

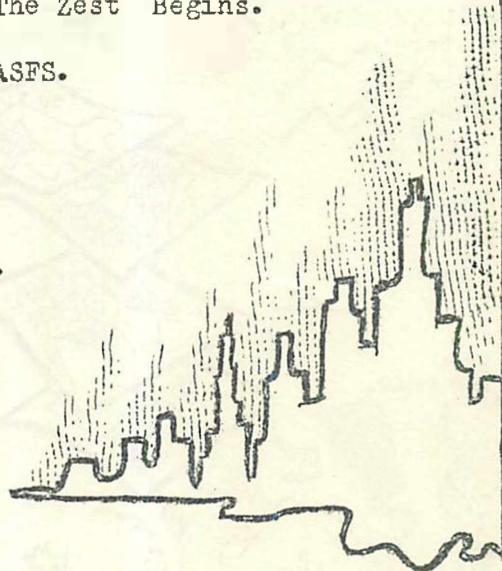
ATOM ABROAD



ATOM ABROAD



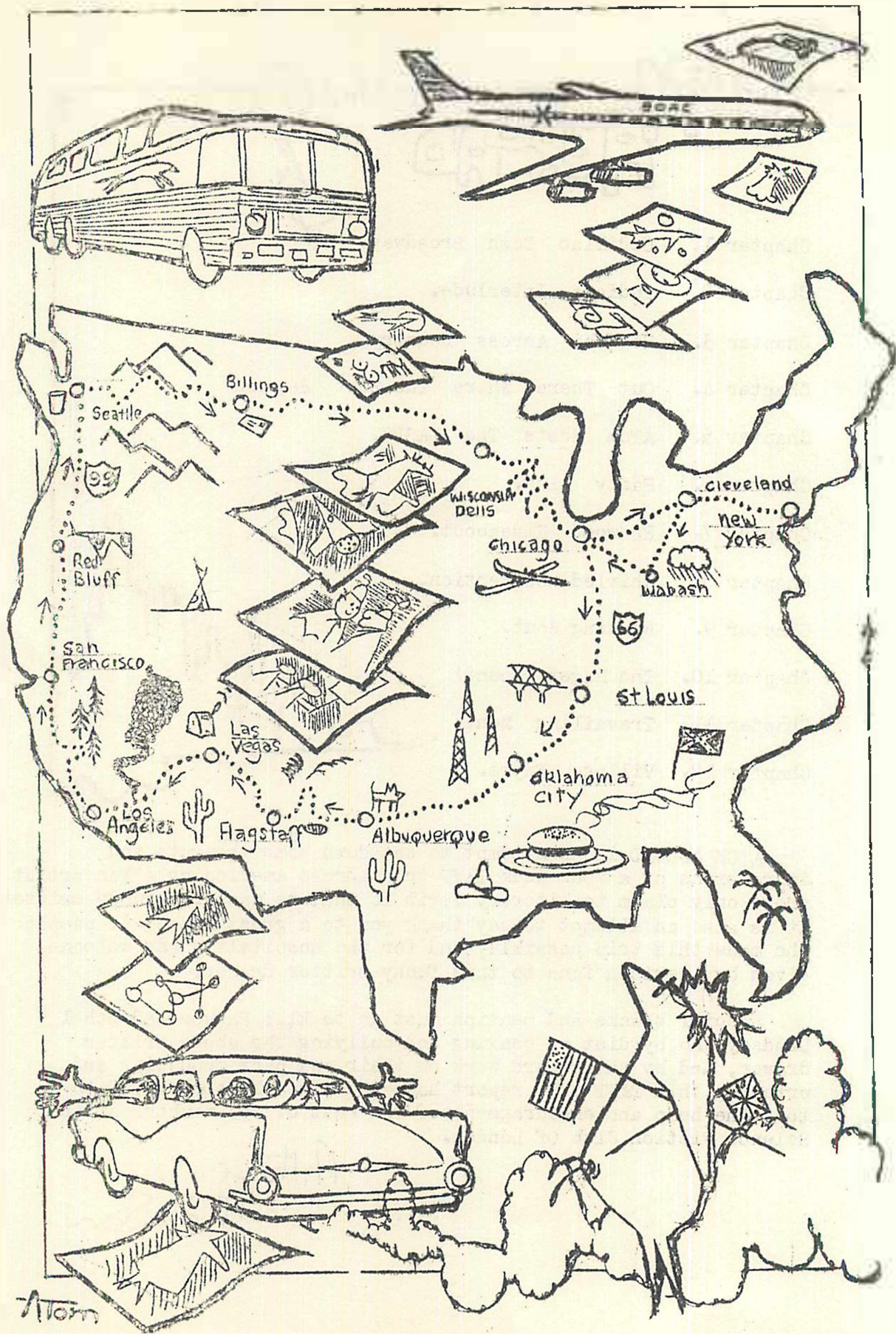
- Chapter 1. Cadillac Down Broadway.
- Chapter 2. Indiana Interlude.
- Chapter 3. Hotfoot Across Country.
- Chapter 4. Out There Where The Zest Begins.
- Chapter 5. ATOM Meets The LASFS.
- Chapter 6. Party Line.
- Chapter 7. Redwood Rideabout.
- Chapter 8. Whirled Convention.
- Chapter 9. Bussing Bout.
- Chapter 10. The Puget 'Sound'
- Chapter 11. Travailing Man.
- Chapter 12. Village Fayre.



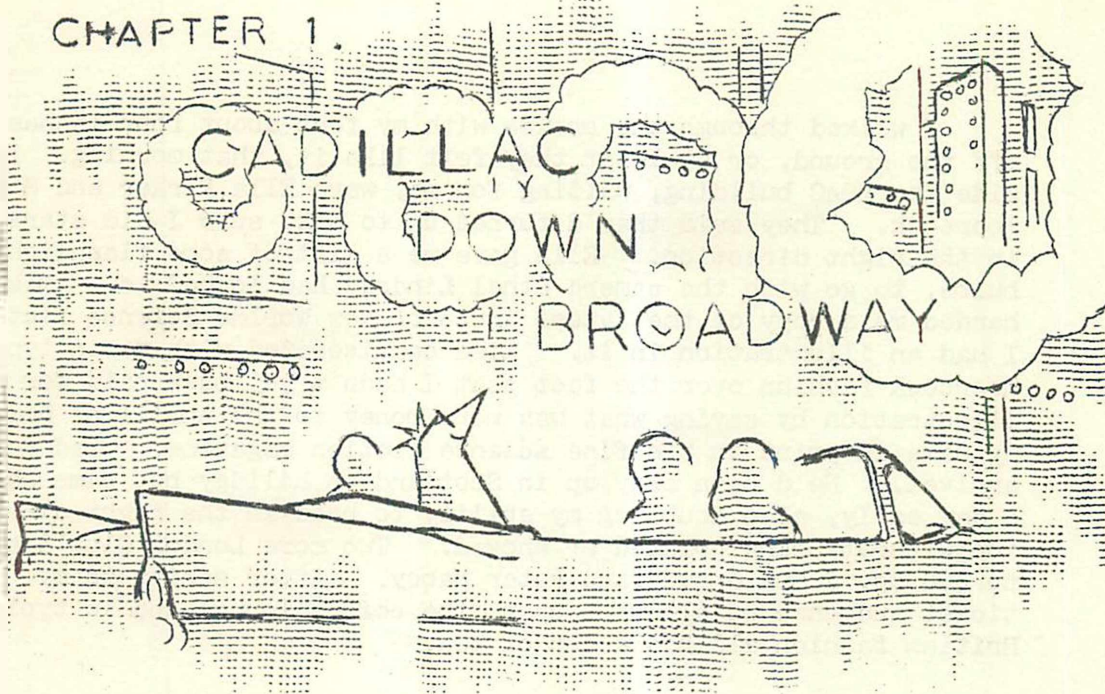
ATOM ABROAD is an attempt to set down some thoughts and impressions of a four week TAFF trip across America by a Fan artist whose only claim to literary merit is that he can draw funny critters. It is also an attempt to say thank you to a great number of people who made this trip possible, and for the hospitality and welcome given by American fans to this funny critter drawer.

Special thanks and mention must go to Ella Parker and Ethel Lindsay who by dint of coaxing and bullying the above critter drawer, and by sheer hard work on their own part producing and printing this TAFF trip report have made it all possible, with too, the help and encouragement of the rest of the members of the Science Fiction Club Of London.

Arthur
Thomson



CHAPTER 1.



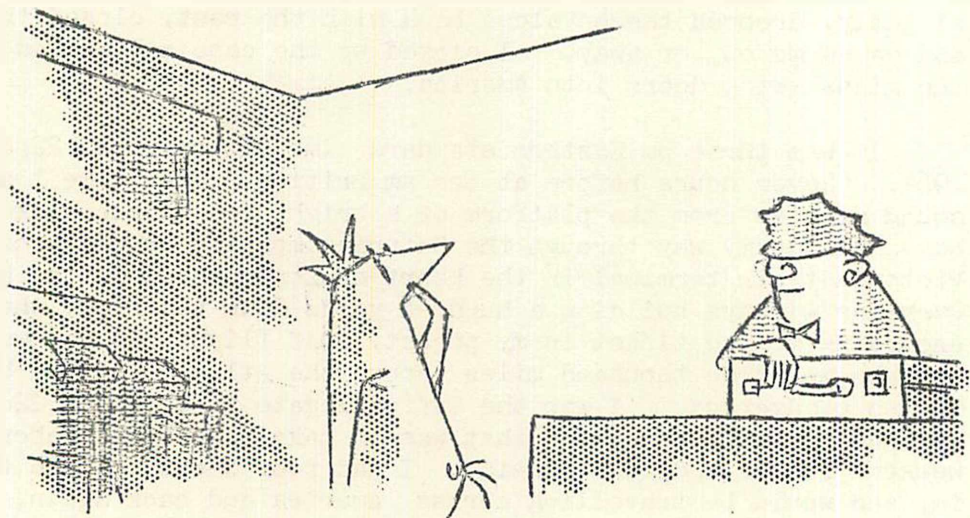
The customs officer at the J. F. Kennedy airport, New York, opened my case and looked in at the envelopes that filled it. I could see his mind boggle. He was probably wondering what sort of nut would bring a case full of envelopes into America instead of clothes. I began to wonder just how I was going to explain how I was taking two hundred and fifty 'London in '65' Progress reports seven thousand miles in my case, as a favour to Ella Parker. He lifted one of the envelopes up, looked at it then at me. I coughed slightly and said, "Uh, a Convention, in London, in 1965. Ella Parker says " At the mention of Ella he seemed to shrink slightly, dropped the envelope back with the rest, closed the case and waved me on, or away. I picked up the case and walked through the glass swing doors into America.

It was three pm Eastern standard time Saturday the 22nd August 1964. Seven hours before at ten am British Summer time I had swung my case from the platform of a bright red double-decker London bus and made my way through the Saturday morning crowds around the Victoria train terminal in the heart of London towards the British Overseas Airways building a hundred yards down the road, where, according to the ticket in my pocket, BOAC flight 503 was waiting to take me three thousand miles across the Atlantic to the United States of America. I was the Taff delegate to the 1964 22nd World Science Fiction Convention that was to take place over Labor Day weekend in Oakland, California. I had four weeks to make the trip in, and would be travelling across America and back again.

I walked through the crowds with my feet about four inches off the ground, or at least they felt like it, that morning. Inside the BOAC building, waiting for me, were Ella Parker and Mike Moorcock. They said they'd turned up to make sure I did start off in the right direction. Ella gave me a gift of some flashlight bulbs, to go with the camera Ethel Lindsay had loaned me. Mike handed me a copy of the latest issue of New Worlds Science Fiction. I had an illustration in it. Mike commiserated with me in typical Moorcock fashion over the fact that I hadn't yet been paid for the illustration by saying what was mere money to the thrill of seeing my name in print in his fine science fiction magazine. Ted Forsyth arrived. He'd been away up in Scotland on holiday but came back a day early, also doubting my ability to head in the right direction without being pointed or shoved. Two more London Club Stalwarts turned up, Jimmy Groves and Peter Mabey. After seeing to my ticket and case we all went up to the coffee lounge and in typical British fashion all had a cup of tea.

At 11.45 am we trooped downstairs to the coach and I sat inside it feeling that it was all wrong me being on the coach and not standing outside with the rest of the fans waiting to wave goodbye to someone else. Ella knew I was thinking this and the look in her eyes was telling me that it was real. She and the others waved as the coach pulled away and headed for London Airport where my magic carpet in the shape of a Boeing 707 was waiting

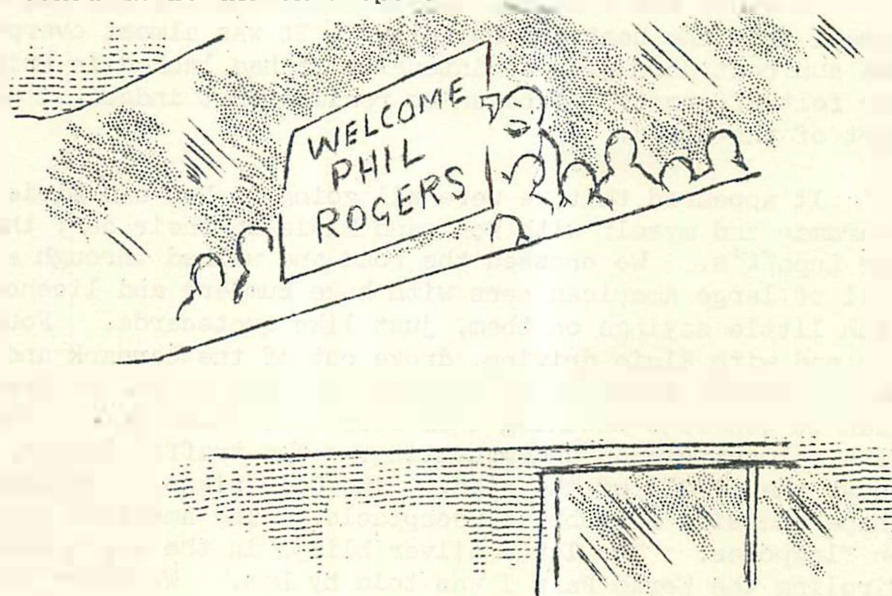
By one oclock we were airborne and heading out over the green fields of southern England towards the coast. I began to believe it really was all happening to me.



The flight across the Atlantic took six hours, but seemed no time at all. I almost felt cheated. You should have to stand on a pitching deck, in the teeth of a howling gale, lashed to the rigging to make such an epic journey. At two oclock local time, we were over the eastern seaboard of America and preparing to land. I saw the highways and cloverleafs, just like it was supposed to be, then we were touching down.

Before we could get off a nice American gentleman in uniform came through and looked at us. None of us carried bombs, had fungus growing out of the tops of our heads or were busily engaged in overthrowing the government, so he smiled at us and said we could leave the 'plane. We trooped into the Arrivals building to show our visas and collect our luggage. My case hadn't come through the luggage port so I went over to the customs counter and looked up at the glassed in visitors balcony. I immediately saw the face of Dick Eney, a good head and shoulders above the group of people around him and, in almost a reflex action of relief at recognising someone, lifted my arm and waved. He smiled and waved back, the people around him waved too, then some blackguard amongst them raised a huge banner with the words "WELCOME PHIL ROGERS" printed on it.

I shook my fist at the group turned to go back to the 'plane saw my case had arrived and decided to stay. I carried it across to the customs counter and put it in front of the customs officer, he opened it and looked in at the envelopes.



Once through the swing doors I was in the airport foyer and amongst the group of fans, who had come down from the balcony and were waiting for me and I was shaking hands and being introduced to everyone. Elsie and Don Wollhiem, John Boardman, Steve Stiles, Andy Main, Dick Eney, Pat Lupoff and smiling banner holder, Dick Lupoff. Dick shook my hand enthusiastically and said, "Phil, we're glad you made it." "Dick", I said, "I have a confession to make, I am really Atom, in a clever plastic disguise".

Everybody booed or cheered and we walked out of the airport doorway. I was still busy sorting everyone out. Dick Eney, was unmistakable. Big built, round faced, moustached. Don and Elsie Wollhiem, a littler older than the rest. John Boardman surprised me, knowing his extreme views, big, calm looking, with a full black moustache. I'd expected a more intense nervous type of man. He was wearing a vivid red shirt with a large tin button on it showing the back view of an elephant with the words "Goldwater is the living end" printed on it. Pat Lupoff was a slim, nice looking girl. Dick Lupoff, a well built person, with dark hair and heavy glasses, smiling widely and taking charge of things. Steve Stiles and Andy Main were the two youngest, and reminded me of young fans like Des Squire and Pat Kearney of London.

We stood for a moment outside the building and for the first time I felt the heat and humidity. It was almost overpowering. The sun beat down with an intensity it had lacked in Britain. The air felt different. I began to realise that indeed, I was in another part of the world.

It appeared that we were all going to Don and Elsie's. John Boardman and myself with Don and Elsie in their car, the rest in the Lupoff's. We crossed the road and walked through a carpark full of large American cars with huge bumpers and licence plates with little sayings on them, just like quotecards. Found Don's car and with Elsie driving, drove out of the carpark and down a long white highway bordered by scenery that was to me, so typically American it was like watching a US show on British T.V. The used car lots, almost hidden under bunting. The traffic lights, hung high above the middle of the road. The Cola signs. Mailboxes the same shape and size as rubbish receptacle. The American flag flying on flagpoles. Two large silver blimps in the sky a mile or so off. Circling the World Fair I was told by Don. We drove into the Rigo Park district, where Don and Elsie lived, drew up in front of their house, and went up the front steps into the cool of air conditioning, to relax with a tall drink and wait for the others to turn up. I opened my case and gave Elsie the present Ethel Lindsay had sent her,

then wandered round the room with her looking at the titles on the rows and rows of books that lined the walls. Dick, Pat and the rest arrived, to explain they had come via Atlantic Beach and points East. This was my first example of the Dick Lupoff runabout tours service, something I was to become well acquainted with in the next four weeks. The plans for the rest of the day were explained to me. We were going out to eat, then on to a party at Terry Carr's apartment in Brooklyn. We went out to the cars and drove downtown to eat.

I hadn't yet adjusted to what part of the day I was in, maybe I was confused with the time differences I'd experienced within a few short hours. It seemed early evening, but what evening or how, didn't come through.

Downtown the group split up. John Boardman went off home, and Steve Stiles decided to go right on to the Carrs. The rest of us followed Dick Lupoff to the restaurant of his choice. Dick told me that he'd taken Ethel Lindsay and the Willis's to it, and hoped I'd like it. We came to some steps in the sidewalk and went down them. Dick told me it was the restaurant 'La Cave de Henri IV Roi'. We went in through a tiny entrance then down some more steps into darkness. The headwaiter came up out of the gloom and led us, single file, hands on shoulders, to a small alcove cut in the side of the cave. It was lined with wooden seats and had a small table with a large white candle in a bottle on it. Everybody slid themselves round the seats. I peered about me in the candlelight and found Don Wohlhiem sitting beside me. From the menu I chose Shrimp cocktail as a starter, and Dick Lupoff, who I was beginning to enjoy enormously, but regard with a little bit of wariness, at his deadpan style of humour, suggested the main course for me, for reasons which became apparent later. I managed to find Dick Eney and said I hadn't expected to see him in New York. He explained that as I wasn't going to be able to get down to Washington he'd come up to see me. I thought this was pretty good of him, and in line with the impression British fandom had of him, that he was a good man.

The shrimp cocktail finished, my main course came up. It was duck. It looked pretty good from what I could see of it by the light of the candle and I was taking up knife and fork to tackle it when the waiter leaned past me and set it on fire. I registered horror at the treatment of my duck. Don Wohlhiem leaned over and said "don't say too much or they set fire to you as well".



I was beginning to get over my out of kilter feeling with times and places, and hoped I was beginning to relax. Certainly I was feeling at home with this group of people. How they were coping with me, and my English accent, I didn't know. The meal over, we single filed out into the New York evening. All I remember of the restaurant are the steps down, the candlelight, the alcove and the steps back up. If there were any other parts to the place I didn't see them. It had been an excellent meal, in fact, with the group of fans that were there, a wonderful meal for my first in America. We crossed the now neon lit road back to the cars. Here I asked if I could ride in Dick's car. He had told me during the meal, when I asked him, that it was a Cadillac.

The Cadillac came up. Dick, Pat, Dick Eney, Andy Main and myself got in. Don and Elsie said they'd see us at the party and we drove out of the garage. It was here that the Dick Lupoff starlight tour of New York, Poughkeepsie, and environs, began. It was a very warm night, I had always liked hot weather and was adjusting fine to it. With the top down, but no ticker tape or high velocity bullets we drove through, around, and past the lights and sights of Fifth Avenue, Broadway, and Times Square, under eye searing neon, and large smoke rings being puffed across Times Square by the cardboard cigarette man. Saw, and drove past all the brightly lit movie houses, theatres, restaurants, garish girlie shows, innumerable shops, all open, and milling crowds on the sidewalks. The whole thing was big. The entertainment area of London, around Piccadilly Circus seemed genteel and small in comparison to this absolute blast of colour, lights, crowds. The traffic here too, was noisier horns, hooters, car radios, and droll American expressions which passed between drivers at traffic snarl ups.

At 42nd Street Andy Main mentioned that Jon White, editor of the magazine 'Inside', was in a French Hospital nearby. We decided to visit him and show him the stranger from across the sea. In a few minutes we arrived at the hospital. The place itself was typical of older hospitals in any city. Shabby fronted and jammed between buildings. Taking an elevator up several floors we found the right room and went in. The very high literary quality of 'Inside' had led me to expect an older man. Jon was in his late teens, or early twenties, with a likable personality to suit his age. He was pleased to see us all and gave me a copy of the latest issue of 'Inside', with an illustration of mine on the cover. He said he hoped to be out of hospital and see me again when I returned to New York. Leaving the hospital we continued the Grand Tour, this time plunging into and through Greenwich Village, Canal Street, Chinatown, and little Italy, staring at, or being stared at by the inhabitants of all these places. We went over an ugly iron bridge into Brooklyn. Crossing the bridge, speaking

of all the sights and sounds I'd just experienced I said "America certainly puts on a show" and Dick Lupoff pointed out that I wasn't even on the American mainland yet, just a couple of small islands offshore.

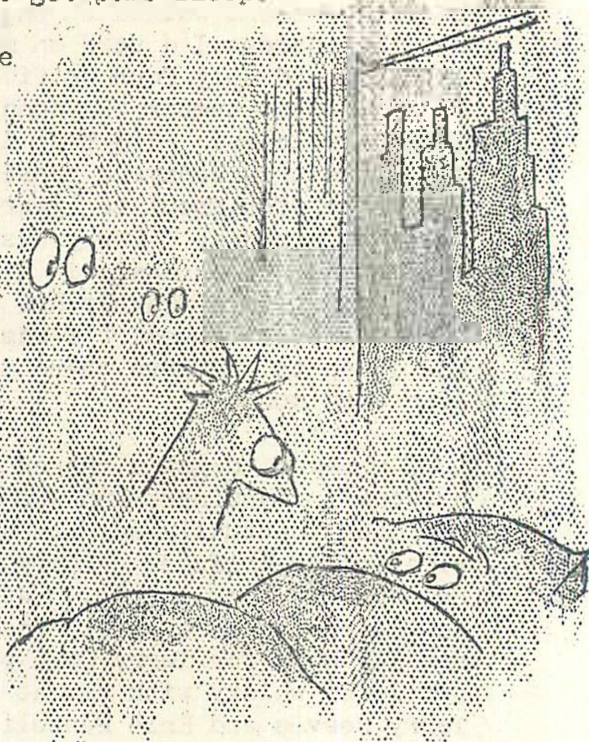
The tour itself had taken up quite a bit of time. I realised we were late arriving for the party, and worried a little about it. We'd parted from the Wollhiems a couple of hours earlier and I wondered how it would look turning up so late. We found a parking place in Pierrepont Street and walked up the street to the Carr's apartment. This was the address I'd used on my entry form and visa. In actual fact I was to spend only four or five hours there the whole of the four weeks. We knocked at number 41 found there was indeed a party on, and, that we were welcome. I'd been looking forward to meeting Terry Carr ever since the trip became a possibility. We'd some form of contact with each other for about ten years and many of my illos had appeared in Terry's fanzines. Terry was tall and quietly spoken, then, at the Convention, and back again in New York, I enjoyed being in his company and talking to him. Carol, his wife, was a dark good looking girl, with dark expressive eyes. I was introduced to Marsha and Charlie Brown who I was to see here there and everywhere during the trip and get to like very much.

I managed to get a chance to tell Steve Stiles how I admired his artwork in fanzines, and was explaining to Marsha Brown that Englishmen didn't actually say actually all the time, when Larry Shaw and his wife Noreen arrived. Larry I'd met before, when he came across to Britain way back in '56. At sometime during the evening I was brought to the phone to say hello to Boyd Raeburn calling from Canada, as he usually does for Terry Carr parties, and promised help demolish another bottle of whisky with him at Oakland. A feat we'd performed with Terry Jeeves and Eric Bentcliffe at the '57 Worldcon in London. Talking to Terry I mentioned that I hadn't yet had a chance to send a card or cable to my wife in London. He took me to a phone in his bedroom and with his help I called the American Cable Co and sent a cable to London, just like that. Terry waved away the cost of the cable and we went back to the party. Sometime during the night the Shaws, Wollhiems, Dick Eney had to leave. Dick to get back all the way to Washington. I said again how pleased I was he'd come up to New York. A while after, sitting on the floor looking through a book of Bok sketches with Marsha Brown I began to realise time and events were catching up with me. I worked out I'd been awake for about twenty hours, since getting up that morning in London. Once my mind took this in it cried enough and I began to feel tired.

Terry had explained to me that he'd received his instructions as to my handling, from Ron Ellik, organising things from far of California. I was to be placed on a bus at 6 am on the Sunday morning,

heading for Cleveland and Nick Falasca, who would be waiting for me to take me by car across country to Los Angeles.

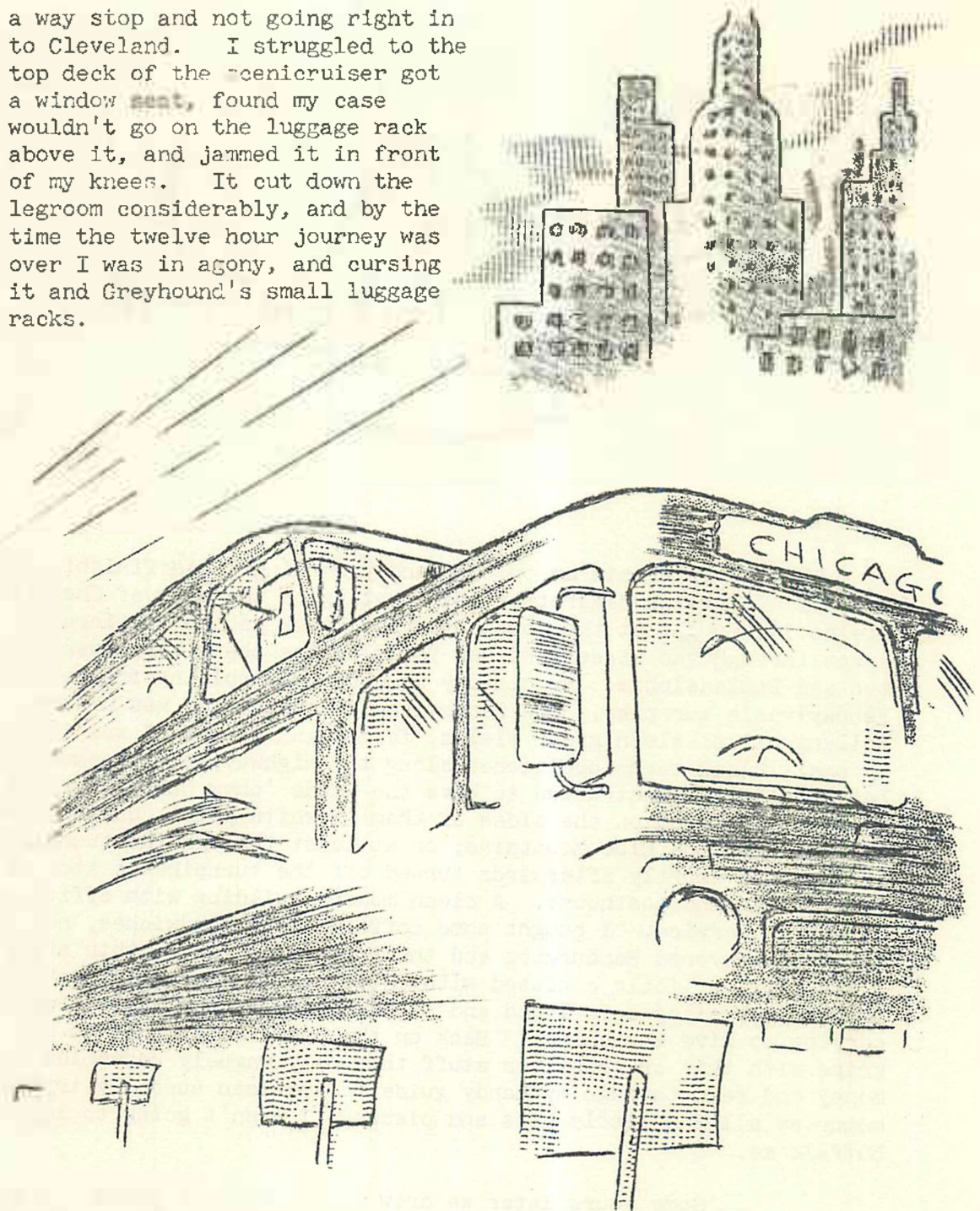
Terry said that depending how I felt, I could stay up the rest of the night and collapse on the bus, or get a few hours sleep at the Lupoffs. I said that as Dick and Pat had to go home I'd go with them, it would probably do me some good to get some sleep. So we left, around 3am, finishing off the Lupoff tour by going via the Bowery where they really do have people lying along the sidewalks and sitting in doorways just like they advertise. Then up past the old Nunnery of fannish fame, across Union Square, through Yorkville and up past Central Park. If the route isn't in the right order, well you ask Dick Lupoff, I was sleepy. At the Lupoff apartment block we woke a tired elevator operator who took us up to Dick and Pat's apartment, where we tip-toed in, in the darkness so as not to wake the new baby, or coloured nurse who was sleeping on a camp bed in the living room, and which I fell over. I was steered to a large divan, thought briefly, 'Wow' and fell asleep.



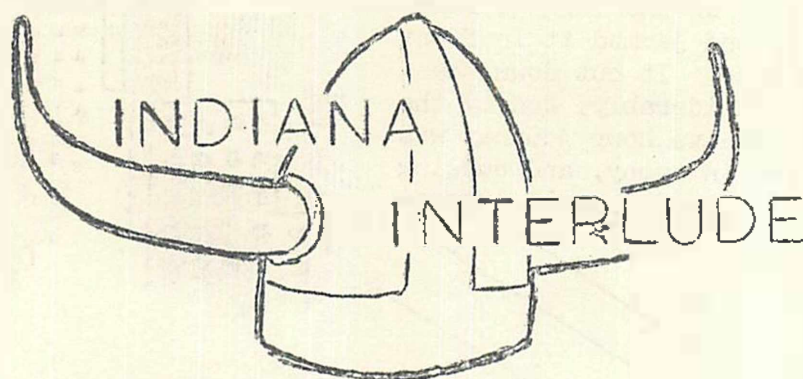
Three minutes later, sadistic Dick Lupoff woke me, told me it was five am and that there was a bus waiting for me at the Port Authority terminal. I found my shoes and my smile, put them on and we went out into the dawn. At the depot we checked on the bus. I had to get off at Brecksville, Ohio, a stop a few hours out from Cleveland. Nick would be waiting for me there. We went and drank a cup of coffee. American coffee is an entirely different thing to British coffee, both are beverages, and both are called coffee, but that's the only thing they have in common. We went down to the departure floor and found my bus. Dick said he hadn't made up his mind yet whether he and Pat would attend the convention, so I'd said I'd see him when I came back to New York and climbed aboard the bus with my case.

I was told to take my case aboard as I would be getting off at

a way stop and not going right in to Cleveland. I struggled to the top deck of the scenicruiser got a window seat, found my case wouldn't go on the luggage rack above it, and jammed it in front of my knees. It cut down the legroom considerably, and by the time the twelve hour journey was over I was in agony, and cursing it and Greyhound's small luggage racks.



CHAPTER 2



Shortly after six am on the Sunday morning I was finishing the last of my English cigarettes and starting on the pack of Chesterfields I'd bought at the port authority kiosk as the scenicruiser swept through the streets of New York, across the river towards Trenton and Philadelphia. By mid-day we were out, rolling free on the Pennsylvania turnpike. The Pennsylvania countryside was pretty. Rolling hills, clean green fields, farms, and barns. I was intrigued by small black barns positioned along the highway, they seemed to have been specially constructed to have the words 'chew OLD MAIL POUCH Tobacco' lettered on the sides of them in white paint, quaint. We went through the Blue Mountains, or at least through the tunnels cut in them and shortly afterwards turned off the turnpike to stop at my first Greyhound posthouse. A clean modern building with efficient cafeteria service. I bought some coffee, and egg sandwiches, not yet having discovered Hamburgers and their wonders. Up to this stage I was still a little confused with US coinage and usually proffered the largest sized coin I had and stood hopefully for whoever was serving to give any change. Back on the bus I determined to get to grips with this crazy silver stuff that only vaguely resembled real money and read through my handy guide to American currency trying to memorise all the little bits and pieces. I wasn't going to let it buffalo me.

Some hours later we drew up for another break. I got out and went into the posthouse, made my selection and with a minimum amount of fumbling succeeded in tendering the correct amount that the foodstuffs were listed at, only to be thrown aback when the cashier said "State Tax". It appeared that it was the old story of everybody wanting to get into the act, and the State even wanted a finger in

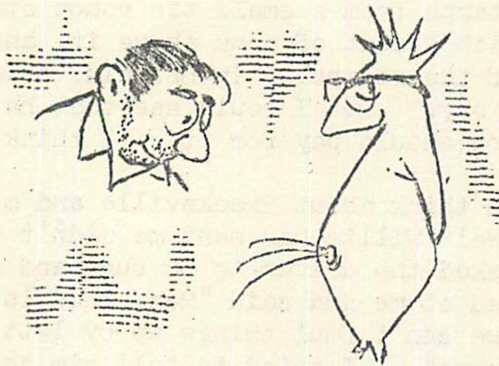
my apple pie. I bought some postcards and mailed them off. It was a little funny getting the stamps from a small tin robot stamp machine instead of an iron box with a coat of arms above it, and, to pay more than the actual value of the stamps. In Britain, stamps are stamps and you pay what they say. But I could see that here, a service was being given, and you should pay for it. I think.

On the road again I began to think about Brecksville and meeting Nick. They Greyhound map that Walt Willis had sent me didn't show the place so at another stop I asked the driver to be sure and let me out at Brecksville. He looked at me and said "Man, this is an express, we go right through.. we can't foul things up by letting people off here there and everywhere". I tried to tell him that the Man in New York had said that the bus was stopping at Brecksville, but he just looked at me. I went back to my seat and worried a little. Terry Carr had said that if I didn't meet Nick in Brecksville it would take several hours delay to contact him from Cleveland and get him to come in and collect me. I noticed that the first driver had gone and a new driver was climbing aboard, so I went down and asked him if I could get off at Brecksville. "Sure". he said. I smiled at him, he smiled at me, and Pennsylvania was a wonderful place full of friendly people. By four or five oclock I began to see signs saying Cleveland was only so far away.

At six thirty, an hour later than scheduled, the bus slowed down and stopped, and the driver waved me down. I unwedged myself from my case and lugged it down the bus and got off. I was standing by the side of the road in the middle of a small town. From the garage across the street came a stocky dark suited figure. He came up to me, took in my case with the BOAC sticker, and my lightweight English sports jacket in heavy tweed, and said, "Arthur"? "Nick?" I said. We both grinned like devils and shook hands, relieved it had all happened just as Ron Ellik had ordained.

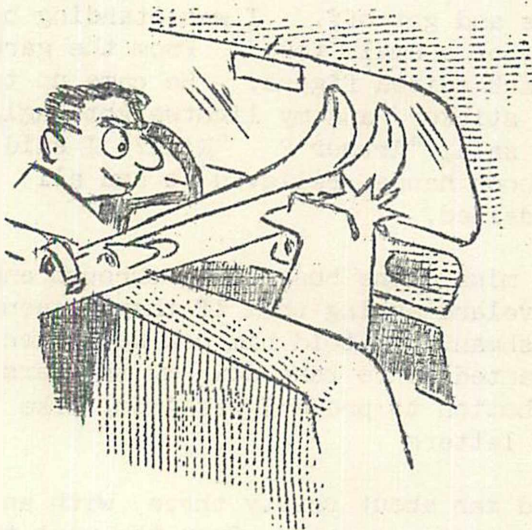
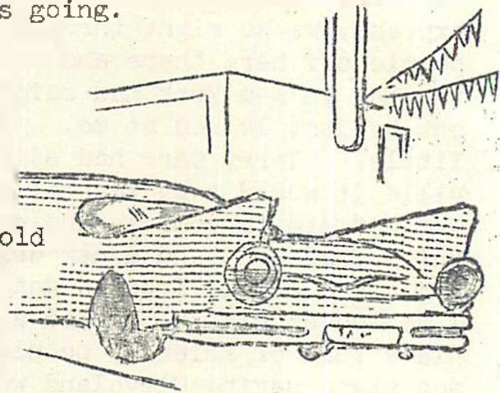
Nick told me he thought he'd missed the bus coming through and had been phoning the depot at Cleveland asking them if they'd seen a slightly bewildered looking Englishman. I told him how we'd been late and asked him if he really wanted me to take down my trousers and show him the hairs in my bellybutton to prove I was Atom, like we'd discussed as recognition, in letters

Nick was a stocky dark haired man about thirty three, with an infectious grin and low throaty American accent. Over the next three



weeks during the trip across country and in California I don't think I heard him say one word of complaint or bitch in anyway. He took everything in his stride and was ready to grin at any problem or tribulation that came up and go along goodnaturedly with anything that was going.

We crossed the road to a long low black Ford lying snugly by the sidewalk. The back end looked only a few inches off the ground. Nick asked if the case was my only luggage and looked relieved when I told him it was. He told me that he was moving out to the West coast and had most of his wordly goods with him. He opened the boot of the car to show it crammed to the brim with cases, valises, boxes, and crates full of records. It explained why the car was only a few inches off the ground.



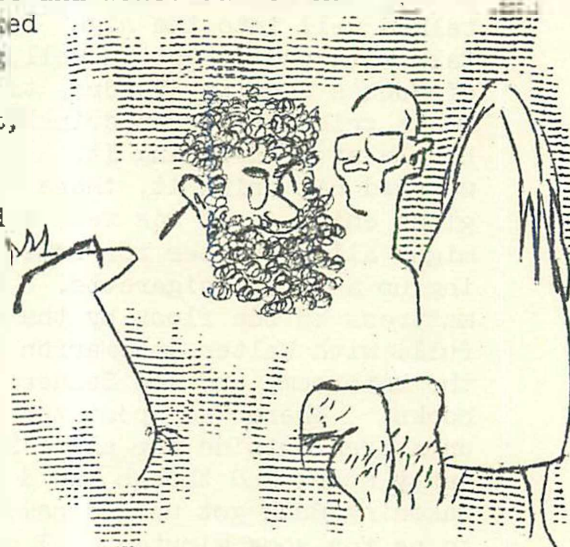
Going round to get in Nick warned me to be careful. Inside the car from the dashboard to the rear window lay a pair of skis. We got in. Nick on the driving side of the skis and myself on the other. He said that he'd been skiing most of the season and hoped to get to the ski resorts on the West coast. We started off to Indiana. Nick had written to the Coulsons in Wabash and they'd invited us to stop overnight. We talked across the skis to each other, about fandom past and present and discussed the controversy raging across the face of fandom about Walter Breen being

banned from membership of the Convention, by the committee, and the brouhaha this had caused amongst fans far and wide, with people like Ted White taking up cudgels on behalf of Walter and others such as Dick Eney striking out for the other point of view.

By ten or eleven that night we were in the heart of the Indiana

countryside looking out for the Coulson house. Nick held a letter giving directions and drove along peering out into the darkness. He said we'd see a light soon, and sure enough out of the night a small yellow glow appeared. We found it came from the window of a house set a little off the road. Parking the car we walked up to the door and knocked. Buck Coulson opened it and welcomed us in.

I walked into the room and looked at the three people who were sitting there looking at me. One was a big hairy bearded man in white shirt, white shorts and biblical sandals. The person next to him a thin tanned male with all his hair shaved off and fierce burning eyes. The last of the trio was a female with wild blond hair hanging down around her face a ghastly smock on, barefooted and at least ten and a half months pregnant. "Hello Walter Breen, Ted White and Marion," I said. "Hello Arthur," they said.



Also in the room was a big smiling crewcut young man who introduced himself as Joe Sanders. Juanita Coulson came in from the kitchen. We talked, Walter and Ted explained they were on their way across country to Oakland to not attend the con, and I explained I was on my way across to Oakland to attend the con, and we spoke of other things. Walter Breen impressed me. He was a big man yet gentle in manner and speech. Dressed as he was he looked a little unreal sitting there, in this house in the middle of Indiana. Ted with his shaved head and Marion with her barefeet looked a little unreal too. Marion mentioned, no doubt to do with her condition, that she'd stumbled on the front steps of her house in Berkeley a week or so earlier due to a small earthquake tremor moving the steps. The conversation centred on the various experiences Walter, Ted, Buck, Nick and Juanita, had gone through, with hazards like Typhoons, Tornados, Snowstorms, Floods, Earthquakes and Dust Devils, all round the country. I sat there waiting for the house to be struck by any one of the natural disasters that appeared to be roaming uncontrolled across the face of America. Finally the tales died away and everyone sat there looking at me. My mind flickered briefly through London fogs, windy days, and rain, but rejected them as being unworthy to introduce into such a line up. Looking at the expectant faces I said, "Well we don't get much of those sort of things in Britain. But we have been troubled with Vikings".

Juanita went into the kitchen to fix something to eat, in the silence that remained, it seemed best policy to follow her. Whilst Nick and I sat round the table eating, Buck, Ted and Joe came out to chat with us. Marion put her head round the door, said Walter felt unwell had gone to bed, and she was joining him. The rest of us talked well into the night. Buck and Juantia were easy people to talk with and we got on well. We looked through the complete files of Buck's fanzine, Yandro, talked art, talked talk and listened to Ted's tribulations in drinking Cola, and finding dead flies in the bottle after drinking it. Juanita offered him another drink and we watched him drink it, there weren't any dead flies in it, only broken glass chips. It was well into the night when Buck suggested we might all be better for some sleep and drove us off to bed by lighting up a herbal cigarette. The bed in our case being a comfortable mattress on the floor by the bathroom door. The house was pretty full, with Walter and Marion in the front room, ourselves in front of the bathroom, and Joe Sanders stretched out in a tiny room full of books. Where Ted spent the night I don't know, it might have been up a tree outside for all I knew. Nick and I woke at six, to get an early start and though we'd said we'd make it away without anyone wakening Buck got up and came down, and Walter came through and spoke to us for some minutes. I don't recall much of what was said, but again I was impressed with Walter's courtesy and gentle speech.

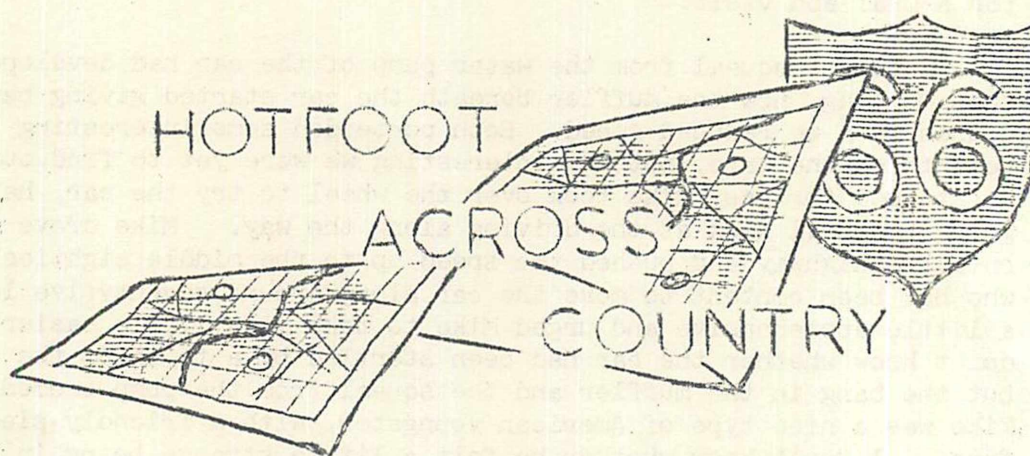
We drove away into the Indiana dawn, heading for Chicago, where we were to pick up the third member of our cross country crew. This was Mike Domina, editor of the fanzine Introspection, I'd sent him some illos which he'd used, and was looking forward to meeting him. Around eight we stopped for breakfast. The waitress took our orders and passed across the inevitable glass of iced water. I found difficulty in coping with the huge amount of crushed ice that filled the glass, this was something I never did manage to feel happy about during the whole trip. I suppose native born Americans have developed the muscular dexterity to be able to push their upper lip up and hold off the mass of ice whilst they suck up whatever liquid is left in the remaining part of the glass. I couldn't get the hang of it, I just couldn't get a good gulp at the drink without ending up with a nostril full of ice. By ten that Monday morning we were on the outskirts of Chicago. I read the map for Nick and navigated him up the freeway through Chicago to the right turn off. We don't yet have this freeway system through cities in Britain, most highways bypass the big towns. This idea where you could drive through or over most of the city without touching it until you came to your turnoff seemed fine. In London, to get through it, you have to thread your way through the roads across every district, encountering all the traffic using them. We found the right street, drove up to the Domina house and hooted hopefully. A young man came out followed by an older woman whom I assumed was Mike's mother. She looked rather doubtfully at Nick's rusty Ford, but we all smiled and shook hands. Nick

opened the boot, waved his hands over it and space appeared into which he stuffed Mike's valise. We waved to Mike's mother, who stood watching us depart with her hands to her mouth. Made our way back onto the freeway and headed out of town for Heyworth, Illinois. Nick had written to Bob Tucker and received an invite to stop off for a meal and visit.

A slight squeal from the water pump of the car had developed that morning, now the muffler beneath the car started giving banging noises when we reduced speed. Both portended some interesting moments on the trip, but how interesting we were yet to find out. When we stopped for gas, Mike took over the wheel to try the car, he was going to spell Nick at the driving along the way. Mike drove out onto the highway and pushed the speed up to the middle eighties, Nick, who had been content to move the car along around seventyfive looked a little apprehensive and urged Mike to take it a little easier. I don't know whether the car had been startled by a touch of the spurs but the bang in the muffler and the squeal from the pump seemed louder. Mike was a nice type of American youngster, with a friendly pleasant face. I don't know whether he felt a little strange being in the company of two older fans, he never opened up much during the trip, but was pleasant when he did say anything. We made good time to Heyworth. I felt fine, and a little sense of wonder that I was sitting in a car with two American fans, speeding through Illinois to visit Bob Tucker. Heyworth came up, and looked to me a typical American small town, white painted one storied wooden framed houses set in open gardens, grass lawns down to the roadside with an air of spaciousness I was unused to after the building to building style of London suburbs and fenced or hedged gardens.

We round the right house and parked the car in front of it. From around the side came a tall crewcut figure with a couple of small boys tumbling around him. Bob Tucker peered at me and said something about a genuine bugtype Englishman. We moved back of the house to sit round a garden table. The small Tuckerites seemed fascinated by my accent and kept asking if I was a real Englishman. I threw out a few "Awfullys, and Actuallys" just to show the flag. Fern, Bob's wife, came out to tell us to come in and eat, and we trooped up the back porch steps to go into a wonderful meal that left us satisfied and contented with life. The meal over we moved into the main room and sat talking. Bob mentioned about the two other Taff Delogates that he'd met, Ron Bennett, and Eric Bentcliffe, who had stopped overnight. I told Bob about the time Eric had stayed at my home, after the '57 Worldcon. He'd been nursing a heavy cold, retired early with a bottle of whisky, drank it all and left in the morning leaving the empty bottle and a plastic fried egg on my bookcase. I happened to mention to Bob that I'd only sent postcards so far, to my wife back in London. He took me into his den, sat me at his typewriter, provided me with an airmail form and said "write a letter." Before leaving, we tooke some photographs outside the house climbed aboard the Falasca Ford and with a bang and a squeal went on our way.

CHAPTER 3

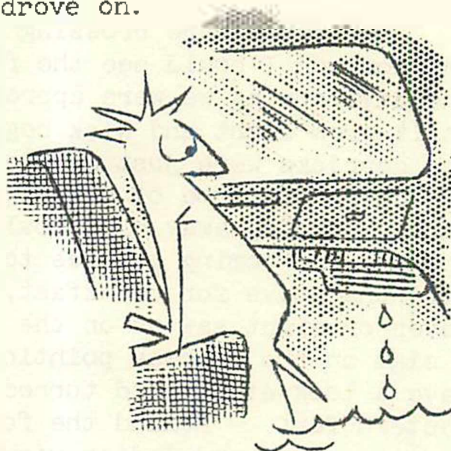


This was the start of the big leg of our journey, the next fan stop would be at Las Vegas, Nevada. We got out on to Route 66 our first target being St. Louis, Missouri. It's outskirts were reached by early evening. Nick decided to go round the town by a route on the map that said 'Route 66 St. Louis Bypass'. By the time we realised that this was a misnomer we'd spent double the amount of time in the area than we would have if we'd gone right through the city, missed our way and bounced around a very miserable section of the American heartland full of unmade streets and tumbledown houses, then finally, after wondering if our springs would hold out, got out onto a new highway and found a sign pointing towards the Mississippi. With the water pump squealing in rage, and the muffler banging away in high dudgeon over the rough treatment they'd been given, we passed some roadmaking machinery and headed for a big new bridge. From my side of the car it looked a little peculiar, and as we swung up to go over it I mentioned to Nick that he'd better accelerate if he wanted to make it to the other side. The Bridge ended in midstream. We backed off, found a cloverleaf and managed to cross a mile or so further down river. On the other side we ran into heavy traffic, pulled up in disgust and went into a bar for a beer.

When the traffic had died down we drove on heading for Tulsa. The pump and muffler noise was becoming louder at every slow down. It had been, and still was, a very hot day and the car itself began to show signs of overheating. The temperature gauge needle had crept up into the 'HOT' side of the dial. By ten oclock on the Monday night we were up to the Missouri Kansas border. Stopping to fill up with gas, Nick also bought some 'Radflush' which he poured

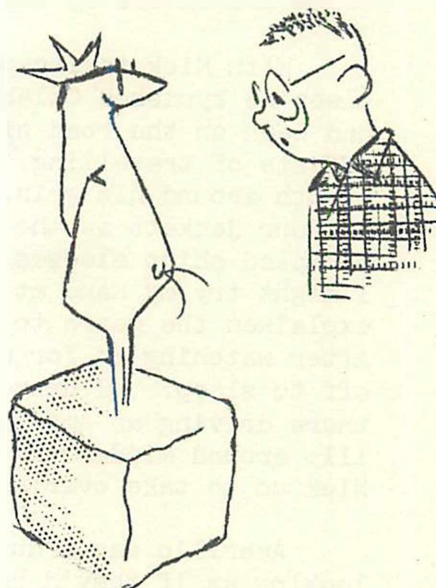
into the water system in the hope it might cure the overheating problem. Mike took over the wheel, Nick crawled into the back under the skis to sleep and I dozed beside Mike as we drove on.

The car was still overheating as I dozed off. Just before Tulsa I woke up from a dream in which I was trapped in a tiny steel room with water rising up all around me and drowning me. I found that the 'Radflush' had other qualities besides clearing the cooling system of rust. The seams of the heater under my side of the dashboard had sprung a leak and was dripping boiling water on to my feet.



We stopped the car and woke Nick up to tell him the good news, mopped up the water and drove on until a gas station came along. We refilled the rad' whilst never-to-be-daunted Falasca opened the boot, delved in and came up with a can of 'Sealtight' which he proceeded to pour into the rad' on top of the 'Radflush' already in there. We got back in and drove on, myself keeping a weather eye on the heater and my feet well clear. The car was still overheating. I wondered what mighty struggle for power was taking place inside the rad' and cooling system between the two opposing fluids.

The 'Radflush' must have won out, for after I'd been lulled into a false sense of security by the absence of any water dripping from the heater I put my feet back under it, to wake up with the plop of some hot sticky substance falling on my feet. This was the water from the rad' but mixed with the 'Sealtight' to form a gooey mass. I could see Nick delivering me to Ron Ellick in L.A. with my legs encased in a block of solidified cement seal. So we woke Nick up again. He had the solution to the problem without even thinking about it. Stopped the car found a pair of pliers and changed the water hoses over blocking off the line to the heater. We drove on, without the heater. Outside, the night temperature fell to below zero, inside the car it was colder.



By now we were crossing the flat Oklahoma countryside and away on the horizon I could see the flicker of lightning. By dawn on the Tuesday morning we were approaching Oklahoma City. We were all awake as it grew light and Nick began pointing out the oil derricks and rigs. The derricks were just as I'd imagined them, tall latticed towers against the dawn, but some of the rigs were just walking bears, set in backyards, pumping away. I could visualise the owners waking up in the morning and coming outside to draw off a pint of oil from them, to fire the stove for breakfast, just like going out to milk a cow. Seven or eight saw us on the outskirts of Oklahoma City and seeing a sign on the highway pointing to Frontier Land U.S.A. we decided to have a look at it, and turned off the highway into a large wooden western fort. Behind the fort was a whole layout of western streets, houses, mines and Indian wigwams. It wasn't open yet, but we stopped and wandered about looking in windows and taking a few photographs, then thought about breakfast.

The car's peculiarities, like pump squeal and muffler noises had grown worse during the night. Nick said that the muffler was definitely on the way out yet he'd only bought it two years back and it was guaranteed for ten years. He didn't mention the pump squeal; at least not in words you could repeat. We now always moved off to a rising shriek from the pump whilst the muffler sent out staccato bangs. The noises died away as we gained speed, but were always there, ready to make themselves heard if we slowed down. We went away from Frontier Land in fine style, sounding like attacking Indians being driven off by the guns of the fort.

With Nick taking over the wheel and Mike in back getting some sleep we bypassed Oklahoma City and headed for the Texas border. We had been on the road since Sunday and were beginning to show the effects of travelling. Nick's beard had sprung out in a rich dark growth around his grin, and I guessed I looked as bad. We'd taken off our jackets as the day grew hotter and were all in shirt sleeves, crumpled shirt sleeves. To give Mike and Nick a respite I suggested I might try my hand at driving for a while. We changed over, Nick explained the gears to me, I started up and drove off down the road. After watching me for a while both of them seemed satisfied and dropped off to sleep. I drove on, feeling pleased with myself for just being there driving an American car down Route 66 in Texas. Nearing Amarillo around midday the traffic began to get a little heavy so I woke Nick up to take over and drive us into town.

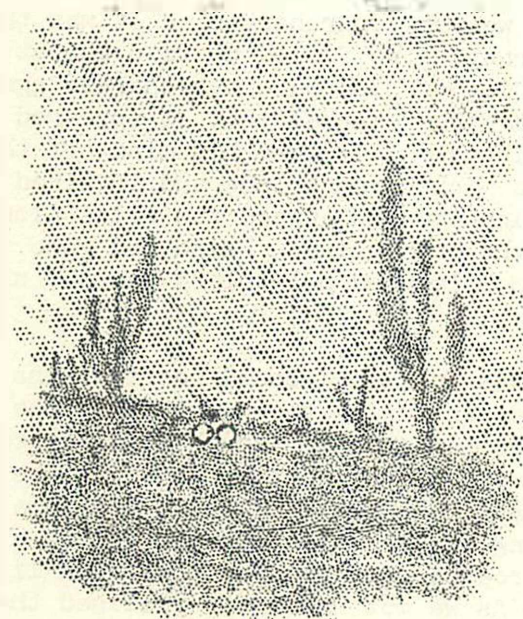
Amarillo was a dusty sprawling town of low buildings, some looking as if they'd been rush erected the night before. For the midday meal Nick thought I might like to try Bar-B-Que Texas style. We pulled in at what appeared to be the only brick building around. This was a modern restaurant, cool and clean inside. The Bar-B-Que

was excellent. It was so hot outside we could have stayed on in the restaurant all day, but the meal over, we decided to push on. Nick was working to some schedule he had the ultimate to be in Los Angeles for the Thursday to attend the LASFS meeting. Nick said that things going well we should be able to visit Meteor Crater and Grand Canyon, before turning off to go up to Las Vegas, also that as we were making pretty good time it might be a good idea to rest up at a motel for a few hours. The prospects of a shower and shave were cheered. We went out to the car and binged our way out of Amarillo. By the middle of the afternoon we had crossed into New Mexico and the country had changed from dusty plains to semi-desert with gulches and wind blown arroyos and fascinating purple buttes away off the road.

A likely looking motel appeared, so we swung in and stopped. Nick went in and dickered with the owner, then came back with the key of a room which we had till twelve that night. The heat even though it was five thirty was tremendous. My teeth felt like each one was wrapped in tiny fur coats, so I passed up first chance at the shower to get some toothpaste working on the fur. By six we had all showered, to collapse on the beds, fast asleep after two days and a night, driving.

Nick had brought in his alarm, it woke us at ten oclock, We were feeling hungry after the rest up, so pushed on to Albuquerque to eat. Just before entering Albuquerque, I saw off to one side of the road two eyes, glinting in the light of our headlamps. "Look". I said "My first Mountain Lion."

Well," said Nick, "I guess it would probably be a dog, or a lynx, at the most". "Listen, Nick Falasca," I said, "For you it might be a dog, but for the purposes of my trip report it's a mountain lion." I'll admit right here though, that from the size of the body I saw behind it was a small, thin, lion.



Reaching Albuquerque we drove through, trying to keep the car's noise at a minimum. The town looked clean and nice, in the night I suppose we were seeing at the best time, when the heat of the day was past. I was a little awed at the amount of neon Americans seemed to think was needed. Signs lit every building and window down the main road. Shut or open every buisness

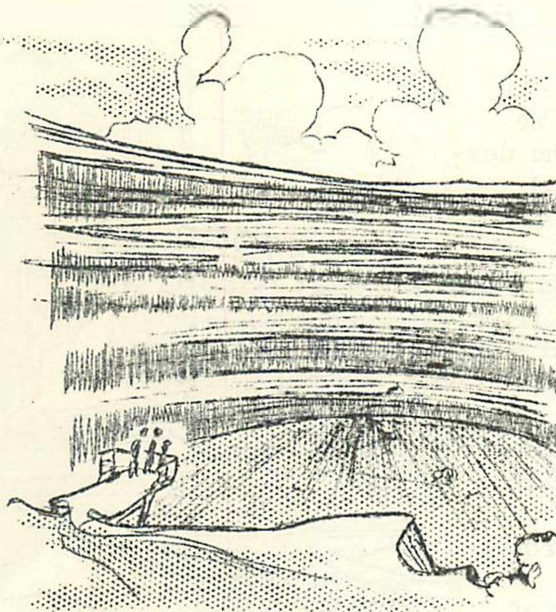
had its sign on. In Britain, neon signs tend to be smaller even in city centres and most shop neon is turned off when the business is closed. Here though, the brilliant neon gave the place a hued glow, on walls, shop fronts, and sidewalks, all down the main street was washed in varied coloured light.

We found a large brightly lit restaurant specialising in pancakes and stopped. I tried hotcakes, with syrup, with a couple of cups of coffee to wash it down, and stared at the highway patrol man at another table, clad in a leather fringed jerkin with a big silver star on it, and gunbelt and low slung revolver.

Out of Albuquerque we drove on through the night, it was much warmer than the night before, and Nick had to nurse the car a little when it showed signs of overheating, the needle on the gauge was never far away from the 'hot' side.

By six am on the Wednesday morning we'd entered Arizona, and were looking for somewhere to eat breakfast. This turned up at Holbrook just past the petrified forest. Holbrook was the place at which some years before a fan carcalcade including Nick and Taff man Ron Bennett had been held up at gun point by an irate motel owner. We were hungry, and stopped at the first cafe we saw. It was a mistake, the meal was greasy and we were overcharged. It was the first bad meal I'd had on my journey. We filled up with gas at a nearby filling station and according to Nick were overcharged again. As we drove off through the place Nick remarked that it appeared they were still holding up fans in Holbrook. To take his mind off the price he'd had to pay for the gas Nick began a long and involved pun all about monkeys and Darwin, which took us a good few miles along the highway before he delivered the punch line. Mike had gone to sleep half way through and though I laughed politely I was too sleepy to get the whole effect of it.

At seven thirty am the sun was up, and I could see that the surrounding scenery had changed again during the night, from the desert of New Mexico to rather rockier ground, though still broken up by small gulches and outcrops of soft stone through which the wind had blown wierd intricate holes and channels. Soon, a very small, for Arizona, sign came up pointing to the Meteor Crater and we drove off the highway on to a smaller road across country towards a line of low hills a mile or so off. As we got nearer we realised that the hills were in fact the wall of the Crater. We drove into the carpark, paid our dollar and walked through a small museum out along

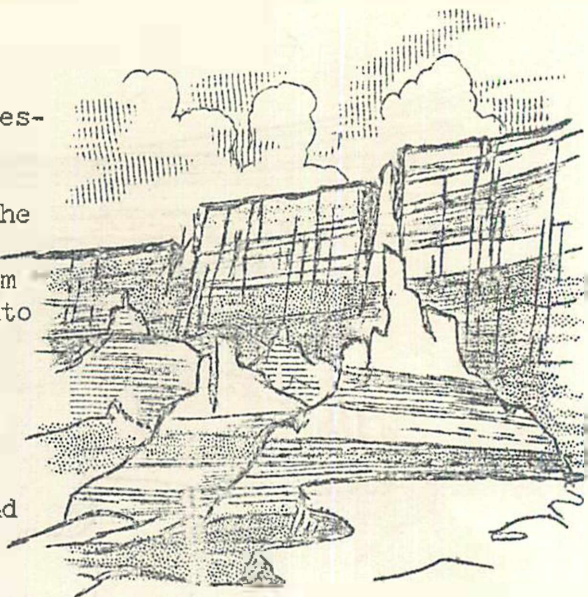


a pathway, to come to an observation platform built out over the edge of the Crater. Before arriving, I'd made a crack about how maybe the Arizonans had dug the thing just as an added tourist attraction to the Grand Canyon, but looking out across the Crater we were all suitably impressed. We were looking at a great circular depression, the far wall blending away and around the floor of the Crater, in a series of eye unfocussing strata lines of blue and white deepening in colour into purple and then ochre as the wall reached the bottom. We stood and gazed, blinking at the effect on our eyes then wandered back up to

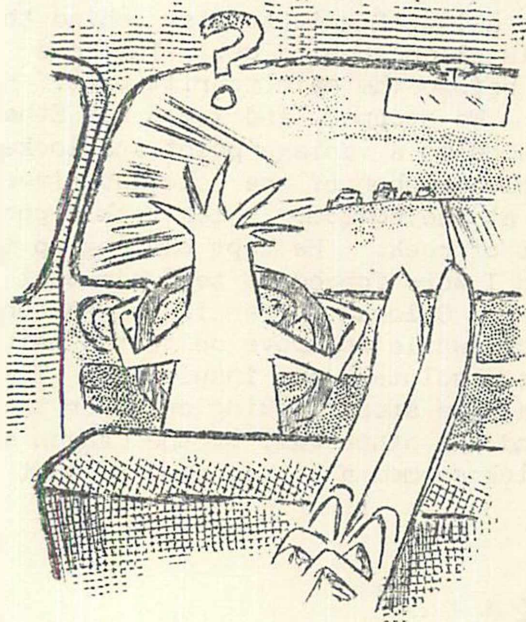
the museum to look at the bits of meteorite and maps and charts of the various diggings over the years, where people had tried to find the path and final end of the meteor. One small piece of meteorite about the size of a football had a projection sticking up from it, and with nobody looking we tried to lift it. It was too heavy for Mike or myself by Nick got it a few inches off its stand. At eight oclock we went back to the car and drove back to the highway to head for the Grand Canyon.

Just before Flagstaff we turned off of route 66 and headed for the Canyon. The road we went on to had just been freshly laid with gravel, travelling behind a small truck our windscreen was in danger of being shattered by the amount of gravel chips being thrown up at it by the wheels of the truck. Nick decided to pull out and pass, and I agreed, saying it would take a lot of grit to stay behind the truck. Mike Domina groaned in his sleep, behind us. The road brought us out to the Canyon well before the main tourist part. Here, the opposite wall was quite near. We stopped, and I got out Ethel Lindsay's camera. We climbed out on to a vantage point and looked down into the gorge at the small blue ribbon of the Colorado river winding its way between the walls at the bottom. Nick took a photograph of me, standing on an outjut of rock. He kept backing up to get all the view in until Mike and I were forced to tell him that I might be losing Ethel's camera in the Colorado river if he went one more step. After climbing around a while we drove on to the main part of the Canyon. The view was absolutely awe inspiring. The early morning was warm and clear and we stood looking out over the eye stunning scenery between us and the other wall of the Canyon miles across from us. Even Mike and Nick seemed a little awed by what

their country could show them. We looked down into the Canyon at the descending ridges of jagged hills and bluffs falling away to the floor and the now tiny ribbon of the river. The colours were beautiful: not bright or sharp, but a blending of tones from yellow through ochre, red, indigo into purple. Mixed up to give an almost unearthly effect. A huge rocky purple bluff would be framed against a background of yellow canyon wall. Red sandstone lifted up against blue rock with yellow streaked ground falling away from it, and down through it all small dark tracks of mule trails, winding and wending their way towards the river. A small red 'plane dipped down and flew along below the opposite rim, becoming a moving black dot against the far wall. We took photographs, accosting a passing kindly stranger to take a snap of us standing against the rail of the lookoutpoint, then with a last look, went back to the car.



The day, and the car, was hotting up again, the noise from the pump and muffler caused heads to swing round from looking at the view to stare at our departure. Nick was beginning to feel the strain of constant driving, and Mike had slid back into sleep again. When we reached route 66 I suggested I take over the driving again and give Nick a rest. We changed over and I got into the driving seat.



What followed was just plain foolishness on my part, but we were tired and everything seemed so natural that I just wasn't thinking. I started the car up, engaged the gears, noted a car up from the side road behind us, and to pull away before it arrived, drove out on to the opposite side of the road and started down it. I'd just began to think it was damned funny all these cars coming at us when Nick and Mike screamed into my ear that I was on the wrong side of the road. For one moment of blankness everything seemed to stop, then I was wrenching at the suddenly unfamiliar gears and trying to steer a path down the middle of the highway between the cars going both ways.

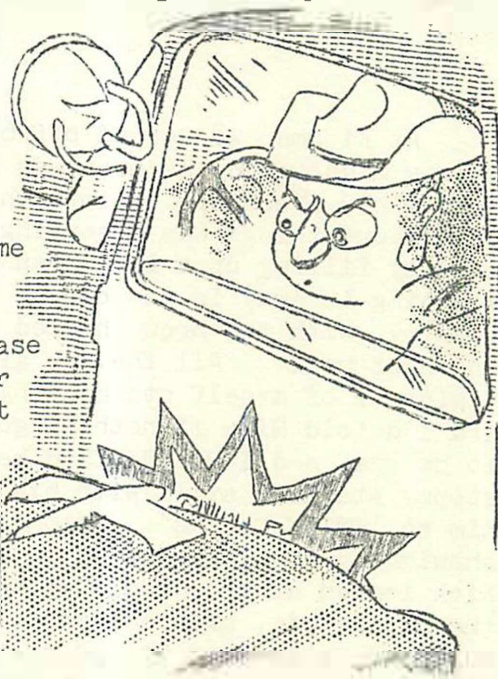
We were lucky and I managed to drift over and into the right side of the road. On the inside lane I drove on and entered Flagstaff where Nick found his voice sufficiently enough to ask in a slight quaver if we could stop and get something that would stop him shaking. Mike said that I didn't seem all that worried, but I guess it was just a spontaneous demonstration of the stiff British upper lip ... the bottom one was trembling enough, though.

I pulled across the road and round behind a filling station next to a small restaurant. We got out and went in and had another lousy meal. Arizona seemed to have a penchant for dishing up lousy meals as well as scenic wonders. We ate our meal and determined to get out of the place, but events hadn't finished with us yet. Mike said he felt awake enough to drive. We got in, he started up and drove around the filling station out into the roadway into the side of a passing State Sheriff's car, almost obliterating the large painted star on the door panel, but stopping a matter of inches away from it.

We sat looking out of the windscreen at the amazed face of a very irate looking Sheriff, who was beginning to realise he'd almost ended up as the hood ornament for a very battered out of state Ford. With fearsome gestures he waved us back into the filling station. We crept round and back with Nick telling Mike to ease the motor so the Sheriff didn't hear the muffler noise. We parked and sat awaiting our fate. It approached in a leather jacket, big white stetson, and gunbelt. Mike wound down the window and the face of the Sheriff peered in at us.

"Do you do that often?" he asked Mike.

"Duh, duuh." said Mike. Finally he let us go. As Nick said later, Arizona wants tourists, and booking them isn't the right way to go about it. We sat still until he drove away, then started up the anvil chorus of muffler and pump, crept out on to the highway and snuck off towards Nevada.

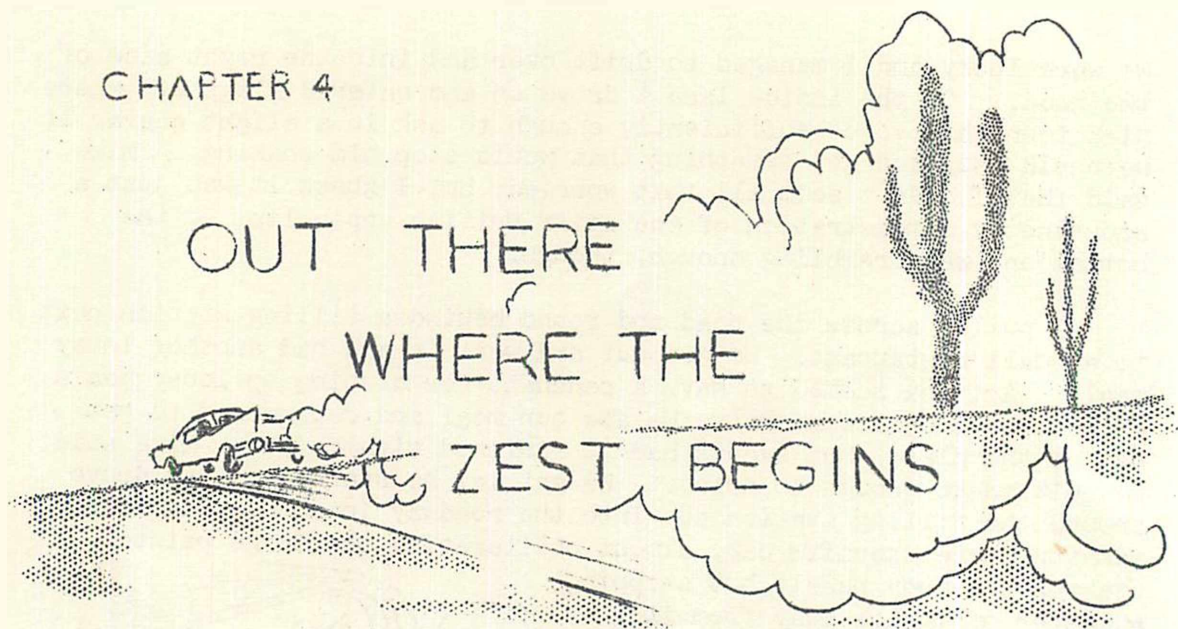


CHAPTER 4

OUT THERE

WHERE THE

ZEST BEGINS



At Kingman we turned off 66 on to route 93 for the Nevada border. It was midday and the heat was terrific. The car's temperature gauge needle had crept way up into the danger zone. Even Nick's amazing calm about things was deserting him a little. I had noticed him quietly filling up a large can with water at our last gas stop, and stashing it away in the car. We were driving through rocky barren country, with the brown humped hills in the distance shimmering in the heat haze. All the way along I'd been saying I'd like to have a picture of myself standing by some cacti, we hadn't seen any so far and I'd told Mike if nothing good came along he'd just have to pretend to be one, and I would stand beside him. He'd been practising at stops, standing still with his arms bent up at angles, I'd been telling him to 'THINK Cactus'. Along the highway clumps of cacti began showing up and I prevailed on Nick to stop so that I could get a photo. Nick looked at the needle of the temperature gauge stuck way over on the danger pin, grinned and stopped. Clouds of steam and ochre coloured water shot up out of the hood drenching the front of the car. We got out and found that a bypass overflow pipe had come loose, the colour of the water was no doubt due to the various cans of 'fixit' we'd been pouring in to the rad'. It had stained all the front of the car, blending with the black paint, rust, and dust to form a wierd paint job. Whilst Nick was waiting for the rad' to cool down so that he could unscrew the cap and pour his can of water in, Mike and I walked down the road, found a cactus and took pictures.

Nick finally got the cap off and his water in, we closed the hood, and with the temperature gauge reading 'HELP' drove on. It seemed that whilst we kept the car moving at speed the airflow helped cool the engine, for the needle eventually crept down off the pin a little. With it flickering a few hairsbreadths below boiling point

we began threading our way up through the mountains that led to the Boulder Dam. All the windows were wound down and ourselves and the car were gasping in the airless heat. We hit the top and started down, with a magnificent view of the Eldorado mountains in front of us. The climb up seemed to have been the last straw for the muffler. It now sounded as if the exhaust gases were going straight through under the car pausing only to explode in what was once a proud ten year guaranteed silencer. By four oclock that Wednesday afternoon we were down out of the mountains and pulling round a long cliffside curve, rolled out on to the top of the dam. We stopped and got out. Nick said he'd go and see if we could get on one of the official tours of the dam, Mike and I leaned over the side looked down and took some photographs.

Turning to Mike to point out some feature I saw him running across the dam holding the seat of his pants. I caught up with him and found him muttering something about his pants splitting. I tried to get a photo for posteriorities sake but he vanished in the direction of a restroom clutching his spare pair of trousers in one hand and the split in the other. Nick turned up to say a tour was just starting, we joined the line with Mike returning clad in new pants and big smile. Nick informed us that the temperature stood at that moment at 110 , and it felt like it. The tour started, we went into a small lift going down. It was as cool as Christmas inside the dam. You could feel your body luxuriating in the airconditioning. Beautiful. Down at the bottom of the dam a friendly guide took us all round, showing the great turbines: which as Nick pointed out looked very much like a Paul illustration. Then through the tunnels and workshops. Nick remarked that there were Chinese workers buried in the concrete of the dam, they had fallen in and died during its construction. We got to the end of the main tunnel and the guide gave a short history of the dam ending by saying that we might have heard the tales that there were Chinese labourors buried in the dam, this was untrue, he said. Nick and I looked at each other, we knew better. Going back to the lift I asked Mike if he'd happened to notice a small yellow hand sticking out of the wall of one of the side tunnels. "If there was," said Nick "it must have just been a clever plastic imitation". The tour over we went topside into the heat once more. Climbed into the car, and due to the fact we could only drive slowly across the top of the dam, drove off sounding like the whole Ford works going full blast.

We climbed up away from the dam, through Boulder City, a green looking oasis of a township in such barren desolate scenery. By seven oclock we were on the outskirts of Las Vegas. Nick had a letter from Dwain Kaiser, a young fan who lived in town, inviting us to stop in for a meal, chat and clean up. All of which, in the unshaven, grubby, by now dehydrated state we were in, sounded like

heave' itself. The directions to his house seemed a trifle complicated, so Nick found a phone box at the start of the Neon strip and called Dwain's number. Mike and I slouched beside the car and looked at Nick in the phone box. He'd got through, but whatever else was happening it was all pretty complicated. He kept nodding and waving his arms about, opening the door of the booth frequently to point out towards the horizon and a large mountain that rose above the town. After about fifteen or twenty minutes he put the phone down and came out mumbling away to himself. I cocked an eyebrow in query, but he said not to ask him how to get there. He had all the directions firmly fixed in his mind and to explain would only complicate things. It was now

around eight, we drove down through the main strip with the neon signs growing bigger and brighter the nearer we got to the centre of the town. We drove past the Golden Nugget and the rest of the big gambling palaces promising ourselves that we'd come back in and visit after a meal and cleanup at Dwain's. We hit the end of the strip and went round a circular roundabout to turn off right. The roundabout had logs embedded in the roadway, to stop cars speeding round. We bucked over these with the muffler bellowing and banging and the pump giving agonising falsetto screams. As we pulled out to go right I noticed that a police car had been following us around, filled with open-mouthed police peering out trying to see just what was in front of them. A little later up the road we were stopped by traffic lights at an intersection and gained the company of a hotrod with a couple of youths in it. Stationary at the lights with our muffler throbbing away like a fullblown Masserati, it was obvious to the hotrod that we were a souped up camouflaged drag job. The lights turned green and we both shot away, the hotrod at about twenty times our speed. But I think our starting noises won out from the startled looks on the faces of the hotrod youths as they passed us.

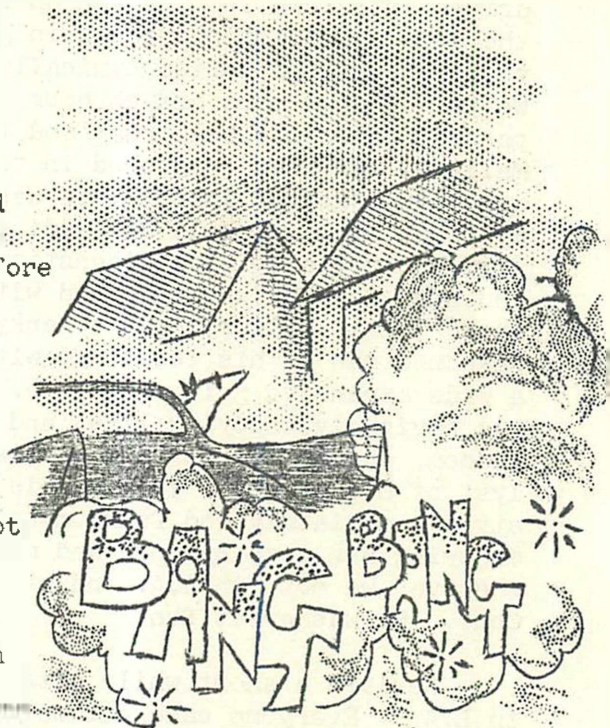


We went on, turning left and right at crossroads according to the instructions locked in the mind of Nick Falasca. The lights of Las Vegas gradually petered out behind us and we drove on faced only with the night. By now we were out in the desert, seeing in the light of our lamps cacti and jackrabbits, but no sign of houses. After about quarter of an hour of this Nick asked if I

could see any lights. "No." I said. "I think we're lost," he said. "Yes" I said. From the amount of bumps we were going over it felt that we were off the road and running free on the desert. In front of us behind a line of hills, was a glow in the sky, but we guessed that they must be the lights of Los Angeles and turned round. We bumped back into the outskirts of Las Vegas and roamed up and down various roads until even the indefatigable Falasca began to think about going back into the main part of town and getting a beer. As we turned down a small side road to head back into the town centre some people came out of a house to look at us ... the noise, of course. At the same time we noticed the number of the house was the same as the one we were looking for, checked and found we were indeed in the right road so pulled over and up before the group of people grinning and banging in relief, only an hour or so after we'd phoned up from a mile away that we were on our way.

Dwain Kaiser was a big pleasant boy, he and the group of young fans with him seemed pleased to see us, but not half as pleased as we were to see them. We all trooped into the house to collapse on divans whilst his mother: a cheerful smiling woman dispensed the long awaited cool drinks. Dwain's father had been

looking rather doubtfully at us, travel-stained as we were with bristly beards and wild glazed looks in our eyes. We probably looked slightly different to the picture of worldly intelligent science fiction readers he'd been given by Dwain, but we explained how long we'd been on the road and he showed us where we could shower and shave and change into some fresh clothes. A huge meal was waiting for us when we'd freshened up. Both Dwain's mother and father were hospitality itself, especially to three grubby strangers, even if they were supposed to be connected in some way with their son's hobby. The meal over we went into the main room to sit around talking to Dwain and the other youngsters. It appeared that only Dwain himself was active in Science Fandom, the others were mainly comic book fans. They showed us their comic book fanzines, and talked airily of issues running out at a hundred dollars. Discussing the art in one of the 'zines I, in my innocence had to say truthfully that the drawings were ghastly, pointing out various examples of bad artwork. "I did them" said one of the youngsters. I gulped and had to launch into a rather discursive talk on art, perspectives, composition, balance, and such. Ending with, "Well as you can see



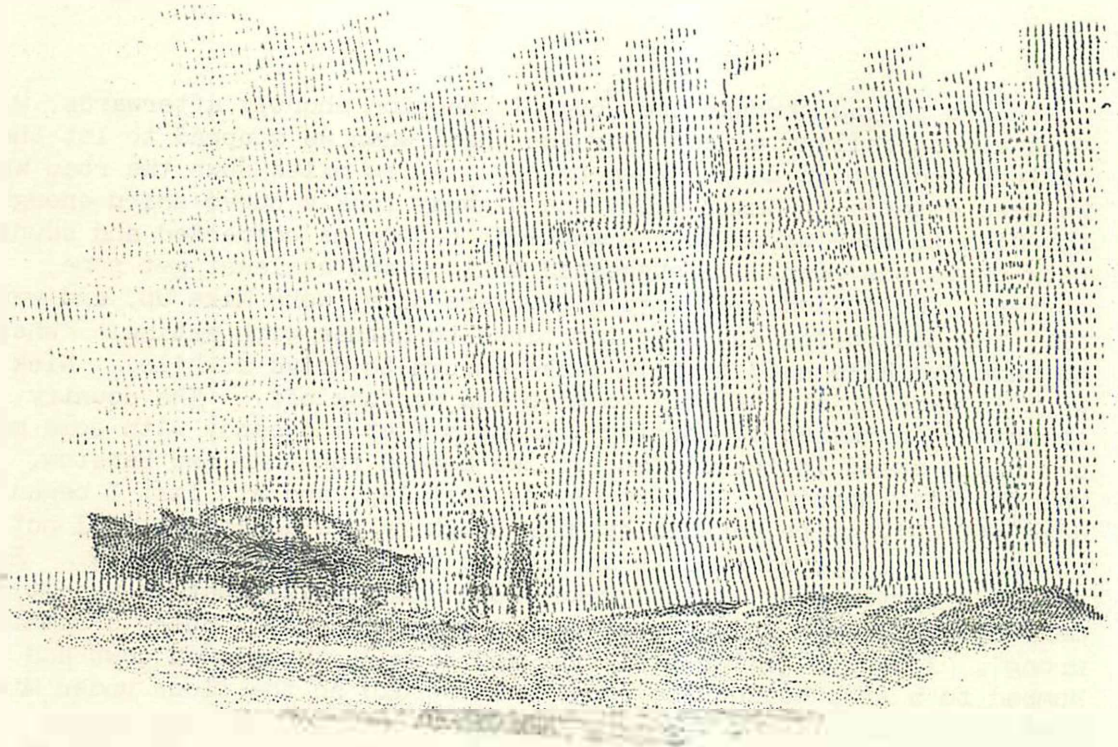
I've explained it as would an art teacher." It seemed to mollify them and we escaped into conversation on other topics. Dwain's father and mother went off to bed after saying we would be welcome to stay the night, but we had already made up our minds to go back in to Las Vegas for a look see and then drive through the rest of the night, to cross the desert and reach California before the heat of the day. The phone had rung whilst we were talking. It was Bill Mallardi and Bill Bowers, of Doublebill fanzine fame. They had just driven into town from Denver on their way across country to attend the con. We listened to Dwain giving them instructions how to get to his house and smiled cynically.

We talked some more and an hour passed before the bell rang and the Mallardi car crew staggered in to say they'd gotten lost. This was my first sight of Bill Mallardi and Bill Bowers, also Alex Eisenstien and Durk Pearson who they had with them. Bill Mallardi was a lanky rawboned man in his twenties, with a wide expansive grin and voice. He was obviously enjoying life, and fandom, and proved to be the catalyst of his group. I liked his style immediately and found myself enjoying his company more and more whenever we met, in L.A. and at the Con. He was great fun.



We left a short while after they arrived, with promises to meet up in L.A. Everyone came out to see and hear the fearsome Falasca Ford roar off. We started up and drove off slowly to give them the full benefit of its performance, and were pleased albeit a trifle self-consciously, at the looks on their faces as we went off. Back in the centre of Las Vegas we parked the car in a side street and wandered on to the strip. It was around one oclock in the morning but the mass of neon made the street as bright as day. We walked along into the Golden Nugget, and stood looking at the one arm bandits playing their people, looked around the faro tables, then went up to the long bar for a beer. The effects of the big meal we'd had, and general tiredness seemed to be counteracting the freshness we'd felt after cleaning up. After wandering around some more clubs we decided to call it a day, found the car, got in, and drove out of town. I think we were in some sort of daze from travelling and the heat of the past couple of days. Nick was drooping at the wheel and Mike fast asleep in the back. We made a few miles up the highway then Nick said he'd have to stop and see how he felt after an hours sleep. We pulled over to the side and parked. Within seconds he was asleep. I'd felt tired too, but with the two drivers out for the count and the night almost halfway over I began worrying about the car getting

across the desert before the day heat, and of it getting to Los Angeles on the Thursday in time for the LASFS meeting. These thoughts drove sleep away. I sat staring out into the darkness smoking cigarette after cigarette. By four in the morning I guessed Nick had enough sleep and callously jabbed him in the ribs a couple of times without saying anything, he woke up and sleepily said he'd have another try. We drove off, but he was still swaying over the wheel, so I stopped him forced Mike awake and made him drive. He lasted twenty miles before I stopped him and woke Nick up again. We bundled the sleeping Domina into the back and got off again. As first light was tinting the sky behind us we reached the Californian border and stopped. I got out with Nick and stood there looking into California. I didn't say much, as we drove on, just lit a cigarette and thought about Taff, and all the people who had made this trip and moment possible for me, and stared out of the windscreen at the dark ribbon of road stretching in front of us, reaching out across the hills in the distances, to the Pacific.

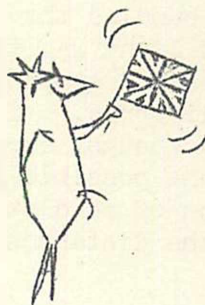


CHAPTER 5

ATOM

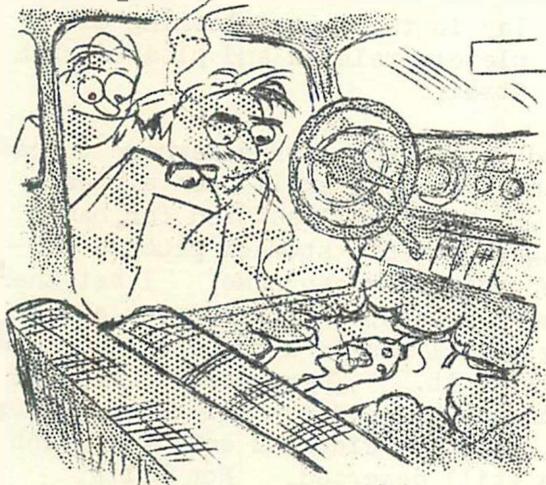
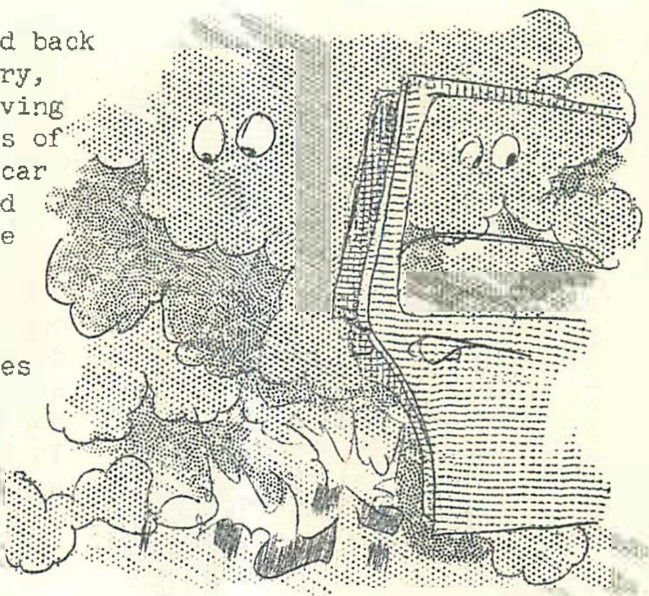
MEE TS THE

LASFS



We passed through the 'bug' inspection shortly afterwards, with Nick almost falling asleep over the wheel when we stopped to let the officer look in at us and wave us on. A few miles down the road when we were entering a small town, the highway took a curve sharp enough for Nick to take us on to the shoulder before he corrected and swung back on to the road. I suggested we stop and at least get some coffee. We pulled over into a truckers cafe, woke Mike up, and went in. We had coffee but felt too tired to bother with eating. When we came out Mike said he felt awake enough to drive a while. Nick went in back under the skis to sleep and we took off. The country around us in the early morning light was flat and sandy with some more low hills ahead in the distance. We headed for them and Barstow. It was Thursday morning, we were on the last lap, and at last I began to doze off only to be wakened by Mike coughing and asking me if I noticed anything. I opened my eyes and looked at him across the skis. He seemed a little hazy, then I woke enough to realise that it wasn't just me feeling sleepy, he was wreathed in smoke. "Well, there's something wrong", I said, "better pull over and stop." We slowed down and bumped to a stop beside the road. As we did so the floor under Mike's feet burst into flames. We opened the doors, got out and looked back in. The rubber flooring was burning merrily, and for all we know the whole car underneath it. I leaned in and shook Nick. "Nick," I said "Wake up, your car's on FIRE!" He came bolt upright, flung

himself for the door, bounced back off the skis, made another try, got out, ran round to the driving side and began pulling pieces of burning flooring out of the car flinging them on the road and stamping on them. The smoke was thick and black and the smell of burning rubber was horrible. Mike helped Nick jump up and down on the pieces of flaming rubber and I went and got the can of water in case it would help. With most of the front flooring torn away and stamped out, the fire seemed out. The smoke cleared and the three of us gazed in. We could see right through the bottom of the car



past burnt flooring and blackened metal surrounding a large hole, under which lay the remains of the muffler, and below that, the ground. Mike and I began laughing, finally Nick grinned, and joined in. We stood around the open door of the car, laughing and feeling relieved that things weren't as bad as they had seemed. It was a lovely morning. The air felt sharp and clean. We were in California and we felt fine.

"On," said Nick, "through fire and flood ..." We piled in, Nick with his feet straddling the hole, pulled the starter, the Ford roared into life and we were away. We rolled through Barstow in fine style, heading for San Bernadino, through it into Californian hills, rounded, and showing signs of brush fires. By eleven we were on the outskirts of Los Angeles in fairly heavy traffic. We got on to the Santa Monica boulevard and headed along it looking for Greenfield Ave. Just before Midday we bumped and banged across some railroad tracks into a quiet treelined road, to pull up before a low green coloured one storey house. We had made it. Nick and I solemnly shook hands and out we all got. We crossed the stretch of Grass in front of the house, skirted the water spray guarding the front door and knocked. The place was deserted. We gazed



through the french windowed door into the cool gloom inside. Saw shelves upon shelves of books, comfortable looking armchairs and divans, but no fans.

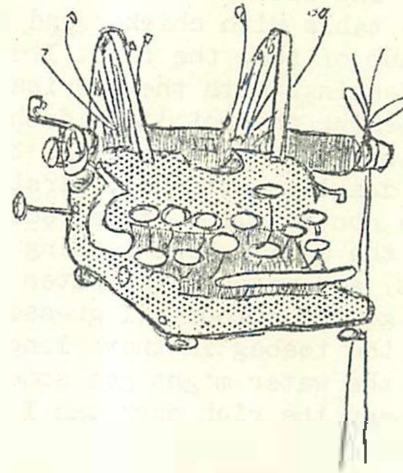
We stood in front of the door looking at each other. For no other reason then it might be open I tried the door handle. The door opened. We went in. On a table lay a note addressed to Ron Ellik and signed by Al Lewis. It informed Ron that he, Al, had gone off with a mermaid. I thought; "well, by cracky, they said about these L. A. fen .."

We went back out and dragged in our cases from the Ford, which lay in the gutter looking completely relaxed and pleased with itself.

After looking round, we headed out looking for somewhere to eat. This was found a block away on the main road, a small open air cafe called, by Heavens, 'The Snakorama'. Mike and I settled for ham-burgers, but Nick with a fine disregard for his stomach plumped for some red gooey stuff with a weird sounding Mexican name. "I sat there feeling just fine. The air, the warm breeze, the palm trees along the road. The feeling and knowing that I was in a temperate climate. A sense of "this is just the way I like it." There were some local papers on the tables. I looked through one and saw all the fish off the coast were dying from some red blight. Finished eating we went back to Greenfield Avenue. It was still deserted. Ron Ellik, ghod knows where, and Al Lewis off gallivanting with a mermaid. We lay around in the armchairs wondering if we had the energy to shower. The door opened a stocky figure clad in vivid Hawaiian shirt, shorts, and crewcut, entered. It was Al Lewis sans mermaid.

We told Al who we were. He told us that he'd been off taking a papier-mache mermaid; symbol of the Pacificon 11, to store somewhere, so I could use the bed at the Pelz's. I was sort of relieved that Al's love life hadn't been cut short by the dreaded red blight. Al was a calm, softly spoken man. Quiet, but worth listening to when he talked, and an interesting person to be with. He showed us the shower, we dragged some fresh clothes out of the cases and cleaned up. By the time we were looking more presentable Bruce and Dian Pelz

and Don Simpson had arrived. Bruce, with Ron and Al, had been one of the organisers of my stay in California. I was to stay with him and Dian whilst in Los Angeles. Bruce was a large swashbuckling figure, with black beard and thick head of hair, in looks he reminded me very much of Orsen Wells. Dian was a slim goodlooking girl, who was extremely photogenic. She had a pleasant air and relaxed manner of speaking. In fact, both Dian and Bruce had this calm easy relaxed way with them. As I got to know Bruce I saw that he held very definite opinions, was firm in his convictions, but didn't let things get to or bother him. In the next two weeks, I found myself enjoying being with them, because of this easy, no bother no fuss, air they carried along with them, apart from the fact that they were also good company and the best of hosts.



John Trimble turned up, on his way back to work from lunch. He told us that Bjo was waiting to see us all, that he'd see us again when he came home from work, and left. We all went out to pile into Al's Ford Econoline bus, with myself sitting up front next to Al who pointed out the various L.A. sights to me as we drove along, headed for the Trimble house. Belgrave Ave. lay in a quiet clean looking suburb of Los Angeles, we got out in front of a bungalow type house and were met by a cheerful smiling Bjo Trimble. Bjo's baby had been due for almost a week, and she said that if it didn't arrive soon she was frightened the doctors might start blasting. We all sat around and chatted, and Bjo showed some artshow paintings that had arrived in for the Con. Don Simpson found an ancient typewriter John had picked up from somewhere. I told Bjo that this was the same model as the dreaded Shaw/Berry typer that Bob Shaw had sold to John Berry when he entered fandom, and pointed out that there was a vital part missing on the Trimble machine. The two cans of beans John had to tie onto the carriage mechanism to enable it to function. We were discussing whether two tins of Californian peaches would be the equivalent to two tins of British baked beans, as John arrived in from work. Bruce had told me that



we were to go on to Knott's Berry Farm to sightsee and then eat.

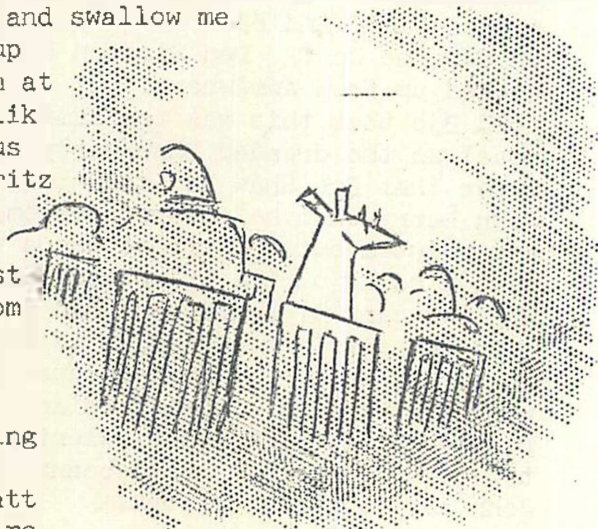
Knott's Berry Farm is a famous tourist place, combining a reconstruction of an early western mining town and large restaurant where the celebrated Chicken dinners and Knott's Berry Boysenberry Pies were to be had. We roamed around looking in all the shops, stores, stables and saloons. Took a trip by mine train, and ended up round a large table with chicken and pie being served. Here I thought I'd try a cup of tea, the first I'd ordered in the States. I had my first dealings with the American teabag and goofed by picking up the bag, opening the pot lid and throwing the bag into the water, then being told by the rest of the table that I should have unreeled the little dragline attached, first. I apologised for being brought up in a non dragline teabag society.

During the meal I kept looking into the pot, and watched the water turn a pale golden colour. I guessed if I kept the teabag in there long enough the water might get somewhere near the rich dark tan I remembered tea looked like, but we couldn't wait that long, so I drank



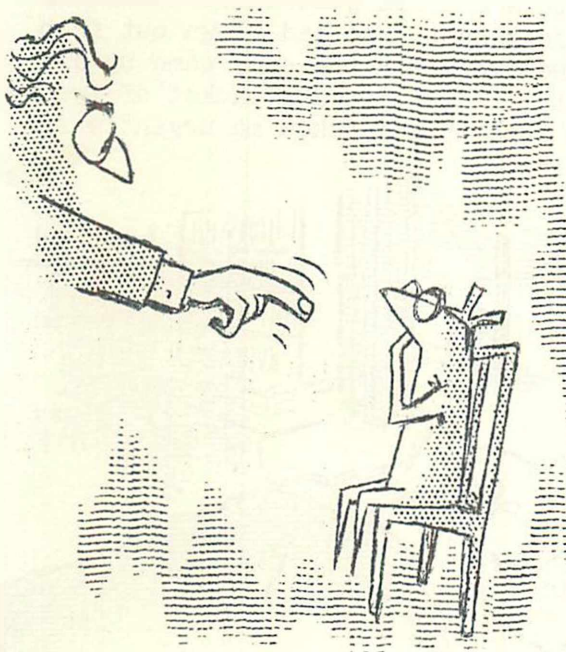
it whilst it was still in the pale yellow stage. From Knott's the next port of call was the LASFS meeting. It was dark by the time we drove up to stop outside the entrance of a large building. We got out and I walked up to the entrance to meet Ron Ellik waiting for us. "Hi, Ron" I said, extending my hand. He took it, and sort of judo threw me through the entrance, into the hall. Blinded a little by the light I stood just inside the door peering about. There seemed about a million people in the hall, all turned facing the door and clapping their hands. I faced the mass of faces not knowing whether to bow, wave, unfurl a large Union Jack I carried wrapped round my body, or just wish the floor would open and swallow me.

The rest of the Knott's Berry group came in and we managed to sit down at the rear of the meeting. Ron Ellik sat beside me pointing out various members and visitors of LASFS. Fritz Leiber, Len Moffatt, Rick Sneary, Jock Root, Leland Sapiro, Paul Turner, Bill Blackbeard, and a host of other names, familiar to me from fanzines and fandom. I smiled and nodded, and people smiled and nodded back. We had entered whilst some LASFS business was being discussed, I sat there whispering hellos to Rick Neary and Len Moffatt and people around me. Leland Sapiro



who was sitting a seat away from me passed a note to me asking urgently for illustrations for his magazine Inside. I wrote a little note on the back of his that I didn't have any drawing paper on me right at that moment but would see what I could do later, and sent it back to him. He sent one back saying thank you.

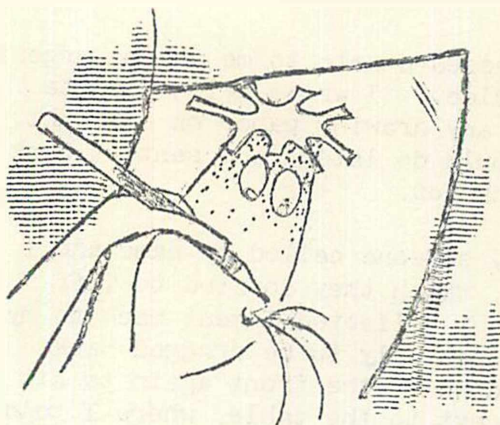
Up front, at the directors table, someone called my name and I went up to collect the LASFS pun fund, which they donated to Taff delegates. A little awed at the amount collected I went back to my



seat only to be dragged back down to the front again to sit next to the table, where I told people how happy I was to be there and started answering a few questions, like the one from Fritz Leiber, who asked "Who you?" I was saved from explaining I was just a harmless itinerant fan artist who happened to be passing by, by quick thinking of LASFS visitor Sam Moscovitz, who, as I tried to answer Fritz, stood up and in a steady monotone delivered a lecture on Science Fiction Editors, Co-editors, Co-co-editors, print hands and paper boys on the staff of early Amazing Stories. I crouched back in my chair trying to look as if I

were part of the furniture. By the time Sam had been stopped I had managed to escape to the back of the hall, where, as the meeting wound up, I stood and talked to people such as Sylvia Dees and Steve Tolliver, Jack Harness and other LA fans. Dave and Katya Hulan came over, and I mentioned that we'd just got in from dinner at Knott's. Katya told me that I was invited out to their home the next evening for chicken dinner, Southern style. The ordeal of the meeting and the entrance over, I was beginning to enjoy myself. Someone said that we were all going to Kals for coffee and I went out to Rick Sneary's car with Rick and Len Moffatt. I told Rick and Len that Ella and Ethel sent their love, little realising just how Rick and Len were to go about sending their love back.

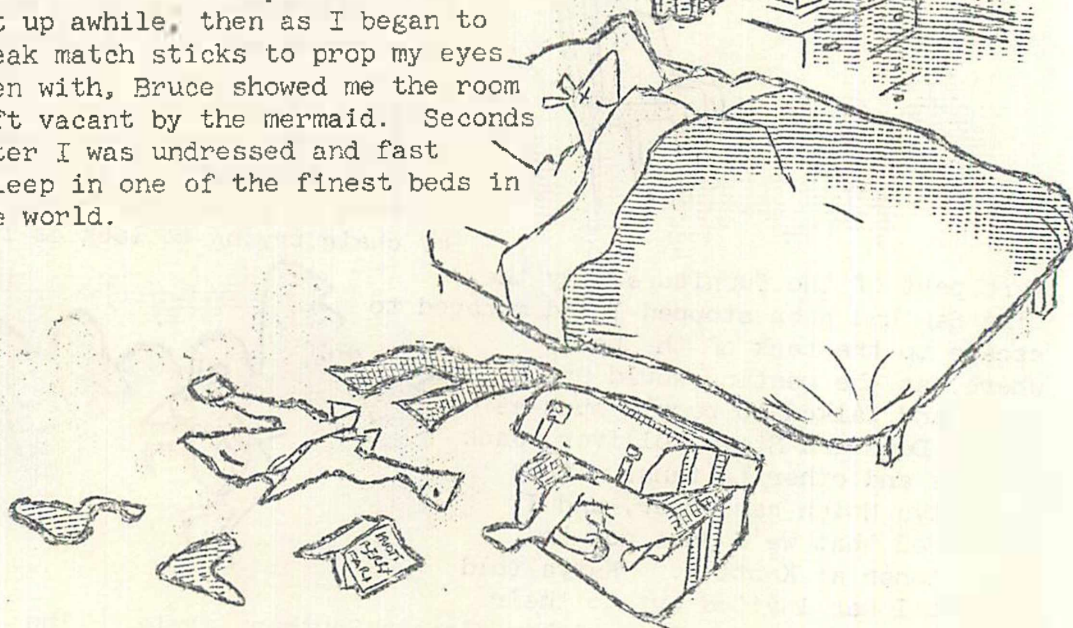
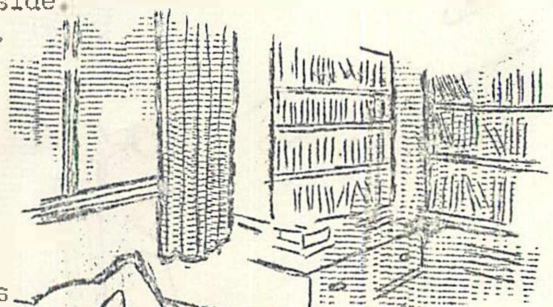




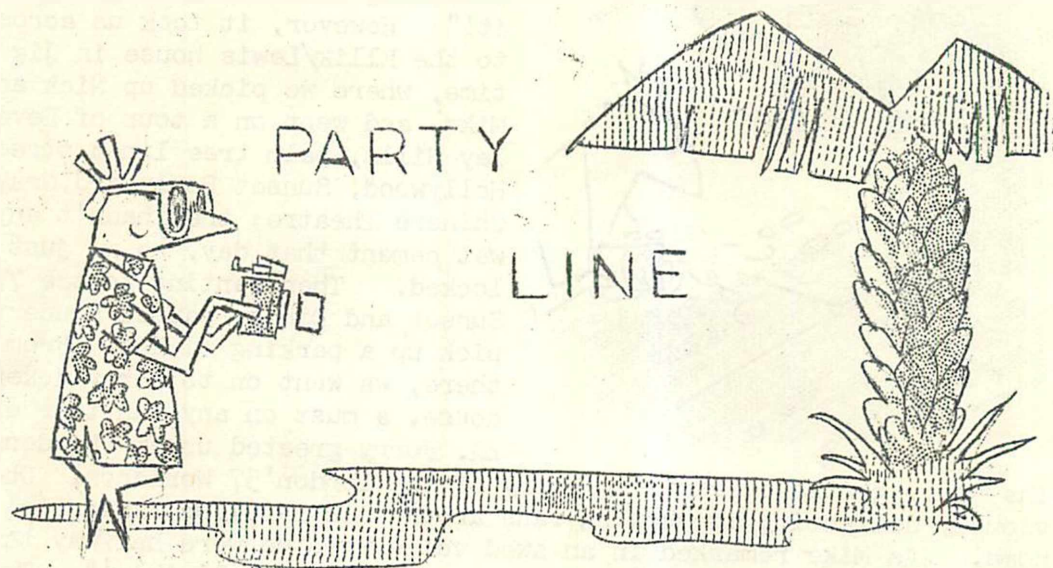
Kals was packed to the doors with fans. We managed to find seats at a back booth and coffee came up, so did fans, faces, names and "Hi's" and "Hellos". I remember having to draw an atom bomb complete with hairy navel on a paper napkin for someone, to prove that the hairs were an integral part of the creature and not just added adornment. Jock Root, who had flown out from New York for the con, came up and

sniffed at my Chesterfield cigarettes and produced a packet of twenty English 'Players'. Leland Sapiro came up and asked me urgently for illustrations for his magazine Inside.

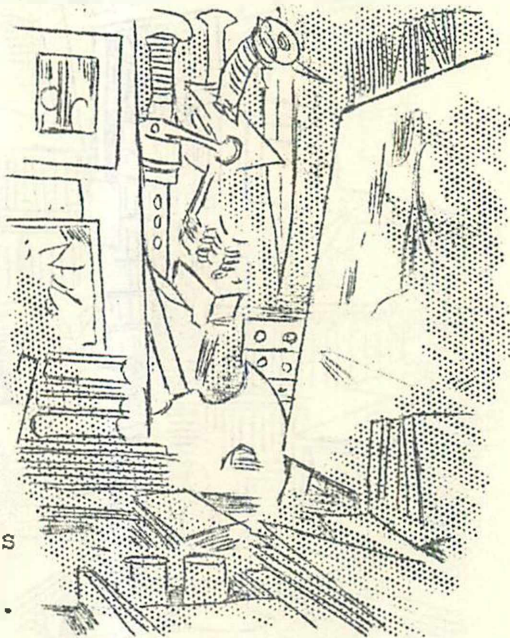
I promised to see what I could do. Finally things began to break up, so with Bruce, Dian, Al and the rest of the Econoline crew I went back to Greenfield Ave, picked up my case and went off with Bruce and Dian to their apartment. We sat up awhile, then as I began to break match sticks to prop my eyes open with, Bruce showed me the room left vacant by the mermaid. Seconds later I was undressed and fast asleep in one of the finest beds in the world.



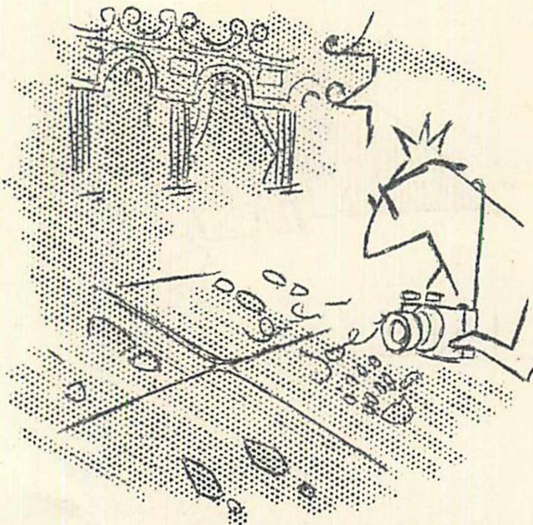
CHAPTER 6



On The Friday morning I got up at ten and banged around until I was sure I'd wakened Bruce and Dian, and went out to them. Bruce and Dian's apartment had that certain something that seems to mark all fan households. Books. Shelves of them, piles of them. Along one wall was Bruce's bound fanzine collection, whilst several filing cabinets held fanzines waiting to be bound. A large oil painting of Dian's stood on an easel, the walls carried paintings and sketches, Awards and plaques decorated other walls, and a small alcove bristled with swords, daggers and scabbards. Bruce's collection. Typewriters, fanzines, sketches, paint colours, brushes, a bow, and a large double bitted axe for Bruce's Pacificon fancy dress stood against the walls, or were stacked on tables. A lovely, fascinating room.

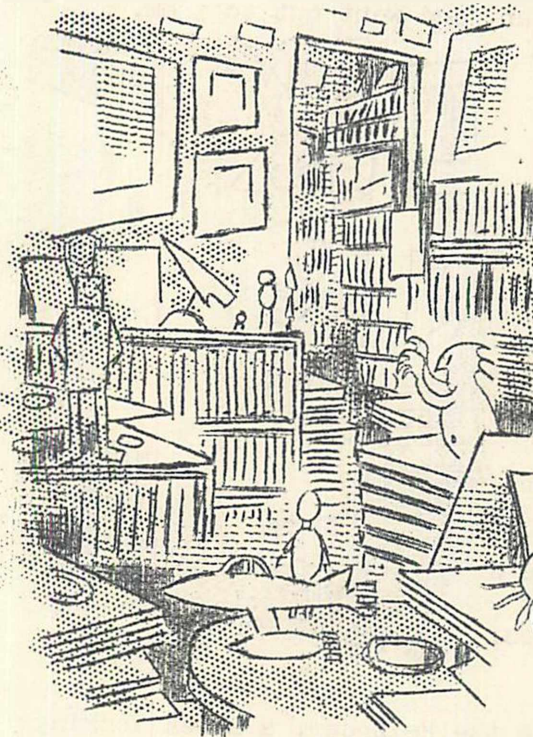


After breakfast we went out to the Pelz car, a sleek looking white job who's habits belied its looks. Bruce said he called it



the "Dammit". Because "Dammit, something else had gone wrong with it!" However, it took us across to the Ellick/Lewis house in jig time, where we picked up Nick and Mike, and went on a tour of Beverly Hills, palm tree lined streets, Hollywood, Sunset Boulevard, Graumans Chinese Theatre; they hadn't any wet cement that day, so we just looked. Then wanting to see 77 Sunset and Dinos, caused Bruce to pick up a parking ticket. From there, we went on to Forry Ackerman's house, a must on any fan tour of LA. Forry greeted us at the door.

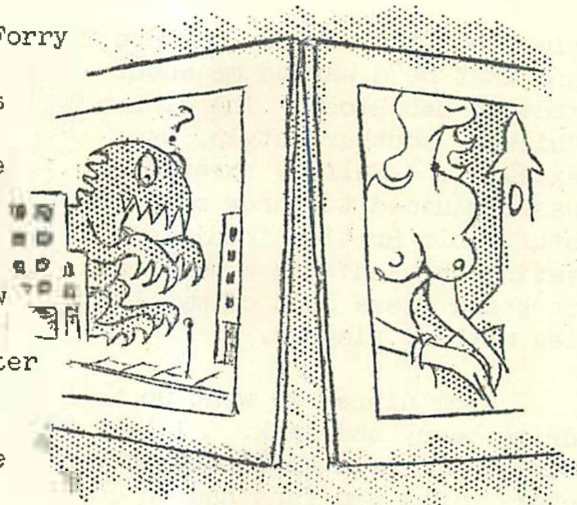
The same, gentle ever-smiling Forry of the London '57 Worldcon. Obviously delighting in showing fans around his fabulous fantastic home. As Mike remarked in an awed voice when we were halfway through the tour. "You mean they're asking us to believe all this!" There were books, books, and more books. Where there weren't books there



were magazines, or paintings or film posters, or plaques, and awards, or film stills, or robots. Robots that lit up, robots that flashed, dinky little robots, huge menacing robots, fun-loving robots, robots with smiles, robots with friends, robots in cars. And amongst the robots were monsters. Plastic monsters, rubber monsters, monsters that trousers fell down. And around them were more books, magazines, signed photographs of famous actors, masks, more paintings, original magazine covers, rare editions of books, whole issues of magazines, and the walls were covered, and the floors were covered, with books, magazines, models, paintings, film posters, movie stills through which wended small gangways that led you to steps down

past more books and up stairs past more magazines with the walls hidden by paintings, sketches, posters, photographs, in the wonderful world of Forrest J. Ackerman and science Fiction.

One thing that took me was that Forry had got a very competent Los Angeles artist to repaint covers from science fiction magazines, but had the artist alter from the originals to suit Forry's taste by here lowering an arm so a female breast came to view, or there, lifting a scale so to show a tentacle. In one case, where the original cover showed a monster from outer space crouched behind a building Forry had the artist take the building right out so he could see all the monster.

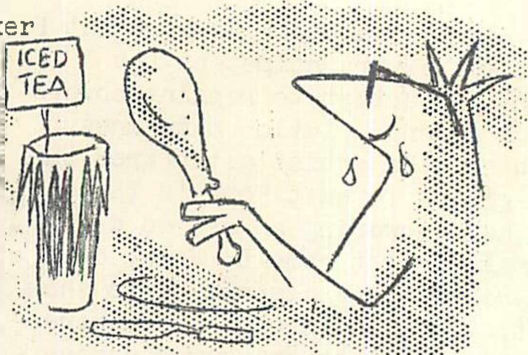


We went through the house with Forry pointing out various specialities. The face mask, the actual face mask from the Creature from the Black Lagoon. A small photograph of Bella Lugosi in short trousers, or maybe it was Forry himself. We left Forry shaving in his bathroom full of science fiction magazines and walls covered with movie horror posters to drop Nick and Mike off at Greenfield and go on out to the San Fernando Valley and the Hulans, in Van Nuys, for dinner.

Out at Van Nuys we drew up at a white fronted, stucco apartment building. Walked through a portico, almost into a Kidney shaped swim pool that lay in an open courtyard surrounded by a two storied apartment layout. Beyond the pool, framed by palm shrubs, was a long table set for dinner. We crossed to the group of people near the table to be welcomed by Dave and Katya, and introduced to Bob Bloch, Ed and Ann Cox, and Lois Lavender, daughter of Roy and Deedee 'Primrose'; to carry on a fine old taff report tradition inaugurated by Ethel Lindsay. With Lois was Ron Ellik. Forry having finished shaving was also there.

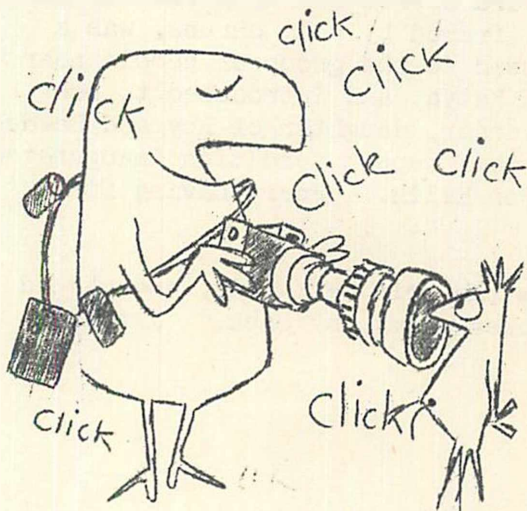
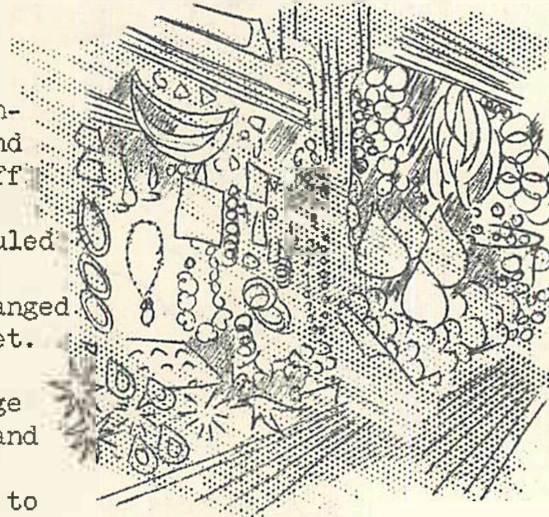
During dinner Bob asked me how the trip was going, and warned me about meeting a fellow called Tucker on my way back. I told

him that I'd already met Bob Tucker and that he'd warned me about meeting Bob Bloch. The dinner Chicken, southern style, was excellent. Halfway through I was persuaded to throw aside my stuffy old British traditions of eating chicken with a knife and fork and sieze hold of my chicken leg with my fingers.



From dinner we went up to Dave and Katya's apartment to sit, drink beer, and talk. I told Forry and Bob about the fabulous German con held earlier that year, where the hotel owner got drunk every night and fans had to complain about being kept awake. Around eleven we left, got back to Bruce and Dian's but stayed up till one or two oclock looking at artwork and cutting out and mounting illustrations.

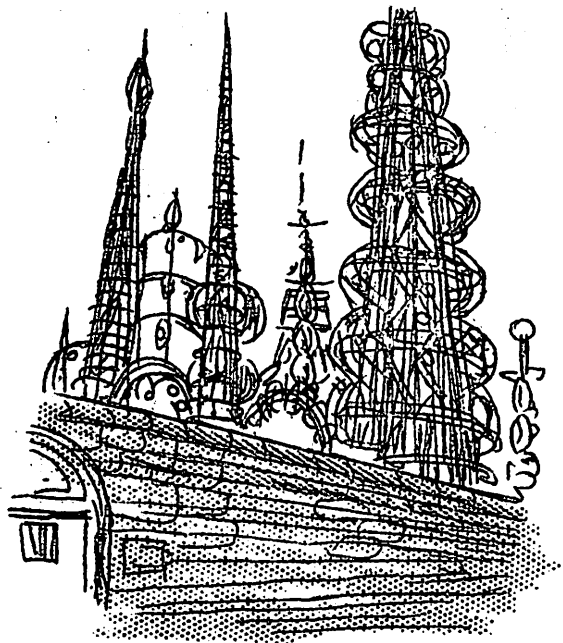
We were up by nine thirty, to breakfast and get over to Greenfield Avenue to pick up Nick and Mike and with Don Simpson go off in Al's econoline on further sightseeing. Today was scheduled for Farmers Market and Olvera Street. Bill Rotsler had arranged to meet us all at Farmers Market. A meeting I had been looking forward to. Farmers is a large open air market full of shops and stalls selling everything from weird exotic costume jewellery to weird exotic foodstuffs.



Bill was waiting for us and to walk through the market with Bill made everything that Taff was meant to be, for me, just so. Bill was bedecked by cameras and at Farmers and later Olvera street seemed to be photographing everything and anything that moved, as well as anything that stopped still too long. We had lunch at Farmers then went on, in the econline, Bill with us, to Olvera Street. On the way, Bill opened a box he'd brought across from his car and passed around photographs of nude studies he'd taken. Beautiful girls, beautifully photographed.

They went round the econoline crew, with heads only occasionally going up to look out at some scenic or civic attraction we were passing.

Olvera Street was very Mexican, and very touristy, but it was fun to wander up it looking at the stalls, the colours, the wealth of Mexican leather and wicker work, and to study the faces of the sellers, to the accompaniment of the Rolisler camera shutter clicking. From Olvera Street we went on to another fans must for an LA trur. Wattis Towers, a fantastic collection and construction of spires and



arches, built of concrete and decorated with coke, Seven Up, and any other sort of bottles the builder could find. Plus pieces of crockery, plate, or pattern he could lay hands on. All done as a tribute to the Emigrant Bill, or his own wankiness.

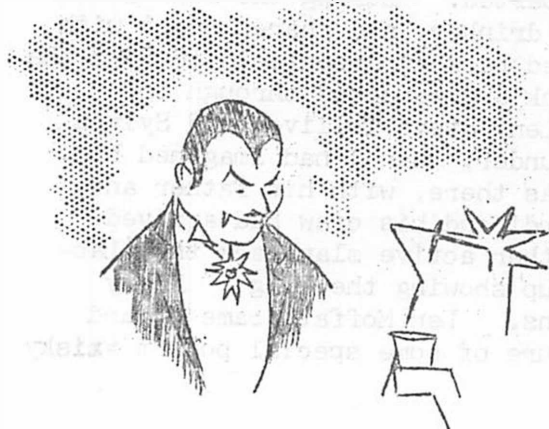
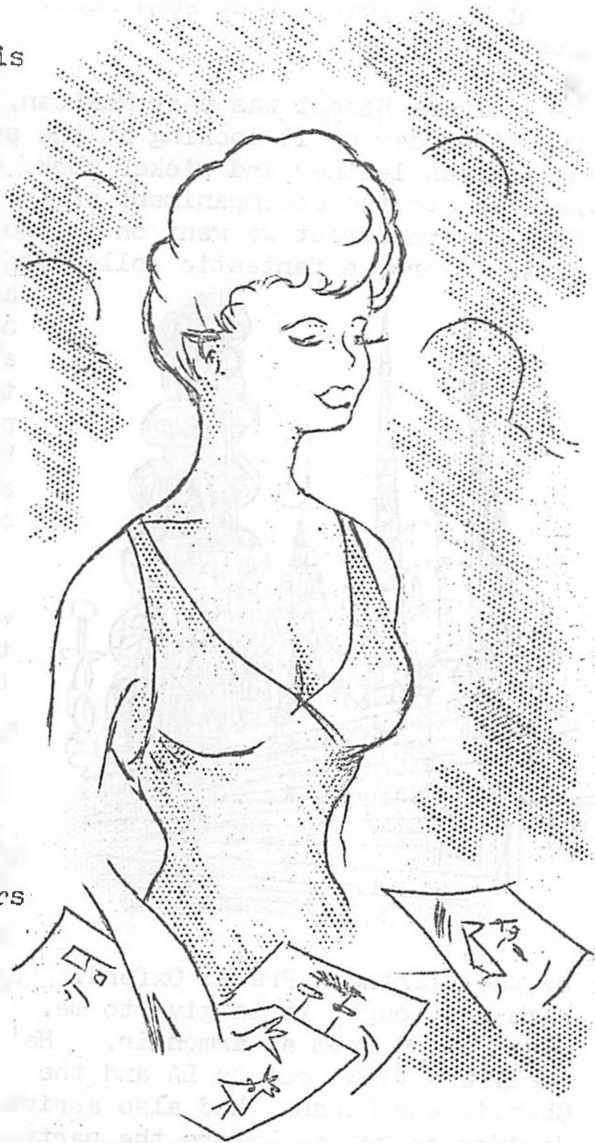
We dropped Bill back off at Farmers to pick up his car, then went on to Greenfield Avenue where the LASFS open party was to be held that night.

There were some early arrivals at Greenfield. Bill Blackbeard, a big genial figure, presented me with a large book with the title, Anatomy for Art Students. Written by a Professor Arthur Thomson, M.A. F.R.C.S., LL.D., and published

by the Clarendon Press. Oxford, Bill had come across it, saw the name and bought it to give to me. Travelling man, Dick Lupo, waved at me from an armchair. He'd decided to take his vacation early and flown out to LA and the Con, with Pat. The Browns, Charlie and Marsha, had also arrived in from New York. Everybody decided to go eat before the party started. During the meal I found that Bill Blackbeard was a tea drinker, and shared a pot with him and Adrienne Martine. We arrived back at Greenfield to find the party in full swing. I found a drink and wandered through the crowd talking to people. Rick and Len, Steve Tolliver and Sylvia Dues, Ted Johnstone, smaller, and rounder, than I had imagined him. Roy Lavender Junr, Loio's brother, was there, with his father and mother, Roy and Deedee. Bill Mallardi and his crew had arrived. Jack Harness and the group from the then active slamshack the 'Lab-yrinth'. I moved from group to group showing the flag. Every room in the house was filled with fans. Len Moffatt came up and poured into my glass a generous measure of some special potent whisky

he'd brought along, and wandered off with an even bigger glassful in his hand.

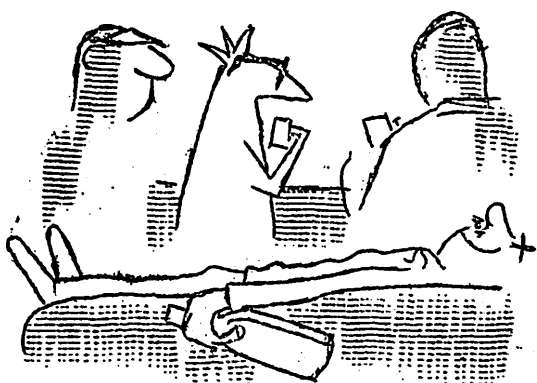
Bill Rotsler arrived, with his current model, Jodi Lynn. I was talking to them, by a table, when someone stuck a handful of paper in front of us, and the first of the Rotsler/Thomson cartooning sessions got under way. It went well. By the time the first few sheets were filled we had forgotten the people looking on, and were drawing just for ourselves, enjoying working together, and working out gaglines against each other, each trying to leave the other to work out the final punchline and illo. The paper supply ran out, and whilst someone was getting more, Bill grabbed a hold of Katya Hulan, she was wearing what has been described as 'Katya Hulan's Sexy Yellow Dress' and started drawing on her shoulder and arm. Nothing loth to use such a fascinating surface I grabbed the other arm and carried on illoing. I was starting across her shoulders and Bill was trying to explain to her how he had a terrific idea for a mural across the front of her ... uh, decollage, when some more paper arrived and saved her from having to give more drawing area for the sake of art



After this first cartooning session broke up, I made the rounds again. Talked to Fritz Leiber for a few minutes listened in on a group which included Redd Boggs and Gretchen Swchenn, paused whilst Len Moffatt refilled my glass with some more of his 'special' and watched awed as he refilled his own to the brim. Was bowed at by a small dark dapper character in evening dress, wearing on a ribbon around his neck some order or decoration. He said how happy he was to be at

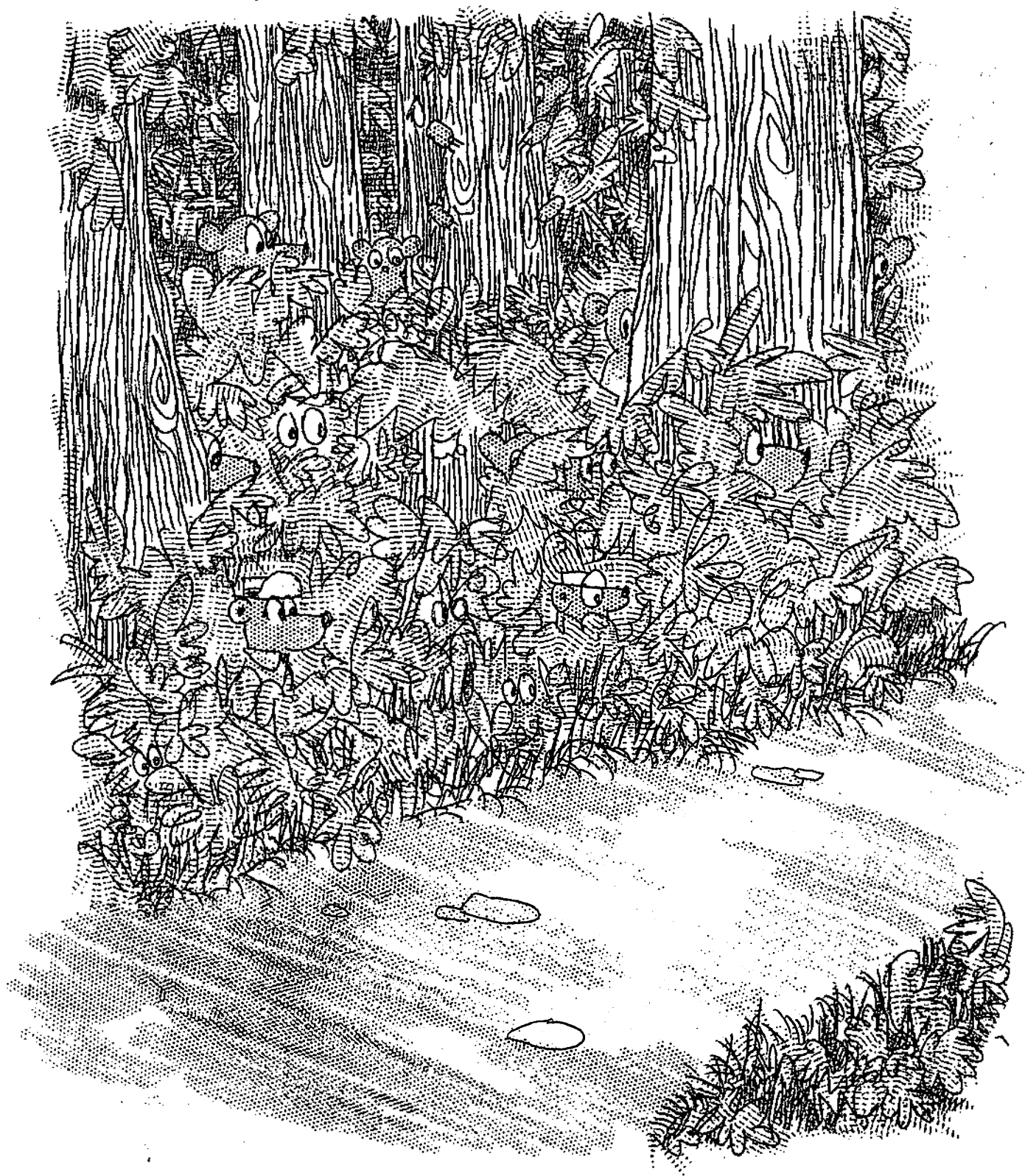
the party, that he was President of the Dracula Society of America, and as it was nearly twelve, had to leave for another appointment, bowed again and vanished into the crowd. I shuddered, and went on into one of the bedrooms. A Brag game was in full blast. Mississippi gambler Dick Luppoff adjusted his green eyeshade and invited me to bring the LASFS pun fund into the game. The punfund was safe at Bruce's, so I sat in, explaining to Dick that it didn't feel like gambling using American coinage. He said I wouldn't mind losing some of it then, but by diligent application of the Ron Bennett Brag ploy Winning, I was soon a couple of dollars ahead. It began to feel like real money. During the game Len Moffatt came into the room. His bottle of

'special' was empty and he was full. He lay on the bed behind the game, said politely he hoped he wasn't disturbing us and became unconscious. We patted him and carried on playing. I pulled out whilst still ahead and wandered some more.

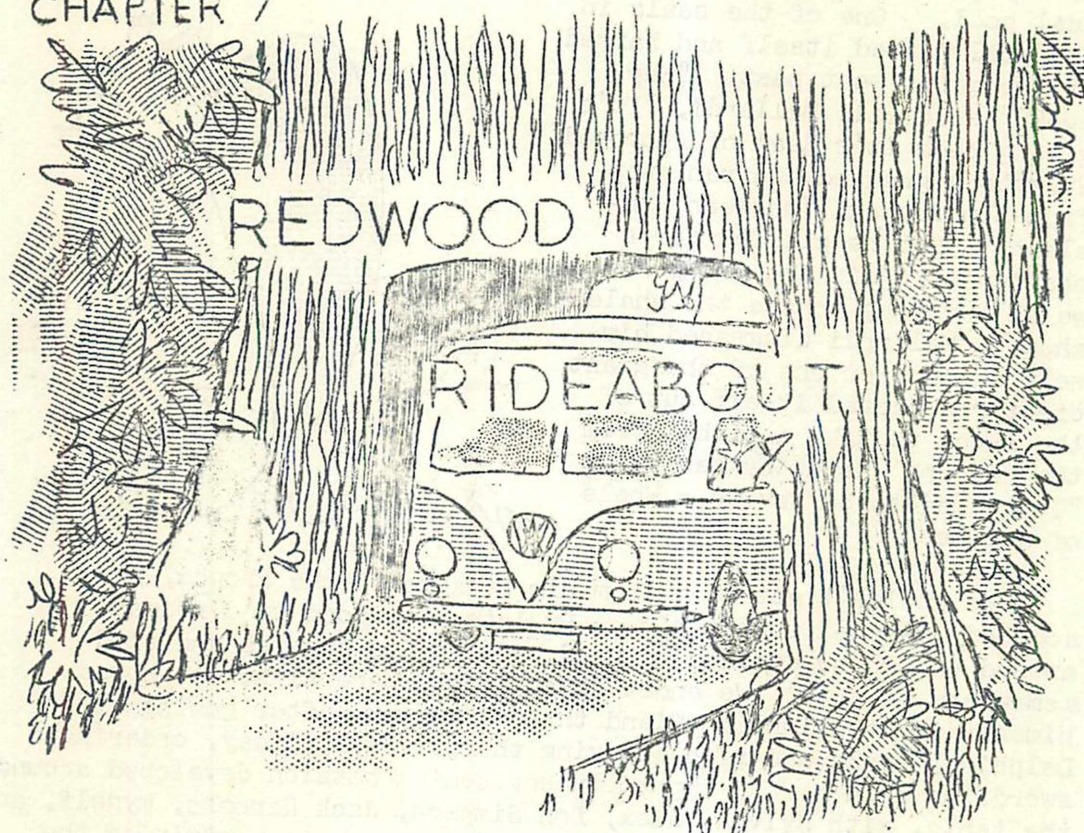


Out in the main room some die-hards were still drinking and talking. Al Lewis was still doing grand work dispensing drink and also running a coffee urn in a corner of the kitchen. I took

a cup in case the Moffatt 'special' was working on me, and went back looking for the brag game. In the room where it had been a Bourner game was in session with Bruce, Dian, Ron Ellik, and a few more inveterate card players. The body of Len Moffatt had disappeared from the bed. I found the Brag game in the back bedroom and joined it. Dick Luppoff had gone, his place taken by Sylvia Dees, which is a better arrangement whichever way you look at her. Barney Bernard Los Angeles famous compulsive punster was also in the game, making lousy puns and losing money every second. We played for an hour or so, people leaving and others taking their places. By now it was almost dawn. I got out of the game and went back to the living room. The Bourner game was going strong right in the middle of it. So I dragooned Marsha Brown into helping me make some real tea. Found a pot that Al said I could boil water in, ripped open six or seven teabags and threw the contents into the pot and had Charlie and Marsha drink the result, as well as having a small cup myself. Charlie said later, that when he did get to bed in the back bedroom all he could do was lay and stare at the ceiling, and swear never to drink English made tea again when he felt tired. At seven thirty the Bourner party called it a day. Bruce, Dian, and myself went home.

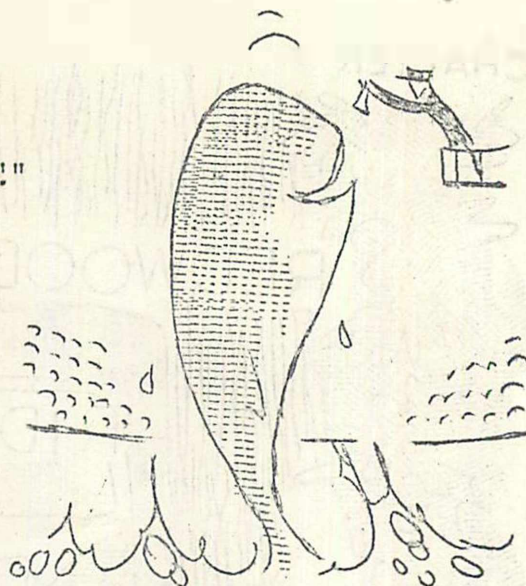


CHAPTER 7

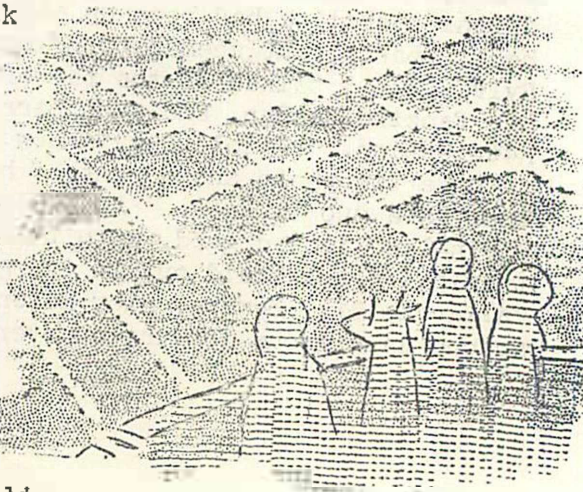


Sunday morning started at eleven oclock. Bruce woke me up and said "Right, now you go to Marineland." I had in fact, arranged this with Al Lewis at the party. Bruce and Dian were going to visit Dian's parents, and Al had suggested I might like to see Marineland. He rolled up in the econoline shortly after eleven oclock with Nick and Don Simpson. We picked up Sylvia Dees on the way. Everybody in the econoline had been up all night, at what had been a fairly hectic party, but seemed to be bearing up well, including myself. Sylvia and I talked of the far off heydays, when she was publishing her fanzine FlaFan, and John Berry and myself were churning out Retribution. I told Sylvia how John and I had wrangled over who was to have the photo she'd sent of her self in playshorts and bikini top, as a sub to Ret'. It was another wonderfully warm day. Marineland looked good, with the profusion of palm trees, cacti, and tropical plants laid out in its grounds. We met up with Bill Mallardi, Bill Bowers, Alex Eisenstein and Fred Patten. To roam around as a group looking at everything. This included two very

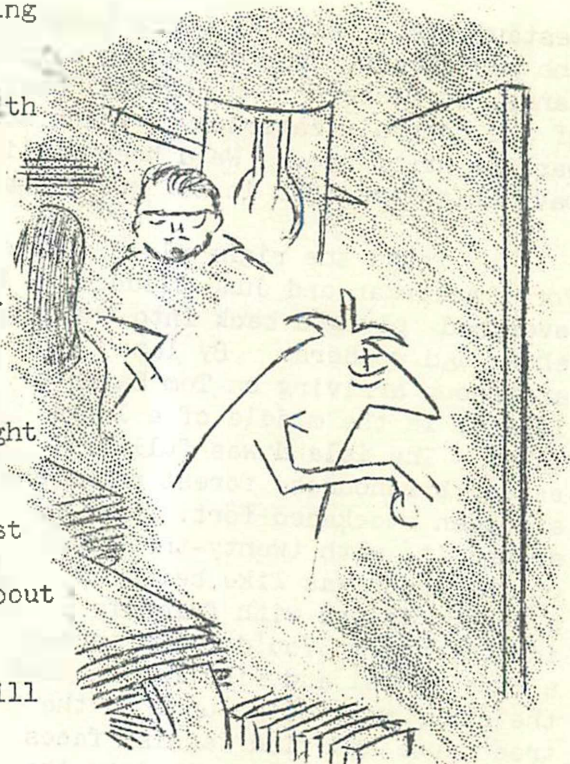
pretty girls walking past the Seal pool. One of the seals in the pool raised itself and barked as the girls went past. "Hey look," said Bill Mallardi, "It's giving them it's Seal of Approval!" Everybody groaned and ran away from him crying, "unclean, unclean!" But he pleaded for a chance to rejoin the group so we all went up to see the whale show. Mallardi disgraced himself again when one of the giant creatures heaved itself out of the water to take a titbit from the keepers' hand, by remarking "It seemed to be having a Whale of a time."



We couldn't get away from him because of the crowds, but somebody managed to hit him. By late afternoon we'd roamed around enough so decided to head back to Los Angeles and find somewhere to eat. We ended up at Kals, where Al Lewis showed himself for the inhuman fiend that he was by, after gazing at Dolphins, seals and fish enjoying themselves, all day, ordering a swordfish dinner. An impromptu cartooning session developed around the table, with Sylvia, Alex, Don Simpson, Jack Harness, myself, and Al Lewis all taking turns to create a crazy cartoon strip of the days events. To end the evening Al suggested we go up to Griffiths observatory. We dropped Sylvia off at her apartment and drove through town to the observatory park. Halfway up the hill through the park, the Econoline ran out of gas and we all had to pile out turn it around and jump back in for a hair-raising engineless ride back down the hill right across the highway and neatly into a gas station. Filled up, and went back up the hill under power. At the observatory we met up again with the Mallaridicar crew, to look round the observatory, admire the Bonestell paintings and slides, and go out to stand on the balcony looking out over the lights of Los Angeles, the highways stretching straight out in ribbons of light away from us towards the horizon, with the sky behind us aglow from the lights of the San Fernando valley. It was late and Al dropped me off at Bruce's before taking the rest of the tired econoline fans back to Greenfield Avenue.



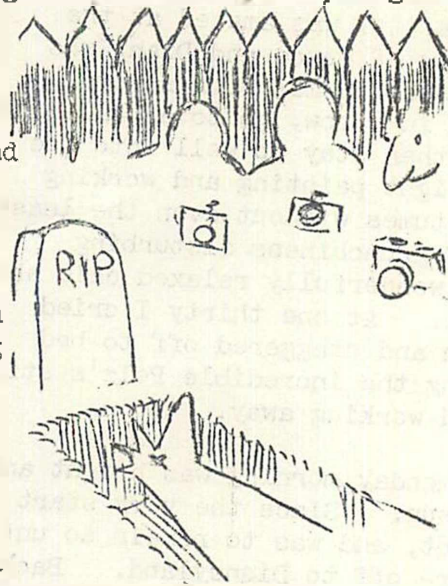
I found Bruce and Dian looking at and swopping slides of past conventions, with Charlie and Marsha Brown. They went back with Al to Greenfield Ave. whilst I stayed up again, with Bruce and Dian cutting mounting cards for illos, Dian staining parts of Bruce's Pacificon costume and Bruce working away on his accoutrements. I was amazed at the vitality of Bruce and Dian, who could stay up late for several nights in a row, go to an all night party then stay up well into the next night painting and working on costumes without even the least bit of grunchiness disturbing their wonderfully relaxed calm about it all. At one thirty I cried enough and staggered off to bed leaving the incredible Pelz's still up and working away.



Monday morning was bright and clear. Cloudless skies and warm sun. Since the very start of the trip the weather had been perfect, and was to remain so until the end. Today was a big day. We were off to Disneyland. Back in Britain, Ella Parker and Ethel Lindsay had lavished acclamation on the wonders of Disneyland, always ending up with "You'd love it." Well, here I was, going to experience it all, at last. The line up to board the econoline at Greenfield, came out at Al Lewis, Bruce and Dian, Nick Falasca, Mike Domina, Charlie and Marsha Brown, Don Simpson, and myself. We were to meet Pat and Dick Luppoff, Dave and Katya Hulan, the Mallardi crew plus Jack Harness, Forry, Jock Root, Ellie Turner and her two children and June Glidden, there, at Disneyland. The whole group finally totalled twenty-three souls. The econoline was at Disneyland by ten and clutching our books of tickets we set off down 'Main Street, U.S.A. 1800' To meet up with the first of the others, Pat, Dick, Dave and Katya. Away we went, the rides and thrills coming thick and fast. By mid-morning we'd picked up Bill Mallardi, Bill Bowers, Jack Harness, and Jock Root. The flying saucers were tried, and they had to drag me away from them to sample the submarine ride through the wonders of the deep, then around the park by monorail, across the American desert and through a goldmine, by mine train, up a lazy English fairytale river by barge. The party had split up to go sample different rides and had arranged to rendezvous for lunch at one of the open air

restaurants. With Al Lewis leading the way our group started for the restaurant, over drawbridges into Fairy Castles, down leafy lanes, up Western town streets, past Amazon rivers, to arrive at one of the open air eateries. Which someone in the group pointed out was the wrong one. We'd been calling Al our trusty native guide, Dave Hulan ammended it to 'rusty' native guide.

We found the right place and met up with the rest, including Forry Ackerman and June Gliddon. After a snack and breather, everybody plunged back into the sights and sounds, sampling rides, shows and wonders. By late afternoon arriving on Tom Sayer's Island, in the middle of a large lake. The island was full of caves, treehouses, forest paths and a wooden stockaded fort. Roaming around it, with twenty-three fans on the loose was like being on a desert island with friendly inhabitants. You'd climb through a cave tunnel and find fans coming the other way, climb up into the tree house and find fannish faces peering out at you, walk into the stockade to be saluted by Bill Mallardi standing for the Seventh Cavalry. Outside the fort was a small 'Boot Hill' with spare handy open graves, which I was persuaded to climb into and be photographed. Though Mallardi needn't have said I looked natural there.



Off the island, I joined Nick, Mike Domina and Don Simpson. Don had acquired a felt hat from somewhere, with the word CTHULHU embroidered across it. He also had a magic wand made of plastic that lit up at the tip when he waved it. I had a large coloured button that said 'I Like Disneyland' and changed to a picture of Donald Duck when you looked sideways at it.

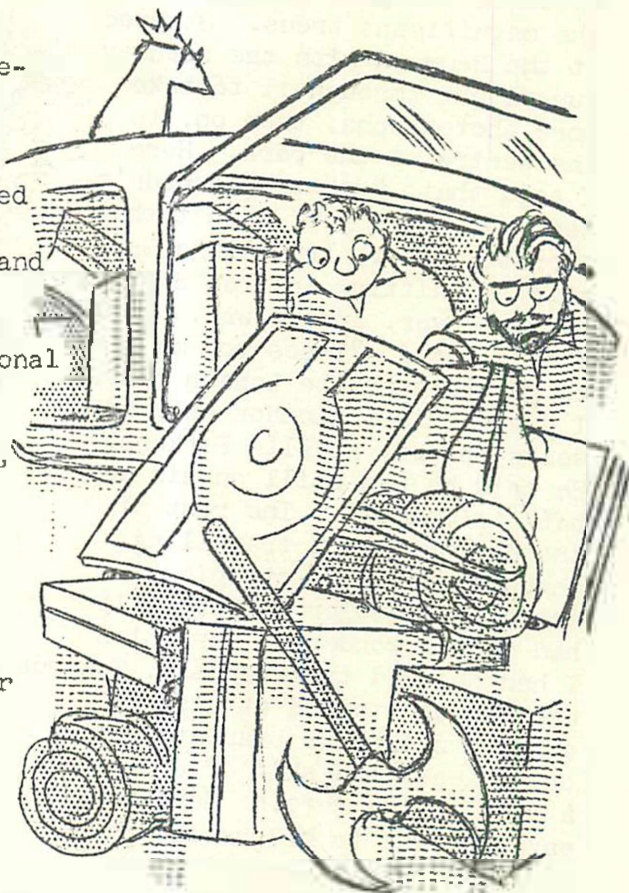
The party had split up on leaving the island, to meet and split again. Brave intrepid fan travellers waiting for the river boat up through the Amazon jungle met other fans stumbling from the boat and brushes with Hippos, cannibals, and lousy pun making guides. I took a trip, in the company of Jock Root, in a small galley up over Peter Pans Kingdom. Part of it across a night lit scene of London, over the River Thames and London Bridge to swing away past South London, directly over where my own home lay, and I would have given anything to have my small daughter, Heather with me to have shared and enjoyed with me all the days wonders.

It was dark by now, but the rides went on. The bobsleigh ride through the Matterhorn getting full marks from everyone. It was fun to go tearing round a bend and find a bobsleigh full of whooping fans crossing your path.

With a last look at the firework display we went out to the econoline and went back to LA. I left Bruce and Dian still up and working away on things, packed my case, and went to sleep. Tomorrow we started off for Oakland and the convention, via a three day trip sightseeing through the central valley and Yosemite National Park. On Tuesday morning the 'Dammit' was loaded with a plethora of luggage, fancy dress, shields, arrows, swords and the large axe and artwork. We drove out to Van Nuys where we were to transfer to Dave Hulan's microbus and travel with Dave and Katya up to the convention. We found the Hulans loading their luggage aboard the microbus and piled our own in as well. Dave Hulan was a round-faced soft-voiced southerner, who had come out to Los Angeles earlier in the year after leaving the army. Katya too, had this southern drawl

in her voice that I found fascinating. She was an extremely attractive blond girl. With Bruce and Dian they were, I found, as good company as one could wish to be with. By early evening we were at Madera in the central valley, where we were to stop overnight at some of Katya's relations. Here I had my first chance to see American t.v. Whilst the others were dragging in the overnight luggage I sat down next to a young man watching a tv set, only to recoil in horror it was showing an English movie.

Wednesday morning we were up early enough to be first in line at nearest wine tastery, to have six or seven glasses of wines which we drank like experts, or addicts. Then on, suitably refreshed, to the Yosemite. It was another glorious day. In the park we stopped to take photographs and admire the views of tree filled valleys, towering mountains, and look for bears. Drove on to

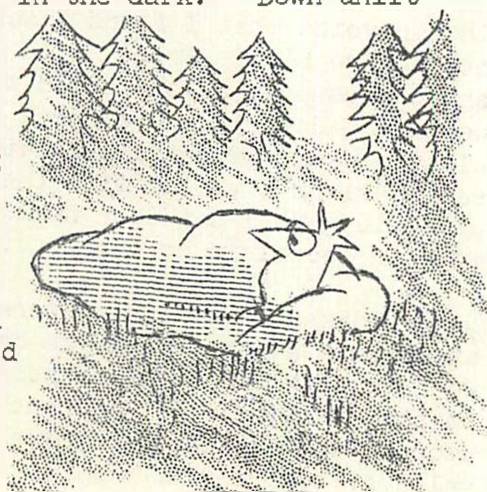


the Giant Redwood grove to take more pictures and gaze upwards in awe at the magnificent trees. Stopped at the Redwood with the roadway tunnel cut through it to take more photographs, then on, to the centre of the park. Here I said that, " though we hadn't seen any bears yet, wasn't that Burnett Toskey, travelling Seattle fan sitting in that car over there."

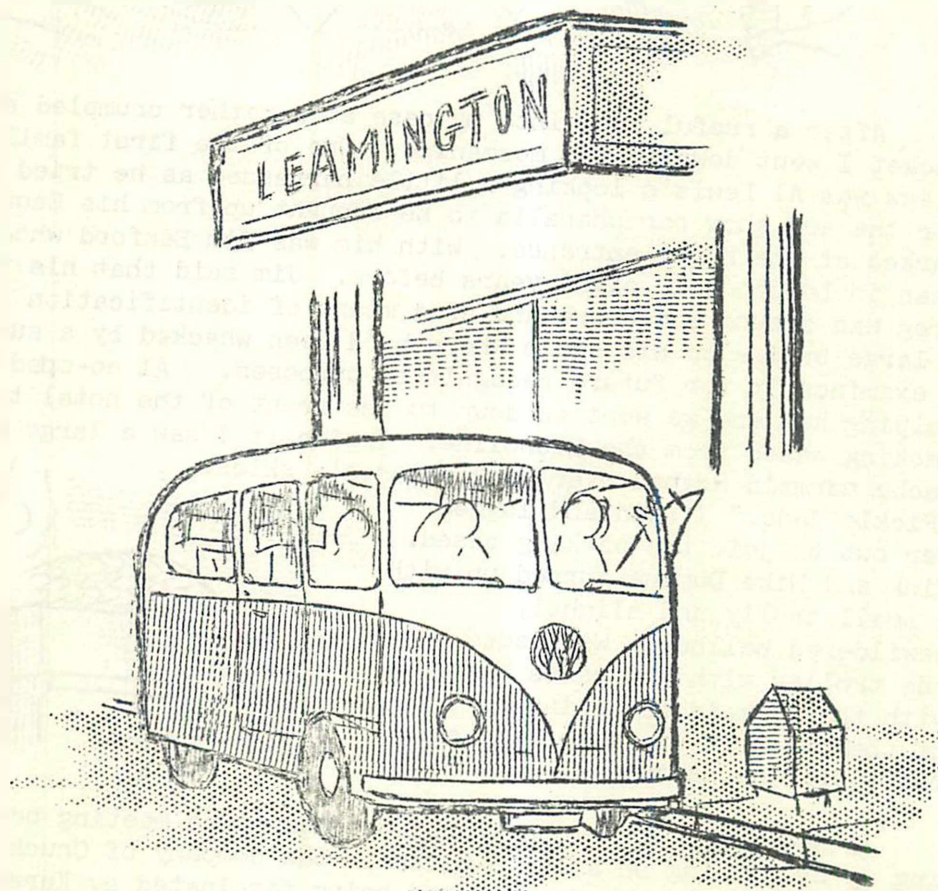
We went over, and it was. "Hello Tosk" I said, "I see you managed to get through the London traffic." I'd seen him in London only three weeks before, at Ella Parkers. He said he was still on his way back to Seattle. The rest of the day was spent travelling through the park, stopping to enjoy spectacular scenery. It had been a wonderful day which I had enjoyed tremendously. Towards evening we stopped at a small cafe, and saw our bear at last, or at least the skin of one, on a wall in the cafe. Dave suggested we get to McConnell State park and stop overnight there.

We all had sleeping bags, my one being loaned to me by Al Lewis. McConnell park took a heck of finding in the dark. Down unlit roads with only the occasional small sign pointing the way to the park. After a brush with a huge American diesel train with headlight and whooping whistle, at railroad crossing we found the entrance to the park, rolled in stopped, got out the sleeping bags and crawled into them.

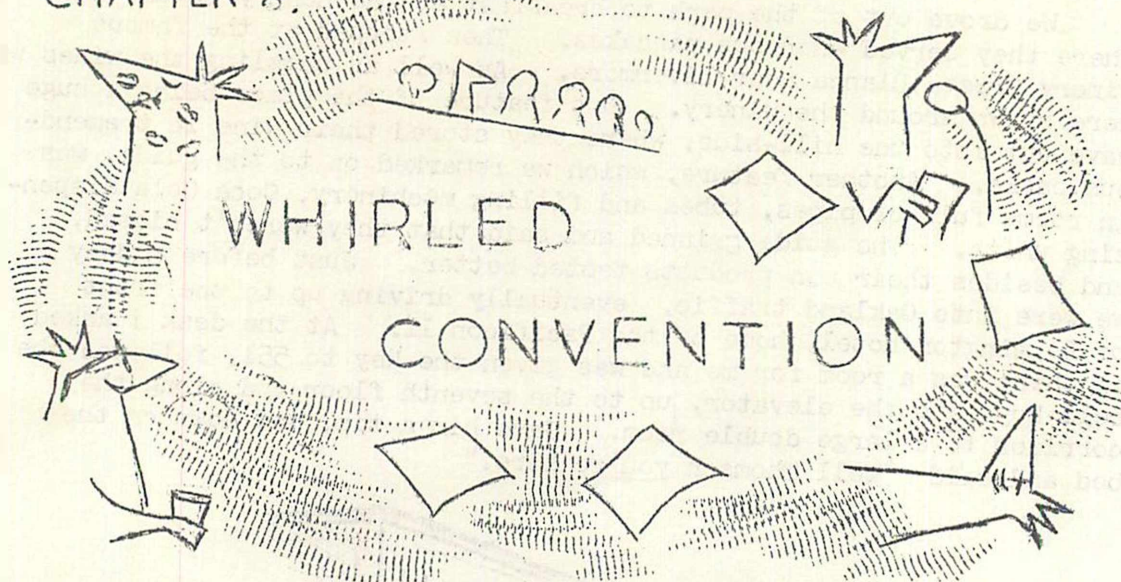
Five thirty on the Thursday morning found me awake, gazing around fearfully in case any bears had joined us during the night. None had, but it was cold. I got out of my sleeping bag, hopped through the dew and into the microbus, and watched the dawn come up over the trees.



We drove out of the park to breakfast at the Hungry Truck cafe where they served enormous pancakes. Then stopped at the famous winery Cresta Blanca near Livermore. As well as sampling the wines we were shown around the winery. One feature of the place being a huge cave cut into the hill-side, where they stored their wine in tremendous casks. Another feature, which we remarked on to the guide, was in rooms full of pipes, tubes and filling machinery, Coca Cola dispensing units. The guide grinned and said that they weren't biased, and besides their own products tasted better. Just before midday we were into Oakland traffic, eventually driving up to the front of Leamington hotel, home of the Pacificon 11. At the desk I asked if there was a room for me and was given the key to 551, followed the bell boy into the elevator, up to the seventh floor and along the corridor to a large double room. Gave him a tip, sat down on the bed and said "Well Thomson you're here."

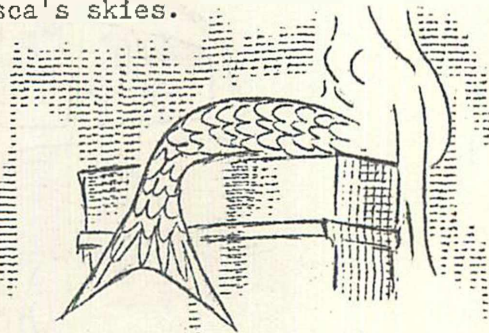


CHAPTER 8.



After a rueful look into my case at a rather crumpled sports jacket I went down to the mezzanine. One of the first familiar faces I saw was Al Lewis's looking a little harrassed as he tried to arrange for the art show paraphernalia to be brought up from his Econoline parked at the hotel entrance. With him was Jim Benford whom I'd last seen in London some eight years before. Jim said that his twin brother Greg was around somewhere and as a means of identification showed me a large bruise on his scalp where he'd been whacked by a surfboard. I examined it for future recognition purposes. Al co-opted us into helping him and we went on down to the front of the hotel to drag huge packing cases from the Econoline. Inside it I saw a large papier-mache mermaid draped over Nick Palasca's skies.

"Fickle jade." I said and lugged her out to join the packing cases. Nick and Mike Domina turned up with a small trolley and slightly bewildered bellboy. We loaded up the trolley with the cases and with the mermaid reclining on top of them took it up to the art show rooms off the mezzanine.



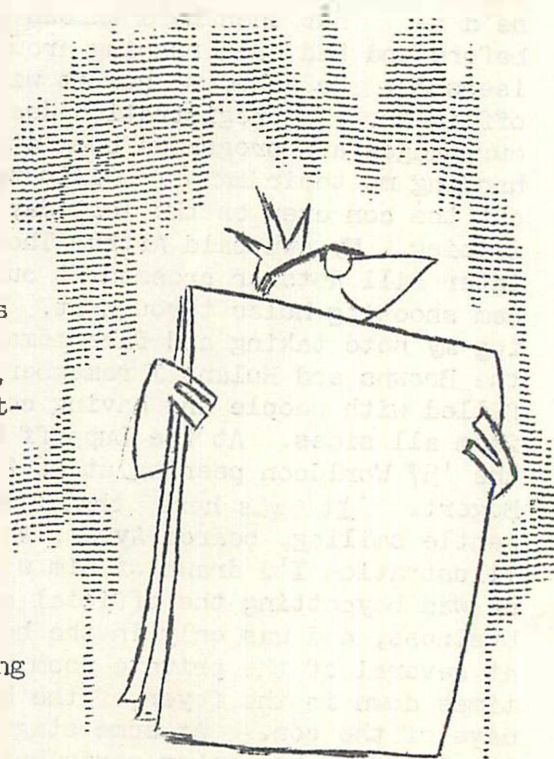
I spent the afternoon around the mezzanine meeting people, ending up by sitting on a large divan in the company of Chuck Hansen, Ed Meskys and Karen Anderson, and being fascinated by Karens low melodious voice. Early evening I was invited out to dinner by Terry Carr, Carol and the Luppoffs, and went with them, the Benfords, Phil Dick and his estranged wife to another downstairs dimly lit

restaurant, where during the meal Phil Dick kept up a nonstop filibuster of comment and conversation whilst waving around one of the largest cigars I've ever seen. His estranged wife, who had ordered one of the largest steaks I'd also ever seen, and washed it down with eight or nine Manhattans looked across at the Benford twins during the meal and cooed "aren't they just the cutest.." The Benfords turned in unison and looked at her, their eyes pools of incandescent fire behind their spectacles. I sat beside Terry and Carol and enjoyed the whole show.

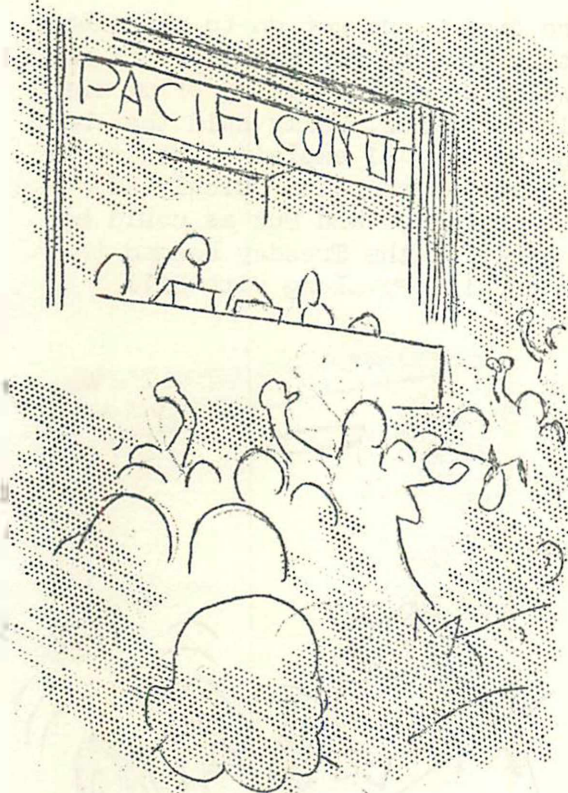
At the hotel the mezzanine was buzzing with fans, I found my place again on the divan and sat talking to the Pelz's, Len Moffatt and Charlie and Marsha Brown, who told me that they were having drinks in their room later and to come up. Bill Donaho came along and we chatted for a few minutes. He was quieter than I'd thought he'd be but then he'd thrown a large party at his house the night before and had been running around all day doing whatever con organisers do. He asked me how it was going, I said fine and he wandered off again. The registration desk opened up and we lined up to receive our badges and programme booklets, it was here that people started handing me their badges to illustrate and every now and then throughout the con even on the last day someone would hand me a badge for illoing. My own said Arthur Thomson without even a 'p' in it, but later Bill Rotsler crossed it out put "Atom" on it and drew a Rotsler beam shooting holes through it. With the amount of people I was meeting my note taking and face memorising became a little lax. With the Browns and Hulans I remember going around and into various rooms filled with people and having conversation and drinks come up at me from all sides. At the Luppoff room party I saw another face from the '57 Worldcon peering at me from out under a small table, Jean Bogert. It was here that I met Avram Davidson and Grania. A gentle smiling, bearded Avram, who said that he still had the original illustration I'd drawn of him wearing his sexy grey sox. It appeared he was boycotting the official convention because of the Walter Breen business, and was only in the hotel as a private person. I saw him at several of the private room parties, and talked to him several times down in the foyer of the hotel where he sat during most of the days of the con. At some stage during the night I was invited up to the Tony Boucher poker party but found myself walking along the Oakland streets with Dick Luppoff and others heading for the all night cafe called the 'Doggie Diner'. It became a mecca for hungry fans during the night hours of the convention, whenever you walked into it you were sure to find a group of fans around a table. Dick Luppoff discovered that the jukebox held three or four records by the Beatles and insisted on playing them all every time we went there. Pat Luppoff and myself retaliated by playing "Little Old Lady From Pasadena". I ended up at the Brown's party, quieter than most, but a nice place to relax and finish the night up in.

On the Friday morning I went down to the mezzanine to find the indefatigable Al Lewis up and hard at work at getting the art show on the road. With Adrienne Martine I went round hanging paintings for Al then later went out to the mezzanine to meet and greet Elinor and Buz Busby and go phone up Boyd Raeburn to come down and have breakfast with us. Elinor I took to immediately, she had the nicest of smiles and the warmest twinkle in her eyes. She had a charming way with her that I found reminiscent of Madeleine Willis. I enjoyed being in her company and listening to her. Buz I'd always pictured wearing his beard, he'd shaved it off and the whole convention I kept feeling that Roy Squires of Los Angeles fandom looked more like Buz, with a beard, than Buz did without. Boyd when he came down looked exactly the same as he'd done at the time of the London World-con, cool, suave, immaculate, and, as he said, without the slightest trace of an 'English Accent'.

Later in the convention hall to hear the official opening Dick Luppoff collared me to remind me to be ready for the fan panel on Imagination in Fanzines that he'd dragooned me on to. He pressed into my hands an enormous pad of drawing paper and two felt pens. During the introductions of various personalities attending the con by Ron Ellick and Tony Boucher in turn, each one got to an obvious description of Harlan Ellison, but just before introducing his name the other would butt in and start introducing someone else. They played Harlan for a few minutes like this then got him to stand up for a good round of applause. I was introduced and stood up trying to grin over the drawing pad Luppoff had given me. I hope nobody thought I was so nervous I was as white as a sheet.



After the introductions people remained to see myself and the other poor suckers follow Dick Luppoff up to the platform to start the fan panel. I found myself clutching my pad and sitting next to Ron Ellick, Dick Luppoff in the centre at the mic' Wally Weber and Joe Gibson on the other side of him.



I hadn't any idea what to say, but decided to go along with the general way the discussion went. This wasn't too bad a decision for the whole thing ran into the ground right away. I don't know who the people in the hall were, but they certainly weren't fanzine editors or fanzine fans. No sooner had Dick opened the panel than people began standing up and abusing us all over the place over the fact that there weren't enough Science Fiction Stories and Articles in Fanzines. The panel were basically fanzine fans, though Joe Gibson had run a wonderful series of Space travel in his fanzine G.2. and Dick Luppoff had featured material on Burroughs in his fanzine Xero. This didn't seem to stop the audience getting up and lambasting us and any fan who didn't put out a fanzine full of fine stuff like science fiction written by amateurs.

Ed Wood got up and castigated us. He said that he wanted fanzines to be vital. To contain immortal material, material that would last forever. I thought of pointing out that the Bible had scooped us, but cowered behind my drawing pad. Someone else got up and said that though he had never read a fanzine, if he did he'd want it full of scientification. He said "We are science fiction readers, and that is what we want in our fanzines." Dick appealed to any faneds in the hall to stand up and defend their magazines. Nobody took up the challenge. The audience emboldened, accused the panel of not reading science fiction and started to make nasty remarks at us. I began to wonder how I could get off the platform before I was dragged off and tarred and feathered, when Dauntless Dick Luppoff fighting a gallant oral rearguard action, managed to close things down. We made our escape, through muttering ranks of bloody minded science fiction readers.

The rest of the afternoon I spent around the mezzanine and art-show. During the doomed panel I had sketched a cartoon of Ed Wood. He came up and asked me for it, we chatted for a few minutes. And do you know, Ed Wood is the friendliest of fans and nice to know, we got along fine. Of course I didn't mention science fiction, or fanzines. Bill Rotsler came along and we fell to on another cartooning bust, and having a hock of a time. The cartoons were snatched

up by kibitzers as soon as they were drawn, one got on to the sketch table in the artshow and was bought by someone for a dollar. I met Jim Webbert, his wife Doreen, and Wally Gonser. Talking of my trip up to Seattle to stay over with Elinor and Buz, Wally said that he'd like to drive me up, sightseeing on the way. I explained how tight my schedule was and that I wanted to get up there as quickly as possible so's to have as much time with Elinor and Buz as could be managed. Greyhound out of Oakland early on the Tuesday seemed the best bet for this. We all went out to dinner, along with Bill Mallardi, Bowers and Alex Eisenstein. When we returned to the hotel we heard that there'd been some fracas at the registration desk which had ended up in a wrestling match with Gretchen Schwenn Redd Boggs and Bob Beuchley the Convention Sergeant at Arms. This Boycott and Breen business ran all through the convention but it certainly didn't spoil the convention for anyone who wanted to enjoy themselves. It didn't for me, I know. Another thing I know is the unbounded generosity and warmth of the American fandom, that can reduce a person to wondering just how to show how much you think of it. Joe and Robbie Gibson came up to me, explained their idea of 'A little bit extra' raffle for the Taffman, and put an envelope with twenty dollars in it, into my hand.

"This is the first days take," said Joe.

"Uh .. uh. . ." I said.

"So buy a drink for us sometime," said Joe.



"Ahem, uh Monster fans"

To night was the first of the open parties, held in a large room off the mezzanine, and given by Detroit and Cleveland fan groups. From the open party I went on to others scattered about the hotel. Chatted with Wrai Ballard and Elinor at one of the parties, went down to the Browns, where it almost seemed as if the party from the night before had carried right along, then on down again to the open party. At times I'd have sooner sat still in one place, but I was enjoying myself wandering and seeing everything and everybody. In the open party I got involved in a discussion with the Benfords, Elinor and Gordon Elklund, on art, music, and cultural differences between

Europe and America. I think we were putting each other on most of the time and I went off hoping I'd held up my end of it. Out in the mezzanine I stumbled across a hilarious group comprised of Dick Luppoff Pat, Dian Pelz and that wacky crew, Bill Mallardi and his men. They were all busy founding Bellybutton fandom. A mystic society full of complicated rituals and drunken signs by which one bellybutton could recognise another. I was acclaimed a member because of my hairy bems and went off with them to the Doggie Diner to celebrate the founding of the order and play Beatle records. Getting back to the hotel I looked in on the Brown's party and chatted a while to Fritz Leiber and Sue Sanderson about cats in Egypt, villages in Wales, and the aura of depression that hangs over the valley of Glencoe in Scotland. I think I had been drinking. I forget what time I went to bed.



Saturday morning I got up stood under a shower groaned, then went down to the mezzanine. Al Lewis was still working away in the art show room, helped by Bruce Pelz. On the other side of the door Katya Hulan was doing fine work selling raffle tickets for the Institute of Speculative Literature. They all looked bright and alert even though they'd been up most of the night. Ted White, having got down out of the tree in Indiana, came along, and we went round looking at the paintings. Jock Root had given me another Players cigarette the night before, I craved for more, so decided to go out and see if I could buy some anywhere. I had to go to the post office anyway, to get some airmail letter forms. I met Dwain Kaiser in the lounge and he offered to come along with me. Dwain was one of those sincere, nice, young fans. I liked him. We walked a few blocks, found a tobacconist and managed to buy a whole carton of Players, then went on to the post office. Met Dave Kyle, and the small Kyle Jnr there, and walked back with them. I'd seen Dave several times in Britain and we discussed his trip over in '65. He said he'd something for me back at the hotel and brought it down from his room when we arrived back. On his trip to the con he'd stopped in at Bob Heinleins and Bob had autographed one of his books for me and sent it with Dave and his best wishes. Elinor Busby came up, asked if I'd been across to San Francisco yet, and suggested a trip across that afternoon. I reflected that I wasn't seeing too much of the programme, but you couldn't be everywhere at once, and said I'd like to see San Francisco.

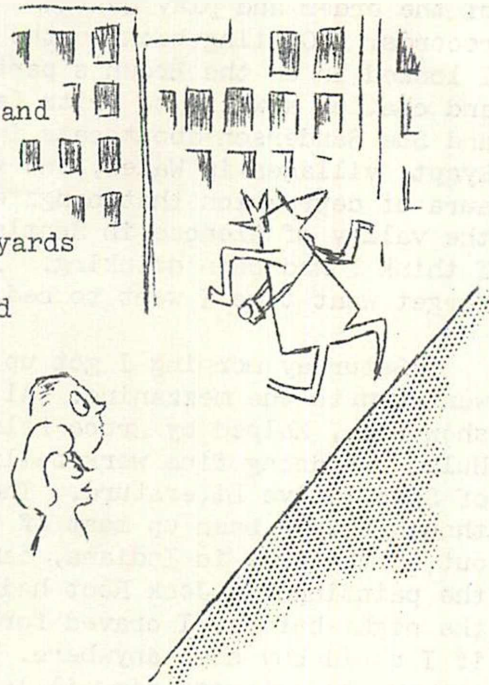
We rendezvoused in the Foyer around one oclock, with Boyd Rae-burn, Buz having passed up the chance to look at the sights to stay in the bar with Nick Falasca and look into the merits of Bloody Marys.

So the three of us went out, caught a bus over the Bay Bridge into San Francisco. On the bus over I found that Boyd had also noted the tendency of Americans not to ask for directions from people. At the terminal Boyd and myself, with Elinor standing back smiling, asked a few people how to go about getting to Market Street and the cable cars. We had several interesting conversations with people who had never been in San Francisco before, and a drunken soldier, before we decided to just get on a trolley car that seemed to be heading in the right direction. We asked the driver to put us off at the right stop so he took us about five miles further on. Funny. We got transfers and a trolley back. Found Market Street and the cable cars. They were full of people

and out of action. A fuse had blown somewhere. Boyd was determined to get to the 'Top O the Mark' and get a drink so we coaxed Elinor to walk up the hill. Just to prove something, like I was a crazy Englishman I ran up the last twenty yards and held my breath so they could not see how puffed I was. We entered the Top O the Mark and ordered drinks. Here I had my first break through on the crushed ice problem. I had told Elinor about it, and she suggested I might ask for a drink without the ice. It worked I got a good glass full of Scotch and ginger ale with nothing to hinder me from actually drinking it. We gazed out at the city and bay scene, drank our drinks, and felt fine.. The cable cars were still stopped when we came out so we walked down hill then turned off

into Chinatown. After a look through some tourist shops we went in to a restaurant and had a chinese meal. It had turned chilly when we came out. A cold wind was blowing along the streets but we struggled against it and made our way back to the bus terminus. We tried asking directions a few times but gave up at the variety of replies we got back, so we kept walking towards the Bay Bridge visible over the buildings along the way. On the bus back going over the Bay Bridge Elinor turned to us and said, "Now you know why Americans don't ask directions."

We arrived back at the Leamington just before the wine tasting started. I don't know if it was the effects of the meal I'd had or the cold wind we'd walked through, but I excused myself to Elinor, went up to my room and quietly threw up. Showered, brushed my teeth, took some tablets, felt fine, and went down to the wine tasting.



Elinor recommended the Chateau La Salle, I tried it found it good and carried on drinking it. After the wine tasting Al Halevy came up and asked me if I'd be one of the fancy dress judges. People in costume began arriving in the hall, whilst up on the stage things began to warm up for the show Chief Red Feather and his Indians were going to put on. The hall filled up, the stage lights came on, and Chief Red Feather appeared. He

had just started into his opening speech when into the hall came Bill Rotsler with a couple of cameras and flash units slung around him, following him came his model, Jodi Lynn. Slung around her was a handful of gold dust. Nothing else. Just Jodi and some gold dust, though

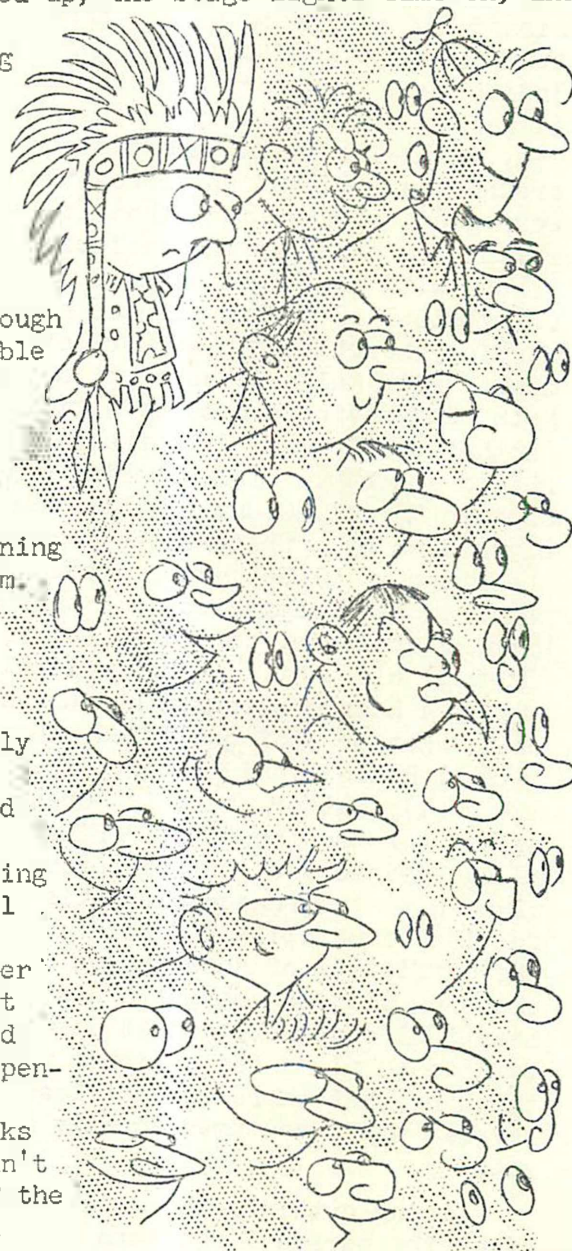
she was wearing an almost invisible net costume. The appearance of Jodi in the altogether caused a mass surge by every red blooded American male towards her.

Almost at once the back of the hall lit up with flash bulbs turning the well lighted stage into gloom.

I should have may be mentioned above, that a certain Taff Dele-gate had been amongst the surge of male fans towards Jodi. A collective Aaaah! went up slightly tinged with awe, at the sight.

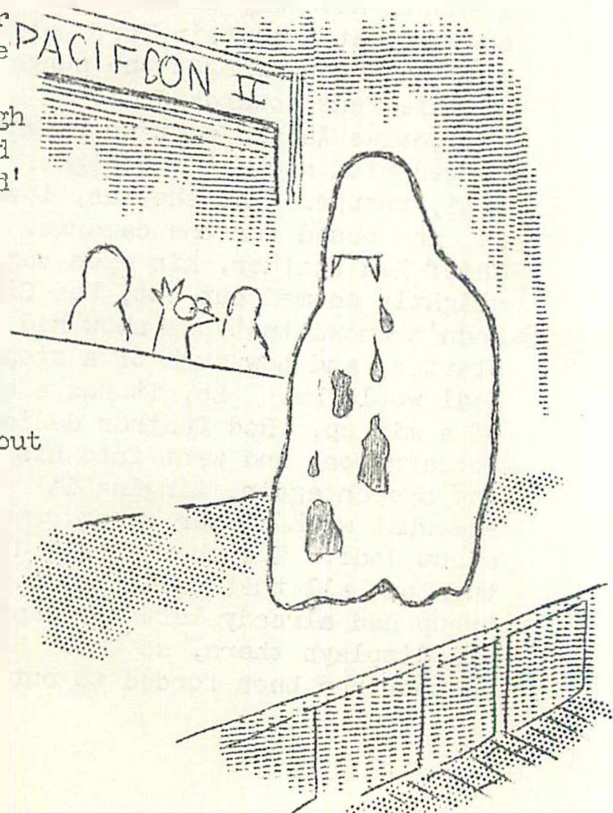
Jodi, trouser that she was, loved it, and posed for the cameras.

Chief Red Feather, his eyes bugging slightly seemed put out, but Bill hadn't known that his show had started, and how much of a stopper Jodi would be. So, it was a bit of a mix up. Red Feather decided to carry on, and went into his opening speech again, tinging it somewhat with bitter sweet remarks about Jodi. The show itself didn't turn out all that well. Most of the troupe had already left for Japan and displays there, so Chief Red Feather had been forced to put on a put together job. Amongst the Indians



accompanying him were some almond eyed chinamen. He himself was Chinese, but a red Indian Chief none the less, and he'd probably got some relations in to help out. Anyway, the Tong...I mean tribe, banged on drums and some genuine Indians gave dance exhibitions. Bill grabbed a hold of me and pushed me at Jodi, to take a photo. I stood next to her and adopted my English Man Abroad attitude, but wished I'd a pipe to hold. After Bill had taken photoes I went up to my room to wash the gold dust of my hands. Down in the hall the Indian show was over and the place was filled with fans in fancy dress. Al Halevy ushered me up to the stage where I sat next to Forry Ackerman, Lalli-Goldsmith, and the other judges. Al got the parade going around the hall and up across the stage in front of us. The costumes were good, with so many that it became difficult to commit yourself on which were best, in the various categories. Paul Turner a Pan like figure with the tight black fur of the lower part of his costume actually stuck on to his skin at his waist. Sylvia Dees and Adrienne Martine, beautiful in a swirl of coloured veils and glittering body dust. Bill Mallardi came up, dressed as a way out Venusian Male Jungle Moth, and having a heck of a time. Bruce and Dian Pelz. Bruce as 'Lothar the Bowman' from the Barsoomian tales, martial, helmeted, with shield and bow. Dian, looking superb in her costume as Thuvia of Mars. Captain Marvel, Count Dracula, assorted monsters and a figure completely hidden by a white sheet covered with bloodstains passed across the stage. Blake Maxim, a young Los Angeles fan, practically stopped the show as he appeared in a puff of smoke and dressed as Merlin. Winning applause, as did Bruce, for 'living' his part. We had a little bit of a hassle amongst the judges as to whether Jodi qualified, though as Bill Rotlser said later, "it did not really matter, he only 'dressed' her up for the fun of it." Finally we managed to sort out the prize winners to the reasonable satisfaction of us all. I'd read about the difficulty of show judges of choosing winners amongst a host of beautiful costumes, and it is hard to have to plump for a winner without thinking that there were at least several other costumes equally as good.

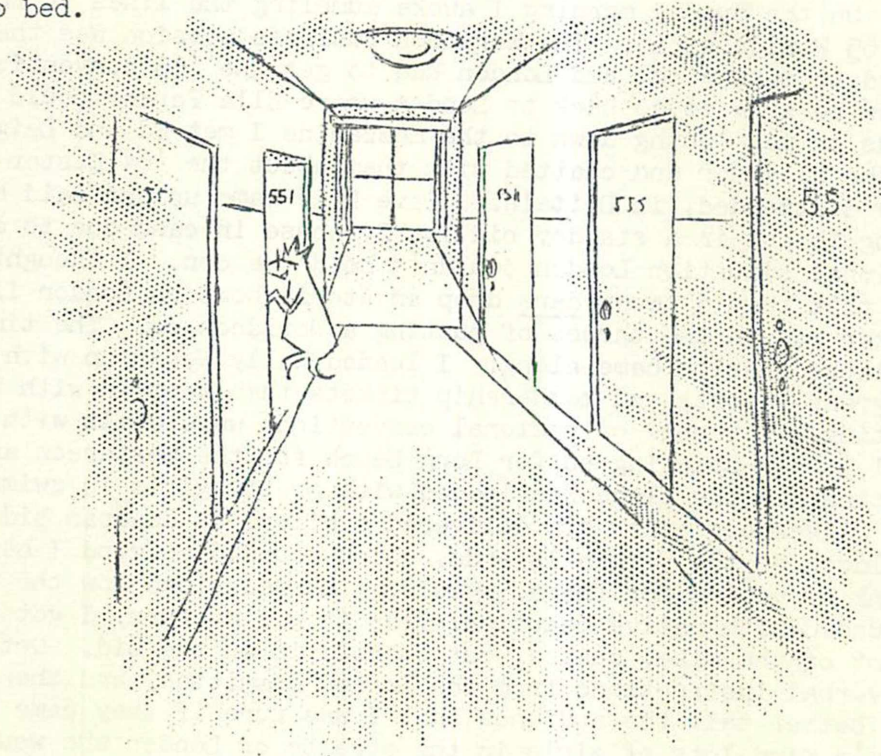
Going out into the mezzanine after the parade I ran into the other Englishman-At-Large. John Brunner. We stood and chatted for a few minutes with John's oh so English accent sounding strange



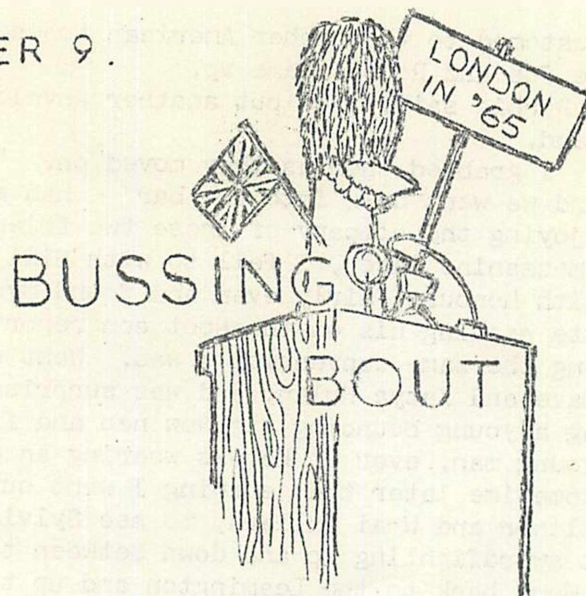
to my ear now accustomed to the richer American tones. Further on into the mezzanine Joe and Robbie came up.

"This is today's," Robbie said. Joe put another envelope full of dollars into my hand.

"..uh..uh" I said. I grabbed them as they moved on. "Now," I said Joe led the way and we went down into the bar had a few drinks and I found myself enjoying the company of these two friendly and natural people. In the mezzanine later, I fell to with Bill Rotlser, cartooning, parted with honours fairly even and found myself sitting alongside Ted White reading his on-the-spot con report and wondering if he was attending the same convention I was. Went up to the Mallardi party with Dave and Katya Hulan, and was surprised in Danny Plachta, expecting a young bouncing goshwow neo and finding a big, quiet, pleasant young man, even if he was wearing an electric blue dinner jacket. Sometime later that evening I went out to the Doggie Diner with Buz, Elinor and Wrai Ballard, to see Sylvia Dees in long black belted coat swordfighting up and down between the tables, with Steve Tolliver. Went back to the Leamington and up to talk to Tom Seidman in the Browns room, then on to larger noiser room parties. I finally sneaked away from a jam-packed room about five oclock and went to bed.

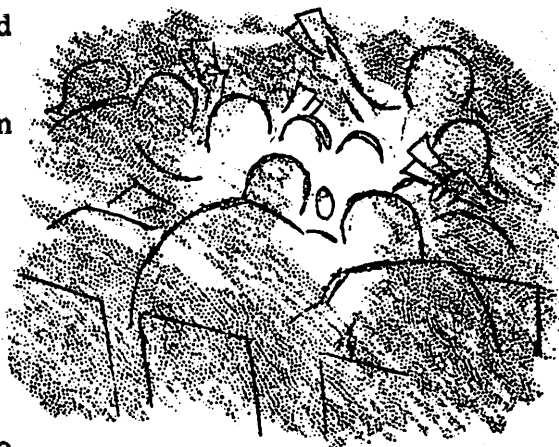


CHAPTER 9.



On the Sunday morning I awoke mumbling the lines of the London in '65 Worldcon bid. The Worldcon business session was that day. I had to make good, and London had to get the '65 convention or I'd never be able to go back to London where Ella Parker could get her hands on me. Going down to the mezzanine I met Ed and Leigh Hamilton in the elevator and chatted with them about the '64 Easter convention they'd attended, in Britain. Dave Kyle came up and said he was going to put in a standby bid for Syracuse in case due to any international situation London couldn't hold the con. I thought of telling him that they'd never dare drop an Atomic bomb on London if Ella Parker was in the throes of putting a Worldcon on. The time for the business session came along. I loaded Wally Weber up with London progress reports and membership tickets then went in with him to the meeting. A couple of regional conventions were dealt with first. Paul Turner speaking up for Long Beach for the Westercon and describing how the place was loaded with pretty girls in swimsuits. Bob Silverberg after him delivered a hilarious deadpan bid for a Worldcon on the Virgin Islands, which sounded so good I began to think of voting for there, myself. He described how the islands abounded with native beauties. Then it was my turn, I got up in front of the mike, quaked, but started in on the bid. Got through my verbal instructions from the London committee, and then thought I'd better tell the audience that I was sure if they came to London they'd find lots of girls in the streets of London who would be only too delighted to meet them. Escaped back to my seat, forced Wally up to second me, saw it go to the vote and heaved a huge sigh of relief when Al Halevy announced London had the Worldcon for '65

Almost immediately Wally and myself were deluged by people demanding membership and thrusting dollar bills at us. It began to get a little hectic, with the rest of the business session still going on, so Wally and I crept out to continue taking memberships in the mezzanine. We sold London memberships and passed out progress report booklets for the rest of the afternoon, then I went up to my room, found a tie that wasn't too crumpled and dressed for the banquet.



Downstairs, outside the Versailles Room, where the banquet was to be held, I stood and chatted to Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett whilst American fandom, looking very formal in jackets, ties, and hungry expressions went past us into the room. Bill Rotsler turned up with Jodi. I'd thought he was leaving before the banquet but he explained that Jodi was having such a good time at the con she'd persuaded him to stay on. Bruce, Dave, Dian and Katya came along. Bruce looking more Orsen Welles than ever, in evening jacket and formal tie. I went on into the banquet with them, but as they were to sit at the Saps table I found a seat with Buz and Elinor, Boyd Raeburn and the Lunnoffs. Al Haley wearing the harassed look of all worldcon organisers came up and asked if I'd sit up at the main table, so I followed him up and sat next to Sidonie and Alva Rogers.

Just as we were starting the meal Al came up again and ushered into the seat next to me a petite white headed lady with twinkling eyes. He rushed off without saying who, what, or why, so I bobbed my head and told her my name. She bobbed her head back, took out a small card and wrote, "I didn't quite catch your name. The noise is playing havoc with my hearing aid. I'm Miriam Allen DeFord." It had some small cards that I'd been using to jot down notes on, so I wrote back telling her who I was, why I was there, and that I was pleased to meet her. From there on in the conversation between us was partly lip reading and card writing, and I had a wonderful three hours next to a delightful, intelligent, lively witty lady. I poured her wine, offered her Player's cigarettes, and was completely captivated by her. We talked and wrote about science fiction, her stories, conventions, travel, modern youth, fans and had a terrific time. The banquet meal, itself, was Beef Stroganoff. I heard later that there'd been some mutterings about it. It seemed o.k. to me, certainly nothing to get into a stew about. During it I talked to Sidonie on the other side of me. It was obvious, that with all this Walter Breen business coupled with the strain of putting on a convention, she was pretty keyed up. When the meal finished and Tony

Boucher got up to start off the speeches he made reference to the work the whole committee had put in, and praised them, Sidonie started snuffling into her hanky, finally having to leave the table. As Boucher went into the Hugo award winners Sid' came back with a huge box of Kleenex tissues, which she cried into whenever things got too much for her.

The Hugo winners came up to receive their awards, but things, I think, got a little too adulatory. A standing ovation for the first Hugo winner was followed by another for the next, then another for the next, until it grew almost meaningless. Certainly, something was lost, because of it. After the main awards, Forry got up and said he'd a special award to present. This was: the Forry Ackerman 'Mannordall' Award, which he'd specially created for the Rofiser Girl, Jodi Lynn. Jodi loving every minute of it, came up from the back of the hall to receive it. 'It' being a kiss from Forry and the key to his room. After Forry, Sam Moscowitz came up to the main table, to present the Hugo Gernsback award; no, wait a minute, it was the First Fandom award, to Hugo Gernsback; things got a little complicated once Sam got to the microphone. Yes, that's it. Anyway, Sam got this piece of wire, medal and wood up to the podium, grasped hold of the mic' took a deep breath, and was away. He launched into a few words about Hugo which took all of forty-five minutes, give or take an era. Ed Maskys, punkish faced bespectacled Californian fan had drawn his chair right out into the aisle in front of the speakers so he could hear and see all. Ed Maskys will never do that again. For, as Sam got rolling and reached 1919 with Hugo launching Radio Broadcasting Ed's eyes began to close, and as Sam came up to the 1920's and Hugo creating Sexy Girlie magazines, Ed gradually slipped further and further down in his seat, and as Sam reached Hugo's early struggles in New York, Ed's head fell to one side and his mouth dropped open, and as Sam showed how Hugo Saw A Vision Of the Future, snail, Maskys type snores began to issue from Ed's mouth. And as Sam went on to tell us how Hugo deserved all he was getting, Miriam and I discovered, via the cards, that our birthdays were on the same date; August the Twenty-first, and that it was also Tony Bouchers birthday date too. We agreed that it was a pretty wonderful thing that there were three people at that table with the same birthday.. I thought of passing a note along to Sam asking him what his birthday date was, but he seemed busy. Eventually someone must have passed some sort of note to him, for he wound up his few remarks on Hugo, and left the podium.

Then Al Hallevy beckoned me to the microphone. Realising the

state the audience was in after the Moscowitz speech I cut my four second speech to three and managed to say thank you and how happy I was to be there, and what a wonderful trip I was havi'g. Then fled back to my seat. The cut part of the speech had been that this was the very first time a fan artist had been a delegate, and that I felt proud, and kinda humble to be the first Taffman who had become known through artwork and not writing or fanzine editing or being a convention fan. In fact, this time you could say that it was Art for Arts sake.

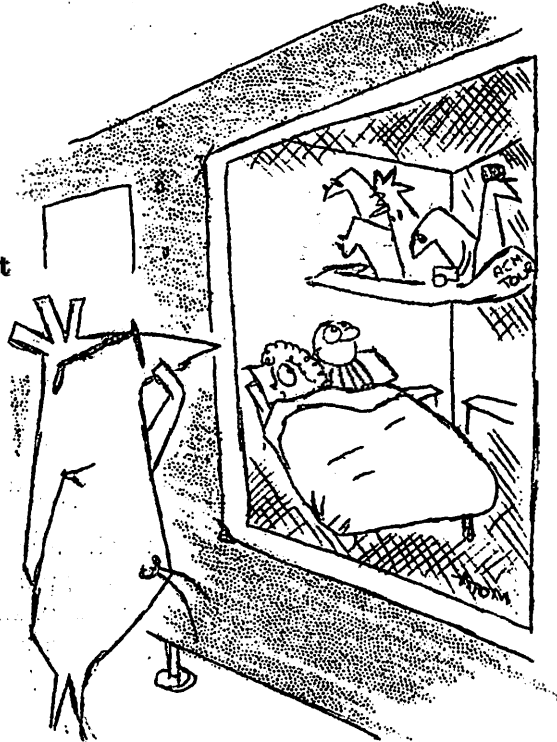


Real speeches were then made by Forry and Ed and Leigh Hamilton and the banquet finished. I'd been told by Ben Stark that as London had won the '65 Worldcon the official party that night in room 208 off the mezzanine would be sponsored by the London committee. So with Wally Weather once more loaded with membership booklets and the last of Ella's two hundred and fifty progress reports we sallied into 208.

Seeing Wally safely into a corner and surrounded by people wanting London memberships, I went on up to the bar for a drink. Serving the drinks in fine style were Dick Ellington and Danny Curran. I told Danny he was doing a grand job. He wiggled his bare toes and poured a generous glassful for me. I circulated around the room, passing Wally still doling out memberships, patted him on the back and went on circulating. This took me round the room a couple of times, talking to people, then out through the mezzanine and up to a couple of room parties, and back down to 208 which was still going strong. I found Wally still in his corner, a little glassy eyed and with a pocket full of dollars. I suggested we close up shop, so we went down to the hotel desk and saw around two hundred dollars deposited into the hotel safe. Then went back up to the parties. During the hours that followed, I remember at one period roaming through the Oakland streets to the Doggie Diner with Bill Mallard and his Men, then going back to more rooms, and more parties. About four o'clock I found I still had my room key, so carefully went to bed.

Monday morning dawned bright and clear, I'm sure. I got up about ten and went down to the mezzanine wanting only coffee and maybe a couple of bottles of Alka Seltzer. In the artshow room Al

Lewis was still working away at show business, helped by Bruce and Dian. Katya Hulan was selling raffle tickets for the Institute of Speculative Literature and looking after its table, on the other side of them. I shook my head, carefully, at these amazing people who could stay up all night at parties then work away that early next morning. Walking round the paintings with Alex Eisenstein I saw the awards were up, and felt pleased that I'd won a couple. Harlan Ellison came over and said that Cele Lalli-Goldsmith had been looking at my cartoons and wanted a word with me. I saw Cele, she said that she thought she might use some of the cartoons in *Amazing*. Barring, she said, the one showing the tourist aliens coming through the bedroom with the man and woman in bed. She liked it, but couldn't use it as such. I thought, then said how about them coming through a bathroom with a man in a bath. That would do fine she said, Visions of a totally nude male standing up in a bath crossed my mind, but I guessed Cele didn't have quite that sort of idea in mind.

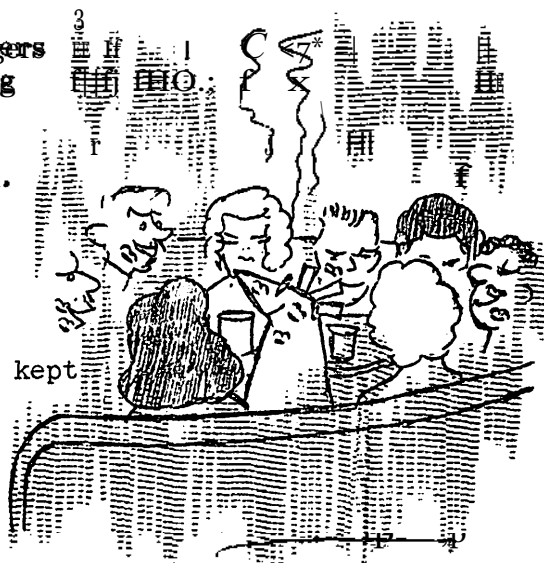


Wally Gonser came by with Jim and Doreen Webbort. They told me that Buz and Elinor hadn't been enjoying the convention due to the Breen business and all, so had cut out and gone home, saying they'd see me when I got to Seattle. Wally said that as I wanted to get there as quickly as possible he and Jim and Doreen would cut their couple of days sightseeing trip back and drive me straight through if I'd like to come along with them under those circumstances. I said that would be ok, and we settled at that.

During the early part of Monday afternoon Joe and Robbie Gibson came up and gave me another envelope full of dollars. They explained it was the last, they'd drawn the raffle. I just couldn't tell these people how much this gift meant to me, or how much I thought of them doing such a really nice thing. So I said that I could at least buy them another drink.

We went down to the bar with Rick Smear, Len Moffatt, Dian Pelz

Dave and Katya Hulan, and another girl who's name I unfortunately forget. Down in the bar we found a vacant booth and arrayed ourselves around it. The drinks came up nicely. My request for scotch without ice worked again, so I had a couple or three. It was here that Rick and Len devised their "send our love to Ella and Ethel" scheme. Len turned to Rick and asked him if they should send their love to the girls. "Yes" said Rick, his eyes lighting up. Len turned to the girl on his left, said "Pass this along to Atom so he can give it to Ella and Ethel." then kissed her soundly. She came up for air, said "Yes indeedy" and bussed Dave Hulan who kissed Dian who seized hold of Joe Gibson, and kept it going. It went from Joe to Katya, who finally delivered Len's love, with myself as the messenger. Just to show how I approved of this fine demonstration of American know how, and how much Ella and Ethel would appreciate it, I kissed Robbie Gibson on my right. Rick sent the whole thing round again. Then Dave Hulan and Joe Gibson who said "By-Cracky" wiped his lips, and demonstrated just how much he admired Ella and Ethel. "Is this a private ritual, or can anyone join in?" said Sidonie Rogers who had come up and stood watching Rick had Sid' sitting next to him before she could put fresh lipstick on. And away we went again. Forry Ackerman, who had done a double take as he passed the booth, said that he'd found Ella and Ethel the best of fans so was invited into the circle. The drinks kept coming and the kisses kept going around, until, a little shwacked and breathless we broke up the snogging ring to go eat and recover. Powerful people, these Americans.



Later in the evening, coming back from a meal in a restaurant where I'd seen Frank Dietz wearing a Tokio in '67 button and trying to eat a steak with chopsticks, Wally Weber and I discussed the best way of getting the London money back to Ella. It totalled 250 dollars. I said that I'd send it American Express as soon as I found an office open, either in Oakland or when I got to Seattle. I met up with Wally Genser and Jim Webbhart in the mezzanine. Wally said we'd be pushing off for Seattle as soon as possible on the Tuesday. He mentioned that he'd put his car in for repairs at a nearby garage, but that it would be ready in good time.

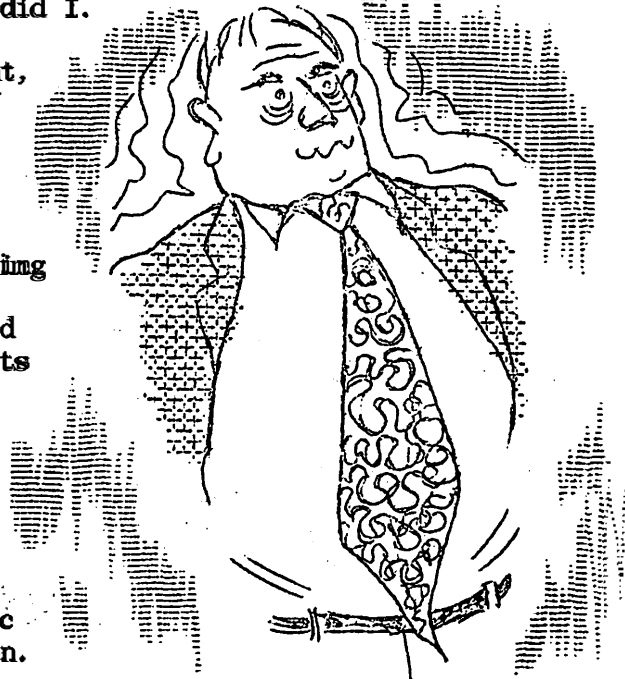
The rest of Monday night was spent around the various parties. I don't know whether the Browns were still holding their four day

room party, or whether people just wandered in to talk and drink, it was a good place to go though, to sit quietly and talk or listen. At another party I sat down to chat with a fan couple who's names, escape me, and Tom Sicilian came up. The male of the couple butted into Tom's opening hello by starting a long hoary anti-semitic joke. Harmless in itself, but strangely out of place. Tom listened politely, then walked away. So did I.

Sometime during the night, Dave Hulan, Katya, and myself took off for a last coffee at the Doggie Diner. Going back to the hotel through the deserted streets, we met the inspiring if slightly staggering figure of Elmer Perdue who, through the slight haze around him, recognised kindred spirits and enquired.

"Fans, pray tell me, is the establishment known as the Doggie Diner in this general direction?"

We assured Elmer that if he carried on he would no doubt bump into it. With a majestic wave of his hand, he passed on.

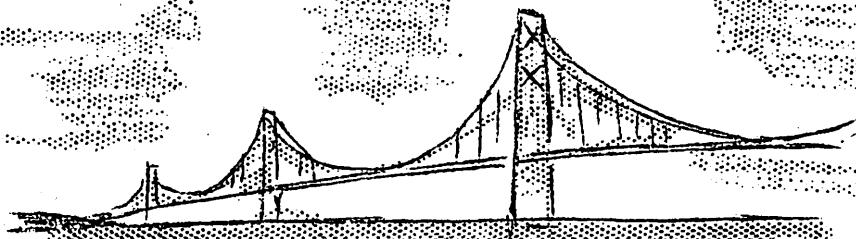


By four thirty am I reluctantly gave up, sought my room and fell into bed.

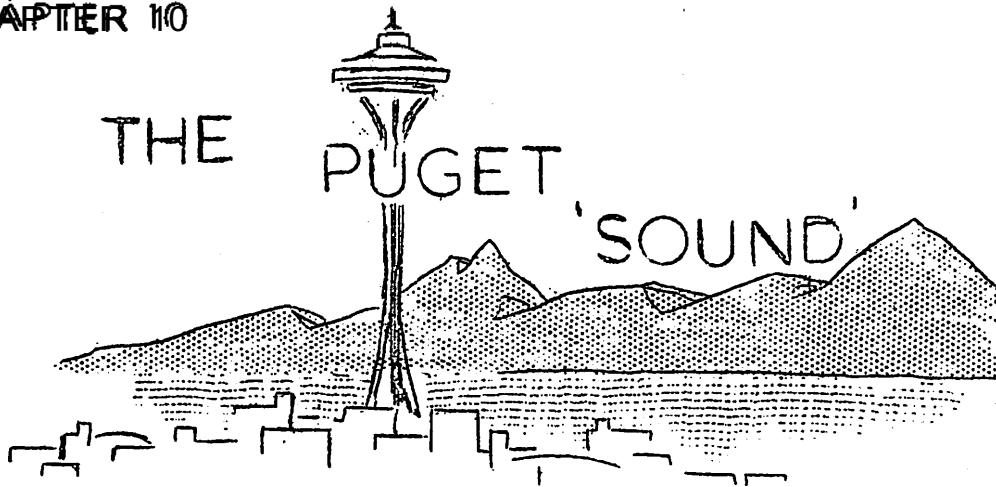
Tuesday morning I left my room around ten, realising that it was now all over and my spirits sinking into a stage of depression that was to make me physically sick by the end of the day. Down in the mezzanine I met Jim and Doreen Weibert and Katya Hulan, who were going to breakfast, so joined them. Downstairs we passed fans with luggage booking out, and Dave Kyle standing outside the restaurant. We found a vacant table and ordered. There was a slight "Ahem" and I looked up to see Dave Kyle and Forry standing by our table. As I looked up at them the horrible realisation came to me that the day before Dave had invited me to have breakfast with him. I stammered out some sort of apology. He took it well and he and Forry sat down with us. We talked about his trip to Britain. Breakfast over, the rest of the morning was spent going round saying goodbye to those people I could find. I missed Rick Smeary and Len Moffatt, and a whole host of other people, but did manage to say hello to Anna Sinclair Moffatt who had turned up for the last couple of days of the con. Around eleven or so I walked out to the hotel car park with Bruce, Dian, Dave and Katya, to stand aside as they loaded their luggage back aboard the microbus. Saw

then climb aboard, and waved goodbye to four people I'd come to know, like and enjoy being with.

Back in the hotel I found Wally Gonser and Jim and Doreen. We went down to the garage where Wally's car was to see how things were going. On the way we passed an American Express office that was open. In a matter of minutes I'd passed across the London money and it was on its way to London. I also changed into travellers cheques the money Joe and Robbie Gibson had collected for me. Down at the garage the car wasn't ready but they offered to loan Wally a car to take him around until his own was finished. We decided to take it and have a run out to the Golden Gate after we'd finished packing our luggage and booked out. In my room, I packed my case with con booklets, photos that Bill Rottler had brought up from Los Angeles for me, the world con gavel and base Al Halevy had given me to take back to London, and took one last look round the room before taking my key down to the desk. Wally, Jim, and Doreen were down with their luggage, we gave it all to a bell boy to look after and took off for the Golden Gate Bridge.



CHAPTER 110



We drove out over the Bay bridge, through San Francisco, then out and over the Golden Gate, then drove back into Oakland and out to Berkeley to call in at the Ellingtons. I still felt a little sick and depressed. Outside the Ellingtons home I saw the fearsome Falasca Ford lying in the gutter, still bearing the marks and dust of its transcontinental trip. Inside the house we found Nick Falasca relaxing in a deep armchair, and still smiling. It was good to see him once more before I left. Dick was upstairs bathing, Pat and Poozie out shopping. In the room with Nick were two huge dogs who looked part wolf and part wolf, the larger part being wolf. Dick came down and talked about the dogs, they were the famous Buck and spouse. Buck, Dick said was the coolest of dogs. Nothing phased Buck, he was too cool. Why, said Dick, one day Buck jumped out of the car over in 'frisco, but Dick didn't worry, he knew Buck would only stay with cool people, and sure enough, a week later some very cool friends of Dick's in Berkeley phoned up to say that Buck was with them. How he got across the Bay/toll bridge isn't known. I thought that he probably found a cool type taxi driver and got him to drive him across. Buck came round us. I sat back when he sniffed at me and tried to look a very cool, if trifle sickish type Englishman.

Around four o'clock we decided to get back to Oakland and see if the car was ready. I said goodbye to Nick, hoping one day, it would be hello again. Pat and Poozie hadn't come home, so I said farewell to Dick, wishing I'd had more time to spend in the Bay area so that I could have got to know them all better. Out on the sidewalk I went over and patted the fearsome Ford, before climbing into the loaned car with Wally and the Weberts and heading back to Oakland. Wally's

car still wasn't ready, but soon, soon. We went back to the Leamington, parked the car and went along a block to a very small dark Mexican restaurant, where my stomach refused to look at anything but a bowl of soup and some Alka Seltzers that Jim valiantly dashed out and got for me. Then back to the Leamington again. To hang around in the foyer and feel like hell. Al Halsey turned up. We sat and talked, almost the first chance I'd had of speaking to him for more than a minute at a time. Al, with his damaged face and nose, told us of his trials and tribulations in trying to get medical treatment. He'd spent most of the day around hospitals, and ended up at a private doctor, who'd stuck a band aid across Al's nose and charged him twenty-five dollars. I found Al fascinating to listen to. He had an intense, nervous manner of delivery but spoke well, and interestingly. He talked of his jobs, lack of them, hopes, ambitions, and how, in between dashing round hospitals and doctors he'd queued up to draw his unemployment money, which came in handy to pay the doctor with, for the twenty-five dollar band aid. Danny Platcha was still around. I chatted to him for a few moments, and was again impressed at his courteous mature manners. The Browns came back into the hotel, after being out shopping in San Francisco. They were on their way to eat then go out to the party at the Ellingtons. Charlie explained his arrangements to take me round the World Fair on the Wednesday of the following week, and I promised I'd get to New York by then come hell or high water.

Sitting around in that hotel foyer was as depressing as anything I'd ever experienced. I'd had such a wonderful time over the past four days, that to sit there made my having to leave California all that much worse. Wally Gonser went out to see if the car was ready and when we were beginning to think of strapping our cases on to our backs and starting to walk to Seattle, or give up and go to the Ellington party he turned up with his car. We piled the luggage into the boot, climbed aboard and took off at eight thirty p.m. Drove out of Oakland, got on to Route 99 and headed north.

Around eleven that night, with everybody feeling tired, we decided to stop overnight at a motel. Red Bluff came up, and with it a motel. We got some rooms, then went on up the road to eat. Ordering I asked for a glass of milk. All I got from the waitress was "huh?" I asked again, got another "Huh?" and realised that feeling as I was I was speaking pure London Kings English, and that it was coming out "Aaah gless oov mealk" So I switched and asked for "Uh gllkaaasss uv mililk" and got it, to applause from Wally and Jim and Doreen. Back at the motel Wally and I staggered into our room, sneered at the shower and fell into our beds. I stuck my wallet under my pillow. Then blacked out as my head hit the pillow.

A knock at the door, and daylight through the windows wakened me. The knock was Jim waking us up for an early start. I mumbled we were awake and he went off back to his room. Wally was still unconscious. I got out of bed and noticed my wallet lying on the floor, thinking it had slipped from under the pillow during the night I picked it up, then felt its emptiness. I couldn't quite comprehend it for a moment, then I noticed my watch was gone from the bedside table, and the realisation came that we'd been robbed. I woke Wally up. "Wally," I said, "We've been robbed." which seemed the only thing to say at the time. Wally came upright in the bed with complete disbelief written across his face. I showed him the wallet. "No money and no watch". I said. He rolled out of bed and crossed to his pants. They were lying on the floor, his wallet on top of them. Empty. "Duh." he said. "Me too." I said; Wally said he'd go see the manageress, and get the police. Whilst he was gone I checked my wallet sort of hoping that it would suddenly fill up again. It didn't. My driving licence was still in it and wonder of wonders one English pound note. Missing was around ninety dollars. Then I noticed the small blue wallet of travellers cheques lying beside the bed. All the cheques were in it, the bulk of my money which had been the cash Joe and Robbie Gibson gave to me from their raffle plus the odd few dollars of my own that I'd put with it in to travellers cheques. The missing money had been most of the cash I'd got from the artshow. I was as relieved as a man saved from hanging. At least I wasn't completely cleaned out. I still couldn't really believe it had happened at all, and started thinking "well, well." I should have enough money to see me through, and whilst I might have to cut down on some of the presents I had hoped to get in New York, I would be covered, when I got back to Britain by the Insurance I carried, that's if they believed me.

Wally came back saying that the police would be along. He himself had lost around twenty to thirty dollars. We worked it out and realised that the thief must have slipped the door lock, walked in, took Wally's wallet, my watch, then not finding my wallet in my pants, casually looked for it under my pillow. Wally had worn his watch and we wondered why the thief hadn't just unbuckled it from his arm whilst he was about it.

There was a knock at the door and in walked two of Red Bluffs finest, all complete with leather Jerkins, sheriffs stars, and pearl handled revolvers. They were very nice, and took all our

particulars and said that there'd been a rash of motel robberies in the area. The younger of the two noticed a half round horseshoe shaped depression in the carpet near the door and asked if we had any heel marks like it. We hadn't. I thought of saying that it might be one of those famous American horse thieves I'd read about, but decided it wasn't the time to be making assinine cracks.

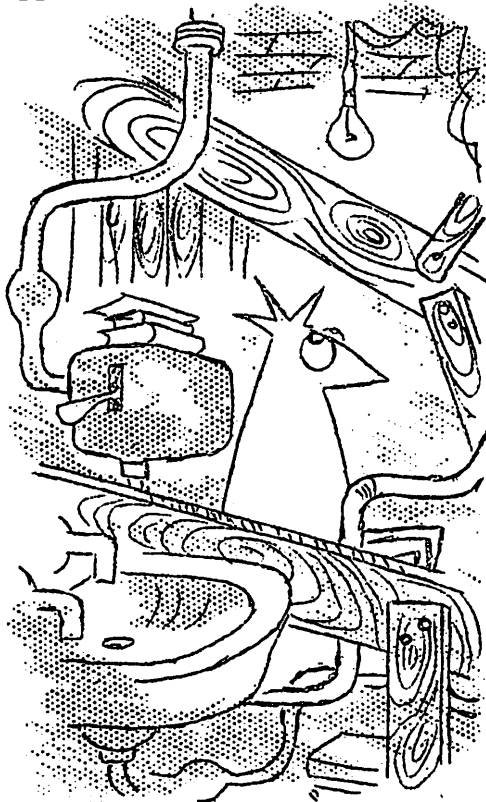
The police wrote everything down, said "Well there." and drove off. Jim and Doreen came in and with Wally, felt down about it all. Strangely enough by then I didn't feel too bad about it. I don't think anything could have spoiled my trip for me. Certainly not just losing some money. I was sorry it was gone, butt, well, there. I told Wally, Jim and Doreen this.

There didn't seem any point in hanging around Red Bluff so we went out to the car and took off.



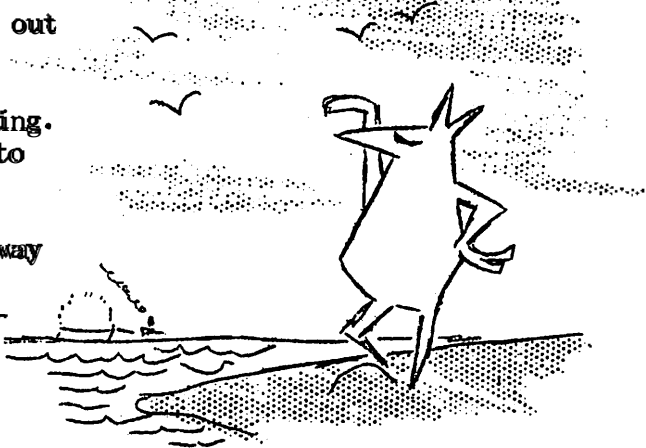
By mid morning we had passed Mount Shasta, a magnificent sight, and were well on the way through Oregon. Wally, choosing to ignore the tales he'd heard of my liking to drive on the wrong side of the road let me take the wheel for a while. For an hour or so I drove up route 99 towards Olympia. On the right side of the road. At Olympia we stopped for a meal, then drove on for Seattle. I was a little worried about time. Buz and Elinor were expecting me early on the Wednesday and here it was late afternoon. We drove on, with Mount Rainier looming up before us, its snow capped peak turning crimson in the setting sun. Beautiful. By nine we were driving past the huge Boeing works on the outskirts of Seattle, and shortly afterwards pulled up at Wally's house, where Jim and Doreen picked up their own car and drove off home, some distance out from Seattle. Wally took me on, through Seattle to arrive outside a small cosy looking wooden bungalow type house, just after ten o'clock. Probably the long wait, all day, for my arrival, and wondering where I'd got to, had made Buz a little edgy. He came out, said for me to go in and spoke to Wally. I climbed a little thankfully

and stiffly up the outside steps and went into the house, to be welcomed by Elinor. Buz came in after me, with my case, Wally called goodnight and drove off. Buz said that maybe he'd been a little short with Wally, after waiting all day for me to get there but well. Elinor made a cup of tea. The best I'd tasted since I left home. After it went down Buz offered me a ceramic mug and uncapped a bottle of his famed Home Brew. It went down well too.

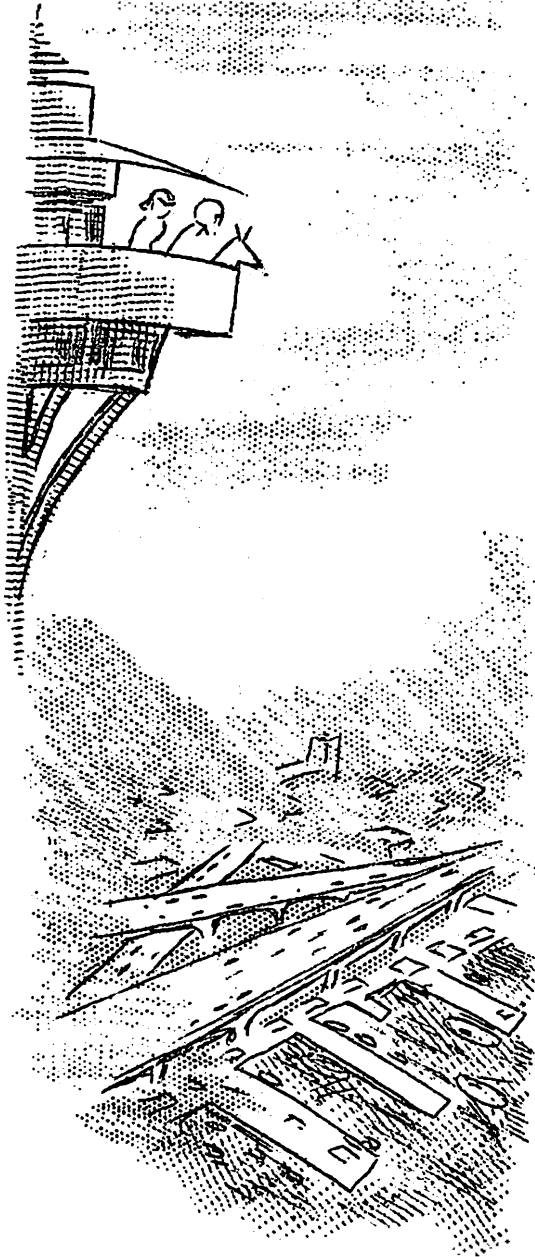


We sat and relaxed and talked. Elinor pointed out the Beatles ~~album~~ ^{album} illo, already hung on the picture wall. Next to it I noticed a coloured illustration I'd sent them some years before. It was nice to see it up there, all those miles away from where I'd drawn it in London. I also got acquainted with Nobby and Lisa, the two Busby Daschunds. Most of my visit Nobby would come over when I was sitting on the divan and plump himself across me to have his ears tickled. Around one a.m. we decided to get some sleep. Buz showed me the bathroom, which was halfway through a do-it-yourself renovation, and a small bedroom, lately vacated by Boyd Raeburn, who hardly ever speaks with an English accent.

Thursday morning we drove out to the Pacific seashore, to walk along the beach, enjoying the sharp tangy wind, and morning. And, as I hadn't had a chance to in California, I went down to the waters edge and dabbled my hands in the Pacific Ocean. Away out in the Sound a large scow loaded with sawdust was breasting whitecapped waves. We watched a while, then drove back into Seattle to visit the Space Needle, One of Seattle's famous landmarks, built for the Seattle World Fair, and now a tourist



attraction. At the top of the Needle was an open observation deck below it, a restaurant. The restaurant was a fabulous thing. The tables on a circular floor which slowly turned around the centre of the Needle to give the diners an all round view of Seattle, Puget Sound, the Cascade Mountains, and Mount Rainier towering up in the distance. For the meal I settled on Pacific crab and shrimp salad to say "Cool!" as it was served in a huge clam shell. We sat eating as the floor slowly turned, with Buz and Elinor pointing out the various scenic features as they came round, or we came round to them. We could see the whole of the Seattle water-front, with the freeway running right along the the wharfs, and small passenger boats pulling in to the piers. I said that America certainly went in for things in a big way, and pointed out it even had ferries at the bottom of its freeways.



The meal over, and after a look around the observation deck above, we went down to drive around Seattle, sightseeing, then back home to phone up the Greyhound depot to find out the schedules for my trip back to New York. The information we got was that I'd have to leave early Saturday morning. It meant I wouldn't get the weekend in at Seattle, and I began to realise that time was running out on me.

Early evening we drove out across the famous floating Bridges on the Seattle lakes, to arrive back at the house for a late dinner and an evenings conversation and home brew drinking. Buz is the very devil with the home brew, especially if he see's you like it;

like I did. My mug was never allowed to get below half full, though towards the end of the evening I was well above half full, and feeling fine. We talked about fandom, the con and the '65 worldcon.

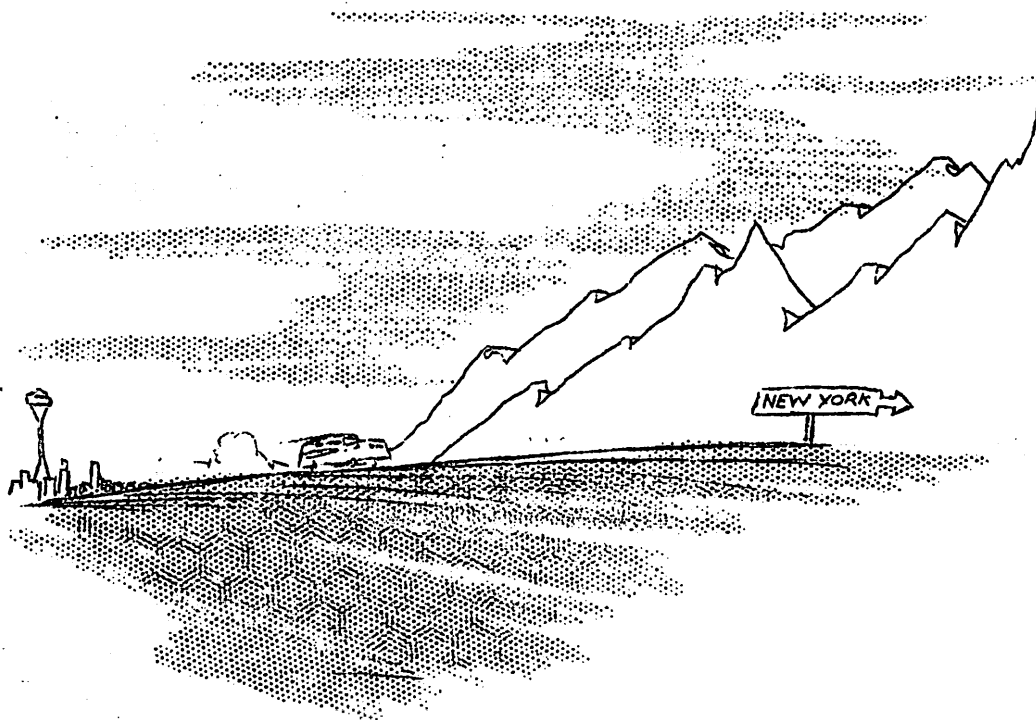


Friday morning started with a trip out to Green Lake, a favourite walking spot, then on to the Seattle Zoo to wander around and find a whole section that Buz and Elinor hadn't known about. We drove to the Seattle waterfront for an excellent meal and walked along the jetties looking at the fishing boats. The afternoon was spent out in the garden drinking home brew, punning and wondering about Lisa's addiction to eating the tomatoes from Elinor's tomato plants. Wm Ballard arrived for dinner, and Scotty Tapscott and his wife came along for the evening after dinner. Earlier Elinor had got me to explain about the SFCO-London's game which we'd hoaxed Wally Weber with during his Taffy trip to Britain. This is a game played with several different sized coins and a small block of wood. There's two teams, and a Judge, or referee, and you're supposed to arrange the coins on the block of wood in certain 'sequences'. In actual fact there isn't any rhyme or reason to the arranging. The hoaxed doesn't know this, and the teams play as if in deadly earnest. The referee disqualifies the players one by one for supposed fouls or infringements until only the person being hoaxed is left with one other player of the opposite team and thinking that the outcome of the game depends on his correct placing of the coins, and not quite knowing why or how.

We played this without telling Scotty or his wife, myself being referee. I disqualified Wm, Elinor and Buz, leaving Scotty and his wife facing each other across the block of wood desperately wondering how to win. Then ruled out Scotty when he made a move. We told him it was a complete hoax whilst his wife was taking some glasses out to the kitchen. He groaned. Then told his wife when she came back. "But, but, I Won!" she wailed. After Wm, Scotty, and his wife left for home, we sat up talking way into the night, trying to say everything left unsaid, with my departure hanging over us.

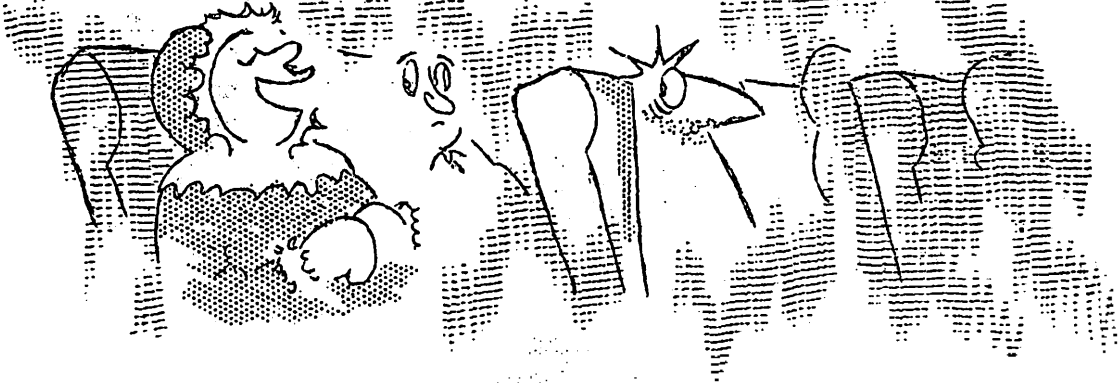
Saturday morning we were up by seven thirty; I had to catch the bus at nine. At breakfast when I sat down to it, I noticed Elinor had only placed a fork by my plate. I didn't say anything, but picked up the fork with my right hand and ate the meal, using it to cut and lift with. At the end I pointed my feat out with pride. Elinor said that she'd gotten so used to me that she'd forgotten about the weird British style of eating with fork and knife all the time.

We drove down to the depot at nine. Checked my case into Greyhounds man, and watched a little apprehensively as it went away somewhere. Then went to stand at the departure doorway. Jim and Doreen arrived. They'd phoned the night before and I'd mentioned what time I was leaving, so they drove in to see me off. Nice of them. I went through that damn awful feeling again, of having to say goodbye and leave people I wanted to stay with, had come to enjoy being with so much. The Bus rolled into the depot and I climbed aboard to get a top deck front window seat and watch Buz keeping an eagle eye out for my case going aboard, and giving the thumbs up sign when it did. I had a large envelope handy so I quickly on it "See you in London" and as the bus pulled away and we all waved I held it up at the window.



CHAPTER 11

TRAVAILING MAN



The next three thousand miles and three and a half days and nights were an experience in themselves. Yet, something, as with all the rest of my travelling, I wouldn't have missed, apart from the three days and nights it took out of my time. I settled down and read, smoked and snoozed the first day through, as we climbed up towards and through the Rocky Mountains. Behind my seat was a young man who had also got on at Seattle. In the sleepy silence of the bus he loudly confided to his seat partner that he had just come down from Fairbanks, Alaska, and went into details, like he was on his way home after being three months in Fairbanks, Alaska.. "which he'd just come down from.." At the first main stop his seat companion got off and someone else took their place. To be told, along with the rest of the bus that the young man "Had just come down from Fairbanks, Alaska.." The next morning his seat companion got off, or fled to another seat, and there was a groan of dismay from the whole of the top deck as he got another partner and we were treated once more to .. "I've just come down from Fairbanks, Alaska.." Words and music by the young man. At eight am on the Sunday morning we stopped at the Greyhound post house in Billings Montana, I sent a postcard off to Walt and Madeline Willis saying that all the staff at the posthouse sent their greetings and hoped to see them again.

At Miles City, a hundred or so miles further on the seat partner of the young man had had enough, and got off, maybe to fly the rest of the way. A newcomer took the empty seat, and we heard the whole score again. I'd become so familiar with the young man's script that I could silently mouth the words a second or so before he got to them. Fargo came up, and went past. During the day the look of the country had changed from mountains and green firs to flat dusty plains, then, as we got into Minnesota, to rolling hills and green fields, white painted farms and beer signs.

By Sunday night we were well on the way to Minneapolis and St. Paul. I managed to grab a shave and wash at one of the stops, and apart from stiffness from sitting so long, felt okay. We rolled along, all through the night. Monday was a bad morning. After travelling so far the day before, Monday morning we seemed to be driving round, through, across and back across the country around Wisconsin Dells. Maybe the driver had friends in the area and was showing off his big shiny bus. We finally straightened out and reached Milwaukee, to run along the highway beside Lake Michigan past big breweries and bigger beer signs. At Milwaukee we were treated again to "... I've just come down from Fairbanks, Alaska,..." when the young man managed to secure another victim. We drove into Chicago late Monday night. I realised that I had come full circle having left there with Nick and Mike three and a half weeks before, though it seemed as if I'd crowded several months living into those three weeks. I had to change buses at the Chicago depot, and lined up for the New York bus, to listen with some small satisfaction as faintly from the Washington line some distance further down I heard a plaintive voice saying "... I've just come down from Fairbanks, Alaska."

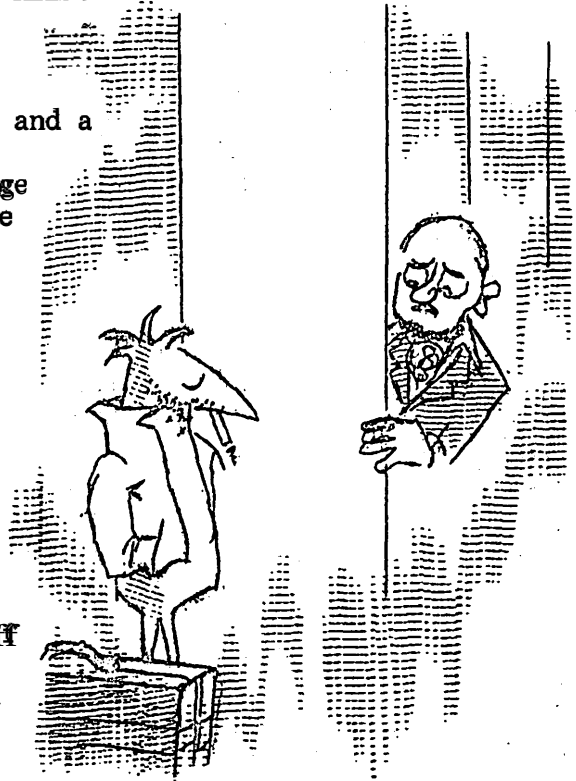


I was lucky and managed again to get a top deck front window seat. We pulled out of Chicago and the rest of the night and most of Tuesday morning was spent in sleeping as the bus headed for New York. We went out on to the Penn Turnpike, which I'd travelled down to meet up with Nick, and even stopped at the same posthouse I'd used on the way out. This time entering it, paying the correct money for the food, and strolling around nonchalantly.. to ease the numb feeling of continuous bus travelling. Around nine o'clock in the morning we crossed the Delaware. Somehow, this was a big thing for me, and I felt I ought to maybe stand up and salute as we went across. None of the Americans on the bus did, and the driver didn't even comment on the fact we were crossing it. He'd been giving little snippets of information and comment over his mike' during the journey. As we crossed the bridge he did switch on the mike' and said that if we all looked out of the right

hand windows we'd see something. It proved to be a small dingy zoo or circus quarters. We approached New York, running through dismal countryside full of dirty little creeks and car graveyards. I got the feeling going through it as I do when coming into London by train past squalid little untidy gardens, gas works and grimy houses, that people should have the approaches to their cities clean and nice to go through and look at. The Tall Buildings came into view miles away and took an hour or more to get any nearer. By twelve midday we drove through a large tunnel under the river and up into the New York Port Authority building. I uncramped myself, collected my case and tiredly went up the escalator to the main concourse.

Well, here I was, New York by Tuesday, now what. I remembered Jock Root had given me his telephone number and told me to call when I arrived. So I crammed myself into a phone booth and dialed his number. He answered almost immediately, I thought, thank god, pressed the right buttons and got through to him. "Hello Jock," I said "this is Atom ... HELP!"

He said that he had a luncheon date, but would come and collect me on the way. I told him the state I was in, unshaven, grubby, and a little frayed round the edges. He said that maybe he could manage to get me cleaned up and would be down in twenty minutes. I dragged my case across the floor to a marble column and stood before it smoking and looking at the American scene. The men were dressed a little more conservatively, the women, a little more chic, maybe, than the west coast. The whole scene was to my eyes, so American that I momentarily expected to see some characters from Naked City to come dashing through shooting off guns. They didn't, everybody just went past on their business like anyone in a large terminal in London.



After three cigarettes the warm friendly features of Jock Root peered round the column, to take in my unshaven face, mussed hair, crumpled windcheater and pants. Jock was dressed in immaculate white shirt, paisley patterned cravat, hacking jacket, and the rest of the apparel that the well dressed New Yorker was wearing to go to a luncheon date. "Hi Jock," I said, "I've just come down from

Seattle, Washington..." Jock gulped and said that we'd be able to go to his mother's apartment nearby so that I could clean up. On the way, Jock explained his date was with a young English TV actress who had been working in New York for a couple of years. He'd phoned her and arranged to meet her at his mother's apartment block. We did, and I watched her eyes widen slightly as she took in the state of the Englishman who was horning in on her luncheon date. Up in the apartment Jock showed me the bathroom smiled gently, and closed the door, I summoned up some hidden energy reserve and moving at three times my normal speed flung off my creased clothes, showered, shaved, dressed in white shirt, dark red tie, sports jacket and trousers, polished my shoes, and flung open the door to stand nonchalantly in the doorway and feel pleased at the surprised expressions on the two faces as they looked at the suave immaculate Englishman coming out of the room that a rather crumpled bum had gone into. I felt like a human being again, too.



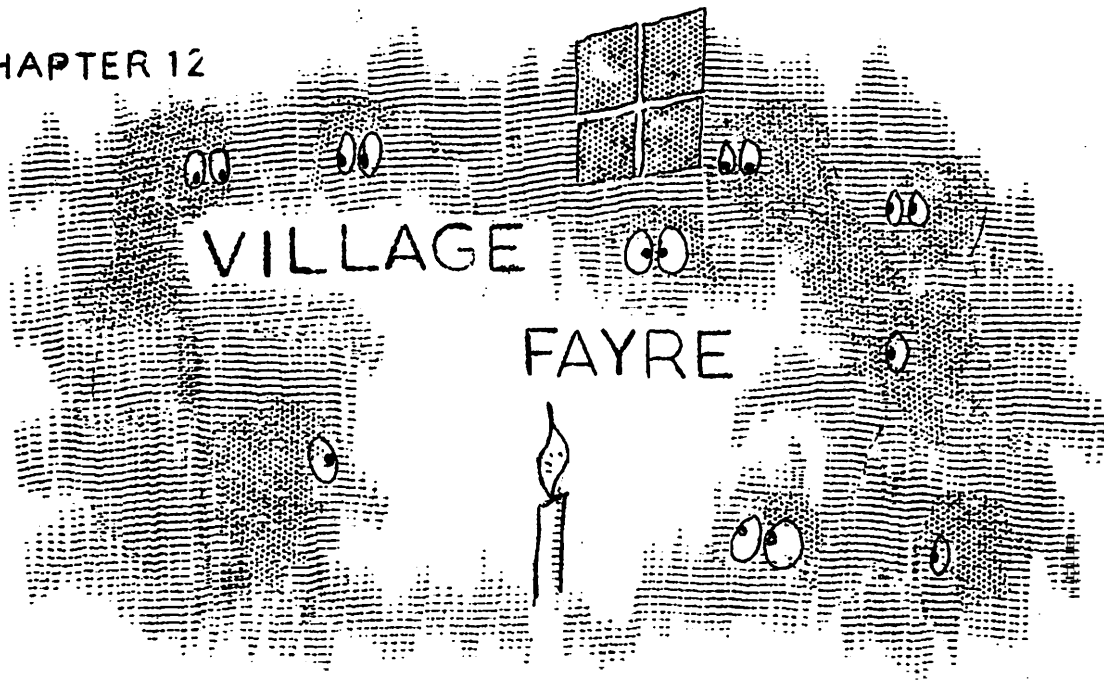
We had had a drink of bourbon to celebrate the transformation scene, then went out to eat. After the meal we saw the actress to wherever she was going, then went on up to Jock's apartment to drink some fine whisky and chat until the Luppoffs' and Camm's turned up. I'd got on well with Jock in LA and at the Convention here was no exception, we sat and talked and drank scotch until Dick, Pat, Terry and Carol arrived in Dick's car. Then we all went out to sample whatever the New York evening had to offer.

This started with a visit to a Mexican restaurant. I had tortillos or Emthillados or some such meal. It came up looking and tasting remarkably like good old Cornish pasties. Terry did say afterwards that he'd asked the waitress not to make my helping too hot. It was a fine meal, anyway. I had recovered from my bus travail and was enjoying the evening and the company. I thought then, how lucky I'd been with the various groups of fans I'd been with all along the trip. I'd enjoyed being with them all, and had felt no awkwardness or tenseness in any of the company, and had been able to relax and enjoy everything without having to worry too much how the Tariff image was looking.

In Greenwich Village we strolled along and into what appeared to me to be a condemned building, held up by wooden beams and unwashed bearded characters. It was some sort of 'arty' coffee house, where you could also get all sorts of wierdly named ice cream concoctions. On the way out we passed a large cup of coffee painted on the wall, so egged on by the irresponsible elements of the group I inked in a small Atom Ben swinging across the cup, and went out having established that I had done some art in Greenwich Village. We strolled some more, then Dick Lupoff found a movie theatre that had the Mark Of Zorro showing, with a character at the door who gave you a bag of peanuts as you went in and another who played the piano during the film. We went in, to eat peanuts, listen to the piano watch Doug Fairbanks senior beat them all, say wow, and come out feeling happy and sleepy around one am in the morning. We dropped Terry Carol and Jock off and went on past the old Nursery building, the Cameraval press building, a few bridges most of Central park, to finally tip toe into the Lupoff apartment once more and collapse on the divan.



CHAPTER 12



Wednesday morning I waited for Charlie and Marsha Brown to come round and take me off to the Worlds Fair. They arrived about Ten and we went out into the bright New York sunlight all set for a whole days wonders. Which included my first trip on the New York subway system. The stations were old fashioned and grimy, but we took a clean shiny blue train out to Flushing Meadows and the Fair.

I enjoyed the Fair. We wandered it most of the day, strolling around taking it easy and seeing what we wanted to see, which included most of the best pavilions and exhibitions and the reconstruction of a Belgium village, where we sat on the steps outside the town hall and ate huge waffles covered with strawberries and cream whilst we listened to a brass band playing its heart out in the square. A little later when we were sampling some beer, the band finished playing and came past us, all the players speaking Belgium or Flemish. Late in the afternoon we went into a Polynesian show and watched the Hula dancers cope with goose pimples and the rather chilly wind that had sprung up,

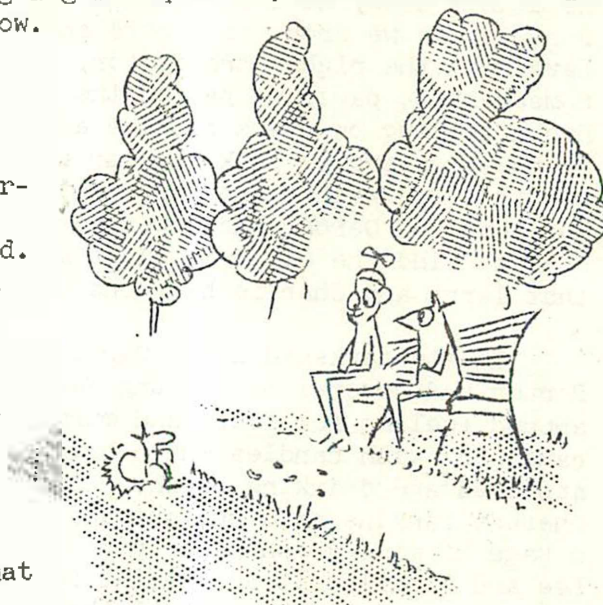


then took the Subway back to the Bronx and the Browns' apartment. Looking at Charlie's book shelves with him, we made the discovery that we were both historical fiction buffs and battled titles at each other whilst Marsha made mysterious p'ises with bottles of wine, herbs, wild ripe and other ingredients to whip up a handsome meal. We sat talking until the small hours of the morning then I bedded down on the divan and let them get to bed and grab a few hours sleep before morning.

Thursday morning Charlie saw me safely back to the Luppoff apartment on his way to work. Dick had gone to work and Pat was getting ready to go out and do some shopping, so I read awhile, then went out for a stroll on my own. It was easy. I discovered that New York is square. All you have to do to take a walk without losing yourself is walk to the corner of the block, then down the main street as far as you wanted, then a block along then back up the main street on the other side of the block, until you arrived back at your original street. I strolled for an hour, looking at the shops and sights. This part of New York seemed a trifle grimy, the small shops seemed to be seedy or dilapidated, or at least the fronts of them gave me this impression. I enjoyed the walk, looking at the people in the streets and ~~in~~ a small kick at walking up fifth ave. I passed a side street where there must have been an accident, two police cars were swung across the road, the lights on their roofs whirling and blinking and the policemen themselves moving people on, and it was all so New Yorkish, or at least so to me, with my tv show conditioning, that I felt a pleasurable glow at it all. I didn't feel strange though. I hadn't during any part of my trip. I'd felt at home the whole time. I'd enjoyed the newness of the sights I'd seen across the country, but had never felt out of place at any time or that I didn't 'belong'. I had no craving for the familiarity of the British scene, nothing seemed 'wrong' here in America, I could accept the newness of what I was seeing without feeling it wasn't quite right.

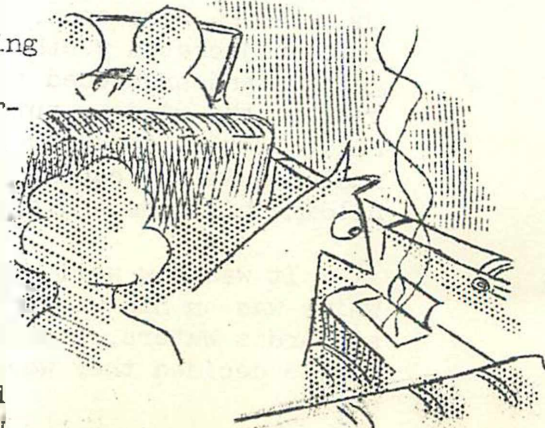
Back at the Luppoff apartment I waited for Steve Stiles to arrive to chaperon me around during the afternoon. I also phoned the BOAC people about my 'plane back. They said they'd be delighted to see me at the JFK airport on Friday Evening about eight thirty. Steve arrived and we went off to visit the Metropolitan art museum. I was a little wary of Steve, some of his writings had that worldly cynical 'putting on' style about them, and I treated him with a certain amount of circumspection. Steve turned out to be a quiet interesting person and I enjoyed his company. We talked about his hopes and prospects in the advertising business in New York, and looked around the paintings in the museum. Then went out, into Central Park, where we sat on a park bench in the warm sunlight and fed

squirrels with some peanuts we bought. It was a pleasant afternoon, we chatted and threw the nuts to the squirrels and I think I enjoyed it about as much as I'd enjoyed anything else during the whole trip. We'd been talking about art and styles and feeding nuts to one small squirrel that had come up and was sitting only a few feet away from us. Noticing the line of small teats down its front as it sat up I remarked idly about it being a girl squirrel, Steve looked slightly astonished and asked how I know. I felt taken aback, the whole thing seemed suddenly out of kilter, that I should be sitting in Central Park in New York and lecturing an American Fan on the Birds and Bees. "Steve Stiles" I said. "Your are puttong me on.. you swine." I pointed out the teats on the squirrel "Oh, duhhh." Steve said. So we left it like that. And went out of the park to take a bus back to the apartment, to get ready for the party that was being held at Ted Whites place out in Queens that evening.



Jon White turned up at the Luppoff apartment, having successfully escaped from the hospital a few days before. When Dick came home, we all went out to the car and took off for Queens, stopping along the way to pick up Lee Hoffman, whom I was seeing for the first time since the British Kettering convention way back in '56 We'd liked each other then and got on well, and because of that, I think we were a little shy to start with at seeing each other again. Lee gave me a small gift of an Indian arrowhead in exchange for the gift of a Confederate toy soldier I'd given her back in Britain during her trip, we sat in the back of the Cadillac and chatted and got over our strangeness as Dick drove on through the New York suburbs.

After twenty or thirty minutes driving Dick said we'd stop for gas, and directions, he was lost. I was smoking a cigarette as we drew into the gas station so before pulling up at the pumps I lifted the lid of the ashtray on the arm rest and threw the cigarette butt into it. Unfortunately the bottom of the ashtray was rusted away and I saw the glowing butt end disappear right down inside the side of the car. All the while we were filling up I kept opening the ashtray lid and peering into the depths at a red glow

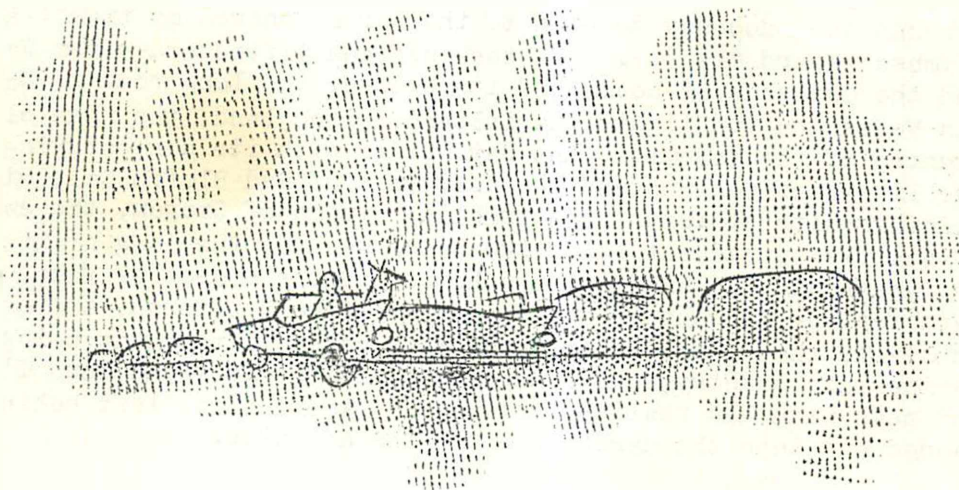


winking back at me, and wondered if I might be held responsible for burning down Dick's lovely drop head coupe Cadillac. Lee said not to worry it being a Cadillac it might just be a deep ash-tray for cigar smokers. I closed the lid and tried to forget about the cigarette end. We got lost again at the end of the street and asked a police patrol man where the White House was. He didn't know, at least didn't know where the one we were looking for was, so we drove some more and finally turned into what must have been the right street, for, as we drove down it looking for somewhere to park, we passed the figures of Carol Carr and Marsha Brown sitting on steps outside a house, we waved as we went by found somewhere to park the car and went back to them. It appeared that Ted wasn't back from not attending the Pacificon yet, but that Les Gerber had appeared and unlocked the door for them, only to find the electric light and power had been turned off, and that Terry and Charlie had gone off to buy some candles.

In the darkened house Carol told me that Les Gerber, Andy Porter and several more young New Yorks fans were there, so I crept around feeling for faces and murmuring howdedos. Terry and Charlie came back with candles which brightened things up a bit, bottles appeared and drinking began. Andy Porter gave out copies of a oneshot fanzine he'd put out and found out that if you folded up a page of mimeograph paper you could make a paper aeroplane of it. Lee and I hailed it as a great fannish discovery and went on to say that it could become all the rage at conventions where you could go up to the top of the hotel and sail the 'planes out over the city. Carol asked Les if he'd brought his guitar. Les modestly said he had, so Carol asked him if he would play it for us. So with a couple of preliminary strums he swung into "There's a Bad Bad Bad Bad Bad Bad Bad Bad Bad Earthquake a comin" Lee, who is pretty much an expert on folk music lay back on the settee and closed her eyes all the while Les sang. At the end of the song Les said He'd sing it again later for us, and Carol, Oh that Carol, asked him to give us his imitation of Elvis Presley. Les got up from where he'd been sitting during his folk song singing shook his hips and strummed his way into his Elvis imitation. The room was at the front of the house, and the windows were open. Outside on the sidewalk a group of passing leather jacketed youths carrying guitars stopped, unstrung their guitars and proceeded to form a backing group for Les. Les went over to the window, put one foot on the sill and played his guitar right back at the group, then swung round and facing the enthralled audience in the candlelit room, finished the whole effort off by holding his nose and playing his throat as a finale.

It was now well after eleven, Fannish drums had said that Ted White was on his way across country from Oakland, with Andy Main and Ardis Waters, and hoped to arrive in New York that night, but people decided they were hungry, so the Cadillac crew, with Terry

and Carol took off and drove back into New York to park in a small street and make their way over the body of a man lying across the pavement into a Chinese Restaurant. Sitting round the table I mentioned that there seemed to be quite an odour even for a Chinese restaurant. Terry pointed out the garbage truck parked outside the open door and certainly, it seemed to get a little better once the truck moved away. Remembering my experience in San Francisco I fastened on the menu where it said Boiled Shrimps and hoped for the best, it wasn't, for they turned up floating in a thick brown goo. Carol took pity on me and offered me some of her boiled rice. After the meal we dropped Terry and Carol off then Jon White, and took Lee on back to her basement apartment where we spent a pleasant hour listening to kinky old records, and sitting around talking. In the small hours of the morning we got back to 73rd street but after dropping Pat off Dick and I spent all of forty minutes going round and round the blocks looking for a parking place for the non inflammable Cadillac.



Friday, the last day. So in the morning I went out and walked around the streets of New York near the Luppoff's apartment, then with Pat went to lunch with Terry, Dick and Don Wollhiem at the Brass Rail which was very very Englishy but didn't serve Stones Green Ginger wine. After lunch and a look at Dick Luppoff's office high in the IBM building and his fanzine collection therein, I wandered around Times Square and Broadway rubbernecking with the best.

I took a taxi which had no ashtray but was ankle deep in debri back to the Luppoff apartment, packed, and sat talking to Jock Root who was going to the airport to make sure I left the country. Jon White, Steve Stikes, Andy Porter and Mike Mc Inerary arrived to help Pat Dick and Jock get rid of me, so when the time came we all piled into the Cadillac and took off to the airport, driving through New York as it got dark and all the lights came on, and I sat there and wondered if I'd ever see it all again.

We saw my case checked through at the airport then wandered along a corridor to a small doorway leading to the departure apron. I turned to Dick and said " I'm not really Phil Rogers, and I'll stay if you like." Shook hands with all of them, kissed Pat, went through the doorway down on to the apron, showed my ticket and climbed aboard the 707. We took off and lifted away from Wabash and the Coulsons, St Louis and its bridge, the long road to California, Las Vegas and its lights, Marinleand, Disneyland, the high clean country of the Yosemite, the Bay bridge with its dog carrying cabs, the lights of Oakland and the policemen of Red Bluffs Cal, with their shining white stetsons, The tumbling rivers of Oregon, the sweep of Seattle spread out below the Space needle, the long nights outside the Greyhound bus windows, the homes and the houses of fans, the warm feeling of welcome and friendship freely offered, the enjoyment in myself that I had experienced as a personal thing at being in and seeing this country, and a hope that all the American fans I'd met and been with had realised this. And America was left behind as we headed out into the darkness above the Atlantic.