

THE ROGUE RAVEN 29 should come to you eventually from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. I'm sorry that I can't do any better with a clever colophon, but, as I have been reminded by more than one of you, I'm a little bit out of practice. Maybe this will get better as I go along, and maybe it won't. Try to bear with me as I try to pick up the pieces of my shattered fannish life.

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I've been feeling guilty for some time now because I haven't done an issue of The Rogue Raven for a long time. #28 was begun last February and I don't think I finished it up until May. Let us hope that this issue is completed in a somewhat shorter time.

I've tried to analyze a bit why I haven't been publishing as frequently as I used to. But I gave that up as not particularly productive. What the hay! I should take a leaf from the book of Horrible Old Roy Tackett and publish when I feel like it and not worry about the spaces in between.

I received an issue of Undulent Fever from Bruce Arthurs the other day. He's evidently been the same place I have as far as publishing goes. It was good to see his zine appear again and it gave me a boost to roll the stencil into the typer and have a go at it. I almost re-named this issue Indolent Fever. Well, enough of this crying over spilt time. Let me get on with something more entertaining than bemoaning the fact that I have not published for aeons.

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WITH APOLOGIES TO JOE PEARSON
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There should have been a cover for this issue. It was done by Joe at Westercon last July. There should have been a somewhat lengthy report of activities both at the convention and away from the convention. It was a long convention and there was plenty of time to snoop around San Francisco. Joe and Carmen and assorted other folks made a couple of near disastrous trips out into the wilds of S.F. and came back with splendid tales. Perhaps

the tales were better because things didn't work out as well as we had planned. Anyway, I still have notes and will hit some of the highlights next time, not of the convention itself, but of some of the other adventures we had. And I will get the cover e-stenciled so Joe's art doesn't go to waste.

Aging is when you get winded playing backgammon.

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WELL, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING WITH YOURSELF?

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Something has to have been taking up my time, so maybe here is a good place to catch you up on what it was. I'll start with the most recent times and move backward from there. Most recently has to have been the Science Fiction Fair. Last year we held the first of these with the student body associations of two of the Seattle Community College campuses putting up the money. It was fairly successful and they decided to do it again. So about the third week of January the second SF Fair was held. The guests this year were Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Elizabeth Lynn, John Varley and Ed Bryant, with special guest on Friday evening Peter Beagle. The fair is held at both campuses and the programming is only in the afternoon and evening, attempting to give the students an opportunity to attend their classes and events of the fair both. We have not attempted to make a convention out of this, so we don't worry about art shows, and hucksters, and masquerades. The idea is to stick to writing, the enjoyment of science fiction, the ideas that are presented through sf.

We were a bit disappointed with the turnout this year. We didn't have Harlan Ellison to draw people as we did last year. In some respects, however, I felt that we had four solid newer writers (new only in comparison with some of the older stalwarts in the field, since these writers combined have produced an impressive volume of work with very high quality). Each writes in his or her own style and each deals with varied subjects. I felt that in answering the questions put to them there was a varied approach and that they were excellent examples of the breadth of the field. In some ways it was a stronger program than our first one. We've debated why the attendance was not as high and feel that the publicity wasn't as strong as last year, and that perhaps our timing was off. We may have been competing with the beginning of the quarter when things haven't settled down enough, and we had some problems with the quarter break during which no one was being bombarded with information about the coming event. Given another chance next year we'll do better.

Still, generally it was felt that the Fair was a success. The student officers who were involved felt that they were given their money's worth and we must depend upon that as the principle source of funding. At any rate, it was great to have these people come. They gave their all to the panels and readings and those students and members of the community who attended were very pleased with the program.

A side benefit for Anna Jo and me was the opportunity to take Ed Bryant to dinner on a Sunday evening. Ed and a lady friend were excellent company. We went to a place on the Seattle waterfront which featured a Sunday evening clam and crab feed and we stuffed ourselves. Good talk flowed. Ed caught me up on many of the people in the southwest whom I have not seen for some time, especially some of my friends and acquaintances who are writing. He tried to entice us to come down to Penulticon this month but a series of appliance disasters has hit the Denton household recently. Money isn't exactly short, but it's not terribly long either. Christmas didn't help a bit. It was lots of fun, but it didn't help. Anyway, it was good to see Ed again and to be able to spend a little time with him. I wish that we didn't live so far apart and that this opportunity offered itself more often.

Another side benefit was having Chelsea Quinn Yarbro read my palm. She did it so casually, coming up to me on the first evening and taking my hand to look at it. I knew what she was doing and said, "Go ahead." The lady is very talented at it and uncannily correct. It's not a parlor game to her and I listened intently to what she said. I wish I had a recording, because it's so difficult to remember all that she said. Thanks, Quinn.

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TANKCON
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Over the Christmas holidays the Dentons traveled south along I-5 to Sacramento and environs. The principle reason was for me to attend Tankcon, a small invitational held each year between Christmas and New Years. Jim McLeod was the host this year and Dale Goble, in a fannish frenzy at owning a new Olivetti typewriter with changeable golf balls, even prepared a program for the event. I must say that it was slightly different from previous Tankcons. Partly the reason was that Jim was involved in some courtroom proceedings having to do with an air-conditioning system in a house he had sold recently. The system had quit after he had sold the house and he was being sued for the repairs on it. Jim spent parts of a couple of days in court and the proceedings were held over so no decision was arrived at. For the life of me, nor Jim either, could I see how Jim could be responsible for something that happened after he had sold the house, signed sealed and delivered.

We were disappointed that Mike Horvat, original instigator of Tankcon, could not get away from his printing business to attend. I hope that means that Mike is being very successful, having moved the business to Stayton, Oregon recently. Another stalwart who did not show up was Bill Marsh from Carson City, Nevada. We don't know why he didn't show as he had previously told Dale that he was coming for a couple of days at least. On the plus side we had Art Scott, the Emperor of Dapa-Em, the mystery apa, visit from Cupertino for a couple of days. Dapa-Em is the only mystery apa in existence and is a tremendous learning experience for someone interested in the mystery field. It is bi-monthly, has a full complement of 35 members at present and the most recent mailing was 345 pages. And it sticks awfully close to the mystery field, unlike most sf apas. If you happen to be interested in contacting Art to get some information on the apa, drop me a post card and I'll be glad to give you his address.

As you can imagine the talk was not only of sf but of mysteries. A surprising number of sf fans with whom I talk also read pretty extensively in the mystery field. I think Art was once the OE of Apa-5. Along with this talk we had access, through Jim's video tape recorder to some awfully good movies. On the mystery side we saw The Big Fix with Richard Dreyfuss as Moses Wine and Murder By Decree with Christopher Plummer and James Mason as Holmes and Watson. Both very fine films. On the sf side we saw Invasion of the Body Snatchers with Mr. Spock, Barbarella and a thing called Warlords of Atlantis which I only saw snatches of, as I was busy at the time getting whipped by someone in backgammon. One other fine film in Jim's collection was The Goodbye Girl.

Bookshopping took up one day. Dale and I started off in the morning at The Ranch for a breakfast that had biscuits and gravy (why can't someone put that on the menu up here?) and then started hitting the used book shops. We dropped back at the house to pick up Jim and hit more of them in the afternoon. I came home loaded with used paperbacks and one or two hardbacks. It's always fun to bookshop in someone else's town. In your own home town you hit the same bookstores because you know which ones are likely to have what you might want. At the same time, every time you go to them you know that 90% of the books are the same ones you looked over last time you were there. So it goes.

Much backgammon was played and I seemed to lose pretty consistently. But I had a good time and maybe learned a little more about the game. Some Clue was played and I managed to win at that a couple of times. And I had the pants beat off of me in Scrabble by Art Scott and Jim McLeod. Maybe I wasn't cut out to be a wordsmith. Speaking of which, I was introduced recently to Boggle, a game in which dice with letters on them are jiggled down into a frame and with a timer the players have about three minutes to make up words from the layout according to specific rules. Fascinating game!

On one evening some other local folks came in for a feed of spaghetti and garlic bread. Mike Garrels, chairman of Sacramento's Westercon in a couple of years, Laurie White, and old friend and fellow Slanapan, and Bridget McKenna, a new member of Slanapa. We had a good evening watching movies, talking, and getting in occasional games of backgammon. Debbie McLeod even got to come back to her own house that evening.

While all this foolishness was going on Anna Jo was off touring the gold country near Sacramento. She has an adventurous nature and loves to explore. She recently got some slides back which she had taken during her jaunt and she did see some fascinating things. She visited places like Sutter's Creek and Volcano and other small towns in the area, and from stories she has told, she met some very interesting people.

One of the bad things about Tankcon was Jim's ownership of the videocassette recorder. The color and resolution were excellent and it was a pleasure to sit in the comfort of a living room and be able to watch shows like the ones I mentioned above. I suppose that one of these days I'll succumb to the desire to own one of these devices. There have been four or five things I would like to have on videotape and I suppose that people who own recorders find more things to tape. I'm not a great television watcher. I limit myself on purpose because it would take time away from reading, writing and other activities which I enjoy. But mention I, Claudius, The Sacketts, The Dain Curse, Murder By Decree, The Great Train Robbery and I get a funny look in my eye.

I keep hoping, of course, that the price will come down a bit. The extended times that one can record now seems to be an improvement. The video disc confuses the issue at the moment. I'm partial to the tape format as it allows recording while the disc does not (at least not yet). The disc is cheaper, but is limited to what the companies decide to make available. This will expand, I'm sure, as more machines are bought by consumers. Well, all of this was sort of a digression. I don't expect to do anything rash for a couple of years (or maybe months). When programs like Mystery come along, and announcements are made about a 12-hour mini-series of Shogun I get the sort of look in my eyes that Mr. Toad got when he discovered a new toy. And, of course, along comes a new magazine entitled Panorama which seems to be aimed at exactly the sort of viewer that I am. I haven't subscribed but I did pick up a copy of the first issue from the newstand. It's aimed at the selective television viewer and seems to be a pretty good magazine. So what is one of the main articles in this premier issue? A run-down on the various VCRs available with a well done chart of prices, timing arrangements, attachments, etc. Oh, woe!

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NECROMANCY

*If Charley Dessen
Had ordered Ralph Branca
To walk Bobby Thompson
& face Willie Mays*

*If these spells would work
Every time that I cast them
I might be there myself
In the big leagues today.*

-- Michael Carlson --

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Since I left off above Michael's poem (and can spring training be far behind?) talking about one form of entertainment, I may as well continue with another form.

Last issue (I'll remind you; you surely won't remember after all this time) I was moaning and bitching about the state of the record industry and the fact that nothing was being issued that I was particularly interested in. Well, good things come to those who wait, I guess. There have been things issued that I was interested in. And I must be the first to damit (oh, what a lovely typo!) admit that each one has his or her own tastes. Jerry Kaufman told me that there was lots of good New Wave, but I'm not interested in New Wave and he is. During the typing of this, I've been listening to Tony Banks' A Curious Feeling and Tony Williams' The Joy of Flying. Music must be a very important part of most of our lives, as I got lots of letters with recommendations. I was told to rush out and buy Jethro Tull's Songs from the Woods and Heavy Horses, and I agree. Both are some of the best Tull on record. Someone else recommended Horslips, an Irish band, and I was way ahead of them. Their The Men Who Built America was a very fine album, and their latest, Short Stories, Tall Tales is good but a bit on the commercial side. I've also enjoyed Matrix, a jazz group, with their latest effort, Tale of the Whale. I could go on naming groups and records, but won't except to mention a couple of imports. First off is Ralph Lundsten and the Andromeda All Stars, a Swedish group, who have recorded a very interesting album entitled Alpha Ralpa Boulevard. No Cordwainer Smith fan could pass that up, surely. The second is a very expensive package of two lps by Greenslade with a book by Patrick Woodruffe. The entire package is called The Pentateuch and the music is mucho synthesizer. Very interesting stuff, both the music and the art and story.

Enough already of recordings. I can't pass up the opportunity to rant about my son, Sean's band, and the old folks chance to hear some real live rock and roll done by someone we know. (I should have mentioned above that we did have a chance to hear Horslips one night in a smallish place in Seattle where they did a one-nighter). Sean's band, Hard Times, has become primarily a weekend band, and one that does almost exclusively high school dances. There's a very economic reason for this. A one-nighter pays them \$500 and they can do two or occasionally even three such dates on a weekend. They might be better known locally if they played taverns, but they can only draw \$800-\$1000 per week for tavern jobs. So you can see that the better paying of the two is the high school dates.

A couple of weeks ago they agreed to do a one nighter at a tavern in Kent, near here. I had heard them about four months ago, but only for a couple of sets. Anna Jo hadn't heard them for about two years, certainly not since the band has become almost the old Gryffyn Band of three or four years ago. Only one member remains of the group that was Hard Times when Sean folded his earlier band and joined Hard Times. Monday night is quite traditionally a quiet night at taverns, but the band members had noised it about with their friends that they would be playing. Quite a few people who knew them came out. But surprisingly there was a pretty good crowd of people who did not know them also.

It was a good night. The band was hot. They were playing tightly and having a good time. It showed in their performance. Jumping up and down, acting crazy, grinning a lot, playing some good licks, staying in tune pretty well (they laid out several hundred recently to acquire a strobe tuner to keep all of the guitars in tune and it helps -- Sean plays three different guitars now and keeping them in tune is a bear). Mom and Dad got a lot of weird looks from people who didn't know us, but lots of the kids friends came over and spent the time between sets sitting at our table and talking with us. Lots of kids we hadn't seen in several years, and one fellow who used to work in the local record shop about five years back and is now a Boeing engineer came over and re-introduced himself. He remembered that I was into sf and we talked music and sf for about twenty minutes. We stayed until 1 a.m. and got to hear five good solid sets, including one of their own songs, besides all of the other peoples music that they play. Good happy times and a lot of fun for everybody. We split at one, but Sean said later that they got applauded

back for an encore. They felt very good about the gig and said that it was nice to play for a more adult audience, even though the money wasn't as good. With their own sound and lights they do a very professional show. It is to be hoped that they will play there again sometime so that we can go hear them.

Having talked about one of the kids, can I neglect the other two? I'd better not. Shannon returned from California last April and has been working at the public market here, sometimes selling her own t-shirts and other times working for a fellow who imports shirts and sweaters from Mexico. More recently she has started in a displaced homemakers program at Highline Community College and is enjoying it immensely. It gives her an opportunity to get a handle on what some career opportunities might be. Grandson Aaron is a lot of fun, nearly five, and I'll try not to get started with the grandfather bit, except to say that I'll make a reader out of him before he hits first grade. He loves books already.

Eldest Tim is home from Alaska with an allergy to crab and more recently a very bad back from this last trip. He's been fussing with the insurance company since October when he arrived back, and got that squared away just last week and was sent to see a neurosurgeon. Preliminary examination seems to suggest a crushed disc and he will go in for a milogram on Tuesday. If that turns out the way the doctor suggests he may have to have the disc removed by surgery. That is a nasty business with little guarantee that the back will every be better again. On the other hand, he can't go around with the pain in his back and down one leg, so it is something of a quandary. Of course, I have no experience to give him much advice, but will talk with the doctor on Tuesday with some questions about whether there are any alternatives.

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TRAVELING TIME

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Do you want to hear again about our trip to England? *Moans* Oh, no, not again. Well, I'll try to keep it brief. I've been reading a superb trip report from John Hopfner which runs to 70 pages, and is beautifully written. I did one such for one of our trips, but it's awfully time-consuming. But I admire people who do such and delight in reading them. I'm just not up to writing one of them any more.

This was our fifth trip to England. Of necessity there are some things to be done in London, but not nearly as many as on previous trips. We wanted to take in a couple of plays and did. Bedroom Farce and Crucifer of Blood. Both excellent productions. We visited the London Museum especially to see a fine exhibit of "150 Years of the Metropolitan Police" -- (Scotland Yard). Of course, we book shopped and other shopped. We were fortunate that my cousin Margaret arrived in London the day before we did and cousin Joe, her brother, arrived the day after we did. So we were able to have a couple of dinners together and wander the town a bit.

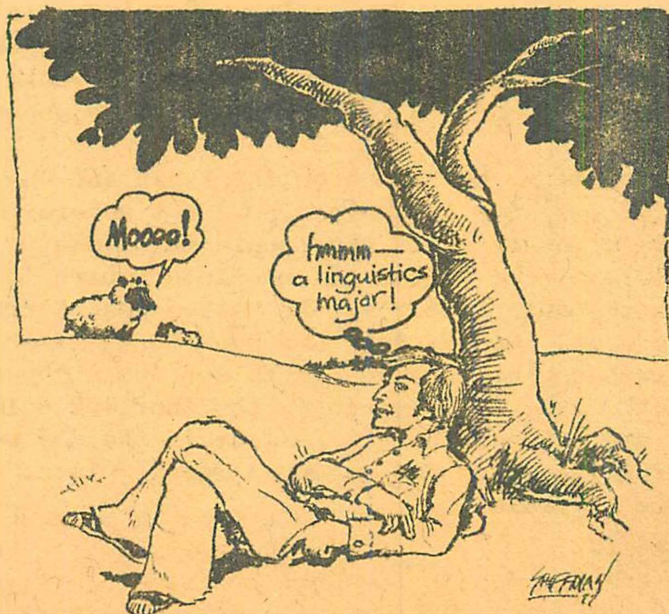
We had planned to do some hiking along the north coast of Devon and Cornwall, so took the train to Taunton, then by bus to Minehead. The guidebooks which we had purchased two years back and had studied were excellent in every way. They allowed us the most sophisticated sort of hiking possible as accomodations with phone humbers were listed along the way. We would call an inn or bed and breakfast in the morning, tell them that we were on the trail and would definitely be there for the evening, then arrive to a hot bath, a couple of drinks in the bar, a lovely dinner, and a bed to sleep in. What a civilized way to hike! The Coastal Footpath, as it is named, stretches for 515 miles along Devon, Cornwall, and again across the south coast of Devon. In a week's time, with one day off for washing clothes and relaxing, we covered 40 miles. We weren't out to kill ourselves. We hiked through woods, along cliffs, over portions of Exmoor, through small villages, up over the downs. It was

a wonderful experience and we'd like to pick up next trip where we left off, at Ilfracombe. We were well prepared for all kinds of weather and got it, lots of rain and wind. We carried only small day packs, with a change of clothes for the evening, a book or two, cameras, and a space for a lunch. Wonderful hiking, and much of the time not a soul in sight. Wondrous views along the cliffs, across the combes and on clear days across the Bristol Channel to Wales.

When we had finished the hiking, we took the train back to Taunton, picked up our left luggage, rented a car and once again met our cousins for a wonderful French meal and a walk around town. Then we were off to explore Dorset. Highlights of this portion of the trip were Hardy's Cottage, Maiden Castle, a huge and ancient hill fort, the county museum of Dorset in Dorchester with many Roman artifacts, and a visit to Lawrence of Arabia's cottage and paying our respects at his grave. Then we wandered north through Glastonbury, Wells, and Bath, crossed into Wales, down the Wye valley to Tintern Abbey, and on to Cardiff. For three days I wandered Cardiff, collecting material and doing research for a novel on which I am working. On the fourth day we continued the researching in Barry and Penarth, dockside towns near Cardiff, then headed north to the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons. This is a beautiful, peaceful area of Wales with some nice climbing. We spent one day climbing Corn Dhu and Pen-y-fan and were nearly blown off the top in gale force 9 winds. I nearly lost my glasses to the wind, could not hold the camera still enough to take pictures, and Anna Jo had to get on hands and knees a couple of times to keep from being blown over. I don't know what the wind chill factor was, but I know I was beginning to experience hypothermia by the time we got off the top. We were catching the tail end of the storm that hit the Fastnet Races and had hit Cardiff during the time we were there. In Brecon we attended an organ recital in the cathedral, a new experience for us. The organ can shake your liver. At Hay-on-Wye we visited the many book shops the town is famous for.

Thence eastward to Henley-on-Thames to visit Keith Roberts. He had most graciously prepared a dinner party for the evening of our arrival and with some of Keith's best friends, David and Kate Hunter and Graham Walker, we went first to a pub, The Victoria, to quench our thirst, and then to The Golden Curry for an excellent Indian meal. And what a wonderful evening of conversation afterward.

Over the next few days we wandered the countryside in the company of Keith. We visited Sourbridge, a wonderful man-made lake and informal gardens covering acres of land, and laid out by Capability Brown in the 1700s. We took in Chedworth Villa, a restored villa from Roman times, stopped in Chipping Norton and Stow-in-the-Wold, went north to Northamptonshire, Keith's home county to visit some of his favorite places and meet his dear friends, Bob and Kath Curtis. One day Keith and I went to Oxford on a book buying expedition, drained away our time and money and enjoyed



ourselves immensely. I could have devoted pages to our stay with Keith. I'll stop here to say that since our return home I have heard from Keith. A volume of short stories is now out in England from Gollancz. It is entitled Ladies from Hell and if you are a Roberts fan, write to Blackwells or Parkers or Hatchards or Foyles or whom-ever you deal with and order yourself a copy. Later on there will be a new novel, entitled Molly Zero, or so I suspect. It should be published this year sometime. At this point we don't know whether these will be published in the states or not, but if they aren't it will be a tragedy. Well, enough of all this. Again, I could devote pages to the Roberts-Denton dialogue at no little embarrassment to both of us. Let me just say publicly, thank you, Keith, for your kindnesses, your good company, your excellent knowledge of the best pubs in England you'd better have your turntable in good working order the next time round.

How to describe the worldcon? Well, lessee. One big blur. You've heard elsewhere about the consumption of beer? Well, it was copious. For me it was an opportunity to meet people whom I had met previously, especially the English friends we have made. And also to meet some American people with whom I have had contact for many years now, and yet had never met. Where to start? And worse yet who will I leave out?

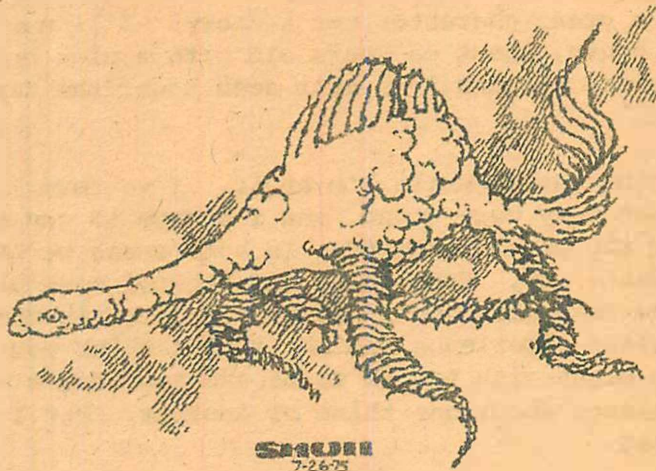
It was good to see the likes of Mike and Pat Meara again. And Eric Bentcliffe. And Darroll and Rosemary Pardoe. And Pete and Anita Presford. Got to meet Paul and Caz Skelton. And Ian Maule. Good folks all. On the American side, I finally after about 11 years of correspondence and apa sharing got to meet Ned Brooks. And Bob Tucker, with whom I sat quietly and talked and we didn't even "smooth." Saw Lisa Tuttle for the first time in about eight years. Met Terry Hughes. Had a nice chat with Peter Roberts. Sat and talked mysteries with Michael Carlson, whose poem appears earlier on in this issue. Michael lives in England now with his lovely wife, Theresa.

I can't say that I heard much of the programming, being much too busy meeting with people and talking. I made a special effort to meet Richard Cowper, whose work I enjoy. Had a chance to meet Christopher Priest, another author whose work I enjoy. We managed to have a couple of very nice Greek dinners in good company, including Ron and Linda Bushyager and John Miesel and others one evening. We had a chance to walk around Brighton in the rain one day, another walk out on the pier in the sun, and a long walk down the beach one evening as the sun was setting. Went to a couple of readings, and was most impressed with Joan Vinge and Lisa Tuttle. Both have good things in the works, or so it sounds. Joan's The Snow Queen will be out in April and should be very good. The art show was quite good and the Dragon's Dream exhibit was spectacular. I found out at the eleventh hour that they allowed photographing and it was *sob* too late to do anything about it.

A ride up to London on the train and one last mad dashing day was all that was left of our stay in England. We hit several bookshops, and were most impressed by the book knowledge of the people at Hatchards, while we were unimpressed by the help at Foyle's. We dashed off to Sloan Square for Anna Jo to see if there were any bargains at Laura Sahley's. We walked past Harrods and maybe we'll get inside one of these days. Caught the tube back to the west end in time to have dinner at The Swiss Centre, and then dashed off to see Tom Stoppard's play, Dogg's Hamlet, Kahout's Macbeth. Two last lagers at the Sherlock Holmes Pub and who should walk in but Cathy Hill and Paula Anthony. Earlier in the day we had met Bill Rotsler on the street, soulfully looking for a camera repair place. So farewell to England for another couple of years.

JURY DUTY

Along about October I was called for federal jury duty. Here my life is almost



2/3 over and I've never been called before to serve on any kind of jury duty. On federal jury duty you are on call for six months. So I still have another couple of months to go but don't know whether I will be called again or not. I've been through a couple of jury selections which didn't take, so to speak. I was dismissed from the jury box on a trial of a woman who had accompanied her common law husband when coming through customs at the Canadian border and he shot and killed a guard. She was charged with aiding and abetting. Selection took all day on that one and each of 36 prospective jurors was called to judge's chambers separately and questioned by judge, prosecutor and

defense. After this there were general questions to all prospective jurors about ownership of firearms, relations in law enforcement, and a couple of others. I was also questioned separately about my children. After a whole day I was dismissed.

I have been on two juries since then however. The first charged a Canadian citizen, owner of a small company dealing in new and used tractor attachments, with introducing stolen property into the commerce of the U.S. with the knowledge that it was stolen. There were three counts on three separate items, plus one count of using false and fraudulent documents to do so. Two winches valued at approx. \$6,000 and a 40 foot hiboy trailer. The trial lasted three days and deliberation took another whole day. We found him guilty on two counts and not guilty on two.

The other trial had everything. It involved illegal firearms, namely silencers. Conspiracy to manufacture and sell same. Two men were involved and tried together. Both are right wingers, both feel that the Federal Reserve Note is not real money, and that the economy of the U.S. is going to collapse. One has served time for not reporting an income tax return. Both have religious organizations as some sort of front. This all started when a con was released from California to a half-way house in Seattle. He was a friend of the other man who had served time. They were going to set him up in a sign painting business. He was sent to Idaho by his friend here to look at a "machine", most likely a printing press as the guy had spent about 25 years in prison for forgery and counterfeiting. But this was not part of the trial. He came back with a short barreled rifle and two silencers. He had bragged to a man in Idaho that he had "connections" and could get \$1000 each on the street. He then got cold feet and turned himself in to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. They did legal wiretaps of telephone conversations, used on-the-body recorder, and bugged a hotel room in Idaho. They also brought in an agent from Richmond, VA to pose as a mob connection to set up a buy. He bought six silencers. Defense claimed they were barrel stabilizers and flash hiders. We had to go to the shooting range and see the weapon fired in the dark to make our own determination. The trial took ten days, and we had first to deliberate on whether the items were silencers or not. Then we had to deal with the whole matter of entrapment. Were they entrapped or not? Yes, they were silencers, and no, they were not entrapped. We deliberated a whole day and found them guilty on all counts. The short barrelled rifle was actually a .22 Ruger pistol, with silencer on end, a rod which pulled out to make a stock for the shoulder, and a telescopic sight on top. Looked right out of a James Bond movie. You should have seen the look on the pawn brokers face when he was asked

to identify the pistol which he had sold. He was able to do it from the serial number, but what he was holding in his hands certainly puzzled him.

The agent who went undercover was a great character for a story. I'll use him someday. Quiet, soft-spoken, a little heavy, about 45 years old with a nice beard, immaculate dresser. And one of the coolest persons I've ever seen under the fire of the defense attorney.

I should say a word about both of the juries while I'm at it. I've never worked with people who were more sincere in what they were doing, and I'd have to say that a jury trial is really a fair shake for the person charged. In both cases we looked for loopholes that would let the defendants off. Each point was debated carefully, and the instructions from the judge were read aloud over and over in certain parts to clarify our thinking. It's an excellent experience and one that I think you should never turn down if you are called. You might wish to ask to be excused from a certain type of trial because of strong feelings about one thing or another. But I think that it's an opportunity not to be missed.

Speaking of which, we have a new chapter of the Mystery Writers of America in the Northwest. This Saturday night our guest speaker will be from the Snohomish County prosecutor's office and one of the things he will talk about is how attorneys go about deciding which people to excuse from jury and which to keep. It should be most interesting in the light of my experiences. I've been told that it was surprising that I was chosen for any jury at all with my education and background. I must say I was surprised myself.

Well, no book talk and no letters. Maybe I'll try a catch-up issue in another month or six weeks. Art: Canfield - p.1; Shiffman - p.7; Shull - p.9 Thanks, guys.

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