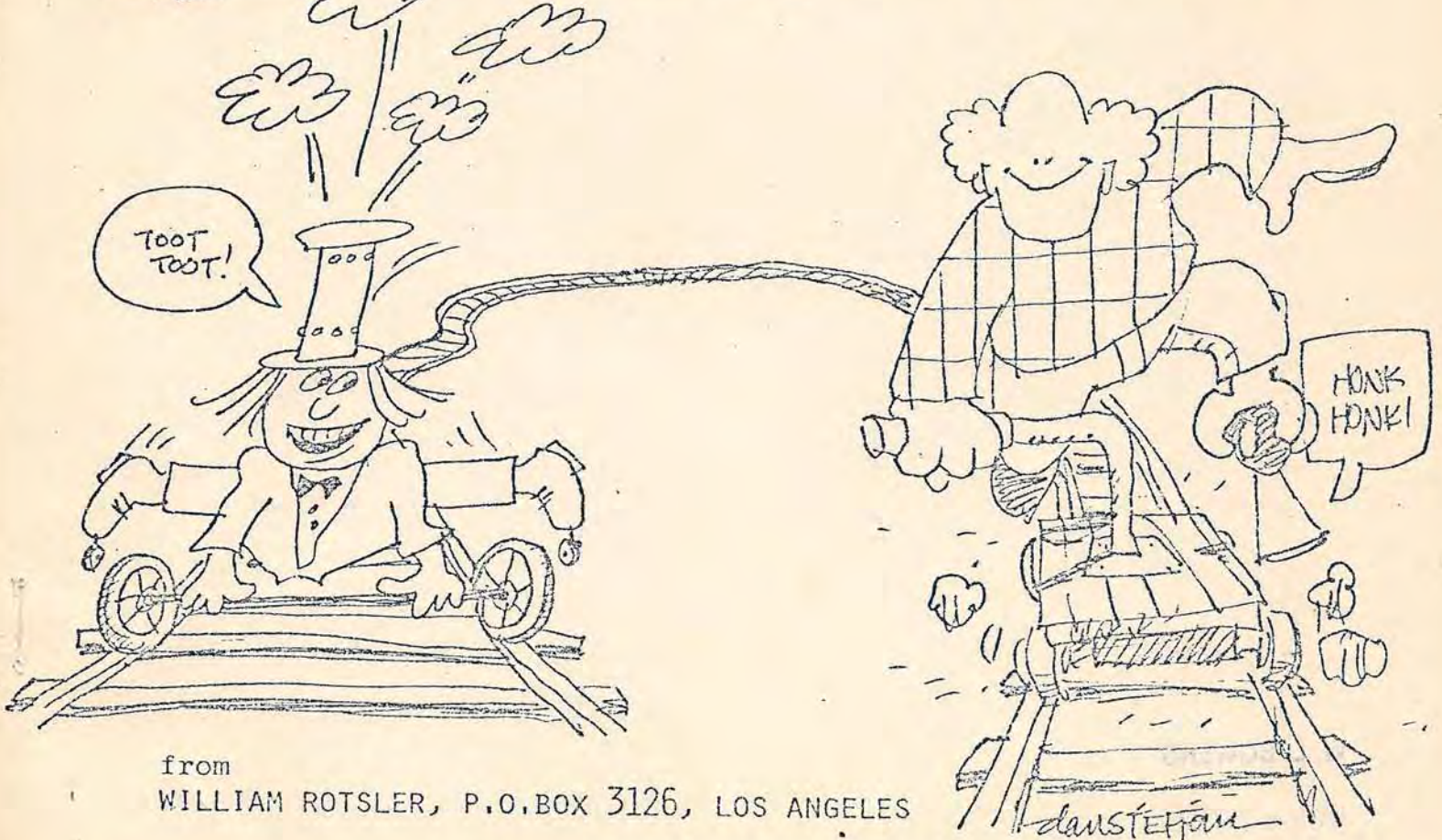


KITIC MAGAZINE



from
WILLIAM ROTSLER, P.O. BOX 3126, LOS ANGELES



ROBERT M. BOWERS



W. L. BOWERS

NOV - 3 1976

PART ONE SEEING AMERICA

TRAVELS WITH BIG RED

In August, 1973, I set out to fulfill a dream. I was to be the Guest of Honor (Fan variety) at the Torcon, the World Con that was to prove to be the largest collection of fans in the history of Mankind to that date. But that wasn't the dream. The dream was that I was going to tour America with a beautiful young lady, a figure model, and take nodd pitchurs of her in all of the beautiful places we came across. Her name was Vincene Wallace.

My relationship with the pretty lady started back in 1967 or so, when I was still doing a lot of naked lady photography and nodd pitchurs. She was about 19 then, with that great mass of thick red hair, her milk-white skin all freckled, and those perfect breasts--so perfect people often thought they were plastic, but they definitely weren't. She was married then, to a guy named Wallace that everyone called Wally because he hated his front name. By the time I had met her most of the Big Time Naked Lady Photographers had shot her and it is usually unfeasible to do singles after that. But I used her in the group nudist mags we (Bill Blackbeard & I) were doing for Earl Kemp & Bill Hamling. They were a lot of fun, just silly-ass and had no sex in them, but a lot of naked folks.

From the first there had been a strong sexual attraction between us, but it was all unvoiced. She was married & I didn't come on to her...but it was there. We were quite friendly. I starred her in a film called HOT LEAD (one of the two I did not write or edit, out of the 26 I did). Just after she and Wally went on the road, with her stripping all over the country, but mostly in the South. Just prior to her leaving she came to see me, to get some acid. I found out later she came over to make love, but was too shy to let it be known. Sigh.

A couple of years later she came back into town and was the maid to Juliet in THE SECRET SEX LIVES OF ROMEO AND JULIET. I had been scheduled to be the still man on that, and accepted a short job as the Prince of Verona, mainly just for kicks. Then the still job was given to Joel Sussman. I asked out, not wanting to bother, as I

had only taken the job because I'd be on the set anyway. But they couldn't find someone else on short notice. It was strange for me, as it was the first time I was on a set where I was not either still man or director. As an actor, with no other responsibilities, I just had fun. Mitch Evans, Vincene, Antoinette "Supertongue" Maynard, and I just played...mostly off camera.

There was a big orgy scene, lots of girls, and I was paired with Vincene. It was wild, with writhing sweaty bodies getting dusty and plastered with straw...a "drunk" went around pouring wine on couples...people would



take a couple of bites out of a peach or an orange then fling it randomly across the set...someone else would pick up the oogle and fling it away...randomly. Chickens were gnawed and thrown...clothing ripped and tossed...and right in front of the camera there was Miss Wallace and I...she nude, me in nothing but very thin tights. Now I don't want to offend you but I must use a technical term here...we were dry fucking. If we hadn't been right in front of the camera, if we had been in the back...well, I think our sex life would have started much sooner.

But still we didn't get together. I used her in some of the silly-ass lesbian mags we did and some of you have seen the Christmas cards I did from that period. Time passed and Vincene went off to be a stripper in Seattle and we exchanged letters occasionally and that was it.

Then in the summer of 1973 she called. Could she come stay with me? She was splitting from her husband. Of course, I said yes and about fifteen minutes after she came in the door we were making mad passionate love on the cut-velvet covering of my waterbed.

Okay, so now I had a model to go traipsing around the country with. She was agreeable and off we went. Our first stop was Las Vegas where we went to a big fancy show where a girl friend of hers had just been appearing in. Then we headed north, to Zion and Bryce Canyons.

We rose early and went out where I shot gorgeous pictures of her, redheaded glory & all, against the rose-red and amber of those pretty, pretty places. We went through Yellowstone and on up into Canada to Lake Louise, shooting nudes everywhere--along streams; in a tram going up to the top of the Rockies, covering up for passing cars; a few feet off tourist trails with the majestic mountains in the background, and so on.

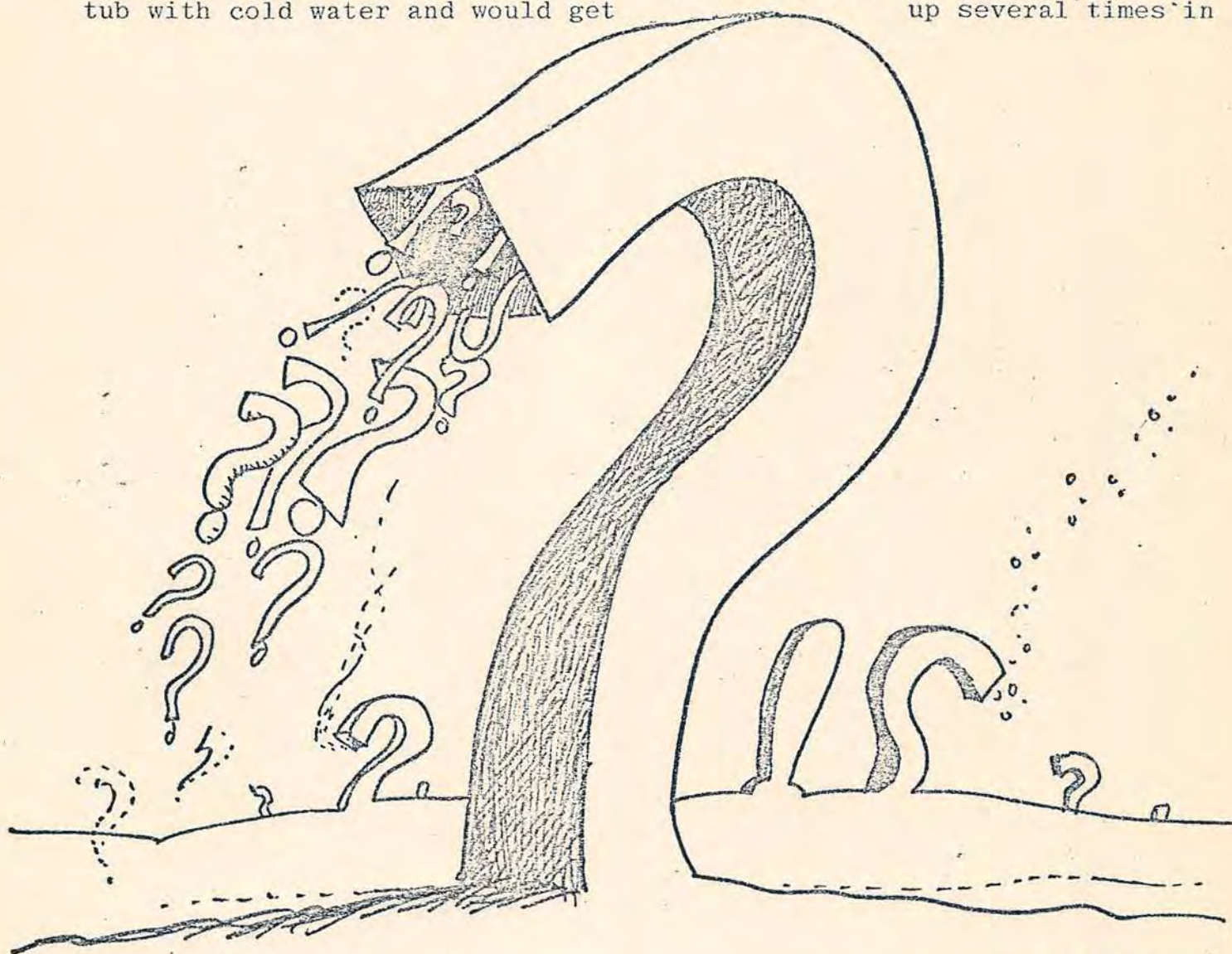
We headed across Canada then down to Chicago, which I hated on sight. We stopped only for lunch and to look at the big Picasso sculpture. The Art Museum was not open or we might have gone, but the city and the people totally repelled me. Everyone seemed covered with running sores, were maimed or twisted, mentally and/or physically. It was disgusting--especially with the contrast in my mind of the nude Vincene, wind blowing her long thick hair, standing on a 1,000-foot cliff edge, or against the red rocks. We pushed on.

All my life I'd heard of New Jersey as a garbage dump and was quite surprised to find the eastern part quite beautiful. It was one of the surprises of the trip. We went into New York, saw Judy-Lynn and Lester del Rey, then went with the Ballantines to their country home. Betty served the best corn on the cob I'd ever had (and we used to raise it in our garden at the ranch!) and was a gracious and expert cook. After a couple of days we pushed on, up through Maine, where we could not get lobster! (It was through the middle, not the coast.) Seems they only had fabled Maine lobster one or two days a week. We wandered around Quebec, which had one part that was very nice and interesting. This was the second time I smuggled booze for the SFWA, by the way. Seems it was cheaper to buy it in Calif. and truck it to the SFWA in Toronto than



to buy it there. I'd smuggled a case of assorted liquor into Canada in the West, then back into USA, now again into Canada. I have a sordid past. Montreal was beautiful, a lovely mixture of old and very nice modern, but there was a convention there and all the rooms were filled. We went west, through a huge lightning storm, and found a motel halfway to Toronto.

It was hot and muggy in Toronto, keying the TROPICAL TORONTO TALES fanzine later on. We were a day early and could only find a hotel a block from the Royal York. It was so hot we filled the bathtub with cold water and would get up several times in



whole

the night to sink into the water, then go back to bed without even drying off. The next day we checked into the York, then started that process known as Con-Going. We had already seen the remains of the World's Fair so we hardly left the confines of the hotel the whole con, which is not unusual.

After three years I really don't remember details, so I'll give it to you in fragments, undoubtedly out of chronological order but who cares?

Vincene was a big hit. She's warm and charming, of course, and sexy, but she definitely felt like a hangerson at first. One night

she confessed something rather sad to me. When she had broken up with her husband she suddenly found she had no friends. They were all his friends. In her youth, she felt, her "friends" were really out to ball her. She suddenly felt very alone. True, my friends accepted her on "Bill Rotsler's girl friend" basis, but she quickly made good friends on her own merits.

One of the highlights was the costume ball, where she appeared wearing silver boots, a silver bikini bottom, a silver mesh thing on her head and a silver net-like blouse, which left her torso bare. I think she was a sensation as Wyoming Magnum, a minor character in Patron of the Arts, which had not been published quite yet.

There was an offensive French cinematographer there. Earlier he had been ordered off the stage as he was really getting into the masquerade too much. When he zeroed in on Vincene he just wouldn't stop. Running the camera right in to her breasts, for example. Now VW was used to being nude on stage and in movies, but there was always a separation, both physical and professional; but at the Con that was gone. Every yoyo in Christendom brought his Brownie Starflash around to go click. Several times she just had enough and I'd hold her. But that cameraman just wouldn't quit. I asked him to cool it and he ignored me. So I reached around and put a big fat thumb right on his lens.

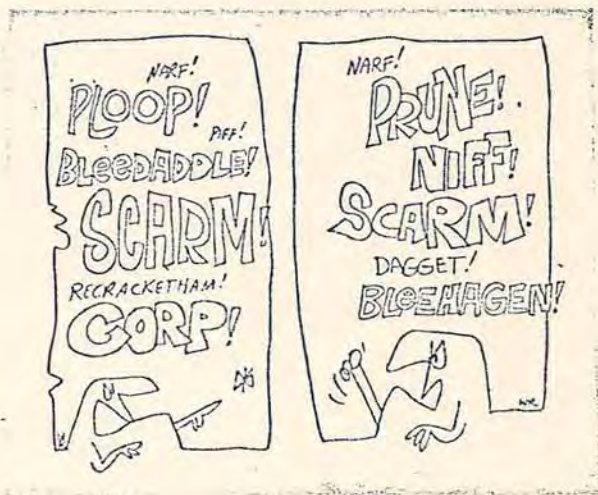
Every other cameraman in the world would have stopped at once, if he had an ounce of professionalism. Never fazed him. I finally had to give him a Spock pinch and tell him, very quietly, that if he didn't knock it off I'd change his sprockets for him.

Vincene struck up a friendship with a depraved looking nun and were much photographed together as the Sacred and the Profane.

We partied and talked, talked and partied. (Who remembers after three years? What great lines are lost--!) Bob Silverberg, VW and I did venture out once, to wander through Tropical Toronto to eat and sightsee. Earlier, getting the van serviced, we had ridden the nifty Toronto subway system, which is really nice.

I bought two pieces of very good Eskimo sculpture and gave Betty Ballantine her choice. As Fan Guest of Honor I felt obliged to go see people & parties I might not ordinarily have done. I figure they don't invite you to hide out with your regular friends.

But eventually came the Big Moment...I had to make a speech.



Now you must understand I had never made a speech before. About 1951 I gave a "talk" on art & sculpture to some woman's club in Oxnard and a few years ago I "talked" at a dinner at the LASFS... and of course, I've been on countless panels. But a speech...jesus.

Although I had two years to prepare I still didn't know until almost just before doing it what I was going to say. Traditionally, the fan guest of honor talked about his years in fandom. But standing up there, looking out at about (literally) 1500-2000 fans, many of whom were sure to be muttering, "Who the hell is he?" I was unsure. I'd typed out a rough, but had folded it. Every time I looked up I lost my place and had to ad-lib. I really don't know what I said. I bought one of those cassettes, later on, to find out just what I had said, but they sent me the wrong one. I guess I'll never know.

But I talked about my friends in fandom and used lines by Sid Coleman & Greg Benford. I also came in second on the Hugo (Pro: type) once again to Poul Anderson, who also won the Nebula the same way. Sigh. Lost out on the fan artist Hugo, too, but that's become traditional.

Asimov won for Best Novel (a book I couldn't read!) and hugged and kissed Vincene. Earlier (I think) when they were introducing all the BNF fans & proz Asimov got me up, stuck a sillyass plastic straw hat on my head and said something like, "Say something dirty." There was a laugh & I don't know if anyone heard my comment to Isaac, which was something like, "I didn't know you wanted your name mentioned." I was not happy with that silly business.

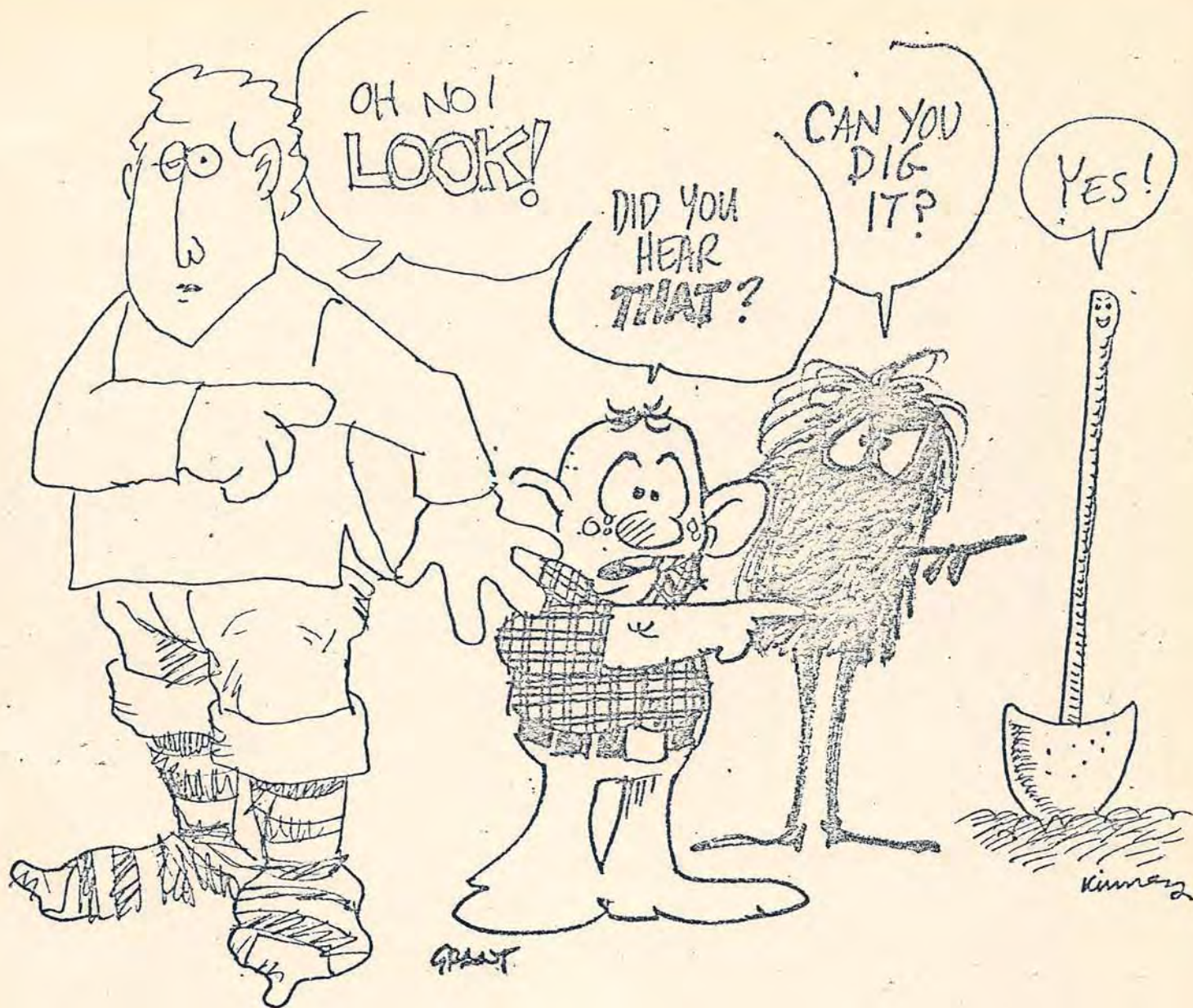


God, looking back now it is all a blur. Eventually the con was over. Vincene and I headed out to Niagara Falls, then down to Philadelphia. The sore throat that started during the Bangquet (oh, let the typo stand) was now a raging illness. She drove us most of the way while I lay like a sick dog in the back of the van, on cushions.

I blame the illness (and traditional stupidity) for what followed. We checked in to the Benjamin Franklin Motel, almost across the street from the Rodin Museum and the Philadelphia Museum, less than a mile from Independence Hall, etc.

I parked 30 feet from the back door, in a well-lighted lot that was said to be patrolled several times a night by the police. I intended to go back down and bring up things, but with all her clothes and mine--more than enough for the 6-weeks the tour was intended, and the suitcases, etc. But I was just too sick. In the morning I was better but

the van wasn't. Everything had been ripped off. All our clothes, a Hasselblad, an original Enzenbacher belt buckle, an original George Barr Nametag-of-the-Month special foldout (the first he'd done), custom made cut velvet jacket, all the film we'd shot so far on the trip (and I'd had it developed in NYC at the cost of \$300), the other Eskimo sculpture, my address book, check book & reading glasses, etc. Also lost was a lovely little reindeer sculpture given to me, privately, as consolation for losing the Hugo, by the Ballantines, the del Reys, Cliff Simak, the Farmers and the Blochs--a most touching and thoughtful



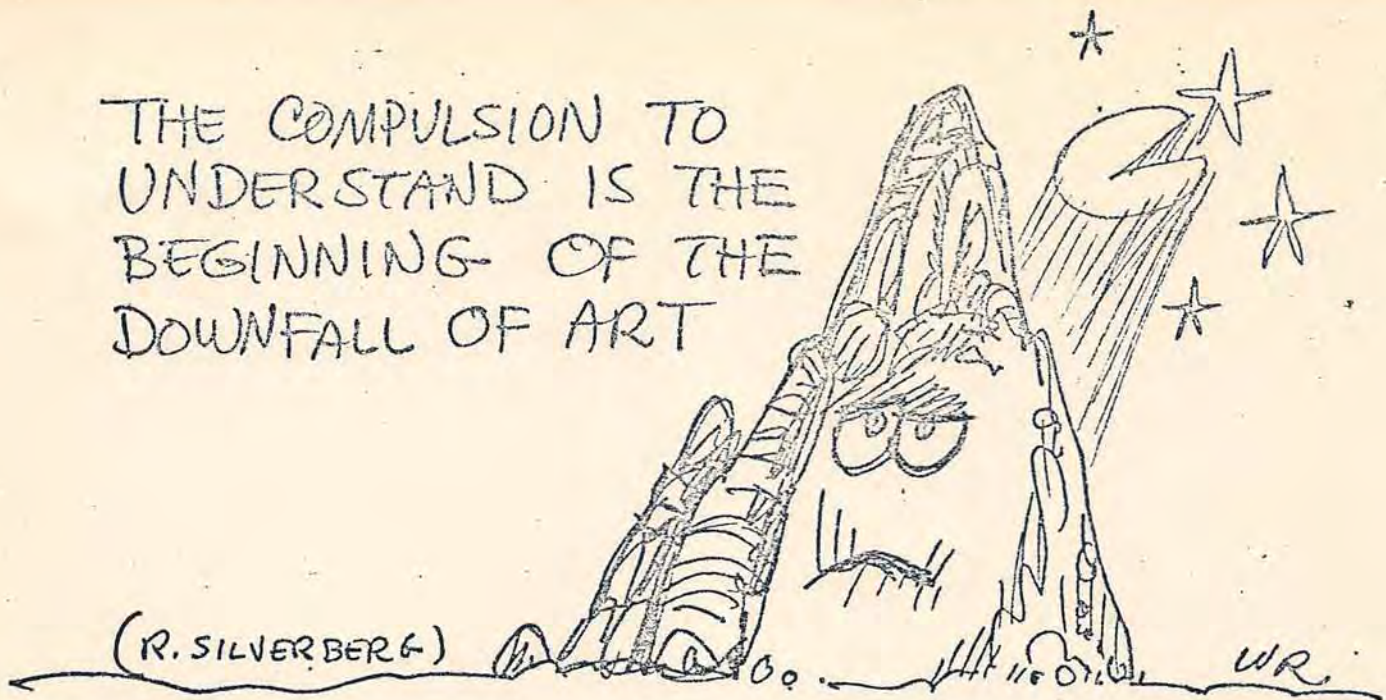
Cooperative drawing done at MidAmeriCon, 1976

gift. Neither Vincene nor I are the type that can walk into a store and get things off the rack. I must look at 200-300 shirts to find one. Many of the shirts lost were custom-made. I lost suits, the luggage, and \$500 cash that I had very carefully concealed in the van. (They really searched it!). Left only our shoes and a t-shirt or two. They even took the dirty laundry.

It was devastating. Haven't really recovered to this day. I keep going to put on a certain shirt or jacket and realize I no longer have it. You see, I took my very best things to the Torcon, too look nice, and so did Vincene. The lost was about \$4,500 worth of stuff and it really set me back. I had intended to go to Europe, but replacing her clothes and mine, new camera, etc (nothing was insured, by the way!) just stopped me dead. Today, in 1976, I'm really just getting out from under.

Anyway, we moped around Philly (the City of Brotherly love...for your goods) looking at a closed Independence Hall, Rodin/Philly Museum, going to fancy restaurants, etc, waiting for Paul to wire money. We had only the soiled clothes from before and Mastercharge. Finally, with

THE COMPULSION TO
UNDERSTAND IS THE
BEGINNING OF THE
DOWNFALL OF ART



Once again a little anachronism, to visually spice up the text...this one uttered at MidAmeriCon speech of G. Barr, when he was talking about understandability in art. Our comments to Bob follow...

cash, we headed back to New York to buy a camera. I had another Hasselblad in Los Angeles, but thought I could recoup the cost of the trip by shooting Vincene, so had to have a camera. ("Shooting" means with a camera, folks.) I also had a hard time getting enough film, and was buying it in one and three roll lots all across the USA, instead of in boxes of 20 at a cut-rate as I do in LA.

We stayed with the del Reys, who were most gracious, then started south. VERTEX was going then and NASA had given Don Pfeil a letter, a sort of Open Sesame to Cape Kennedy. But he had thought not to go, gave me the letter. After we left, he & Linda changed their mind, drove south and ended up with nothing more than the standard bus tour, while we had the VIP treatment.

We drove down through all those Southren states in various states of gloom, fucking like mink, and finally found Disney World. I gotta say it lifted the gloom clouds a little. This eastern version of Disneyland is much better situated, for you approach from across a lake, like you should enchanted kingdoms. Laid out like Disneyland and almost the same, it is hauntingly different...as though you went back to a house you had lived in for years to find things all changed around. I even got some semi-nudes there, on Tom Sawyer's island! (Have I no shame? No.)

We visited with Walt Leibscher & some relatives of his, then took him with us to the Cape. The letter opened doors and we had ourselves a limo, a couple of other guests only, and a guide.

It was strange & wonderful. Standing on the concrete pad where we launched our first sub-orbital flight, it reminded me of a parking lot behind some torn-down building. I got to dig into the voluminous files of photos and to meet the chief photographer there. He told me a sad story. There's a metal sculpture that sits out in the bushes, a tribute to (if I remember correctly) the astronauts that died. He positioned a camera, staying up all night to get Venus rising in a long streak across the early morning sky, right over the monument. They

ART IS THE BEGINNING
OF UNDERSTANDING



(W. ROTSLER)

made it into a postcard...only some engraver thought the streak was a scratch and painted it out. They took us all over, and everywhere we saw the clusters of Ordinary Tourists being shepherded about and felt very special.

We were taken up into the topmost part of the Vehicle Assembly Building, which is really the BIGGEST damn building, on the order of 50 stories plus high. We went up in the fastest elevator I've ever seen, like something out of a s-f movie (well, a sci-fi movie, anyway). The girders just blurred past.

Walking out at that altitude was really exciting. The Apollo-Soyuz capsules, etc were there, under tents filled with nitrogen. But suddenly I saw something that was pure Sense of Wonder. I pointed it out to Walt, who agreed. Remember the scene in Forbidden Planet where they are walking across a sort of bridge and the whole thing of the Krell underground was below & around them? Well, we saw it. There, far below, were three sauntering figures on a bridge, the right direction and location and everything!

We really had fun with Walt and Vincene felt very close to him, confessing once again it was the first time she had made friends on her own, without a lot of sex stuff involved.

Heading west, we stopped at Fort Walton Beach, a lonely stretch of sand near where VW had once worked. Waiting around for a man to go away from his perch on a sanddune we finally got impatient and she stripped and we did all sorts of nudes in the water & sand and--apparently--the guy never looked.

Earlier, we had shot VW around the fort in St. Augustine and in some remote creek back in the tules. We joined some young folk and in a wet t-shirt you could see through, shot more. We found a stripper at a club in Orlando (where VW had once worked, too) and did some nudes of her in her home & out in the swamp. Oh, and VW entered an "amateur" topless contest in that club & won \$50.

But now we were heading across Louisiana and Texas. Stopped to see my ex-brother-in-law in Houston, shot Vincene around the Alamo (she was not nude, but in her tight-fitting bright yellow body shirt you would have thought so!), and on to Pecos, Texas. (We were in Houston the afternoon of the famous Bobby Riggs-King tennis match but wanted to push on.)

We shot nudes of Vincene perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon, in the Petrified Forest, and various pretty spots. She was getting restless to return to LA and get a job, but we felt the circumstances forced us to return to Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park. It was cold now, instead of hot, and she was really chilly out there, practically at dawn, but she is a really trouper and we did some really beautiful things, I think. You'll be seeing some of these

in collages and other ways. (Strangely, I have not offered any of the photographs from that trip for sale. Very odd, in fact. But by this time I was quite emotionally involved with this most charming of ladies.)

We got back to Los Angeles 49 days (7 weeks) after leaving. We stayed with Paul Yurner for a few days, as I had given up my house to make the trip, meaning to get a house upon my return. Vincene & I found a temporary apartment, then after a week or two she got her own place. She drove my van up to Seattle to get furniture and then I flew up to drive back with her. I stayed with the Busbys, but by then our relationship was breaking up. (Vincene's & mine, not the Busbys.) After we got back, after about two months of close contact, we didn't see much of each other. We'd traveled about 14,000 miles together, had a great time, made love in umpteen states and a province or two, experienced mych together, and went on to other things.

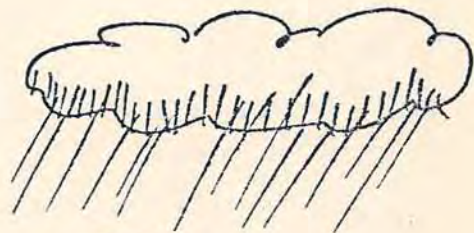
AFTERNOTES

Seattle

Just before Vincene left for/I almost experienced another secret fantasy--me and two beautiful women. I met a gorgeous model named Delphine, who was from France. She saw Vincene, who occasionally has the urge to be bi-sexual. ("Sometimes I just feel like a woman.") Delphine said yes, Vincene said yes! and I was grinning from ear to ear. Two gorgeous ladies, highly skilled sexual experts...and little ol' me. I've set that up in countless movies (and cast myself in some!) but never actually had it happen in Real Life. Two ladies in one day, three in 24 hours, but not all together. Yummy, I thought. (I am nothing if not lustful at times.)

But there was really only one day...Vincene had to leave and Delphine was being deported for overstaying her visa. And the French lady mistook the day. Sigh. Another fantasy put back in the file.

COMPULSION IS THE
BEGINNING OF
DOWNFALL



(W. ROTSLER)

Witch Of The West

Doreen Welbert Arcane Arts

Spells cast · Love Philtres
Wells poisoned
Cows dried up



1415 Barcelona, Akron, Ohio 44313



216-836-1237

ART IS
COMPULSION

(w.p.)



SEEING AMERICA

PART TWO

Travels with the Iron Maiden

In August, 1976, Sharman DiVono and I set out to go to a Worldcon in faroff, exotic Kansas City. First, however, I was to be Guest of Honor at Bubonicon 7 or maybe 8 (they themselves are not quite certain!) in faroff exotic Albuquerque...AlberQQ? No, dammit, Albuquerque. I'll get it right some day! Roy Tackett and Bob Vardeman had invited me down. Originally Sharman & I had planned to go to KC via Salt Lake City, then come back south when it was cooler, so it only necessitated a reversal of direction.

I slipped on some grapes in a market in Blythe, came to a thump on my buttocks, but hitting the end of my fingers on my right hand. (My hands are not in such great condition these days, anyway.) They thought I was going to sue, but I was very concerned no old lady slipped on the barely-seen mess. A few minutes later we passed Sore Finger Road.

Gail Barton decorated my name tag with an "Electric Angel" and sang me a filksong about Rotsler girls. I commissioned her to write a space pirate song for a book I'm doing but later, at MidAmeriCon, she passed me onto Doris Beetem, from Virginia, who a lot of people call The Elder Goddess, who was a charming lady who promised to put her "minions" to work. Said the word would spread throughout filkdom and I'd probably get a LOT of songs!

It was a very nice con, small and intimate. As guest of honor I once again felt the urge to talk a lot (be "on") for I think that is why you get invited like that. So people can get to know you and talk to you. Everyone was most gracious, the panels short but interesting, and everyone relaxed and congenial.

Before the con started Sharman & I visited Old Town, where she fell in love with a \$900 Indian belt. We visited a lady who evaluates Indian jewelry for insurance and was nice enough to not charge us when she found out what we wanted: to sell Shar's squash blossom necklace & a belt to get enough for the \$900 belt, or an almost-as-good \$600 one. (These are authentic, not tourist shit.) Advice: sell them in LA where we'd get more money.

We spent a lot of time with Jim & Webbort, some with Roy and Chrys Tackett & Vardeman, and I met Fred (and Mrs Fred) Sabenhagen. His kids wore t-shirts that said "Berkserker I, II, III." I met, very briefly, a fan named Bill McCafferty, the guy who changed his name to Raven Blacksword. I was busy right then, thought I'd see him again, and didn't. (What happened, swordsman?)

We had come down to Albuquerque through Flagstaff, right by beautiful Sedona, and had stopped briefly at Montezuma's Castle (a cliff-dwelling of the 12th Century that has nothing to do with mis-



spelled Moctezuma nor is a castle). Sharman was much more pleased with finding a big mesquite bush hung with many pods, which she gathered and is drying. She is really "into" herbs & we have the greatest eggs in the morning as a result!

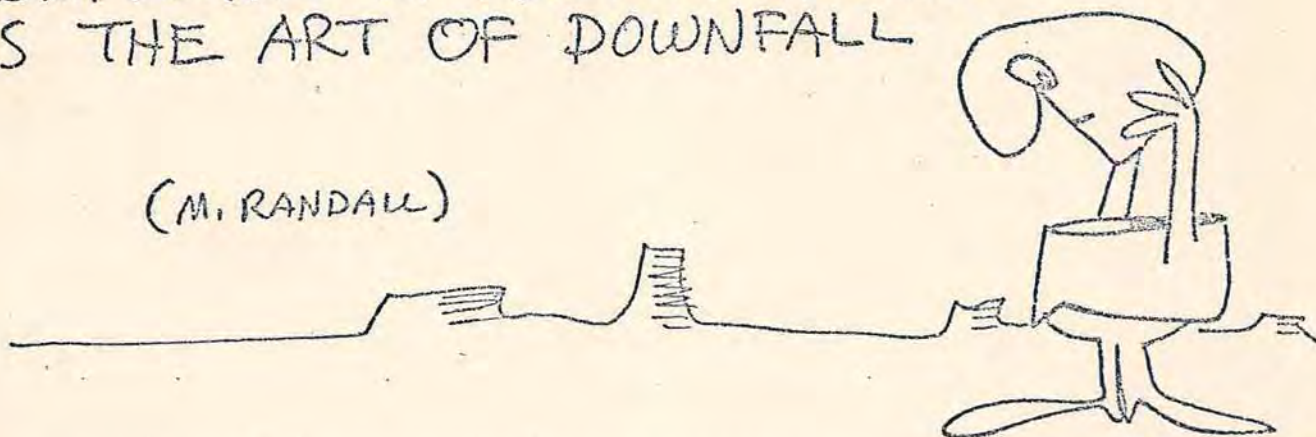
Again, I had to make a speech. But, by now, it was much less frightening, having been a Westercon toastmaster and imitated Phil Dick and Phil Dick imitating me. I figured they wanted to know what I was doing, so I spoke on novelizations, on the influence of the Southwest in my writing (my "ideal" planet always turns out to be lower Utah, Northern NM & Arizona with a lot more water), on slang & names in s-f, and god knows what else.

It was a nice con, about the right size and I thank everyone very much for inviting us.

The history of the American West is a natural antecedent in any future development in opening up new planets. (WR)

COMPULSION OF UNDERSTANDING
IS THE ART OF DOWNFALL

(M. RANDALL)



"Bill, do something worthy of reduction (in LOCUS)." (Terry Carr)

There were only four people in the costume contest at Bubonicon, and I, of course, was a judge. There were three girls, each with good costumes, a a guy in an SCA costume. We gave it to a girl in what was really the least costume, but she was the only one with presense...and she was one of Gor's submissive maids. Bruce Pelz was there, pushing for LA in 1977, and bought four huge boxes of fanzines from Roy Tackett, and I offered to take them back for him.

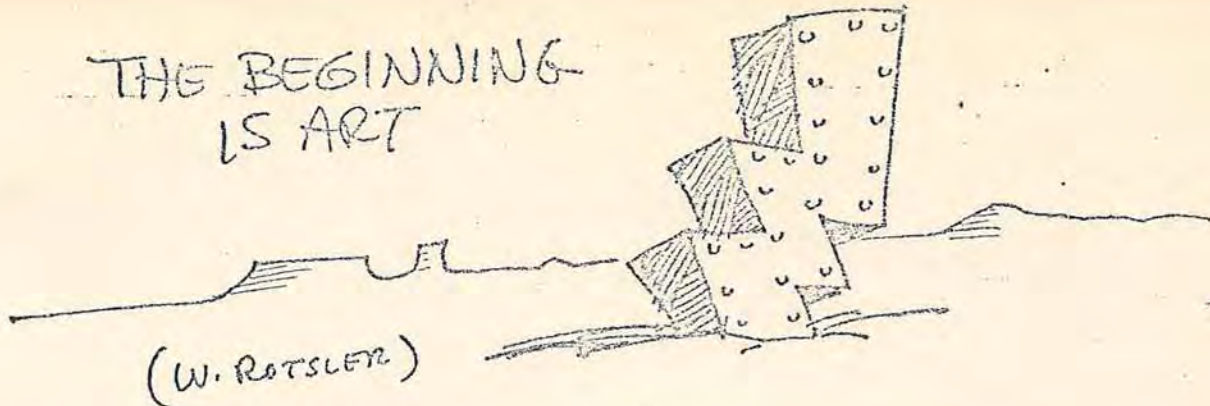
Then we were ready to head north and east.

"It takes an aggressive race to get off a planet." (Roy Tackett)

Both Sharman & I love the architecture of the Southwest, the adobe buildings, with rounded edges, arches, tiles, thick walls, all blending into the landscape. No where is this more evident than at Sante Fe, New Mexico, where I think it must be compulsory, as we saw no other kind. But that red or rose-colored earth turns me on--it seems so deliciously alien.

We looked through a lot of galleries in Sante Fe, then in Taos,

THE BEGINNING IS ART



(W. ROTSLEF)

"These conventions are to revelry as boot camp is to exercise."
(Sid Coleman)

and I came to the conclusion that if you are an Indian you are not necessarily an artist. In fact, except for some jewelry in traditional designs (no originality, but lots of craftsmanship) we saw only one labeled Indian artist that was any good, in the New Mexico Museum of Art. There, in Sante Fe, they had a terrific folk art show, plus a "trading post" that looks like a trading post, beautifully reproduced, with exceptionally fine (museum quality work). There was also an excellent exhibition of contemporary arts & crafts, much of it in the Indian motif, but without being "traditional." Maybe there will be some growth after all.

We caught some rain & lightning going into Taos, which is a small mountain town. (For you TV fans, this is where McCloud comes from.) We had an excellent Mexican dinner at the Taos Inn (Fancy Expensive Restaurant Fans take note, though it was not Expensive.) It even had oven-fresh sopapilla, a pastry you eat with honey. Shar pronounced it the best Mexican dinner she'd even had.

"Tennis shoes are a white man's moccasins."
(Sharman DiVono)

Sturgeon's law was quite evident in Taos, though we found a good regional-type book store. Leaving Taos we went out of town to the big pueblo. I'm afraid I've never been able to look at people living in squalor (in this case, mud slums) and think it colorful or picturesque. We didn't even get out of the car, but pressed on.

We had lots of time to get to Kansas City, so took it easy, wandering through lots of shops and galleries. But we went on over the mountains in the rain, along twisting roads, to the eastern slopes, then turned north to Pueblo, Colorado.

WR: Is Science Fiction in danger of becoming respectable?
Andy Porter: I don't have any good ties!

There is no pueblo in Pueblo we found out, so we headed east, out into the vast boring middle gut of America, heading down toward Dodge City, through Swink, which isn't even on the map, straight into a wide-screen rainstorm with big budget lightning.

Dodge City is a bust. We thought they might have made a decent tourist trap out of their reproduction of Front Street, but the whole

IF YOU'RE COMPULSIVE DOWNFALL CAN BE ART

(S. COLEMAN)



"I always thought there would be an Italian market for condoms with the head of the Pope."
(Sidney Coleman)

thing is totally phoney and commercial. If they had even sold postcards of Bat Masterson or Wyatt Earp with real photos it might have helped, but they didn't. Lots of early West stuff behind glass and wire screens, but frozen, sterile, and dull.

Wichita was quite different. They had in Indian Arts center that was large & modern, with a very extensive Indian beaded clothing & object collection that Sharman spent much time on, and a big enclosed area for tribal dances 'n' stuff.

But the best part was Cow Town. Here they had put together a western town as a western town of the 1870's/1880's should look, perhaps a little idealized & "complete" but very interesting. They brought in authentic buildings and reconstructed "typical" buildings from pieces of old ones. Then they stocked them with whatever would be appropriate (fire engines, hearses, canned food, barber chairs, bars, school children). Really nicely done and better than Disneyland because the stuff was real. We passed a hippie-type couple who were making a short porch rail out of a long one and I said, "You have the biggest doll house in town," because it was just like that.

Then on to Kansas City.

We arrived the night before and got a motel. By the sheerest luck we found a superb chinese restaurant. (Later, Larry Noven "discovered" it, too.) Due to a misdirected directional wave by a gas station attendant we ended up driving thru two states, completely around KC, trying to find a movie. We gave up, went to bed, and were up early for the con.

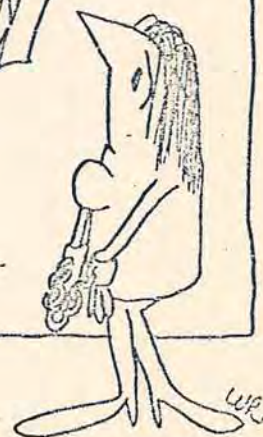
From now on don't expect chronology, just a random collection of memories.

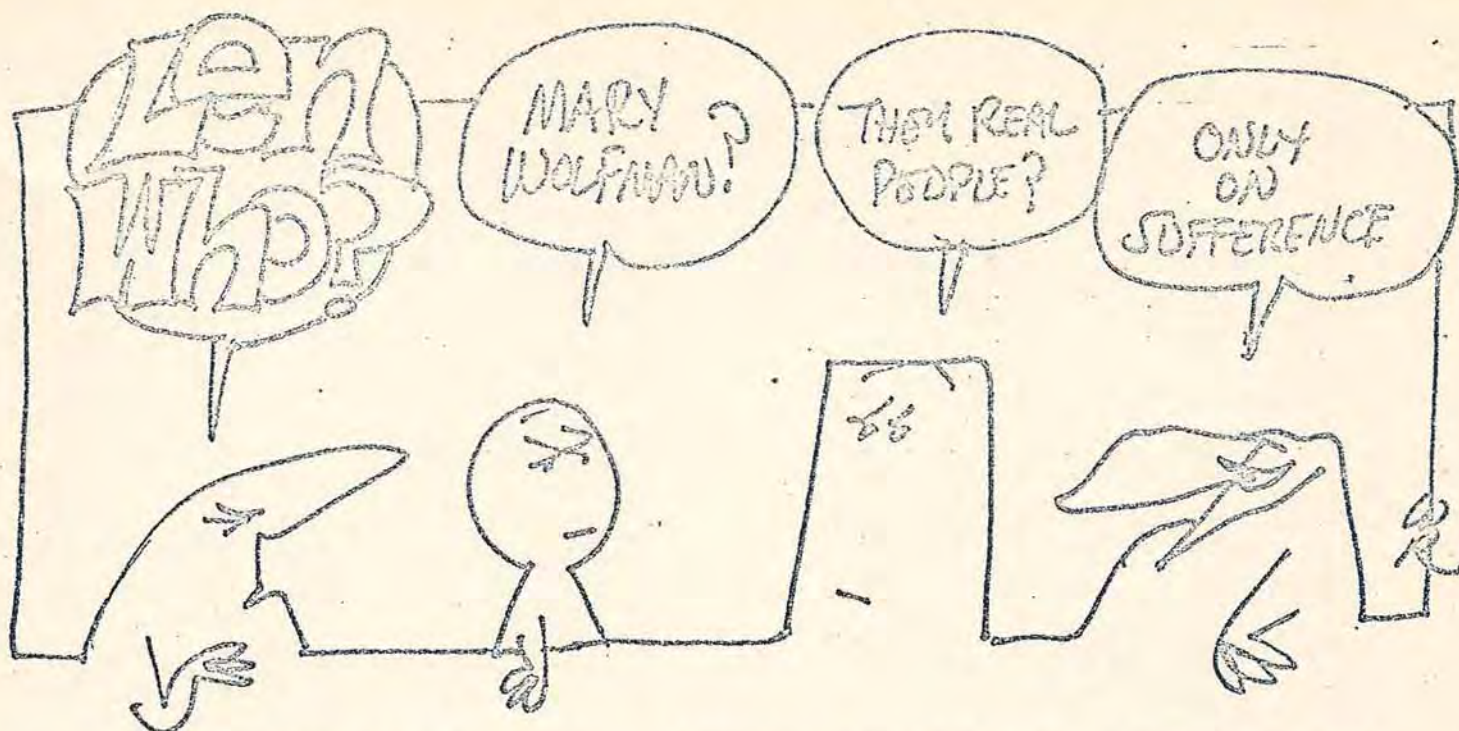
We met Len Wein and Marv Wolfman there and ended up spending much of our time with them. One of the first things we did, that evening, was look for a certain sf writer. Called his room and got a giggling, panting

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW

THE LIST:

- 1: WOMEN IN THE PRE-TRIB RAPTURE
- 2: WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY
- 3: WOMEN AS PASTORS
- 4: WOMEN AS PEOPLE
- 5: WOMEN IN GENERAL
- 6: YOU
- 7:





lady. Then I heard another giggling, panting lady and realized I had called at an inopportune time. "Would you care to have a bizarre conversation?" I asked and she (grunt) said (pant) yes, so (wet noise) we (sigh) had (uh-uh-uh) a (ooo) short (ahhh) conversation. Later, the male part of that trilogy (we don't call threesomes triads in the sci-fi game) said he was amazed she (1) answered the phone; (2) could talk. So I then called another sf writer (hell, it was only 11pm) and he was in bed, sounding petulant. So we did a cartoon, that is, I drew a cartoon of the four of us, Len/Marv/Sharman/WR, sitting around a writhing, threshing bed making critical comments and passing on technical advice. I slipped it under the door, after listening, and all seemed dead quiet. Later information proved that moment to be a Time Out Rest Period. (After all, the ladies aren't getting any younger...)

We spent a lot of time cruising the huckster room. Bought George Barr's book, Dave Kyle's on SF (which is about the best of these recent books on sf illos & art), some comix, etc. I was asked by a semi-pro fanzine company if I'd like to have a book of my cartoons. Was interviewed by a comics fanzine & asked to be a guest at a comics con in Detroit in Nov. If they follow up with info I think I will, as Len Wein is going, too.

In general, I thought the MidAmeriCon was very interesting, though there was some rather sloppy scheduling. Too much one time, not enough another. Had a lot of dinners with various people, but mostly in the hotel. Was scheduled to go one morning with Silverberg to the famous oriental art collection at the KC Museum, forgot I was to be on a 2nd panel that morn, and missed it. But Bob gave it a "so-so" review so I didn't follow up. Not a fan of oriental art, really; too wiggly.

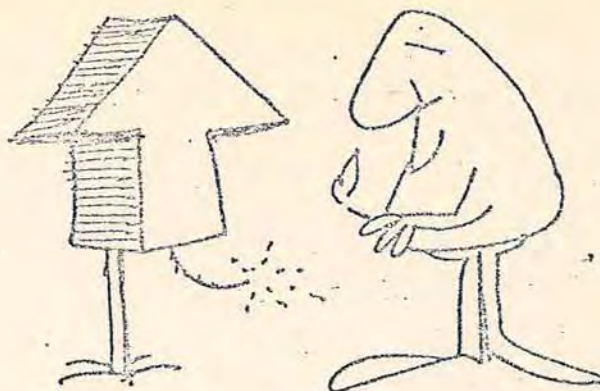
Saw a lot of Jerry Jacks and Frank Robinson (who Sharman says she likes a lot and feels comfortable with them both). We had arrived at the con almost broke, as a vital advance check hadn't arrived. I ended up having my agent wire me some hundreds.

"No one ever pointed out a Holiday Inn as a local sight."

(WR)

BEGINNING IS THE DOWNFALL OF COMPULSION

(R. SILVERBERG)



"Those of you who only know the public Louis XV may not realize the private Louie is a hellava fellow...he can talk dirty like a musketeer." (Sidney Coleman, during a Heinlein euology)

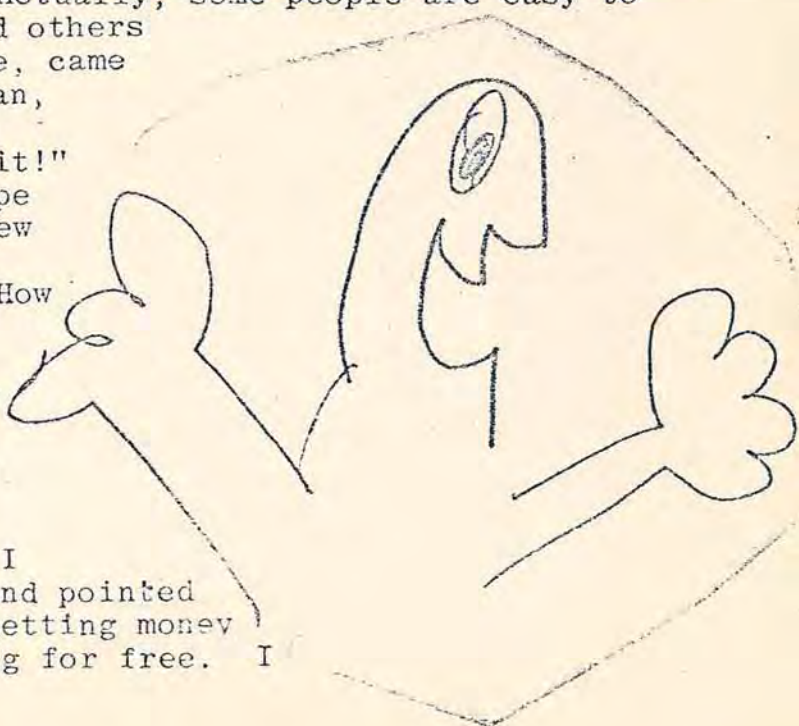
As you can tell from the quotes, we spent a lot of time with Sid Coleman, too. I like "our Sid" more and more all the time, as does Sharman, and he "came to us" with high advance publicity (via the Carrs, mostly) years ago. Makes me want someone assigned to follow him around and transcribe the quips.

The Art Show was excellent. The STAR WARS art work was superb. It was badly situated, however. You almost had to know where it was to find it. I took Lester & Judy-Lynn del Rey there, as they wanted to see it but couldn't find it. It looks like really FIRST rate stuff, though it did prompt the aforementioned Professor Coleman to say, "STAR WARS looks so much like Planet Stories that the last two reels should be a letter column."

Marv Wolfman invented the Deja Vu-master. I did a intermidible series of drawings of the pens of various artists, then moved on to do the pens of certain writers if they were artists, (This is always fun for me, of coyrse, but I noticed a certain thing here...in passing the pages around writers/artists were first a touch nervous, wondering if they were included & what I might have done to them...then nervous in case they weren't included. Actually, some people are easy to find a visual shorthand for, and others are not. A woman, unknown to me, came rushing up, propelled by some man, saying, "I draw just like you!"

"Yeah?" I said. "Prove it!" I thrust my ever-present envelope full of paper at her and she drew the thing you see to the right, which I saved, just for this. How can people be so blind? Sigh.

Had breakfast with Bjo one morning and she was telling us about some Star Trek stuff (troubles with getting a contract she liked for her ST CONCORDANCE, etc) and about all the ST mail she gets...and I said, "You have a book there" and pointed out how she could & should be getting money for certain things she was doing for free. I nice to see the eyes light up.



I had one embarrassment at the con. Fellow came up in some dim spot and said Hi, stuck out his hand. I said, "Hi...who are you?" He said, "Grant Canfield." I was thunderstruck. He didn't look like GC. In fact, I was quite confused, as twice earlier, at a distance I had seen this fellow, in profile, that looked just like Grant did the last time I had seen him. But a good close look told me it was, indeed, Grant. He had cut his hair and it was short & curly. Later, I saw the "imposter" and he still looked like the "old" Grant.

We arty fellers (Hi, Burbee!) only had one good shot at a cartoon "war." Gathered Phil Foglio, Grant, Jay Kinney, Dan Steffan, Randy Bathurst, etc in the bar and we drew up a storm and really had fun. I think Grant has the pix. (He drew this one at right at another time, when I was telling them how I won World War II)

I really like those so-called "wars," though I don't think we think of them as "wars." Maybe some do. I don't.

We set things up for another guy, or finish one someone else has set up, or continue the "set-up". Probably more fun to watch happening, wondering how some-o-e is going to handle it, than just seeing the finished drawing.

We had intended to continue at the Artists Reception in the Art Show, but Grant & Dan disappeared at the last moment & it never happened. Which brings me to the Hugos. (Don't ask me why.)

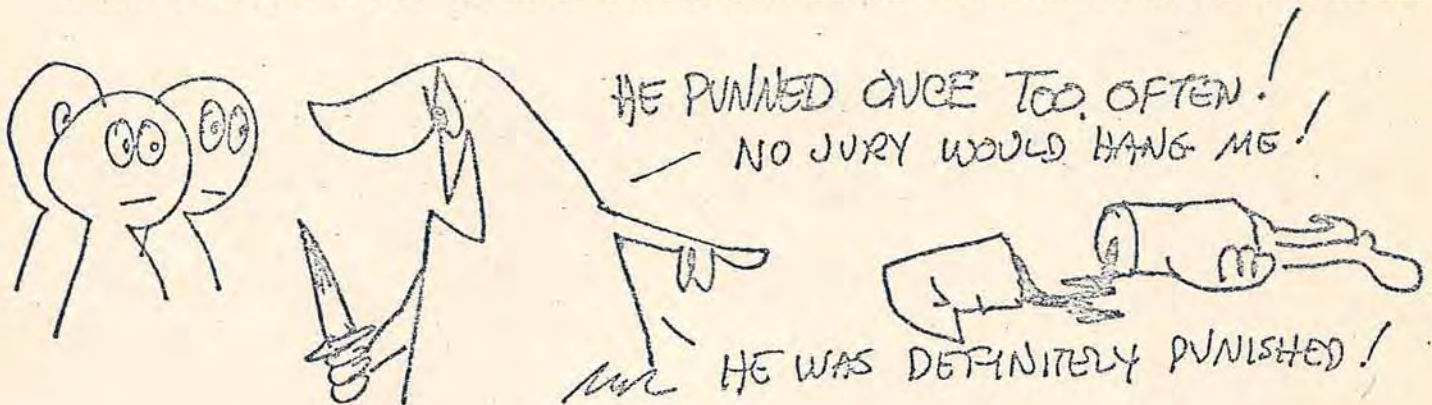
Several things happened there that I did not care for too much. It wasn't that I begrudge Kelly Freas or Tim Kirk another Hugo. But I think Ben Nova, in his acceptance speech, was right in saying we should rethink this and not vote by habit. I mean, Kelly has TEN hugos and Tim now has 50% of all the fan art Hugos given. I think Grant should have won, then next year Dan Staffan, then Jay Kinney. Not that Tim doesn't deserve a Hugo, except that in 1975 I don't think he had much in the fanzines, if anything. But others should get a chance, methinks.

A distressing thing happened at the Hugo ceremony. I can't



really explain it. Maybe he thought he was being funny, but it definitely didn't come out that way. I was sitting next to Sharman, George Barr & Tim. Phil Foglio came over and in a voice that carried quite a distance said, without any humor, "Congratulations, Kirk, you son of a bitch!" Then turned & left. Maybe he takes these things too seriously. I looked at Tim in time to see his jaw drop. Later, I asked him and he graciously tried to excuse Phil, saying he probably meant it differently. I was startled, and ashamed for him. I had never even heard of him before he was nominated, but that may be my own myopia. Bad performance, Phil!

"The Story of O could have been called A Man, A Woman, And A Whip." SC



"You don't go to McDonald's for duck."

(Marv Wolfman)

After the Hugo ceremony I happened to see Dale Enzenbacher going one way in a hall and Sprague de Camp going in the other, holding his Grand Master Award with the figure by Dale thereon. Inspiration struck. I have never spoken to de Camp in my life, but I stopped him, asked if he would like to meet the man who designed it, etc, and they had a most auspicious meeting.

Got crowded into the Kelly Freas surprise birthday party and almost squashed. We had met a young couple from Big Rapids, Mich, Kurt & Jo Ann Weideman. (He was the fan and she--very pretty--was attending her first con, very much carried away by it all and I think Kurt was bugged at the attention she was getting.) At one point in the crowded party Len, she & I discovered that we had been Big Brothers or Big Sister to more damned people. It created a bond. Of sorts. (I can remember when fandom's big beauty was Tigrina.)

At the Banquet we sat at the table Bob Silverberg had thoughtfully bought out (and I think was stuck for a ticket). I started drawing--as usual--for that's (1) my party trick & way of getting attention--we can't all be Sidney Colemans; (2) escape from boredom; (3) inspiration. I started doing name tags for people. It started with Sidney wanting one that said NOBODY IMPORTANT and another, NOT WORTH KNOWING. (Terry Carr later added NOT WORTH READING). I did one for Fred Pohl with editorial changes; one for Frank Robinson that said "Frank Robinson, friend and faithful companion to TOM SCORTIA." Marta Randall received one that said, ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS marta randall." Charlie Brown was with a new fan, Maude Kirk, a ceramicist (?) from the Bay Area that I found very interesting & charming. It was my first meeting with her, so while people were eulogizing Heinlein, I did her one that said, TOTAL UNKNOWN...GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR...smile early." She



said later all sorts of people asked her for autographs and wanted to know who she was.

Speaking of autographs. They had a Meet The Proz party... outside, in the dark. You couldn't see who anyone was. Someone asked me for an autograph and I always draw a cartoon, so I moved under a light & sat on a planter to do it. I was instantly surrounded and must have done 50-60 cartoon/autographs in those hard-bound books, plus a few of my own paperbacks. By the time the con ended I must have drawn 200 cartoon/autographs in those books, plus all sorts of other things...maybe 300 drawings. That first night, however, I started a series of drawings about Terry Carr, who was around, in other people's books, setting him up.

I also did a lot of devilish things, like do a drawing of a character holding a huge piece of paper, or pointing to a blank page, and saying, "In this spot, today, Tim Kirk is going to draw the best dragon of his career!" or "Look! A George Barr original!" (Heheheh...)

While Len/Sharman/Marv were standing in line, playing magnetic scrabble, I attended the Burroughs luncheon, or Dum-Dum, as they call it.



I was asked by Vern Coriell (sp?) to give them what I knew about the ERB comics line. Their guest of honor was Jock Mahoney. (We had just seen Jock at the ComicCon in July) So when I went to the podium I slipped him a cartoon about him as Tarzan, then threw in a line to the audience about how I thought, of all the Tarzans, he was the best looking. He jumped up and kissed me on the left cheek. (Later, I was to do a cartoon of one of my characters worrying, "Jock Mahoney kissed me on the same cheek that Ray Bradbury kissed me...Is this getting to be a trend?" And an off-panel voice says, "Only if you get to liking it.")

Later, Jock read/showed the cartoon to the audience, the first one I gave him. Sharman was jealous that I had been kissed & not her, too, so I went back in & checked with Mrs. Jock and she said it was all right, that she liked people who liked Jock. I gave her the cartoon I just described, Sharman got her cheek kissed, and all was well.

"John Norman writes hard Gor and you (Ted White) write soft Gor." (Sidney Coleman)

That interlineation was said during one of those nights I was up late. One night I was up until 4am, but the Dead Dog party saw me stay up until 6. Gah.

I was on an artist's panel with Kelly Freas, George Barr & others and it was pleasant and painless. I met Eric Lindsay & Keith Curtis from Down Under. I met Sally Rand, introduced by her sister-in-law, a fan, Mrs. Beck. I showed her the drawing I had done to give the not-very-pretty stripper they had (but she did a good act, vamping during the very long intermission of the costume show). One character indignately says, "She certainly has some nerve doing a strip in front of Sally Rand!" The other says, "She does use a fan, she is one!" Ms Rand asked for it, so I gave it to her.

"Great name tags are not written, they are re-written." (S. Coleman)

The costume affair was quite good, possibly the best I've seen. Some magnificent costumes. Even the folksinging--and I am not a folk song fan at all--was quite pleasant, done by the Passavoys & Co. The play they did, however, on another night in the theater...ugh. I was supposed to go to dinner with Tim Kirk, Ian Ballantine & an editor from Bantam, but as we were leaving Tim mentioned he had done the sets, and wanted to see the play. So we stood in line. (And stood in line.) I knew before the first person walked on stage it was going to be dull. Good production values, really, but SLoooooow. I actually went to sleep, as did Ian. I was just leaning forward to say to Ian, "Thank you for the invitation to dinner, but I can't take any more of this," and Ian said, "Let's go." We saw only two sections, but that was enough. HOURS later it broke up. I felt sorry for the Heinleins who could hardly have crept out, as we did. And they spent \$8000 on that!

"These conventions are to revelry as boot camp is to exercise." (SC)

I hardly went to any of the official functions--mostly because I wasn't interested or because they came early in the morning. I meant to go to the "Women in SF" panel, but... (And I think the dnub they gave Dena Brown on her Hugo was inexcusable!) I was on the "Artists' Genre Luncheon" panel, where my biggest contribution probably was, after Kelly Freas got a big hand was to start a cry for "Drawing! Drawing!"

I missed the belly-dancing affair, though at a private party given by George Barr he had a really excellent belly dancer. I do find it hard to believe in blonde, fair-skinned belly dancers, however. She did that dancer trick, known to strippers as well, of focusing in on one man, pinning him with her eyes. The dancer has all the options, of course--if the man reaches for her she can dance away, put him down, laugh at him, etc. If he doesn't do anything she has lost nothing. I was reminded upon coming to know a bosomy stripper many years ago, on my first sex film still-man job, in 1960. She said if she ever caught a man's eyes he'd never look at her body. So the first time I went to see her dance she spied me, went "Bill!" from the low stage, left the 20-30 guys clustered at that end and came over to do her entire act two feet away. Naturally I deliberately tore my eyes away and looked at her bod. She then gave me the most graceful, sinuous Italian gesture imaginable. (She was also the stripper that used large pasties to give extra lift to her full bosom, pasting them on at the bottom, folding in the nipple and pasting the pastie higher up. I went in one night to photograph her, saw the pasties already on, said, "Gee, I'm sorry to ask you to take them off, but..." She said she couldn't...the night before, taking them off, she had ripped a nipple.)

The Hugo Losers party was easily the best party--loud, funny, gregarious, filled with people. Had time for a talk with Dan Steffan, also a bit with Alfie Bester and with Maude Kirk, who is very nice indeed. When we got around to nominating Best Losers I nominated myself--after all I lost 9 out of 10 Fan Artist Hugos, plus one pro Hugo and a Nebula. I received the Best Loser award by acclamation. (But after seeing the full, final list, I'm not so sure I wanted to be on it...oh, well.) Never was introduced to Gardner Dozois, though talked to him without even knowing who he was. Well, kinda talked, over the party's din.

In fact, until I read the LOCUS conreport I didn't even know some people (like Kate Wilhelm) were at the convention. (The lightning bolt thru the window cartoon in LOCUS, by the way, was the result of being awakened by one of those huge midwestern thunderstorms.)

I want to disagree with someone: Dena Brown, in her LOCUS article, to be precise. She seemed down on the stripper and on the belly-dancing, specifically that the belly-dancing was scheduled opposite Susan Wood's panel. (1) If I were scheduling events I'd try, if I had to overlap, schedule things opposite each other that would appeal to different groups, such as fantasy & hard-science panels. So people that would like belly-dancers probably wouldn't go to a women-in-sf panel. (Though I heartily agree with Dena's complaint about 2nd class citizenship for women in sf. Something must be done!) (2) The stripper was an unusual thing to put on. I thought she did a very professional job, although her style of beauty is not my ideal. The intermission was VERY long, the judging difficult, so they needed something. Even after her long act, the Passavoys were on a long time, too. (3) Sally Rand's "award" to the "Best Pussys" was crude, but hardly unexpected, huh? They "gave" her the opportunity to create the award, or something. (4) Why weren't there men up there, as strippers, or whatever? (Something to think about Florida & Phoenix!)



The last morning, we were having breakfast with Sidney Coleman and Len Wein and I saw the Heinleins in the coffee shop. It was the first time I had opportunity to talk to them, so I went over. I got a blank stare until they looked at my tag. Later I was talking to Paul Williams, who was writing up Heinlein for Rolling Stone or something, and he said he thinks Heinlein's remarkable memory (and it is, despite his rambling speech) is keyed to name-recognition, ala Jim Fatley.

In no time Heinlein re-complimented me on Patron of the Arts, and brought up something that had bothered him about a piece of it, (and remember, it has been 12-15-18 months since he read it) where the people go thru the Martian Star Palace & into the other world sans their tooth fillings. He said those caries bothered him and he offered 2-3 solutions about what I could have done. They stopped at our table and I introduced Sidney & Len and he instantly knew who Prof. Coleman was, started to really talk, but Ginny pulled him away. She was going home, with or without him!

 "There's something about tomatoes that embarrasses me." (Len Wein)



All during the con we were introducing Len & Marv to Big Name Writers, which impressed them. They had some novel and unexpected experiences. For example, after Heinlein & de Camp, who would you pick as the least likely Pro to know about comics?

We introduced them to Jerry Pournelle (who I must say I didn't see drunk) who immediately said, "Listen, about Dr. Strange, you shouldn't have had Clea in bed with Ben Franklin--!"

I think that blew their minds. I was astonished at just how many closet comic fans there were! Another example: they wanted to get into the SFWA and hoped certain comics credits might

This cartoon was
Sid Coleman's
idea, I think--

be okay. I looked for but couldn't find the Sec'y, but introduced them to andy offutt, who was instantly impressed & wanted their autograph for one or more of his kids. (andy then left with a pretty, bosomy, predatory lady who wanted to get into the SFWA but had other ideas about credits.)

While they were talking to andy I saw R.A. Lafferty standing in the SFWA suite, looking somewhat less bombed than usual. Now I have the darndest time connecting that drunken old man we see at all the cons with R.A. Lafferty of the beautiful prose. So I started talking to him. The conversation started out as though you were in an ordinary room with four walls, a ceiling & floor. But suddenly I noticed the walls were changing color...doors appeared and disappeared...floors became...something else. It was a thoroughly confusing conversation in which each piece of the mosaic was logical and clear. Later, in the beer bar, I asked him to join our group. He came swaying over and informed us the difference between a drinking man and a drunk was that a drinking man kept mobile. (It was actually a more complicated answer than that, but I only have two dimensions to write in here.) Still later, I saw him sit down in the bar after a "tour." I went over, said, "Aha! You're sitting and have become a drunk!" He came up with a charming, smiling, loophole about it was okay to rest now and again.

A charming but weird man who writes better than most people.

"I am firmly convinced that the sexiest men in the U.S. are in Colorado. They may also be the dumbest, but I don't know about that. Since I've been sitting here (in a Colorado Springs cafe), more raw male flesh has passed through those doors per minute than any other place I can think of. Colorado is truly a single woman's paradise. They're hunks!"

SOMEONE HAS INSULTED
THE GUEST OF HONOR!

ROUND
UP THE
VUSAL
SVSPECTIS!



Stiller

(Sharman DiVono)

Cartoons this page from Pete
Weston's MAYA 11, or maybe
it's Robert Jackson's...

We left Kansas and drove
across to Colorado. Actually,
Sharman drove most of that long
trek, as I was dead from about
3 hours sleep. We had intended
to go one way & look at some
national parks, in which case
we would have gone through Neola

(Hi, Neola!). We were on our way to Salt Lake City and time was running
out. Shar had to be back at Lee Strasberg's class and we didn't have
time. We stayed two nights and a day in Salt Lake and I met her
family. Her mother is attractive & charming & talented in crafts &
arts...her brother Reed is very tall, good-looking, and is getting to
be dominated by his father...and Sharman's father is very negative.
About everything. But I think he sensed something & never once took
after me. After hearing all the shit over the last 2½ years I was
ready for him.

Anyway, we spent an evening at Sharman's uncle's home, the man
that gave her PUPPET MASTERS and turned her onto s-f. Had a good time
(her father was not there) and took off for Las Vegas and LA the next
day. We did drive to and stay at Zion National Park and spent a
morning looking around that most beautiful of places. I'd love to
have a time machine, go back a few thousand years, and put a house
there, something that would be gone before man arrived.

Then home, tired, broke, dirty, but pretty pleased, in all, with
the whole trip. It would have been cheaper to fly, but we wouldn't
have seen a lot of things. Frequently Sharman would start off the
morning's drive with a whip snap, a mule skinner's exhortation to the
beasts...or sing "Do not forsake me"...or do her alien...or her deep-
throated samurai warrior voice...or the Gunsmoke theme going into Dodge.

A very nice lady to travel with. And to live
with.

Aftermath notes: I did a "Fit Subjects
for MidAmeriConversation" list. For Friday it
was "How your wristband reminds you of disease
is OUT. The Art Show is IN. Star Wars is IN.
How it is time Grant Canfield won a Hugo is
sort of OUT."

For Saturday: How long the play was is
OUT. Howard the Duck is IN. Heinlein fascist
stories are OUT. Blood jokes are OUT.

For Sunday: How hungover you are is
OUT. Who else is hungover is IN. Silverberg
is IN and IN. (And OUT and OUT.) How good the
costumes were in IN.

For Monday: Pun are OUT. Puns have
always been OUT. How Len & Marv made fools of
themselves with three young femme fans is OUT.
(Kidding your friends at the expense of their
wives wrath is OUT.)

And that was Seeing America, folks.

WR



DAN
STEFFAN
USES
A
MIRROR!

GRANT
CANFIELD
- TRACES
HIS
ALIENS!

YOU EITHER
GOT IT, OR
YA DON'T!

IT ONLY TAKES
A ONE-LINE
REPERTOIRE TO
TRACE A
ROTSLETZ...

ANYONE
CAN DO
IT...

