

Redd Boggs'

SPYROCHNE

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UNDER THE HILL

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The afternoon sun blazes against the livingroom window till it gets lost in the tree by the fence. I just raised the blind, and see that the sun is hidden, not only by the haze of green leaves, but by the evening mist upon the bay. Angel island and the slopes of the northern peninsula merge mistily together, vague blue masses against the pale rose of the sky. San Francisco and Alcatraz island are only remote dark smudges in the mist, with only a single intense white beacon flashing from those shores to tell me that the far side of the bay still exists. The tinted clouds extend across the whole western horizon, but the bay which is still visible remains a muted silver. And now as I write the red revolving beacons on the towers of the Golden Gate bridge begin to shoot warning beams at me every ten seconds, across the dozen miles of azure dusk.

A CON RETORT FOR DICK LUPOFF

Despite fierce competition from Major George Seithers, Dick Lupoff has walked off with the brass gobboon for writing the most inaccurate account of the Battle of the Mezzanine to hit the fan press to date. His gobboon-winning report appears in Sam #12, January-February 1965, under the title, "A Con Report for Steve Stiles." The passage in question begins on the tenth page of the report (the pages are unnumbered). Editor Steve Stiles says he "ripped the guts out of Dick Lupoff's con report." Too knows how many more inaccuracies, distortions, misstatements, exaggerations, deceptions, and lies appear in the original. The version printed by Stiles, however, is sufficient to brand Lupoff as a thoroughly irresponsible reporter, and to make one despair for the cause of honesty and truth in fandom.

In the passage describing the Battle of the Mezzanine, there is hardly a single accurate statement. So determinedly inaccurate a performance suggests a strong element of malice on Lupoff's part; otherwise I should think he would state a solid, ringing fact every once in a while, just by sheer chance.

Furthermore, Lupoff's account fails to make clear the issue involved in the fight. It was not a drunken brawl; none of us had had so much as a thimbleful of beer. It was not an attempt to prevent us from entering the convention suite. None of us made any such attempt. It was not an attempt to remove non-members from the convention, since Gretchen

was a paid-up member, and none of us strayed from the public part of the hotel. We were all boycotting the convention, and far from seeking to enter the convention rooms, we were actively rejecting any well-meaning invitations to enter them. Plainly, the only reason we were ejected from the mezzanine was that we were pro-Breen and anti-con-committee.

The implications of Lupoff's description are that we were aggressively trying to force our way into the convention and that we violently resisted attempts to prevent us from doing so. Nothing could be further from the truth, since we were peacefully chatting with friends when the committee sicced sergeant-at-arms Bob Buechley onto us.

I am going to reprint Lupoff's incredible account, word for word, below to the left. The righthand column contains my comments on this account.

"One night -- Pat says it was Friday, and I believe her -- "

"several boycotters decided that they would enter the mezzanine area and attend the open party in the con suite."

"Bob Lichtman came, saw a plain-clothes Burns man's badge, and left quietly. Gretchen Schwenn and Redd Boggs arrived en couple"

"and were met at the door by Bob Buechley, the (feh!) sergeant-at-arms."

"The precise details of what took place between Gretchen and Bob are unfortunately denied to history, for each participant and/or witness to the incident seems to have a startlingly different story to tell,"

"ranging all the way from a violent and unprovoked attack of Bob upon Gretchen, to a violent and unprovoked attack of Gretchen upon Bob."

"As nearly as I can piece it together from descriptions by Dick Ellington and Al Halevy,"

"Buechley barred Gretchen and Redd from the con suite."

Pat Lupoff contributes one of the very few facts in the account!

Perhaps some boycotters did; however, I object to the implication that attendance at the party necessarily followed entrance upon the mezzanine (a public area).

Wrong. There were three of us in our party: Kevin Langdon, Gretchen and myself. We entered and left together.

Wrong. The mezzanine had no door; we didn't go near the con suite. We didn't see Buechley till later.

In all fairness, then, since Dick Lupoff did not witness the fight, it would seem proper to print the "other" side, not just the side that makes the con committee appear in a favorable light.

If the facts were as Lupoff parades them, how could there have been an "unprovoked" attack either way?

One should carefully note that the account by Lupoff is widely at variance with any descriptions by Dick Ellington and Al Halevy to us, at a later date.

I confess that at that time I did not know that the con suite was

"They insisted on entering, at least on temporary passes. Buechley agreed, and offered temporary badges. Now, here is where the story gets very unclear. Either Gretchen or Redd standing behind her, refused to pin the badge on her dress/his shirt."

"Buechley either attempted to pin a badge on Gretchen's dress or to reach across her shoulder and pin one on Redd's shirt."

"In either case, Gretchen took exception to what she regarded as an unwelcome familiarity ("How dare you TOUCH MY BREAST!")"

"and flew at Buechley's throat, knocking him to the floor, kneeling over his chest and throttling him."

"Redd attempted to race to Gretchen's (!) rescue but was held back by Halevy and/or other bystanders."

"After Gretchen had been pulled from Buechley's quivering body,"

"she and Redd either stalked off in a huff, or were thrown out, or left in their leisure and with full dignity, depending on whom you believe."

nearby, nor did I ever learn just where it was located. Neither Gretchen nor I ever entered it or tried to enter it then or at any time during the convention.

As the con committee well knew, Gretchen was a paid-up member of the Pacificon (membership #10) and had a perfect right to enter the con suite had she wished. She did not wish. Had Buechley or any of the committeemen tried to give me a "temporary badge," I would have hurled it in his face. However, nobody tried.

Buechley offered no badges to us. However, Al Halevy attempted to pin Gretchen's duly-paid-for badge on her. Of course Halevy did not try to pin a badge on me, or on Kevin, since we were not members.

Can anyone who knows Gretchen quite imagine her protesting in such a shocked and virtuous manner?

Buechley, attempting to eject Gretchen, though she was a member of the convention, grappled with her and tried to drag her toward the stairway of the mezzanine. She bent over, grabbed his leg, and threw him down. They fell in a heap, but Gretchen did not kneel over his chest. She did not try to throttle him.

I wouldn't swear that someone did not try to stop me, but if so he was unsuccessful. I ended up with my face two inches from Bob Buechley's.

Nobody pulled them apart. Both Buechley and Gretchen got up separately and without assistance.

We were thrown out, but not bodily. We hardly left "with full dignity"; we had been ejected from a public part of the hotel for no other reason than that we were on Walter Breen's side and against the con committee.