

"When was the last time you faced reality?" asked Edward. Barbara smiled. "I don't know. I haven't been able to identify reality yet." The response pleased Edward and he chuckled. "Keep it that way, lady, it's better than anything else around."

THE ROGUE RAVEN 12 is brought to you in the spirit of unreality by Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. Available at subs of 10 issues for \$1 and to people whom I especially like I have a special deal. This is for July 15, 1975.

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THE RAVEN FLIES AWAY

Time seems to be relentlessly passing away and no matter how I strain to keep the big hand from catching up with the little hand each hour, there seems to be no way of doing so. Consequently the date of July 13 looms large on the calendar. That, dear Ravenfriends, is the day upon which my wife and I will board a Boeing 747 in Vancouver, British Columbia and a short 8½ hours later set down in merry England

I was going to be ever so clever (hmmmm, that has a nice ring to it!) and have a couple of Ravens made up ahead of time just to surprise you all during my hiatus. But you all know how that goes. I tried to get President Ford to declare a moratorium or a Raven Holiday or something like that but you know the kind of cooperation you get out of the White House. So The Raven is going to take a vacation. Or to get in the mood for it all, I'll say it as the English do, The Raven is going on holiday.

Anna Jo and I won't be coming back until August 17th. Do not expect the next issue of TRR until September 1. That should be the auspicious 13th issue, unless I decide to do as many hotels do and skip from 12 to 14. Not likely, however. By the time we return I should have some of my fannish energies renewed and be able to press onward. There's nothing like a little time off to think about what you've been doing lately. The recent Westercon generated some conversations with people whom I respect highly that seem to indicate that the writing of fiction ought to be placed as one of my top priorities. One professional to whom I have submitted work made a statement which prompted me to bolt the room, lock myself in my hotel room, down three cups of coffee in a row and generally consider what he was telling me to do. Which basically was to quit screwing around and write a novel. So I've got to think about that quite a bit during the next five weeks and probably do an outline as well as some research while in England. If he's got that kind of faith in me, then I guess I've got to have that same faith in myself. At any rate, I took his words more seriously than any others I've heard since I started submitting short stories a couple of years ago. What this is likely to mean in terms of fanac is something I want to think about also. I certainly don't like to think about giving up some of the fannish activities I've been involved in over the past six years, but I need to be honest with myself about the amounts of time spent in various apas. The Rogue is very likely to continue because it gets great response for the amount of effort that goes



into it. Likewise Ash-Wing, which has been going so long that it would be a shame to quit at this point. There is some potential that TRR would move to a monthly schedule since I am continuing to get so many requests for it that it could easily become a burden on its present bi-weekly schedule. Typing directly on stencil, as I do doesn't require much time, but the rest of the publishing process does, and if I went to an 8-pager once a month it would be a whole lot easier. Sounds strangely like the old By Owl Light, doesn't it. Well, we'll see when I get back.

HOW WAS WESTERCON?

Well, good and bad. Yes, I have some good news and some bad news. Like the master of slaves said on the three-tiered Roman galley. The good news is that there is a double ration for lunch. And the bad news is that the captain wants to go water skiing after lunch. The Hotel Leamington may have been a good hotel for the Worldcon that was held there in 1962, but it wasn't a good hotel for the Westercon held in 1975. The first indication was when I pulled up to the front door and unloaded the luggage and checked in. I asked the desk clerk about parking, since they had had us indicate whether we were driving on the reservation card which I had sent in a month ago or better. She indicated that I should talk to the bell captain. He said, "Well, there's a parking lot over on the next corner, and one a block away and another one the other direction a block and a half." "You mean there's no parking in the hotel parking lot?" I queried. "That's right, sir. We're all filled up." Nice going, gang. The hotel hadn't seen so many people in years and wasn't able to cope. The dining room was small and the service lousy, according to reports. We did not even attempt to eat there. Going out to eat, however, was like a trek across the African veldt. Lots of little places close by, but seeming they depend only upon the luncheon trade of the office and store workers in downtown Oakland. So consequently they closed for the holiday weekend. Even McDonald's closed. So we had a Jack in the Box, a Doggie Diner (believe it) and some other worse. A walk of some distance to Chinatown did provide a delicious Chinese dinner, Mandarin style. Many people discover The Hof Brau which had huge hot beef and hot pork sandwiches. But all in all, it wasn't easy to find a meal.

The programs were generally good and some people participated who generally have not been in attendance before. Alfred Bester, Peter Beagle, Roger Elwood, John Brunner come immediately to mind. The old standbys included David Gerrold, who was also the pro guest of honor, Bill Rotsler, Bob Silverberg, Fritz Leiber, Katharine Kurtz, Marion Zimmer Bradley and E. Hoffman Price.

The art show was fine with regulars Tim Kirk, George Barr and Alicia Austin well represented and lots of fine work by Jim McLeod, John Howarth, a Chinese girl whose last name is Ericksen whose work is outstanding. Originals of Ballantine's Worlds of Fantasy Calendar for 1976 were on display and it will be well worth buying. Over all the art show was fine although the room was pretty crowded. A bigger room would have functioned a lot better.

The masquerade was something I just passed by. The ballroom was filled and the overflow took up much of the mezzanine. I guess I'm getting jaded, but sitting for several hours to see the costumes just didn't appeal to me this year at all, and I spent some of the time watching Barry Gold construct a Dungeon for a Dragons and Dungeons game. Fascinating, but I still don't understand it.

Of course, seeing old friends and meeting new ones is always the joy of convention going. Of the new ones, the ones who spring immediately to mind are people like Bill Bowers of Outworlds and Andy Porter of Algol. I enjoyed meeting them and we had some rather long conversations. Bruce D. Arthurs from Scottsdale, editor of Godless and the new Undulant Fever was there with his big leather hat. A gaggle of people from Apanage whom I had not met and whom I found to be energetic and a lot of

fun included Jan Snyder, Amy Falkowitz and Don Keller, he of the music column in Ash-Wing. Chris Sherman of Minneapolis is a great young fellow who is going to burn himself out if he isn't careful...I told him so to his face, so he won't be surprised by this comment. We spent a good share of time together and I was delighted at his intense interest in so many facets of life. He's an excellent conversationalist and we could have gone on for several more days if lack of sleep hadn't caught up with us somewhere along the way. An older friend whom I had not seen in several years was Ken St. Andre from Phoenix. Ken and his wife had come to San Francisco for the American Library Assn conference earlier the same week, then Ken came over to Oakland for the con. You may remember that Ken was going to do a game called Tunnels and Trolls, a variant of Dungeons and Dragons which was to be easier and faster to play. Well, he accomplished it and I have a copy in my possession now. It runs close to 50 pages mimeo (oops, offset) has some great humorous cartoons by Rob Carver of Phoenix, and is generally a much more humorous approach to gaming than is Dungeon and Dragons. Still looks complicated to me, but what do I know. One can read through these rules and get a good chuckle without understanding a thing about the game. I'm afraid that Ken found out it cost more to produce than he had originally anticipated. It's going to cost \$3 now that it has been published, but for friends of Ash-Wing and The Rogue Raven, he'll knock it down to \$2.50. Here we go again. I don't have Ken's address with me, since I'm doing this at school. You'll have to look back in the last few issues of TRR to find that information. You do keep a back file of The Raven, don't you? Anyway, I think I'm still looking for a nice simple sf or fantasy game which two people can play in a hour or less and which lends itself to be played by mail. Of course, it's got to be interesting enough to hold one's attention and to make you want to play it again, but not so complex that it takes 16 hours and a Master's Degree in Tactics to play well.

The artist's were their own inimitable selves. Joe Pearson corned Lee Nordling into starting a Western cartoon and it continued on for three days and something like eight or nine sketch pad pages. Somewhere in there Bill Bowers said that he would publish it in Outworlds. Before it was over all he could see that he had made a bad mistake. It's going to cost him a half year's pay to have the thing reduced and made ready for offset. I don't know which was more fun; watching the cartoon develop through the hands of a variety of artists or watching Bill gulp whenever Joe would mention a couple of more artists that hadn't worked on it yet or that so-and-so had started a new page.

Of course, there were old friends there. Bill "Swampy" Marsh whom I hadn't seen for almost two years. Bob Alvis, Sherlockian and book collector from Boulder. Vardeman, grinning ear to ear when I congratulated him on his first novel, an sfs, to be published by Dell. Ted and Karen Pauls of T-K Graphics, Bill Patterson from Phoenix, crazy Mark and Paula Ann Anthony, who publish the madcap Whatever. Roy Squires who turned me on to a good Scotch whisky and wanted to make sure that I had a complete list of Edgar Pangborn's works. Loads others of course, and I'm sorry if I've slighted anyone, but time is beginning to press.

All in all, I guess I was satisfied with the convention. Conventions are people, and that's what counted.

I've worked off and on on this thing all day between clearing my desk and taking care of some last minute arguments with the business officer, seeing that the student help all got their checks, checking with the photographer about films to take to England, making a decision for the Board of Publications and other mundane activity.

Anna Jo just called to say that Andy Porter and Jon Singer had just called from Portland and were going to stop by tonight. Don't they know that I've got to think about packing? All right, you guys. It's Colonel Sanders and pizza for you, but

I'll put them to work bundling Ash-Wing for the bulk mailing. Then tomorrow morning I'll take it down to the postal terminal and get it in the mail. Tomorrow afternoon we have tickets to go to see a production of "The Hobbit" which we have never seen performed and I'm hoping it's good. Tomorrow night I guess I can take some time to think about packing because the following day (Sunday) we have to leave for Vancouver, B.C. around noon in order to begin check-in for the flight about 3:30 in the afternoon.

Then on to London. The itinerary there looks like this: five days in London, then south to Runnymede, Hastings, Romney Marsh (The Scarecrow of...), Canterbury, then up the east coast, on to Yorkshire (dales and moors and the city of York), then north into Scotland, Edinburgh, further north to Inverness, Findhorn, Loch Ness, Gull-oden, back down to The Lake District, visit Anna Jo's second cousin in Cumberland, thence to Wales, finally to Exmoor and back to London with stops in Somerset and Wiltshire if time permits. Sometime in there we'll see if we can get to Nottingham, to Stockport to see Dave Piper and to Henley to visit with Keith Roberts.

As if I didn't buy enough at Westercon to keep me busy for a while, I'll probably do a lot in England. Jeff Frane tells me that there is a nicely matched set of Ursula's "Earthsea" books published over there. I still hunt for the elusive John Cowper Powys; there's got to be Arthurian stuff that I haven't stumbled across yet. By the way, Anna Jo said she has found out where Merlin is supposed to be buried, and that would be fun to add to the list of places we've already visited which are connected with the Arthurian legend.

Well, I think I'm going to give up right here and run this off. I have lines left to be filled but the tension is building and I have no more words to say for a while. I'll have lots of words when I get back, I'm sure. And perhaps more energy than I have right now. Got back from Westercon with 101 fever and still have not recovered. Hope the plane flight doesn't do funny things with my ears and throat.

Don't forget to drop me a card if you'd like a copy of the trip report which I'll do when I get home. I'm only running enough for those who have indicated an interest. So until September, take care and have an unusually good summer.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Harrod's has everything; perhaps I can buy a plot.