

THE ROGUE RAVEN 50

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I think this issue will be more in the nature of journal entries than any thing else. I suppose that I will tell you about a longish trip which Anna and I took last year in the late fall. Other than that there's not a whole lot to tell. Life continues, which is good, I suppose. I had another birthday. That's good, too. There's one more twinge and one more creak, but otherwise things aren't too bad. The alternative to having a birthday isn't very attractive so I will continue to attempt to avoid that alternative. But we try not to count anymore.

I'M GLAD I WASN'T BORN A SERF or SEE HOW THE PRETTY FLOWERS GROW

2-27-97 One of my sons was kind enough to present me with a gift certificate to a nursery for Christmas. No doubt he'd been talking to his mother. Who must have told him that Poppa Bear, as he affectionately calls me (I think), had been talking about wanting some roses recently. The gift was much appreciated and made the old man do more than just talk about it. Last Sunday, with not much else on the platter, we took a drive to the north end of Lake Washington to one of the biggest nurseries in the area.

When I walked into the smallish building, I wondered why everyone talked about this nursery so much. The building was about 30' through and then we entered a huge lot, covered with awning in which every sort of plant was displayed. When I found the roses section I was overwhelmed. I don't know a thing about roses and spread before me was an array that would give any casual gardener fits. Suddenly there appeared before me this nice gentleman with the half glasses and a sweatshirt that read "American Rose Society." A savior indeed. I explained that I knew absolutely nothing about roses, had never grown then and needed help in the worst way. He was ever so good. He explained the various types of roses and we decided on hybrid teas. Then he asked me for colors, and that choice wasn't so difficult. He explained to me about a number which indicated hardiness and resistance

to disease, so we picked two roses which are hardy and give me a good chance to be successful. The first two were a red with yellow center called Double Delight, and the other was a classic, yellow tinged with red, Peace. For the third rose I wanted a white. He showed me several, but I really had my eye on another which seemed to have a large bloom and was really white, not creamy. He didn't recommend it.

A woman, also from the American Rose Society came up and this point, and a wonderful debate ensued. She had grown the white I wanted, Honor, for ten years and hadn't had any problems, and no, it did not develop brown spots from the rain (yes, we do have occasional rains in the Northwest). I stood and listened as these two experts from the Seattle Rose Society duked it out. It was wonderful. The man finally gave in, turned to me and said, "You should see what it's like at board meetings." So I chose Honor, the white I wanted, thanked them both profusely and took away three bushes, well, stalks, which they assured me looked extremely healthy. And a booklet from the Seattle Rose Society which gave me the basics of where and how I should get them planted.

The next step, of course, was to consider where I was going to plant the bushes. I read the manual assiduously that evening and in discussion with She Who Must Be Obeyed it was decided that some ground cover in the front yard could come up. This would give the closest thing to the proper amount of sunlight that seemed to be required.

My age is really beginning to show. It took two days to wrestle the plants out of the ground. We think it is St. John's Wort. We transplanted it to some spaces in the back yard. Then I went to work with the pitchfork. The first thing I discovered was that there was a tangle of roots of various sizes in what was to become the rose bed. The second thing I discovered was that my back was good for digging about two short

rows at a time and that if I didn't want to go down, incapacitated, that probably three short sessions would be it for the day. This is when I began to wonder what sort of people were the serfs and peasants that we read about in medieval history. Well, we know that their lives were short and that they had plenty of health problems, with improper diets and plenty of manual labor.

Anyway my persistence is beginning to pay off. Between early spring showers I have managed to get the bed dug, roots pulled out, and a second spading done during which I added a considerable amount of peat moss to the soil. Now the three bushes have been set. I have been warned by several people to whom I told this tale that roses are difficult to grow, that they require a good deal of care, lots of watering, spraying with insecticides, fertilizing at proper times of the seasons, and pruning. Am I up to all of this? Time will tell, I guess. I'll keep you apprized of my success or lack thereof.

COMPUTER TALK

3-24-97 I just received an issue of SKUG from Gary Mattingly and he can talk more hi tech than I can. But you'll forgive me, of course, if I blabber on about my new computer. Probably 75% of you are way ahead of me, have upgraded long ago, and what I have to say is old hat. But this is like a brand new toy, in spite of having had a computer since '82. Discovering what's out there on the net and being able to e-mail folks (well, most folks) is being a lot of fun. Microsoft asks, "Where did you go today?" and I find myself going in strange directions. Being more of a mystery fan today I went in that direction first. And having been to a mystery convention in February during which I met several Sherlockians I decided to see what I could find. Enough to keep me busy for the next year-and-a-half it seems. My favorite places in England, including up-to-date weather forecasts which may come in handy for a trip there in the springtime, perhaps in '98. Somehow a link led me to Steeleye Span and the 70s came roaring back at me. I found Strawbs, Fairport Convention, Rick Wakeman, Moody Blues, Procol Harum and Yes. I still have several to look for. Whatever happened to Uriah Heep, anyway? Before I knew it I had so many websites in my 'favorites' file that I had to take

time out and organize them into folders. Pulp? How about sites for Doc Savage and The Shadow? How about logs for old time radio shows? How about recipes for Chocolate Decadence, Chocolate Death, Chocolate Genocide? What I haven't found is a recipe for Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie the way they make it at Pipers in Silver Springs, Nevada.

And e-mail? I've had more correspondence with people far away than I have had in the last ten years and I expect to have much more when others discover that I have an e-mail address. I used to think pocsards were great.

Well, I suspect that this is enough effusion for one issue. Those of you who have been on the Internet and have had e-mail for some time will probably guffaw at this old neophyte and his enthusiasm. Go ahead, laugh. I'm having fun.

EXMOOR

5-27-97 I've been reading a couple of books about Exmoor, that place in Southwest England which is something of a spiritual home to me. I've laid the book aside and spent some time in quiet contemplation of my memories of a bit more than a year ago, when we visited England in the autumn. We spent five days on Exmoor doing some hiking and visiting the villages thereon. We stay in the small town of Lynton on the coast of the Bristol Channel and drive out during the day. There is an excellent handbook to walks on the moor which we have used ever since our first trip. For some reason, perhaps my age showing or a reaction to a near-death experience when I had my by-pass, I chose to do a walk which we had done a dozen years before. This is the Lorna Doone walk, taking us over the country which Blackmore wrote about in his famous novel of Exmoor.

After breakfast we walked down the street from our B&B and entered the bakery. There we bought meat pasties and mincemeat pastries. The woman who waited on us looked at our backpacks and asked if we were going hiking on the moor. I replied that, "Yes, we were." "Whereabouts?" she asked. "Well, we're going to leave the car just beyond Brendon Two Gates and

hike almost to Malmsmead, then double back into Doone Valley," I said. She grinned. "Brendon Two Gates, is it? You've been on the moor before, I can see," she said. "We've been to England ten times and we always spend five days to a week on the moor," I said. As she packaged our lunch so we could stash it into our backpacks, she wished us a pleasant day on the moor. "I hope so," I said. "When we did this same walk twelve years ago we got rained on harder than I have ever been rained on. But today bids to be fair."

We drove up out of Lynton and made our way up onto the moor. We parked the car just beyond the two gates in a little lay-by, donned our boots and packs, and locked the car. For a ways we walked on the top of the moor and then at a meeting of two tracks we made our way down to the right. At the bottom was water running (??N??). There we turned and followed the water along, keeping as well as we could near the stream. This isn't always possible. We would occasionally encounter spongy mucky area and a detour was in order. But we kept the water in sight. The moor is covered mostly with bracken and gorse, with only an occasional tree that has withstood the winds and harsh winters. At last we reached a sheltered area with a small grove of trees and it seemed expedient to walk around it.

This was the same mistake that we made twelve years ago. At the other side of the grove we came back to the water. There we found a beautiful pool where the water spilled over a limestone shelf. We stopped by this to eat our lunch. It was quiet and peaceful with only the sound of the water as it spilled in a waterfall of several feet. And never did a pasty or the mincemeat rolls taste better.

We continued on along a fairly wide and well-traveled path now and walked for about fifteen minutes before we came upon a plaque set to one side of the trail. It was in commemoration of W.D. Blackburn and his novel, Lorna Doone, set in this very area. It was when we saw the plaque that we knew that we had gone beyond the turning point, the very same mistake we had made the first time we walked this walk. We turned back and remembered that the small bridge crossing the stream and leading us upward

toward Doone Valley was hidden by that small grove of trees which we had circumvented. We found the bridge and crossed, walking along a faint trail above the Badgeworthy Water. The locals pronounce it "Badgery."

Another hour brought us to Doone Valley, where the lovely Lorna lived with her outlaw relatives. There's not much left there now, but you can see evidence of foundations of the stone dwellings that were there. An uphill climb now, not steep but steady that had me puffing when I reached the top. Now we could look over the top of the moor and see the track stretching before us that would take us back to the car. Except that there was one more dip down to the first stream that we had followed early in the hike and then a climb back up again. The sun began to drift lower and a young couple who had left their car at Malmsmead asked us if we knew how far it was. We pointed out the track which we had followed early in the day and told them to continue straight on and they would come to it. I also cautioned them not to waste any time or they would be caught by the dark. They thanked us and hurried off.

We were only a short distance from our car and reached it well before dark. We drove back to Lynton, washed up and strolled down to the fine Indian restaurant for a well-earned reward. This restaurant is a recent addition to Lynton. We used to eat at The Glass House every night, but this time we ate Indian four nights out of five. At my age one never knows whether there will be another opportunity to do this walk and it was splendid. I recall vividly the first time we walked this route. When we had reached a point about as far away from the car as we would be for the entire day, the heavens opened and it began to rain. It rained harder and harder and toward the end of the walk we were soaked to the skin and our only company on the moor were the Exmoor ponies, standing with their tails to the wind. This was a time when we literally poured water out of our boots. But that's only another memory, isn't it?

SPEAKING OF BLACKMORE:

5-27-97 Well, I was, sort of. R.D. Blackmore was the author of Lorna Doone. On various trips

to England I have looked for other titles by this author in second hand book stores. Blackmore was an extremely popular writer and thousands of copies of his books must have been published, yet many book sellers have told me that they keep want lists for their customers. It seems strange that so many copies of titles by a popular writer would disappear. I think I have three or four other titles.

THE TRIP I WAS SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU ABOUT INSTEAD OF GETTING TRAPPED IN NOSTALGIA

5-28-97 I think that it was in the last issue of *The Rogue* that I gave a preview of an anticipated trip in the autumn. Of course the trip is now only a memory and photographs which need to be labeled and put into some sort of an album. Since the trip was an extended one, nine weeks and 6,000 miles on the road. I'll try to keep this report short, shorter even than the piece on Exmoor.

The first section was a drive pretty straight across the northern states to arrive in St. Paul, Minnesota in time for Bouchercon, the mystery convention. There were several places at which we wanted to stop along the way, mostly sites associated with the Indians. Well, at least in our minds. The first was Devil's Tower in northeastern Wyoming, which most sf fans know from the movie, *CE3K*. It was a site sacred to the Indians long before the aliens arrived. They know it as Bear Lodge. (You might note that my e-mail address bears a resemblance to the name. Though we visited Bear Lodge early in the trip, the memory was still very strong when I was attempting to get a name for my e-mail address.)

In early October the weather was just fine. We were able to walk the trail around the base of the tower, getting wonderful views of each side. On one side climbers were ascending and we watched them for a while. Most climbers and climbing guides desist from climbing during June when many plains Indians come here for ceremonies. A bonus was a wonderful prairie dog village at the foot of the tower. We watched them romp and wrestle and were quite close to them.

The second Indian site was Bear Butte in South Dakota. This site is sacred to the Cheyenne

where one of their leaders, Sweet Medicine, is believed to have received the Sacred Arrows, very important symbols for that tribe. The day was blustery and the area, a state park, was pretty much closed for the year. The visitor's center and all of the trails were closed. A few buffalo grazed below the parking lot. There had been a bad fire on the butte during the summer and it was easy to see the black scars.

Our third site to visit was Pipestone in Minnesota. Pipestone is a National Historic Site and the place where the Indians came to quarry pipestone or catlinite (named after the painter, Catlin) from which they carved their ceremonial pipes. The stone is a red stone that is found about fifteen feet under ground in a very narrow band. This site was considered neutral ground by the various tribes who came here to quarry the stone.

Other places that we visited on the trip east to St. Paul included Custer State Park in South Dakota, where there are several hundred buffalo. We saw only about a dozen. We stopped in Rapid City where Prairie Edge is a store which is almost better than a museum, it has so much contemporary Indian craft, beading, pottery, regalia and a terrific bookshop. Nearby is Sturgis, home of the Harley-Davidson runs and also home of the original Road Kill Cafe, which we walked by. We also stopped at the Crazy Horse Monument to see how things were proceeding. It won't be done in my lifetime by my way of reckoning.

I won't go into a long description of the convention. Mystery conventions tend to be a bit more serious, nay, a lot more serious than do sf conventions. Auditoriums tend to be full rather than having the panels outnumber the audience. Tons of writers show up and, just as in sf conventions, seem to have never known that these conventions are put on by fans and are not for the exclusive entertainment and business of them. I shouldn't tar them all with the same brush for many, yes probably most, of them are friendly and willing to enter into discussions. And the dealers' room is truly a book room. Makes you want to have a full wallet. With rooms of books at home and weeks to go on the trip, I was extremely selective.

One of the main reasons I attend Bouchercon is that is the one place where many of the members of Dapa-Em, the mystery apa show up. So once a year we have these several days of camaraderie, eating out together, and generally catching up on all that has gone that didn't get written about in the apa. Just like sf apas, huh? We found a Greek restaurant, had a wonderful Vietnamese meal where we just told the waitress to have the chef put together a meal for ten people, and ate at a historic diner right out of the twenties and thirties.

Conventions must end and we moved on, turning right and heading south. We stopped at Northfield, Minnesota to see where the Great Northfield Bank Raid was held. The James boys weren't so lucky there. Northfield seemed a nice little town with a small college and several book stores. Further south and east we came to Rochester, home of the Mayo Clinic. I was surprised. I had always thought that the clinic would be in a much larger town. I was having camera trouble and found a camera store in the mall where I purchased a new small Olympus camera with a 38-105 mm. zoom lens. It has worked very nicely.

As we trended east to the Mississippi we came to Effigy Mounds, a prehistoric site overlooking the river. Ancient mound builders apparently buried the bones of their deceased in an avenue of small mounds and built larger mounds in the shape of bears. The leaves had all turned and the wind was blowing but we had a pleasant hike along the trails up the bluff and a spectacular view from the edge.

At the risk of offending any readers in Iowa and Kansas, I don't remember much except fields of corn. I recall thinking that it was getting pretty late in the year for corn to still be standing. In Marshalltown and Des Moines we visited art galleries with small but very nice collections of French impressionism.

We did visit a small historic hotel in Burr Oaks, Iowa which is the only building remaining in which Laura Ingalls Wilder lived. And strangely it is the period which she did not write about in her "Little House" books. The publisher didn't

want her to because it would make her character too old in the other books. Her father had failed at business and came to this little town (village, really) to run this small hotel. The Wilder family lived downstairs, and Mrs. Did the cooking and probably the laundry for some permanent guests. The teacher was a permanent guest.

In Abilene, Kansas we visited the Eisenhower presidential library, museum, and home, as well as a commemorative chapel and the ubiquitous gift shop. Across the street was the National Greyhound Museum. It turns out that Abilene was once the center of greyhound breeding. I was surprised at what I found in this museum. I anticipated famous greyhounds and breeders and trainers. I didn't expect to be greeted by a quite regal retired racing greyhound who got up from her special mattress to approach us as we came in the door to act as a greeter. Nor did I expect to find a quite large gallery of greyhound art, both fine and everyday. Everything from paintings and sculptures to Greyhound Bus signs, magazine covers graced with greyhounds and advertisements featuring greyhounds. This was more fun than the presidential library.

Well, I could go on and on with this litany and bore you some more. We visited zoos in Wichita, Kansas and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. We attended greyhound races in Wichita and Council Bluffs, Iowa and a wonderful day of thoroughbred racing at Remington Park in Oklahoma City. OK City also featured The Cowboy Hall of Fame, with lots of wonderful art and the Kirkpatrick Center with an art gallery, photo gallery, aviation museum, science exhibits and the Red Earth Indian Center.

We also visited art museums in Marshalltown and Des Moines, Iowa and in Omaha, Nebraska hunting down examples of French Impressionism. In St. Joseph, Missouri we caught an early snowstorm of seven inches and visited the house where Jesse James was gunned down by that dirty little coward, Robert Howard and the hotel which was the headquarters for the Pony Express, now a wonderful museum. In Oklahoma we visited Woolaroc, not far from Bartlesville. Woolaroc is the former estate of

Frank Phillips of Phillips Oil. Not only did he have a herd of elk and one of buffalo, but a man-made lake and a beautiful stone lodge. He also built a huge museum for his collection of Indian art. Also near Bartlesville was the Tom Mix museum. The real rootin' tootin' cowboy. Small but tasty.

Indian things? A wonderful Indian center in Wichita. In Oklahoma the Cherokee Center at Tahlequah, the Museum of the Five Civilized Tribes in Muskogee, and the Creek Museum in Okmulgee. At Anadarko the Indian Hall of Fame, an outdoor park featuring the busts of fifty famous Indians, including one who was once the vice-president of the United States. A prize to the first who tells me who. We also got to attend a pow-wow in Anadarko. It was at the Riverside Indian School and was to honor the members of the cross country team which had taken second in the State. The dancing was gourd dancing, entirely different from the plains dancing tradition which is danced in the northwest at pow-wows. There was only one drum but the lead singer was Kenneth Cozad and the rest of the singers and drummers were cousins and such. Cozad drums and singers have a national reputation so we were pleased to be able to listen. We were only able to dance one dance, an honoring dance for the students on the cross country team. But we got to meet the principal of the school and the Crow grandparents of the pow-wow princess. It was a very entertaining evening. I even won one of the evening's raffles but as it was a huge basket of groceries for which I had no room in the car, I gave it back to the committee and had them draw again. Anadarko is also a center for Indian beading and has a small Indian museum and supply shop. The beading displayed there was extraordinary, particularly to me, who has just recently begun beading.

Somewhere in there we visited Fort Sill, Oklahoma to see their small museum and to visit the graves of Quanah Parker and Geronimo. Parker is buried in the military cemetery and Geronimo is buried in the Apache cemetery a couple of miles away. Fort Sill is where Geronimo spent the last days of his life with a small plot and some farming.

West Texas held more things of interest

than I would have dreamed. There were two places that I wanted especially to see. One was the Staked Plains (Llano Estacado) and the other was the Palo Duro Canyon where the Comanche wintered and where Quanah Parker surrendered. I could almost believe the folks from the Flat Earth Society when I drove across this area. 360 degrees of flat. It was exciting in more ways than one. Not only was I visiting an area I had read about in western history but I was running out of gas. Somehow I hadn't been paying attention and suddenly I was out in the middle of this plain with no towns or corner gas stations. I slowed down to 40 mph and put the car in cruise control. It was fifty miles before we came to a little town and I breathed a sigh of relief.

The Palo Duro Canyon was a beautiful place, most memorable for a squabbling flock of wild turkeys (we don't have them in the northwest and I had only seen them once before) and a sensation sunset over the rim. I was told by a fellow that this could have been a National Park but the state of Texas goofed and wouldn't put up their share of money. So the area I wanted to see most, where the Comanche wintered, is now on private land and people can't visit. About five or six miles of the canyon is now a state park.

A bit south is Amarillo and we stayed there for several days. Among other attractions was the National Quarterhorse Museum with some wonderful exhibits, some interactive. Ever want to know what it looks like to a jockey in the starting gate? The gallery which features changing exhibits had an incredible photo exhibit by the producer of Lonesome Dove, along with pages of corrected manuscript, costume sketches, and a display of costumes and the sideboard of the wagon. There was also an hour-long movie about the making of the film.

During our stay in Amarillo there was a working cowboys convention and we thought Why Not? I've never seen so many displays of spurs and bridles. Along with clothing, saddles, cooking gear for the range and other accouterments of the life of a real cowboy. In addition there was an area where real cowboys sang real cowboy songs, not the country western stuff you hear on the radio. Some of them were

darned good singers, guitarists and song writers. We enjoyed them for about an hour. These were real people who se work is cowboying. Downstairs in the arena were demonstrations of roping, the management of horses, etc. And in the evening a rodeo, what else? It was great fun. One thing we neglected to do was to drive about eight miles out of town to see the row of Cadillacs buried nose-first in the desert. I forget what it is called.

As we trended south and west and headed for Carlsbad Caverns we came to what must be one of the best kept secrets of the National Park system Guadalupe Mountains National Park. One of its features is Guadalupe Peak, at 8760 feet, the highest point in Texas. Another feature is McKinnon Canyon where we did a nice hike, following a stream and seeing deer who seemed pretty indifferent to us. It must not be hiked by many. We did another shorter hike on the day that we came to the park, and the longer one in the canyon the next day. We drove on to White City and stayed there in order to visit Carlsbad Caverns. In the morning we took the elevator down from the visitor center and did the Big Room with its spectacular formations of stalactites and stalagmites. We returned to the surface for lunch, then in the afternoon took the long route down to the other part of the caverns open to the public, hiking down 80 floors or 800+ feet. This second section of the caverns is not as spectacular as the Big Room but it was interesting to see the fog form at the level where the outside air met the cold air of the caves and to smell the odor from the hundreds of thousands of bats who live in that part of the caves. They were gone, of course, headed south into Mexico for the winter.

We crossed into New Mexico and spent a day in Carlsbad and then headed north. We stayed pretty much in eastern New Mexico, visiting Fort Sumner and Las Vegas. Fort Sumner is the site of the Bosque Redondo, the end of the Navajo's Long Walk, when they were rounded up out of Canyon de Chelly and forced to walk to this place of imprisonment. There they were expected to farm and support themselves. Never mind that the soil will hardly grow weeds. For four years they suffered and some 700 died. At last they were allowed to walk back home after

Manuelito was able to convince the U.S. authorities that the Navajo did not wish to fight, but only to return to their homeland in northeastern Arizona. About a quarter of a mile from the visitor center for this Historic Site is a small private museum of Billy the Kid memorabilia and the graveyard in which Billy is buried is directly behind. The grave and tombstone are now surrounded by an iron cage, since the gravestone has been stolen twice. Some peoples' children!

We moved on up to Las Vegas which is a largely Hispanic town with two colleges, one of which is Armand Hammer's World College. The town has some remarkable old buildings with beautiful architecture. Many of them sit empty, being too expensive to own. And probably with no businesses big enough to wish to convert them to office space. We ate lunch at an incredible Mexican restaurant, then drove to the old plaza to walk around and see what it had to offer. Some funky shops and we bought some beautiful hand-thrown bowls.

Onto Albuquerque. We spent Thanksgiving Day about 80 miles south at the Bosque del Apache, the national wildlife reserve where the snow geese and sandhill cranes by the thousands spend their winter. It wasn't an exceptionally good day but we saw nineteen species of birds that day. When it threatened to snow we turned tail and fled back to Albuquerque. We had a full Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant near our hotel and were waited on by a young Native American from our home state who is attending the Univ. Of New Mexico. The next day we rendezvoused for lunch with our old friend, Bob Vardeman. If you wish to read an excellent novel concerning Kit Carson and the Navajo's Long Walk look for *The Long Walk* by Karl Lassiter.

That same afternoon we got caught in a lashing snowstorm and decided that it was probably time to make an effort to head home. It was getting on toward December. We headed west, stopping at the meteor crater for a look, stopping briefly in Gallup to visit the trading posts, and in Flagstaff at an excellent second-hand book store. We had overnights in Kingman, AZ, in Tonopah, NV and in Reno. Then it was over

Donner and pass and up I-5 and home.

I hope I haven't bored you all with this. Some people who have neither the inclination nor the time to travel the way we do still write to say how much they enjoy reading about our trips. I'll just say that the notes I wrote up on my laptop came to over forty pages. So you got off easy.

CTHULHU CALLS

For some reason I have never previously been captured by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft. I had read the odd story here and there and over the years I had somehow purchased various collections of his work. They sat on the shelves, however, rarely opened and certainly unread. Then, some six or eight months ago, for some reason I took a volume down and read several of the stories. I discovered that they were somewhat like chocolate decadence. If one doesn't overdo it, takes one's time, reads slowly and sort of lets the mythos seep in, the stories are quite enjoyable.

At about the same time I discovered the series of collections of stories in the Cthulhu Mythos edited by Robert Price. They are edited by Robert Price and are stories written by a number of different writers, some well-known and others not within my ken. The most recent of these collections from Chaosium is The Xothic Cycle, all of the stories related to the Mythos and written by Lin Carter. Almost as fascinating as Carter's stories are Price's introductions. This is the 13th collection in the Chaosium series and as I look back over the volumes, I note the names of Henry Kuttner, Frank Belknap Long, Manley Wade Wellman, Robert Bloch, Robert Silverberg, Alan Dean Foster and others. It's obvious that many writers have been attracted to the world that H.P. Lovecraft created and have continued to keep the Mythos alive.

Having discovered that I can not only read these stories, sometimes written in florid language (hah, almost always written in florid language), and always filled with strange names, but can also enjoy them in small doses, I'll continue to pursue the works of Lovecraft and his offspring. These worlds are fascinating. I'm not likely to devote my entire reading time to them but I'm rather glad that I discovered, at this pretty

late date, that I do derive enjoyment from them.

On another topic entirely, E.C. Tubb wrote thirty-one adventures of Dumarest, in which he battles the dreaded Cyclan and tries to find the coordinates for his home, Earth. DAW published these space opera stories but finally stopped, leaving Dumarest stranded in space. The stories were light reads, not really important in the scheme of the science fiction/fantasy world, but they were entertaining. They were certainly better stories than the Doc Savage stories which were published in entirety a few years back. (Boy, now I'll hear from my old friend, Dale Goble, concerning that last sentence.) Those of us who enjoyed Dumarest were disappointed that the final book was never published. Well, if you could read French, there was an edition of The Return published there in 1992. At last it has been published in English here in the United States. It has been published by Gryphon. I imagine that the press run is fairly small. The book is in trade paperback format and is fairly obviously a small press endeavor. But many thanks to whomever is behind Gryphon Publications for publishing this book. Of course, I have a good number of these Tubb books to read before I get to the final one. But it's nice to know that it's sitting on the shelf just waiting for that day.

HEY, BUD! WANNA READ A GOOD MYSTERY?

6-11-97 I don't want to sound like I'm blowing my own horn, but I am. I'm not a big-time writer who can sort of shrug when he or she gets published. So *toot* I have a short story in the combined July/August issue of Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine. Only if you should you be interested, of course.

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

Murray Moore - 377 Manly St. - Midland, Ontario
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Randy Mohr's "I have been to Arrakis, I have seen Dune" letter reminded me of the Roman coin in my wallet. I bought it at a con for U.S. \$2. The emperor is Justinian II. Being able to hold that worn oval of metal is my way of feeling I have been to Ancient Rome.

[[I've just finished watching the twelve episodes

of "I, Claudius" and it holds up as well as it did when I originally saw it twenty years ago or better. There's something about feeling in contact with ancient peoples; probably explainable only by expensive psychologists.]]

Richard J. Faulder - P.O. Box 136 - Yanco, NSW 2703 Australia

Randy Mohr's reaction to his trip to Arrakis and Dune amused me. I do wonder what it would be like to be on a world so dry that stillsuits would be needed. After all, the Bedouin don't use them, and for millennia Aborigines roamed the deserts of this continent naked. As to waves and clouds of stars, Randy needs to be in the country areas of the continents of the Southern Cross. On clear, moonless nights I can look up and see the Backbone of the Night, the name given the edge-on view of the galaxy of which we are a part by the Aborigines.

While I'm not sure, since I would have been very young, I think the first Agricultural Show I ever attended was in the central western NSW town of Parkes, where my paternal grandparents lived. I remember the sample bag that was bought for me. For most of my school years we went to the Royal Agricultural Show in Sydney which then, as now, ran for ten days. There I developed a taste for Dagwood Dogs/Pluto Pups, saveloys impaled on a stick, coated with batter, deep fried and dipped in tomato sauce. While there was a Grand Parade of horses and livestock in the Arena, I don't remember ever seeing it. However, I do remember wandering among the stalls of farm animals and machinery and the hall where people from different regions of the state had put together large displays made out of produce from their region. These days I'm chief steward for the agricultural hall at the local Leeton show. Unfortunately the glory days of country shows seems to be past, and each year the Show Society has to try harder to attract patrons away from the sitcoms, soap operas, game shows and sports on TV.

You're lucky to have vigorous Native American communities so close to you. Unfortunately a renegade member of our federal House of Representatives seems to be unearthing the xenophobia which always bubbles in the Australian psyche. To exacerbate matters, the

new Prime Minister is avoiding criticizing the propositions raised by the member. It is very disappointing for those non-Aboriginal Australians who were hoping for a reconciliation with the people who occupied this continent for at least forty thousand years.

[[Though the big Western Washington fair I wrote about previously is the granddaddy of them all, the county fair and several others still thrive quite nicely. The big fair has moved with the times and where once there was a rodeo and horse races on a 1/3 mile track, there is now a venue for country-western artists. Livestock, large and small, and agricultural products have been moved to another part of the fair grounds. One of the most memorable events when I visited the Isle of Wight one time was attending the agricultural show. I remember show jumping and dancing backhoes, which were a hoot. // We just spent the weekend at a two-day pow-wow and are looking forward to an excellent three-day pow-wow this coming weekend. Other readers should know that we dragged Richard off to a pow-wow during his visit here a couple of years back.]]

Robert J. Coulson - 2677W-500N - Hartford City, IN 47348

I'd enjoy archaeology, but I've never been to a working dig. Your western trip sounds interesting, if not one that we'd make. I thought about seeing the Cowboy Hall of Fame when we had a con in Oklahoma City, but ended up not going. Have seen Carlsbad — and Mammoth and Wyandotte, the "Big 3" of caves. Is there anything to see in Iowa or Kansas? I'll wait for the next issue to find out.

Too bad about the Gingrich book, because it wasn't that bad. (Also it wasn't a novel; it was the first third of a trilogy and it most likely wasn't written by Gingrich but by his "co-author," William Forstchen, who has done a couple of sf novels on his own.) If the other 2/3 had appeared, I'd have read them and probably liked them. It wasn't up to the Turtledove "World War" books, but it was interesting and worth reading. I'd like to see the trilogy come out under Forstchen's name, once the blight produced by Gingrich wears off. I'd like to know what happened later. Anyway, maybe it will become a

rare book and son Bruce can later sell my copy for a fabulous sum. (For that matter, it would be nice if Gingrich began writing science fiction and forgot about politics.)

[[Well, let's not get extreme now.]]

Harry Warner, Jr. - 423 Summit Avenue - Hagerstown, MD 21740

Your recollections of the Puyallup Fair came at a time when I have been heartsick over the demise of the Hagerstown Fair. Much of what you wrote about your fair could have applied to the local event in my boyhood and youth. Some of my earliest memories involve visits to the Hagerstown Fair, then I managed to wangle the job of covering it every year during the first half of my newspaper career. But now there is nothing at the fairgrounds but some decrepit buildings that will soon be razed and disputes over what should be done with that empty land, about four blocks by three blocks in size, less than a mile from the town square. It's too hilly and rocky for many possible uses, the streets that feed it are narrow, there are too many shopping centers in this area that have fallen on hard times for it to serve for that purpose, and nobody has come up with a proposal for a project that would use all of the fairgrounds.

It was enormously popular during the fairs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Newspapers here devoted several pages each day to events during Fair Week. But that was when more than half the area's population lived on farms or in other rural areas. The Hagerstown area got urbanized and a group of fair directors decided to turn the horse races each Fair Week into parimutuel betting events and expand the meet to two weeks. They greatly enlarged the track and put up a new grandstand. This forced them to tear down the exhibition buildings and to move the midway from its paved roadway to unpaved portions of the race track's infield. Farmers began to lose interest. Then the Maryland Racing Commission decided Hagerstown wasn't producing enough revenue for the state from its betting income, took away the local racing weeks, and gave them to bigger tracks in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Now we had no racing and not much of a fair. The event continued to decline and suffered a new catastrophe about ten years ago when some

kind of dispute caused the 4-H and FFA people to pull out and set up a new fair of their own a half-dozen miles west of town.

[[That's a real tragedy. Fortunately our fair, and others around, The Evergreen in Monroe and the King County Fair in Enumclaw, has continued to be successful. The racing and rodeo may be gone, but there is still livestock to see, horses and rabbits for kids to pet, Fishers Flouring Mills famous scones with raspberry jam, rides on the midway and plenty of exhibition space. I don't go every year but get the urge every two or three years.]]

Chester Cuthbert - 1104 Mulvey Ave. - Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1J5

TRR #49 and your writing alleviated my illness, but I am only now convalescing from seven weeks of pain, two hospitals, doctors' offices and home confinement resulting from kidney stones. May there be no repetition.

[[Whoa, back, there! Let's have no more of this sort of thing. I'm sorry you had to go through it and glad that it's all over.]]

My reading lately has been mainly about Houdini, Dunninger, Robert-Houdin and Eileen J. Garrett.

[[That sounds like some mighty interesting reading. I'm also glad to hear that Muriel is a lot better after a double by-pass operation. I've been through that. I amaze folks with the handful of pills that I take each day, but the alternative isn't very appealing. Stay well, both of you.]]

We Also Heard From: Randy Mohr (new father of a baby girl in October), Harry Andruschak, Steve Sneyd, Kim Huett, Elizabeth Lynn, Gary Green (moved to the Seattle area and now we talk on the phone), Don Herron, Jan Howard Finder, Ben Indick, and Eric Lindsay. Thanks for all the letters. And also to everyone who has sent zines.

Getting near the end. Randy Reichardt visited here a couple of days after he had attended the Special Libraries Association conference in downtown Seattle. Randy is from Edmonton and is a science librarian at the University of Alberta. We had a great visit and he turned me on to The Oyster Band from England. A self-described as a "Rock band that plays folk." Great stuff!