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ABOUT THOSE HEFFALUMPS

It has been my habit, when running out of space on the eighth page of one of these efforts, to manage to come down to the last line in the middle of some cliffhanger and smugly leave things there, in media res, as we say in the literary profession. I've done this five or six times and nobody's said a word. But the last time, while describing our African tour, I got us mixed up in a mess of angry elephants, let things drop there, and must have received a dozen vexed comments. So at least you guys read the stuff.

Fairness impels me to finish the story. Where was I, now? Let's see -- we had gone to one of the obscure national parks in northern Kenya, a place that had been open to tourists only two or three years and got practically no visitors even now. So the animals are wilder than usual and easily spooked by intruders. And there we were in our rickety rented Chevrolet, with our native driver and the native park ranger who is mandatory on all such driving tours of a wild-animal park, and suddenly the driver halted and the ranger began to look nervous and we realized we were in the midst of about fifty elephants, large and small, who were blocking the road up ahead and now were also streaming around behind us. And snorting menacingly and wagging their ears, which is not a sign of friendliness among elephants. Our driver looked apprehensive, even our ranger seemed scared, and that's where I ran out of stencils.

What happened is that we sat perfectly still in our car for maybe half an hour, waiting for the elephants to clear away. The ranger had a huge gun, but wasn't likely to use it except in absolute necessity, since it can cause a mighty mess to fire a gun when surrounded by so many elephants (they're more likely to stomp the gun-wielder than to flee) and in any case shooting isn't encouraged in national parks. The elephants had us quite thoroughly cornered -- a one-lane road hemmed in by thick underbrush, which they were busy munching and trampling -- and if they got any more annoyed with us than they already were, they could flatten the car very readily. After a while the elephants blocking the road ahead of us moved off, and we slithered forward without disturbing those feeding along the edges of the road, and that's how we escaped from the terrible heffalump herd.

Does it make you happier to know the end of the story, now? (It was pretty scary -- especially since the ranger was plainly troubled, and was obviously not just staging all this to give the tourists a good story to take back to the USA. But I think more visitors are killed by bears each year in Yellowstone National Park than by elephants in the East African parks.

THE HEFFALUMPS' GRAVEYARD

I am still trying to replace some of the fanzines & such lost in our fire of 1968, with the big project being to replace the run of FAPAZines from the 49th mailing on through the end of 1967. By the time this comes out, I'll probably have regained a good hunk of that missing run, since three different members have offered me mailings covering most of the 1960's and a little farther back. But of course the problem of the 1950's is a big one. I am still in the market for, say, mailings 49-80, and will pay considerable sums for them, especially for mailings 49-55, which have Great Sentimental Value.

At Jack Speer's suggestion, I got in touch with Walter Coslet, who has these mailings plus everything else, and is trying to sell his entire collection. I explained about the fire and all, and got in return a typically irritable yet sympathetic Coswal letter, telling me that he was going to sell his collection only as a unit (for something like \$20,000) and had a potential buyer lined up. I can't blame Coswal for not wanting to undertake piecemeal dispersal of that vast collection, but it does disturb me a bit to think that the purchaser is probably going to be one of those clergyman-collectors of old pulp magazines, who wants Coswal's Thrill Books and Argosies and won't give the slightest damn for the throw-in fanzines he also gets. (I replied to Coswal, asking that he put the purchaser in touch with me once the deal is closed, so I can make a bid for the FAPA file, but I doubt that anything will come of it.)

I also need some copies of my own fanzine SPACESHIP. At last check the ones I was missing were #1 2 3 4 6 7 10 19 and 20. I have a couple of duplicates of the later issues, thanks to the generosity of several FAPA members, and am willing to trade those for any of the ones I'm still missing. Or else cash, or whatever.

Otherwise most of the fire losses have now been replaced, or else I've given up looking. And I figure that the costs of the blaze will have been paid off by, say, November of 1970. It was an interesting experience in high finance, especially the part where the insurance company left me to lay out the first thirty or forty thousand dollars, or whatever, of rebuilding costs while the agreed-upon insurance settlement was placidly making its way through months of bureaucratic shuffling. Somehow we did it with the help of loans, advance call-ins of future royalties, and some inspired juggling, but it wasn't fun.

TRAVELING GIANT DEPT.

Where did we go for our next trip, after our African safari? Well, we didn't go anywhere, really. We sort of stayed home and worked hard and paid back bank loans, just like ordinary humble middle-class people, so we could get out of hock after the fire. And now, a year after the African thing, we still haven't undertaken any jet-set exploits -- neither New Zealand (like Boyd) nor Egypt (which was supposed to be this year's trip, but got cancelled by Israel's current foreign policy moves) nor anyplace else of note. Oh, we did go to Washington for the 1969 Disclave, which was pleasant enough even without the coeducational sauna of earlier years, and we flew down to Pittsburgh in June for the first regional convention there, and in late June we went out to Arizona and drove around in the desert and stopped off in Tijuana to sell pot to the natives and visited Harry Harrison in Imperial Beach, which is five miles inland, and went up the coast to LA to see Harlan's fabulous house and attend a groovy Westercon and writhe haked on Rotsler's floor while exotic music beat in our ears. And then in August we went off to St. Louis to attend the Worldcon, and went off with Terry and Carol Carr for an intense shared experience that we can't really describe to all you folks in a family fanzine, and won a Hugo, and such. And in November it was a trip to Philadelphia for the Philcon, and in March a one-day trip to Washington with Ejler Jakobsson to inspect an architectural exhibit pertinent to a series of stories I've been writing for him, and a little water in March up to Boston to attend the Boskone and get a lesson in how to drive on a snowy turnpike with a bunch of Easter Sunday amateur motorists all around.

But all those trips were merely normal routine excursions in the life of an American fan/pro. Now that I put them all down on paper, it begins to seem to me that maybe we have done a bit of traveling since coming back from Africa, but somehow it doesn't feel that way.

On the schedule for the months ahead is another visit to fabulous Pittsburgh and a European trip, centering around the Heicon. Where, a little to my awe, I find I'm supposed to be American Guest of Honor. I don't mean to come on with false modesty when I say that the choice startled me. I have always thought of convention Guests of Honor as grand old men with decades of work behind them -- you know, Heinlein, Campbell, Asimov, that bunch. The old guys. And though I expected to be picked by some worldcon some day, I assumed it would be about 1980 or so, and never gave the guest-of-honorship a whole lot of thought. When the invitation came, I thought at first glance that I was being asked to serve as Heicon toastmaster, a much less startling request, and it wasn't for a moment or two that I realized what they really wanted me for. A most astonishing moment. I wrote back saying, well, yes, sure, much flattered, but what about X and Y, naming two notable pros of the older generation

who, it seemed to me, had been in line for the honor a whole lot longer than I. It turned out that X, who was Clifford Simak, was already the designated GOH of the 1971 Boston convention, and that Y was the choice of the 1972 group with the best chance to win the bid. So my conscience was cleared somewhat.

Not entirely, though. So I hauled out a list of previous guests of honor and was surprised to see that they weren't all Grand Old Men. Asimov had been about my present age when the honor came to him. Poul Anderson had been several years younger. Bob Bloch had been only 31, Blish 38 or so, Matheson probably 35. So there is precedent. I still think there are some senior writers who should have the distinction pretty soon -- Jack Williamson is the prime example that comes to mind -- but they wouldn't necessarily have been able to go to Heidelberg. And, though doubtless Roger Zelazny and Chip Delany will eventually see service in the GoH capacity, I think it's best that their turn wait a little longer. I mean, they're just a couple of young whippersnappers who began publishing s-f only five or six years ago. And I believe that the Worldcon guest of honorship should in the normal ~~xxxxx~~ course of events be reserved for us grand old-timers who have won some seniority in the service of s-f.

Would you believe that it is now 16 years since I sold my first story? To today's 19-year-old fan, I must be as venerable a figure as Frank Belnap Long or Cliff Simak seemed to me when I was breaking in. Reaching backward sixteen years instead of forward, from the time of that first sale, I come to 1938, when Unknown was in the planning stage, Ray Palmer had just taken over Amazing, Sam Moskowitz was a neofan, and Ted White hadn't even been born. (I had, but I wasn't reading much s-f yet.)

A funny thing about these time-spans -- especially if you measure history in terms of prozines, which I sometimes do (and a lot of other folks of my s-f-oriented generation, like Terry Carr.) For instance, I began buying prozines regularly in 1947, and immediately began to regard any magazine issued before that time as something prehistoric, dating from a time beyond some cosmic boundary had been erected. I will never forget the day in 1949 that I saw my first bedsheet-sized ASTOUNDING, and realized that there had been a time in prehistory when ASF's format had been grotesquely different from the one I was familiar with. That bedsheet ASTOUNDING, which I handled with such reverence and awe, was all of seven years old when I ran across it, yet I looked at it as if it were seven million years old, because it dated from a time on the far side of the boundary. (I still feel the same sense of mystery and antiquity whenever I look

at a 1942 ASF. Yet it is now almost six years since ASF's last conversion from large size to small, and surely there are neofans around today who are smitten with that same kind of wonder when they discover a 1963 issue.)

The revival of old prozines also upset my time-sense. Since I began quickly to collect back issues, I knew about most of the ephemeral magazines of the early 1940's that had perished in wartime. Since I had never bought any of them on a newsstand, they all were locked into prehistory for me -- titles like SUPER SCIENCE and ASTONISHING and FUTURE and MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES. I'd buy them from Julius Unger or Claude Held, dig their unfamiliar logos and strange spines, and fondle them the way one might a triceratops egg. Then one day in 1948 I went to the newsstand (the date I messed up back there was 1948) and there was SUPER SCIENCE STORIES! A mint new copy, dated January, 1949 -- a whole stack of them! Just out! I was as croggled as if one of those triceratops eggs had hatched. But at the time that happened, SUPER SCIENCE had been in suspension for something like five whole years. It seemed unutterably ancient to me only because its demise lay anchored beyond my private great divide.

Nowadays we have VENTURE coming back into print after having been dead for eleven years. The news of its revival inspired nothing more profound in me than the thought that here might be a new market for my stories. But how does a 16-year-old fan feel, one who is as enthralled by prozines as I was when I was his age, when he beholds a mag return that folded when he was five?

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Remind me, the next time I feel like reminiscing about wonderful moments in science fiction, to tell you how I discovered at four in the morning one Saturday night in 1950 that FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES had changed to a trimmed-edge format, and spent a weekend all abuzz as a result. (Actually, I can tell you here, and quickly. Coming home from a date in far-off Queens that fateful Saturday night, I stopped in a newsstand in an unfamiliar part of the city and there was FFM, totally transmogrified into a new and sparkling format. The issue in question wasn't due out on Brooklyn newsstands until the following Tuesday. I didn't buy it, because I was with some mundane friends and didn't feel, at the time, like letting them see me buy a magazine of That Sort. (They might paw it and get eyetracks on it while expressing their derision.) So I went home without it, and by morning was convinced that I had dreamed the whole thing. And spent all day Sunday trying to reconstruct the details of that hallucination. But then came Tuesday, and FFM hit Brooklyn, and lo! It had trimmed edges! Do today's teenagers experience such heady thrills?

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TRAVELING MIDJIT

The most recent trip we've taken was to Rochester, New York, in mid-April. If you think that's a funny place for us to be going, well, so do we. What happened was I let myself get plugged into the Great Academic Circuit.

A curious recent development in science fiction is the desirability of s-f writers as campus speakers. Various college organizations now vie to import us. We deliver the same sort of speeches we might give at worldcons; take part in the same sort of panel discussions (Old Wave vs New Wave, Whither S-F, etc.) and get PAID. The fees start at about \$100 and go all the way up to \$1000 or more.

A few writers have begun to make a career of accepting these invitations. Harlan is the outstanding example. These days he does hardly any writing, but swings around the country from Texas to New York to Alaska, dropping in on tank-town universities, tossing off speeches heavily salted with contemporary youth-slang, banging a few coeds, and picking up hefty fees. It's not a bad sort of life, if you don't mind living in airplanes a lot, seeing a bunch of dumb cities, and pitching your line to the current collegiate fads (revolution, ecology, etc.) which Harlan does in a pretty shameless way.

He's not the only one to go whirling around on these junkets. In early April there was some sort of campus film festival in Buffalo, New York, that brought in Poul Anderson, Gordie Dickson, Arthur Clarke, Harlan, and a bunch of other luminaries. Other writers are catching on, and now SFWA is setting up a lecture bureau that will make us even more readily available.

I have always avoided this kind of stuff. As some of you know, I'm a pretty private kind of person, who likes to call his own shots as much as possible, and the idea of zooming off to some dreary college town merely to pick up a few bucks has never appealed to me. I like money very much, and I also like to travel, but I'd rather not mix the two; I can make money quite nicely sitting at home at my typewriter, and when I travel I'd just as soon not be obliged to put in a certain amount of time standing around making polite conversations with my hosts. I even turned down a free trip to Rio de Janeiro in the spring of 1969 because I didn't feel like going to Rio just then, not even for free. (A lot of your favorite s-f writers did go, and some of them enjoyed themselves, and some didn't; but all I heard of that junket later leads me to think I would have hated it.)

However, I let myself get suckered into this Rochester trip, partly because I wanted to see just what the academic-lecture thing was all about, and partly because the fellow who asked me to go, Neil Shapiro, is a decent sort whom I wanted to oblige. Also, I'm curious about what goes on on campuses these days, and generally enjoy the company of most undergraduates a good deal more than that of most people Over Thirty. (I'm not much in favor of the more violent col-

legiate rhetoric, the bombings and occupysings and such, but I'm in considerable sympathy with the collegiate attitude toward the arts, sex, clothing, drugs, etc., etc.) So I said yes.

The idea was that Anne McCaffrey, Ben Bova, and I would discuss the role of technology in science fiction at Rochester Institute of Technology, at a fee of \$200 each, we to pay expenses. Later, the s-f club at neighboring University of Rochester asked Anne and me to speak there too the next day, at fees of \$150 apiece. So it would be \$350 for the two-day trip; not bad money, but air fare and such had to come out of it, and considering what I could make simply by staying home and writing a short story for Galaxy, the trip would be no bonanza at all.

Somewhere along the way Harlan squeezed into the R.I.T. part of things. Which changed the tone of what we would do considerably, for Harlan knows nothing about technology and even less about the kind of dialectic give-and-take a panel needs; I saw at once that we were in for another ego trip. But what the hell: I like Harlan, and even though I could see that the speech itself was foredoomed I figured we'd have some good times together before or after it.

Barbara and I flew up to Rochester early on the morning of April 16. Mohawk Airlines, out of Newark; the Newark Airport is as close to us as the other NY airports. By previous agreement, no one from either university was to meet us when we arrived; we wanted to see fabulous Rochester, not to spend all day jawing with our hosts. So we rented a car (\$44 for two days -- Rochester is Expensive) and drove to the motel the R.I.T. people had booked for us (\$30) to check in, and then went out to see the town about 10:30 that morning.

We learned very fast that there isn't a whole lot going for Rochester. It's a placid, sleepy place of about 300,000 -- a kind of miniature Minneapolis, with (I suppose) a lot of charm for its inhabitants, but none whatever for outsiders. Two or three skyscrapers make up the Urban Center. A few bookstores, no restaurants of any interest, no shops, no art galleries. The place lacks texture and density and flavor. Sightseeing? Well, we took in the George Eastman House, which is the shrine of photographic history; pretty interesting, too. Then off to the much touted Planetarium, only to discover that it gives no daytime shows except for kiddies; in Rochester the grown-ups are working during the day, and evidently there aren't any tourists. So we skipped the Planetarium. Next door was the Science Museum: a few rooms of local fossils, arrowheads, and stuffed beavers. And so on. We called sightseeing quits an hour ahead of time and went back to the ~~the~~ motel to wash up and get ready for dinner (at Neil Shapiro's house; what restaurants?) with our fellow panelists.

There was Harlan -- in the room next door, dead tired, depressed. It took him forever to get ready to go out. The others showed up. We went off (without Harlan, who was then in his second hour of shaving and dressing) to the one highlight of the trip, a pretty fair

gallery/boutique, ceramics and jewelry and such, where we picked up an interesting little sculpture by the architect Paolo Soleri, a man we greatly admire. Then a fine Jewish dinner at the Shapiro house and then off to R.I.T. An audience of about 100, I'd say. Maybe half of them read s-f; the others were just there, apparently, because there isn't much else to do in Rochester in the evenings. No moderator. We rambled on. My attempts to talk about technology in s-f were quickly derailed by Harlan, who wanted to talk about Harlan. Okay. Soon he was explaining, in nitty-gritty vocabulary, how he wants to reform all the world's evils through his fiction. Since reforming evils is big on campuses these days, he immediately captured the audience; I guess they could see him cleaning up pollution, aiding the blacks, and ending the war, all via the medium of his contributions to Galaxy. This struck me as a pretty blatant play to the audience, and I called him on it, pointing out that in fact his fiction is experimental, surrealistic, dadaistic, not at all the kind of Mack Reynoldsy didactic stuff he seemed to be saying he wrote. Which led into a pretty heated and exhilarating discussion between him and me on the purpose of art, the importance of social comment in fiction, etc., etc. And just as things were getting good, we were told to knock it off: the panel was over, and we had to go backstage to meet the faculty.

The faculty: a sad bunch of downers, trapped in a third-rate school and depressed about it. A lot of heavy drinking there. Nobody offered me any pot; talking with some undergraduates who had managed to get into the faculty thing, I was shaken to find some of them actually afraid of the stuff. But one activist, turned on by Harlan, cornered me and denounced me for insufficient social commitment. He had read my novel UP THE LINE and nothing else, and couldn't understand why I bothered to have my characters horse around in Byzantium when they should have been correcting our world's problems.

After that, about midnight, we went off to some ice cream parlor -- late-night entertainment in Rochester. I began to feel depressed about the whole stupid jaunt, and we slipped out and went to the motel. Up early, out to sightsee again. Off to the famous Conservatory: three little greenhouses in a park. Some pretty tulips and cacti. Half an hour there. Then to the Art Museum. Not bad, but small. Two hours. What now? Desperately, off to the zoo. A real bummer. Two moldy polar bears, one moldy elephant, no giraffe. Half an hour for the whole thing, going slow. Back to the motel. Long lunch. To Univ of Roch. Just Anne and me; without Harlan, an easier time, a better discussion. But as pointless as a convention panel: amiable ramblings about the state of s-f. Pass go, get \$150. To the airport. Dinner with Bova, Anne, Neil, couple others. Mohawk Airlines has postponed our homeward flight by three hours. We can't shift to American Airlines because our car is parked in Newark and American flies to LaGuardia. At last a plane. Home, 2:30 AM. Beat. Grim. Two days work shot. Nothing gained except some dumb money.

Campus circuit? Baby, you can keep it.