

HYPHEN

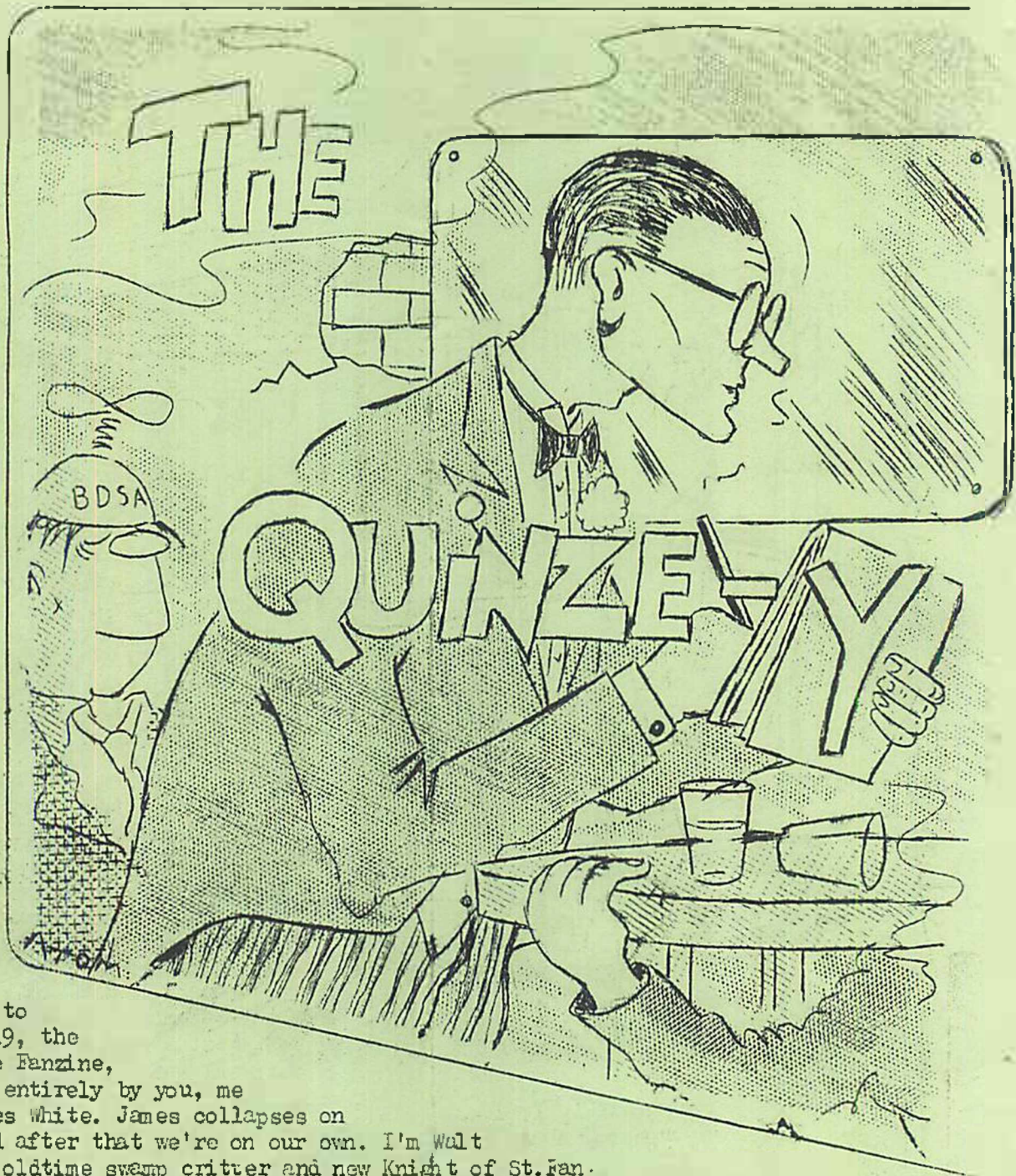
NO 19

JANUARY 1983



"There, doesn't that make it all worth while?"

LONDON WORLDCON REPORT



welcome to
 Hyphen 19, the
 Intimate Fanzine,
 written entirely by you, me
 and James White. James collapses on
 p.19 and after that we're on our own. I'm Walt
 Willis, oldtime swamp critter and new Knight of St.Fan-
 tony, of 170 Upper N'Ards Ra., Belfast, N.Ireland. The illus-
 trations are by the illustrious Art Thomson, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive,
 London SW2. The Sex friend of Distinction waiting in the wings to take over should I
 falter is co-editor Chuck Harris, 'Carolyn', Lake Ave., Rainham, Essex, as ever my
 best friend and severest critic (alternately). Others associated with us and not
 afraid to give their names are George Charters (who stencilled The Enchanted Dupli-
 cator), James & Peggy White, Madeline & Carol Willis and Bob Shaw.

Hyphen is 1/- or 15¢ per copy, in coin of your realm. You send it, we'll spend it.

SOUTH
GATE
IN
'58

MOORAY FOR
RORY FAULKNER

HOW TO MEET
TWC AND
INFLUENCE
EDITORS
LESSON
III

REPORT

BY JAMES
WHITE*

* With foot-
notes by WAW

THINGS HAVE CHANGED since the days Irish Fandom wended its way conventionwards by rickety cattleboat, and watched the lights of Donaghadee fade from Assembly Deck B---so called after the Mahaffey of the same name---and punned about the ship's equipment in a manner that became a ritual. Now we look down on cattleboats...way down. In my own case from a height of some 18000 feet.

Walter & Madeleine could not aspire to such eminence, however. I was flying direct to London by Viscount: they were merely flying to Liverpool and taking a train the rest of the way---the poor, poverty stricken non-professionals. Their aircraft, a re-christened war surplus Dakota, could admittedly put-put along at a cool 200mph and its operational ceiling was well above most factory chimneys. As we waited at Nutt's Corner airport for the Liverpool plane to be readied, I pointed out that as the flight-path lay chiefly across the Irish Sea the chimney hazard could be discounted unless they passed over one of the larger cattleboats.

Anxious not to lull them into a false sense of security, however, I also pointed out that the 200mph airspeed was possible only if the

aircraft did not blunder into too many clouds and the engines did not fall off like in Ken Bulmer's van. They were due to leave five minutes before me, and just before they moved out to their aircraft past the gleaming four-engined giant that was mine I told them of some of the funny things which could happen to Dakotas when they entered the to them alien world of the air; how wheels fell off, and tail-planes... though not usually both wings. How in times of headwinds the pilot only reached home by squeezing out the wadding in his cigarette lighter, not to mention the laughable tendency for the passengers' seats to fall through the floor....

As the little plane carrying Madeleine & Walter roared off the runway dead on schedule, the public address system announced that my superior type Viscount would be delayed for 65 minutes because of technical trouble.

Finally we were allowed aboard the aircraft and it took off. I discovered that the technical fault had been a blown valve--tube to the colonials--in the night flying equipment. The time then was 10.30am; the Viscount would be making two more round trips before dusk, but still they would not let us take off until this piffling valve was replaced.*

FOUR HOURS LATER I was scanning the biggest lounge of the King's Court Hotel for sensitive farnish and/or voracious pro-type faces. I spotted Ackerman at once, talking to a small group in a tight circle of armchairs—the armchairs were tight, not the occupants; it was only 3.30 in the afternoon—so I went over and said, "You probably don't remember me....."

But he did; he said, "Why, Bob Shaw...!" and shook hands warmly. After disillusioning him tactfully I told him he was looking much better than last time I had seen him in 1951 when he had been somewhat under the weather due to a double-barreled ailment comprising travel sickness and non-asiatic flu. I also noticed there was a considerable speeding-up in the well remembered Ackerman drawl; now he jabbered along almost as fast as Gary Cooper. The musical "Hummummmmm-mm-mm?" was gone too, but it was nice seeing even this streamlined, healthy and vigorous Ackerman again.



He introduced me to a young German fan called Rainer Elsfield, who was later to distinguish himself as an after-dinner speaker, and to Bob & Barbara Silverberg. I said excitedly, "Not the Robert Silverberg whose story was printed upside down behind mine in the latest Ace pocketbook?" just before he got in a similar question. Barbara Silverberg I found to be a very nice girl with a lively sense of humour who possessed the good taste to laugh at most of my jokes. She does not look like one of the three specialists in an abstruse section of electronics. Bob Silverberg is young, intelligent, blackhaired and good-looking in a vaguely neanderthal sort of way, and his face seems to fall naturally into a scowl. This, he explained carefully, is because his face muscles are constructed that way and it is acutely painful for him to lift the corners of his mouth. He was destined to go through the Convention in constant agony. When someone--usually me--made a pun, the scowl would become a sneer, and the Silverberg Sneer is a devastating thing. Humbly I asked if maybe he could teach me to sneer like that and he said he'd try.

*Come now, there might have been an eclipse of the sun.

We did not guess then at the awful consequences this simple request was to have, the mind-shattering weapon it was to unloose. We said goodbye, having still not decided who was upside down with regard to which, promising to meet about 7.30 in the Globe...it being Thursday night. I left to search Gamage's for accessories for my train set.

The Globe that night remains for me a noisy, smoky blur. I can remember Ted Carnell and I plying each other with drinks, one each. I met Bobbie Wild, the Convention Secretary, an efficient, overworked and slightly harassed girl who said she had insured herself so that she could wrap a certain person's blank guitar round his blank-blank neck with impunity. I wished her luck. Then there were Joy Clarke and Ken & Pamela Bulmer, all looking as pretty and vivacious as ever, except Ken. But Vinç Clarke was a shock. Gone was the distinguished toffee-apple of yesteryear; in its place was this soft-spoken young patriarch with sane straightened-out kid written all over him.

Then there was Mr Wansborough and Mr Reaney.

The place became quickly smokefilled and the fans overflowed into side bars, then the billiard room, finally spilling out into the street. There I vaguely remember a gutter brawl between the Silverbergs and Boyd Racburn on the proper method of making coffee, which Bob left to test his American-English vocabulary on me. We talked about lifts and elevators, then the Underground, the Tube and the Metro in Paris. When he suggested that the Underground in Ireland was called the Mother Maquis I used one of his own sneers on him and left for the purer air inside.

Suddenly it was "Time, Gentlemen, Please" time and we were driven onto the streets again. A party of predominantly London fans formed and began trekking away in a direction opposite to that in which lay the Underground station they were making for. I managed to convince them of their error and eventually we were being borne hotel-wards. An argument developed then as to which station---Lancaster Gate or Queensway---was nearest to the Kings Court. Half the fans got out at Lancaster Gate and booed derisively at those still on the train, who booed back. Then the weaker willed types on the train had second thoughts and got off hurriedly, while those of a similar disposition on the platform made a quick dash back onto the train. An interesting situation developed with the guard yelling "Mind the doors!" repeatedly and the said doors...rubber-covered, luckily...opening and closing with musical thunks on fannish arms, legs and torsos. Finally we all, counting halves and quarters that is, found ourselves on the Lancaster Gate platform. It turned out that the nearest station to the hotel was Bayswater.



It was about 2.30 when I went up to my room, to find a still, emaciated figure occupying one of the three beds. I went through its luggage quickly; it consisted of four smazzy suits, twenty-three ties, a camera and one hundred and fifty two-colour printed cards bearing the CDE legend and stating that the holder was one Stephen F. Schultheis. After a few moments deep agitation I decided that the figure on the bed was Steve Schultheis. It bothered me somewhat that it did not appear to breathe, but I went to bed reassuring myself with the wellknown fact that Arch-Coon John Berry is dead from the neck up, and it was therefore conceivable that the Cleveland Op was extinct from the cervical vertebrae on down.

Next morning the figure did not move or breathe during the time I dressed, washed or shaved. It did, however, make a slight smirking sound when I inadvertently spilled some of my shaving water on its head. Greatly relieved at this sign of life I went down to breakfast.

The few occupants of the dining room ran heavily to bloodshot eyes and slow, thick speech, with the exception of Mary Dziechowski...uh, yes...who came down looking trim and smart in a ski-suit and cap. I concluded she had a room on the top floor. I left, making a mental note to say 'Gesundheit!' the next time I heard her name mentioned.

After breakfast the Silverbergs and I went to Les Flood's shop. He hadn't got a copy of the latest Ace Double, but insisted on taking our pictures in a semi-stiff, back-to-back pose. It took him a long time to get us arranged just right, but finally we got away just before the crowd began throwing pennies. We headed for the British Museum.

I spent two hours wading through ancient pottery, mummies and postage stamps before discovering the awful fact that this was not the museum which contained a whole floor devoted to Aeronautics. But I concealed my disappointment well, I thought, being content merely to make sneering remarks about completist pebble-collectors in the Geology Section and trying to decide, in the Egyptology Room, which of the occupants most resembled George Charters. It was hard to tell with these bandages.

Bob Silverberg, in an attempt to instill in me the rudiments of archeology and stuff like that, began giving me the history of a collection of sculpture which he was keen to examine called the Elgin Marbles. These, it seemed, had been purchased while the Greeks were away fighting a war or other. "Ah," I observed, "so the Greeks are missing some of their marbles." They did not speak to me after that except for suggesting that surely I had presents to buy for my family, and that they could recommend some good shops at the other end of London.

The hotel was undergoing structural redecoration and it was not until 5.30 on Friday night, when the painters knocked off for the day and the weekend, that the convention members were able to peacemate among each other satisfactorily. Groups formed, broke up and re-formed all over the place and there was an atmosphere building up that I had never encountered at any convention before...exuding, I think, from the fact that there were now no nonfans in the hotel to scoff or raise eyebrows or otherwise apply wet blankets to the proceedings.

Around six o'clock the laws of randomness governing such things selected four people who were hungry and arranged them to occupy the same square yard of space at the same time. This I found myself in company with the fabulous Rary Bulkner, a small quiet girl called Ruth O'Rourke and my other room-mate * Mel Ashworth, in an Italian restaurant for tea. Rary is a charming 69-year old ex-bulldozer hostess who fairly radiated excitement at being able to attend the convention. Her hair is white but it is impossible to think of her as being so many years old. Ruth O'Rourke was an unobtrusive person during the convention until on the third day she created a farrish precedent by going on a pilgrimage to the Shrine at Walsingham, causing some anxiety to Rary, Bobbie Wild and others who thought she had been spirited away to Buenos Aires or Rainham and notified the police. But all these things were still in the future that Friday night, and the only cloud on our horizon was Mel, who insisted on punning continuously during the gaps in the conversation when I wasn't punning continuously. Despite this it was a most enjoyable meal, though in my case a little bit delayed....

*Peggy: he means other than Steve Schultheis, honest.

While the others guzzled and slurped over weird-sounding dishes like ravioli and pistachio I had been impatiently waiting for a lettuce and tomato sandwich. As time wore on and I began to nibble at the salt cellar Mal suggested that perhaps the management were handpicking the ingredients on account of who I was. Rather tartly I replied that they were obviously growing a lettuce and a tomato for me special. Mal considered this for a few minutes, and agreed that while the hypothesis was essentially correct, I had neglected to include in my theory the fact that the management came of a warmblooded and kindhearted Mediterranean race and were obviously waiting until the lettuce and the tomato died of old age before tearing them from their earthy home and parent plant respectively. I told him I sat corrected.

When the sandwich did arrive it was cheese and onion, and I had to rush to get back in time for the press conference.

The only incidents I can remember were hearing Rory talk fan slang to a bewildered journalist and John W. Campbell under fire from four reporters at the same time who were trying to get him rattled. The way he had them on the defensive within two minutes was masterly. I was interviewed about this time by a drawling, patronising journalist who inked me somewhat. Using my 14 years experience of dealing with irate customers whose suits don't fit I deftly switched roles until I was getting such details as the school he attended and his publication's official and unofficial circulation figures.* After this I ate pretzels with a nonchalant air and sneered out at Chuck Harris through the glass door of the lounge where the press conference was being held. Harris, as a fake pro who has refused to cash the seven-and-tenpenny cheque he received for his one and only professional sale, was excluded from such august company as me and John W. Campbell.

The press conference turned out to be wasted effort because no publicity whatever came of it. Probably the reporters had been plied with so many drinks that they could not remember the answers to the questions they had asked---or even the questions.

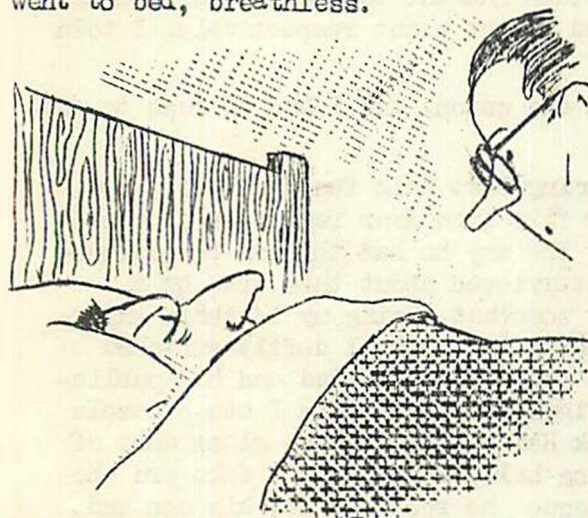
Round about nine o'clock---the program already showed signs of running late though we couldn't prove it because it hadn't been issued yet---we were shooshed by members of the committee into the hall. Here the ceremonial gavel and clonker thing were handed over by Dave Kyle to Ted Carnell, after which the new Chairman told us there would be no further official sessions until tomorrow and we were free to mix and talk and make friends. Feeling a little guilty because we had jumped the gun and been doing just that for the last day and a half, we slunk out and began permeating again, Mal and I having decided that we had been having social intercourse in sin and that these extra-legal and unofficial friendships would have to be ratified as quickly as possible. We are essentially ethical types and, speaking as a man with a married wife and child, I don't hold with that sort of thing.

Suddenly it was one o'clock in the morning and people were actually going to bed! I rushed to find Walter to have this terrible thing explained to me. I found Walter & Madeleine thinking about going to bed, and Ken and Pamela and Chuck and Arthur and practically everybody. Apparently it was customary to go to

*Remind me to tell you about the time when James, at home with a cold, sold a suit to the vacuum cleaner salesman.



bed on the first night of a convention to have strength for the succeeding nights. Mal and I hung around to see if anyone else subscribed to this heresy and found that they did. Sorrowfully we retired to our room where we found Steve Schultheis already asleep...I use the word loosely. I took Mal on a conducted tour of the sleeping Schultheis, pointing out the cavernous cheeks, the sunken eyes and the yellow shrunken skin. Mal was impressed. We discussed the advisability of driving a varnished chair leg through its heart but decided against it because of the likelihood of our being billed for the chair. We waited until 2.30 watching to see if Steve would breathe---either in or out, we weren't hard to please---then went to bed, breathless.



THE NEXT DAY, SATURDAY, there was another fine battery of bloodshot eyes at breakfast. Mal had gone to meet his wife, Sheila, who was to join him that morning, but the Schultheis thing was still making like the undead. I ran down Walter, Madeline, Chuck & Arthur Thomson in the upstairs lounge and Arthur introduced me to a foully corrosive drink comprised of tonic water and Disprin which tasted like a mixture of ammonia and quinine. After a bit I left to nose about the other lounges, figuring that as I was supposed to be doing a report I ought to know what was going on.

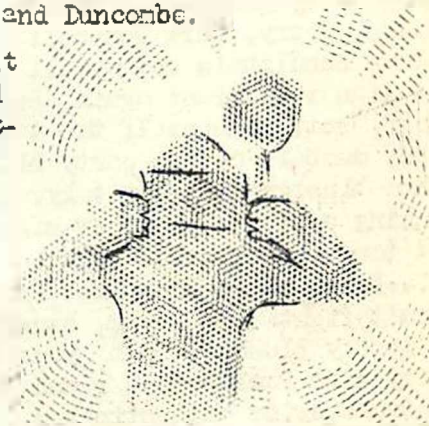
In the lobby I was introduced to Wally Weber again. I had had this particular person introduced to me several times before, but had not yet seen what he looked like---in fact I never expected to see Weber. The first few times we had met I had tried, how I had tried, but the introducer had only got as far as "This is Wally Web---" when the Seattle fan's flash camera would explode in a blaze of searing radiation which immediately bleached the visual purple in the eyeballs of everyone within fifty yards. Everybody had met Weber but nobody had actually seen him, so this time I automatically closed my eyes when we met and noted with grim amusement the way my eyelids turned bright pink as his flash tried vainly to blind me again. I had decided that the only defence against Weber was a white stick and black spectacles. I blundered on into the lounge.

The place was fairly crowded and I caught sight of the Silverbergs talking to someone whose broad back was towards me. I sneered a greeting and suddenly found myself confronted by the equally broad-shouldered front of no less a personage than John W. Campbell himself. I got the sneer wiped off just in time, shook hands and fought an overwhelming urge to bump my forehead three times against the floor. But our Guest of Honour turned out to be a pleasant and quite uncondescending type of person, a great amiable bear of a man whose conversation and mind processes were either stimulating or over-stimulating, but never dull. I remember an incident which occurred on the last day of the convention when Mr Campbell was giving a talk on psionics. A certain femfan with a camera had been moving up and down the aisle and to and fro along lines of seats, jockeying for position to get a good shot of him up on the stage. He must have been noticing this, although it had no effect on his delivery, for just as the girl demon photographer was about to snap her shutter he broke off to point out that she would obtain a better picture without that metal cap over her lens. The remark was delivered casually and without sarcasm, and the incident passed almost unnoticed without embarrassment to the girl.

Mr Campbell also remembered and complimented me on the one and only story I sold him, three years ago. This means that he can have three wishes, one eighth of my literary estate and my daughter's hand when she grows up, and if anyone says an unkind word about him in my presence it will mean plonkers at 6 paces.

I engaged in desultory shouted conversation with Mr Campbell and the Silverbergs for a few minutes---the shouting being necessary because of the background jazz music blaring from loudspeakers scattered around the place---then left to rest my ear percussion section. The only people who were chatting comfortably in that lounge were two other loud speakers, Moskowitz and Duncombe.

At 1.15 the luncheon was supposed to start, but it was considerably later than this before everyone had found his seat---so much so that there was a suggestion going round our table about the advisability of slipping out for something to eat. I discovered on taking my seat that the empty space next to me was reserved for no less a person (?) than Wally Flash Weber. I shut my eyes out of sheer reflex, then thought that at last I might get to see this Weber because it was fairly likely that he could not use his flash camera while wielding a knife and fork. Then somebody nudged me and said "Weber's coming!"



Through the door of the dining hall came Weber's camera, Weber's Adam's apple and Weber himself in that order. In the flesh, what there was of it, he turned out to be a boney, blonde-haired drawling thing with a devastating but economical sense of humour, tall enough to qualify for Irish Fandom. On the other side of Wally were H. Beam Piper and his wife. I asked him if he was H. B. Fyfe.... Or maybe on second thoughts it was H. B. Fyfe and his wife and I asked him if he was H. Beam Piper. Anyway, he said no.

According to the menu, the Queen was to be proposed by Mr Wyndham and seeing the shocked look beginning to form on Wally Weber's face I reminded him quickly that the Queen was married to some friend of Chuck Harris's and that it was merely Her Health that was being proposed. Weber nodded slowly, saying, "Yah, I was worried..." We rose, bellowed "The Queen!" and looked round for a fireplace to hurl our glasses at. There was none, so we sat down. From somewhere a slightly awed American voice observed that this was the first time a science fiction convention banquet had opened with a serious honest-to-goodness toast to Her Majesty!

I don't remember much about the speeches except that they were good---I was busy most of the time trying to attract waitresses' attention in an effort to get some food for the faint, emaciated and starving Weber. Weber's place had been set on the corner of our table, the exact corner. It looked such an improbable position to eat at that the serving staff must have concluded that he was a gatecrasher who had brought along his own cutlery. When he had eventually been served, however, I told him---in strictest confidence---that that



place had really been mine, but that I had changed positions before he came in. He thanked me for telling him and assured me gravely that my confidence would be respected, for he could well understand that if word of this should get to Weber there might be a certain amount of unpleasantness.

Sometime during the course..or five courses ..of the luncheon somebody pinched the official gavel and clonker.

All the talking had made us hungry again, so a party comprising the Bulmers, the Kyles, Ferry, Bert Campbell, Brian Aldis, Steve Schultheis and myself went to the Italian restaurant again. Bert was in rare form, setting himself the task of making the lady members of the party blush and keeping them blushing indefinitely, all without making a single improper suggestion. He did it too, his dialogue going something like:

"...Look, she's blushing! Pam's blushing. Aren't you blushing, Pam? That's right, don't fight this thing, blush!" Then in a smooth seductive voice, "There's such a lovely blush comes to your damask cheek when you blush. Damn you woman, blush!" Very soon Pamela Bulmer and Ruth Kyle were both blushing furiously, then Bert astounded..or authenticated..even himself by making Dave Kyle blush! I can't remember what I had for tea on that occasion.*

When I got back to the hotel Steve Schultheis accosted me on the stairs. His mouth held a lopsided leer, the brim of his hat was yanked down and over his beautiful grey and silver speckled suit there hung a ghostly image of a Goon-type dirty raincoat. He said, "Lissen, White..."---the GDA never pronounces the 't'---"...Arthur and me has cooked somethin' up, see. We want ya, up in the room in ten minutes, huh?" I shrugged and said "Oui." He said, "Yeah, just me an' Arc and you." I said, "O.K.". You have to translate everything for some people.**

Ten minutes later I walked into Room 43 to find Steve and Arthur putting the missing gavel and clonker into an empty Kleenex box. I said, "Hah, so it was the GDA who stole the gavel..." Arthur Thomson sprang to his feet, denying it hotly. Steve Schultheis poked tissue paper into the box to keep the contents from rattling and denied it coldly. Hissing in traditional Goon fashion he began to fill me in on the background.

The way Schultheis told it, he had seen the gavel and clonker disappear and had seized this opportunity to solve the case by offering Dave Kyle the services of the Goon Defective Agency to retrieve the missing articles. Kyle, in a weak moment, accepted and handed over a cash retainer totalling one halfpenny, in sterling. Steve now wanted to make a production number out of the return of the gavel and, thinking of yours truly and his weakness for guns, knew just how to do it.

When I had heard him out I stated that I would participate in his plan on two conditions. One was that Antigoon, as the fearless champion of right and the scourge of the GDA, would never stoop to gavel-pinching, so it would have to be a pseudo-Antigoon who was blamed. Secondly, I must get the gun that fired seven shots, not one of the six-shooters. The GDA operatives agreed, and we got down to details.

*There was a red Miss in front of your eyes?

**It was James who on his return from Paris uttered the famous bequote: "What's the good of speaking French if everyone knows what you're saying?"

" HE GOT THREE DEGREE BURNS
FROM THE FLASHBOLDS
WHEN HE MADE HIS
SPEECH AT THE BANQUET "



This it was that at 8.30 I was seated in the main hall with a brief-case containing the missing gavel balanced on my knee. The place was crowded and the crowd restive at the delay in the program. Carnell, who had already been briefed on the operation, mounted the rostrum. He delivered his lines well, announcing that the delay had been caused by the theft of the official gavel. The Convention could not proceed without it, he went on in a voice throbbing with suppressed emotion, but the services of a well known detective agency...not the FBI but one of similar repute...had been engaged to recover it. The organisation was the Goon Detective Agency and a report was expected at any moment.

At that instant a report rang out from the back of the hall where Goon Arthur Thomson, dressed in Mal Ashworth's military raincoat, fired a shot from a blank cartridge pistol borrowed from Shel Deretchin. Mal's raincoat was six sizes too big for Arthur, and all I could see of him was his shoes and the tip of his nose, plus a little hair. This first shot was the cue for me to jump to my feet. Immediately, Arthur shouted, "Stop, James White, vile pro and agent of Antigoon!" I snarled, pulled out the pistol lent me by Boyd Raeburn and returned fire, retreating down the centre aisle with the brief case hugged to my side. In the confined space of the hall the firing was incredibly loud and dramatic. There was an instant's shocked silence, then mingled cheers and boos arose as those present chose sides in the battle.



I retreated slowly to the foot of the stage, then Steve Schultheis came blasting out from a side door. Caught in the deadly crossfire, I snarled, sneered and spat (I was out of ammunition by this time), then staggered, reeled and collapsed dramatically on the floor...after having dusted a section with my handkerchief...with my head resting on the brief-case. Arthur Thomson dashed up, made a phoney little speech about the GDA always winning and plunkered me on the forehead to finish me off. Steve snatched away the brief-case so quickly that my head bounced on the floor, and I heard him handing the gavel to Carnell with a spiel about the glorious GDA. It was at this point that the carefully planned operation began to get all fouled up.

Ethel Lindsay, a nurse and a very nice person who has unfortunately been led astray by John Berry, was supposed to appear then, take my pulse and temperature and help me stagger off the scene. Instead Unethical Lindsay was standing on a chair with a GDA badge stating that she was Stephen F. Schultheis pinned to her chest, hooting and screaming "Down with Antigoon!" And Shel Deretchin, who had no

part to play whatever except lending pistols, became overcome with excitement and dashed out and began dragging me off by the feet. At this point Arthur Thomson, out of respect for my suit if not for me, grabbed my other end and lifted me clear of the ground. I didn't think it was possible for the relatively diminutive Arthur Thomson to carry the heavy end of a fourteen stone working like myself, but he did it. For half an hour afterwards, however, he looked as if he had been shot 17 times instead of me.

The GDA-Antigoon gun battle was supposed to be a surprise item and it was.* So much so that quite a lot of people in the lounge missed it. These, I found out later, had heard the gunfire reverberating through the hotel and had put it down to Sam Moskowitz having an attack of hiccups.

A talk on a new planetarium followed, then an auction. I missed both because Mal and I, commissioned to write conreports, had gone out permeating again in an effort to discover something dramatic or scandalous. Everyone was enjoying himself hugely, yet somehow contrived to be well behaved. Out of sheer boredom I plucked a small bloom from one of the many floral decorations and stuck it in my lapel. Carefully then I reminded Mal that I had been shot and that the James White he knew and loved was dead, but this, I ended triumphantly as I pushed the flower in my lapel towards him, was my twin-carnation!

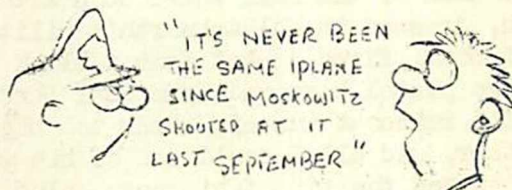
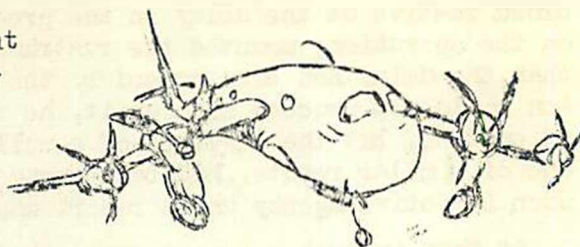
I left Ashworth suffering from a sudden malaise as I spotted Peter Phillips. I went up to him respectfully, steadied him, then tried the same pun on him. Mr Phillips staggered back against the wall, then he straightened up, threw back his shoulders and for the first time in my knowledge of him he went clear around the edges. He said distinctly: "By Ghod man, you've shocked me sober! I hate you!" Then he grabbed for the shoulder of a passing waitress and began to sob.

An hour or so later the BBC TV unit routed a skiffle group from the back lounge as cameras and equipment began moving in. The fancy dress costumes were hurriedly donned and the BBC began a long series of filmed interviews.* Meanwhile a band of surprising brilliance had replaced the auctioneer in the hall and dancing commenced--or maybe it would be more correct to say mixed wrestling or rhythmic mayhem: that band really despatched those couples. I can't remember much of what happened after that except that I was enjoying myself. I do remember however one point where I tried to talk Bob Silverberg into strapping ourselves back to back and entering the masquerade party as our Ace Double. But Bob said he wanted to think it over, and as I left him I saw him talking earnestly with Barbara and some members of the Committee. Later he told me it grieved him terribly, but he couldn't do it because his wife had been picked as one of the judges and it would be unethical. I hinted that maybe the real trouble was that he had never been taught at school to walk backward on his hands, sneered politely and withdrew.

The band packed up at 2.30 and Mari Dziechowski, Mal & I who had been listening to them from close up, went back along

*Even to the Program Committee, alas.

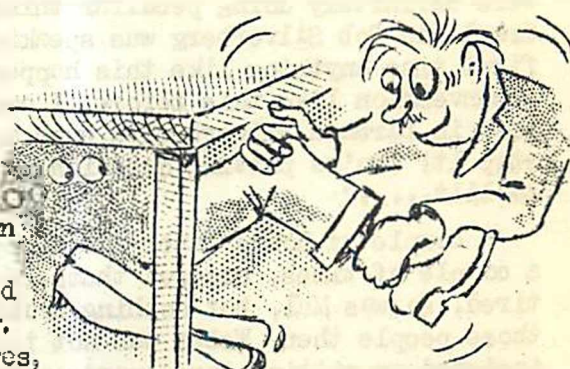
**with the Kyles, Dietzes, JWCampbell, Rory Faulkner, John Brunner, Jean Bogert and others. I made a sound tape of the broadcast, which Rory Faulkner now has.



into the curtained-off section used as a dining room. As we tromped along the carpeted floor we noticed that already things had been set out for breakfast. Suddenly we were accosted by a night porter who told us politely but firmly not to come through this room again. He gravely gave the reason for this interdict: we were getting dust in the cornflakes.

We three despoilers of pure and innocent cornflakes slunk away, trying not to raise a cloud that would increase the poisonous dust fallout.

The small lounge, where we found ourselves next, was well filled...most of Irish Fandom, the Bulmers, Boyd Raeburn and Peter Phillips being some of the people present. Boyd Raeburn was apparently being introduced to the local sport of snogging by Pamela Bulmer, chaperoned by her fond husband who was supplying the fog. Peter Phillips, once more fuzzy round the edges, was cycling the process owlishly and pulling, or at least bending, Boyd's leg. There was no harm intended, of course, but Boyd's leg was not built to bend that way. I admired the way Boyd kept control of and Chuck Harris terminated what could have been an awkward incident. But immediately after this Phillips started playing a harmonica, quite brilliantly, with his left leg wrapped around his neck. Then he produced a sort of musical banister which he called a recorder and began to play that as well, and at the same time. At this point he fell off the table. After tottering to his feet he stated gravely that the discord he had just produced had been due to the harmonica and the recorder having been in different keys: then he reeled away, bumping the doorway on both sides as he left.



It is impossible to describe or to dislike Peter Phillips.

Some heretics among those present began suggesting that we go to bed. Mal and I left for a patrol of the other lounges in an attempt to find something reportable for our promised conreports. The BBC and the masqueraders were still occupying one lounge; another skiffle group had started in another, the ensemble including guitarists Dan Morgan & Joim (Hymen) Kippax. In the lobby John W. Campbell was deep in an apparently philosophical discussion with Rainer Elsfeld and another German fan who seemed to know no English. Rainer was translating both ways and the result was sheer Marx Brothers. In another lounge a large group contained such people as Forry, the Dietzes, Bert Campbell, Steve Schultheis and Bob Madle. At the moment they seemed to be discussing cars. We left and came back full circle to the small lounge, where Walter was alone in front of a typer doing an airlettered report for Len Moffatt. We discussed the discovery by Chuck Harris and Walter of the fabulous Ray Nelson, who had been at the convention for two days without anyone recognising him, then Madeleine appeared and lugged Walter off to bed.

The BBC men had now spent several hours collecting material for what could be no more than a five minute spot on their "Tonight" program, and they were still at it. The skiffle group had exhausted themselves and gone, but there was a huddle of fans round the Ackerman-Dietz-Madle group in the corner of the large lounge, and George ATW Charters was benevolently overseeing a poker game between



Ron Bennett, a very nice girl whose name I didn't get who was Ted Camell's secretary at Nova, Peter Phillips and some nameless others. Somehow Mal and I found ourselves in a party containing the Silverbergs, Arthur Thomson, Ellis Mills and at some distance Wally Weber. I remember at one point a curious Tower of Babel effect overtaking us. Arthur suddenly began speaking alternate sentences with a Cockney and a broad Scottish accent, Ellis's and Wally's voices were definitely doing peculiar things, I was breaking into Wally's Western drawl and Bob Silverberg was speaking pure North Irish. I'm sure this was the first time anything like this happened, probably because there has never been a convention like this before. I could see the light of madness beginning to grow in Barbara Silverberg's eyes as she protested wildly, "Bob, stop it! Please stop it! You're putting question marks everywhere, like him! You're beginning to lilt....!"

A couple of hours later the Silverbergs, after nearly falling on their faces a couple of times, dragged themselves off to their room. I was beginning to feel tired, so was Mal, but nothing could have got us away from that conversation or those people then. Weber was not technically a member of this group, because he insisted on sitting three yards away from the rest of us so that he could pretend not to be with us when the level of punning got too low. He also kept reminding Mal and me of how nice it would feel to lie down in a lovely soft bed. The fiend. To counteract this, I suggested to Mal that we go up to our room and dunk our heads in the wash-basin. This we did, and as we were leaving we paused at the door and looked back at our beds lying there so seductively and smugly. We snapped our fingers at them, and sneered. They wilted, visibly.

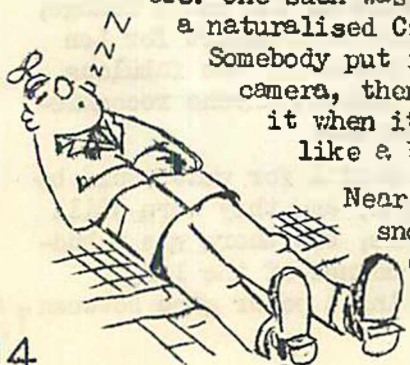
It was at this moment that we felt that history was being made, that what we had done was no empty gesture but an actual weapon of war. After a sneer like that, why, going to bed would be tantamount to fraternising with the enemy. It had been at that moment that the art and science of Panceronics came into being, the foundation of an entire new field of knowledge. But just then we were too tired to foresee this: proudly and kind of humbly we returned to the lounge.

George Charters, who had booked into a hotel 3 miles away so that he could be sure of getting his sleep, was still perched benignly on a table watching an extremely fuzzy Peter Phillips taking his cautious and sober fellow players to the cleaners. About this time, roughly 6am, the BBC technicians began to evacuate the hotel. Friendly jeers followed them and somebody shouted "Yah, weaklings!" Someone pulled the curtain aside to see them off, and daylight was revealed outside. A tired, ragged but triumphant cheer went up: we had done it!

But there were those who had fought the great fight only to fall by the wayside. Not into bed had they gone, but instead had struggled to the last, finally to tumble unconscious across tables, onto chairs and into corners. One such was an indefatigable and somewhat mercenary photographer, a naturalised Czech with the fine old Bohemian name of Peter West.

Somebody put forward the idea of taking his picture with his own camera, then waiting to see how much he would charge himself for it when it was developed. But as he was cradling his apparatus like a baby as he slept we hadn't the heart.

Near us, Rainer Elsfield was stretched out on the floor, snoring gently. Arthur rose, took a long lily-like flower from a nearby vase and advanced on the sleeper with the intention of laying it on his chest. But the vase had held water and the stem was wet, with the result that Rainer was abruptly faced with the



choice between waking up or drowning in his sleep. He chose the former and as he spluttered Arthur nipped over to the wall beside him and stood in a tensed, dramatic pose, pressed flat against the wall with this flower held aloft like a Roman eagle or something, while Rainer looked around him with a sleepy look and went back to sleep with a puzzled expression on his face. After this Arthur contented himself with putting the lily in Peter West's hair.



AT 6.45am THE CARD GAME BROKE UP. Peter Phillips staggered off to bed and George Charters, with gentle olde worlde charm, stated his intention of walking back to his hotel, adding that as he had paid for bread and beakfast he considered it his bounden duty to go back and muss up the bread. George does not usually get his words mixed up, but this was the latest he had been up since the time he gave his mother trouble with his teeth. Somebody found a trumpet and let go a couple of hideous blats on it. The sleepers on chairs, tables and the floor jerked feebly at the call of this pseudo-Gabriel, woke and went to bed. Then the manager appeared with a polite and reasonable request for the trumpet-playing to cease on account of the earliness of the hour, the people sleeping in the next hotel and the obvious lack of ability of the player.

Somebody asked if it would be possible to obtain sandwiches and the manager said no, but breakfast would be served in an hour. There was an immediate movement towards the dining room, but the door was locked and through its glass panels we could see the rows of tables laid for breakfast. The comfies ~~seemed~~ to mock us.*

The sun was shining brightly through the big windows on the van, bristly and red-eyed faces of the dozen or so dickheads who had not gone to bed. I saw Arthur and Hal staring at me and I found myself staring back at them, and we came to identical conclusions simultaneously---we must look as horrible and haggard-looking as the others! We decided to have a wash and shave before breakfast despite it meaning the loss of our places in the queue.

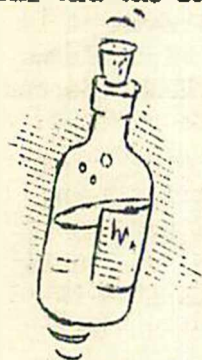
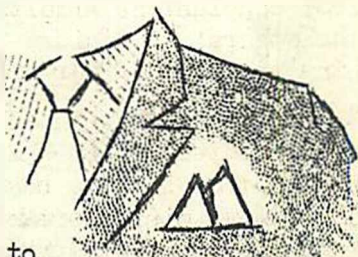
We went to Arthur and Chuck's room. Arthur, who had a devil in him since about 1939, immediately shook Chuck awake and told him the time. Chuck misunderstood, bounced out of bed and began dressing madly, shouting "Eleven o'clock! Eleven o'clock! I've missed breakfast again....!" When Arthur explained that it was only seven we had to rescue him and take him to our room. While Hal and I freshened up Arthur, who had never seen a Schultze's asleep before, was completely fascinated. He disappeared suddenly into his own room and returned with Chuck and a lemonade bottle full of vodka and lime juice. Apparently he wanted to hold a wake.

The events of that Sunday morning and afternoon have gone muzzy. Not that I was tired, mind you. Far from it. My mind was clear and alert and I was in fine physical shape but for a tendency for my legs not to do what they were told. People

*A dusty answer, if there ever was one.

were wont to remark on the number of times I ran into door jambs or went upstairs on my knees. I do remember, however, noting with sorrow the number of fans with whom I had shared the night's vigil who had gone to sleep in easy chairs despite the deafening background music of the taped jazz concert. Ellis Mills was unashamedly snoring with his mouth open, but Willy Weber was pretending to be awake while sneaking a sleep behind a propped-up newspaper. We woke him up, informed him that we were on to his little game and let him go back to sleep. It seemed that Mal, Arthur and I were the only ones who were holding out. It is a proud and dozy thing....

I can remember the Silverbergs coming in, and Bob sneering and waving a copy of The Times, stating that he was Top People and above walking on his hands. He then lifted a Kleenex which had been left lying on the table, folded it carefully and put it in his pocket, remarking casually, "I'm a completist". Then there was the time Arthur Thomson got lost looking for a milk bar and I had to turn Kensington Gardens around the other way before he found himself again. After lunch there was the ceremony of St. Fanthony, a truly imposing piece of farmish pageantry, followed by a selection of farmade films that ranged from very good to brilliant. The Tea Drinking Contest was cancelled and a really amazing demonstration of hypnotism followed, all of which deserved description in detail, but Sunday was a rather telescoped day for me. George & I went out for tea and met Mr & Mrs Harry Harrison. Harry, who wrote "Rock Diver", looks as if he might have come from a long line of German generals and his voice is strictly from broken glass, but he is one of the nicest people I've met. His wife is a small, delicately beautiful woman who to my mind fits exactly the expression "A perfect doll". They have a 3-year-old little boy, well-mannered and by American movie standards atypical, who was with them at the Convention. We talked mostly about men's fashions and the IRA.



Arthur had to start work in the morning and was taking leave of us---Mal, Sheila, Steve and I, that was. He had brought the vodka and lime juice to give to us, stating that he was afraid Chuck might run amok on it. Mal immediately started pouring out farewell drinks into tooth glasses, and had two half-tumblers filled before we could convince him that we weren't drinking that stuff. When even Sheila declined he knocked back both shots himself, stating that he didn't want to throw it away in case it ate a hole in the sewer pipes. Arthur left and we went down to see the film, Mr Wonderbird.

At one point during the shpwing Mal remarked that he was feeling woozy. I replied that this was understandable. He was, after all, fighting a bottle: the vodka was winning and he was woozing. Sheila kicked me and asked Mal to take her back to her hostel.

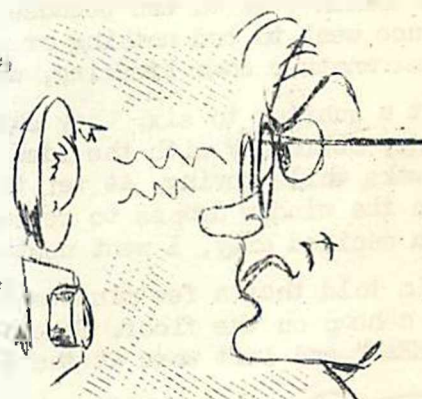
After the film events took a hectic turn when Ellis Mills invited practically everybody* up to Room 64 for a party. When I arrived the place was packed shoulder to shoulder and two deep, and intoxicating-type beverages were being passed out including a fanged and taloned liquid---some of the Polish 140-proof white spirit which had been used in the St. Fanthony investiture, I believe---which made all other drinks seem soft. The room was so smoke-filled that Weber was using an

*Including Mr & Mrs John W. Campbell. JWC didn't come of course, but was I heard delighted to have been asked. In America it seems the fans don't invite him to parties.

infra-red flash...or maybe that was his nose * A skiffle group had got itself organised on a bed, the ensemble comprising three guitars, a hat box and an enamel thingummy found under a bed.*The noise, especially after the singing started, was hideous. Shortly after it had driven Man and myself down to the lounge, along with another few fans interested in retaining their sense of hearing, the noise-makers were evicted. Apparently Ellis had had the bad luck to get a room next to that of the hotel receptionist, who had not had any sleep for nearly as long as Mal and me. There was no unpleasantness over the incident, because the receptionist was a nice girl and nobody wanted to make her miss her sleep.***

It had been a very successful party until things had got out of hand, and we all assured Ellis of that. The main thing I remember from it was Mal and I and Silverberg demonstrating the art of the duello using the Psneer weapon: we made the momentous discovery that (a) the only defence against the psneer was to cross one's eyes and (b) the only person present who could psneer with his eyes crossed was Silverberg. Also at that party an intelligent discerning young American called Whyte—with a 'y'—asked for my autograph and called me Sir. I became suddenly aware of my three brownish-grey hairs, but it was nice egoboo even so.****

Later in the lounge we found ourselves in a group composed of Ethel Lindsay, Walter, Madeleine, Ellis Mills and a few hazy other people. We were carrying ourselves with the conscious superiority of persons who have shunned sleep for some 40 hours or more. We psneered a little, practising our technique. At this point Wally Weber arrived complete with camera and asked what we were doing. We told him it was a new and subtle weapon we were developing for beds and things, and he said he would like to photograph it. We psneered at full strength, in unison, into his flash. Wally collapsed in a heap on the floor. Struggling weakly to his feet he held his camera to his ear and shook it gently. "Hah," he said sadly, "Subtle? Rattle rattle. Subtle. Hah hah." It was about this time that the others took an interest in the sneer as a weapon and began to suggest developments; the long-range sneer, the shot-gun sneer, the delayed-action sneer, the Intercontinental Ballistic Sneer, the International Standard Sneer, preserved in perspex at the Smithsonian Institute and so on. The lowly sneer became the Psneer and the science of Psneerics came into being. We explained it all to Bob Silverberg later and he solemnly vowed his intention of selling it to Campbell.



ROUND ABOUT 4AM ON MONDAY MORNING I began to feel definitely tired. I could tell because of the way I kept missing words--whole sentences sometimes--out of the conversation, by the increasing frequency with which my eyelids thudded shut, and by the greater feats of physical strength necessary to get them open again.

*wally did so much walking on beds I suggested next day the Convention Committee were going to dispense with admission tickets and merely examine people's faces for his footprints. Madeleine pointed out he was wearing shoes. "Yes," said Wally, "I didn't want to get my feet dirty."

**Roscoe has given me strength to resist this temptation.

***Not that way, anyway.

****Doesn't seem to have occurred to James he might have been getting documentary evidence he spelled his name differently.

Except for Arthur Thomson it was the same group who had talked through the previous night and morning, though I think Mal and I were the only ones who had not been to sleep since Friday night. It was Wally Weber and Ellis Mills who, with 45 minutes and 2 hours sleep under their belts respectively and thus bright-eyed and alert, were making with the sparkling conversation, Mal and I being content merely to nod now and then. Fortunately we managed to stiffen up again before our faces hit the table. I tried everything to stay awake, even going as far as mixing a double Tonic and Disprin. A couple of times Mal and I dragged ourselves up to our room to sneer at the beds, but we stopped doing it about 4.30 because the beds were beginning to snore back. Schultheis was snugly dead in bed again.

Round about 5 o'clock, so the bleary-eyed witnesses tell us, Messrs Ashworth & White were really having it tough. Apparently Mal would collapse forward and I would nudge him awake, then I would succumb and he would do the same for me. Rather like those little Swiss figures that bow in and out of fancy barometers. Mal just couldn't go to bed because he had to catch a bus at 8am and he knew that if he once went to bed nothing or nobody would shift him out of it. I merely wanted to see another dawn breaking, which proves what a poetic soul I've got.

At a quarter to six, they say, I was walking up and down the lounge, obviously with the idea that it was easier to pretend to be awake while moving. At ten to six I was observed to pull aside the window drapes to reveal a sky which was still dark--but a decided grey. I went upstairs.

I'm told that a few minutes later Mal rolled out of his chair into a heap on the floor. Somebody pinned a notice to him reading "FAKERN" and left word at the desk to wake him up for his bus.



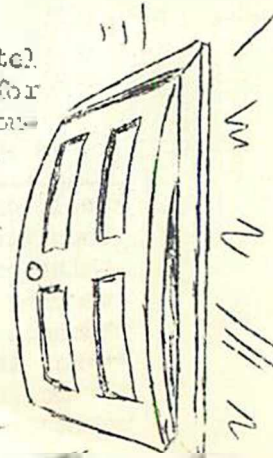
I awoke four hours later with a note from Mal pinned to my chest denouncing me for having taken the room key to bed with me so that he had had to go to all sortsof trouble to break in. He added some stuff about how nice it was meeting me and the other members of Irish Fandom, and maybe at Kettering next year....

That was the tone of the rest of the day. Through the business session that morning, the question panel and the Psionics talk---handled interestingly by John W. Campbell with occasional witty interjections by the redoubtable Eric Frank Russell---there was a feeling of breaking up. People had left and were leaving constantly. It was a sorry time. Some people were different, of course. Arthur

Thomson had found that the convention had made him unfit for work and had rejoined the proceedings early on Monday morning.

At about 7pm the Bulmers, the Willis's and myself left the hotel to visit Brockham House, Arthur & Olive having invited us there for supper. We had a very good time, but as I found myself nodding constantly when I forgot to keep pinching myself, I pleaded fatigue and left, planning to be back at the hotel in bed about 11.30.

Hah! Frank & Beile Dietz had invited me to their party and I thought it only polite to tell them I was sorry I couldn't go. But to apologise I had to join the party, and after I'd done that I found I most definitely did not want to leave again. There were some films of American conventions shown, then Ted Carnell's movies taken while he was over there last year. He also showed an unfinished

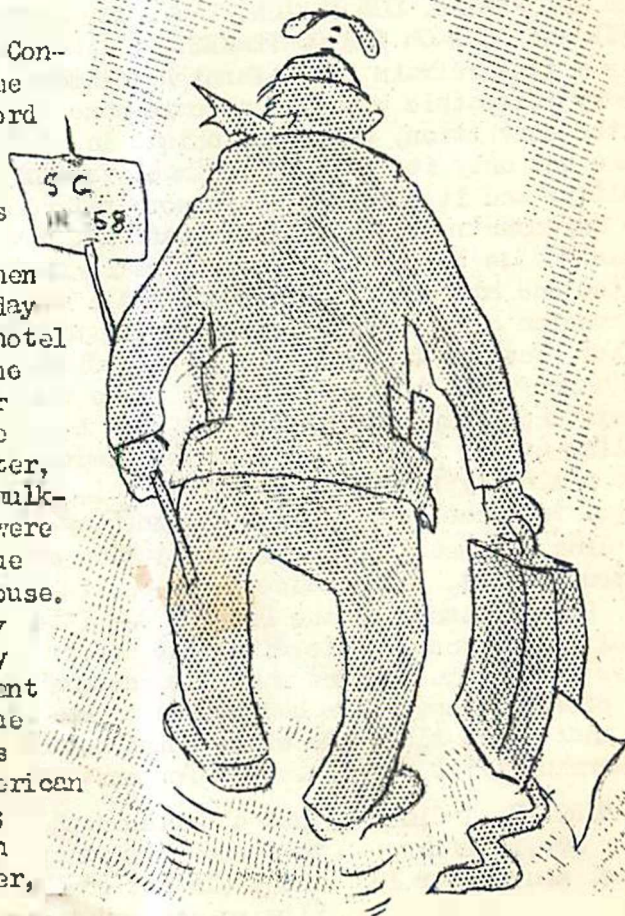


travel-type film he was working on featuring the sights of London, which displayed a photographing and editing ability which shook me. After this he produced his movie camera and nothing would satisfy him but a long lingering shot of Barbara Silverberg's kneecaps. Bob Silverberg, unwilling I suppose to offend a source of revenue, agreed to her displaying the lower half of her legs. However, so that Carnell in later years should not extract too much lascivious delight from this shot, Bob and I, who were sitting on either side of Barbara, also displayed kneecaps. Then Bob went one better by rolling up his sleeves.

Robert Silverberg, you may or may not know, is the only person known to grow a long straggly beard on each forearm. In his case forearm is warmed, not warmed.

After all my good resolutions it was 4.30 when I went to my room. Steve Schultheis, who had also been at the party, was just going to sleep. I kept him half awake until 5.30 telling me what had happened during my absence at the Thomson's. I must have been very tired because I can't read my notes now, but apparently a lot of people said nice things about the Committee, there was a little presentation to Frank & Belle Dietz, and Harry Harrison appeared with some sort of petition involving the payment of Dave & Ruth Kyle's fare home as a wedding present. Ted Tubb conducted his one and only auction of the Convention. I'm really sorry I missed that.

ON SECOND THOUGHT I'm not sure that the Convention did end on Monday night. The time Wally Weber and I lost ourselves in Oxford Circus station and searched in vain for Hither Green (a surface station) in the Underground system, even going so far as to try to buy a ticket there, was of a piece with the happenings at the Con. When we returned from the Bulmers' that Tuesday there were still groups of fans in the hotel lounge, talking and laughing far into the night, and on Wednesday morning, an hour before I was due to fly home, I met some fans for the very first time. A week later, as I was starting to write this, Rory Fulkner, Boyd Raeburn and Steve Schultheis were in Belfast. There were parties in Oblique House, the Berrysidence and the White House. At ours Rory shocked and delighted us by sneering with her eyes crossed, the only pity being that Silverberg was not present to make a contest out of it. Even now the spirit, the feeling, hangs on. One keeps expecting someone---a late returning American fan perhaps---to drop in on us suddenly; then the Fifteenth World Science Fiction Convention, the very best convention ever, will flare up again.....



FINAL FootNote!

WALT
WILLIS

That distant thumping sound you hear is me beating my breast in remorse. In case you don't know the remorse code, the message is that I'm sorry about the title I inflicted on James's conreport. For those of you who are happily innocent of the more sordid manifestations of abnormal psychology, I had better explain first that this World Convention was the Fifteenth, and the French for fifteen is 'quinze'. (I'm sure even Jean Linard knows of the Kinsey Report.) Also that, although James unfortunately omitted to mention it, an extraordinary number of people lost their voices after the Convention, and quinsy is a disease affecting the throat. So there: in the immortal words of James himself on a previous such occasion "It's not good, but it's obscure."

The only excuse I can offer is that I did try very hard to think of something else. Other potential titles included MEANWHILE BACK IN THE OTHER LOUNGE, OLDE WORLDECON, SWEET FIFTEEN, THE RETREAT FROM MOSKOWITZ, KINGS COURT AND COMMONERS, FIER AND PSNEER, CON FUSION, YNGVI WAS A LOUNGE, THE WORLDECON THE FLASH AND THE DEVIL and DUST ON THE CONFLAKES. We liked the last one best, thinking it would make a fine refrain for a farmish folksong, but Tucker stole it from us in some sneaky telepathic way. In any case none of them seemed to really sum up the mood of the Convention, which was unique in so many complex ways. You want something to evoke not only its casual, relaxed, friendly atmosphere but its climactic, historic quality, and it should contain some references to the fantastic environment, like the unreconstructed hotel and staff and that corridor-like convention hall, so obviously made by knocking several small rooms together. (I don't know what the one at the end had been, but my seat had a hole in the middle.) But the most important impression of all was how wonderfully the European and American fans blessed together. Towards the end I asked Ving Clark what had struck him most strongly and his answer was "how wonderful it is to talk to people I'd never seen, and have them understand because they have the same background." That was just the way I remember feeling at the Chicon. After a few minutes it was hard to believe these people were nominally foreigners. We felt we'd known them all our lives...or at least, we wanted to. Some day, we must all meet again. The best thing is that we can say that not from the usual post-con frustration of having failed to talk to the people you wanted to meet, but because those people are now friends whom you want to meet again. Partly thanks to the Program Committee and partly thanks to that much maligned hotel (bless you, Bobbie Wild) the affair was a stupendous social success. I remember fearing beforehand what the postcon reaction might be---you know the way every previous convention has seemed to wipe out a section of fandom, and here was one that could blast the whole thing out of existence---but there seem to have been no harmful after effects. Take for instance the testimony of

SID BIRCHBY, 1 Gloucester Ave., Levenshulme, Manchester 19

What a Worldecon that was! I feel like a neofan after going to a show like that. So many Big Names I never met half of them. (In any case, I couldn't very well bust around saying, "I'm so-and-so" to everyone. Sooner or later I'd have made a horrible boob. As it was, I stood three double whiskies to a TV cameraman by mistake.)

Well, here I am, full of Sams of wonder. What should I

do now: I've written up my conreport, stuck all my snapshots in the album, written toady letters to all the faneds I met, and I have a half built psionics machine downstairs. Things have come to the big let-down.

Maybe what fandom needs is an after-sales service. I heard so many statistics from Sam Moskowitz about his readership survey that maybe he has one going already. A sort of post-Con Service & Repairs Department, to stop that fannish spirit from evaporating. If he has, here's one potential customer already. Sam, Sam, speak to me! ('Sam, Sam, pick off the Moskowitz'? Sorry, Americans, English joke.) I am a male reader from Column 4, subhead 2 of your survey chart. What should I do with my sense of wonder?

A pity we didn't get together more, but with a gathering that size, it was difficult to keep the rooms still, didn't you notice? And those continual earth-tremors, too. You realised, I take it, that if I was lying flat on the deck sometimes it was on account of the earth-tremors? (Next time, wear a namebadge reading 'Clifford D. Seismic'.)

However I did have the pleasure of meeting you and Madeleine, and I hope that we shall meet again. It was just as you said in CONTACT: a small group met, talked and formed into other groups, leaving behind in its members the glow of a pleasant conversation and the thought: "I really must keep in touch with s-and-so now that we've finally met".

You know, I hadn't realised until then, what an entity Irish Fandom was! I mean that in no disparaging sense, look you, nor am I particularly given to flattery. I can do no better than quote from some notes I made during the Convention. These were on various topics and aspects with which I had been impressed. Among the notes I find the following: "Compulsive fanning during Con; rapt fans in corners typing airletters (conreps?); the fannish chores in background---continuous costing? TAFF meetings: Irish Fandom's cohesion like the still centre of a whirlpool (cf vortex of centrifugal pump at Olympia)".

I never enjoyed myself more at any Cons. to coin a Goldwynism, it was, for a brief moment, epoch-making.

We now come to H18, which I should have written about long since. (Don't worry, Sid. Some people actually haven't written yet!) It was an exceptionally bright and bouncy issue, I thought, and full of fannish cheer--Bill Temple's Flat Episode especially. Coming straight to the letter column, I notice Archie Mercer expressing disbelief in Eric Frank Russell, which is like not believing in Blog. Personally, as one who had hoped to meet Archie at the Convention--well, he was booked to occupy one third of our room--I am entitled to doubt his existence. Believe me, many a silent tear was shed onto the forlorn off-white pillow labelled 'Archie' that weekend, as we stood, or leaned, round the empty bedside. And I had brought him a special present, to be handed over at a solemn ceremony---a gramophone record entitled "Beside My Caravan" with a chunk out of it.

The record, not the caravan, clunks.

(Before we go on with the readers' letters proper (or, in some cases, improper) I'd like to say that although James has taken over this Hyphen, as he does every five years, there is one regular contributor that Hyphen would not be the same without.



For tradition's sake I'll take an extract from one of his letters and call it

THE GLASS BUSHEL

Bob Shaw, 209-27th Ave.
SE, Calgary, Alberta,
Canada



The other month it dawned on me that I was pretty ignorant about poetry, so I set to at the local library and began a planned study. My first step was to make a list of a hundred of the major English poets, noting the dates of their births and deaths. This I set out in the form of a chart to the scale of 2 1/2" to the century, starting in the 14th century and coming up to the present day almost. Each man got a line about a sixteenth of an inch thick representing his life span. This was to give me a picture of English poetry in a form where I could glance at any poet and see at once where he came into the scheme of things, who were his contemporaries and things like that. It made up into a very beautiful thing, but as I was completing it I noticed something very strange. I had kept the chart

symmetrical as best I could and in its final form it was exactly the shape of a modern space rocket!

I felt like one of those characters in a story who is sorting through miscellaneous data of some kind and all of a sudden discovers some world-shaking truth. The V2 shape was there perfectly, complete with the wide base fins and the smaller ones about halfway up. This was the sort of thing that impressed Charles Fort. Just think of all those poets being born, writing, dying; and the end result of it all being the silhouette of a star ship...

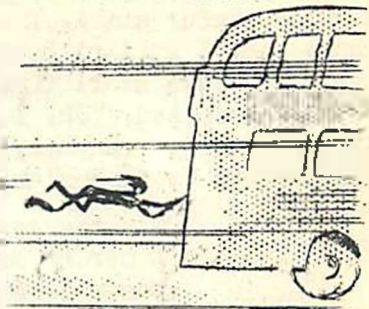
Saw your little piece about lighting coal fires in Abas 10. I wish I had known about the Willis Barbecued Coal Method so that it could have been included. I am casting about for other subjects for similar monographs at present but I haven't come up with anything really suitable. I was considering one on how different people hop on and off buses but the buses out here all have sneaky-type doors which remain closed when the bus is moving, and the people here wouldn't have the necessary frame of reference to appreciate it. It seems a pity though that the Herby McGill technique should remain in obscurity. He was a book-keeper from Ballymena who could not get it into his head that when jumping off a fast-moving bus the trick is, by kicking and pushing away from the back of the bus, to discard as much forward momentum as possible before hitting the ground. He always leapt from the side, which is something the real bus hopper never does. The bus stop was about 100 yards past our office and it was right outside the office that Herbie and I always made our jumps. Using a really powerful kick and push I used to kill speed perfectly and hit the ground at walking pace, but Herbie, doubtless taken by the idea of slowing down gradually, used to hop off sideways at the same time but retain his grip on the rail and run alongside the bus right up to the stop. The first part of this run was made at tremendous speed during which time Herbie presented the appearance of a huge rag which had accidentally been snagged and was flapping about in the wind. What a sight!

Then there was Campbell, who could not understand the theory of relative speeds and decided that as he jumped away from the bus he should face away from the bus and thus hit the ground moving in the right direction relative to the direction he jumped in. In vain I pleaded with him but like a philosopher denying the existence of the matter he was made of, he put his plan into action the next time we were on a bus. Bravely he chose a moment when the bus was doing about twenty and leaped off straight out from the back. At this point I averted my eyes and when I next



looked, although the bus had gone some distance from the point where Campbell left it, he was lying on his back on the ground almost below the platform. I got off and helped him to his feet and we found that he was almost unhurt except that the back of his raincoat was worn away in places where he had been bouncing along the road in the wake of the bus.

Then there was Dare Devil Gwynne who boasted that he could hop onto a bus at any speed. I still recall vividly the evening on which he and I spotted our bus nearing a distant stop up the road from us. I ran as fast as I could and managed to board it as it was pulling out; then, to my horror, I saw that Gwynne had hardly moved at all and was leaning nonchalantly on a post in the middle distance. I stayed on the platform to see what would happen. The bus was doing about thirty when it passed Gwynne. He threw himself at it and, misjudging its speed, barely managed to grab the back rail---a far different manoeuvre from the rigid-wrist grip on the side rail which swings you onto the bus with no effort at all and which he had meant to do. For a few frantic seconds he tried running to keep his feet but the bus was too fast and he found himself with two hands on the rail and one elbow on the platform being trailed along the ground. Women and children screamed, pedestrians pointed, showers of sparks flew from the sparkles in his shoes, his cap blew away and was lost, but in the midst of all this fury of sight and sound Gwynne's face was quite calm. It looked up at me from its lowly position several inches above the platform and I looked down at it and, in that moment, Gwynne and I communicated. His eyes seemed to say; "You were right, Bob. I'll never do this again." What a strange little instant of time, what a perfect little memory!



KEN POTTER, 45 Worcester Ave., Bowerham, Lancaster

This piping voice from the almost dead indicates that Lancaster Fandom is practically out of the War Office's sphere of influence, and revived again.

After a harrowing wedding, attended by the Ashworths, and after a week or so of absolute gafia in Paris, Irene and I are now back in the fray and eager to get another Brenn-schluss out.

(I had to print that for the description of the honeymoon... 'Irene' is of course the beautiful and virtuous English rose who as Irene Core used to write nearly as good as Burbee.)

RAY NELSON, c/o American Express, Paris

I have just finished reading The Harp Stateside... That girl who gave you such a bad time at the Chicon is now an arty advance guard poetess in San Francisco. For a while she was trying to pass herself off as a lesbian, but when that didn't work she married another advance guard poet and gave birth to a number of lovely little battles. They are separated now.

I lived with her for a week when I was out there, and a nuttier chick I never did see. She was on her Lesbian period at the time, and in order to please her I had to wear girls' nightgowns and perfume in bed with her. Finally I had to throw her out because

her dog, Pipa, was not housebroken. As we parted I asked her, "Do you have any message for me to carry back to the fan world?" and she said, "Yes, tell Harlan Ellison our engagement is off."



FRANK SMITH

613 St. Western Rd.
Glasgow W2
Scotland

I'm beginning to suspect the impeccability of your taste when first I see you maintaining that all femme fans are pretty and second, in the current Woz (OMPAmag), that you actually prefer small, firm breasts. When I saw that I was so aghast that I said to Betty, "Ghod, Willis must be slipping. He says he prefers small firm breasts, like Sandy Sanderson." To which she replied, "Oh, I didn't know Sandy Sanderson had small, firm breasts."....Anyhow, I've reported you to the Californian connoisseur, Mr Wm. Rosler, so be warned.

(In the Woz which started the current controversy in OMPA I merely suggested that Jayne Mansfield and some of her bosom pals were deformed. As for Rotsler's girls, it's obvious that they all live in low-G conditions.

Enquiries about joining OMPA should be addressed to The President, AV Clarke, address the same as



H.P. SANDERSON
7 Inchmery Rd.
CATFORD,
London SE6

Dear Walt, (Tee hee, we know something about you.) I side with Chuck. In fact I would go even further and say that I know of only one truly beautiful woman in fandom, but then I'm prejudiced. (Evans no, I wouldn't say that.) If pressed to place someone in second place I might nominate Pat Milnes. (nee Pat Doolan. Now, Frank Milne, will you renew your sub?) It might be of interest to note, in passing, that John W. Carr has no comments to make on the subject.

I was very amused to read that Eric the Bent had heard that EFR had caused a stink. One tends to worry a little about the mental level of his correspondents. Still, he has only himself to blame really. He will insist on writing those peculiar articles of his sounding off against sex in sf. (Peculiar because each one is full of the stuff.) My main objection to the Post Office seeing EFR's article was prompted by the thought that if it did then the source might be dried up--and I for one would be very sorry!

(Sandy's comments were of course made before the Worldcon...

I thought Eric Bentcliffe's high moral tone was just to give a guise of respectability to the worthy project of a series of pornographic anthologies, like vice exposures in the Sunday papers. The trouble was he hadn't any worth-while material to work with. The articles should have been called Eric, or Little by Little.)

ALAN C. EIMS

Rte 1, Box 159
La Center,
Kentucky, USA

I have already torn p.24 from my copy, just as have many high-principled fans the world over. I am sure--fact is, I know, my former true love will get a hell of a kick out of it, whether she loves me or not, so it's now winging its way through the US mails along with my latest dreary love-letter. In the next letter goes 'Bliss Krieg'... damndest part of it is that she doesn't have a wardrobe in her bedroom. I've been practising with the refrigerator in the kitchen but she's been rather too frigid lately anyway. (Besides, you don't want your u der-carriage iced up.)

I firmly disagree with your views on female fans, mainly because I have never encountered any science-fiction girls at all---the only two I ever knew who read it did so because I asked them to (that was before I developed a better line of course). All girls are egocentric, ugly ones stay home, and the ones who get wrapped up in fandom enough to attend conventions are likely to be pretty intelligent or they wouldn't have.

(And now a last minute surprise: the welcome return of another old Hyphen favourite.)

GRUNCH

DIGEST

GATIA HAD ME IN ITS DREADED GRIP

As Walt said.....surely you remember "No. 10?....I was compelled to withdraw from actifanning for a while. It was no use, tho'; I had to get a job and marry the girl too.

Love makes the world go round, but after you're over that dizzy feeling it's rather pleasant, the only trouble being that one can't devote the usual three weeks to composing GRUNCH. Twenty minutes between washing-up and Doing A Job Around the House is the maximum permitted, and at that you pile up enough guilt complexes to reach from Havelock Ellis to Sigmund Freud.

FANDOM GOES TO THE LAW

British actifan circles spent much energy on the World Con., and we're only now starting to recover. It was dream-like, meeting Moskowitz, 4e, Silverberg, Campbell, Beam Piper, Raeburn, Schultheis, Madle and all the rest, tho' the dream grew nightmarish at the end. This was the snafu with the Hotel - "what will happen when Conventions run out of Hotels?" - and in case you've heard rumours here's the CONFIDENTIAL-type dirt.

When the Committee booked the Hotel, the Manager was French, bearded, and brimming over with joi de vivre. He entered thoroughly into the spirit of things. Drunk with excitement, he even tried reading s-f, to get prepared for fans. He thought an S-F Con was devoted to s-f.

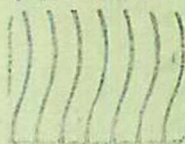
Unfortunately, some weeks before the Con. the Hotel changed hands, and the new Manager was a mundane type. Professionally willing, but not co-operative in a friendly way, we felt. Came the Con; on the Saturday night Secretary Bobbie Wild was casually informed that fans for whom we'd reserved beds hadn't booked in. As we'd booked all available beds offered, this was a shock. Omitting details, about 16% of the bookings for 3 nights failed to show up. Worse, altho' the old Manager had understood we'd booked for 3 nights, the new, on the basis of a preliminary letter of enquiry, wanted payment for the full hotel for a fourth night also.

To be presented with an unforeseen bill for £160 on the last day of an otherwise successful Con is a mite unsettling. We paid £100 under protest, went back to our various homes to sort things out. We can establish that the Hotel wasn't booked for four nights, also through some incredible confusion on their books we're due for about £30 back - if we can get it. Letters to the Hotel have produced no answers, and the matter is in the hands of a solicitor (lawyer to the US readership).

We've managed to collect from many of those who didn't appear, or in some cases have sufficient reasons for not asking for recompense. On the basis of hard cash we scraped through without being in debt or going around with the hat, but that's all. None of the debts of honour have been settled, including a considerable sum representing London Circle Funds which had been placed at the disposal of the Committee, and none of the Committee members have been re-imbursed for expenditure at the Con.

That's the position as of the middle of January, verified with Bobbie. But...we did have fun - and made sure it was SOUTH GATE IN '58.

A Uinç Clarke



Len Moffatt

10202 Belcher

Downey

California

USA

HYPHEN No. 19 January 1958
SITTING HILLS
170 Upper Meadows
Belfast, N. Ireland

PRINTED MATTER (REDUCED RATE)

WHERE WAS OSMOSIS WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT? IF THAT'S THE MANAGER, WHO'S THE LITTLE MAN HE PAYS TO RUN AROUND LOOKING WORRIED?... THAT HAND CARVED FLINT THINGUMY AS YOU CALL IT EXCITES MY SENSE OF WONDER.... I THINK I'LL GO AND LIE DOWN IN MY ROOM AND LISTEN TO SAM MOSKOWITZ.... JOHN W. CAMPBELL CORNERED ME IN THE LOBBY... SHE DOESN'T LIKE LOW JOHNS--SHE WANTS ONE WHERE SHE MEETS A FAIRLY GOOD CLASS OF PEOPLE.... IN THIS CONVENTION HALL PEOPLE ARE BOUND TO SPEAK AT GREAT LENGTH... I PREFER WOMEN WAITRESSES TO MEN WAITRESSES.. NO, NO, I DON'T MIND ANYTHING... YOU JELLY ARE ERIC FRANK RUSSELL? YOU LOOK JUST LIKE I'VE ALWAYS IMAGINED-- HUN... IT IS BAD ENOUGH BEING -- FAN WITHOUT PEOPLE STARING AT YOU.... HUN, ISN'T THIS ONE OF THOSE DAYS THAT MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE ALIVE?... I TELL YOU, I JUST WALKED IN AND THE FANS COMFISCATED ME.. I SUGGEST YOU READ A BOOK ON GOOD TASTE... HE FORGOT TO ASK THEIR NAMES--JUST HAVE BEEN THROUGH WORKING FOR GREENBACK... THAT'S THE WORST ABOUT GREENBACK, IT'S IMAGINE--MAY I BORROW A CUP OF MONEY?... LET'S TAKE SCIENCE FICTION AWAY FROM THE PIONEER AND GIVE IT BACK TO THE FANS.... JOHN O'NE IS -- GOOD MAN.... NO MERILEY MARRIOTT? I'M GOING TO ASK KEN FOR MY MONEY BACK.... LAST AMERICAN EDITOR HE HAD OVER HERE WAS BEN MARLEY. SHE KISSED A LOT OF US. WE'RE DEAD OUT OF LOVE THIS TIME... I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR FANS MAKE ME OTHERS LOOK LOUSY. THAT'S BORN OF COURSE, THEY ARE LOUSY.... I AM PETER VORZIMER'S MOTHER... I CAN'T CHALLENGE YOUR DEFINITION OF THE WORD "FUEL" BECAUSE IT ISN'T IN EITHER OF THE DICTIONARIES I POSSESS. (al ashworth, bob silverberg, jls white 2, lton, pat eric frank rus. ell 5, waw 6, rick elsielld, dave whrette, eric bentallife, nate moorcock, geo charters, ktelc, gregg collins, mrs.vorzimer

There'll be a full scale GRUNCH next issue in which Vinp will, among other attractions, publicly eviscerate Mr Patrick Moore on our behalf, a nice long Glass BoShel and, I hope, a thing from Mal Ashworth. Also lots and lots of lovely letters (not counting the one you're just going to write), eleven pages of them already on stencil. The names and addresses of everyone who wrote since the last issue will be printed, whether their letters are quoted or not. No quotes wanted.

The next Hyphen will be published on Thursday 27th February, at approximately 10.1 am. If a box means your subscription has expired. This is just a statement of account and if you're an old friend doesn't necessarily imply that your card is being expelled from the index. It might though, if I haven't heard from you recently. Someone has to pay for the magazine and you've only got one copy to finance.