



FOCAL POINT

FOCAL POINT, Volume 2, Number 10, a fanzine of news, views and reviews, is edited by Arnie Katz (Apt. 3-J, 55 Pineapple St., Brooklyn, NY 11201) and rich brown (410 - 61st St., Apt. D-4, Brooklyn, NY 11220). Assistant Editor: Colleen Brown. Invaluable Help: Joyce Fisher. Editor emeritus: Mike McInerney. Published bi-weekly, it is available for news, all-for-all trades (both editors, please) or 6/\$1. Illustrations by Steve Stiles, Joe Staton, Bill Rotsler and Arthur Thompson. SUPPORT THE SHAW FUND! August 3, 1970.

THE BOB SHAW FUND

A fund to bring long-time super-fan and rising pro Bob Shaw from his home in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to the Noreascon has been launched by a committee of well-known fans. At the end of the last England-to-U.S. TAFF race, many felt that, tho Eddie Jones was an extremely worthy winner, it was a shame that American fandom couldn't also have the sublime joy of basking in BoSh's marvelous wit. We all wanted to meet the fan who had co-authored The Enchanted Duplicator, had written "The Fansmanship Lectures," and had been such an important part of the most celebrated local fan circle, the Oblique Angles.

The result of the discussions is the Bob Shaw Fund. We've held off starting the drive until now, because we wanted to wait until the TAFF race was completed. We want no competition with TAFF and have consulted with the current administrators on the matter. Having been assured that no TAFF trip to Noreascon was contemplated and with Elliot Shorter tapped for the Heidelberg trip, there's no reason to delay starting to raise our goal, \$1,000.

As co-chairmen of the Bob Shaw Fund, we will try to coordinate Fund activities and disseminate Fund news through FOCAL POINT. But the Bob Shaw Fund is a Fandom Project, not a FOCAL POINT Project, and any efforts on behalf of Bob by other fanzine editors (including editors of other newszines) are greatly desired and will be greatly appreciated.

There are many ways of contributing to the Fund, not the least of which is sending a check made out to Richard Brown (address above) for as much as you can spare. Fanzine editors are encouraged to put out special Bob Shaw issues available on a cash-only basis with the proceeds to go to the Fund. Anyone wishing to do such a fanzine can write to FOCAL POINT and we'll make arrangements about advance publicity and such. Naturally, we'd also like faneds to urge their readers to send money. Artists can do cartoons supporting the fund for their favorite fanzines. People who have material of value which they would be willing



to have auctioned off for the benefit of the fund should write to us. We'll be glad to conduct the business end of such auctions Right Here in FP. Fans running conventions might remember the Bob Shaw Fund when it comes time to contribute to fannish causes. Attendees of local fanclubs can do a hell of a lot of good by passing the hat and otherwise encouraging their fellow club members to toss in some dough.

Whatever way you choose to make your support for the Fund felt, do it now. The sooner we get that thousand, the sooner Bob can start making all the necessary little arrangements that must be completed to get him to Boston in 1971.

The Bob Shaw Fund Committee at present includes rich brown and Arnie Katz (co-chairmen), Richard Bergeron, Terry Carr, Steve Stiles, Joyce Fisher, Colleen Brown, Ray Fisher, F.M. Busby, John D. Berry, and Bruce Pelz.

NEW WORLDS NARROWLY ESCAPES BANKRUPTCY NEW WORLDS, which has weathered so many storms, seems to have come through another. NW has enjoyed a modest 15,000 sale which has allowed it to do a little better than break even. For the last few issues, however, the distributor has been withholding as many as 5,000 copies per issue from the stands without the knowledge of Mike Morcock and the rest of the NEW WORLDS gang. The unexpected sharp decrease in income almost drove the magazine into bankruptcy. Morcock has been in America recently trying to avert the demise of his magazine, and he seems to have been successful. It now appears that contracts will be signed with both British and American publishers to produce a quarterly paperback edition of NEW WORLDS. The names of the firms involved can't be revealed yet as contracts have not yet been signed.

SPANISH COPS BUST NEUVA DIMENSION On June 26 the Spanish police seized all copies of NEUVA DIMENSION No. 14, charging the publishers with "offenses against the Spanish state" and other similar charges. The result is that No. 14 will be pulped and the publishers will be jailed and/or fined. ND has been cited as perhaps the most distinguished sf magazine in the world in typography, selection, world coverage and artistic taste. The story which appears to have given offense is one dealing with the Basques and a time machine -- a humorous story with nothing political in it. Apparently, mention of the word 'Basque' is very dangerous at the moment. (source: WINNIE/NORSTRILIAN NEWS)

DON BENSEN has been hired by Ballantine to edit a new line, Beagle Books, which will contain mostly general books but should also contain some sf. They're now compiling their first list, with publication scheduled for the first in the line in October.

DUNE MAY NOT BE IN PUBLIC DOMAIN AFTER ALL Terry Carr told me (Arnie) over the phone. He explained that there'd been a court case a year ago the upshot of which was that an author could not lose his copyright due to an error by his publisher. This presumably would apply to Dune, since the error in the copyright notice was caused by ANALOG, not Frank Herbert.

THE WILLIS ANTHOLOGY issue of WARHOON is completely on stencil according to Dick Bergeron. Besides including all installments of Willis' "The Harp That Once or Twice" column, the volume will include "The Harp Stateside," "The Harp in England I," and "The Harp in England II." This figures to become one of the all-time great fan publications the moment it's available. Bergeron intends to warm up for the Great Event by getting out a regular issue of WARHOON very soon. In fact, he's holding it for a highly controversial column Terry Carr is writing for it.

CALVIN DEMMON WINS TAFF RAFFLE The drawing for the painting donated to TAFF by Jack Gaughan was held at the Fanoclast meeting of Friday, July 17. Calvin Demmon was the lucky winner. Congratulations! The drawing for the Eddie Jones painting has not yet been held.

LANGDON JONES had a little personal bad fortune to go along with the bad news about NEW WORLDS. During his current visit to the U.S. he had an accident with the lit end of a cigarette. It flew off into his eye, which closed on it. There's no permanent damage, and the eye is recovering nicely.

NY COMICON was held at the Statler Hilton the July 4th weekend. Paid attendance was 2000+ on the first day, and most estimates of total attendance ran considerably higher. There were some complaints (traders all over the halls blocking traffic; hotel goons challenging anyone not wearing convention identification, including GoH Bill Everett even tho he was standing by a huge photo of himself at the time), but most seemed to think it a good con. Alley awards were not presented or announced, but rather slipped furtively into the winners hands, NEWFANGLES reports. The con got TV coverage on Channel 4. Denny O'Neil said there were some good panels -- comics as an educational tool, sword & sorcery, the medium in the 70s, the boys from MAD -- and auctions. The Academy of Comic Book Arts presentation on Friday was one of the more interesting events, altho only pros and invited guests attended. The highlight of the ACBA event was a panel discussion with Stan Lee as moderator, and Dan DeCarlo, Sergio Aragones, Gil Kane, Gray Morrow and Denny O'Neil as panelists.

ABOUT HEICON PROGRAM BOOK AD RATES Hans-Werner Heinrichs, public relations director of the Heicon, finally wrote Andy Porter about alleged differences between ad rates charged U.S. and European sf pros. Heinrichs said news of the supposed difference had originated with Jack Chalker, and went on to say that this was not Chalker's first attempt to discredit the Heicon. Heinrichs says there is no difference in the ad rates, Chalker notwithstanding. FOCAL POINT checked back with its Usually Reliable Source, who admitted that the European ad rates he had used for comparison had been quoted to him by Jack Chalker.

EASTERCON 22 PROGRESS REPORT 1 of Eastercon 22, the 22nd British Science Fiction Convention, is out from Peter R. Weston (31 Pinewall Ave., Birmingham 30, U.K.). As of June, 120 fans have already joined the con, which will be held next April 9-11 at the Giffard Hotel, Worcester. Membership is expected to reach 300, with anticipated attendance pegged at about 200 at this time. While it's still early, some program items have already been set. Brian Aldiss will be the Guest of Honor, there will be a Fancy-Dress Ball, a St. Fanthony ceremony, and a full-scale Banquet and presentation of awards. Plans are being made to have John Brunner conduct a session on "How to write SF" for would-be writers, Ethel Lindsay conduct a program on fandom, and Philip Strick to arrange and talk about films. In the absense of any plans for another British World Convention in the next few years, the Eastercon 22 committee intends to make the event into a fully international event. "With so much globe-trotting being done by sf people these days," Pete says in the PROGRESS REPORT, "I see no reason why we should not be able to attract a good number of American and European fans and professionals in 1971 ... I would like those of you who live outside England to think about the idea very seriously; not only will this be an enjoyable convention, but the town of Worcester is in an extremely attractive part of our country should you want to take a European holiday next year."

SF AT EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE Bob Bloch reports that he, A.E. Van Vogt, and Larry Niven, so far, have addressed a sf group at the Sherman Oaks Experimental College in Van Nuys, Calif., as part of a regular Friday evening program in which sf writers rap with students. Other local writers have been scheduled for future dates in this series.

BAYCON PROCEEDINGS will not be published. The decision was reached at a meeting of the Baycon (1968 World SF Convention) Committee on July 17. Those who bought pre-publication copies may have the \$1 returned by writing Alva Rogers (833 Monterey Ct., San Leandro, Calif. 94578) if they have moved since Baycon, or by waiting

if they haven't. (source: WINNIE)

MATCHED Wally Weber and Patricia Priest were married July 4 in a private ceremony at King County Courthouse, Seattle, Washington. Local fans learned of the event when announcements were mailed the following week. A reception at their home (5422 - 16th Ave. SW, Seattle 98106) on July 19 was attended by numerous fans and human beings. Ella Parker attended by telephone from London, and Wally was so overcome that he forgot to call her a S.C.O.A.W. Or perhaps it was that he remembered not to.

HATCHED A daughter, Emerald Dawn, was born to Lon and Kathy Atkins at Santa Monica Hospital at 1:02 a.m. on July 18, weighing in at 5 lbs., 10 oz. On the way to the Hospital, Lon and Kathy were sideswiped by a camper van running a red light, which totaled their car. An ambulance had to be dispatched, and their hit-and-run driver was never caught. Despite this, and a dangerous complication Kathy suffered (a premature separation of the placenta), both mother and daughter are doing very fine.

DETACHED F.M. Busby is taking an early retirement option with the Government service as an electronics engineer, and as of August 1 he will be a Free Man. Assuming he is not immediately kidnapped and taken to The Village, he and Elinor will be staying put in Seattle.

HARLAN ELLISON in New York on business, sold a sequel to "The Glass Teat" to Ace Books. Tentatively titled "Son of the Glass Teat", it will be composed of further installments of his "L.A. Free Press" television column. ::: Harlan has also written a HULK synopsis that will be fleshed-out by Roy Thomas and will appear as a two-parter early in '71. It involves the Hulk in another dimension where he is ruler and meets the Phantom Eagle through the intervention of Kang the Conqueror and a girl who loves him for himself. (source: NEWFANGLES)

N3F Dave Lewton has completely ignored the No. 1 Army SOP and volunteered to publish TNFF after Art Hayes gives up the post. We hope this does not mean a decline in Dave's general-type fanatic. ::: Gary Labowitz is the latest to fall to the unfortunate FP tendency to misspell peoples names. In the last issue, we changed his name to Gary Leibowitz, which is not so much a case of misspelling his name as my mind slipping its gears; as far as I (rich brown) am concerned, Gary should have never published That Fanzine (A CANTICLE FOR LABOWITZ).

APAc MYRIAD had 98 pages in its 15th mailing, which was mailed out July 3 by Emergency Officer Cecil Hutto while Stven Carlberg was on vacation in New Mexico and Oklahoma. Due to an increase in the membership from 25 to 32, there are still a few membership openings. Dues are 75¢ per year. For details, write: Stven Carlberg, 2811 Summer Grove Dr., Shreveport, La. 71108.

POSTAL WOES For some inexplicable reason, about half the copies of FOCAL POINT addressed to Canada, and all the FPs addressed to Foreign Countries outside of England were returned to us marked 1) Insufficient Postage, 2) Envelope Required. Inasmuch as these FOCAL POINTS weighed no more than any of the others, we were unable to obtain a reason as to why some copies were singled out, and the P.O. was unable to explain why envelopes were required. As a result, those copies were mailed a second time -- and we apologize for the delay. ::: The U.S. has placed an embargo on all surface mail to England for the duration of England's dock strike. This will no doubt delay delivery of this issue, and possibly future issues, of FP to that country.

BILL ROTSLER PHOTOGRAPHED Bill Moyes jumping off into the Grand Canyon with a kite. They launched him with a car and over he went. Five camera positions covered the one-mile-deep, several-miles-long flight. He was barefoot. And arrested.

Before actually asking Bob Shaw directly if he would accept a Fund to get him to a U.S. worldcon, I (Arnie) thought it might be a good idea to check with Bob's good friend and fellow Irish Fan, Walt Willis. I wrote to Walt inquiring about whether Bob would look with favor upon such a project. Instead of the expected reply from Donaghadee, there came this:

A LETTER FROM BOSH

Dear Arnie,

I was down at Donaghadee last night paying the Willises a visit. For me it was a slightly sleepy, unremarkable sort of an evening until, about half-way through, Walt suddenly remembered something, went out of the room and came back with your letter. Needless to say, the final paragraph sent me right into orbit. Would I look with favor on a Bob Shaw Fund? I can't think of any greater honour than to have such a fund even proposed, and if it should succeed I would make arrangements to be at the Con, even if it meant resigning from my job, sending the family to a labour camp and going over on an economy class pusher biplane excursion flight. The rest of last night's meeting faded away from me as I sat there daring to contemplate getting over for two or three weeks of conventioning and yarning with American fandom. And the proposal, I kept thinking bemusedly, came from a fan who never even received a letter of comment from me... Did you ever get the feeling that maybe people are fine, god-like beings after all?

* * *

In closing, I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to you and the others who conceived the idea of a Shaw fund. I should go on for page after page about it, but I honestly haven't the words to express my feelings. Even if the whole scheme comes to naught, I will regard the fact that some fans somewhere proposed it as ample reward for all those years spent in working for SLANT and HYPHEN.

Yours,

Bob (signed)



-- JOHN D. BERRY

The non-Westercon held in the Bay Area over July 4th weekend was a complete and utter gas. It was like one of the best room parties at a larger convention transported someplace else and turned into a con in its own right. The physical set-up helped immensely: the noncon was held almost entirely at Bill Donaho's large house in El Cerrito, and everybody spent a good deal of their time in the pool, whirlpool bath, and sauna complex in the back yard. The only time spent away from Donaho's was for eating, sleeping, or Saturday afternoon and evening when the whole party shifted out to Greg and Joan Benford's house in Alamo.

It was essentially just a huge, weekend-long party, which looked much like the SFCon with only a few changes in personnel. Included among the attendees were: Buz & Elinor Busby, Greg & Joan Benford, Jim & Hilary Benford, Dick & Pat Ellington, Bill Donaho, Dan Curran, Dick & Pat Lupoff, Bill Rotsler, Paul Turner & his lady Neola, George Clayton Johnson, Bob & Margo Lichtman, Mike McInerney & Barbara Dodge, Hal Hughes, Hank Stine, and a whole array of Berkeley-type people who frequent Donaho's. And probably several that I forgot or didn't get with that blanket-like end statement. There was lots of entertaining talk, drinking and other Loosening Up, exotic-restaurant expeditions, and all the usual sort of convention paraphrenalia. A number of people played a game called Group Therapy, based on encounter group-type stuff, with lots of cards whose directions require a lot of honesty and opening-up. Some time was spent discussing the first installment of the new Heinlein novel, and according to Bill Donaho, the concensus was that nobody could believe that a dirty old man whose brain was transplanted into the body of a luscious young thing would start lusting after the doctors only half an hour later.

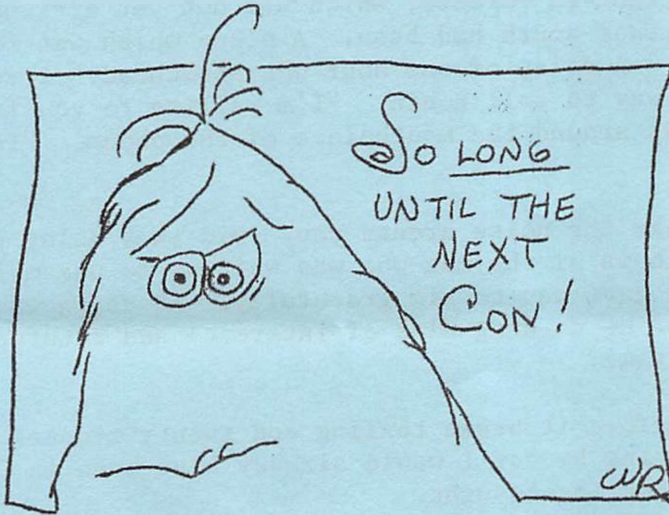
George Clayton Johnson presented some new Wild Schemes that he explains so convincingly that they almost sound plausible for a while. In fact, I think one of them is: he wants to put together an assortment of the best fannish material of all sorts he can find, with special emphasis on writings about the nature of fandom--sort of a Whole Earth Catalog of fandom, he calls it--and sell it to a large mundane publisher and expose it to the world. I'm not sure I'd want it to work, but I think it might.

Bill Rotsler drew only one (1) cartoon during the entire weekend.

Saturday night at the Benfords', the phone rang and it was Bob Tucker calling from exotic far-off Heyworth. Everybody clustered into the kitchen and exchanged greetings. Then, a little while later, after everyone was back out on the lawn, the phone rang again. "It's the Silverbergs," said Jim Benford, without glancing toward the house. We all laughed. Then everyone started flocking toward the kitchen again, and it was the Silverbergs, along with the Carrs on a four-way extension from New York. (Dividing it between four phone extensions makes the signal very weak indeed, and nobody could really hear what was being said, but it's the Thought that Counts.)

Everyone seemed to agree that noncons are a splendid thing, and there's talk of having another over Labor Day weekend. We shall see.

MIDWESCON



-- BY TED WHITE

It was an on-again and off-again thing, this year. I hadn't been sure I'd even go to the Midwescon, and yet, because it was sure to be my last convention of this season, I wanted to go.

Robin, conversely, much as she wanted to go, had decided she would not--it being by then only a month and a half until the baby would be due. I made arrangements with John D. Berry to drive out--John would fly from Cincinnati to the Bay Area afterwards--and

Arnie was thinking about making the round trip with me. I spent an afternoon in the hot sun installing a new lower radiator hose on the car--it involved taking out the radiator--and Thursday I bought ice for the freezer chest and several cartons of Pepsis in preparation.

Then John called. I'm running a fever--101--so I won't be going with you," he said. "Oh," I said. Arnie had already decided his finances would make the trip impossible. Suddenly I was faced with a 1,600 mile round trip by myself. The driving wouldn't be any harder--I do it all anyway--but it would be damned lonely. "Say, listen," I said to Robin, "why don't you come with me?" Suddenly it began to look like there was no reason she shouldn't come. The lousy earlier months of her pregnancy were past, she was feeling healthier and happier, and--why not? So we made plans to leave Thursday night, after her natural childbirth class.

It was her first class, and the two hours had their strenuous moments. When we got home she was exhausted. "I don't think I'm up to a long car trip," she said. "You better go by yourself."

"The hell with it," I said, suddenly feeling lousy. "I won't go." And we went to bed.

Just before we fell asleep, she said, "You could fly, you know."

So Friday I spent a rainy mid-afternoon making phone calls and made a reservation on an American Airlines dinner flight that would leave LaGuardia at 7:30. I blew a cloud and then, carrying my briefcase (the one I picked because it would hold lps) I strode out into the rain and for the subway. (I got soaked because I couldn't see carrying an umbrella along with me to Cincinnati. And a good thing, too.) More rain, no cabs, and a long walk from the subway to the East Side Airlines Terminal. I picked up my tickets, bought some flight insurance, and called Robin. "If anything happens to me," I told her, "at least you and the Child will be Taken Care Of." Oh, it was a gloriously saccharine moment.

The bus to LaGuardia took surprisingly little time, considering the fact that

rush hour was now in full swing, and I had time to browse a newsstand at the airport and see for the first time the new AMAZING logo on display side-by-side with ANALOG's. "Not bad," I agreed with myself. Then the delays began.

My flight had been shifted from Gate Four to Gate Three. The lounge at Gate Three was already filled with people awaiting a flight to Toronto, which had not yet arrived from whatever its point of departure further south had been. A plane which was to have been mine was taken out of service. A delay of one hour was announced. I returned to the newsstand, pausing on the way to call Robin. "I'm calling to you from 30,000 feet up," I said, cupping my hands around the mouthpiece of the phone. "Isn't science wonderful?"

"No, you're not," Robin said. "I can hear the noise around you. Did they delay your flight or something?" About then the elbows of the man who was waiting to use my phone began digging sharply into my ribs and I gave way to him gracefully. At the newsstand I bought a couple of newspapers (there being nothing else of interest) and returned to the lounge to cadge a seat and pass the time.

We spent half an hour aboard the plane before it began taxiing and twenty minutes more before the takeoff. Had I left that morning by car I would already have been in Cincinnati. It was for some reason not a cheering thought.

The flight itself was also prolonged--I was getting used to it now--because we had to loop far south to avoid towering thunderheads, perpetually aglow with lightning flashes. Somehow, finally, we dropped down to the Greater Cincinnati Airport (in Kentucky), I found the limo that made the trip to the Carroussel, and at about midnight I arrived at the Midwescon. It was, I reminded myself, about the hour I usually arrived at the Midwescon.

The first voice I heard after passing through the archway into the courtyard of the motel was Tucker's. It came, disembodied, from a room somewhere overhead. "Is that Bob Tucker?" I called, none too wittily. Bob poked his face over the railing and allowed as how it was. He was with Rusty Hevelin and several of the Cincy guys. "Where's the action?" I asked.

"That's funny," Bob said. "We were looking for you. The party's in your room, isn't it?"

"It won't be if I don't find a room," I replied jauntily. "Have you seen Andy Porter around?"

"He's here, but I haven't seen him for a while," Rusty said.

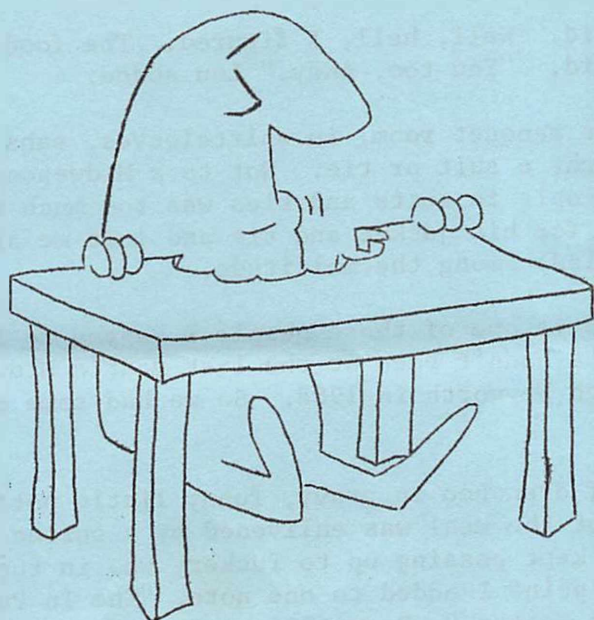
"Come on up to the Cincinnati Suite," Bob said. "Maybe he's there."

He wasn't, but I registered and said hello to various people, including Andrew Offutt, who seemed taken back to meet me there, and just as I was phoning his room, Andy walked in. Bob waited until we'd greeted each other and then announced, "Andy? Ted White's looking for you." He kept it up all weekend.

Andy and I went back to his room to dump my stuff. While we were there Andy phoned the desk to ask if he could switch to a double. The desk said there were no rooms left. I eyed the cushions of the room's two chairs and decided I could make do with them for a mattress on the floor. This agreed upon, we set out again to find The Action.

There wasn't much Action that night--nor, to be sure, on the following nights either.

THE SERVICE IS LOUSY
BUT THE FOOD IS GOOD
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It was a strange Midwescon in that many of the people I expect to see there weren't there this year. Fortunately, there were other people there whose company I found myself enjoying, but not the instant gestalt of the previous years. We all had to sort ourselves out and find each other afresh. Disconcerting. Or, as Jerry Kaufman said later that night, "This is like the Marcon." I gather there was no action at this year's Marcon.

At one point in the evening, Jerry, Suzzle and I wandered over to Alex Krislov's room. It was dark, but rock music (The Band) was audible, and when we knocked we were invited into a room in semi-darkness filled (it seemed like) with Groping Adolescents. Suddenly I felt quite ancient. We found a place for ourselves at the foot of one bed, and quite by accident discovered that a small boy was sleeping on the floor almost at our feet. He had a barricade of suitcases surrounding him. "One of the Beam kids," someone said. We listened to the new country-acoustic Greatful Dead album,

and talked quietly, and then finally, because it was after all something like five in the morning, left for our respective rooms.

The Carroussel is a lousy Midwescon motel. I seem to remember thinking this once before --in 1966--the last time a Midwescon was held there. Made of two motels joined under one management, it is spread out over the equivilent of two city blocks, has three pools (between which fans unwillingly split themselves), a room-numbering system which isn't any system at all, and, fortunately, is across the street from Fritch's. I heard a lot of grumbling about the service there--at one point we met the Thompsons disgruntledly wending their way back from a chicken-in-the-basket emporium further up the road, and they told us of how they threw their menus in the waitress' face and stalked out after some unconscionably long wait--but I had no problems. I've been eating chili there since 1961, and I've found that a bowl of chili and a tossed salad not only make a decent meal (the chili is long on meat and short on beans), but gets served almost immediately. In any case, that became my breakfast.

After breakfast (some time after the noon hour), Andy and I donned our swim suits and cased the pools. We found no one at the lower pool--no one we knew, I should amend; the motel was full of non-fans--and went up the long hill to the upper pool. There we found not only a scattering of fans, but a most attractive bikini-clad girl who was willing to rub sun-tan lotion on our backs in return for the use of some of it for herself. We formed a small cluster around her (picking up Ben Solon and then Larry Propp in the process) which wasn't broken up until she had divulged she was part of a wedding party and was from San Francisco, and several of the males of her group had shown up to usher her off. (The males were overpreened studs from where I sat; it brought her down a trifle in my estimation.)

There followed the inevitable game of Chaos in the pool--and for once uninterrupted by pool guards. (The only sign of the motel Establishment to be found was the poolside cocktail waitress--also in a bikini.) After a time we chose sides for a more organized game of pool polo, my side winning eventually by a score of eight to four. Ironically,

my teammate in scoring most of our side's points was Larry Smith. Times change, and just as well, I guess.

At one point that afternoon Lou Tabakow approached me to ask if I'd bought my banquet ticket yet. I hadn't, and, at \$6.00, I wasn't sure I would.

"We're seating you at the head table," Lou said. Well, hell, I figured. The food is usually best at the head table. "Okay," I said. "You too, Andy," Lou added.

So that evening Andy and I trapsed over to the banquet room, in shirtsleeves, sans ties. In my case there was no choice: I hadn't brought a suit or tie. Not to a Midwescon, ferchristsakes. But one sight of all those people in suits and ties was too much for Andy. He chickened out, returned to our room for his jacket and tie and left me alone (nearly alone; Mike Lalor was also casually clad) among the multitude.

I found myself a seat next to Fern Tucker, who is one of those people I happen to like alot, even if she isn't wild about fandom. She hadn't been at the last year's Midwescon and I hadn't seen her since we'd passed through Heyworth in 1968. So we had some catching up to do.

The meal was mildly awful: overdone roast beef drenched in gravy, funny little potatoes, two lousy choices in salad dressings, etc. But the meal was enlivened by a series of notes which Charlie Brown, at a nearby table, kept passing up to Tucker, who in turn passed them along for the rest of us. At one point I added to one note, "The In Party Tonight will be held in room 622. --The Secret Master." Room 622 was the room of our poolside friend from the wedding party. I didn't expect Bob to read it among the other announcements, but he did, and a sufficient number of people were wise to the fact to make it a good joke. (Later on that night I checked the room out to see if anyone had actually gone there for a party. I met the girl and her boyfriend coming out and invited them to one of the other parties, but they said they were off to one of their own. I shrugged and figured I had at least atoned for any unwitting harm I'd done with my wee joke, and returned to the party I'd left.)

I figured, when Lou asked me to sit at the head table, that he had a reason. He did. I was asked to stand up and say something, and despite my bold resolution to make no new enemies that night, I'm afraid I did anyway.

I asked for questions, and after explaining that subscriptions weren't a sure-fire solution to AMAZING's circulation problems--that it was better to maintain open channels to newsstands where new readers might be attracted--I was confronted by an angry young man who stated that he by damn subscribed, and he didn't like being insulted and being told his subscription was no good, and--! I tried to placate him, but he was still going strong when Bob wisely intervened and brought that element of the "program" to a halt. Thank ghod.

There were several good parties that night, most of them "open". One was in the Pittsburgh femme's suite; another in Jim Young's Minneapolis suite. I circulated between them with occasional walks outdoors for the fresh air. I felt a little at loose ends.

Fortunately, early that evening John Berry had shown up, fresh from the airport, his virus infection run its course. We'd parked his bags in the room Andy and I shared--there being no other rooms at the Inn--and after partying most of the night away, John and I joined Brad Balfour, Larry Propp, Ben Solon and a young girl named Gloria in whom Ben was showing a strong interest for a walk up the road to the all-night pancake house. I had several all-night pancakes there and crossed the place off my list of Places I Wish Someday To Return To. I could tell strange stories of that evening, not

the strangest being one late-night walk I took during which I encountered a very pretty girl from Minneapolis named Lynn, surrounded by an entourage of half a dozen eager young male fans. All had been partying a Good Bit, as we say, and Lynn made rather less of an impression upon me than she had earlier. I learned in short order that she was a Star Trekki, and proud of it; that she was Teutonic, and proud of it; and that when in her cups she was one loud broad, and proud of it. *Sigh*

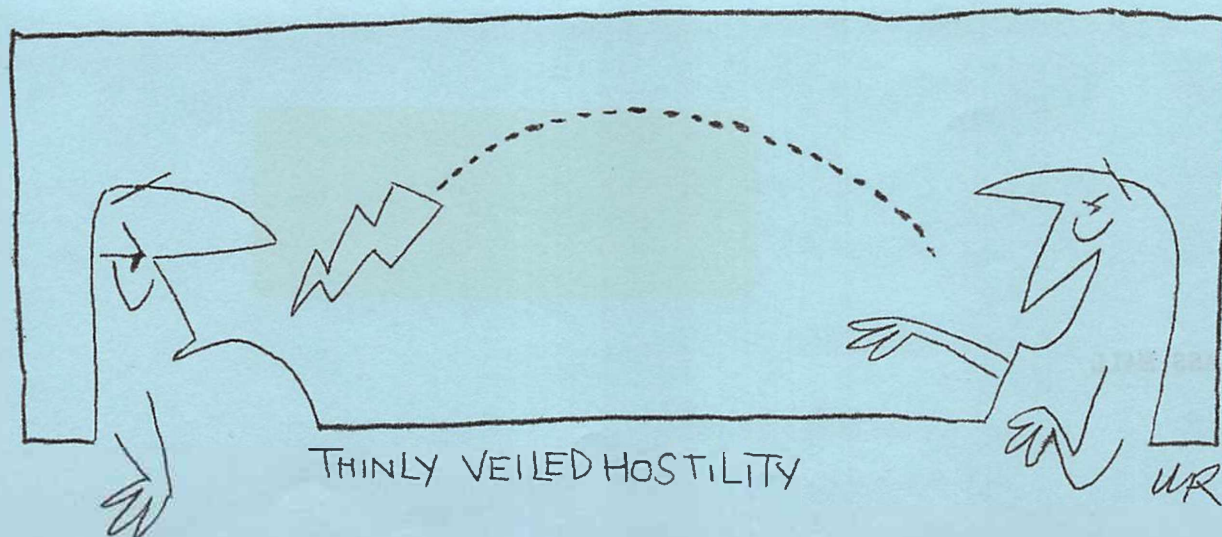
Sunday was a quiet afternoon and goodbyes. Once again, it seemed, we Fanoclast types would close out a Midwescon with the Tuckers. We sat around the lower pool (no fans at the upper one), read Andy Offutt porno books, and, after dinner, played shuffleboard.

The shuffleboard court was next to the lower pool, and I'd been watching it with half an eye during the afternoon. I'd never played the game, but it looked interesting. Someone--Larry Smith, I believe--challenged me to learn the game. Investigation proved Bob Tucker had never played before either, so we formed a team and scored an impressive victory, which went to our heads. Rog Sims and his wife challenged us and proceeded to whup our tails, as the saying goes. I played the rest of the night with people who shared my amateur status, like the Tucker boys, Brad Balfour, John Berry, and such-like. Finally it settled down to a quiet party in our room again: Tucker, Charlie Brown, Andy, John, Brad...it was the kind of party I'd been expecting the whole weekend without quite realizing it, and I think we were all feeling a little sad that things hadn't jelled in this way until this, the final night. We broke up comparatively early, since we all had to be up earlier the next morning: Charlie, Andy, and I all had the same flight back to New York City.

Yet, after it was down to the three of us trying to get comfortable for the night, the talk went on for a couple more hours. It was a good time to be among friends and nobody quite wanted to end it.

The phone the next morning told us it was 9:30. We straggled out of bed, packed up, went over to Fritch's for breakfast, checked out of the room (they charged Andy more for his "single" on the two nights John had shared the room; "Our security informs us you had a guest," the man at the desk said, but split three ways it was still pretty cheap), barely got to the airport limosine on time, and from there on out it was smooth sailing...or flying. A clear day--but for the pollution--no delays, a half-empty plane (with the same stewardesses Andy had flown out with), an excellent Bloody Mary and adequate food (it was a "luncheon flight"), and we flew right over my apartment in Brooklyn on our landing approach. "Did you see me wave?" I asked Robin.

-- Ted White



MORE NEWS

ADVENTURE GOES ALL FICTION

Popular Publications, which also publishes ARGOSY, has announced a sweeping change in the format of ADVENTURE to commence with the December issue, out in about one month. Formerly a large-sized slick men's sweat magazine, ADVENTURE will be transformed into a digest-sized all-fiction publication. Sales of a test issue which featured fiction instead of ADVENTURE's usual fare were encouraging enough to prompt the move. Bruce Cassiday will be buying fiction of 3000-5000 words, and category fiction, detective and sf, will not be ignored. The "new" ADVENTURE will sell for 50¢ and, depending on the volume of advertising, run about 96 pages.

COLLEEN BROWN ENTERS HOSPITAL

Colleen Brown, fabulous assistant editor of FOCAL POINT entered the hospital Sunday, August 2, for tests connected with a recently diagnosed thyroid condition. She will remain at Victory Memorial Hospital in Brooklyn until Thursday, August 6. The callous co-editors of FOCAL POINT sent a notebook and pen in with her, and boredom may propel a second installment of "Column A" into being sooner than we had previously been able to hope.

THE AX

A reminder to: John Bangsund, Harlan Ellison, Dean Grennell, Mike McInerney, and all the rest of you with "10" on your mailing label, that this is the last issue of FOCAL POINT you will receive unless you do something. Likewise, those with "sample" on their label are advised to take Immediate Steps.

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