountain View for 1984.

Not really. On 3 September CNN carried an item that RETURN OF THE JEDI had won science fiction's most prestigious award, the Hugo, for best dramatic presentation making it a clean sweep for all three of Lucas' STAR WARS films.

No mention was made of anyother Hugo awards and LACon was not even mentioned by name. If the Hugo had not gone to Lucas there most likely would not have been any mention at all.

So it goes.

I do not even know what else was nominated. I'm sure that LACon II was crawling with old fannish friends but it was...too rich for my pocketbook and I'm not all that much interested in mingling with the mob.

Unfortunately, the hotel changed hands again in early 1984. The new owners closed the coffee shop, cut off the room phones, stopped the elevators. In early August the television leasing company repossessed all the room TV sets for lack of payment. A few days later the city of Albuquerque demanded payment of the long overdue water bill threatening to cut off the water supply if not paid.

The local manager contacted the home offices in Atlanta and reported the situation. (The Mountain View is owned by The Otto Corporation and Bankers Union Life Insurance Company.) The answer came back to tell the city to turn off the water and to lock the doors. So on 14 August, just ten days before Bubonicon, the con was without a hotel.

I must give very good marks to the con committee (George Bates, Craig Chris-singer, John Greenfield, Patricia Rogers and Jim Messerich, chairman). They scrambled. Within two days they had made arrangements with the Shalako Inn (three blocks west of the Mountain View) and were busy contacting everyone who had registered by mail and/or telephone. They also got permission to post a large sign at the entrance to the Mountain View announcing the new conhotel. The Bubonicon 16 committee did an extraordinary job on just about everything.

The traditional precon party was held at the traditional home of the traditional Jack Speer on Thursday, 23 August, but we didn't make it (not a traditional thing.) A week before Arthur Itis decided it was time to visit and I was in misery. We did manage to get to the airport to pick up Takumi and Sachiko Shibano. Chrystal greeted them at the gate while I waited downstairs at the luggage area. The Shibanos had flown directly from Tokyo with only a few hours layover in Los Angeles and were quite tired. We took them to the Shalako, settled them in and told them we would see them for lunch the next day.

I'm not going to give much of a con report because I did not participate all that much. I had a huckster table at this one (and managed to sell a goodly number of excess paperbacks) and really was not up to doing a great deal of moving around. Everyone eventually visits the huckster room anyway. Was happy to spend some time with fellow Flappers Kaj Stevens, Becky Cartwright and Beedee Arthurs. Eve Featheringill came down from the remote mountain village of Truchas but, alas, Perdue was unable to make it this year being laid up with leg problems. We truly missed him.

I bestirred myself long enough to participate on a panel on foreign fandoms. (Craig had called a few evenings earlier. He asked if I would talk about

what I knew of fandom in the USSR. I was in bed, in misery, full of medicine. Sure, Craig, anything.

Spider Robinson discussed Canadian fandom; Takumi talked about Japanese fandom and Jack Herman held forth on fandom in Australia and the Pacific. Pretty good panel as such things go.

Otherwise there were the Green Slime Awards to

The Otto Corporation/Bankers Union Life Insurance Company for demonstrating some of the worse aspects of American Business Practices.

The American and Soviet space programs for continuing to drag their feet and the usual foulups.

The Baltimorons who put on Constellation for going at least \$40,000 in the hole and then sending out those begging/semi-threatening letters crying to be bailed out. (I was tempted to let them share this with the people from Boston, Chicago, and Denver who bailed them out.)

Greystoke for once again screwing up the Legend of Tarzan.

The general run of stf movie/teleplay novelizations which are all bad with particular attention to the "V" books which are ghastly.

You'll have to read elsewhere of how the programming went and who said what. Total attendance/registration was 214 and apparently a good time was had by all despite the lack of a bar at the Shalako. The con committee found a way around that, too. Not that it really mattered to me at the time. Some of the medicine I was taking carried large warning labels not to mix it with booze. Hell of a note. (I have, fortunately, shifted to a new medicine which carries no such warning and can wash the pills down with martinis.)

Chrissinger and Messerich say that after everything was paid off there were still a couple of hundred bucks left over as seed money for Bubonicon 17.

And I never cease to be bemused by what people buy and don't buy at the auctions. Or at Vardeman's ability to sell such things as empty bottles, paper bags, and other miscellaneous junk.

X

The arthritis mentioned above is in the spine and results from an old back injury. Twice in the past year a nerve to the right leg has been pinched and quite effectively taken me out of action. Rest and anti-inflammatory drugs and whirlpool paths seem to relieve it but it takes several weeks before the pain is gone. Ibuprofen seems to be the best of the anti-inflammatories. Ah, the joys of growing older. Robert Browning was an ass. Grow old along with me, indeed. Anybody know where I can get a new skeleton?

Since I mentioned American Business Practices...

We now and then order some clothes from the Haband Company. No complaints, the material is good and the clothes are well made.

Chrys recently received a couple of letters from them. Haband declared it was impressed with the way other companies were giving special discounts, etc., to their best customers and so was forming Haband's "very exclusive" Million Dollar Club for special Haband customers.

"Your valuable personal membership card is enclosed, inscribed with your individual membership number."

Uh-huh.

As I said Chrys received two of these letters; one was addressed to Chrystal Tackett and the other to Mrs. L. H. Tackett. The individual membership number on both was 153.

Of course it is an advertising gimmick but when the company is so cheap that it doesn't even make an effort to convince the customer otherwise... it is a bit amusing, what?

Well, now, being cheap myself I appreciate Haband's ploy all the more... Have I ever denied being cheap? Would I continue to publish this rag by mimeo on twil tone instead of getting all fancy about it. Which means, too, that I'm going to think awfully hard before I spring 17 bucks for a book - I'll usually wait until it comes out in paperback and secondhand paperback at that.

But...

I quickly dug on \$17 + tax for Heinlein's new one: *Job: A Comedy of Justice*.

Whatever his faults may be Robert A. Heinlein is still the master of this field. When he makes up his mind to tell you a story there is nobody writing stuff today who can match him.

Job: A Comedy of Justice is a veritable gem. Science fiction? Perhaps. Fantasy? Surely. A stinging, biting, clawing, scratching satire which is going to send every religious fundamentalist in the country--in the world--screaming after Heinlein's hide. Spider Robinson says this book will be burned. You betchum, Red Ryder. It will be burned, banned, denounced and demonstrated against.

Alex Hergensheimer, fundamentalist minister from Kansas (not our Kansas, though, Toto) walks through a fire-pit while on a Polynesian cruise and when he walks out the other side the world isn't the same and frequently never is again.

I won't even attempt to go into details except to tell you that Alex inhabits a continuum where fundamentalism is the straight scoop and the Bible is the word of Yahweh. Oy veh!

Go spend your money on this one. For seventeen bucks it's a steal. Thorne Smith would have loved it.

It has to be an alternate universe. On page 179 Alex declares that Coors is an excellent beer.

Which leads me to this letter I received from Garner Ted Armstrong. Garner Ted tells me that the evolutionists "cannot answer the mystery of bird migration" and this certainly must be a telling blow against the theory of evolution. Yes, sir, Garner Ted. Garner Ted wants to send me TWENTIETH CENTURY WATCH (absolutely free) and maybe I should let him do that as the lead article, "A Migration Headache for Evolutionists" might explain what the mystery of bird migration is for I didn't know there was one. Migration Headache. That's amusing.

I wonder if Garner Ted would trade for DYNATRON??

Did you know that the armadillo is the only animal besides man that can catch leprosy? You didn't know that? Now you do.

Formerly
Blank
Lines

Job: A Comedy of Justice comes at an appropriate time and, obviously, the times brought forth the book. The fundamentalists are, perhaps, no more numerous than they ever were but they have discovered organization and consequently are making their first big push at this time with the active support of the present federal administration. Indeed these are interesting, and perilous, times. My argument with the Fundamentalists is not in their particular peculiar beliefs. Everyone has the right to follow whatever religion is found attractive or none at all. No, my argument with Fundamentalists is they are not satisfied with following their religion--they want to force it on the rest of us, too. The Fundamentalists have apparently decided that they cannot persuade the bulk of the population that they are correct so they want to make their beliefs the law of the land.

Not my land.

Heinlein (and other writers) has covered this before. I refer you to his "Future History" outline and to the stories in his Future History series.

Fun times ahead, no?

It is getting to be a bit late in the year but I should mention Space Day 1984. The New Mexicans for Space Exploration did their usual fine job of trying to keep the idea of the space program (or whatever one wants to call it) alive and in front of the public here in the Land of Enchantment.

Those goodly folk scheduled several interesting items in commemoration of Space Day (including a special commemorative postage stamp cancellation). Dr Eric Jones of the Los Alamos National Laboratory gave a talk on human migration into the far corners of the galaxy. His suggestion was that we all go Off On A Comet (quick, who wrote that?). Comets go out to the far reaches of any solar system and with minimal energy boost could be nudged into the gravitational field of the next star over thus providing us with a S-L-O-W but steady method of interstellar travel. Dr Jones likened this to the way early man walked to the ends of the world from where ever it was he started.

Eric Jones, being an orthodox, Einstein believing scientist, holds no brief for FTL travel. (Despite the assorted reports in the science magazines that an assortment of objects travelling faster than light have been measured by astronomers.) There is some mounting evidence, too, that early Homo Saps may not have walked to the end of the world. He may have ridden horses.

Still Jones' presentation was interesting and shows that some people are thinking on the problem of star travel.

The following day NMfSE sponsored an exhibition at one of the large shopping centers where a number of organizations displayed things of interest. The New Mexico amateur astronomers club had various displays of the solar system. The University of New Mexico astronomy department went somewhat further afield with a 3D display of known galactic clusters. (It matched rather well with a recent schematic of the universe published in SCIENCE 84.)

Ex-astronaut and ex-Senator Harrison Schmitt showed up with a stack of 8x10 glossies which he autographed and handed out.

Jack Speer huckstered land on Mars. For one dollar he would give you a deed to a 50'x100' lot in downtown Mars City or whatever he was calling it. I told him I wasn't about to live in the city so for two dollars he sold me a small spread in the mountains over there. Small spread extending from 25° to 30° north and from 70° to 75° west. Roughly 27,000 square miles. I figure I'll raise thoats. Just got to figure out a way to get there now and keep the damned nesters off it....

So this year's Space Day programs were interesting and the New Mexicans for Space Exploration did indeed remind people that the program is still there and the planets are still there and the stars are still there. Good group, the New Mexicans for Space Exploration and I should attend more often than I do but there is usually a conflict with their meeting dates.

As long as people like that keep plugging away--one of these days we'll make it.

.....which represents the lapse of a couple of months and November is trickling down. Since I have no particular schedule for Dynatron I really don't have any deadline to meet but I must have pages in FLAP's December mailing so I bestirred myself to do a bit more on this before that deadline arrives.

October was more or less family month. Elder daughter, Diana, and grandson Troy arrived from Oscoda, Michigan on the 6th and younger daughter, Rene, flew in from San Diego a couple of days later. The first time both have been here at the same time in quite a while. Rene, however, had not seen her sister for a couple of years and had never seen her nephew. The five of us dashed off to Pinetop, Arizona, for a few days where a good time was had by all (despite the bad weather). We got back to Albuquerque in time to greet Diana's husband, Tom Stull, and put Rene on a plane back to San Diego a couple of days later. Danny MacCallum had no vacation time coming so he remained in San Diego patiently taking care of hamsters and impatiently awaiting his spouse's return. (And eating fried chicken by the barrell.) Diana, Tom, and Troy flew back to Michigan in late October and it is awfully damned quiet around here these days. We spent a few days finding an assortment of toys that Troy had left behind, though.

These modern times are tough on families. Diana, Tom, and Troy are 2000 miles off in one direction; Rene and Danny are almost 1000 miles off in another. If I ever get around to retiring maybe we can see them all a bit more often but that is still somewhere in the nebulous future. Ah, well, there's no need to go into all that.

I finally got around to attending a meeting of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society in November. I was too crippled to attend the September meeting and was in Arizona at the time of the October meeting. September was the annual election meeting and, since I was absent, I was promptly elected to office. Margo Glenn-Lewis finally was able to deliver the two copies of EARTH ABIDES I had ordered from her at Bubonicon...she's been toting them around for two months in hopes of getting her money. Shame on you, Tackett, making the woman wait that long for her reimbursement.

The speaker for the evening was a local chap who had applied to NASA for entrance into the astro-

naut program. He was not selected but, still, has lots of good things to say about the program. He did point out, however, that the civilian scientists in the program tend to view the training as boring and repetitious. Our speaker seemed to think the future of space flight is mostly in close orbit stuff with the shuttle eventually being replaced by mass drivers and the "space plane". There may be a colony on Mars someday but it is at least 10,000 years in the future. Interstellar journeys are unlikely.

Trouble with all of these people is that they have no vision or imagination. Granted that with the space rockets we have now those sort of conclusions are perfectly valid--but they do not allow for any sort of advancement. We're using sky rockets now and, in their view, we'll still be using skyrockets 10,000 years from now.

Our guest said he was currently working in the laser labs at Kirtland AFB. Ah, yes. Was employed there myself a few years ago. We called it the Albuquerque branch of Ronco. Isn't it amazing?

The remainder of the meeting was taken up with starting plans for Bubonicon 17. It appears the same committee will be in charge this time, too. They did an excellent job with B16 so B17 should also be a success.

Details of Bubonicon 17 will be published as they become available. Mark 23-25 August 1985 on your calendar.

Somebodies calling themselves "Friends of Fandom" (with friends like these....) sent an assortment of fliers concerning an assortment of "conventions", mostly in the Houston area. Something called "Minicon", for example, was featuring a costume contest and fortune telling.

Fortune telling.

Nah, I don't want to comment on that.

There has been some weeping and wailing of late about the decline of fiction in the SF magazines. Not just the quality of fiction but the quantity also. My curiosity perked up just a little. I just happened to have on hand some science fiction magazines so I decided to do an utterly unscientific bit of research.

I ignored all of the ads, features, articles, letters, illos, poetry and miscellaneous other junk and counted the pages of fiction.

ANALOG, December 1984. 180 pages. 100 pages of fiction for, roughly, 55%.
ANALOG, November 1980, 180 pages. 123.5 pages of fiction. 69%

ASIMOV'S, Mid-December 1984, 180 pages. 113.5 pages of fiction. 66%.
ASIMOV'S, January 1979. 196 pages. 119 pages of fiction. 61%.

AMAZING, January 1985. 164 pages. 112 pages of fiction. 68%.
AMAZING, November 1979. 132 pages. 75 pages of fiction. 57%.

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, December 1984. 164 pages. 105.5 pages of fiction. 64%.
F&SF, March 1979. 164 pages. 126.5 pages of fiction. 77%.

Based strictly on pages, two down and two up. I made no attempt at word count. Highly unscientific and I draw no conclusions and suggest that you don't either. A lot of the drop may be caused by the increased amount of advertising included in the books which is, in its way, a good thing since it helps to keep them going.

Must admit I was surprised by the low count on fiction in the December 1984 ANALOG.

Concerning quality, deponent sayeth not.

Hummm. Can I fill another half-page? I doubt it. If you want more...write letters or something.

ET
11/11/84