

NULL-F 49



This is NULL-F #49, published for the February, 1973, mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association by Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va., 22046. The last issue of NULL-F to carry its proper number was #46. Yes, Folks, it took me three years to find out what issue of this zine I was putting out...*sigh*...but aren't you glad I finally did?

OLD BUSINESS: One thing that's wrong, definitely wrong about minaccing it here is that I don't always take the opportunity to reply to things in the mailing following their publication. I probably wouldn't bother in this case except that P. Howard Lyons brought it up again in the November mailing (or his annex the mailing). I'm referring to Norm Clarke's blast at me in the August, 1972 mailing.

I kinda wish I had it in front of me now to comment on in a more direct fashion, but perhaps it's just as well I don't. Because I really can't see much point in meeting Norm head on, Invective to Invective.

I first heard about Norm's little blast from Boyd, at the LACon, and since I hadn't seen the mailing before leaving home, I had no idea what Boyd was talking about. Then, while visiting Greg Benford a day or so later, I had a chance to read his mailing, and to read Norm's piece. I haven't bothered to look at it since, and, as I mentioned above, I don't believe I will now. There's hardly any advantage to reinoculating myself with Norm's spiteful prose.

What Norm was attacking was not anything I'd published here in FAPA, but a column of mine which appeared in EGOBOO, a fanzine published by John Berry and me, which John tells me less than half of you are likely to have seen. Norm did not write EGOBOO a letter of comment (he hasn't in some years), but used my column there as the basis for a personal attack on me, my tastes and my interests, here in FAPA.

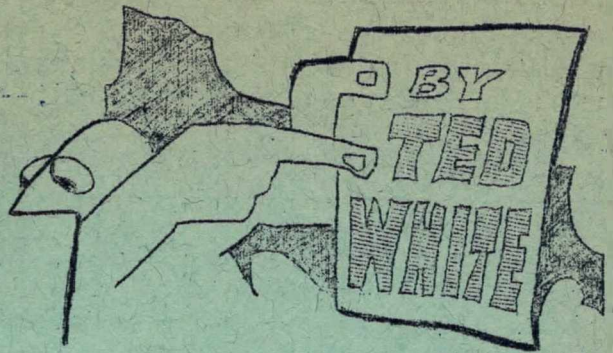
Rather than offer any kind of rebuttal to his attack, I propose to reprint the original column herein. That way you can read it and, if you wish, reread Norm's bit, and draw your own conclusions.

I will say, by way of amplification to my column, that it is fairly obvious that Norm and I do not listen to (or for) the same things in music--any kind of music. I recently pulled out all of my old Jazz at the Philharmonic albums (I have them all--going back to the ten-inchers on Stinson and Mercury) and tried to relisten to them. I've been listening to a lot of my old jazz records these days, and while the albums I always liked (the Blue Note Thelonious Monk sets, for example, or the "Jazz Classics" reissue of the Edmond Hall Celeste Quartet, with Hall, Meade Lux Lewis, Charlie Christian and Isreal Crosby, circa 1941) still sound as good as ever, those JATP sessions sound flatulent and boring--as much so as they did when I first heard them, more than twenty years ago.

Sure, I know about all the Great Names who played on those sessions, but it's pretty obvious that they had their lesser moments. Most of the giants of the era weren't working with their own rhythm sections, most of the tunes are unchallenging "heads", and most of the solos are strung together blues cliches. Very few of the "jam sessions" were real jams--no cutting contests, no real excitement or surprises--and most of the musicians played down to their audience, the boredom obvious. (When Lester Young is reduced to playing a 'honk and skree' solo consisting on one note endlessly repeated, in brutal caricature of the sort of r&b musician who plays beer joints while squatting on one knee with the other foot in the air, well, this may be Norm Clarke's idea of what jazz is all about--I'm told it's all he can do--but it's not mine.)

But I really don't feel like arguing over the merits of an inferior collection of mediocre jazz. I mentioned the JATP only to make a point about what was happening in present-day rock.

UFFISH THOTS



THE CONCERT FOR BANGLA DESH: Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic has finally come to rock music. It was inevitable, I suppose--a stage of development through which the emerging new-jazz (which is what rock is these days: the successor to jazz) must pass.

The original JATP, you may recall (he said, quite well aware that almost no one but Boyd Raeburn and Norm Clarke will recall), was an aggregation of "jazz greats" assembled on one big stage (originally, that of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Hall; hence the name for what quickly became a touring show), where they proceeded to demonstrate that the sum of the parts was an unimpressive whole. Virtually all the "stars" of the late thirties and forties passed through the JATP at one time or other--the great Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young--even Les Paul and Nat "King" Cole. And all the major concerts (such as they were) were carefully recorded and released as a never-ending series of albums (on several labels, starting with Mercury and ending with Verve) up into the late 1950's, so that the general mediocrity of these musical events could be preserved for all time.

Most of them were simply jam sessions. You brought a dozen "all-stars" onto the stage, the piano player would start either a stock blues riff or the changes for a "standard," a song everyone knew from its opening notes. A long series of solos would follow until everyone there had taken a few choruses. Then the song ended and the next began. It didn't take too many pieces to fill an afternoon's program or an lp--two was about average: one blues and one "standard". Every so often a trio or quartet would be assembled out of the rhythm section and maybe one hornman, and they'd play. For variety.

The JATP never, to my knowledge, introduced one fresh arrangement or one new tune written for just that occasion.

Rock, as I said, has now arrived in an analogous position--has been, actually, since the second "Super-Session" album came out, and definitely since Leon Russell took over rock as its ultimate session man. And about the most disappointing thing to come out of this "phase" is George Harrison's album from the concerts he gave last August.

I might have expected it--but didn't--from the film clip (of Harrison playing "Bangla Desh") shown on the Cavett Show a month or two back. I excused it then as an example of bad tv sound; it wasn't.

Basically, this album is a rip-off in the name of charity. As such, it is, I guess, acceptable. I mean, if we must be ripped-off, best such a genuine charity be the beneficiary. But it saddens me because it is so revealing...because I had wanted to give and this crude attempt to grab first thwarted me and dealt my sense of charity a blow. And because--somehow--I'd expected better of George Harrison.

The most immediately obvious rip-off is the timing of the record. For this you must go to the labels on the records themselves, where the timing is given only for each track. But when you glance at the flip side of the first record (side six, *sigh*) and see only two songs listed, one a little over three minutes long and the other just over four...

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well, it takes very little mental agility to realize that this side--of a fucking twelve-inch lp record!--has only a little more than seven minutes of stuff on it.

Seven minutes and nineteen seconds, to be exact. Why, 45 singles have been longer. ("Hey Jude" was only eight seconds shorter.)

As it turns out, the entire three-record set has almost ninety minutes (of music and other stuff, like tuning up, introductions, and audience noises)--89 minutes, 44 seconds, which averages to fifteen minutes a side, which isn't disgraceful although it's cheap. But this is distributed peculiarly. Side one, for instance, has (counting some six minutes of people walking onstage, applause, tuning, more applause, etc.) 22:35. Side two has only 14:13; side three, 13:43; side four, 12:02. Side one was Ravi Shankar's side, and allowed him a generous 16 minutes for it. Sides two through four, however, and side six (the seven-minute one) are devoted to George Harrison's own JATP. On these four sides, two thirds of the album, we are treated to eight Harrison songs, all but the closing "Bangla Desh" available on other albums in better performances--and much better sound--plus one song from Ringo ("It Don't Come Easy"), one from Billy Preston ("That's The Way God Planned It"), and a two-song medley from Leon Russell. All four sides add up to only 47 minutes and 17 seconds, and could easily have gone on three sides, to say nothing of the fact that they could have been put on just two sides.

The fifth side, almost twenty minutes long, is given over to Bob Dylan's superstar trip. I am not a big Dylan fan (I don't dislike him, but I haven't bought too many of his records, either), but those who are have assured me that they too found this entire side a drag and a complete waste of an lp side. The material is mostly old Dylan, sung in a voice half-way between "Freewheeling" and "Skyline" and almost completely without feeling. Since the melodic possibilities for these songs are low anyway, I'm not too surprised that the assembled band did nothing with them at all (although others, like Kooper and Stills, have managed better in the past).

So here's what the album, on three lps, adds up to: A quarter of an hour's worth of Indian music (on which I am not qualified to judge; Robin said she'd heard better at a live Shankar concert she once attended). A side of live Bob Dylan which will excite the Dylan completists (among whom Stephen E. Pickering now numbers himself, take note!) and almost no one else. And three-quarters of an hour (that's the equivalent of an "hour" tv show, folks!) of Harrison, Clapton, Russell, et al, messing around.

Of those 47 minutes, about ten--the Leon Russell sequence--are musically worth while. Russell understands stage-shows, and has learned (from Delany & Bonnie?) how to sweat fashionably. The medley of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and "Youngblood" is a real medley--"Youngblood" is interpolated in the other tune--and makes good musical sense.

The actual sound, however, is poor. The soloists are reasonably well-miked, but the backup band and especially the backup singers are almost completely lost most of the time. Badfinger is part of the backup band, but is never audible as more than part of the background din. I don't know whether the fault is that of Madison Square Garden or the engineers from Apple, but one need only contrast the recorded sound on this record with that of any number of other recent live recordings (like Chicago's Carnegie Hall concert--which takes up four lps, and a lot more honestly, too) to appreciate what has been lost in clarity.

Despite the fact that the music is sloppily performed (on one Dylan tune the accompanists and Dylan abruptly lose each other) and badly recorded, it marks an event, and as such will undoubtedly sell millions

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of records. The fact of this "eventness" was obviously not lost on the sell-out audience, either. They applauded everything--even Ravi Shankar's tune up. To them the fact that George Harrison and all were right there in front of them was more important than the music played. (From the way they applauded the opening notes of each piece, I assume they'd have been unhappy had he introduced any new songs at all.) And when Bob Dylan walked out--they went crazy. Wow! Event!

Well, that's what the record preserves. Big names pulling a JATP, turning out short, perfunctory versions of very familiar songs, indulging themselves for a good cause.

But, I keep thinking, it didn't have to be like this. The record is culled from two concerts (there's no information as to what came from which--nor even on the actual personnel for each piece), and if each concert was virtually a duplicate of the other, still two versions of a song could've been spliced together, or simply placed side-by-side--the record, if it had to be a three-record set, did not have to be so stinting.

And, finally, there's the booklet. Sixty-four pages, all in color. It must've cost plenty--money which didn't have to be spent so frivolously if indeed it could have gone to a Good Cause--and it too celebrates the event and little more. Lots of photos (some very poor in quality), no captions. Very little text. Listing of musicians, but not what they played. Mindless.

Is this the best George Harrison could come up with? Has he too been wearing the Emperor's Clothes?

OTHER BEATLES: Well, I continue to buy all the former Beatles' records, balking only at Yoko's (I haven't gotten Fly yet and undoubtedly won't for a while--until I see it dirt cheap), but it's a mixed bag. I keep getting this stubborn feeling that Phil Spector is obsolete and that his production techniques (whatever they may be these days) are the kiss of death. Of all the records he's produced for various Beatles, only Harrison's first 3-record set had clean sound. Lennon's latest, Imagine, sounds as if it had been taped on an old Pentron. I keep coming back to it after a week or two and I've forgotten how nothing a record it is. It seems like another aspect of the JATP syndrome too much of the time--musicians have been assembled and the songs are performed, but the interpretations are shallow and uninvolved. When John's songs were done by the Beatles, they were at least better realized. Of course, they were usually better songs, as well. My contempt for Lennon grows with each new revelation of himself in public: what passes for intelligence is more and more obviously just smarty-pantsness; Lennon is still stuck in his early adolescence, still welded to a desk in some grotty Liverpool schoolroom, thinking up ways to cause trouble. His "How Do You Sleep At Night" is the sort of cheap shot he undoubtedly excelled in doing when another kid got one up on him.

McCartney's Wings/Wildlife album comes off on first hearing as not much better--just a group of musicians playing some rather thin tunes. But on rehearsals I've decided it has a lot more to offer--that it is in actuality the most sophisticated album Paul has yet done--and curiously like George's solo album. For instance, although only four people play on Wildlife, Paul has slipped in a lot of subtle production devices--overdubbed voices for choral effects, and the like. This album is not what the group will sound like when it performs live. The pieces are long--many of them reminiscent of the extended coda on "Hey Jude". Both Paul and George seem fascinated by the technique which Terry Riley exem-

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plifies: endlessly repeated riffs with subtly varied counterparts. In the early sixties this was called "modal jazz" and Miles Davis did a great deal of it.

200 MOTELS: I bought Frank Zappa's album of the music from 200 Motels a couple of months ago, right after Chris Couch visited us in fact (I first saw it on a trip into Georgetown with Chris). As an episodic album it's most like the Uncle Meat album Zappa put out several years ago--and also intended to be part of a film. It is almost similar to the Filmore East Mothers album which came out this fall and Zappa's Chunga's Revenge of last year--the areas of overlap are, respectively, about 60% and 40%, although not much actual material is duplicated.

Well, anyway, as a Christmas present to ourselves and in celebration of the fact that my mother was babysitting Kitten and we had our first opportunity to go to the movies since our daughter was born, we splurged (\$2.50 a ticket) and went into Georgetown to stand in line with other freaks for the first performance of the day of the film, 200 Motels.

Personally, I liked it fine and thought it was worth the money.

This despite the almost uniform bad reviews the movie's gotten.

About half-way through the film I realized in a blinding flash of insight not only why the picture had turned so many critics off, but what Zappa was really doing.

Ostensibly he is showing, in a visual collage of sorts, just how "touring can make you go crazy." In fact, what he is doing is using all the materials most familiar to him--i.e., rock touring and allied phenomena--in the creation of a Dadaist artwork for film. (Actually, not for film, but for videotape; the whole movie was taped, then transferred to film. The use of tape allows marvelous television-type effects, rendered in color as good as any I've ever seen in a movie theatre.)

Everything about the movie--the non-linear assemblage, the various pieces of material used--is designed to assault the senses in a Dadaistic fashion. Nothing is as it seems; everything is a delight. The movie is a fantastic trip in a way which puts 2001 totally to shame.

It helps to have listened closely to the album in advance--some aspects of what is going on are clearer on the record (or, more specifically, in the accompanying booklet) than in the movie, especially the escape of the newts from Motorhead's Midnight Ranch. And it's a lot of fun to listen to the album after seeing the movie, for the restimulation of ones senses it provokes.

But, I would guess, one has to be in tune with Zappa to really want to listen to the record or go to the movie. Not everyone is. Most movie critics aren't. Oh well.

FANDOM: I would like to make a definitive statement to all you fen out there currently brawling over "fannish fandom" vs. "sercon fandom." Here it is:

Nobody "runs" fandom--any part of it. Neither Charlie Brown nor Arnie Katz has the inside track on proper fanning. Take a good look around you. See those guys getting off on having fun in fandom? They are "fannish fans." See those other guys digging on sf? They are "sercon fans."

You can get your chuckles from fandom. You can also pop your rocks on sf. The two are complementary and not ideological opposites. And the Word on fandom is not handed down on high from New York fandom--either the Brooklyn branch or the Bronx branch.

Dig yourself.

NEW BUSINESS: I read Milton Stevens' THE PASSING PARADE in the last mailing with some absorption--I've always been a sucker for the inside account of how a convention was put on--right up to the bottom of page 17. There Milton says, if I may refresh your memory with the exact quote, "Ted White's editorials had annoyed me and I wasn't too appreciative of all the keen egoboo of being typified as either a thief or an associate of thieves."

On the next page, he adds, "For this I get represented as a cheap, thieving bastard by Ted White."

Milton is referring to the series of editorials I had in AMAZING and FANTASTIC last year on the Worldcon situation. (No, I won't reprint them here; you ought to have them on your shelf.)

I wrote Milton a letter when I read those two above statements. In my letter I challenged the truthfulness of his comments. As I recall, I suggested that if he couldn't quote me chapter and verse on these statements about his representation as a "thieving bastard," et al, that he make a public apology.

Well, Milton did not answer my letter--the life of a 'Convention Pig' is a busy one, these days--and I have no idea whether he will issue that apology in this mailing. Somehow, from the tone of his other remarks about me, I doubt he will.

For the record--which is freely available to anyone who wants to re-read those editorials of mine--I did not call anyone connected with the LACon a "thief," an "associate of thieves," or "a thieving bastard." Nor, indeed, did I cast any aspersions on the LACon committee, although I declared myself to be philosophically opposed to the kind of convention the LACon was hyped to be. For the record, I published--in one of those editorials--a letter from LACon chairman Chuck Crayne, and I think almost anyone would agree that my treatment of Crayne and his letter was quite fair and in no wise antagonistic.

The fact is, I leveled no attack upon Milton or any of his cohorts--nothing whatsoever to merit the kind of arrogant bullshit he published about me in his THE PASSING PARADE.

What I did do was to point out that Worldcons are making a lot more money than they legitimately need these days, and suggest that sooner or later this situation would be badly abused.

If that shoe fits you, Milton, just put it on and wear it in silence. Your yawns of selfrighteous outrage are, at present, totally unwarranted. (But what's the rumor I heard to the effect that the LACon subsidised the German travels of its committee members--to the tune of several thousand dollars--suggest to you? How about the stories I keep hearing about how LACon has not passed on any funds to the next convention, or to TAFF, or any of the usual dumping spots for convention profits? Can you refute these rumors? Will LACon publish a financial report? What are you doing about the movement in the SFWA to demand payment for all professionals who appear on Worldcon programs commensurate with the after-con profits? Are you aware of the reputation you fellows have earned in fandom strictly on the basis of your own furtive actions? Speak up, fellow.)

Milton continues in the following vein:

"I don't like Ted White very much at the moment. That shouldn't really be too surprising. I don't think much of his ideas on running a convention. Since fandom is relatively democratic, anyone who really likes White's ideas can always form a bidding committee and try to get a worldcon themselves. I suspect that they would lose, but they always have the right to try. If they won the bid, they would most likely lose their shirts. Probably the most conclusive argument against Ted White is that nobody seems willing to risk their money on his ideas. If there was any merit in what he has been saying, certainly someone would step forward to take the risk."

The sound you just heard was Milton's head disappearing into the sand.

But let's backtrack a minute. Just what are these terrible ideas of mine? Just what is it I've said which has Milton's back up like this? Did he give you any idea?

Basically, I think that Worldcons should adhere to the ideals under which they were put on for more than twenty-five years. I believe that they should be made as cheap as possible for their membership, and that any profits should be passed out to the usual fannish charities--the next con, TAFF, the Art Show, DUFF, the SFWA (as a lump sum to the organization --not as individual payment to pros), etc. I think the idea of a ten-dollar membership fee is flatly ridiculous--and a terrible rip-off.

Now Milton would have you believe that these are stupid ideas and ones which no sensible fan would avow. Further, if anyone was misguided enough to do what I suggest, Milton is convinced he'd lose his shirt.

Wise up, Milton: in 1967 we did everything I suggested. Membership fees were \$3.00 at the door, \$2.50 at the previous Worldcon (as a discount to encourage early registration). We charged awfully low rates to hucksters and advertisers (who I believe should shoulder any real additional expenses Worldcons now incur--let those who make money from the Worldcon foot its costs!), and yet we were able to give a substantial amount of money away after the NyCon3.

"If there was any merit in what he has been saying, certainly someone would step forward to take the risk." Open your eyes, Milton. Someone did.

I don't know about Toronto; I know the Glicksohns share my thinking, but they don't chair the committee, and it would appear that Toronto policy will be a mixed bag. But Washington, D.C., won the bid for 1974 on a platform that correlates 100% with what I've been urging. This is no coincidence; much of the thinking in the first two editorials I wrote on Worldcons came out of a series of long, intense discussions with Alice and Jay Haldeman--the co-chairmen of Discon II.

"Those of you who remember DISCON remember a convention that kept a tight hold on finances. No individual made any money off the convention and a financial report was published. Bill Evans was treasurer of DISCON and he is treasurer for DISCON II. We are following the same guidelines and want to make this clear from the start. In the event that we are left with a surplus, the money--if sufficient--will be used for the publication of a Proceedings of the convention. If there is a remaining surplus, or if there is not enough money for a Proceedings, it will be distributed to universally recognized fannish causes such as TAFF or pass-on funds for the next convention."

That statement comes from the first Progress Report of the DISCON II.

BASIC PHILOSOPHY: It seems to me that the basic philosophy of the Worldcon should be altruistic. Under such a philosophy, almost thirty Worldcons were put on for the enjoyment of their attendees. Under such a philosophy, each Worldcon received all the help it asked for from previous Worldcon committees--both in the form of hard, practical advice and in the form of money (the pass-ons). No one expected to make more than enough money to adequately fund those fannish charities, like TAFF, which had come to depend upon these funds to a greater or lesser extent. Con committees worked as tirelessly and selflessly fifteen and twenty years ago as they have in recent times.

This changed in 1971. In 1971 the Noreascon opened a new bucket of worms. The Noreascon committee presented a fraudulent bid in order to win the convention (the bidding speech deliberately misrepresented the convention hotel rates to be substantially less than they--and the competitor's--really were) and charged then-unheard-of membership fees on an escalating basis. Since the convention rumors have flown thick and fast about the sums of money which the convention handled and made as profits. I have

heard speculation from others closely connected with Worldcon bidding and likely to know the facts, that the Noreascon committee cleared a profit of perhaps ten thousand dollars. (When you consider how many attendees may have paid a ten dollar registration fee at the door, you can see where the bulk of this might have come from.) This is denied, but not too convincingly, by Tony Lewis, who said, "We made a lot less than that." To date the Noreascon has not published a financial report and I'm told it does not intend to. To date I have not heard of any funds being passed on by Noreascon--either to following Worldcons or other fannish charities.

Now whether or not Noreascon really made the profits some believe it made is immaterial. What is important is that a lot of fans and pros considered the convention a rip-off for the benefit of the Committee. When LACon followed in Noreascon's shoes, resentment began to harden.

The reason for my editorials in AMAZING and FANTASTIC was the volume of mail I was receiving on the subject from my readers, most of whom resented what they considered to be high-handed behavior on the part of the Worldcon committees (primarily Noreascon's). In many cases, these readers were misinformed or ignorant of the facts. Some were upset that it cost \$10.00 (or so they thought) to vote for the Hugo awards. Others had other grievances.

The initial point of my editorialr was to present the background information against which current goings-on could be better judged. I described the former practices of Worldcon committees, suggested that Worldcons were getting too big, and offered several alternatives for future Worldcons, ranging from a trade exposition run by professionals to a closed-door convention with limited membership. I tried to be fair. I described the pressures under which a con committee works, and the actual financial problems it faces. My initial editorial was sparked by a long and sensible letter from Erwin Strauss, a former Boston fan, coincidentally, which I published as a part of that editorial. In subsequent editorials I published the letters I received from Mike Glicksohn (describing Toronto's situation), Chuck Crayne (describing LA's situation--and he disagreed with me a lot less than Milton did) and from Ivor Rogers (describing the problems unique to the Secondary Universe Conferences, on which he loses money).

Nowhere in those editorials did I launch an attack on any one committee or convention; I reserved my attacks for trends and policies which had a broader espousal. In every case I gave all interested parties a chance to occupy the same forum--my editorial space, not the letter column--an opportunity which remains open to anyone who has anything to say.

Presently, the situation is this: the professionals in sf have watched two major Worldcons apparently rip them off. It is a dead certainty that without the cooperation--the appearance--of sf pros, no Worldcon could attract more than the hard core of convention attendees. (That might be a good thing, if we wanted to get the Worldcons smaller again.) The pros are not just the main attraction--they are almost the only attraction a Worldcon has to offer. They make up better than 90% of the programming.

While Worldcons made no money to speak of, it never occurred to most pros to request speaking fees. Now Worldcons look like they are making profits in the five to ten thousand dollar range (the estimate which most outsiders agree on), and a number of members of the SFWA are asking, publicly, why they shouldn't collect speaking fees.

The LACon refunded the membership fees of everyone who appeared on its program, which is laudable. (But didn't Worldcons once give memberships to those on the program...?) But at the most this was \$10.00. Now, I appeared on a fan panel one afternoon with Terry Carr and Lou Tabakow and Noreen Shaw, and I did so without any thought of payment, so the refund of my membership fee (which arrived this month) was a pleasant bonus, and one for which I will say "Thank you," to the LACon committee. But that is

not what the more militant SFWA members have in mind. What they have in mind is twenty-five to fifty dollars, minimum, as an individual speaking fee.

And they have a point. If the Worldcon is making Big Money, then this money should be shared with those whose attendance made these profits possible. If the Worldcon is a business, operating to make a profit, then the SFWA is perfectly justified in asking a fair payment for every pro who makes his appearance on the official program. (Well, hell, Harlam is already collecting payment for his appearances--in the form of "Special Awards" which promptly become "Hugo Awards" on his next dustjacket.)

And that is the can of worms which Noreascon opened. Until Noreascon and LACon can convincingly show that their profits were minimal, the SFWA has members who are going to be increasingly hard-headed about this--debate is already going on--and the cons who will most directly feel the pressure will be Toronto and Washington. In the latter's case, I believe the Committee can convincingly demonstrate that no one will be ripping off anyone, no excess profits will exist, and payment to pros would be out of the question.

But in the meantime, Noreascon and LACon have much to answer for. They have set a tone of avarice which will not be easily dispelled. For this they have no one to blame but themselves.

Are you listening, Milton?

WHILE I'M ON THE SUBJECT... One of the expenses which con committees have recently saddled themselves with is Uniformed Guards. These guards stand duty to see to it that no one who does not have a convention badge enters the various function rooms.

Why are these guards there? Because the con committee is afraid fans will sneak in without paying (c.f. THE PASSING PARADE). Why would the fans want to sneak in? Because they bridle at the ten dollar admission charge. Why is there such a high fee? Because the guards must be paid. Etc.

It seems to me that a Worldcon committee can take one of two attitudes towards a con. Either the committee can be uptight, hard-nosed, and tyrannical--or it can take an easy-going stance.

It is my opinion that committees which opt for the hard-nosed approach are generating trouble--and work--for themselves. Reading Milton's description of how he hassled various fans who objected to joining the convention, one is struck by what a prick he really is. He all but gloats over these encounters. He verbally struts about with his chest puffed out as he describes the unpleasant scenes he provoked.

Would it have mattered if three people did not join the convention? Would it have toppled the profit structure?

Look, let us grant for a moment, purely as a hypothesis, that George Clayton Johnson, Wendy Fletcher and Mitch Evans are every bit as obnoxious as Milton thinks they are. What is the best way to treat such people? Is it to continually confront them and hassle them? Or just to ignore them? If indeed they were trying to prove some weighty radical point by pointedly refusing to join the convention, is it wiser to dignify their protest with acknowledgment than to dismiss them as beneath one's notice?

On the other hand, Wendy Fletcher did the cover for the LACon Program Book. She had art work on exhibit in the Art Show. Presumably she was not paid for her cover painting. Why not return the favor with a free membership or a membership waiver?

I don't know, but I suspect that Milton deserves his enemies.

AND FINALLY: You overguaranteed the banquet by 111, Milton? Oh, ho ho.

Us naive types who operated on less lavish budgets didn't guarantee our banquets at all. We let the hotel tell us how many tickets to sell. You city slickers are so much smarter.

ANNUAL REPORT: So what else is new? Well, the shape of local-area fandom is undergoing some radical changes. John "D." Berry moved down to Falls Church soon after the turn of the new year. His ostensible purpose was in order to publish EGOBOO more frequently; we only seem to get out an issue on those occasions when he visits. Right now he's looking for a job and a place of his own around here.

About a week after John came down, Rich and Colleen Brown came down for a weekend, and found a house to rent about half a mile from here (it's not actually in Falls Church, but it has a Falls Church mailing address). Rich is now working for Reuters as their correspondent at the Treasury Department, I believe.

And, at the moment, Michael Nally and his lady Edie are also living with us; Michael is an artist whose work has appeared in FANTASTIC, and he manages a bookstore where Robin is now working part time.

So life is full.

What fascinates me is that in all the years I lived here as a boy, there was never anyone else active in fandom in this city. Now, suddenly, there are several of us here. It is going to take me a while to get my mind wrapped around the notion.

This prompts a tangential thought: in all the years since I graduated high school (in 1956), my friends, associates and acquaintances have always been fans, or friends of fans. Fandom has long since ceased to be our major preoccupation, of course, but it was always our common ground, our meeting point, and the fact of it meant that we always moved in the same common social settings.

In New York City it was possible to have more friends than one could keep up with, all of them fandom-related. (It was also possible to avoid 80% of local fandom and still be intensely involved in local fanac; there must be over two hundred fans, quasi-fans and ex-fans in the New York City area.)

The Washington area has a much smaller fan population, of course--even if you include Baltimore fandom (which I suppose I do)--and yet fandom here is curiously splintered. Although I have attended the local WSFA meetings sporadically and I've been to all the local Disclaves and Balticons, I've yet to run into Bill Evans, for instance (we exchange notes about getting together, but have yet to do anything about it). And the only times on which I saw the Pavlats were when WSFA meetings were briefly held at their house, more than two years ago. The old guard of WSFA is largely extinct. (Well, not entirely; Chick Derry revived his interest in WSFA a year or so ago, but I gather his attendance did not overlap mine by much.)

When we moved down here, about the only fans we had much interest in seeing regularly were Alice and Jay Haldeman, in Baltimore. The rest of the local fan scene appeared cluttered with people whom I either do not like or have little in common with. However, an unlikely pair showed up at the 1971 Disclave, and, subsequently, at one or two WSFA meetings, with whom we grew friendly: Michael Nally and Jim ("Big Jim") Lawson. At that time Big Jim was running a small bookstore in Springfield, and Michael was living in Annandale doing some sort of construction work. Both are, in the current argot, "freaks," and this was our common bond.

Knowing Big Jim and Michael was our ticket into the local freak community, which is in many ways parallel to the fan communities I'd known before.

Since our own interests had been turning towards organic gardening, poison-free foods, a self-sufficient way of life, and good dope, I suspect this shift of communities was inevitable.

Where was I?

Gradually we've become involved in a local scene which is analogous

to the local fan scene of which we were a part in NYC (but without the ego-conflicts and feuding, thank ghod!). What amazes me is the way in which I can now go out to do errands or like that and bump into a friend on the street, quite by chance. I never knew enough people in a small enough area before for this to happen. I like it.

Now that John and Rich and Colleen are living in the area too--three of my favorite people in fandom--the chemistry seems to be getting really good. Everyone is compatible, and everyone gets along well.

What else has been happening?

Well, the Big Thing, I suppose, was our trip out to LA this year, for the LACon. We stopped off in Albuquerque for the Bubonicon at which I was guest of honor, and then drove on, via the Grand Canyon and such things, to the LACon the following week.

I didn't attend the same con Milton Stevens did, I'm glad to say. I skipped most of the program, managed to get into the pool on several occasions, and tried to get to most of the better parties. As I've already remarked elsewhere, the real problem with Big worldcons as far as I'm concerned is the simple fact that too many people whose company I enjoy were there. It was impossible to put together a clique for the duration of the con, for instance--the usual group of us who get together at a Worldcon must have numbered somewhere between fifty and a hundred, and it was hard to even get everyone you wanted together in one party (although the one in Don Fitch's room Sunday night came closest to that ideal, I thought). Going out to eat was impossible: we just had to grab someone (like the Benfords) and go; otherwise it turned into a mob scene which no restaurant could handle.

Nonetheless, I enjoyed the LACon. I enjoyed sitting with Buz by the elevator bank and talking while the world (and Alva Rogers) passed before our eyes. I enjoyed the opportunity (at Don Fitch's party) to discuss writing (and storytelling) devices with Elmer, whose fine hand with words I've come to appreciate a lot more over the years than I did in the mid-fifties when I characterized his stuff as deadwood minac. And--shit! I'm not going to try to remember everyone I enjoyed a pleasant moment with, with attendant fears of Leaving Out Someone Important By Accident. It was a big con, with lots of good people in attendance.

After the con we spent a pleasant couple of days in Laguna Beach with Greg and Joan Benford, including a day on the beach, and then drove north to the Bay Area, where we visited Jim and Hilary Benford, the Carrs, the Lupoffs, the Ellingtons, Bill Donaho's house (Bill was in Las Vegas, but we sure enjoyed his whirlpool bath, swimming pool and sauna), Mike McInerney, Jay Kinney and Calvin Demmon (in roughly that order) over a period of about a week, during which time my car's brakes failed.

My car...yes, my car. A 1961 VW bug, with a new engine in it. It hauled three adults and one small child, plus all our luggage and a big cooler (for food and drink) on an odyssey of some 7,000 miles. I have no idea how we did it, but somehow we did, and without undue discomfort. Astonishing. (The gas mileage was good, too.)

We culminated the trip with a two-day visit with the Tuckers, and got back to Falls Church exactly one month (to the day) from the time we'd set out.

Two weeks later I drove out by myself to Des Moines, Iowa, for a Secondary Universe Conference, a two-day drive each way, and it seemed like almost nothing...

THE END: This brings us to The End of another scintillating issue of NULL-F, the Annual Fanzine.

--Ted White